

Name: R.J. Krabbendam
SNR: U1254751
ANR: 624641
E-mail: r.j.krabbendam@tilburguniversity.edu
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Affective Injustice in Positive Reactive Attitudes: The Demand for Women's Gratitude

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Preface

This thesis is truly the pinnacle of my Master's journey. I have been busying myself with this topic all throughout the two years I spent on my Master's degree, and it only feels right that I round off my Master's thesis writing on the thing that became my obsession. And when I say obsessed, I am not exaggerating: my enormous stack of reading material on the topic became somewhat of a curiosity whenever I pulled it out of my bag at the library. I had a book or article with me at all times to keep exploring the field of moral psychology, which I was unfamiliar with before starting my degree. I saw signs of affective injustice everywhere I went, and every time I encountered an expression of gratitude, I started (over)analysing it.

As such, writing a word of thanks for a thesis that covers gratitude practices feels a little odd. However, I am truly grateful for the support I have received and though I will mostly argue about the negative aspects that come with some of our gratitude practices, there is no injustice here, and gratitude is truly due. I am grateful to my supervisor Alfred, ever supportive, critical and honest, whose idea it was to expand the topic of my Ethics paper, and to the participants of the EPSSE 2021 and FemPhilAZ 2021 conferences for their helpful questions and comments. In particular those of my commentator Max Kramer, whose critique was helpful in developing my paper into the work that is sitting before you. I am also thankful for the proofreading by Laura, whose sharp eye even spotted the extra spaces, and Robin, who has critically read through almost all of my work over the course of my Master's degree. Lastly, I am grateful to Isabel, with whom I developed the caffeine addiction that made this work possible.

Abstract

Even though gratitude is generally a positive emotion, it is compatible with negative consequences. In this thesis I argue that demanding gratitude from historically marginalised groups can constitute affective injustice, i.e. injustice to people qua affective beings. Based on Macnamara's rights exemption claim (2019), no gratitude may be legitimately demanded from women for having received basic rights. Beyond the rights exemption claim, I argue that when their gratitude is demanded, women are subjected to various forms of affective injustice. I build on the works of Srinivasan (2018), Whitney (2018) and Gallegos (2021) to identify these injustices. Being faced with the demand for gratitude, women are faced with a normative choice between emotional aptness (e.g. anger caused by awareness of ongoing injustice) and paying lip service to the undue demand. When the demand is met, women are exploited for their affective labour to support men's emotional well-being. Moreover, it communicates that there is indeed something to be grateful for, reinforcing existing power structures by underlining women's role as passive recipients of rights and obfuscating any further inequality in society. We need to rethink our gratitude practices and aim for a fair division of affective labour to achieve affective justice.

Key words: Affective injustice, Feminist philosophy, Gratitude duties, Moral philosophy, Reactive attitudes

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1. Introduction

During the Covid-19 pandemic, citizens of various countries expressed their gratitude to healthcare workers by going outside and collectively applauding them. This grateful performance left a sour taste in my mouth, and I wondered why I reacted this negatively to something that was done out of the good of the public's heart. As I sat inside, refusing to go out on my balcony to applaud the frontline workers, several of whom are my friends, I reflected on what was wrong with this expression of gratitude. Is gratitude not supposed to be a positive emotion? I realised what caused my negative reaction. Applause, particularly applause for people who cannot even hear you at that time, is an empty token, a puff of air. Meanwhile the structural issues of low wages, demanding work, and unpaid overtime due to lack of capacity and funds are not fixed. The applause works as a distraction, a slight of hand to steer away from the negativity surrounding the needs of frontline workers.

But it was more than that. My reaction was more than second-hand outrage, it was personal. It reminded me of another corrupted mechanism of gratitude, a mechanism of harm involving the undue demand of gratitude. I am talking about a commonly heard narrative about the position of women in the Netherlands and other western countries. We should be grateful to be living here, in this time and place with relative equality. Women in the past and women in other countries have it so much worse than us. Even as a girl, such reactions left me wondering why we ought to be grateful, but boys were not asked to appreciate the fact they did not live under feudalism anymore, that they could enjoy an education, and have healthcare should they need it. And even though frontline workers are worthy candidates for our gratitude, the way in which it was expressed was as manipulative as the demand for women's gratitude, steering away the conversation from ongoing injustices.

In this thesis, I explore the mechanisms of affective injustice (injustice towards people qua affective beings) in the positive emotion of gratitude. In the intersection between moral and feminist philosophy, I aim to provide an answer to the research question: in what ways does the demand for women's gratitude constitute affective injustice? Moving beyond the question of a

duty to be grateful in general, the central claim that I defend in this thesis is that when women's gratitude is demanded, they are exploited for their affective labour to enhance men's emotional well-being. I expand the existing frameworks on affective injustice of Srinivasan (2018), Whitney (2018) and Gallegos (2021), which mostly focus on the emotion of anger, to explore how an emotion that is generally perceived as positive, can still fit the description of affective injustice. Within this field, the consideration of affective injustice lurking in gratitude, or positive emotions in general, has not yet been considered. Nor have moral philosophers writing about gratitude considered this possibility. Though philosophers such as Jackson (2016) and Martin (2021) have written about oppressive aspects of gratitude in general, they have not made the connection to affective injustice in particular.

In chapter 2 I provide a working definition of what gratitude is and what it does, drawing on the works of various researchers in the field of moral psychology. Chapter 3 covers gratitude duties, in the first section establishing that in some cases, there are indeed gratitude duties. In the second section, I explore the question of whether this duty entails corresponding claim-rights on the part of the benefactor (i.e. can they legitimately demand gratitude). In the third and last section of the chapter, I go into the exceptional status that rights have. I will follow Macnamara's theory (2019) to argue that there can never be a demand for gratitude in response to providing a benefit to which the beneficiary has a right. In chapter 4, I argue that based on the rights exemption claim, women's gratitude for receiving rights cannot be legitimately demanded. What is more, I argue that based on the existing theories by Srinivasan (2018), Whitney (2018), and Gallegos (2021), demanding women's gratitude in those cases constitutes affective injustice. Lastly, in chapter 5, I make the case that the current literature on affective injustice is insufficient to fully account for the gratitude cases. First, I connect the framework of affective injustice to adaptive preference formation: women's preferences - and therefore their options - are restricted as a result of unjust gratitude practices. Next, I expand Gallegos' account by arguing that we need a fair division of affective labour for there to be affective justice. In the final section, I tentatively explore the counterintuitive cases of injustice where the recipients of gratitude are treated unjustly. The applause for healthcare workers can arguably fit this description.

My framework of gratitude cases as affective injustice lends itself particularly well to situations involving historically marginalised groups who experience a demand for gratitude for having received certain benefits that the dominant group has had all along. Nonetheless, I would argue that the theory also applies to various other situations, such as the gratitude towards frontline workers, distracting us from ongoing injustices. My focus is on women's gratitude since there are various intersecting expressions of gratitude that each have some inherent underlying system of injustice. The most salient example is the demand for women's gratitude for having received basic human rights, but it also occurs when we, as a society, express gratitude to women by celebrating domesticity (Martin, 2021). This is not to say that the undue demand of gratitude always occurs along the gender binary, nor that mechanisms of affective injustice are not intersectional. I will, however, limit my argumentation to this simplified binary situation to make the case to open up our understanding of affective injustice. By doing this, I hope to prompt others to explore the ways in which other groups are affected by this type of injustice.

2. Defining Gratitude

In this first chapter, I delve into what gratitude is and provide a working definition of what aspects constitute paradigm cases of gratitude. Moral psychologists have written an extensive amount of literature on the topic, and there are many disagreements on how to interpret gratitude exactly. It is a rather complicated emotion, involving beliefs, affect, and conative aspects in which ontological and normative disagreements can develop. First, I consider the necessary elements that make up gratitude as it commonly presents itself. Next, I show what gratitude does to us: how it forms and sustains relationships and motivates us to act in certain ways. Lastly, I consider where to place gratitude in our moral landscape, its status as a second-personal reactive attitude, and how its cultivation is perceived as virtuous. I take each of these issues and elaborate on the viewpoint of various researchers within that aspect. I take a paradigm-based approach to solve these disagreements within the field, choosing the path that aligns with the most general cases of when gratitude occurs. This is not to say that gratitude cannot arise or is not fitting with any of these discarded aspects, but rather that those aspects are divergent or exceptional cases. My aim in this chapter is not to argue against alternative views on what constitutes gratitude. Rather, I provide a general overview of what gratitude is in a generic sense so it can serve as a working definition for chapters 3, 4 and 5. My argumentation in those chapters is based on the claim that what is being asked of women is paradigmatic gratitude of the kind that is uncontroversially supported by most moral philosophers. I am not claiming that my definition of gratitude is definitive nor that my list of components is exhaustive. Rather, my aim for this chapter is to provide a comprehensive overview of the aspects of gratitude that are important for my account of the demand for women's gratitude.

What is Gratitude?

This seemingly straightforward question has a rather complex answer. What we mean when we say "I am grateful to them for their help" has a number of underlying components. In short, gratitude is generally a positive emotional response towards a benefactor for a benefit given to us. For example: Anne is grateful to Brandon for helping her move house. Insofar as gratitude is a moral response, it is accompanied by the belief that the benefactor has done something or has

attempted to do something to warrant a grateful response. Because of this positive moral evaluation, the beneficiary has an affective disposition of goodwill towards their benefactor (Manela, 2021, section 3.2). I return to the claims that gratitude is a reactive attitude and that it involves a moral evaluation in chapter 2.3. For now, I take these claims as a given and move on to the components that make up the situation in which gratitude arises. I therefore only discuss instances in which gratitude commonly occurs rather than discuss when one ought to feel grateful. Gratitude duties will be the topic of chapter 3.

We often see gratitude as a feeling simpliciter, we *feel* grateful. However, emotions are more complex than mere feelings. After all, we feel hungry, but it would be strange to call hunger an emotion. Emotions consist of more than a feeling or affect, they are about something, they contain judgements (Manela, 2021, section 4.1 & Jaggar, 1989, pp. 154-156). This *intentionality* is what makes an emotion different from other bodily sensations. We have the feeling of having a knot in our stomach but knowing that we are nervous *about* an upcoming job interview makes this an emotion. We may not always have the words or hermeneutical tools to recognise what a certain emotional state is about, but such a discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter.¹ For now I leave such cases aside and work with the clearcut cases in which we are aware of the emotions' intentionality. Gratitude meets the criterium of having those two components: affect - we *feel* a positive sensation - and intentionality - we *feel* grateful *for* something. We can therefore classify gratitude as an emotion.

Though the paradigmatic account of gratitude is a positive one - i.e. it feels pleasant - gratitude can also be a negative emotion - i.e. it feels unpleasant (Manela, 2015, p. 134). Consider this case of a negative emotion of gratitude: when Betty and Anthony go swimming, Anthony almost drowns. Betty, while saving Anthony's life, gets caught in the undertow and passes away herself. Even though Anthony is incredibly grateful to Betty for saving his life, he does not experience this emotion as a positive one. Instead, it is painful for him to recollect the event and he only experiences sadness and regret. To doubt his grateful feelings would be cynical. So perhaps

¹ For a discussion on moods as emotional states without intentionality, see Fish (2005).

positivity is not a requirement for the beneficiary to experience gratitude. What is there, is an attitude of goodwill towards Betty (if she were still alive) and a certain behavioural disposition. I return to this disposition in the next section. Luckily, the affect we experience when we are grateful is usually positive. We are grateful for a gift, for help we receive, for an attempt to improve our lot. And since this usually does not involve the benefactor dying, it is safe to conclude that overall, gratitude is a positive emotion.

Gratitude is a response to a benefit. Something or some action has impacted our lot for the better. It would not make sense to say that I am grateful for a burglar stealing from me.² The burglar has not benefited me, nor did they even try to benefit me. This intention is so important that an attempt to benefit is enough by itself to cause gratitude according to some philosophers (e.g. Berger, 1975). Let us take another example to appreciate the force of this point: my neighbour saw the burglar breaking into my home and tried to catch them. However, my neighbour is not very fast and fails to apprehend the criminal. Even though their attempt did not benefit me, I still feel grateful for their attempt to help me. Walker argues that I am only grateful in cases such as this because the (attempted) benefit exceeds my right (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 48). If it was not my neighbour but my security guard who tried to apprehend the burglar and failed, I may not have felt as grateful. After all, I paid the guard to keep my possessions safe and as such, I already have a right to their service. I return to the point of gratitude for rights in the next chapter. Regardless of the outcome of the discussion when something is truly a benefit or a right, gratitude is a response to an actual or attempted benefit.

Taking stock, gratitude is a (usually positive) emotional response to a benefit or attempted benefit, accompanied by an attitude of goodwill to our benefactor. Let us move to the next aspect. Not only does the benefactor need to provide the recipient with a benefit, but the beneficiary also needs to gladly accept the benefit. If they did not want to receive the benefit in the first place, they are probably not very grateful (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 52). What if I am in cahoots with the burglar, and I am actually attempting to commit insurance fraud? In this case, what causes the concept of

² See Fitzgerald's account (1998) for a perspective on gratitude in cases where the beneficiary has not received a benefit but rather, has been harmed by the person or people towards whom they experience gratitude.

gratitude to fail to take place is not the failed attempt, nor the less than positive emotions, but rather my lack of willingness to accept the attempt (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 52). I would likely experience even more annoyance at my neighbour for interfering if they succeeded in apprehending the hired burglar.

So far, I have spoken of gratitude in situations where there is a benefactor who bestowed a benefit upon a beneficiary. I argue that the paradigmatic case of gratitude is structured in this way, but not all accounts of gratitude necessarily include the existence of a benefactor. There are conflicting theories on whether or not statements of the kind 'I am grateful for the sunny weather during our picnic' are reflective of gratitude towards an unnamed deity, if it is the subcategory of propositional gratitude, or if it is something else altogether, namely appreciation (Manela, 2016, pp. 286-287). Some philosophers have included dyadic relationships (i.e. a relationship in which there is only a beneficiary and a benefit) in their definition of gratitude (e.g. McAleer, 2012). I am grateful *that* X is the case. Walker (1980-1981, p. 45) makes a similar distinction between gratefulness and gratitude. Gratefulness, in his view, does not require a triadic relationship (i.e. in which there is a beneficiary, a benefit, and a benefactor), but gratitude does. Colloquially we would say that we are grateful for our health, or grateful for the nice weather during an outing, but since propositional gratitude lacks a sense of concern for a benefactor as well as any motivating aspects that are present in paradigmatic gratitude - gratitude concerning a triadic relationship - it is contested whether this is truly gratitude or not. Manela (2016, p. 282) explains that often, prepositional gratitude and propositional gratitude (or appreciation) occur at the same time but can come apart. When someone cooks me a delicious meal, I am both grateful to them for their concern for me, and I appreciate the tastiness of the meal. If the meal is absolutely disgusting, I am likely still grateful to them for the effort they put into cooking, but I do not experience propositional gratitude for having received the meal. I would rather wait until I can make myself a sandwich at home. Considering the ongoing discussion of whether or not propositional gratitude is gratitude, I leave it aside for my argumentation. When I speak of gratitude, I therefore always refer to prepositional gratitude, or gratitude in a triadic rather than dyadic relation.

According to Manela's line of argumentation, a benefactor needs to have at least some agency for there to be prepositional gratitude. After all, if we are 'grateful' for the nice weather, we either need to anthropomorphise meteorological phenomena, invoke some sort of theism, or otherwise ascribe agency where there is none (Manela, 2016, p. 285). Since this is either a clumsy way to think about gratitude, or highly unlikely, it is more plausible to think about this in terms of appreciation or prepositional gratitude. I would, however, argue that benefactors do not need to be full moral persons: we can be grateful to children providing us with a kindness even if we would not hold them fully accountable for any morally bad behaviour. Nonetheless, at least some degree of voluntariness, agency, and goodwill are needed. Let me elaborate.

The existence of a benefactor presents us with a host of interpretations of the criteria someone would need to meet to be a benefactor. Someone may provide us with a benefit, but if they did so accidentally, only as a by-product of malignant or egoistic purposes, we usually do not experience the positive emotion of gratitude towards them (that is, when we are aware of their intention). Nor would we feel grateful if our benefactor was forced to provide us with a benefit. We can distinguish various levels of agency in a benefactor. I take each in turn, arguing that none of these would normally be a candidate for grateful attitudes. At the first level, a benefactor provides someone with an unintentional benefit. For example: a benefactor left their umbrella behind by accident. The beneficiary can now use this during the unexpected shower later that day. In this case, the benefactor has no benevolence towards the beneficiary. That is to say: they do not have any goodwill towards the beneficiary. In fact, they do not have any feelings towards them at all, positive or negative. The second level could be that a benefactor provides the beneficiary with an intended benefit, but only as a by-product of their motivation to do something else altogether. This ulterior motive can be positive, neutral, or negative/selfish. An example of a neutral motive would be that the benefactor has too many things to carry home and decides to leave behind their umbrella in order to pick it back up another day. Moving to a different example, a positive, non-benevolent motive would be bringing cake to the office to celebrate the benefactor's own birthday. Let us say that the beneficiary forgot their lunch that day. The benefactor is unaware of this and is not moved out of concern or goodwill towards the beneficiary. However, they are moved by some other positive motivation that happens to benefit the beneficiary. An example of a negative motive

would be that the unintended benefactor spreads a malicious rumour that their beneficiary is secretly in love with another co-worker. The co-worker hears about it, and it turns out that the feeling is mutual. The beneficiary and their co-worker are now happily together. Lastly, at the third level, the benefactor did act consciously, but involuntarily. If the co-worker is forced by company policy to hand out cake on their birthday, the benefit of receiving cake is hardly an act that would be the source of gratitude in the rest of the team.

So, which of these levels would normally instil a sense of gratitude in us? I would argue that if we are aware of the benefactor's intentions, we only experience gratitude if they voluntarily and consciously act in a way that benefits us for *our sake* (Walker, 1980-1981, pp. 49-50 & Berger, 1975, p. 299). We can still appreciate the benefit if it was a by-product of their ulterior motives, but this would be what Manela (2016) calls appreciation. So, we do not only need beneficence, but benevolence (Berger, 1975, p. 299). In this way, situations warranting gratitude are different from contractual obligations. Though the benefit may help both parties, in the case of gratitude, someone benefits us not out of self-interest, but for our sake. Even though there is a situation where the benefactor and beneficiary cooperate, cooperation without benevolence does not provide sufficient grounds for gratitude (Berger, 1975, pp. 300-301). Paradigmatically, gratitude is thus defined as an emotional response to an (attempted) benefit provided voluntarily and consciously by a benefactor for the sake of the beneficiary. How can this rather long description of gratitude be categorised in the field of moral psychology? In the third section of this chapter, I argue that it is a second-personal reactive attitude. But first I move to the question of what gratitude *does*.

What Does Gratitude Do?

Since gratitude is often a positive emotion, and since it usually is a response to benevolence and always in response to (attempted) beneficence, gratitude plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of our communal relationships. Expressions of gratitude foster strong communal bonds and set us up to engage in new relationships (Algoe, 2012, pp. 462, 464). While the benefactor shows their concern for the beneficiary through benefiting them, the beneficiary in turn shows their concern for the benefactor and appreciation for the act through a demonstration of gratitude (Berger, 1975, p. 302).

In most cases, we want to express our gratitude *to* our benefactor, usually by saying thank you. In other cases, we show that we are grateful to our benefactor by helping them or doing something else in return when the opportunity presents itself (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 51). Importantly, reciprocity in the context of gratitude involves sincerity (Roberts & Telech, 2019, p. 4). When someone benefits us for our sake, we *want* to do something in return. Less obvious, but nonetheless an important option, we may want to 'pay it forward' (Card, 1988). Consider the following example: Andrew is walking down a busy street and their wallet falls out of their pocket, unbeknownst to them. Benedict is late for a meeting, quickly points out to Andrew that their wallet has fallen on the ground and keeps on walking. Andrew turns around to thank the stranger, but they have already disappeared into the crowd. Andrew cannot express gratitude to their benefactor but will likely feel compelled to assist another stranger. Gratitude therefore promotes prosocial behaviour, not only towards the benefactor but also to the community at large (Algoe, 2012, p. 465).

Thus, gratitude is a motivating force. This is one of the aspects in which gratitude differs from gladness or appreciation. In the case of the latter, there is no desire to favour another, while in the case of gratitude, there is this motivation (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 49). When we want to reciprocate, this is not a one-on-one repayment (Callard, 2019, p. 90). It would feel artificial and strange if Andrew's behavioural disposition is to ensure that they help someone with their wallet, spending the days with their eyes cast down in search of a wallet to return. Rather, the beneficiary enjoys considerable latitude in what their grateful behaviour entails. The beneficiary can choose from a range of appropriate grateful acts or expressions in order to meet this moral demand (Berger, 1975, 306), but an appropriate reaction chosen from this range is expected. Pace Wellman (1999), who argues against gratitude duties because a beneficiary will not buy a gift for their benefactor in return, I would suggest that gratitude's conative nature always entails a grateful behavioural disposition in the beneficiary. Returning to the dinner example of the previous section, I can choose to say 'thank you' to the benefactor who cooked the meal, walk their dog when they need help in return, or do something else altogether.

Such behavioural dispositions align with the communicative nature of gratitude. At the risk of getting ahead of myself, the status of gratitude as a reactive attitude entails that it communicates to our moral community as well as the recipient of our gratitude that the benefactor has done something praiseworthy (Macnamara, 2015, p. 557). Given our social nature, gratitude results in emotional uptake in others as well. The rest of the moral community may feel more positive towards the benefactor, and the benefactors themselves feel a sense of self-approbation, believing they have done well (Macnamara, 2015, p. 559). Since such emotional responses have a conative nature too, the community is further strengthened by a behavioural disposition to do nice things for each other in return (Macnamara, 2015, p. 560, see also Algoe, 2012).

Gratitude in Our Moral Landscape

As I mentioned in passing in the previous section, I take gratitude to be a reactive attitude. I follow Strawson (1962, pp. 50-51) in this, where he defines reactive attitudes as reactions to an action that is either morally reprehensible or praiseworthy. The upshot of this is that gratitude is an emotional response to our moral evaluation of the benefactor's action. It is necessarily a second-personal reactive attitude (Roberts & Telech, 2019, p. 4): gratitude is always the emotion of the beneficiary, and never that of a third party. It would be strange if my neighbour is grateful for my benefactor who cooks me a meal. They can still have some sort of moral evaluation, but that would amount to approval rather than gratitude.

Like love, it is perfectly logical that gratitude is both a feeling and an attitude. Love involves certain beliefs about the subject of our love, such as finding them the smartest, most attractive, funniest person in the world. Even though the attitude of love is always present, there is no constant affect. When I am at work or otherwise preoccupied, I am not experiencing love qua emotion. Similarly, a beneficiary can always be grateful to their benefactor for saving their life, even if they do not experience the grateful emotion at all times. What is more, besides being an emotion and a reactive attitude, gratitude is also a virtue (Walker, 1980-1981, p. 47 & Roberts & Telech, 2019, p. 2). I briefly address the virtue of gratitude and how the virtuous disposition of being grateful exists alongside the emotion here, but in the following chapters I focus mostly on the emotion and attitude rather than the virtuous account.

The affective trait of gratitude in our moral community is seen as a virtue. People who possess this affective trait experience the emotion more easily than someone without the trait (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002, pp. 112-113). Cultivating gratitude is perceived as admirable and displaying gratitude plays an important role in our moral lives and our interpersonal relationships (Berger, 1975, p. 298). This may be for a good reason: practising a grateful attitude by way of gratitude journaling or other exercises has been proven to improve our subjective well-being (McCullough et al., 2002, p. 118). We often use moralising language when we talk about gratitude: a grateful attitude is seen as a virtue, whereas being ungrateful is considered a vice.³ The sense of owing gratitude or having a debt of gratitude to someone is ingrained in our social norms and we find moral fault in individuals who do not demonstrate gratitude in an appropriate way (Berger, 1975, p. 307). We look at ungrateful people with disdain and when a benefactor does not receive the gratitude they feel is owed, they experience resentment towards the ungrateful person. In the next chapter, I will address this sense of having a debt of gratitude.

In conclusion, we have seen that gratitude is an emotional response to an (attempted) benefit provided voluntarily and consciously by a benefactor for the sake of the beneficiary. It motivates the beneficiary to either return the benefit, to express their gratitude verbally, or to pay it forward. Due to its reciprocal nature and what it communicates, gratitude strengthens community bonds. It is in this sense, a second-personal reactive attitude, which, when fostered, is perceived as a virtuous trait.

³ For a fascinating take on the different ways in which gratitude can have corresponding vices, see Manela (2019).

3. Gratitude Duties

In the previous chapter I have provided a working definition of what gratitude is. The question that remains however, is whether gratitude is supererogatory or if we have a duty to be grateful. Gratitude duties are generally argued for based on a paradigmatic account on what gratitude is. Because I have focussed on prepositional gratitude rather than propositional gratitude, the definition I gave in the previous chapter is a plausible candidate for gratitude-duties and corresponding claim-rights. However, just because we can be and often are grateful in a certain situation does not necessarily mean that we *must* be grateful. What is more, it is debatable whether we can ever have a duty to be grateful.

In the upcoming chapters I will be arguing that demanding women's gratitude is a form of affective injustice, which makes the dismissal of gratitude duties in general too easy an answer. What is more interesting is the question: if we assume that there are generally gratitude duties, what makes the demand for women's gratitude unwarranted? To this end, I start this chapter by building the strongest case possible for gratitude duties. If I succeed in this, there is a strong likelihood that women too have a general duty to be grateful for receiving benefits.

I will first go over some of the most prominent arguments in favour and against gratitude duties, such as the commandability objection (Liao, 2006). After concluding that there are, in some cases, some forms of gratitude duties, I explain how they are related to the demand of gratitude due to the conceptual relation between duties and rights. This is again a contested claim that leaves us again with fewer situations in which a demand for gratitude is warranted. Lastly, I discuss situations where gratitude is or is not due depending on the different baselines used to measure a benefit (Macnamara, 2019).

It is important to keep in mind that regardless of the right to gratitude and its corresponding duties, experiencing and expressing gratitude may very well be apt. Just like it is fitting to show other emotions in situations where the emotion is not warranted, but applicable nonetheless, there is nothing wrong with individuals showing they are grateful for having received a benefit. Think

back to the instance where the benefactor did not intend to provide an individual with a benefit. This does not result in a corresponding duty to show gratitude. However, no one would find it weird if the beneficiary shows gratitude nonetheless. In this chapter I leave the question of aptness aside and focus on gratitude duties.

Do We Have a Duty to Be Grateful?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, ingratitude is often a source of moral criticism. Intuitively, this would lead us to believe it is morally wrong to not feel gratitude in certain cases. The upshot of this is that there must be a duty to feel (or act out) gratitude whenever a situation is appropriate. We ought to behave according to certain moral principles and being grateful towards our benefactors seems to be one of them. However, there is a tension at play between the duty to feel gratitude and the actual possibility for this duty to exist. At first glance, owing gratitude threatens to break the 'ought implies can' rule (Roberts & Telech, 2019, p. 2): for there to be a duty, it must be the case that one can actually perform the duty. We do not always have control over our emotions, so it seems odd to place restrictions on our emotions.

Liao (2006) addresses this objection in his defence of the duty to love. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, there are certain similarities between love and gratitude. Love, like gratitude, is more than a feeling. It involves having certain attitudes as well, such as wanting to promote that person's well-being and valuing the person for their sake (Liao, 2006, p. 2). Given the parallels I have drawn between love and gratitude in the previous chapter, many of Liao's arguments can be modified to fit the defence of the duty of gratitude. In gratitude and love, we see an emotional component, and grateful attitudes that are not unlike loving attitudes. The commandability objection is rooted in the belief that we do not have direct control over our emotions. However, Liao (2006, p. 4) explains that by employing methods of internal and external control, we can bring about certain emotions. We can give ourselves reasons to feel love or gratitude. For example, by reminding ourselves what our benefactor has done for us, we can bring about the emotional component of gratitude and reinforce our grateful attitude. Or we realise through thorough reflection that there is nothing to be grateful for after all, and so we may discontinue to feel this emotion (Liao, 2006, pp. 4-5). These are examples of internal control that can be used to bring

about the emotion of gratitude. Another, quite common method to bring about gratitude is by cultivating the emotion through habituation or reflection (Liao, 2007, p. 5). Concretely, habituation often looks like saying thank you when you actually wanted to say sorry (e.g. “thank you for waiting” instead of “sorry for being late”) and reflection may look like gratitude journaling. Both are methods that may not immediately result in an increase in gratitude, but over time, will cultivate the affective trait of gratitude, which leads the subject to experience the emotion more easily in the appropriate cases.⁴ Lastly, we could theoretically place ourselves in a position in which we know we may feel gratitude to bring about the emotion by external means. External control may be more readily applicable to other emotions, and many examples of external control feel a little forced. But this is not to say that it is impossible to foster gratitude through external means. This can be illustrated with two different examples:

Leaving work (cat): Alfred knows that he feels joy when he is with his cat. He asks his boss if he may leave work early in order to interact more with his cat, thereby bringing about this positive emotion of gratitude towards his employer.

Leaving work (dinner): Bob knows that he usually feels gratitude towards his partner Ben when the latter cooks him dinner. He purposefully stays late at work to ensure that Ben will cook for him, so he feels grateful to Ben if dinner is ready when he gets home.

In *Leaving work (cat)*, it seems to be the case that even though Alfred is actively manipulating his environment in order to create an emotion, it will genuinely create gratitude in him. In *Leaving work (dinner)*, it is also possible to create gratitude through external means by manipulating external factors, though it may be morally impermissible to manipulate his partner into cooking for him on a daily basis. So, it is possible to bring about gratitude through internal control, habituation and reflection, and even through external control. What this means for the existence of gratitude duties is that the commandability objection loses its bite. Thus far, we do not have enough grounds to dismiss the existence of gratitude duties.

⁴ For the claim that attitudes may be brought about by the same means as emotions, see: Liao (2006, pp.12-14).

However, this entire discussion of commandability of emotions may become moot if what we actually mean by the duty to be grateful is that we ought to behave in a grateful manner rather than have grateful emotions. Perhaps, what we mean by our disdain of ingrates refers only to their behaviour. We expect a 'thank you', or for beneficiaries to go through the hoops which we associate with a grateful inner life (Berger, 1975, pp. 298, 306). Eskens (MS, pp. 2, 5) focuses on this type of duty. In her manuscript, she defends the demandability and enforceability not of the emotion but acts of gratitude. She distinguishes between psychological attitudinal duties (i.e. duties to *feel* a certain way) and expressive attitudinal duties. Logically, acts that express gratitude are commandable, and they are therefore clear candidates for moral duties.

Given the parallel nature of love and gratitude in that they both involve having certain attitudes and emotions, we can use Liao's refutation of the pretended love objection to argue against Eskens' claim that going through the motions is sufficient to discard our gratitude duties. Liao (2006, p. 14) argues that pretending to love is similar to giving someone a counterfeit five-dollar note. Even if the recipient does not find out that the note is fake, it is wrong for the giver to pretend to give the money. And once the recipient finds out, the giver will need to give a real five-dollar note. We can thus conclude that the duty was not truly fulfilled. We expect an appropriate emotional response in other cases as well. For example, being happy or glad at a funeral is an emotional response which is highly frowned upon in many western cultures. We expect people to not merely put on a sad face, but we expect them to *be* sad. McConnell (2018, p. 38) discusses situations where an act can have multiple possible motivations that are competing for salience. This indicates that the act in itself is not the only factor that matters. Not only should there be a morally praiseworthy attitude underlying the act, but it should even be the correct, most salient motivation for that particular situation. This confirms Liao's claim that love is more than behaviour, and by extension, gratitude is more than reciprocating a benefit. Acknowledging and appreciating the benefactor's praiseworthy acts are necessary components of gratitude (McConnell, 2018, p. 49). Based on this argument, I would suggest that our expectation of gratitude goes beyond mere behaviour.

We now have reason to believe that there are gratitude duties, and that these duties necessarily involve an affective component. Given the conative nature of gratitude, gratitude duties must also involve some sort of behavioural disposition. What should this behavioural disposition look like? In the previous chapter, I explained that beneficiaries have considerable latitude in how they express their gratitude. Much like I did there, Manela (2015) also argues against Wellman's (1999) claim that there cannot be any gratitude duties. However, Manela (2015) does state that there are certain restrictions to the beneficiary's choice. He argues that there is a general duty of nonmaleficence: a duty not to harm the benefactor to whom we are grateful. Callard (2019, pp. 84-85) argues that there are two kinds of gratitude duties: a debt of appreciation for propositional gratitude, and a debt of reciprocation in the case of prepositional gratitude. Since I am focussing on prepositional gratitude (i.e. gratitude involving a benefactor in a triadic relationship), I only go into the debt of reciprocation. This debt entails the duty to do something nice in return. Similarly, Martin (2019, pp. 62-63), places another restriction on the latitude of gratitude duties: the duty is necessarily directed at the benefactor. This seems to be a different claim from the duty according to Card (1988) and Callard (2019), who both argue that gratitude duties can be held up by paying it forward. After all, not all situations are equally suitable for a nice return. Martin (2019, p. 59) claims that even in these situations, the obligation is to the original benefactor and not to the person to whom we pay it forward. In the example of the stranger handing back the wallet, even though Andrew will pay forward this kind gesture, his duty to do so is directed at Benedict. Taking these different considerations, we can conclude that there are gratitude duties that entail a behavioural and an emotional component. The way these duties can be met are diverse, and the beneficiary has considerable latitude in choosing their preferred way. Nevertheless, they do have a duty of nonmaleficence towards their benefactor. Lastly, even though one of the ways to meet a behavioural gratitude duty is to pay it forward, the duty is always directed towards the benefactor.

Demanding Gratitude

In the previous section, I have argued that there may very well be duties of gratitude, and that these duties involve both an affective and a behavioural aspect. Now, I discuss the possibility that these duties may be enforced: can gratitude be demanded?

Manela (2015) argues that it cannot. He states that the presupposition that that benefactor has a standing to demand a return from the beneficiary undermines the legitimacy of the demand itself. However, he does not leave it there: he considers gratitude duties imperfect duties, meaning that even though the benefactor cannot demand gratitude from the beneficiary, they do have special standing to resent or remonstrate them in the face of noncompliance (see also Berger, 1975, p. 300, Roberts & Telech, 2019, p. 5). For example, if someone has never shown their gratitude even though they have had an extensive amount of time to do so, we think it is normal to tell them something in the vein of 'a thank you would have been nice'. The benefactor does not so much ask the beneficiary to be grateful, but rather, they are pointing out that they have behaved immorally. Martin (2019, pp. 68-69) disagrees with Manela's assertion that only the benefactor has standing to remonstrate. Instead, she argues that all members of the moral community can blame the ingrate. The benefactor does have special standing in the sense that they have a non-rights based personal expectation of gratitude (Martin, 2019, p. 70). Eskens (MS) goes even further than Martin, though she restricts her argumentation to behavioural duties rather than duties to feel grateful. She argues that gratitude may be legitimately demanded and that compliance with gratitude duties may be enforced. According to her theory, there are stringent conditions that need to be met in order for someone to demand and/or enforce grateful behaviour, but in those particular situations, it is allowed to do so (Eskens, MS, p. 15). At the very least, one needs to have evidence that the person is failing to satisfy their gratitude duties, and one needs to have the standing to enforce or demand compliance (Eskens, MS, p. 3). The last perspective on the demand for gratitude I would like to consider is the question of whether only a third party may enforce or demand gratitude towards a benefactor (Raz, 2010 as cited in Manela, 2015, n36, see also Archer, 2017, p. 228 for a similar claim on enforcing forgiveness). This standpoint is based on the claim that demanding gratitude undermines the necessary benevolence of the benefactor.

So, in the literature, the jury is still out on whether or not we can demand gratitude from someone, even if they have some sort of gratitude duties. Some argue that gratitude may be legitimately enforced, while others claim that either a third party, the benefactor, neither, or both may remonstrate the ungrateful beneficiary. Rather than getting lost in this normative battle, I will move towards a different line of argumentation. Assuming that in general, there may be some form

of permissible demand for the sake of the argument, what could be the problem with demanding gratitude in particular cases nonetheless? In the last section of this chapter, I explore the special status that rights have in our normative landscape and why gratitude can never be demanded for providing a benefit to which one has a right.

A Benefit by What Standard?

Moving on from the general discussion on gratitude duties and whether or not compliance with such a duty can be rightfully demanded, I now turn to a clear case where gratitude cannot be demanded. Coleen Macnamara (2019) made the claim that a benefactor who provides someone with a thing to which they have a *right*, is not entitled to their gratitude: the *Rights Exemption Claim*. In this section I will explain her argumentation as this has a significant impact on the demand for women's gratitude.

At first glance, it seems straightforward enough that we cannot demand gratitude if we give someone a supposed benefit to which they already have a right. Citizens have a right to vote, so being allowed to enter the polling station does not warrant any gratitude on their part. The reason that Macnamara provides for this is interesting, however. She argues that when one has a right to something, it is already *normatively* theirs (Macnamara, 2019, p. 97). When I forget to lock my bike, and no one steals it, I have no obligation to be grateful to the passers-by for not stealing my bike. After all, though the bicycle was not physically in my possession, nor were the keys to the bike, it was still, normatively speaking, my bicycle.⁵

So *why* does this situation not provide us with the grounds for gratitude? Macnamara explains that this has to do with the baseline along which we measure a benefit. In the previous

⁵ Smilansky (1997, pp. 586-587) would argue that I nonetheless should be grateful to the people who did not steal my bicycle. He argues that we not only owe gratitude to benefactors for cases of beneficence, but we also owe gratitude for cases of non-maleficence due to the effort the people around us put into not harming us. Similarly, McConnell (2017 as cited in Macnamara, 2019, p. 105) argues that we ought to be grateful to moral standouts. This means that if I would live in an environment where the norm is that people simply steal all unlocked bicycles, I ought to be grateful if my bicycle is not stolen when I leave it unlocked.

chapter, I explained that gratitude is a response to a benefit, and a benefit implies that the beneficiary is now *better off*. In order to measure whether something is a benefit, we need a baseline: better off compared to *what* (Macnamara, 2019, pp. 99-101). Macnamara distinguishes four types of baselines: pre-interaction, statistical, oughts-based, and rights-based.

The pre-interaction baseline holds that something is a benefit if it makes the beneficiary better off than before the interaction. For example: Anthony gives Betty a gift. Betty did not have this gift before the interaction and she enjoys the gift, so she is better off than before Anthony gave it to her. The statistical baseline on the other hand, is concerned with expectations based on previous interactions. Let's say every year on her birthday Anthony gives Betty an incredibly thoughtful gift. This year however, Anthony gives her a five-euro gift card to the gas station. While the pre-interaction baseline would imply that Betty is better off than before the interaction - gas is expensive so this would save her some money - looking at the statistical baseline, there is no benefit at all. After all, statistics would show that this year would leave Betty worse off than she usually would be on her birthday.⁶

The other two baselines are the so-called moral baselines. I will use a traffic example to illustrate how benefits are measured along these baselines. Allen is driving his car towards a crossroad. Cyclist Bernard has right of way and is therefore entitled to passing in front of Allen's car. Bernard's *right* entails that his passing is normatively already his, even if Allen breaks the law and cuts him off. The rights-based baseline holds that when Allen lets Bernard pass, Bernard is not better off because he just received what he had a right to. It gets a little more abstract when looking at the oughts-based baseline. In the Netherlands, it is common courtesy to let cyclists cross on quiet streets if it is raining. This is not an obligation, but the morally right thing to do. The oughts-based baseline stipulates that if driver Allen lets cyclist Bernard cross when Bernard did not have right of way, he does not really provide him with a benefit since this is simply what Allen ought to have done according to social norms. Bernard is not better off than what morality dictates.

⁶ See Wood, Brown & Maltby (2011) for an experimental study on how individuals rank benefits and experience gratitude accordingly.

What this discussion on baselines implies for the duty of gratitude is twofold: on the one hand we can conclude that gratitude is possibly owed if a benefit has been provided. However, whether or not something is in fact a benefit is a matter of perspective. This is an important realisation because a benefit by one standard is not necessarily a benefit by another. After all, in the second traffic example, the rain does not give Bernard a *right* to pass in front of Bernard. These four different perspectives on baselines are therefore all worthy of consideration when someone argues against the duty of gratitude with the argument that there was no real benefit. The second implication, however, is that based on this discussion we can say with confidence that we cannot demand gratitude when the supposed benefit is actually something that the beneficiary has a right to. This has far-reaching consequences for the discussion on the demand for women's gratitude specifically, which I cover in the next chapter.

4. Injustice in Demanding Gratitude

In this chapter I address the moral issues surrounding the demand for women's gratitude. Assuming that it may be the case that there are gratitude duties and gratitude may be rightfully demanded, there is still an ethical problem with this particular demand. In the first section, I return to the rights exemption claim as proposed by Coleen Macnamara to, on the one hand, explain on what grounds such a demand is made by some people, and on the other hand, why women's gratitude may not be rightfully demanded in cases of basic human rights. The second section gives an overview of several theories on affective injustice, an injustice towards people in their capacity as affective (i.e. emotional) beings. The third section covers the actual problem at hand, namely that the demand of gratitude is an affective injustice committed to women.

The Rights Exemption Claim and Women's Gratitude

In this chapter, I argue specifically against the demand of women's gratitude. I am not making the claim that this demand is quite common. Rather, I am claiming that when the demand is made, it may result in affective injustice. Let us first dissect the demand for women's gratitude along the framework I used in the previous chapter. For the purpose of explaining the rights exemption claim in the case of the demand for women's gratitude I use an individual example. However, as I explain in section 4.3, though the demand for women's gratitude may not be very common, it is a systematic problem in our society. For now, let us turn to the individual case of the fictional character Alice. Alice has a middle-management position at a company. Some of her co-workers think she ought to be grateful for the position she has achieved. After all, this is already quite an accomplishment given the small number of women who make it to the boardroom. This may have a familiar tone to readers belonging to a marginalised group. Women are told to be grateful because we are luckier than women in other parts of the world, or Black people are in a better position than they were in the past. Where do these demands come from? The answer to this question can be answered cynically (though perhaps factually): we live in a heteronormative, white supremacist, misogynist society. I am not arguing against this claim, but in this section, I set it aside. Instead, I consider the more optimistic notion that there is miscommunication on two levels: what the benefit is, and what the baseline is against which we measure that benefit.

When her friends tell Alice that she ought to be grateful to have been chosen for the position, they labour under the assumption that women's diminished opportunities compared to men as a fixed fact rather than a contingent condition in society as it is right now. They take 'being given a middle-management position' as the benefit. I now turn to each of the four baselines and see if there are grounds on which Alice's gratitude can be demanded.

Let us assume that Alice has applied to similar positions both within and outside of the company she is working for. Each time, she was rejected. This time however, she was given the position she applied for. Since statistically the expectation was that she would not get the position, the statistical baseline would confirm that getting the job is an actual benefit, and so, based on the statistical baseline, Alice owes gratitude.

Before having been given this promotion, Alice was all-things-considered worse off. She received a position that she wanted, and she now receives better pay than before. Thus, according to the pre-interaction baseline, she has been given a proper benefit and owes gratitude.

In any job application process, we expect the candidate who is most suited for the position to be awarded the job. Assuming that Alice was indeed the best candidate, and given the plausible principle of meritocracy, she ought to have been given the job. Based on the oughts-based baseline, Alice does not owe any gratitude.

Though Alice has a right to equal consideration, she never had the right to this particular job. Even if the application committee had chosen her less qualified male colleague, Alice could not have called upon the right to equal consideration to get the job anyway - assuming that the male colleague is not wildly underqualified. Based on the rights-based baseline, there may be a duty of gratitude for Alice.

We can now conclude that Alice may have gratitude duties for the benefit 'having been given this position'. And that based on this, there may be a misunderstanding of which baseline matters in the case of being awarded a specific position at a company. Alice may take the approach

to measure benefits based on the oughts-based baseline, while her friends measure along another baseline. Hence, they disagree whether or not the position is an actual benefit or not. Alice feels resentment in response to her friends telling her that she should be grateful for having been given this position, because according to her, she ought to have been given this position based on her qualifications. Her friends see it in one of the following ways: she is now better off than she was before, she did not have any right to the position, and based on her experiences in the past, she beat the odds. As these are all reasons for gratitude duties, her friends now judge Alice to be ungrateful.

However, it may be the case that their miscommunication is more fundamental than that. I mentioned briefly that Alice has a right to equal consideration. Women, having a right to equal treatment in the workplace, have normative possession of such equal consideration, even if they factually do not receive it (see also Macnamara, 2019, p. 104). It is perhaps the case that Alice does not think of her job as the benefit, but instead, considers the benefit to be precisely this right to equal treatment. As I explained in chapter 3, Macnamara (2019, p. 96) follows Rachel Weiss in claiming that when the beneficiary has a right to a benefit, no gratitude is due. It is no longer a matter of interpretation which baseline we measure the benefit by. This means that though it may be due to miscommunication about the benefit or baseline, women's gratitude is unjustly demanded of them, since in the case of rights, gratitude is never due. Given the rights exemption claim, though some demands for gratitude are indeed acceptable and a matter of interpretation which baseline one measures by, rights are not up for debate.

Affective Injustice

In the previous section, I have explained why the demand for women's gratitude for having received rights that men (particularly white men) have had all along is not acceptable given the rights exemption claim. Now, I turn to why demanding gratitude in situations like these is more than a wrong qua the rights exemption claim, but rather a case of affective injustice. By demanding gratitude, historically marginalised groups are placed in a position where they have to choose between a fitting emotional response - which is often anger or sadness in the face of continued oppression - and a prudent response, gratitude (see also Srinivasan, 2018).

Let us return to Alice and her middle-management position. She finds out that her fellow middle-managers, who are all male, receive a higher salary than she does. Her friends say she should not speak up and be grateful for having been given the position. After all, it is a great position to be in, very few women make it this far, and women in other cultures are often worse off. The example of Alice and her middle-management position is an individual case, but in truth, cases such as these are not incidental. Rather, the underlying injustice at hand is more systemic and pervasive. Indirect demands for gratitude directed at people belonging to historically marginalised groups occur all around us and have been around for ages. In 1949, writing about the abstract equality men claim to have to women whom they behave benevolently towards, Simone de Beauvoir argues:

This is how many men affirm, with quasi good faith, that women are equal to men and *have no demands to make*, and at the same time that women will never be equal to men and that *their demands are in vain.*"

(De Beauvoir, 2009, p.15. Emphasis added.)

Though she did not discuss gratitude here, her statement can be readily applied to the demand for women's gratitude: the demand both silences women by communicating that there is no more inequality, and at the same time places women in an oppressed position, one where she is the passive recipient of whatever rights men deem fit for her. Today, after several waves of feminist action aimed at meeting those demands, we are manipulated into thinking that we ought to be grateful for our relative equality. And it is indicative of the systematic nature of these implicit demands that legal historian and media critic Madeleine van de Nieuwenhuizen pointed this out during the Women's March of 2020:

Could this be because women are expected to celebrate every victory as such, a victory? [...] Are they victories or are they crazily late adjustments of a juridico-politico-social system that oppressed us systematically as a group in society? Kept us small? Groped us, dishonoured us, deprived us. *Why do they always demand that we celebrate more, that we are grateful?* Why will there be people who think it is ridiculous that we are standing here,

that one day a year that we express ourselves collectively about the irrational and fundamentally unnecessary inequality that we were faced with then, and still are today? Why don't they ever ask why we aren't angrier?

(Van den Nieuwenhuizen, 2020. Emphasis added)

In what follows, I explain how the phenomenon 'affective injustice' is understood by Gallegos, Srinivasan, and Whitney before moving to the next section where I apply their theories to the demand for women's gratitude. Affective injustice can be understood as an injustice that people face in their capacity as affective beings (Archer & Mills, 2019, p. 79). In other words, it constitutes being treated unfairly with regards to their emotional life and its qualification as an injustice is based on the premise that affective agency is an important part of living a good life.

Srinivasan (2018) focuses her research on the emotion of anger, but I argue in this section that her theory can be applied to the case of demanding women's gratitude. Anger, Srinivasan explains, has had a reputation for being counterproductive. Supposedly, the oppressed group's anger would alienate possible allies to the cause, or worsen the conflict (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 125). Though she does not necessarily agree with this claim, she argues that even if we accept that it is counterproductive, it may still be a fitting response, particularly in situations of injustice (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 126). The people who are treated unjustly respond in an angry way because this is the accurate emotional response to what is happening to them and around them. Oppressed groups have to choose between affectively appreciating the world as it is - feeling angry - and making the world as it ought to be - a more prudent, supposedly productive response (Srinivasan, 2018, p. 127). As such, being faced with the normative conflict between an apt response (anger) and a prudent response constitutes a form of affective injustice, on top of the initial injustice that angered them in the first place. This implies that the responsibility for solving the injustice about which the individual feels anger, lies with the victim. They are expected to act in a productive manner or they, and the injustice, are threatened with dismissal. The instrumental value of calm behaviour is deemed more important than the intrinsic value of appreciating the world as it is (Srinivasan, 2018, pp. 132-133). However, since anger is a reactive attitude, it has a communicative function as well. It signals that there is something to be angry about. When victims

of oppression do choose the option to bite their tongue, hoping that this will improve their lot, it communicates that there is nothing to be angry about (Srinivasan, 2018, pp. 132-133).

Shiloh Whitney (2018) uses the term affective injustice to describe the uncomfortable position in which people belonging to marginalised groups find themselves. I have already addressed the dual nature of emotions in chapter 2, where I explained that emotions consist of affect as well as intentionality. Using Merleau-Ponty's body schema - which describes the objective and subjective dimensions of the body, our relationship to the world and its relationship to us - Whitney argues that this dual nature of emotion is more profound and fundamental than is commonly accepted in the field of philosophy of emotions. Affect is not confined to the body, but it circulates between bodies as an affective force, moving others. She references Merleau-Ponty's example of an angry interlocutor. When someone is angry, the people around them do not only see the anger on the person's face, but are affectively moved by it, reacting to the emotion or feeling it themselves (Whitney, 2018, p. 493-494). Members of marginalised groups are often subjected to affective injustice because their anger in the face of first-order injustices is not sufficiently moving, it lacks affective force and as such, is denied uptake (Whitney, 2018, p. 498). The emotion's intentionality is disregarded, and it is reduced to mere affect (Whitney, 2018, p. 495). Marginalised people's emotions are often explained away as a reflection of their emotional or unstable nature: when expressing anger about injustice they are faced with, the Black man is seen as aggressive, the woman as shrill. Severed from the emotion's intentionality, their anger does not affect the people around them in the way that it should, and as a result, nothing about their situation changes (Whitney, 2018, p. 495). Now disjointed from the reason for the emotion to exist, the individual's affect does not make sense anymore and circulates the body of the marginalised person, making that locality into a toxic dumping ground. This is a stark contrast to the way white men's emotions are perceived, namely as accurate responses to the world around them. Whitney (2018, p. 496) argues that this first kind of affective injustice creates the conditions for further affective violence, since the marginalised person is now left with the duty to digest their anger. So affective injustice as Whitney understands it, occurs when someone's emotion is not sufficiently moving to others, when it lacks affective force and is not given the uptake that it should (Whitney, 2018, p. 495).

Srinivasan and Whitney each address how instances of affective injustice work. What was missing in the field, was an overview of what is needed for there to be affective *justice*. Gallegos (2021) builds on the theories of Srinivasan and Whitney and identifies patterns in them to create an overarching concept for precisely this purpose. Following Archer & Mills (2019, p. 76) in their definition of the phenomenon as an injustice in the capacity of persons as affective beings, he defines affective injustice as “a state in which individuals or groups are deprived of ‘affective goods’ which are owed to them” (Gallegos, 2021, p. 2). The fundamental affective goods that are necessary for affective justice, Gallegos argues, are subjective well-being and emotional aptness, each requiring three kinds of subsidiary goods in order to be fulfilled (Gallegos, 2021, p. 2). These subsidiary goods are affective freedoms (e.g. freedom from interference), affective resources and opportunities that contribute to the development of apt emotional responses, and affective recognition as legitimate participants to the moral community (Gallegos, 2021, p. 11). Drawing on philosophical theories of justice, affective injustice is the “morally objectionable deprivation of such goods” (Gallegos, 2021, p. 5).

Affective Injustice in Demanding Women's Gratitude

Using the theories above, I now turn to affective injustice in the demand of women's gratitude. As a framework, I use Gallegos' theory in order to identify in what ways women are deprived of these subsidiary goods when their gratitude is demanded. I link each injustice to the theories of Srinivasan and Whitney where they may apply and identify which injustices are unique to the case of gratitude. The types of affective injustices they argue against are examples of deprivations of the subsidiary goods that Gallegos identifies, and each deprivation will lead to a lack of primary affective goods (subjective well-being and emotional aptness).

The demand for women's gratitude places women in a position where they are faced with a normative dilemma similar to the one that Srinivasan (2018) identifies: either they meet the call for misplaced gratitude, or they reject this demand and instead react with another, more fitting response such as anger, sadness, or annoyance in the face of continued oppression. Gratitude is perhaps a prudent response, since it fosters communal and interpersonal relationships (Algoe, 2012, Darwell, 2019), and it contributes positively to other, related virtues (Gulliford, 2019).

Women who meet the demand may have acted out of prudence or to foster communal relationships. Such reasons align with Fitzgerald's supererogatory categories for civic and perfectionist reasons for gratitude (Fitzgerald, 1998, pp. 129-131). Though such reasons may indeed be productive or prudent, being faced with such a normative choice infringes on the subject's affective freedom. Moreover, the primary affective good of emotional aptness is denied because gratitude is not the apt response in response to having been given human rights (Gallegos, 2021, p. 11). In this regard, the demand for women's gratitude is a type of affective injustice.

When women meet this demand for a grateful response, it communicates that there is a benefit to be grateful for, while we have ascertained in chapter 4.1 that this is not the case. Receiving something to which one has a right does not constitute an actual benefit and thus, no gratitude is due. Through its communicative function, gratitude obscures ongoing injustices in the area of gender inequality. In this manner, it stands in the way of further achieving equality (Jaggar, 1989, p. 167). This places women in a position where they are subject to further inequality because they do not have the hermeneutical resources to identify such inequalities when they are systematically and systemically obscured. Though this falls in the category of epistemic injustices instead of affective injustice - and more specifically, it is a form of hermeneutical injustice - Gallegos (2021, p. 11) notes the link between affective resources and opportunities of individuals and groups and hermeneutical resources. Having the hermeneutical resources to identify an injustice stands in direct relation to the ability to form an apt emotional response to it. The lack of affective resources and opportunities, created by the demand for undue gratitude, forms an affective injustice on top of the epistemic injustice.

Furthermore, this misplaced gratitude constitutes an affective injustice in its own right for the women who do not feel gratitude, but instead are angry because of such ongoing injustices. This may prevent them from expressing their outrage (Srinivasan, 2018) which infringes upon their affective freedom. When they do express their anger, it can result in a lack of uptake, which as we have seen, is affective injustice according to Whitney (2018, p. 495). As such, these angry women experience a lack of affective recognition (Gallegos, 2021, p. 11).

Not only does the demand for women's gratitude obfuscate ongoing injustices, but it also reinforces those injustices by underlining the existing power structures in our society. Gratitude of women to men for receiving basic rights reinforces a power dynamic with men as active grantors and women as passive recipients. It thereby systematically empowers one group at the expense of another (Whitney, 2018, p. 495), transferring women's power to men (Young, 1988, pp. 277-278) as it - falsely - supports the idea that rights are obtained by asking nicely rather than through revolt. Being passive recipients of rights at the mercy of the ruling class sheds doubt on the existence of women's affective freedom in society, as well as highlights the lack of affective resources and opportunities of women.

So, in this chapter we have seen that, given the rights exemption claim, no gratitude for providing women with human rights is due. What is more, demanding such gratitude is a form of affective injustice because it limits women's affective freedom, as well as their affective resources and opportunities, and it therefore inhibits their subjective well-being and emotional aptness. As a result of the hermeneutical injustice that comes with the demand of women's gratitude, another phenomenon might rise to the surface and provide a last kind of affective injustice. In the next chapter I argue that through the demand of women's gratitude, women are placed in a position where they truly believe they ought to be grateful for what they have and no longer think they would like to achieve more: adaptive preference formation.

5. Other Forms of Affective Injustice

In the previous chapter I have explained why the rights exemption claim supports my claim that it is not acceptable to demand gratitude for benefits that the beneficiary has a right to. What is more, when this demand does occur, it is affective injustice. In the last section, I have explained what types of affective injustice women from whom gratitude is demanded are subjected to according to Gallegos' theory. In this chapter, I argue that Gallegos' theory needs to be expanded to accommodate for types of affective injustice that occur in the unjust demand of women's gratitude. Though Gallegos' framework is reasonably complete, the nature of the framework may fail to show some types of injustices that take place. In matters of injustice, it is necessary to articulate the manner in which justice is not achieved in non-neutral terms, rather than focussing solely on a positive account of the criteria for justice. I accept that this was not Gallegos' aim, and his account enables the articulation of affective injustices, thereby solving a hermeneutical gap in the theory. My account therefore serves as an addition to Gallegos' framework, articulating where the demand of gratitude goes wrong in order to highlight the different ways Gallegos' conditions are not currently met. In the following sections, I provide three different ways in which Gallegos' account can be improved through the articulation of the types of affective injustices from chapter 4. In the first section, I argue that besides hermeneutical injustice, affective injustice may result in another kind of injustice not belonging to the category of affect: adaptive preference formation, which is a type of injustice that falls outside of the scope of Gallegos' theory. In the second section, I add a new category to Gallegos' list of subsidiary goods, which is necessary to articulate the injustices in demanding women's gratitude: a fair distribution of affective labour. In the third section, I show how recipients of gratitude may experience affective injustice.

Adaptive Preference Formation

In general, we should expand our thinking about affective injustice and its effects. In the previous chapter, I have explained how Gallegos identifies a link between affective injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Here, I shed light on another kind of wrongdoing that can flow from instances of affective injustice: adaptive preference formation. Though adaptive preferences are

not inherently negative, nor irrational, I argue that in the case of demanding women's gratitude, the adaptive preferences that are the result of such a demand, are potentially both.

Adaptive preferences are preferences that are "regimented in response to an agent's set of feasible options" (Bruckner, 2009, p. 308). In other words: they are preferences that are subjected to whatever is possible to the agent. When an agent acquires a certain preference in response to the content of the feasible set, adaptive preference formation occurs (Bruckner, 2009, p. 309). That which is outside of the feasible set is desired more strongly or more weakly by the agent, and Bruckner (2009, p. 309) argues that the latter is a more common occurrence. I may have dreamed about a medical profession but given my fear of blood, this is not within my feasible set, and as a result I have formed different preferences about my career options. In this sense, adaptive preferences are similar to other kinds of preferences that play a normative role in our personal lives. Given that it is unrealistic to expect that I will overcome my fear of blood, my adaptive preferences about another career path are beneficial to my subjective well-being: I am content with a desk job. If I were to irrationally hold on to my preference for becoming a doctor, it would negatively affect my subjective well-being since I would never be able to fulfil this dream (Bruckner, 2009, p. 315). According to Bruckner (2009, p. 316), the rationality of adaptive preferences depends not on whether or not changing the preference was a process of active character formation (pace Elster, 1983) but rather, if the agent "endorses the preference upon reflection" (Bruckner, 2009, p. 316). Returning to my medical aspirations: I did not consciously change this preference as part of character formation, but I instead discovered that I would not be able to achieve this. According to Elster (1983), this would be an irrational preference. Bruckner (2009) however, would argue that if I now stand by this preference, it would be a rational preference, and thus holds the same normative force. If I would not endorse this preference upon reflection - say, the actions that flow from this preference are not in line with my values - it would not be rational and its normative force would be diminished (Bruckner, 2009, pp. 318-319).

To see how adaptive preferences are formed in an environment that tells you that you ought to be grateful, we return to Alice's middle-management position. She holds professional accomplishments and the money that comes with it as valuable goods. Her friends, co-workers,

and implicitly, society at large tell her that she ought to be grateful for her middle-management position. If she meets this demand and experiences gratitude,⁷ this means that she is manipulated into adopting the belief that she has received more than what she is owed. She may even feel indebted for having received the benefit of a management position as a woman in her company. As a result, she believes that becoming CEO is either entirely impossible for her, or else on the fringe of her set of feasible options, and therefore, she does not apply for the position.

Given that Alice still holds the values of professional (and monetary) achievement, refraining from applying for the position of CEO is an irrational preference for her: she is confining her ambitions. Moreover, this preference has a negative impact on her subjective well-being as a result of this incongruence between Alice's values and preferences. However, Bruckner (2009, pp. 319-320) would argue that the irrationality is rooted in the false beliefs that Alice holds: she falsely believes that becoming CEO is not within her feasible set and therefore refrains from applying, which is contrary to her values. Bruckner may be correct: the problem of irrationality remains but it lies in the irrationality of beliefs rather than the irrationality of the preference. This is not to say that the irrationality of Alice's adaptive preferences is universal. She may come to realise that the middle-management position is in the sweet spot of professional achievement and free time. Alice's values may have changed over time, maintaining their alignment with her preferences. Adaptive preference formation is not inherently negative nor inherently irrational.

Nonetheless, what is morally suspect even when values and preferences align, is that those preferences are informed by a false belief that gratitude is owed. From a systematic perspective, women's prospects may actually be significantly diminished due to the communicative function of gratitude. This link requires some elaboration. I have argued that gratitude communicates that there is a benefit to be appreciated, bestowed on a beneficiary by a benefactor. If the call for gratitude is met by enough women, the belief that granting women a managerial position is an actual benefit, rather than what those capable individuals are owed, it thereby affirms the supposed

⁷ Note that she fully fulfils her gratitude. Given the nature of gratitude duties as explained in chapter 3, it is not enough to fulfil only the behavioural nor only the emotional component of recognition: both must be met in order to relieve her from her duties.

legitimacy of the demand. And by indirectly influencing the career options of one woman, the impression is made that becoming CEO is not achievable for any woman. In other words: by affirming the supererogatory status of the benefit, the 'benefit' of the CEO position shifts towards the fringe or even outside of the feasible set of Alice in particular, but also that of women in general.

The Fourth Subsidiary Good

In the section above, I have built upon Gallegos' theory, arguing that affective injustice as he understands it can have significant side-effects that he does not explore in his theory in the form of adaptive preference formation. Now, I turn to another, more fundamental component that can be added to Gallegos' theory. In this section, I argue that another subsidiary good is necessary for emotional aptness and subjective well-being and should therefore be integrated in Gallegos' framework, namely the subsidiary good of a fair distribution of affective labour.

In order to integrate this new subsidiary good into the theory, we need to return to Whitney's work on affective injustice as her work points us in the right direction. In the previous chapter, I drew attention to Whitney's claim that the marginalised person is left with a duty to digest their anger. What this means is that these marginalised people are performing exploitative affective labour (Whitney, 2018, p. 496).

The demand for women's gratitude is unfair affective labour as well since the same kind of affective response is not demanded of men having had these basic rights all along. This kind of affective injustice is reminiscent of Macnamara's theory (2019) that there is no basis for gratitude if the beneficiary has a right to the benefit in question. This affective boundary is respected in the case of men having received human rights and transgressed in the case of women's rights. Women are thus exploited for their emotional labour: the grateful woman is left with the expectation that she digests her own emotions and jumps through the behavioural hoops of performing acts of gratitude. Rather than being deprived of affective goods, they are burdened with this additional labour, which is similar to Whitney's example (2018, p. 503) of affect displacement onto the bodies of marginalised people. Rather than becoming a dumping ground for anger (as is the case Whitney

argues against), the female body becomes a locality for unwanted guilt, transforming the male guilt of their privileged position into a confirmation of having done well in mitigating gender inequality. Women are expected to express gratitude as an ego service to men (Frye, 2005, p. 87). This gendered emotional labour is thus in service of those men, with positive affect flowing from the female to the male body. Being the recipient of grateful attitudes supports subjective well-being and, in this way, women are exploited to enhance men's well-being. Such exploitation is a clear example of what affective injustice can look like when there is an unfair distribution of affective labour. Gallegos' account is insufficient to explain this particular kind of affective injustice, which suggests that we indeed need this fourth subsidiary good of a fair distribution of affective labour.

The fair distribution of affective labour is distinct from the three other subsidiary goods as identified by Gallegos. However, at first glance, it would seem that this subsidiary good of fair division of affective labour falls in the category of affective freedom. After all, if affective freedom is fully achieved, this would logically include freedom from exploitation in the form of unfair affective labour. To illustrate how these categories are distinct in a world where affective justice is not achieved, I turn to a more familiar case: the difference between paid labour and informal care work. In order to achieve justice, fair work for fair wages is a reasonable demand and many countries have put laws in place ensuring these rights. Formally, all workers ought to be free from exploitation. However, in reality, women in many countries are exploited under the surface for their informal labour. The division of household chores is unequally skewed towards women performing the lion's share of this invisible labour (Guppy, Sakumoto & Wilkes, 2019, p. 180). If we were to judge division of labour only by the standards set by the requirement of freedom from exploitation, unequal division of care work would fly under the radar. Affective labour is similarly - or arguably perhaps even more - obscured from view. What we therefore need, is not only the assurance of affective freedom, but the scrutiny of a specific subsidiary good that focuses on justice as fairness. In this case, what fairness requires is more than simply freedom from exploitation: an equal division of labour.

As a subsidiary good, fair distribution of affective labour supports the subjective well-being of individuals. Though in the case of demanding women's gratitude, a fair distribution of

affective labour would lead to them no longer providing men with undue gratitude, which had been benefiting them. Though men's subjective well-being might take a hit as a result of this, the overall subjective well-being of people benefits from not needing to provide others with ego service, or in the case of anger, not needing to digest toxic emotions. Emotional aptness also benefits from a fair division of affective labour. For, such a fair division would mean that women are no longer habituated to perform ego service, muddying their actual apt emotions. Moreover, in Whitney's theory (2018): when Black women are no longer the dumping ground for unwanted affects, there is no more cross-contamination of other people's emotions.

Recipients of Gratitude

In the previous section, I have made the case for a fourth subsidiary good, which is necessary to articulate in what way affective injustice occurs in the case of demanding women's gratitude. So far, I have made the assumption that in the call for women's gratitude, the recipient of this gratitude - or the benefactor to whom duties of gratitude may be owed - are men. In this last section, I flip the script and see how there may be affective injustice lurking in the place where we least expect it: with women as recipients of gratitude (from men). I conclude by making the case for women's gratitude towards fellow women instead, thereby redeeming gratitude duties in some cases.

At the beginning of this chapter, I have argued that undue calls for gratitude can play a role in adaptive preference formation. Oppressive gratitude expressed towards women can have a similar effect. Martin (2021) argues against gratitude celebrating domesticity as excellence, targeting her arrows at Mother's Day celebrations. She argues that to celebrate meeting and exceeding the oppressive expectation that women perform care duties, is to reinforce such gender roles and therefore, highly problematic (Martin, 2021, pp. 130-131). Moreover, she suggests that even though we may value domestic benefits, the preference of some mothers to provide these benefits arise from gender oppressive expectations. (Martin, 2021 p. 133). Martin goes on and discusses the case of Employee Appreciation Day, arguing that given that employees are placed in a position of servility where they are subject to punishment if they do not perform well, receiving gratitude for doing their job is problematic (Martin, 2021, pp. 136-137). I would argue that women

are placed in a similar position as these employees, as they are disproportionately subjected to blame when they are not perfect parents compared to their male counterparts (Jackson & Mannix, 2004, p. 150). Women, in this case mothers in particular, are placed in a double bind where they are faced with a choice between compliance with gender norms or being subjected to disproportionate blame if they are not the perfect mother. Like Employee Appreciation Day, Mother's Day celebrates oppression as excellence. Expressions of gratitude for performing care duties are therefore a denial of oppressive gender roles. This denial, coupled with the positive and prosocial nature of expressions of gratitude form a pervasive social encouragement that shapes women's preferences (Sen, 1996, p. 265). Women are habituated in this way, which leads to a lack of desire for goods seemingly outside of their feasible set. Receiving gratitude in these kinds of situations is manipulative as it obscures the underlying injustices (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 79-80).

So far, I have argued that there are significant downsides to expecting gratitude from women as well as giving gratitude to women. In this light, it seems that it would be better to refrain from gratitude altogether. However, we should not forget that in its essence, gratitude is a positive emotion that fosters interpersonal bonds and communicates the existence of a benefit and benevolence. But with whom should we build these interpersonal bonds?

When women answer the call to express gratitude to men for granting us basic human rights, this is but one interpretation of the abstract undue demand. And in doing so, the beneficiaries ignore an entire category of benefactors: namely the women who fought for our rights, the suffragettes, women's advocates, feminists and trailblazers in achieving equality. If they are the rightful recipients of our gratitude, men's demand denies these women their affective recognition, which makes this a form of affective injustice towards those more deserving benefactors. Directed gratitude duties, even given the rights exemption claim, seem to be less problematic if we are grateful to women's advocates instead. Though I have so far accepted Macnamara's rights exemption claim (2019), these very rights did not exist before these women came to the stage. So rather than claiming that we need to express gratitude because we receive what was already owed, we are owed something because of the equal rights they provided us. It may have been a true benefit after all.

This could present a problem for my case against undue gratitude towards men, but even if we accept that the rights exemption claim loses its bite when the benefit is the right itself rather than something to which we have a right, women's advocates are a more likely candidate for our gratitude on other grounds as well. Firstly, women's advocates are more likely benevolent towards their benefactors than the men who begrudgingly offered up their privileged position in society. Secondly, gratitude to women who actively fought for our collective rights as a group communicates that this fight is worth it instead of denying ongoing injustice. Rather than silencing women's anger, it amplifies its affective force. Thirdly, because it does not reinforce unequal power relations between men as givers and women as passive recipients, it does not undermine the moral community but actually reinforces it. Lastly, due to their exemplary position, expressing gratitude towards women's advocates does not communicate that the fight for equality is over, but may inspire future generations to keep fighting for our rights. Expressing our gratitude for these women provides them with the affective recognition they deserve. As such, it brings us closer to achieving affective justice.

If there are gratitude duties to these women's advocates, in what way can they be performed? The women responsible for our equal rights often went unidentified, have passed away, or are otherwise inaccessible to us in this day and age. As I mentioned in chapter 3, the exact way to relieve oneself of duties of gratitude is up to the beneficiary's discretion. However, in this case, there is a way that is more appropriate (and accessible) than others. We may have a duty to pay it forward because this is the only act we have access to (Card, 1988, p. 120). Examples of gratitude expressions directed at women's advocates are: joining women's marches or otherwise speaking up about what is still to be done, mentoring fellow women in the workplace, in school or in academia, or voting for political parties who place women's rights on the political agenda.

In this chapter, I have uncovered the missing pieces of affective injustice in the existing literature. I have shown that there is a need to distinguish a fourth subsidiary good in order to articulate affective injustice in demanding women's gratitude: a fair distribution of affective labour. Furthermore, I have pointed out that the demand for undue gratitude can lead to adaptive preference formation. In the last section, I have shown that there is affective injustice in cases

where women are the recipients of gratitude when this gratitude obscures oppression. And lastly, I have redeemed the possibility of gratitude duties by directing our gratitude towards more worthy candidates, which would give women trailblazers the affective recognition they deserve.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored the ways in which the demand for women's gratitude constitutes affective injustice. To this end, I have provided a working definition of what gratitude is, what it does, and where we can place gratitude in our moral landscape. Considering the current debate on gratitude duties, I took the standpoint that we indeed have a duty to be grateful in certain situations, since I am looking for the problem with the demand for gratitude and not necessarily with gratitude duties in general. Not all demands for gratitude are necessarily misguided - though there is no consensus among philosophers on this - but the demand for women's gratitude is particularly problematic. Given that rights entail that something is already normatively in one's possession, no gratitude may be demanded for supposed benefits to which women already have a right. Beyond the rights exemption claim, there is something else at work in the case of demanding women's gratitude. My aim was to expand the current literature on gratitude to highlight how affective injustice may lurk there.

Though most work on affective injustice focuses on negative emotions such as anger, I have argued that the theories of Srinivasan, Whitney, and Gallegos can be readily applied to a positive emotion: the demand of women's gratitude. I have made the case that this constitutes a case of affective injustice too. By demanding their gratitude, women are faced with a normative choice between emotional aptness (e.g. anger caused by awareness of ongoing injustice) and paying lip service to the undue demand. Meeting the demand communicates that there is indeed something to be grateful for, reinforcing existing power structures by underlining women's role as passive recipients of rights and obfuscating any further inequality in society. Furthermore, doing what is asked affirms the legitimacy of the demand, which, if done too often, may actually lower women's prospects for achieving true equality as it changes the perceived feasible set of women. As a result, women's preferences may be adapted for the worse.

These mechanisms of affective injustice lurking in the demand for women's gratitude are based on a lack of subsidiary goods that are fundamental to our emotional aptness and subjective well-being. I have not only argued that the existing framework can be applied to gratitude, but I

also argue that the current framework ought to be adjusted to accommodate for this specific type of affective injustice. In order to achieve emotional aptness and subjective well-being, a fair distribution of affective labour is needed. When women's gratitude is demanded for having received rights, they are exploited for their affective labour to enhance men's emotional well-being.

In the very last section, I explored some possible ways in which being the recipient of gratitude can also lead to injustice, but this mechanism should be further elaborated on. Other possible topics for future research are the similarities between gratitude given to healthcare workers and military veterans, considering how expressions of gratitude can affect moral injury that people on the frontline sustain. Lastly, it would be interesting to delve into some intersectional topics, such as how affective injustice interplays with misogyny, or to look at the undue demand of gratitude through a disability ethics lens. After all, my research has been limited to the gender binary and I have taken women to be a homogenous group. More nuance could benefit the depth of the topic.

In conclusion, I have made the case that even though gratitude is a positive emotion, it is compatible with negative consequences. Women's gratitude for having received human rights cannot and should not be demanded. Perhaps we should rethink our gratitude practices in general and accept that positive emotions may have unintended negative consequences. And perhaps we could all do with a little more 'paying forward' and give attention to the women's advocates who truly deserve our gratitude.

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