

I

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE OBJECT OF HATRED
KAKO RAZUMETI OBJEKT MRŽNJE

INTRODUCTION

Igor Cvejić

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE OBJECT OF HATRED

This topic about the intentionality of hatred was inspired by the seminar *Can Hatred ever be Appropriate* held at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory on May 28, 2019. The seminar was prompted by Tomas Szanto's article *In Hate We Trust: The Collectivization and Habituation of Hatred*, published in 2018 (Szanto 2018). The article puts forward the innovative approach to the affective intentionality of hatred and argues that hatred can never be a fitting emotion. The core of Szanto's argument is based on the claim that the focus of hatred is 'blurred', i.e., "uninformative as to how the targets (individual refugees or refugee-groups) are related to the formal object (hateworthiness)" (Szanto 2018: 463). He adds two main reasons for this being so: "first, the formal object is indeterminate in the sense that it is all-too global (literally 'not focused'); second, the very targets are not fixed but shifting –namely between individuals, groups, generalized social types, or proxies for groups" (ibid.). Furthermore, Szanto finds the source of hatred's power in the community and proposes understanding hatred as a shared attitude that reinforces itself. This account implies that hatred has the overgeneralizing tendency to blur the socio-ontological status of its targets and depersonalize them. Besides the detailed introduction and empowered arguments by the author, the seminar invoked a debate on these issues from various theoretical perspectives and disciplines participated by Đurđa Trajković, Rastko Jovanov, Marko Konjović, Olga Nikolić, Mark Losoncz, and Igor Cvejić.

The three articles in this volume are dedicated to addressing issues from that debate, thus enhancing our understanding of hatred. Apart from some more detailed explanations and additions to his earlier arguments from 2018, Thomas Szanto's article *Can it Be or Feel Right to Hate? On the Appropriateness and Fittingness of Hatred* in this volume introduces two entirely novel accounts. Following D'Arms and Jacobson's distinction between moral (in)inappropriateness and fittingness of emotions (D'Arms, Jacobson 2000), Szanto's article

from 2018 addresses exclusively the question of the fittingness of hatred. The main concern of the first part of the article in this volume is the moral (in)appropriateness of hatred. One of its benefits is that we now have an integrated account that connects Szanto's previous arguments with the issue of moral appropriateness. Moreover, he enters into a challenging and living debate about the possibility that hatred toward seriously evil perpetrators can be appropriate, with authors such as Jeffrey Murphy and Jean Hampton (Murphy, Hampton 1988), Hans Bernhard Schmid (Schmid 2020), Berit Brogaard (Brogaard 2020), etc. However, Szanto concludes that none of the accounts can defend the moral appropriateness of person-focused hatred because they all rest on dubious presupposition, which he calls the "reality of evil agents assumption".

The second part of the paper is mainly concerned with introducing the novel focus-based model of emotional fittingness. Emotional fittingness/adequacy is one of the most important issues of the 'logic' of emotional experience in contemporary theoretical literature. The standard account portrays a picture in which the object of emotion should have evaluative properties that emotion pertains to disclose (its formal object) for emotion to be fitting. The focus-based account tries to avoid some shortcomings of the standard model (e.g., an unwanted consequence of value-realism) by turning attention to the focus of emotion and its constitutive role for the target and formal object of emotion: "we ought to assess whether the affective focus of an emotion picks out *those* evaluative properties of *that* object *that really matter to the subject* of the given emotion, to wit, 'matter' in a way that can, in turn, be assessed by looking at the emotional *commitment* that the subject has to the focus of the emotion" (Szanto, in this volume). Szanto is indeed not the first author who relied on the focus-based account. It is Bennet Helm who had already made a refined argument about differentiation and relations between focus, target, and formal object of emotions¹ in 2001 and integrated it in the question of "warrant of emotions" (Helm 2001). Although many authors adopted Helm's model in their studies, it is not until now that we have straightforward elucidation of the focus-based model of the fittingness of emotions. Szanto's article states how this model can provide the standard of the fittingness of emotions:

An emotion E is fitting, if and only if

- (1) the target, eliciting E is appropriately related to the focus, such that the focus renders the evaluation of the target in terms of the formal object of E intelligible, and
- (2) S is committed to the focus of E, such that in circumstances in which the target is harmed or benefited in a noteworthy way S is disposed to feel those and only those other emotion(s) E* that are rationally interconnected to the focus of E. (Szanto, in this volume)

¹ For earlier use of distinctions between focus, target and formal object see de Sousa 1987.

This clarification helps us to understand better why hatred can not be a fitting emotion. Apart from it, the importance of Szanto's model goes far beyond the question of hatred and represents a valuable contribution to the philosophy of emotions in general.

In his paper *A Critical Account of the Concept of De-Objectified Hatred*, Mark Losoncz challenges Szanto's account of hatred by advocating for a complex dynamic between the 'object' of hatred and the social environment. Losoncz is quite skeptical about what he calls "de-objectifying approach": "it seems that the object of hatred merely serves to 'establish or reinforce our identity as distinct from others' [Szanto 2018: 472]. The hated Other appears as a mere accident in the dynamics of hatred as if the hater has first of all internal difficulties" (Losoncz, in this volume). By pointing out to examples of anti-Semitism and Yugoslav wars, Losoncz concludes that hatred could rather derive its power from (perhaps wrongly understood) objective circumstances: "the object of hatred is a – distorted, misunderstood – personification of otherwise entirely objective and identifiable social mechanisms" (Losoncz, in this volume).

Igor Cvejić begins his article *Some Remarks on Unfocused Hatred: Identity of the Hated One and Criteria of Adequacy* with the question inspired by Helm's argument about the possible inadequacy of love (Helm 2009): whether the identity of the hated one affects fittingness of hatred? Cvejić concludes that if the focus of hatred is blurred, hatred does not trace the identification of the hated person or group. However, this does not solve the problem of possible internal conflict that hater might have by hating someone who does not identify themselves with what they are hated for. Thus, Cvejić introduces a novel alternative. He proposes a possibility that criteria of adequacy of hatred are embedded in the cultural and social framework in such a way that they are not intelligibly justified by their relation to the focus. If that were the case, these criteria would track the properties of being 'hate-worthy' and create what he calls 'quasi-fittingness' of hatred. Thus, Cvejić's account empowers us to hold Szanto's claim that hatred can never be fitting and, at the same time, explains how some people or groups of people are identified as 'hate-worthy' by the haters.

References

- Brogaard, Berit (2020), *Hatred. Understanding Our Most Dangerous Emotion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- D'Arms, Justin; Jacobson, Daniel (2000), "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions", *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 51 (1): 65–90.
- de Sousa, Ronald (1987), *The Rationality of Emotions*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Helm, Bennet W. (2001), *Emotional Reason. Deliberation, Motivation and the Nature of Value*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Helm, Bennet W. (2009), *Love, Friendship and the Self. Intimacy, Identification and the Social Nature of Persons*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

- Murphy, Jeffrey G.; Hampton, Jean (1988), *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmid, Hans Bernhard (2020), "Hate of Evil", in Thomas Szanto, Hilge Landweer (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions*, London, New York: Routledge, pp. 564–574.
- Szanto, Thomas (2018), "In Hate We Trust: The Collectivization and Habitualization of Hatred", *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Science* 19: 453–480.