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Hatred

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hatred Hatred, the noun, and to hate, the verb, do not completely coincide in their semantic ranges. Hatred carries with it more intensity and greater seriousness than many of our most common uses of the verb. Hatred is unlikely to apply aptly to one's feelings about broccoli, though it would be perfectly normal to register one's aversion to it by saying 'I hate broccoli'. In daily speech, hate can be used to indicate a fairly strong but not very serious aversion to a film, novel, or food, all the way to desiring, with varying seriousness, the extermination of an entire people. The word hate can thus mark a powerful moral/immoral *sentiment, or merely register a negative *preference. In this it tracks Latin usage, where the verb, *odi*, and the noun *odium*, can be used to register both simple aversion and also an intense passion of all-consuming detestation.

Attempts to get at the substance of hatred in the philosophical tradition focus mostly on how to distinguish it from *anger. Both anger and hatred accompany and inform relations of hostility, but not in quite the same way. Following Aristotle, the usual view is that anger is tied up with claims for redress against a particular person for particular wrongs, whereas hatred need no personal involvement; we can hate a person for what or who he or she is even without knowing them. Thus whole groups can be hated. Aristotle (384–322 BC) gives thieves and informers as examples. The grim history of the 20th century would add whole peoples based on religion, ethnicity, or race. Anger, Aristotle says, is curable and can be repaired via compensation, revenge, or apology. Unlike anger, which can exhaust itself within moments, hatred decays slowly if at all; it endures. The angry man might feel pity, says Aristotle, but not the hater; for the angry man wants the person he is angry at to suffer, while the hater wants

him not to exist. Roughly then, anger is about acts, hatred about the mere existence of the hated.

Folk wisdom, not incorrectly, sees a link between *love and hate, each tied up with the other, not just as opposites but also as marking the roil and turmoil of close relations. It is disputed whether both can be co-experienced, though a good portion of the world's best known literature and not a little of our own experience would be incomprehensible if they could not be. Their relation is not symmetrical: hatred does not bring about the conditions for love, though love (spurned, betrayed) can readily supply the conditions for hatred. Both hatred and love share a focused intensity; both, strangely, involve caring. Both love and hatred are held to be character defining for those who feel them, with hatred maybe beating out love in this regard, for it seems we derive as much (or more) of our sense of who we are from our hatreds as from our loves. Thus it may be that though haters want their objects dead, they may find they need to resurrect them or reinvent them in order to maintain their own sense of self: to wish, in Othello's idiom, the hated one a thousand lives so he can keep on killing him.

Many of the distinctions between anger and hatred break down on closer inspection. We can hate individuals no less than groups. Consistently being angered by someone can lead to hate, and hate can easily trigger anger.

Darwin (1809–82), with his usual perspicuity, recognized that hatred mixes and mingles with other closely related sentiments depending on the relative status of the parties. Hatred for the lowly is not just tied up with disgust and contempt but disgust and contempt may in fact be the form hatred of the low takes. Hatred of the high by the low, he says, is closely annexed to fear, if not also a form of it. Nietzsche's (1844–1900) well-known account is that morality itself owes its very being to a particular form of hatred the weak have for the strong: *ressentiment*. But the genocides of the 20th century have shown that hatred has an even more remarkable transformative power: it allows the strong to invest the weak with magical and phantasmal powers of control, insinuation, infection, and pollution. A true history of hatred would have to come to terms with anti-Semitism.

Much routine hatred is experienced less as an emotion than as a quasiformal attitude of opposition, of obligatory enmity. And, when experienced as an emotion, hatred may never exist uncoloured variously by anger, disgust, contempt, fear, envy, competitiveness, and all-consuming love. For this reason too it has not been studied systematically in the scientific way anger has; it encompasses too many disparate inner states and outer settings for traditional psychological experimentation to get at. Even the most brilliant of philosophers despair. Thus David Hume's (1711–76) observation: "Tis

altogether impossible to give any definition of the passions of love and hatred'.

W. I. MILLER