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The Essence of Hate and Love

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This chapter updates and extends ideas developed over years in collaboration with deep-thinking friends. In particular I aim to update and extend the chapter on hate by Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin that appeared in *The Psychology of Hate*, edited by Sternberg (2005).

The first section reviews four ways of getting to the meaning of hate, ending with proposed definitions of hate and love as extreme forms of identification with individuals or groups. In these definitions, hate includes perception of a negative essence, and love includes perception of a positive essence (Royzman, McCauley, & Rozin, 2005).

The second section stipulates a definition of identification and provides examples of the power of positive and negative identification in human affairs. This section draws on a chapter about the power of ethnic nationalism commissioned by Dan Chirof (McCauley, 2001).

The third section reviews ideas about what it means to essentialize a category; research shows the ease with which humans essentialize living things, including human individuals and groups. This section profits by ill-fated research with Paul Rozin in which we tried to find measures that would show Japanese more essentialized than Americans. Belatedly we recognized that Americans essentialize Americans almost as easily as they essentialize Japanese.

The fourth section explores positive and negative essence as perceived in human individuals and groups. This section draws on a typology of motives for mass political murder (Chirof & McCauley, 2006) to show that perception of a contaminating essence is an economical way to understand the dehumanization and disgust often directed at victims of genocide.

The concluding section points to research directions implied by the stipulated conceptions of hate and love, ending with brief overview of how these conceptions relate to previous views of intergroup emotions, dehumanization, and motives for mass murder.

## FOUR WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT HATE

In their review of ideas about hate, Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) identified four ways of thinking about the meaning of hate. This section will review and update the four ways of getting to a definition of hate.

### **Platonic Ideal Definition**

This approach assumes that there is an objective right answer to the question “What is hate?” just as there is an objective right answer to the question “What is gold?” If there is one “true,” “real,” or “essential” meaning of hate, then understanding hate means divining a Platonic Form only vaguely seen by others; research must get past approximations to uncover the “gold-standard” definition analogous to atomic number 79 as the definition of gold.

A Platonist example is psychiatrist Willard Gaylin: “We are capable of transient extremes of rage that we call hatred, but the true haters live daily with their hatred...They are obsessed with their enemies, attached to them in a paranoid partnership. It is this attachment that defines true hatred” (2003, pp. 4-5). Here Gaylin opposes everyday use of the word hatred with “true” hatred, a relationship marked by paranoid obsession. The true meaning of hate can only be seen through the lens of psychiatry and psychiatric concepts.

Perhaps most people, expert and layperson alike, slip into a Platonist mode in trying to define something, especially when trying to say why one definition is better than another. This mode of argument does not by any means block useful insights. Despite his Platonic aspirations, Gaylin does at one point acknowledge the normal psychology that is the basis of hate: “Hatred is an extreme and perverse distortion of the necessary process of group identification” (p.171). Indeed a version of this idea appears later in this chapter.

But the Platonist search for the “true” meaning of hate is better resisted. It is not likely that hate, and presumably every psychological concept, has an ideal meaning that can survive over time and cultural

change. Worse yet, arguments over the true meaning of hate do not lead easily to falsifiable predictions about the origins or consequences of hate, or about how to measure it.

### **Definition by Usage**

Investigating common usage has been perhaps the most popular way of looking for the meaning of hate. This approach has two variants: usage by experts and usage by everyman. Both assume that a substantive consensus can be identified.

At the beginning of expert opinion, Aristotle famously defined hate and distinguished it from anger. The distinction is important since many have noticed that there is considerable overlap in the actions associated with hate and anger: both aim to bring bad things to their target.

Aristotle says that anger is the reaction to undeserved slight (also rendered as perceived injustice), and that the target of anger is the person perpetrating the slight. There has been some disagreement about whether Aristotle meant to exclude group perpetrators of slight, but as he mentions that slight to our family and friends can make us angry, there is at least an argument that Aristotle would recognize that the target of anger might be groups (their family and friends) who slighted our group (family and friends) (Christiansen, 2016).

Hate is unlike anger, according to Aristotle, because hate is not a reaction to a particular slight but a reaction to bad character revealed in a history of bad action. Not only individuals can be hated; groups and classes of people can be hated, even if they have done nothing to us personally. Everyone hates a thief or a sycophant, says Aristotle. Hate is also unlike anger in its desires. Whereas hate wishes bad things to happen to the hated, or that they cease to exist, anger wishes revenge--pain inflicted on the perpetrator of a slight by the one slighted.

In their contribution to Sternberg's (2005) edited volume, *The Psychology of Hate*, Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) reviewed expert opinions about hate but found little agreement. Indeed contributors to the 2005 volume were also far from agreement, as summarized in the next paragraph.

Sternberg (2003) originally advanced a three-component theory of hate that includes disgust, anger/fear, and contempt. Staub (2005) saw hate as a complex emotion that includes fear and anger associated with perception of threat from the hated other. Beck and Pretzer (2005) did not offer a definition of hate but described it as a persistent response to persistent perception of being “wronged, damaged, coerced or corrupted” (p.73). Baumeister and Butz (2005) did not offer a definition of hate but assumed that factors leading to interpersonal and intergroup violence (material reward, threatened egotism, idealism, sadism) also lead to hate. Lerner, Balsano, Banik, and Naudeau (2005) operationalized hate as an instance of negative prejudice marked by high emotional arousal and salience. Opatow (2005) described hate as extreme enmity and pointed to moral exclusion as the key to expressing enmity in violence. Berkowitz (2005) focused, not on hate, but on haters; he explored what personal and situational factors might explain how some haters turn to aggression against the hated. Moshman followed Aristotle in seeing anger as a momentary reaction, whereas hatred is “an enduring attitude directed at persons” (2005, p.186); he showed that perpetrators of mass killing have many motives besides hate. Dovidio, Gaertner, and Pearson considered hate as “extreme dislike associated with prejudice that produces aggressive impulses” (2005, p.212) and focused mostly on when aversive racism may turn to blatant racism and hatred. Finally, Alford’s (2005) chapter pointed to the psychic rewards of hate, including the fraternity of those who hate together.

The diversity of opinions about hate among these experts is striking. For some, hate is an emotion or collection of emotions. Others see hate as a negative attitude or prejudice. Some relate hate to love, and others do not. Some try to consider both interpersonal and intergroup hate; others focus only or mostly on one of these. Some discuss hate as the explanation of mass killing; others recognize that most haters never move to violent action and point to the importance of dehumanization or moral exclusion for understanding mass killing. Some are more concerned with where hate comes from—antecedents of hate such as threat and injury--than what it is.

If the experts cannot agree, it should be no surprise that studies of lay usage do not produce consensus either. Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005) reviewed studies of this kind, and what commonality could be found in descriptions elicited from everyman did not agree with expert opinion. Lay usage in describing personal experience of hate, for instance, seems to focus on humiliation by a superior against whom revenge or even expression of anger is too dangerous to contemplate. But status asymmetry of haters and hated is not salient in expert discussions of hate.

It is worth noting that lay-usage studies ask about interpersonal hate; hate for large groups and classes may be seen as politically incorrect and self-report studies thus untrustworthy, at least in Western countries.

### **Ostensive Definition**

A third approach to the meaning of hate is definition by example. This approach is represented in discussions that provide vivid examples of mass killing but no definition of hate or hatred. Hate, then, is what these examples have in common, in particular what is common in the motivations of mass killing.

As already noted, some contributors to the *Psychology of Hate* (Sternberg, 2005) did not attempt to define hate; they pointed to hate with examples. Three popular books about hate--*Modern Hatreds* (Kaufman, 2001), *Fires of Hatred* (Naimark, 2001) and *Mass Hate* (Kressel, 2002)--do not offer any definition of hate or hatred; indeed, hate does not even appear in the indices of the books by Kaufman and Naimark. Instead, these books describe genocides and mass murders in which hate is presumed to have played a causal role. It is worth noticing that Kressel, like Moshman (2005), recognizes that perpetrators of mass killing can have many individual motives that do not depend on hate (fear of disobeying, material reward, status and power; Kressel, 2002, pp. 168, 224, 236).

One weakness of trying to work backwards to hate from instances of mass killing is that interpersonal hate is left behind. Studies of mass killing cannot tell us whether there is such a thing as interpersonal hate, or, if so, whether it is the same as mass hate or something importantly different.

A related weakness is that studies of mass killings may tell us something about the antecedents of hate, understood as a cause of mass killing, but cannot tell us what hate *is*. Efforts to measure hate, as opposed to the psychological trajectory that ends in hate, can have little support from ostensive definitions of hate.

### **Stipulated Definition**

A stipulated definition of a concept does not depend on finding agreement in use of a name for the concept, or on agreement about the commonality in instances said to show the concept at work. Rather, a stipulated definition is the beginning of an empirical research project. If we define hate—or love, or anger—in a particular way, then what useful measures and relationships are we led to?

Stipulated definitions are the foundation of psychology as a science. A useful definition of a psychological concept should do two things. First, it should demarcate a domain sufficiently homogenous to support advances in understanding the causes and effects of that domain (“carve nature at its joints”). And second, it should distinguish the concept from other related concepts. These two kinds of usefulness correspond at least roughly to the issues of convergent and discriminant validity advanced by Cook and Campbell (1979).

There can be more than one stipulated definition for the same concept, and stipulated definitions of the same concept can change over time. Frustration was first defined in animal learning as an instigation to aggression resulting from a blocked goal response, but later came to be understood as instigation to aggression (anger) caused by any noxious experience. The expansion of the definition was motivated by expansion of the frustration-aggression hypothesis to include economic stress (low cotton prices) as a cause of lynching (Hovland & Sears, 1940). Similarly, dissonance was originally defined as a ratio of dissonant to consonant cognitions about an attitude object but ended up understood as self-justification after committing to a sleazy or stupid action (Sabini, 1995).

Royzman, McCauley, and Rozin (2005, pp. 6-8) reviewed a number of stipulated definitions of hate, most offered by well-known psychologists. As already noted in relation to contributions to *The Psychology of*



*Hate* (Sternberg, 2005), differences of opinion tended to arise around whether hate is an emotion or something more enduring (syndrome or disposition) and around whether hate includes emotions of anger, fear, disgust, and contempt. Here I want to focus on a promising definition of hate advanced by Shand (1914).

Shand (1914) begins by considering the meaning of love. He quotes philosophers (Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Spencer) who claim that love is a single emotion, or at most a single feeling compounded of multiple emotions. Then he contrasts this claim with poetic descriptions of love (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift, Coleridge) that include experiences of multiple emotions: joy and sorrow, fear and hope, anger and gratitude. Shand sides with the poets. He concludes that “Love, therefore, cannot be reduced to a single compound feeling; it must organize a number of different emotional dispositions capable of evoking in different situations the appropriate behavior” (p. 56).

As Sternberg projects a theory of hate from his theory of love (see, e.g., Sternberg, 2006), so Shand (1914) analyzes hate as the opposite of love. Both are dispositions or organizations of emotional experience in relation to the fortunes of the one loved or hated.

The health and prosperity of the loved object is a cause of joy: in hatred, it is a cause of bitter sorrow. In place of the delight in being again with the one we love, is a peculiar mixture of repugnance and anger when we find ourselves again in the presence of one we hate; the one impelling us to avoid the person, the other to attack him. ... Thus the joy of hate is opposite to the joy of love, being caused by the suffering, loss of power and reputation of the hated person; and the sorrow of hate is opposite to the sorrow of love, and is caused by his power, reputation, and happiness. While, too, in love we fear those things that threaten suffering, injury, or destruction to the object, in hate we fear those events that threaten to preserve it from suffering and final destruction. In place, too, of the anger in defence of the object, there is anger toward those who defend it. (Shand, 1914, p.59)

Shand points in particular to emotions of joy, sorrow, anger, fear, and repugnance as occasioned by love and hate; these are indeed the emotions most often associated with discussions of hate. Although Shand focused on love and hate for individuals, his idea that love and hate are occasions of emotion, depending on what is happening to those loved or hated, can be applied to groups as well as to individuals. Indeed, Shand refers briefly to “hatred of the capitalist and professional classes by the manual laborers” (p. 58), suggesting that his idea can be applied to large groups, including national, ethnic, and political groups.

In the remainder of this chapter I forward an updated version of Shand’s idea by stipulating that *hate is an extreme form of negative identification that includes perception of a bad essence*. Along the way, I stipulate also that *love is an extreme form of positive identification that includes perception of a good essence*. The next section begins exploring hate and love by stipulating the meaning of positive and negative identification and providing some examples.

#### POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IDENTIFICATION

In an earlier essay (McCauley, 2001), I tried to understand the mobilizing power of ethnic nationalism. My analysis began with the idea that nationalism is a form of group identification, which led me to a definition and discussion of identification that I summarize here. Most generally, I stipulate that identification means caring about what happens to others. It means emotional response to the positive and negative outcomes of others, both individuals and groups.

##### **Positive Identification**

Positive identification is not the same as empathy, which is feeling what others feel. Identifying with a screen character unaware of an approaching monster occasions fear and dread, not the blissful ease of the character. It is not the same as sympathy, which is feeling sorry for others. Identification can occasion positive emotions when the one identified with is succeeding or prospering. It does not mean losing sight of self-interest; rather, it means caring enough about another to sacrifice self-interest. Identification with a needy sibling can occasion pity and a loan, but neither pity nor loan blocks awareness of the bank debit.

Thus understood, identification is a major piece of human psychology. We identify most obviously with families and friends, with teammates and co-workers. Caring about those close to us is easy to explain as self-interest or even evolutionary interest. But we often care about people whose link to our own welfare is somewhere between mysterious and nugatory: princesses and actresses, fictional characters from print and screen, sports teams and sports heroes. We care about our pets: people have refused to escape a flood if their dog or cat cannot get in the boat with them. We care about groups we are not part of: victims of disease or disaster for whom we send money or volunteer our time.

Only slightly less mysterious is caring about common-interest groups we are part of: millions of strangers composing our ethnic, national, religious, or occupational group. For these groups the free-rider problem should rationally lead us to put self-interest first—but sacrifices for such groups are common and form the foundation of political power for these groups. It appears that we do not need self-interest to care about others; instead we seem eager to pour ourselves into others—human and animal, fictional and real, individual and collective.

If the origins of identification can seem mysterious, the effects are far from imaginary. In one study of the physiological power of identification, saliva samples were obtained from fans at a sports bar before and after the 1994 World Cup soccer match between Brazil and Italy. Brazil won and Brazil fans showed a 20 percent increase in testosterone; Italy fans showed a 20 percent decrease (Bernhardt, Dabbs, Fielden & Lutter, 1998).

### **Negative Identification**

So far, I have summarized a view of positive identification. There is also negative identification, which, like positive identification, means caring about both individuals and groups. But negative identification is inverse caring, in which we feel negative emotions when the hated is prospering and feel positive emotions when the hated is failing. A child may feel joy if the bully who takes his lunch every week

meets a bigger bully who takes *his* lunch. Some baseball fans feel joy when the Yankees lose, and sadness if they win.

Negative identification is an important force in politics. In an October 2016 poll of registered US voters, 41 percent of those planning to vote for Hillary Clinton said that their vote was more against Donald Trump than for Clinton; 51 percent of those planning to vote for Trump said their vote was more against Clinton than for Trump (Pew Research Center, 2016). The rise of ‘negative voting’ appears to be an aspect of growing partisanship in Western countries, such that negative feelings toward *them* and *their* candidate are more important than positive views of *our* candidate (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016).

In short, negative identification is a modern instantiation of Shand’s view of hate as an organization of emotional responses relating to the fortunes of the hated. Negative identification means just the kind of inverse caring that Shand described.

But negative identification is not the same as hate. The definition stipulated is that hate is *an extreme form of negative identification that includes a negative essence*. Similarly, the stipulated definition of love is *an extreme an extreme form of positive identification that includes a positive essence*. The next section aims to make clear the meaning of *essence* in this context.

#### THE IDEA OF ESSENCE

As for the concept of identification, my treatment of essence must be a brief version of an important area of psychology. More detail is available in *Why Not Kill Them All?* (Chirof & McCauley, 2006).

As already noted, Plato advanced a theory that to know a thing is to know its Ideal Form or essence, which cannot be learned from experience but only remembered from a life before birth. Aristotle distinguished the essence of a thing from its accidents, an idea developed by Thomas Aquinas to understand how the Catholic Eucharist could have the essence of the Body and Blood of Christ under the accidents (appearances) of bread and wine. These examples demonstrate that ideas of essence go far back in human history.

For a living thing, its essence is the hidden something that makes it what it is. The closest example of essence is the self. My essence is whatever it is inside me that makes me the same person today as when I was five years old. I cannot tell you what the something is—somehow it is more than history—but I am confident that I am the same person despite radical changes in appearance and behavior. Modern biology would say that my genes have not changed, and that these genes set the boundaries of the trajectory of development from five-year old to adult. But perception of self did not wait for modern biology, and my five-year-old sense of self did not require any knowledge of genetics.

Others also have essences. Others see me as having an essence just as they see themselves as having an essence. Each individual is seen to have an essence that is referred to in different times and places as identity, character, personality, spirit, soul, or nature. Not only human individuals have essences. My dog Mugsy has an essence that distinguishes him from other dogs. My cat Shoesy has an essence that distinguishes him from other cats.

Importantly for understanding of hate, groups of living things are also seen to have essences. A three-legged albino tiger is still a tiger because it has still the essence of tiger somehow inside it. This kind of essentialist thinking is a developmental milestone (Keil, 1989).

Before the age of four or five, American children say that an animal is what it looks like. They will say that a skunk with its hair cut and dyed to look like a cat is really a cat, or that a cat made to look like a skunk is really a skunk. But older children will say that a cat is a cat, and a skunk is a skunk, no matter how its appearance is changed. If asked why it is still a cat, or a skunk, despite changed appearances, children look puzzled and hesitate, perhaps coming up with some kind of protobiological explanation about how if the cat had babies, they would still be baby cats. The same experiment repeated in Africa records the same transition at the same age, but the explanation differs. The dik-dik remains a dik-dik despite looking like a gazelle because it still has the spirit of the dik-dik (Keil, 1989).

Research shows that children show an essentialist bias in developing concepts and causal explanations of many different kinds (Gelman, 2005a; 2005b), including concepts of racial categories (Hirschfeld, 1996). Children are not taught essentialism by their parents; the essentialist bias seems to arise spontaneously.

In an effort to be more specific about what it means to essentialize, Haslam, Rothschild and Ernst (2000) had undergraduates rate a variety of human social categories on nine elements often associated with the idea of essence. Two dimensions of essentializing emerged. Birth-determined categories (e.g. Female, Asian) were seen as having discrete boundaries, necessary characteristics, immutable membership, and stability over time. Choice-determined categories (e.g., Homosexual, Liberal) were seen as having similar and predictable members who are “basically the same beneath surface similarities and differences.”

Labeled “inherence” by Haslam et al, “basically the same beneath surface similarities” is almost a definition of the concept of essence. It is surprising that this key element was not associated with birth-determined categories, Instead inherence clustered with similarity and predictability in the dimension that distinguished choice-determined categories. The meaning of this surprise remains unclear but it should alert us to the possibility that humans do not have conscious access to what drives perceptions of essence.

History tells us that ideas of essence have been with us a long time. Research tells us that children show an early and spontaneous bias toward essentialist thinking in developing concepts and causal explanations. So it seems likely that perception of essence is somehow biologically prepared, but perhaps no more accessible in consciousness than our biologically prepared perception of color. Colors are not out there, only a continuous spectrum of radiation that our brain turns into the discontinuities of color bands. Similarly, animal species are not out there, at least not with a million-year perspective, but our brain divides the living world into essentialized categories.

Thus, despite burgeoning research, there is considerable disagreement about the nature and origins of human essentializing. Some believe that the brain module for essentializing animal groups is put to work essentializing human groups. Some believe that there is a separate brain module for essentializing groups

of people. Some believe that brain modules for essentializing were shaped by specifiable evolutionary advantages; others doubt that there is a persuasive evolutionary story about human essentializing. These and many other debates about the nature and origins of human essentializing can be found in the Comments and Reply sections that follow Gil-White's (2001) effort to show how ethnic groups are species to the human brain.

Perhaps the greatest disagreement is about whether ideas of essence should be banned from social science. A few scholars are bold enough to claim that humans are "natural-born essentialists," with "a default assumption that things, people, and events have invisible essences that make them what they are" (Bloom, 2010; see also Gelman, 2005b). But the dominant view in social science is *constructivism*, according to which it is not useful to think of humans, as individuals or groups, as having fixed essences. Especially hegemonic is the constructivist view when applied to groups of people—ethnic groups, nations—where scholars have shown porous boundaries and instability over time that are inconsistent with the idea that these groups are natural kinds.

It is a paradox that constructivists have won the academy while essentialists are found everywhere outside it. A generation of students have learned that essentialism is wrong in fact, but somehow persevere in essentialist beliefs outside the classroom.

To understand hate and love, it is not necessary to take sides in these disputes or even to comprehend them in detail. It is only necessary to recognize that essentialism has a long and rich history in human thinking, and, whether justified or not as a matter of fact, is commonplace in perceptions of human individuals and groups. Returning to our stipulated definitions, the next section discusses ideas of positive and negative essence.

## POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ESSENCE

There seems to be much more research on perceptions of bad, negative, or evil essence than on perceptions of good or positive essence. It is convenient, then, to begin with brief consideration of perceptions of positive essence.

### **Positive Essence**

Obvious examples of the power of positive essence can be found in auction prices. A real Picasso, painted by the master's own hand, is worth many times what even the most perfect copy can bring. An oak rocking chair used by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy sold at auction for over \$400,000; a new rocking chair of the same design might be worth \$1000. Something in contact with a famous person can take on a value consistent with the idea that a positive essence was imparted to the object; this is positive contamination.

Turning from auction examples to research, a positive essence has been shown to be an important determinant of stability and change in individual identity. In a series of studies, De Freitas and his colleagues investigated what kinds of changes can lead to the perception that an individual's identity has changed.

Removing morally good traits leads to a larger sense of disruption to personal identity compared to other kinds of traits, including morally bad traits of an equal magnitude. Furthermore, beliefs about a good true self show various hallmarks of psychological essentialism. People believe that morally good traits are innate and cross-temporally stable, that there is a boundary separating the self-essence from other aspects of the self, and that self-essences have non-obvious properties and are diagnostic of what is true about an individual....To our minds, the most parsimonious interpretation of these various findings is that people believe that moral goodness is the fundamental quality that defines the person. Eliminate this quality, and you eliminate the person. (De Freitas, Cikara, Grossman, & Schlegel, 2018, p. 740)



De Freitas, Tobia, Newman, and Kinder (2016) have suggested that there are similarities in intuitions about individuals and categories. For both, characteristics seen as causal are more likely to be seen as essential, and normatively good characteristics are more likely to be seen as essential. Perhaps, they suggest, perception of positive essence works similarly for both individuals and categories, including categories of people often referred to as groups.

A very different approach to positive essence began as studies of *fusion*, a deep feeling of oneness with another individual or group. At the group level, fusion is measured with items such as “I am one with my country” and “My country is me” (Gomez et al, 2011). This kind of oneness includes a feeling that members of the group, even a group as large as a national or ethnic group, are like family. This is already a clue that fusion is linked with essentializing the group, as family and kin groups are often essentialized (Gil-White, 2001).

In addition, Swann and Buhrmester (2015) report that: “Strongly fused persons are especially inclined to endorse pro-group action when either the personal or the social self is salient, when physiological arousal is high, or when they perceive that group members share essential qualities (e.g., genes, core values) with one another.”

It is important that group action is encouraged for strongly fused persons when the personal self is made salient. This result means that personal identity is not lost in group identity, which is the understanding of identification earlier advanced in the section on Positive Identification. Also important is the observation that fusion supports pro-group action more when group members are seen to share essential qualities. It seems likely that fusion with either individuals or groups is associated with perception of a positive essence. Perhaps it is not too much to say that fusion with an individual or group is an expression of love.

### **Negative Essence**

Perception of bad or evil essence in individuals seems to have been little studied. A good place to begin would be the penalty phase of murder trials, in which the accused has already been judged guilty and a

separate proceeding determines whether the death penalty will be imposed. The prosecution argues for the death penalty by trying to show that the convicted individual is ‘bad to the bone’ and will always be a threat to society. The defense argues instead that there is some spark of goodness in the individual, some chance of redemption. In other words, the prosecution argues for bad essence and the defense argues against it. These arguments might illuminate the meaning of bad essence at the individual level.

It is worth remarking that seeing a negative essence in an individual can be difficult to distinguish from seeing a negative group essence in an individual. “Several years after Keith Tharpe was sentenced to death for murder in 1991, a juror in his case signed an affidavit stating that there are two types of black people: good ones and ‘niggers.’ The juror, who was white, put the defendant in the latter category and said that he wondered “if black people even have souls” (Kennedy, 2019).

At the group level, many scholars have pointed to the importance of *dehumanization* as encouraging or even necessary for perpetrating genocide and ethnic cleansing. Haslam (2006) reviews research offering several different views of dehumanization: excluding a group from moral status as human, denigrating a group’s values as selfish and animal-like, and denying that a group has more than animal emotions.

Haslam integrates these views into a dual theory of dehumanization: *animalistic* dehumanization denies characteristics that separate humans from animals; *mechanistic* dehumanization denies characteristics associated with human nature, leaving an individual or group as object or automaton.

Haslam suggests that animalistic dehumanization may occur primarily in intergroup conflict, whereas mechanistic dehumanization may occur at both individual and group levels. He also suggests that animalistic dehumanization is associated with emotions of disgust and contempt, whereas mechanistic dehumanization is associated with disregard and indifference. For understanding hate, with all its emotional power, it is animalistic dehumanization that is at issue.

The key point for understanding hate is that animalistic dehumanization includes perception of a negative (animalistic) essence. “Essentialist thinking about groups—seeing them as discrete ‘natural kinds’—does

appear to be necessary for animalistic dehumanization. Only if groups are believed to have categorically different natures can intergroup differences be seen as species-like” (Haslam, 2006, p. 259).

As Haslam noted, the emotion often associated with animalistic dehumanization is disgust. The hallmark of disgust is contamination; even brief contact with a disgusting object can contaminate. Modern biology would say that contamination sensitivity is sensitivity to contact with germs and disease, but disgust came before germ theory and goes beyond germ theory, as when dipping even a sterilized cockroach into a glass of juice makes it undrinkable. The natural interpretation of contamination is that a bad essence has been passed from one object to another (Rozin, Haidt & McCauley, 2016).

Consistent with this idea, targets of genocide and ethnic cleansing are often described with a limited number of animal epithets. The enemy is a virus or a bacillus—a disease and contamination threat. They are lice, maggots, cockroaches, pigs, vultures—disgusting and contaminating in their association with offal, decay and death. One could imagine animal epithets that are not contaminating: the enemy are bees, ladybugs, mice, rabbits, sheep, cattle, or canaries. These are familiar animals and calling the enemy by these names would name them animals—but not disgusting and contaminating animals. The common epithets convey not just an inferior animal essence, but a contaminating and disgusting essence.

It is not only groups defined by perceived descent—families, ethnic groups, national groups—that can be perceived as sharing a bad essence. Stalin tried to exterminate the kulaks, a class of prosperous peasants. An even more striking example is the Cambodian genocide, where the predominant target was “Cambodians with Vietnamese minds.” These were seen as contaminating the authentic rural Cambodian culture. The perpetrators did not deny that their victims were Cambodian by blood descent but denied that they were “real” Cambodians. It appears that any group perceived as self-reproducing can be essentialized, including class and cultural groups.

Many observers have pointed to perceived threat as motive or justification for mass political murder, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. Drawing from this literature, Chirof and McCauley (2006) identified four

types of threat associated with killing by category. *Material threat* is perception that another group blocks our economic progress; the US removal of the Cherokee from their ancestral lands in 1838 is an example. *Status threat* is perception that another group has disrespected our superior status; anger and revenge are the likely response, as in 1904-05 when the German army killed or starved to death most of the Herero after this tribe overwhelmed a small German garrison in Southwest Africa. *Existential threat* is perception that it's them or us; fear drives the violence, as happened in the mutual massacres and expulsions of Serbs and Croats in the 1990s. Fourth and finally, *pollution threat* is perception that another group is contaminating our ethnic, religious, or ideological purity; a well-known example is Hitler's fear of Jewish pollution of the German *volk*.

The four types of threat often overlap. Whites in the state of Georgia wanted Cherokee lands but were also disturbed by rising Cherokee education and prosperity and by beginnings of intermarriage between Cherokee and Whites. That is, White Georgians felt not only material threat but status-inversion threat and pollution threat.

If perception of animalistic and contaminating essence is required for mass killing, then perhaps pollution threat is not just one of several threats that can lead to genocide and ethnic cleansing. That is, perhaps pollution threat is the final common pathway by which material threat, status threat, and existential threat lead to mass killing. This and related possibilities are considered in the next section.

#### RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND PREDICTIONS

This chapter advances a stipulated definition of hate as an extreme form of negative identification that includes perception that an individual or group has a bad essence, especially a polluting bad essence. In parallel, love is stipulated as an extreme form of positive identification that includes perception that the loved individual or group has a good essence. As noted in the first section of this chapter, stipulated definitions are only as useful as the research directions and predictions that flow from them. In this section several domains of research are identified and some specific questions raised.

### **Hate and Love as Forms of Identification**

The first and greatest implication of the definitions of hate and love stipulated here is that hate and love are not emotions, but occasions of feeling many different emotions. It is not surprising to think that hate is associated with negative emotions, such as fear, anger, disgust and contempt toward the hated individual or group. More surprising is the prediction that positive emotions are associated with hate, including joy, happiness, and pride when the hated individual or group is losing or failing.

Similarly, it is not surprising to think that love is associated with positive emotions, such as joy, hope, and pride. More surprising is the prediction that love is also associated with negative emotions, including fear, sadness, shame, and embarrassment when the loved one is losing or failing.

The more surprising predictions about emotions associated with hate and love—negative emotions associated with love and positive emotions associated with hate—need to be tested. Indeed, these predictions should be tested separately for hate and love for individuals, as well as for hate and love for groups. A beginning in this direction is research on *schadenfreude*, a shameful joy at another's misfortune (Wang, Lilienfeld, & Roach, 2019). According to Wang, "Dehumanization appears to be at the core of schadenfreude... The scenarios that elicit schadenfreude, such as intergroup conflicts, tend to also promote dehumanization." (Dodgson, 2018).

Seeing hate and love as extreme forms of negative and positive identification is generally consistent with Intergroup Emotion Theory (Smith & Mackie, 2016), in which group identification is the basis of intergroup emotions. Smith and Mackie review evidence that positive identification with a group is correlated with positive ingroup emotions: individuals who identify more with the ingroup report more positive emotions (pride, happiness) relating to the ingroup. And more positive identification with a group is correlated with more anger toward a threatening outgroup.

An easy prediction here is that more positive identification with an individual will similarly be correlated with more positive emotions relating to the loved one and more negative emotions relating to individuals

or groups threatening the loved one. Likewise, more negative identification with an individual should be correlated with more negative emotions when the hated one is prospering and more positive emotions when the hated one is failing.

### **Relation of Individual and Group Levels**

As humans can care about both individuals and groups, we can experience emotions, both positive and negative emotions, in relation to what happens to individuals and groups we identify with. Positive identification (positive caring) and negative identification (inverse caring) can link us emotionally with both individuals and groups. Both individuals and groups can be perceived to have an essence; the essence can be positive or negative. Thus, the view of hate and love advanced in this chapter is symmetric with respect to positive and negative identification with individuals and groups, positive and negative emotions, and positive and negative essence.

But can all this symmetry be found in real people? There are hints in the literature to the contrary. Recall that De Freitas, Tobia, Newman and Kinder (2016) found that, for individuals, normatively good characteristics are more likely to be seen as essential, and they went on to suggest that the same might be true of groups. A bias toward seeing positive characteristics as essential may be true for perceptions of ingroup individuals but seems unlikely to be true for perceptions of outgroups or outgroup individuals. It is possible that there is a bias toward perceiving positive essence for individuals, but a bias toward perceiving negative essence for outgroups.

Another potential asymmetry has to do with the meaning of the emotions occasioned by hate and love. It is easy to say that we feel pride and joy when a loved individual or group is prospering and advancing, and that we feel negative emotions—fear, anxiety, sadness, shame—when the loved individual or group is fading or failing. And it is easy to reverse the emotional implications for hated individuals and groups, replacing emotions related to caring with emotions of inverse caring. But are emotions in relation to individuals we identify with really the same as emotions in relation to groups we identify with? And are

emotions experienced via identification really the same as emotions occasioned by individual personal outcomes?

When someone insults me, I feel anger. Is it the same experience of anger when someone insults an individual I identify with, my son perhaps? Is it the same experience of anger when someone insults a group I identify with, my nation perhaps?

Writing about intergroup emotions, Smith and Mackie (2016) explicitly assume that these emotions are the same experience as individual emotions of the same name. "...we assume that intergroup emotions are generally similar to individual-level emotions in the ways they are experienced; the effects they have on cognitive, perceptual and motor processes; and so forth..." (p.413). No research is cited in support of this assumption.

The distinction between fear and anxiety suggests that experience of individual-level emotion may differ from experience of emotions occasioned by identification. LaBar (2016) expresses the distinction as follows. "Anxiety is a state of unease about a distal, potentially negative outcome that is uncertain or unpredictable... In contrast to fear, anxiety is longer lasting, is more future than present oriented, often has a less specific elicitor or terminator...and functionally prepares the organism to confront a threat—albeit reluctantly—rather than withdrawing from it" (p.751).

The threat posed by an outgroup to an ingroup tends to be uncertain, long lasting, and future-oriented, that is, the emotional reaction to outgroup threat is more likely to be anxiety than fear. Perhaps fear is more common at the individual level, whereas anxiety is more common via identification, at least identification with a group.

The fact that we slide easily into using the same name—anger-- for the emotion corresponding to appraisal of insult at three levels--personal, individual-identification, and group-identification—does not settle the issue. The same issue can be raised for other examples of intergroup emotions: pride, joy,

sadness, disgust. For each emotion we can ask whether it is experienced the same at each of the three levels. Here is a place where physiological and brain-scan measures might help us toward an answer.

### **The Power of Pollution**

In the section on Negative Essence, I suggested that there may be something special about the threat of contamination and pollution. Material threat, status threat and existential threat do not have a special vocabulary of animal epithets; contamination threat does. These epithets—the enemy are a virus, they are lice, they are cockroaches, they are pigs—convey contamination and disgust. That is, these names convey not just inferior essence but rotten, disgusting essence.

Research has begun to study disgust reactions in the context of intergroup relations, including issues of prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup violence (Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley, 2016, p.p. 826-827).

Maoz & McCauley (2008) showed that measures of disgust and contempt toward Palestinians predicted Jewish support for annexing the territories and transferring Palestinians to Arab states. Disgust and contempt predicted support for transfer beyond what perceived threat could predict.

The suggestion here is that all bad essences are not alike, and that perception of a disgusting and contaminating bad essence is a particularly powerful incitement and rationalization for violence against those with this kind of bad essence—both individuals and groups. This suggestion could lead to research testing whether perception of a contaminating bad essence may be the most dangerous form of dehumanization.

### **Relation of Hate and Love**

There are several research issues that arise most clearly when considering hate and love together. First are issues raised by definitions of hate and love that compete with the stipulated definitions advanced here, and second are issues raised by considering examples of hate and love in intergroup conflict.



In her definition of love, Fredrickson (2016) sees *love-the-emotion* as a moment of positivity resonance, in which two or more individuals share positive emotion, mutual caring, and behavioral synchrony. It is difficult to see how this definition of love can be extended to the group level. What would momentary behavioral synchrony mean in relation to an ethnic or national group? In her footnote 2, Frederickson suggests that love-the-emotion can spread from dyads to crowds and communities; this suggestion points toward research that might distinguish love-as-emotion from love as positive identification.

In their definition of hate, Fischer, Halperin, Canetti, and Jasini (2018) distinguish two kinds of hate, chronic and momentary. Chronic hate is seen as disposition rather than emotion. “[Chronic h]ate is based on perceptions of a stable, negative disposition of persons or groups. We hate persons and groups more because of who they are, than because of what they do” (p.309). Momentary hate is seen as an emotion. “The emotion hate (also referred to as “immediate hate”...) is much more urgent and occurs in response to significant events that are appraised as so dramatic that they lead to the kind of appraisals (e.g., “the outgroup is evil by nature”) and motivations (e.g., “I would like it to be destroyed”) that are usually associated with hatred.”

As described by Fischer et al (2018), chronic hate appears to be equivalent to negative identification that includes perception of a bad essence (“more because of who they are..”), except that Fischer et al do not make explicit reference to a bad essence. But it is not clear what to make of the emotion hate (“immediate hate”) asserted to occur in response to events leading to the perception that “the outgroup is evil by nature.” It seems that perception of bad essence is part of both chronic hate the disposition and immediate hate the emotion. To make sense of this formulation, research might try to show that the difference between chronic hate and emotion hate is when hate begins. Perhaps some individuals had hate (negative identification including perception of bad essence) before the dramatic events, and others develop hate (perception of bad essence) only in reaction to these events.

Beyond issues raised by competing definitions, there is a major issue about the extent to which hate and love are independent. One possibility is that hate is the reflection of love, an extreme form of negative

identification that depends entirely on positive identification. In this case love of individual or ingroup comes first, and hate is the consequence of a conflicting relationship between what is loved and what is hated. I love my son then I hate anyone who humiliates him. I love my country, then I hate any group that threatens us.

Another possibility is that I hate any individual or group seen to have a bad essence, and this perception does not depend on love. Perhaps any individual or group perceived to have a disgusting or polluting essence is hated, and the positive and negative emotional consequences of seeing bad and good things happen to the hated are engaged without any reference to positive ingroup identification.

These two possibilities correspond to two views of how ingroup and outgroup are essentialized. If hate is derivative of love, then a seeing negative outgroup essence depends on seeing a contrasting positive ingroup essence. If hate can be independent of love, then it should be possible to find people who perceive an outgroup negative essence but do not perceive a positive ingroup essence.

Chirof and McCauley (2006) surmised that this combination is unlikely. “The Turk, the German *volk*, the authentic Cambodian or Hutu, the working class—each can be seen to have a positive essence that makes it a superior class of people, a chosen people... (p.85). “We suspect that essentializing the enemy is linked strongly and even necessarily with essentializing the in-group. ... The result of this double essentializing is a battle of good and evil, of two incompatible essences in which love of the good means necessarily hate for the threatening out-group” (p. 86). Considerable research would be required to test this surmise.

### **Individual Differences**

Some individuals may be more likely to hate and love than others. Perhaps some individuals are more likely to essentialize groups, or individuals, or both.

More important is the issue raised by Kressel (2002) and by Moshman (2005). Who is doing the hating that is associated with mass political murder? It is easy to assume that hate is what drives the perpetrators of murder, but we know that many young men join in mass killing for mundane reasons, such as material

gain, status gain, escape, and survival. In case histories of genocide, hate-filled texts are usually from elites: Hitler, Pol Pot, transcripts from Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines during the Rwandan genocide. Polls assessing mass or population levels of hate are rare. It will be important to learn more about the distribution of hate in cases of mass killing and ethnic cleansing. And it will be important to avoid assuming that hate is THE cause of mass killing.

### **In Conclusion**

This chapter has advanced the possibility that hate and love may usefully be seen as forms of negative and positive identification. Negative identification means inverse caring, which brings positive emotions when the individual or group hated is failing and negative emotions when the hated is prospering. Conversely, positive identification brings positive emotions when the individual or group loved is prospering and negative emotions when the loved is failing. Hate and love are proposed as particularly powerful forms of identification that occur when identification is joined with perception of an essence--negative essence for hate, positive essence for love.

Theoretically, the view of love proposed here is consistent with fusion theory, but goes further by specifying that fusion depends on perception of a positive essence and by making hate a kind of anti-fusion. Similarly, the view of love proposed is consistent with intergroup emotions theory, but goes further by including identification with individuals as well as groups. Hate as described here is consistent with Haslam's infra-humanization theory of dehumanization, but goes further in suggesting that dehumanization sees not just an inferior animal essence but an animal essence that is disgusting and contaminating. These theoretical distinctions may be sharpened or blurred by the research directions suggested in this section, but the research should in any case enlarge our understanding of the ways that humans pour themselves into caring about others.

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