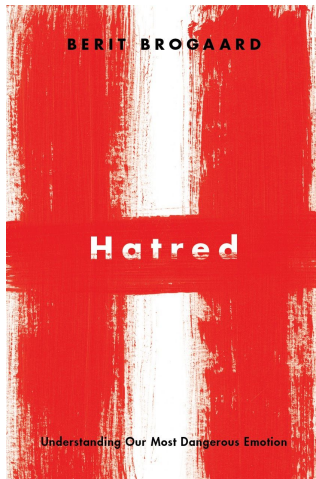


Hatred: Understanding Our Most Dangerous Emotion

Book talk by Berit Brogaard, Oct 7, 2020



What exactly is hate? Is it even a single kind of thing? Random sample of Google results for “I hate.”

- I hate my MacBook. It is slow and buggy enough that I wonder if maybe it's a lemon?
- I hate the fact that the president of the United States is no longer someone parents can point to as a role model for their children.
- I wish I'd never had my kids and I'll always regret them – I hate my life and it's their fault.
- I really hate my ex. Is this normal?
- I hate women. Truly, they are the scum of the earth. Yet I am still biologically predisposed to want them.
- I hate N*ggers, I hate Jews, I hate Sp*ks and Arabs too!

Types of Hatred

- **Hate, in the broad sense: Hate or contempt**
 - Expressions in which “hate” in the broad sense occurs: hate mail, hate crisis, group hate, hate group.
- **Hate, in its Narrow Sense**
 - “Hate” of entities (fried liver, laptops, ideologies): “Strong dislike” (I don't examine hate, in this sense).
 - Personal hate
 - Critical (personal) hate
 - Dehumanizing (personal) hate
 - Group hate
 - Critical group hate
 - Dehumanizing group hate
 - Collective hate

Antagonistic Emotions

- Emotions like blame, anger, resentment, indignation, envy, schadenfreude, disrespect, disgust, contempt, and hatred, among others.

Personal Contempt (Social disgust's judgmental cousin)

- **Contempt's Constituents:**

- Disrespect
- Disgust
- Blame
- Condemnation of character
- **Contempt's Target:** The person the emotion is directed at.
- **Contempt's Dual Focus of Concern:**
 - The person's socially (or normatively) appalling (disgusting) practices
 - The person's lowly character that you take to be a cause of their appalling practices

In contempt, we condemn a person for character flaws tied to appalling practices, such as lustfulness, lack of restraint, and laziness. Such traits are tied in our minds with appalling practices or the results of such practices, for instance, masturbation, promiscuity, gluttony, obesity, idiocy, or whatever else reminds us too much of our own animal nature, our bodily excretions, our impure and imperfect body, or its certain death and gradual decay as we get older.

Personal Hate

- **Hate's Constituents**
 - Disrespect
 - Apprehensive respect
 - Blame in the form of resentment or indignation
 - Condemnation of character
- **Hate's Dual Focus**
 - A perceived wrongdoing, or perceived ill will
 - The person's malevolent or evil character traits, which you take to be causally tied to the perceived wrongdoing or ill will

Objection from Disrespect

It's sometimes said that where hate (in its narrow sense) presents its target as powerful, contempt presents its target as "low," or unworthy of respect. Disrespect is a component of contempt but not hate. Or so the objection goes.

My Reply By Way of Counterexample (*Reductio ad absurdum*)

Beatrice has contempt for her greedy neighbor, and she hates the football coach for raping her daughter. If disrespect were only a component of contempt but not of hate, then Beatrice should have more respect for the man who raped her daughter than for her greedy neighbor. But that's absurd. Clearly, she doesn't view her daughter's rapist as worthy of more respect than her greedy neighbor. She looks down on both but she has even less respect for her daughter's rapist than her greedy neighbor.

We Have Apprehensive Respect for Those We Hate ("I have respect for the sea")

The different "feels" of hate and contempt stems from a difference in the kinds of character flaws the two attitudes bring into focus. Malevolence, the character flaw that fuels our hatred, is associated in our minds with potential power and danger, capacities that call for apprehensive respect and sometimes even full-out admiration.

Two Kinds of Disrespect

- Critical disrespect (in the book I show that this precludes retaliatory desires)
- Dehumanizing disrespect

Hence, We Get:

- Critical hate

- Critical contempt
- Dehumanizing hate
- Dehumanizing contempt

Only Critical Personal Hate can be Rational and Morally Justified

- Critical personal hate as healing (prudential)
- Can be rational/prudential in much the same sense that grief can.
- Can help maintain moral norms of society (morally justified). (Cf. Strawson, 1962)

Group Hate

- The target of the hate is a social group.
- Parasitic on personal hate.

Collective Hate

- The “hater” is a group.
- It is a joint attitude involving an implicit commitment to hatred.
- Hating, or acting as if
- The hate commitment is analogous to the love commitment made in wedding vows “I promise to love you ... till death do us part”

Factors Escalating Group Hate

- Herd mentality/Conformity
- By-stander effect
- Group polarization
- Propaganda
 - Hate speech
 - Hate implicatures
 - Hate literature
- Dark Triad of Personality
- Hate groups
- Recruitment into hate groups
 - Youth
 - Vulnerable Dark Triad
 - Helicopter kids
 - Gen Y

Possible Solutions: A Few Examples

- Hate speech legislation
- Alternative voting systems
- Civic Saturday's
- Debates in groups of different-minded individuals