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Hatred as an Attitude

Thomas Brudholm

Rook di goo, rook di goo!
There's blood in the shoe.
The shoe is too tight,
This bride is not right!
Cinderella

Abstract: Although sometimes forgotten in current uses of the term, 'hatred' is a notoriously complex and ambiguous phenomenon. Analyzing and identifying what characterizes hatred and articulating a concept that helps us think more clearly about hatred is difficult. It is not even clear whether hatred is an emotion, an attitude, a sentiment or a passion. This essay departs from the idea that perhaps hatred is analyzable as a retributive reactive attitude. More precisely, it presents a philosophical exploration of what happens if one puts a messy bundle of notions and examples of hatred into the more clear conceptual framework offered by Strawson in 'Freedom and Resentment'. The question whether hatred can be seen as a retributive reactive attitude is examined both with respect to Strawson's division between participant and objective attitudes and with respect to the seemingly most closely related participant attitude, resentment.

In contrast to the reactive attitudes as conceptualized by Peter F. Strawson, hatred is almost always condemned as a malicious and deeply destructive emotional state. As Elie Wiesel once put it: 'Whatever the question, hatred is not the answer' (Vetlesen 1990: 271). The class of reactive attitudes include emotions long recognized as moral in nature and as part and parcel of what it means to be involved in well-functioning interpersonal relationships. Hatred serves more typically as the mark of the villain and as a source of dehumanizing and excessive violence. Hence also the very common rhetoric of the 'cycles' of hatred; allegedly an imminent danger in the aftermath of mass violence.[1] The

1 For an excellent essay on the misleading assumptions behind much talk about the 'cycles' of violence or hatred, see Walker 2006.

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reactive attitudes can be seen to 'embody our senses of responsibility' (Walker 2006: 25), and it has been argued that 'in expressing these emotions […] we are demonstrating our commitment to certain moral standards, as regulative of social life' (Wallace 1994: 69). Hatred, when it speaks, is often terrifying and demeaning, and it seems to demonstrate mainly an intent to destroy the odious object: 'The Jew', said Nazi Labor Front leader Robert Ley (in a speech delivered in Amsterdam in 1942), 'is a great danger to humanity':

> It's not enough to bring him someplace [ihn irgend wohin zu bringen]. That would be as if one wanted to lock up a louse somewhere in a cage. (Laughter) They would find a way out and again they come out from under and make you itch again. (Laughter) You have to annihilate [vernichten] them you have to exterminate them [for what] they have done to humanity … (interrupted by ongoing applause). (Herf 2006: 155).

Certainly, the moral standing of resentment (a paradigmatic retributive reactive attitude) and hatred (whatever it is) is not the same. Perhaps the tolerance of open expressions of resentment is relatively low in modern therapeutic cultures, but the space for public expressions of hatred is significantly smaller. Indeed, hate speech is a criminal offense in many countries, and there is apparently just one 'crime of passion' where the presence of the latter is thought to enhance rather than mitigate the gravity of the former—i.e., hate crimes. Nonetheless, hatred is a multi-facetted phenomenon and perhaps some kinds of hatred deserve a better press. Looking beyond the narrow confines of current intuitions and sensibilities, some philosophers have tried to give cautious but sympathetic consideration to a concept of morally justifiable hatred or to revitalize ancient—and less pathologizing—approaches to hatred (cf. Murphy and Hampton 1988, Konstan 2007, Elster 1999). This essay departs from the idea that what needs further reflection is not only the normative issue whether some kinds of hatred can be morally justified and escape pathologization. It is perhaps even more important that we get as clear as we can about the very concept and possible varieties of hatred. And that—analyzing and identifying what is hatred or

articulating a concept that helps us think more clearly about hatred—is difficult.

Even Aristotle was perhaps a little bewildered by the subject. At least, in the *Rhetorics*, he said both that hatred is an emotion and that it is painless. That has provided reason for interpreters to wonder, because isn't the latter incompatible with the former? Much later, David Hume asserted that hatred is 'altogether impossible to define' (Hume 2000: 214), and in an unusually poetic moment, Immanuel Kant wrote that if the affect of anger is like water that breaks through a dam, then the passion of hatred is 'like a river that digs itself deeper and deeper into its bed […]. Affects are honest and open, passions on the other hand are deceitful and hidden' (Kant 2006: 150). The elusive aspect of hatred was also noticed by Charles Darwin as he wrote that feelings of hatred 'are not clearly expressed by any movement of the body' (Darwin 2009: 249). More than that, expressing hatred—even in situations where people would seem to have good reasons to hate—is often socially tabooed, wherefore hatred is likely to wear a mask. As illustrated by this anonymous statement of a Bosniak woman from the city of Mostar: 'We are all pretending to be nice and to love each other. But, be it known that I hate them and that they hate me. It will be like that forever, but we are now pretending' (Halpern & Weinstein 2004: 561). Arguably, the difficulties of capturing hatred conceptually are pertinent to most affective states. Still, hatred is certainly among the more complex and ambiguous states to 'catch'.

Perhaps the relative clarity of the Strawsonian concept of the reactive attitudes can be used to illuminate the more ambiguous phenomenon of hatred? That, at least, was and remains the thought behind this essay. As indicated above, the relationship between hatred and the reactive attitudes is often depicted as oppository, and the opposition is not only a matter of moral standing. More than that, attempts to conceptualize hatred often rely on a contrast with resentment (or anger). However, what needs more careful reflection is whether the differences between hatred and resentment exclude their

both being members of the same class of attitudes.[2] When I began writing this essay, the plan was only to probe the case for conceptualizing hatred as a retributive reactive attitude; i.e., an affective way of viewing persons in response to perceived wrongdoing or bad will as demonstrated in their actions. Yet, somewhere along the way—muddling around with Strawson's essay and various conceptions of hatred—I was reminded of the pigeons song from *Cinderella*, and I came to believe that trying to 'squeeze' hatred into the concept of a retributive reactive attitude, or trying only to compare hatred and resentment, was less interesting than a more open-ended reflection on hatred and the whole set of attitudes considered by Strawson. For example, it was not clear to me whether it wouldn't be more appropriate to categorize hatred as an objective attitude. Moreover, focusing exclusively on hatred toward persons, or only on moral hatred, would imply a problematic 'cutting' away of too much of what is intriguing about hatred. Thus, in this paper I would like to explore what happens if we put a messy bundle of notions and examples of hatred (predominantly gathered from the modern history of genocidal violence) into the more clear conceptual framework offered by Strawson in 'Freedom and Resentment' (1974); attending both to the ways in which hatred fits into the framework and the ways in which hatred might be straddling across (or beyond) the given structures and distinctions. I would like to suggest that the comparison between hatred and the attitudes offers a thought-provoking basis for further reflection on what is peculiar to hatred, including its ambiguities. Hopefully, this is a little step toward a better understanding of the moral psychology and political manifestations of hatred.

2 In various regards, hatred is close to contempt about which it has been interestingly argued that it should be seen as a moral attitude like resentment. If it can be argued that contempt should be seen as an attitude, maybe a similar approach could be adopted with regard to hatred? For the argument that contempt should be seen as a reactive moral attitude, see Mason (2003).

Expanding the scope

Bringing hatred into the context of 'Freedom and Resentment' is to depart somewhat from what the essay's implied reader is supposed to do, because we cannot pay heed to the explicit request of the author that we should 'try to keep before our minds […] what it is like to be involved in ordinary inter-personal relationships' (Strawson 1974: 6). Readers going along with Strawson's request might very well come to think of commonplace experiences of resentment, hurt, indignation, and gratitude, but as long as we keep focus on what *ordinarily* goes on in our relationships, hopefully hatred does not demand attention. Hatred lies at the extreme end of the continuum of attitudes at stake in our dealings with one another, and it is tempting to say that the beginning of hatred is the end of a relationship. Near the end of the Danish movie *The Celebration* from 1998, the patriarch, who has been exposed as guilty of incest at his own 60th birthday party, tells the gathering that he is aware that he has done something unforgivable. He acknowledges that his children might appropriately hate him, and that what has come forth will probably mean the end to his relationships with the persons gathered in the house. As this example illustrates, part of the reason why hatred is not an ordinary phenomenon in inter-personal relationships is that it invites abandoning the other or worse. It is, however, not true that relationships always end when hatred festers. The antipathy toward the odious other might have to be concealed or contained. For example, if we hate from a position of weakness or dependence, we might not be able to escape or avoid the continued presence of the hateful. This is where hatred can take the form of *ressentiment* as described by Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler. Thus, to be more precise, where hatred takes hold, relationships might not end, but instead become almost unbearable. As Søren Kierkegaard put it: For the one who hates 'it is agony to breathe in the same world where the hated one breathes. He shudders at the thought that eternity will again hold both of them' (Kierkegaard 2009: 286). And of course, even more complex combinations of hatred and continued coexistence emerges when we

hate the ones we love (Neu 2000), or when hatred is directed toward an aspect of our self.[3]

Thus, although hatred might be excluded from the realm of the ordinary or common place, there are sound reasons to include it in an investigation of attitudes in interpersonal relationships. Indeed, explorations of the dynamics of hatred in interpersonal relationships is the substance of much great literature. From Milton's depiction of the relationship between God and Satan and Shakespeare's of Iago and Othello, to the hateful interpersonal relationships between leading characters in modern novels by Haruki Murakami, Philip Roth, etc. Strawson's examples stay within the 'most comfortable area' (Strawson 1974: 6) between resentment and gratitude, but bringing in hatred seems to be only a matter of expanding the scope of the given examination. More than that, in relation to discussions and uses of Strawson, the inclusion of attention to hatred is interesting exactly because—and not in spite of—the excursion out of the 'comfort zone'. The perspective from the limit might bring to the fore aspects of Strawson's reflections that are left unnoticed in more straightforward analyses or uses of his essay.

Hatred and the Other

However, arguing that hatred has a place in interpersonal relationships does not by itself imply that it can be seen as a reactive attitude. It is essential to Strawson's account of the reactive attitudes that they are testimony of the importance to us of the quality of the will and attitudes of other persons. We care, for example, whether the other did what he did on purpose or accidentally and it makes a difference to us whether the one who has wronged us feels remorse and repudiates his acts or not. This can be true both in the interpersonal and in the social context. Consider, for example, Holocaust-survivor Jean Améry, who publicly

3 For anguished reflection on self-hatred, see the essay 'How Much Home Does a Person Need?' in Améry 1999.

defended the resentments he directed against his contemporaries in post-war Germany. The essay in which he tries to explain the basis and point of his resentments begins with expressions of uncertainty whether the peoples among whom he travels (when visiting Germany) can be trusted: How do they feel and what do they think about the Nazi past? How can a common life between us be restored if their attitude to what happened is typically to let bygones be bygones? Such questions are part and parcel of Améry's resentments, and his essays clearly illustrate how the harboring of resentment and indignation can be testimony of the importance to us of the attitudes and intentions of others.[4] But what is the case for hatred on this point? To what degree, if any, can we say that hatred testifies to the importance to us of the quality of the will and intentions of others?

Where hatred emerges in personal relationships and where it mixes with love or *ressentiment*, the one who hates an intimate other can be deeply concerned with the attitudes and intentions of the hateful person. We shall return to what might be called personal hatred later. But our attention to the possibility of highly personalized forms of hatred must not overshadow the fact that hatred can thrive without much concern about the intentions and attitudes of the individual target of hatred. Whereas anger is typically said to be about particular individuals, it is often considered a hallmark of hatred that it can be felt toward types, groups and categories. Indeed, the one who hates another because of the category or group to which the other (in the eyes of the one who hates) belongs, might be utterly *unconcerned* about the intentions and attitudes of the concrete individuals against whom his hatred is directed. As one reads in the judgement issued by the Israeli court where Adolf Eichmann stood trial: 'His hatred was cold and calculated, aimed rather against the Jewish People as a whole, than against the individual Jew, and for this very reason, it was so poisonous and destructive in all its manifestations.'[5]

4 Cf. Améry (1999). For a detailed analysis of Améry's reflections on resentment, see Brudholm (2008).

5 Cited from: http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/transcripts/

In such cases, the hater might take the expulsion or elimination of the odious, allegedly dangerous and intolerable, others quite personally. Nonetheless, he or she does not hate the hateful as individuals, but rather as deindividualized representatives of a certain category or as members of a particular group; Gay, Muslims, Jews, Tutsi, etc. What they—as individuals have done or what they individually think and feel—does not matter. Or rather, entrepreneurs of hatred do their best to cultivate a second-order norm, that what members of the outgroup feel and think *should* or *must* not matter; that being susceptible to the thoughts and feelings of the targeted people is a sign of weakness. As the the propagandists of the genocide in Rwanda put it in the eighth of the so-called 'Ten Commandments of the Bahutu': 'The Bahutu *must* cease to have any pity for the Batutsi' (Semelin 2007:76, author's italics).

Group-focused hatred—hatred directed toward members of a particular ascriptive identity group—represents the focal point of many recent philosophical, psychological and legal approaches to hatred. For example, a *hate crime* is a crime where the individual victim was chosen because of his or her group identity, and typically hate crime offenders have no personal relation to their victims. Likewise, *hate speech*—unlike standard cases of defamation—is precisely not of or concerning an individual plaintiff. Hate speech is 'the willful denigration of others based on their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, or other group characteristics' (Neu 2008: 154). In these cases of what is today legally represented as hateful acts and expressions, the individual victim of hatred is attacked because of *what* she or he is regarded to be—rather than for *who* she or he is. The individual victim is replaceable, not with anyone, but with anyone *within the group* toward which the perpetrators hatred is directed (cf. Blake 2006). Thus, identity-group based (racial, ethnic or religious) hatred seems to depart markedly from at least one of the salient characteristics of the reactive attitudes. It seems to pay no witness to a concern with the intentions and attitudes of the odious others. And yet. Because although it is true that group-focused hatreds/haters tend to be unconcerned with the thoughts and feelings of

the individual members belonging to the odious group or category, they might very well be almost obsessed with the *imaginaire* or the stereotypical representation of the object of hatred. For example, the antisemite might be passionately attached to a certain chimerical notion of 'the Jew'; an allegedly existential threat to 'us'; a fantastic picture of a monstrous creature filled with malevolence and hatred. Likewise, public incitements of hatred against entire groups, provide evidence of the degree to which (delusional and projective) beliefs about the quality of the (imagined) will of the object of such hate speech matters, matters to the manufacturing of hatred in the 'ingroup'. That is to say, the public cultivation of collective hatred typically builds on the imputation of malevolence or bad will to the outgroup and its members (cf. Semelin 2007). Through wildly exaggerated if not completely unsubstantiated rumours (cf. Horowitz 2001), the outgroup is presented as hellbent on the destruction of the ingroup and detailed accounts of the atrocities committed by the others provide 'evidence' about the depths of their cruel and hateful intentions. Thus, even collective hatred can be said to be concerned with the intentions, attitudes and will of the hateful, albeit in a quite perverse or skewed way.

Hatred and the objective attitude

According to Donald Horowitz, in the case of group-focused hatred, 'those who hate believe that the object of their hatred has properties that do not change. They believe that, in a certain sense, the objects of hatred cannot help themselves, that the attributes are embedded in their nature' (Horowitz 2001: 544). As one could read in an article printed in the Rwandan propaganda magazine *Kangura* from March 1993: 'A cockroach gives birth to a cockroach … the history of Rwanda shows us clearly that a Tutsi stays always exactly the same' (Melvern 2004: 50). Again and again, peoples targeted for destruction are represented as vile and disgusting subhuman beings. With the phrase coined by genocide scholar Helen Fein, they are removed from the 'universe of obligations'; i.e., 'the circle of individuals and groups toward whom obligations are

owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for amends' (Fein 1979: 4). Perhaps, we can say that what unfolds during the instigation and commission of collective mass violence constitutes nothing less than a wholesale ostracization of entire groups and their members from the very realm of the participant reactive attitudes? But then the question arises whether hatred is a participant attitude at all. The participant attitudes presuppose and express an acknowledgment of their target as 'a member of the moral community' (Strawson 1974: 22). For example, the emergence and expression of resentment is intrinsically tied to what Stephen Darwall has called 'recognition respect'. What we might call the resentable Other has the figure of a free and responsible person; someone who can in principle be held accountable and to whom we are ourselves accountable. Someone from whom we expect or demand a certain degree of goodwill, and to whom we ourselves owe a certain degree of goodwill. Someone, ultimately, who inhabits the same moral universe as us. All of this seems a far cry from the abovementioned illustrations of demonizing and deindividualizing hatred. Thus, we better pause to consider whether we are, so to speak, 'trying the wrong shoe' in so far as we try to analyze hatred as a participant reactive attitude. Perhaps, hatred—at least group-focused hatred—is not—or not only—a reactive participant attitude? Maybe it will be more appropriately conceptualized as what Strawson called the (non-participant) objective attitude:

> To adopt the objective attitude to another human being is to see him, perhaps, as an object of social policy; as a subject for what, in a wide range of sense might be called treatment […] The objective attitude may be emotionally toned in many ways, but not in all ways: it may include repulsion or fear, it may include pity or even love, though not all kinds of love. But it cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in inter-personal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which to adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocially for each other. If your attitude toward someone is wholly objective, then though you may fight him, you cannot quarrel with him, and though you may talk to him, even negotiate with him, you cannot reason with him. (Strawson 1974: 9).

Can the objective attitude be toned with hatred? Is hatred more appropriately analyzed as an objective rather than a participant attitude? The testimony of Primo Levi contains an attempt to describe the experience of being seen from within something like the objective attitude. Remembering the look of Dr. Pannwitz, chief of the chemical department at Auschwitz, Levi writes:

> That look was not one between two men; and if I had known how completely to explain the nature of that look, which came as if across the glass window of an aquarium between two beings who live in different worlds, I would also have explained the essence of the great insanity of the third Germany. (Levi 1987: 111-112).

In another passage from *If This Is a Man*, Levi remembers the Kapo Alex, who wiped his hand on Levi's shoulder as if Levi was just a piece of rag (ibid. 113). In both cases, Levi invests the events with utmost importance, but where is the hatred? Indeed, in the second instance, Levi writes that Alex wiped his hand on him 'without hatred and without sneering' (ibid. 114). From the other side of the 'glass window', there is Franz Stangl, the former commandant of Treblinka, who claimed that his attitude to the Jews 'had nothing to do with hate. They were so weak […] They were people with whom there was no common ground, no possibility of communication' (Sereny 1983: 233). Of course, such testimonies need contextual interpretation, but they do suffice to indicate that the objective attitude can be toned with indifference, or contempt rather than hatred. Indeed, avoiding hatred and the excesses it might prompt can be one reason why genocidal entrepreneurs promote an objective or dehumanizing attitude to the victim group. Should this prompt us to pursue the alternative, that hatred is a pure participant and not an objective attitude?

Having tried to ponder this issue for a while, I have come to think that this is probably a wrong question to pose and that the very distinction is probably unhelpful to an understanding of the discourses and practices of hatred as they surface in the modern history of mass murder. True, the expressions and psycho-logic of genocidal or ethnic

hatred provide testimony of demonization, deindividualization, etc. But, interestingly, none of this precludes the assignment of guilt and responsibility or the implementation of practices of accountability vis-à-vis the target group and its members. For example, if Hitler's *Mein Kampf* can be seen as a work of hatred (if there ever was one), then we may notice that it presents it object—the Jews—at the same time as subhumans (germs, parasites, disease, etc.) *and* as beings with traits and intentions that can only be ascribed to other human beings (e.g., being cold-hearted, a perpetual liar, a shameless and calculating being—and most importantly—a group that is consumed by hatred). In genocides, the target group and its members are defamed, discriminated against or attacked qua as instances or incarnations of an odious essence. As Joseph Goebbels put it, with scary precision: 'Die Juden sind Schuld'—'the Jews are guilt' (cf. Herf 2005: 122). Not, the Jews are guilty! The 'category-mistake', the twisting of the ordinary grammar of guilt, mirrors precisely the genocidal twisting of ordinary moral assumptions as to the objects and presuppositions of accountability. It is the self-same 'logic' that surfaces in a testimony about an eleven-year-old Tutsi girl, pleading with the killers to forgive her; not for having done this or that, but for *being* a Tutsi.[6] There is a blindness or a certain imperviousness to dignity, individuality, and rights, but not of humanity. There is talk about guilt and responsibility, but it is collectivized and even transgenerational. Similar points can be obtained from a close look at particular scenes of genocidal atrocities. That is, they confront us with violence that, as argued by Johannes Lang (2010), becomes inexplicable unless we concede that the perpetrator sees his victims as a sensitive and cultivated human subject. 'It is', writes Lang, 'the *human* quality of the interaction [between perpetrator and victim] that provides the violence with much of its meaning' (Lang 2010: 225). Consider just one example of violent humiliation that would not make sense if the perpetrator had adopted a thorough and wholly objective attitude:

6 Cf. http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk/assets/docs/testimonies/valentina-izibagiza.pdf

> A rabbi in Lodz was forced to spit on a Torah scroll that was in the Holy Ark. In fear of his life, he complied and desecrated that which was holy to him and to his people. After a short while he had no more saliva, his mouth was dry. To the Nazi's question, why did he stop spitting, the rabbi replied that his mouth was dry. The son of the 'superior race' began to spit in the rabbi's mouth, and the rabbi continued to spit on the Torah. (Chaim Kaplan, Warsaw Diary, cited from Gaita 2000: 68).

Perhaps, humans attitudes to other human beings—even in the contexts of what seems like complete dehumanization—are never *wholly* objective? It might be tempting to think that genocide, and especially personal participation in mass murder, always require dehumanization and a massive adoption of an objective attitude to the victims. But the picture is enormously complex. Dehumanization and objectifying attitudes *are* salient features of any modern mass murder. At the same time, to uphold a thorough and wholly objective of attitude is perhaps impossible and at least a struggle. Recall, for example, Heinrich Himmler's speech at Posen, where he ridiculed Nazis who saluted the grand-scale extermination, but could not overcome their sympathy with their particular and exceptionally decent Jewish acquaintances. So, how useful is the distinction between participant and objective attitudes? Let us recall that Strawson not only presented the distinction, but also cautioned (although with very different cases in mind) that there is in us a tension between these ways of regarding people. Arguably, this tension is at least as important as the distinction. Thus, instead of speculating whether it is intelligible to hate someone to whom our attitude is wholly objective, we should be sensitive to testimony of the *tension*—perhaps the dialectics or the temporal or social dynamics—between the two kinds of attitude. As Arne Johan Vetlesen has put it, 'dehumanization is the work of negation': 'the anti-Semite whose project is to deprive the Jew of all human traits, to present him as "vermin" so as to exclude him from the category of possible addresses of empathy, contradicts himself; the hatred that spurs him to dehumanize is fed by what can only be an exclusively human source.' (Vetlesen 1994: 258f). So, is hatred, as

Vetlesen concludes 'from beginning to end a relation between humans and humans only' (ibid.)?

I endorse Vetlesen's conclusion as a useful reminder of the dialectical complexity of de-humanizing hatred, but does hatred always and necessarily require a human object? Certainly, the ordinary use of the verb 'hate' is not restricted to persons (whether self or other). We regularly use the word to express our antipathy to almost anything, from rainy days and wet dogs to particular ideologies, entire nations if not humanity as a whole (misanthropy). My eight-year-old daughter professes her 'hatred' of a whole variety of things on a regular basis. And indeed, when asked whether there is anyone person that she hates, the response is an emphatic denial. But then her use of the word is most often not meant seriously anyway. Yet, is it not perfectly intelligible sometimes to 'really' hate things, animals, dimensions of our existence, or traits in the character of another or ourselves even as we appreciate or actually do not regard the object as responsible for its odious quality? In such cases, the hatred of things or traits or conditions might share with the hatred of persons, a sense that 'there is something inherently wrong with it, something that cannot be ameliorated' (Chirot & McCauley 2006: 73); wherefore it would be better if the object did not exist or at least did not exist in our lifeworld. Of course, when directed toward human beings, hatred can be more profound and serious, but it seems to me more difficult than first expected to say anything clearly as to whether hatred is 'paradigmatically' or 'primarily' or 'strictly speaking only' about persons. The tricky question is whether this should be taken to imply that all kinds of hatred are really born of a primitive kind of loathing, revulsion, ill will or antipathy. And then, when human beings are hated because of what they are or how they look, etc., the imputation of a hateful or evil essence is simply a post hoc rationalization. 'You see,' says the hate-mongering anti-Semite as portrayed by Jean-Paul Sartre, 'there must be *something* about the Jews; they upset me physically' (Sartre 1995: 10).

Retributive reactive resentment

Our examination whether the Strawsonian framework can help us become more clear about how to conceptualize hatred has reached an important point. We have been concerned with the basic question whether hatred fits into the overall category of the reactive attitudes at all. Now it is time to focus on the more specific relationship between resentment and hatred; the paradigm retributive reactive attitude and the new and peculiar candidate under examination What is at stake involves questioning whether there is a kind of hatred that is close enough to resentment to qualify as member of the same class of retributive reactive attitudes. Yet, what is most important is not the classificatory issue, but—again—whether the comparison with resentment can help us become more clear about how to think about hatred.

Resentment, as conceptualized by Strawson, is a kind of moral anger directed toward other persons in response to, or maybe as an aspect of, our belief or perception that we have been culpably wronged. More precisely, resentment is an affective response to the ill will or lack of concern of others as displayed in their behaviour. As such, resentment rests on, and reflects, 'an expectation of, and demand for, the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings toward ourselves' (Strawson 1974: 14). What is at stake in resentment can be our interests or rights, our self-esteem or our self-respect and dignity, but it would be misleading to say that resentment is only about the maintenance of the self. What is at stake is always also the norms of coexistence with the person against whom resentment is directed. Strawson distinguished between resentment and indignation and presented the latter as a 'vicarious' kind of resentment that we might feel toward those who have wronged others. As a retributive reactive attitude, resentment involves seeing and relating to the agent toward whom it is directed as having done wrong. It tends to 'inhibit or at least to limit our goodwill' toward the culpable other, but holding the other affectively to account in resentment, does not involve 'viewing their object other than as a member of the moral community'

(Strawson 1974: 22). It is, to the contrary, 'all of a piece' (Strawson 1974: 16) with recognizing the other as a free and accountable fellow. The ways in which resentment is amenable to change are testimony of the tie between resentment and our notions of responsibility. Resentment can be mollified, for example, if we come to see the injury as one for which the other was not responsible; if we choose to forgive the wrongdoer (e.g., as invited by the perpetrator's repudiation of the attitude displayed in his deeds), or if we come to view the agent himself as somehow not a fully responsible agent (e.g., because 'he was not himself' or he was acting under duress). Of course, resentment can be mistaken, inappropriate, unjustifiable and even pathological. Yet, and as noticed by Strawson, it would be an 'exaggerated horror, itself suspect' if one was able to see in resentment only pathology and irrational cravings. This, in a highly condensed version, is Strawson's concept of resentment.

Notice that resentment, as conceptualized by Strawson (and behind him Joseph Butler and Adam Smith), is a long way from *ressentiment* as conceptualized by Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler. Not the least with regard to the role played by hatred in the two instances. There is no need at all to bring in hatred in order to account for resentment, but in the case of *ressentiment*, hatred—suppressed hatred and impotent vindictiveness—plays a pivotal role as the substrate from which *ressentiment* develops. That being said, in order to avoid overburdening this paper, we better leave aside an otherwise interesting inclusion of attention to *ressentiment*.[7] The given concept of resentment is also a long way from group-focused hatred as we traced it through the previous sections. Clearly, the 'dehumanizing' and delusional cultivation of genocidal hatred directed against entire groups was emphatically not what Strawson had in mind—even marginally—when addressing resentment in interpersonal relationships. There is, however, another face of hatred.

7 I have elsewhere paid close attention to the relationship between resentment and *ressentiment*. Cf. Brudholm 2008.

Retributive reactive hatred

Hating someone need not take the form of 'I hate him because he is a Jew' or 'I yelled at her because I hate Muslims', etc. Focusing on group identities is not the only way of focusing on the *kind* of person someone is. We could think of someone saying 'I hate her because she is a cruel and malicious person' or 'I hate him because of what he did to me'. A literary example could be found in the passionate response of Alyosha ('Shoot him') to Ivan's account (in *The Brothers Karamazov*) of the General who set his dogs on a little boy.[8] Another possible example is this statement by Larry Hollingworth when asked to comment on a bombardment by Serbian artillery of a square in Srebrenica:

> My first thought was for the commander who gave order to attack. I hope he burns in the hottest corner of hell. My second thought was for the soldiers who loaded the breeches and fired the guns. I hope their sleep is forever punctuated by the screams of the children and the cries of their mothers (Maass 1996: 189).[9]

Such hatred is related to a character-evaluation and it is perfectly intelligible without any concern with the group-identity of its object. What we might call character-focused moral hatred or simply retributive reactive hatred is often neglected in current discussions of hate crime, ethnic prejudice and collective violence, but it is a highly appropriate candidate for the comparison with resentment.

Like resentment (or indignation), retributive reactive hatred can be seen as an interpersonal attitude, something that A feels toward B. Like resentment proper, such hatred can be categorized as an affective response to the malevolence or culpable indifference of others as displayed in their behaviour; a response most likely, to degrees of malevolence or kinds of indifference that are much worse in nature than the kind of cases fit for resentment. Again, like resentment, retributive

8 For an excellent discussion of this example, see Murphy (2009). And special thanks to Jeffrie Murphy for reminding me of the need to look beyond current notions of hatred.
9 The shelling happened in April 1993 and killed more than 50 persons. Hollingworth was being present as a member of the UN High Commission for Refugees (cf. Maass).

reactive hatred can be said to rest on and be testimony of a commitment to certain fundamental normative demands and expectations: One does not shell civilians; soldiers must not commit war crimes. One should not be indifferent or stand idly by in the face of the ordeal and suffering of others. Finally, retributive reactive hatred—the hatred felt by victims and witnesses of *actual* atrocities or evildoing—is a response to actual events or actions and the attitudes displayed in them. In order to account for such hatred, we do not need recourse to theories of prejudice, projection, propaganda, myth-making or bad faith. Like retributive reactive resentment, retributive reactive hatred can be seen simply as a moral response to serious breaches of basic normative demands and expectations. Whether retributive reactive hatred can be morally justified or not is uncertain (especially if one is thinking about acting out such hatred rather than merely assenting to the attitude), but—paraphrasing Strawson—it would seem to me exaggerated and itself suspect if one was able to see in such hatred only pathology and irrational cravings.[10]

So far there seems to be a good case for giving this kind of hatred the status of a retributive reactive attitude. But, of course, we also need to pay close attention to the possible differences between retributive reactive hatred and retributive reactive resentment. 'Hatred' writes Jon Elster in a formulaic passage, 'is the emotion that A feels toward B if he believes that B has an evil character. The action-tendency is to cause B to cease to exist or otherwise be rendered harmless, for instance by permanent expulsion' (Elster 2004: 230). By implication, retributive reactive hatred can be distinguished from retributive reactive resentment along several lines: By the belief it involves, by the object it takes, and by the actions it craves. Let us elaborate a bit on each of these features.

First, unlike resentment, retributive reactive hatred involves a belief or a judgment that the wrongdoer has an evil character—or that he is basically a loathsome or intolerable kind of person. But unlike projective-

10 For a comparable distinction between projective and reactive hatred, see Vetlesen 1994. Also, the idea of retributive moral hatred is elaborated by Jeffrie Murphy in Murphy and Hampton 1988.

collective hatreds, and like resentment, this representation of the moral character of the odious other is based on experience with the malevolence or indifference of B as displayed in his behaviour (possibly joined by his relentless upholding of pride and identity in that behaviour, as in cases of unrepentant *genocidaires*). In other words: The belief or evaluative judgment that B has an evil character is derived from having suffered or witnessed or heard about his deeds and his attitudes to these deeds. This is a point that is seldom recognized and that escapes attention when all hatred is seen in the picture of projective-collective hatred which really is caused by (irrational, prejudiced, delusional) beliefs about the essence of others, *not* mediated by, indeed rather impervious to, social reality.

Second, with regard to the intentional object of respectively hatred and resentment, it may be tempting to use the common distinction between acts and agents to the effect that whereas resentment is about *actions* ('I resent that …'), hatred is about *agents* ('I hate you'). However, this is probably a too simplistic perspective on the emotional experience. Both with regard to resentment and with regard to hatred (of the retributive reactive kind). With regard to resentment, remember that it is about the attitude of the other as displayed in his behaviour. In other words, the thoughts and feelings of the person who harbors interpersonal resentment are not about an abstract act. They are about the culpable acts of a particular agent, and feeling resentment towards another because of certain acts of his implies, e.g., a certain lowering of esteem for the other (cf. Allais 2008). With regard to hatred, it is correct that it is rather about what the other is than about what he has done. But A's retributive reactive hatred of B's character cannot be accounted for without inclusion of attention to B's self-expressive behaviour. Thus, whether we think of resentment or hatred, the Biblical words that the tree is known by its fruits is perhaps as important to reflect upon as the more often used Augustinean adage to hate the sin and love the sinner.

Third, the 'action-tendency' or the characteristic aims or desires involved in hatred differs from those characteristically related to resentment. As noticed by Strawson, resentment tends to inhibit goodwill

somewhat, but in a way that is tied to regarding the wrongdoer as a member of the moral community. As a response to a perceived breach of a normative expectation, resentment may motivate demands that the moral nature of what happened is acknowledged, that the culpable party is appropriately censured, that retribution is exacted or 'reassurance' that the norms that have been breached are back in order (Walker 2007). But what will soothe hatred? Inspired by Aristotle, Elster points to elimination or expulsion (according to Aristotle, the person who hates wishes that the hateful will 'cease to exist' (*Rhetoric*, 1382a14)).[11]

There is a fourth interesting difference that needs to be brought out for examination, and it has to do with the respective relationship between the two attitudes to our practices of 'moral repair' of human relationships (cf. Walker 2007). Over and across historical as well as disciplinary divides, hatred has been seen as an attitude of exceptional longevity and intractability, impervious, in various ways, to adjustment to new evidence or change of circumstances; a 'stubborn structure' as Gordon Allport wrote, 'in the mental-emotional life of the individual' (Allport 1979: 373). Of course, resentment too can fester and we can become 'possessed' by resentment, etc. But ideally and typically, resentment, contrary to hatred, represents a social and communicative attitude—'hardwired' to reparative practices like apology, repentance, and forgiveness. Hatred, if or when it concerns how we feel about other persons *as a result of their actions* (rather than as a result of *our* prejudices or projections) would seem, in principle, to be able to be mollified through excuses, forgiving, etc. That is, although we need testimony of a radical change of character rather than 'simply' a repudiation of a particular offense, changing the way we feel about the target of our hatred should be possible. Indeed, retributive reactive hatred, though hostile can maybe only be preserved as long as the victim

11 Notice, however, that even if one endorses the point that hatred is characterized by a wish for elimination, it does not predict that people who hate certain others will actually wish or work toward their elimination. Evidently, the actions of persons in concrete situations is influenced by a whole host of factors. Thus, even if there is a wish for elimination or a hateful retribution it might be moderated by other factors.

upholds some notion that the odious are somehow worthy of the recognition-respect accorded to people to whom agency and individual will can be imputed. 'How can you hate those who are so repulsive?' said an 86-year-old woman to a vindictive younger female survivor of Omarska and the ethnic violence in Bosnia. And she added: 'I realized that the people I was directing my hatred toward were not worth that; they were only machines for murdering people' (cited from Minow 1999: 267).

Thus, why is hatred thought to be more 'stubborn', extraordinarily resistant to transformation? To begin with, what is at stake is not just a particular offense. Ultimately, the retributive reactive hater has come to view the other as a basically indecent, evil or intolerable person, a bad or badly tainted character, perhaps expected to be *incorrigibly* bad. Add to this a wish that the odious other would cease to exist, one way or the other. Contrary to retributive reactive resentment, these features of retributive reactive hatred do not invite dialogical encounters with the one toward whom the attitude is directed. Indeed, pretending that those we hate do not exist is one possible strategy when the power or the will to do more is not available. Thus even retributive reactive hatred veers toward moving its target outside the field of moral negotiation and repair. Even if retributive reactive hatred is compatible with acknowledgment of some kinds of respect of the worth of the target, when hatred feels appropriate there is nothing much to talk about. Correspondingly, hate speech is expressive and it can often be said to 'send a message', but it is not communicative or dialogical.

A kind of conclusion

So, a messy bundle of notions and apparent examples of hatred have been mixed into the more clear conceptual framework offered by Strawson in 'Freedom and Resentment'. Did the 'shoe' fit after all? Or would squeezing hatred into the concept of the retributive reactive attitudes require too much cutting away of 'toe' and 'heel'? If one tried to provide an account of hatred that conceptualized it generically as a retributive reactive attitude, then yes, that would be a truncated account. There is a

need for a nuanced, spacious and empirically informed account that is able to accommodate both projective and reactive hatred. But then the 'shoe' did fit in so far as one kind of hatred does seem to me well captured with the concept of the retributive reactive attitudes. True, hatred is not a paradigm case of a retributive reactive attitude and the comparison with resentment has helped to bring that out. There is more to the relationship between resentment and hatred than a simple opposition or a simple matter of relative intensity. But the differences do not disqualify hatred from membership in this subclass of attitudes. However, what came to me as a surprise and anyways as the most important 'lesson', was the degree to which Strawson's essay as a whole was able to fruitfully question given notions as to the ambiguous phenomenon of hatred.

As almost always, one ends with more questions than as one began. For example, what should we think about the relationship between collective-projective and retributive-reactive hatreds? Is it possible to articulate some (prototypical) common denominators or should we work along the idea of Wittgensteinean family resemblances? How to include *fear*? It has been alluded to along the way and perhaps both resentment and hatred respond to a fearful threat; in the case of resentment to a threat to a particular normative order, in the case of hatred to a sense of *existential* threat (whether individual or collective)? [12] And what would happen if one at this point added a comparison with love to the examination? Is love the more direct (compared to resentment) opponent of hatred? Implying a similar intentional object but opposite action-tendencies and opposite beliefs about its object? Also, I have deliberately tried to keep distance to the question how we should morally judge hatred, but is hatred—and I am in particular thinking about the retributive reactive kind—necessarily a moral vice? Is the preclusion of dialogue and communication always wrong? That depends, in part, on the question whether hatred always wishes harm for harm's sake, and on the question whether it is ever

12 For an elaborate account of resentment that includes attention to the idea of a 'threat', see Walker (2007).

appropriate to see people as evil and as 'to be annihilated'—even considering that is moral and philosophical dynamite.[13]

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