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## SOME REMARKS ON UNFOCUSED HATRED: IDENTITY OF THE HATED ONE AND CRITERIA OF ADEQUACY<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Thomas Szanto has recently argued that hatred could not be a fitting emotion because of its blurred focus. It thus cannot trace the properties of its intentional object. Although I agree with the core of Szanto's account, I would like to discuss two connected issues that might be of importance. First, I want to address whether the unfittingness of hatred has anything to do with the possibility that the hated person does not identify with what they are hated for. I conclude that if the focus of hatred is blurred, hatred does not trace the identification of the hated person or group. Next, I propose a possibility that (certain) criteria of adequacy of hatred (why someone is treated by members of society as hateworthy) are embedded in the cultural and social framework in such a way that they are not necessarily intelligibly justified by their relation to the focus and import it has. Under such circumstances, with hatred still being unfitting, these criteria create quasi-correctness of hatred (actually, they trace properties of someone being hateworthy). If this is correct, it will enable us to keep the thesis that hatred cannot be fitting. At the same time, we could use political vocabulary to tackle hatred that is common in cases when a group will not give up their commitment to hatred and argue that some people or group of people is not to be hated under the hating group's own criteria.

### KEYWORDS

hatred, identity, fittingness, criteria of adequacy, appropriateness, emotions

In his recent paper *In Hate we Trust: The Collectivization and Habitualization of Hatred*, Thomas Szanto argued that hatred could not be a fitting emotion because its focus is blurred, and thus it cannot trace the properties of its intentional object (Szanto 2018). Although I agree with the core of Szanto's argument, I would like to discuss two connected issues that might be of importance. First, I want to address the question of whether unfittingness of hatred

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has anything to do with the possibility that the hated person does not identify themselves with what they're being hated for. This question is inspired by Benet W. Helm's analysis of how love could be inadequate. According to Helm love cannot be adequate if properties that justify our love are not an important part of the loved person's own identity. So, to conclude within our topic – if the focus of hatred is blurred, hatred will not trace the identification of the hated person or group. This is partially because given the lack of a clear focus, the criteria for why someone is treated as hateworthy are arbitrary. However, the issue is not only that this conclusion seems contra-intuitive, but also that we lose important parts of our vocabulary in tackling hatred.

By following the implications from the previously addressed issue, I will try to propose a possibility that (certain) criteria of adequacy of hatred (why someone is considered hateworthy) are embedded in the cultural and social framework in such a way that they are not necessarily intelligibly justified by their relation to the focus of hatred and its import. Under such circumstances (with hatred still being unfitting), these criteria create quasi-fittingness or quasi-correctness of hatred. They trace properties of being hateworthy. If this is correct, it enables us to uphold the thesis that hatred cannot be a fitting emotion. At the same time, we could use to tackle hatred vocabulary that is common in cases when the group refuses to give up their commitment to hatred and argue that some people or group of people shouldn't be hated under the hating group's own criteria.

### The Core of the Szanto's Argument

Szanto's argument is grounded in the focus-based account of a fittingness of emotion (for more precise clarification of the focus-based account of fittingness, see Szanto in this volume). Following D'Arms' and Jacobson's distinction, Szanto rightly makes a difference between moral (in)appropriateness and (non-moral) fittingness of emotions (D'Arms, Jacobson 2000).<sup>2</sup> The fittingness of emotions is determined by whether emotion properly follows (evaluative) properties of the situation or the object the emotion is directed to. Usually, those evaluative properties are defined by a formal object of emotion (e.g., the formal object of fear is dangerousness). The focus-based account of fittingness highlights the relation of emotion's target to its affective focus. (Focus is a background object of the concern for the subject, while target is the object emotion is immediately directed to, see Helm 2001: 69). Fittingness of emotions, thus, brings the question of whether the target properly affects the focus of emotion in a way that it matters to the subject. Szanto argues that because the focus of hatred is blurred (uninformative as to how target could affect the focus), we cannot establish the relation of the target to the focus, and, consequently,

<sup>2</sup> D'Arms and Jacobson introduce the third possibility, the question if emotion is prudential (to us). In addition, Deonna and Teroni argued for a difference between the question of fittingness and that of epistemic standards (Deonna, Teroni 2012: 6–7, 44ff.). For more about possibility of moral appropriateness of hatred see Szanto in this volume.

hatred cannot be fitting. He proposes that we understand hatred as a shared attitude, source of which power is in the community – in the shared commitment of its members.

I will first try to test the implications of Szanto's account on cases in which the hated person does not identify themselves with what they're being hated for. Following Szanto's argument, it seems that it is not possible to make an (intuitive) difference in fittingness of hatred toward someone who is identifying themselves with what they're being hated for and toward a person who *does not* identify themselves so. This is the case because in both examples we lack a clear focus to address the fittingness of these emotions. It is for the same reason that hatred can not be fitting and that we can not argue that hatred toward someone who doesn't identify themselves with what they're hated for is (even more) unfitting. Moreover, it seems that the criteria for why someone is treated as hateworthy are arbitrary. I will propose a possibility that such criteria are embedded in a social and cultural framework and create a quasi-fitting relation of the target and the hating attitude. With this conclusion we keep the core of Szanto's account – that hatred cannot be fitting, while at the same time we can explain why the targets of hatred are treated as hateworthy.

### Identity of the Hated?

Love and hatred are certainly not only opposite but also phenomenologically different emotions. However, something in the question of the adequacy of love is intriguing and could possibly be connected to the question of the adequacy of hatred. Just like hatred, love is an emotion focused on a person as a whole that does not simply trace properties in the way, for example, fear does (Helm 2009: 175–206). Because, if that was the case, we could replace the person we love with another who possesses similar traits, and we would also lose the autonomy we assume we have when loving other people. This does not mean that love is arbitrary or that it can not be inadequate. As Helm argued, by addressing what he calls the question of discernment of love (what makes someone worthy of your potential love or more worthy of that love than others?), love can be inadequate if the loved person does not identify themselves with what we love them for:

[...] the properties we appeal to in justifying loving someone are an appropriate basis for that love only if they are more or less central to her identity, for otherwise we would not love her for who she is and so would not properly love *her*. (Helm 2009: 191–192)

Now, the question is could a similar conclusion be made for hatred? Could we say that hatred can be adequate or inadequate in the same way? Is it possible that hatred is inadequate because the person we hate does not identify themselves with what we hate them for? And is it possible to make this argument in line with Szanto's account about the unfittingness of hatred?

Let us make an example. Mickey is a passionately committed member of the Serbian Orthodox community from Bosnia that took part in the 90's Yugoslav wars. As a part of his membership in the community, he fosters a long-lasting hatred toward the Muslim community (the other side in this conflict), manifested as a shared commitment to hate Muslims and embedded in his culture through "feeling rules" that regulate their emotional reactions (see Hochschild 1983, cf. Szanto in this volume). This hatred is then directed at individuals who are in any way identified as connected to the Muslim community. It can be argued that this hatred could be characterized as overgeneralizing and thus inappropriate or unfitting precisely in the way Szanto claims. (The hatred cannot be reduced to those who partook in the war, nor to a particular ethnicity, and it remains unclear what the actual focus of his hatred is and what he or his community actually cares for).

Let us take the example further. At some moment in his life, Mickey has immigrated to Sweden for economic reasons (dire socio-economic situation in Bosnia) to support his family financially. After a few years of living in Sweden, during which he has remained committed to his Serbian Orthodox roots (and his hatred), he got a new neighbor – Amar. Amar was born in the Muslim family in Bosnia and has also immigrated to Sweden. This fact has immediately 'activated' Mickey's hatred – now aimed toward Amar, and made him curse the day he got such a neighbor. (He started thinking of moving to a new apartment and also doing irrational things to frustrate Amar). A few weeks later, Mickey learned that Amar did not identify himself as a member of the Muslim community (perhaps thanks to Mickey's wife Mia, who has always found his hatred irrational and has tried to make a friendly neighboring connection with Amar's wife). Not only that Amar did not identify himself religiously or ethnically with the Muslim community, during the war, he helped some Serbs escape certain death. He was trying to be human, avoiding the war-evils from both sides. For this reason, he was partially excommunicated from his own community, and he finally immigrated to forget all about the war horrors. In a word, being a member of the Muslim community is not a part of Amar's identity.

At first, Mickey's reasoning could be distorted by his hatred (see Goldie 2009: 237–238). He could probably try to 'justify' it by arguing that "blood is thicker than water!", that "apple doesn't fall far from the tree" or simply say "it doesn't matter, that he is a Muslim and always will be, and they are all the same". However, rather than just explaining the overgeneralization of his hatred, these additional arguments also reveal an internal conflict Mickey may have in answering himself a question "is Amar hateworthy?".

In Mickey's case, this conflict could be resolved in different ways. Probably, his hatred will prevail, and he will always hate Amar (regardless of Amar's behavior and attitudes); or he could probably give up his hatred toward Muslims in his interaction with Amar (and with the support of his wife Mia); or he could somehow hold to his hatred toward Muslims, but not direct it toward Amar. My aim here is not to address these possible solutions, but to do justice to the possibility of this internal conflict.

The intuition says that Mickey's hate towards Amar is not in the same way (in)adequate or (un)fitting as it would be if directed toward someone who is a passionately committed and self-identified member of the Muslim community in Bosnia – let's say Ibro. On the other hand, following Szanto's account, it could be argued that in both cases, Mickey's hatred is simply unfitting as it would be – because its focus is blurred. However, I find this answer to be unsatisfactory. It is not only that we lose the important part of our critical vocabulary (that will Mia perhaps use to persuade Mickey not to hate Amar), but it could not do justice to the conflict Mickey may have – it cannot explain the difference between the appropriateness of hate toward Amar and Ibro, respectively. The other way to address this problem could be to account for a degree of fittingness. Although Mickey's hatred directed toward Ibro can never be fitting (as Szanto argued), his hatred toward Amar is unfitting to such a degree it is made obvious. In other words, the focus of hatred is blurred in such a way that it could never be a fitting emotion, but not blurred enough to prevent us from saying that particular hatred (toward Amar) is unfitting in a very clear way: hatred toward Ibro is unfitting because the focus is blurred, but hatred toward Amar is also unfitting because it does not relate to the focus. I would not like to go in this direction. This argument will imply that even if the focus is blurred, there are some focus-related properties that could be evaluated. This, in turn, changes the whole argument, for then it should be explained to which degree hatred, in general, could be fitting, and this is something I do not intend to do. Among other reasons, I believe that this would sidetrack the concrete phenomenological argument.

The different view of the problem could be to differentiate between the general unfittingness of hatred and its direction towards a particular target. It means that Mickey's hatred toward the Muslims is unfitting, but we could also evaluate to which degree his hatred toward Amar or Ibro is adequate (do they actually belong to the Muslim community). However, this seems to be a dead-end. There is a conceptual and philosophical problem here. For the same reason Mickey's hatred is unfitting in general, we do not have the criteria to address the fittingness of the hatred directed at Ibro and Amar, i.e., what constitutes the criteria for someone to be a member of the group that Mickey hates in terms of focus-relevant properties – giving a rather pessimistic result we could hardly argue, that Mickey's hatred toward Amar is more unfitting than his hate toward Ibro.

So far, it seems that if Mickey's hatred is generally unfitting, then we have no reasons to argue that his hatred toward Amar is qualitatively more unfitting than his hatred toward Ibro. This solution seems to be in line with Szanto's account that hatred does not trace the properties of the target. But this also forces me to conclude that, as opposed to love, hatred does not trace the identification of its targets. With the focus of hatred being blurred, we cannot determine which properties are relevant (perhaps Mickey also cannot do it for himself), as well as if having 'Islamic genes' is more or less 'relevant' than Amar's self-identification, or even identification of the Muslim community in

general. For example, for anti-Semitism in Germany during WW2, in some cases, it was more relevant if someone had Jewish origins than if this person identified themselves as a Jew. It seems that criteria for directing hatred toward a particular person are so arbitrary and culturally dependent that we could not address the issue purely in terms of phenomenological or epistemic fittingness.

The previous conclusion is not theoretically uninteresting. In the last example, Mickey seems to have some criteria that tell him that he 'should' hate Ibro. These criteria are not entirely fulfilled in Amar's case. This partial (un)fulfillment could be the source of the conflict Mickey might have. The more important point is that such criteria do not need (descriptively, not normatively) to have their sources in the focus of emotion and the relation of the focus to the target. Instead, considering Szanto's proposition, to treat hatred as a shared commitment, these criteria could have their (arbitrary) sources in community.

### Criteria of Adequacy

Achim Stephan has recently developed a supplement to the theory of adequacy of emotion, by emphasizing, among other things, the role the *fundamentum in cultu* plays in our emotional response. We could understand the concept of *fundamentum in re* through the question of whether emotions do justice to their object and its (evaluative) properties (e.g. if something we fear is actually dangerous). While *Fundamentum in persona* highlights the question of whether the situation actually has a relevant degree of significance for the emoter, i.e., if the relevant focus is important for them. *Fundamentum in cultu* refers to the emotion's foundation in culture: "[...] for usually members of our (or another) social environment show us whether they find our emotional reactions appropriate and acceptable" (Stephan 2017: 3). *Fundamentum in cultu* could be compared to *fundamentum in persona*, for they both reveal the significant focus or, more precisely – in many cases, *fundamentum in persona* is scaffolded in *fundamentum in cultu* with the focus having its significance for a particular culture, group, or society (Stephan 2017: 7; cf. Colombetti, Krueger 2014; Griffiths, Scarantino 2005). The difference between these two concepts is most visible in situation when cultural criteria are in conflict with person's own concerns. However, according to Stephan, cultural background can also impact the *fundamentum in re*:

Without doubt, considering the – as we have seen, indispensable – cultural dimension will lead to further intricacies, when discussing the adequacy of emotional reactions. Some emotional reactions seem to have their *fundamentum in re* only against the background of corresponding specific cultural imprints: there, it is the particular cultural framework that establishes and defines the significance of the FOCUS for all members of such an emotionally affected social group and hence for each of its single subjects; and it is this FOCUS that underlies their various emotional reactions (the FOCUS, then, is truly affected by the TARGETS of their emotional reactions, and insofar their emotional reactions have a *fundamentum in re*). (Stephan 2017: 7)

Considering that Szanto explains hatred as a shared attitude with the source of its power in the community, it seems reasonable to argue that hatred has its *fundamentum in cultu*. In other words, hatred is partially justified in being treated as an acceptable and appropriate reaction by other fellow members of our community (inter-subjectively, or intra-subjectively on a level of group agents). If this could provide *fundamentum in re*, as Stephan claims, then it seems that we could give an explanation on how hatred traces properties of its objects. However, Stephan's account, as well as Szanto's, is focus-based, and given that focus is blurred, this will not be the case with hatred – and I tend to agree with that conclusion.

Achim Stephan also introduces another related argument, remarked in the mentioned article (personal correspondence, Stephan 2017: 8). The idea is that criteria of adequacy are socially and culturally dependent. This needs further clarification. The basic idea is the following. The fittingness of emotion depends on the formal object that follows the properties of the target, e.g., the formal object of fear is dangerousness, and fear follows if the object in question is dangerous. There are, of course, obvious situations when something is or is not dangerous. For example, if we ask if it is adequate to fear a dog – probably yes, if it is huge, aggressive, has big teeth, and is infected with rabies; but also probably no, if it is an aching, injured puppy. Real situations we encounter are, however, much more complex. The idea is that our cultural and social framework partly defines the criteria by which something would be treated as, let's say, dangerous enough for us to have an emotional reaction; those criteria also dictate the appropriate intensity of our reaction. Those criteria, of course, intelligibly depend on the import of the focus.

Now, the argument I would like to introduce is that in some cases, those criteria could be clearly defined (to the possible extent) and embedded in the community without having an actual source in the intelligible relation to the focus of the emotion. Let me address Mickey's example for a moment again. Let's say that Mickey shared his concern with his fellows in Bosnia about his hatred toward Amar and after that recognized that Amar "should be" hated. To put it simply, he recognized that someone who has Muslim roots fulfills the criteria of his own community to be treated as hateworthy (that is what others agree upon). Now, let's make this example a bit more complicated. The following year, Mickey came back to Bosnia. He found that a person he knew, Zoran, decided to change his religion, became a Muslim, and now identifies himself with the Muslim community. Mickey and his fellows recognized (without thinking) that he should not be treated as hateworthy because of his Serbian Orthodox roots. They find that being identified with the Muslim community is not a culturally and socially accepted criterion for treating someone as hateworthy while having Muslim roots is (independently of a person's own identification).

The purpose of this example is not to claim that this is actually the case (with Bosnian Serbs and Muslims), nor that there is any rational line to follow in this solution (it might be the other way around as well), but, on the contrary, to show that these criteria are more or less arbitrary. Whether Mickey's

community shares the criteria that someone with Muslim roots or someone identified with the Muslim community should be ‘seen’ as hateworthy does not seem to follow any logic, nor does it have a relation to the focus, which it cannot due to the focus being blurred. Nevertheless, these criteria could be embedded in the cultural framework and, as such, be well-known to every member of the society (or in some cases, they could be part of emotional patterns and ‘feeling rules’ individual members are not reflexively aware of, but could become aware).<sup>3</sup>

If this proposal seems right, then those criteria create a quasi-fittingness of hatred. To be more precise, once those criteria are fulfilled, it seems adequate for an emoter to hate the object that has fulfilled those criteria. This quasi-fittingness, of course, is not fittingness in usual terms, for it does not specify how objects affect the focus. However, it might explain how these criteria are embedded in the social framework (as well as hatred as a shared attitude) trace properties of objects which fulfill them. In that sense, hatred can not be fitting, but could still be recognized as (un)fitting by members of a particular community – and that is why I use the term quasi-fitting. Note also that this argument does not propose any fittingness of hatred toward the in this example Muslim community (in general) – the criteria only specify how objects of hatred (individual people who fall under the criteria) could be traced.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusions

In previous passages, I suggested a possibility that the criteria of adequacy of hatred (that defines properties of ‘hateworthy’ objects) can be embedded in a cultural and social framework. Such criteria could be various, e.g. skin or eyes color, hair or dressing style, the shape of the nose or skull, one’s economic status or genetic roots etc. And although these criteria are not intelligibly related to a focus of hatred, they actually trace the properties of its targets in such way that it may make the emoter to feel right in hating persons who possess

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3 I would not argue that these criteria are always clear. On the contrary, I believe that they are mostly confusing. Nor do I want to argue that there cannot be ambiguity between community members about the actual criteria they share (see Helm 2009: 266). I have also no intention to argue that these criteria are entirely accidental and meaningless from the perspective of the society: they might be influenced by the way hatred was triggered in a society, how it unfolded and by a complex social dynamic and histories (usually hard to follow). The only thing I propose is that they do not need to follow the logic of relation to the focus, i.e. they might be a result of complex social dynamics in a such way that they need not to be rationally justified by the focus and its import to a group.

4 It could be noted that such criteria are a kind of social norms, or more precisely ‘feeling rules’. However, this should not be confused with the question of the moral appropriateness of hatred. Rather than being rules for what is morally (in)appropriate in society, these criteria regulate the relation of hating attitude towards its targets – they regulate the constitution of target evaluative properties as hateworthy and thus as (quasi-)fitting.



such properties – creating, thus, a quasi-fittingness of hatred. If this is correct it enables us to keep Szanto’s account that hatred cannot be fitting, while at the same time we can widen our understanding of how hatred unfolds in different communities.

There are several implications of this account which I hope might be fruitful for a further understanding and tackling of hatred. (1) It helps us understand how individual members of a society poisoned by hatred could feel so sure that someone should be perceived as hateworthy, even it doesn’t flow from the relation of the object to the (blurred) focus. For example, how Mickey is so confident that Ibro, a passionate member of the Muslim community, is ‘hateworthy’. (2) It helps us understand the internal conflict Mickey might have in his hatred directed at Amar. We could now argue that Mickey had this conflict because his community does not have the explicit criteria for treating someone as ‘hateworthy’ in cases like Amar, although it might have (as Nazis had for people of Jewish origin who do not identify themselves as Jews), but such criteria are much more rare than with the case of Ibro. (3) It might be a fruitful incentive for further empirical research on how hatred unfolds in specific communities. For if this proposal is correct, then we might be able to study the criteria under which specific communities, characterized by some sort of hatred, treat someone as hateworthy. However, this would certainly require further discussion on how such research could be conducted. (4) It could add to the language of social critique we use in political and social life to mitigate the hatred toward a particular group(s) of people (particularly in post-conflict zones). Namely, it is very often the case that members of a group that shares their hatred cannot be persuaded in any way to give up their hatred (because they find it to be an essential part of their identity or because it simply constitutes the social environment they belong to). In such cases, it might be useful to persuade them that their hatred of some people or a group of people is entirely unfitting and that it is so because of the properties those people have or do not have. Then we might say that they do not fulfill their criteria for being hated, and it will be hard to do it if we cannot say that there are some criteria by which hatred is inadequate, even for the group that is the carrier of hatred. (5) It could also give as a ‘strategic’ edge. In the cases when it is practically impossible to tackle hatred (e.g., hatred towards an ‘enemy’ – group or immigrants) it might be tactical to do it step-by-step. This account enables us to think about how it could be done, for it might be possible to challenge the legitimacy of criteria for treating someone as hateworthy on a one-by-one basis.

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## Razmatranja o nefokusiranoj mržnji: identitet omraženog i kriterijumi adekvatnosti

### Apstrakt

Tomas Santo je nedavno uveo tezu da mržnja ne može biti podesna emocija zbog toga što je njen fokus zamagljen, te prema tome ona ne može pratiti svojstva svog intencionalnog objekta. Mada se slažem sa osnovom Santovog argumenta želeo bih nešto više pažnje da posvetim dva povezana problema koja mogu biti važna. Prvo ću se baviti pitanjem da li nepodesnost mržnje ima ikakve povezanosti sa mogućnošću da omražena osoba ne identifikuje sebe sa onim zbog čega je omražena. Zaključicu da, ukoliko je fokus mržnje zamagljen, mržnja neće pratiti identifikaciju omražene osobe ili grupe. Zatim ću pokušati da ukažem na mogućnost da (izvesni) kriterijumi adekvatnosti mržnje (zbog čega se neko tretira kao vredan mržnje od strane članova društva) budu ukorenjeni u kulturalnom i socijalnom okviru na takav način da nisu neophodno opravdani svojom vezom za fokusom emocije i značajem koji on ima. Pod takvim okolnostima, mržnja bi i dalje bila nepodesna, ali bi ovi kriterijumi kreirali kvazi-korektnost mržnje (zapravo bi pratili svojstva koja određuju da li je nešto ili neko vredan mržnje). Ukoliko je to tačno, mogli bismo da zadržimo tezu o nepodesnosti mržnje, a da u isto vreme možemo da koristimo uobičajeni vokabular koji koristimo u slučajevima kada grupa ne odustaje od svoje mržnje i kada je potrebno da argumentujemo da neke pojedince ili grupe ljudi ne treba mrzeti čak ni prema kriterijumima same grupe koja je nosilac mržnje.

Ključne reči: mržnja, identitet, podesnost, kriterijumi adekvatnosti, prikladnost, emocije