

# Is there axiological symmetry between love and hate?

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**ABSTRACT:** Recently, Ingrid Vendrell Ferran (2018) has emphasized the depth of early phenomenological approaches not only to love but also to hatred. In Max Scheler's philosophy of values (axiology), love and hate are 'forms of emotional behaviour towards the value-content itself' (Scheler 1923, 171). They direct the subject's attention to objects which bear values. Since the apprehension of values – so called valueception – even precedes perception, love and hate are phenomena of greatest importance to understand Scheler's phenomenology and metaphysics. While love is "directed at the positing of a potential higher value" (ibid., 176), hate is directed at the potential inferior value, making the two acts – not entirely but axiologically – symmetrical. This symmetry is a decisive albeit questionable constituent of Schelerian emotional phenomenology. Only a critique of the idea of strict symmetry between love and hate may corroborate or repudiate the general axiological perspective.

**KEYWORDS:** hate, love, axiology, values, Scheler, Pfänder, Kolnai

In the sublime psychological prose of 'Crime and Punishment' (1866), Fyodor Dostoevsky gives a subtle description of the hatred that Raskolnikov experiences after murdering the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and her sister Lizaveta:

He walked on without resting. He had a terrible longing for some distraction, but he did not know what to do, what to attempt. A new overwhelming sensation was gaining more and more mastery over him every moment; this was an immeasurable, almost physical, repulsion for everything surrounding him, an obstinate, malignant feeling of hatred. All who met him were loathsome to him – he loathed their faces, their movements, their gestures. If anyone had addressed him, he felt that he might have spat at him or bitten him (Dostoevsky 1866/2005, 104).

Yet, what does it mean to have a feeling of hatred? Commonly and colloquially, hate itself is conceived as a feeling. When reading about Raskolnikov's experience, the expression "feeling of hatred" thus might be preferentially understood as a feeling with the name 'hatred'. However, the rigorous investigation into such a customary denomination must question the experiential fabric underlying it. The natural attitude that frames something as a feeling is no justification for any categorization. On the contrary, the noetic analysis of the respective phenomenon is required to determine relevant aspects in a sufficiently complex manner. In other words: Is the everyday conception of hate as a feeling actually a pertinent conception of what it means to feel hate?

Ingrid Vendrell Ferran (2018) has shown how the early phenomenologists Max Scheler, Alexander Pfänder, and Aurel Kolnai have dedicated their analysis to hatred. The aim of this article is to supplement Vendrell Ferran's work by a thorough investigation of the axiological relation between love and hate. She has presented a concise overview of the phenomenological investigation of hate and her contribution is an important step for the acknowledgement of the phenomenal self-reliance of hatred. The emphasis of this article is to provide an additional axiological argument for the independent analysis of the phenomenon.

## I. The Schelerian methodology for the phenomenology of emotional experience

A path-breaking example for the analysis of phenomena in their emotional constitution is Scheler's investigation "On shame and the feeling of shame" (1913). He identifies a characteristic "double meaning" (Scheler 1913/1957, 77) for phenomena like 'love', 'sensitivity', and 'shame', words that equally refer to a respective class of either lived-bodily (*leiblich*) or psychic feelings on the one hand and to the bearers of a value-relation (*Wertverhalt*) on the other hand. In the case of shame, Scheler describes this second side to the phenomenon as a relation to something of disvalue – when somebody is ashamed 'of something'. This relation constitutes the meaning of shame, a meaning that does not reside in the mere state of having a feeling.

When considering ethological anomalies, such as the observation that animals do not show shame, even convinced naturalists can fathom that the complex experience of shame is no mere psychological mechanism. In this sense, the meaning of shame, its phenomenal foundation, is an experience of "individualization" (ibid., 70). Scheler's analysis amounts to the conclusion that it is the second, tacit aspect that expresses itself in the first, overt aspect of the shame phenomenon, i.e., the feeling of shame. More precisely, every case of shame can be understood as a relation between a lower "more automatic" (ibid., 90) function of the consciousness and a higher "more versatile" (ibid.) one. When feeling shame, the person favours the prior – comparably disvaluable – function while being aware of the meaning of the higher, second function.

Following this structure, the feeling of shame expresses meaningful relations in one of two ways. First, the feeling of lived-bodily shame is experienced when torn between the lower sensual drive and the higher drive for life. Second, the feeling of psychic shame occurs when the person favours the vital sphere, i.e. either the drive for procreation or for growth, in contrast with the higher sphere of their personality, such as love, will, or thought. The meaning of the prior form of the feeling is mainly shame for the lived-body, especially sexual shame. Essentially, Scheler identifies this feeling of lived-bodily shame as the dynamics of two "fundamental motions" (ibid., 80): First, as the higher conscious function from the vital sphere, sexual love (*Geschlechtsliebe*), i.e., an act directed to values, devoted to its object, and an individualizing principle, and second, the sexual drive, i.e., directed to states of lust, a drive to pleasure, and a socializing principle. The other form of the feeling of shame, namely psychic shame, comprises of cases like being ashamed of one's behaviour towards others or one's vice, e.g., when one is ashamed of their cowardice.

Put another way, shame expresses itself in the feeling of shame due to a value-oriented foundational relation within self-esteem, i.e., the experience of an individual's value. Furthermore, because this 'self' does not have to be 'my' self, the experience of feeling ashamed for somebody else is equally possible. The relation between the fundamental motions gives rise to a value-image (*Wertbild*, ibid., 149) of myself or of a fellow human. A violation of this value-image can thus evoke the experience of a feeling of shame.

Instead of simply analogizing the analysis of shame and hate, an unbiased critique of the Schelerian approach has to conclude that it itself is based on important assumptions that yet remain unexplained. Despite being a breakthrough for the phenomenology of emotions, Scheler's rudimentary ideas are not self-explanatory. Two important structures of his approach must be illuminated. First, the difference between feelings, such as the feeling of shame, and the intentional relations he refers to, such as shame proper, and second, the axiological substructure of his analysis. Thus, the question whether hate really is a feeling does not only lead to the inquiry into the nature of hate but also into the notion of feelings themselves.

## II. Schelerian phenomenology of emotion

It is essential to see that the expression ‘feeling’ – as it is used by Scheler – has itself a ‘double meaning’. In the first sense, feelings are states (*zuständige Gefühle*). In isolation, these state-like feelings are experienced in the case of sensual feelings, such as bodily pain, a sensation of lust, or hunger. Because these feelings are entirely momentary and do not entail an object, they do not bear any meaning at all. If anything, they are associated with an object due to the mediation of perception or imagination – meaning is bestowed upon them. Furthermore, these feelings themselves must be felt, i.e., they must be given by an intentional function: “I suffer the pain, I endure it, I tolerate it, or I might even enjoy it” (Scheler 1921a, 262). This ‘feeling’ of the (state-like) feeling is the second meaning of the word, its intentional aspect. Unlike a homonym, the first, state-like meaning of the word ‘feeling’ (*Gefühl*) is a noun while the intentional meaning of the word ‘feeling’ (*Fühlen*) is closer to a gerund. Thus, when we feel a feeling, the state-like feeling becomes the object of the intentional function that is expressed in the verb ‘feel’ and has its own characters of lived experience, such as suffering or tolerating hunger.

Apart from state-like feelings, the content of intentional feelings can be of two further categories, either mood-characters that – unlike state-like feelings – do not entail the quality of a first-person experience, e.g., the tranquillity of a river, the serenity of the sky, or the dreariness of a landscape, or, as the third category, values, such as beauty or pleasantness. Values, now, are the primary objects of intentional feelings. Logically speaking, values are to feelings what things are to imagination. Thus, the relation of intentional feelings to values partakes in an original and independent domain of meaning, the ‘*ordre du cœur*’, as Scheler, drawing on Blaise Pascal, pleases to say, or ‘*ordo amoris*’.

Values, however, are not exchangeable attributes of things, as one might assume in line with the objectivist fashion of present-day natural attitude. On the contrary, Scheler claims that, from an experiential perspective, the acquaintance with values precedes that of singular intelligible things:

For example, we might find somebody embarrassing or repulsive, pleasant or sympathetic, without being able to tell the reason; in the same fashion, we can conceive a poem or some other work of art as ‘beautiful’ or ‘ugly’, as ‘noble’ or ‘common’, even without knowing by the farthest any particular attribute of the object that might make us do so; also, a region or a room appears ‘friendly’ or ‘embarrassing’, similarly, the stay in a room does, without the knowledge about what is the bearer of the respective values (ibid., 12).

Whilst values are no qualities of objects, they themselves have qualities, such as the pleasant taste of different dishes that nonetheless all coincide in being instances of pleasantness. Their existence, however, is entirely independent of any ‘bearer’ they might have, even though some things may have a disposition to be the bearer of a certain value, e.g., vegetables for bearing nutritional value (yet, some vegetables can be toxic for some species and thus will not be a bearer of nutritional value for them). Moreover, the “value nuance” (ibid., 13) of any object is usually the first experience we have of it. This value-acquaintance or ‘valueception’ (*Wertnehmung*), then, is the foundation for all further acts that may elaborate our experience, such as its impression or its further meaning.

Though being independent of any bearer with regard to their essence, values commonly appear with a bearer in the natural attitude, or rather, through a bearer. Nonetheless, these bearers are no mere ‘things’. Scheler offers an ontological alternative by introducing the notion of ‘goods’: “Goods relate to value-qualities in the way that qualities relate to things” (ibid., 15). Goods are ‘things of value’. Yet, they are not founded on being things but their thing-like existence, their tangibility (*Dinghaftigkeit*), depends on the centrality of a certain value in their being. For example, as a good, a work of art is destroyed when the colours faint, the canvas, on the other hand, does not, because it is a thing and not a good. The primacy of value within these goods, however, comes to the fore only when one exercises a certain way of concentratedly feeling the respective values. Ultimately, natural attitude deals neither with things nor with

goods but with stuff (*Sachen*). Stuff is things in so far as they are valuable but not in the way of goods which concentrate on a certain value as the core of their existence (*Wertkern*). Thus, stuff will rather be a bearer of certain values, namely values like utility and pleasantness, than others – ultimately coinciding with the primary interest in utility of everyday life.

Surprisingly, Scheler claims both, the primacy of values and their experiential distance from the natural attitude, at the same time. Still, this is no self-contradiction but an existential justification for doing phenomenology on the pursuit of life's sublimity. The convenient opinion that common sense is an expedient tool for descriptive psychology cannot be maintained in Schelerian phenomenology. The proper analysis of experience requires the withdrawal from natural attitude and must establish sensitivity for extraordinary noematic domains as well as noetic peculiarities.

### III. The place of love and hate in the experience of values

What, then, does it mean to have a feeling of hate, given Scheler's axiological understanding of feelings? The answer becomes clearer when returning to the example of shame and its distinction from feelings of shame. The two ways in which shame can be felt, lived-bodily and psychic shame, are – primarily – state-like feelings. Accordingly, they are the content of an intentional feeling, yet this feeling does only give access to the state. Therefore, a person who exclusively experiences a 'feeling of shame' in this sense will not be acquainted with the value-relation in the background which nonetheless enables the occasion for the state. 'Feeling shame', then, means that the state-like feeling commonly called 'shame' is the content of an intentional feeling. This is more typical in the case of lived-bodily, especially sexual shame, such as in the impulsive reactions of blushing or hiding.

Yet, a feeling of shame can also be an intentional feeling and thus access the value-relation between, for example, a sensual value, e.g., the pleasantness of lust, and the – in comparison higher – vital value, e.g., the purity of sexual love. A person who experiences this kind of feeling will be emotionally aware of the disvalue of their preference for the inferior value: she will be ashamed of something. In this case, the expression 'feeling of shame' means something beyond the merely state-like feeling although it might also be accompanied by a state-like feeling. As an intentional feeling, a feeling of shame consciously expresses the value-relation in the background.

Shame itself, not the feeling of it but the "pure phenomenon of shame" (Scheler 1913/1957, 80), is the bearer of this noematic value-relation which can be emotionally conscious by virtue of the intentional feeling of shame. More precisely: as a "fact of our elementary spiritual or psychic life" (ibid., 77), shame is a "counter-reaction or 'angst' of the individual to descend into the general, of the bearer of higher values to degrade to being a bearer of lower values" (ibid., 80f.). Counter-reactions or 'responsive reactions' (*Antwortsreaktionen*) of this kind, e.g., revenge, are solicited by the present value-relation. Hence, only due to the human condition, particularly due to the "disharmony" (ibid., 69) between lived-body and spirit, shame can be felt. However, this emotional complexity also applies to hate:

That we frequently hear that love and hate are believed to be emotions or state-like feelings, just like rage, anger, can only be explained by the unique transformation of our era and the complete lack of phenomenological investigation in all these matters (Scheler 1921a, 267f.).

Scheler does not dedicate a thorough investigation to the 'feeling of hatred' as he did to the feeling of shame. In his work, he mainly discusses the meaning of hate as an experiential act. Acts, however, must be distinguished from 'functions', such as the sensual functions of seeing and hearing but also intentional feeling. Drawing on Stumpf, Scheler accentuates the difference:

All functions are functions of the ego, they never pertain to the sphere of the person. Functions are psychic while acts are not. Acts are performed; functions take place. In a function, a lived-body is necessarily given as well as an environment to which the phenomena of the function pertain; In person and acts, a lived-body is not yet given, and a world corresponds with the person but not an environment. [...] In two ways, functions may relate to acts. Either they are the objects of acts, e.g., when I am making myself conscious of my own sensual experience of seeing. Or they are the medium for the act being directed towards its object – without the function itself being the respective object (ibid., 402f.).

Furthermore, these two classes of experience, functions and acts, differ from the class of responsive reactions. In this sense, hate is phenomenologically distinct in its experiential meaning from state-like feelings, such as the shameful sensation to cover one's nudity, intentional feelings (as functions), such as being ashamed of one's laziness, and responsive reactions, such as the shame that resides in favouring bodily pleasantness over vital values. As an "emotional act" (ibid., 267), "spontaneous act" (ibid., 268), or "movement of temper" (*Gemütsbewegung*; Scheler 1923, 182) hate contributes to the foundation of our emotional experience. However, for Scheler, its particular meaning can only be rendered intelligible with reference to love. Love originally makes the realm of values accessible for experience. Therefore, mediated by the emotional act of preference, love is the foundation of intentional feeling.

Scheler dedicated the entire second chapter of his pioneer-work "The nature of sympathy" (1923) to understanding this foundational role of love. The difference between both, love and hate, on the one hand and the act of preference on the other is that the latter is an act of knowledge which relates two values as being higher and lower respectively. Unlike this, love gives access to a value in so far as it is higher: "love is directed at the positing of a potential higher value" (ibid., 176). Nonetheless, this discovery of superiority does not entail an act of comparison. In this sense, love is the acquaintance with the loved object's value-core although the object of love ultimately remains to be the bearer of the value, not the value itself. Now, Scheler understands hate in an almost formal axiological symmetry to love:

While love is a movement which is directed from the inferior to the superior value and in which the higher value of a person or object initially comes to light, hate is the opposite movement. Therewith it is readily given that hate is directed at the existence of an inferior value (ibid.).

At this point, Scheler's phenomenology of emotion has helped to criticize the common misconception of hate as a feeling, to adumbrate the difference between hate and the feeling of hate as a state-like or intentional feeling, and offered a value-ethical point of view onto the meaning of the respective experiences within conscious life. Yet, the alleged axiological symmetry between love and hate must be re-examined itself in the subsequent delve into the phenomenology of hate. Still, the symmetry is exclusively axiological: "Scheler is aware [...] that regarding the world of their objects, they are not symmetric opposites" (Vendrell Ferran 2018, 163).

#### IV. The axiological symmetry of love and hate

The value-directedness of love and hate determines the ideal value-image of the respective act's object. In Schelerian words: Hate is a movement in which the concrete individual object which bears values reaches the lowest values that are available in its ideal determination (*Bestimmung*). However, it remains impossible to attribute the value-image of a hated object to the sum of traits, deeds, or customs. There will always be an „unfathomable plus“ (Scheler 1923, 192) – *individuum est ineffabile*.

For Scheler, the axiological symmetry of love and hate encompasses not only the discovery of values and disvalues but also their place in the entire emotional consciousness. Yet, despite being the 'opposite movement' to love, hate is not the opposite of love. Formally, the opposite of both love and hate is the cessation of the emotive movement. Thus, love and hate have a

symmetric, not an antagonistic relation. While love gives access to a higher value for the acts of preference – love ‘creates’ the values in the eye of the subject –, hate numbs the cognitive access: it ‘destroys’ the higher values for the subject. Consequently, only the impression of disvalues remains when we hate something. This emotional substructure also serves as the foundation for motivation: “every living being strives for what it loves and resists against what it hates” (ibid., 214). Therefore, Schelerian emotional phenomenology can account for Raskolnikov’s sensation of repulsion.

Moreover, Scheler distinguishes different forms of hate, depending on the level of disvalues to which they belong. The corresponding hierarchy of values might be one of the most discussed aspects of Schelerian value-objectivism. A detailed account of the peculiarities, such as the relativity of the two lower levels of values or the connection of the absolute values with the perfect entity of God, can be found in the work of Leonardy (1976), Frings (1969), or Cusinato (2012).

In the case of hate, it is sufficient to mention that the form of hate discovering disvalues among the vital values is called ‘bad’ (*schlecht*), among the psychic values, it is called ‘evil’ (*böse*), and for the spiritual values ‘devilish’ (*teuflisch*). However, there are no cases of hate nor love corresponding to the lowest level of values, the sensual or utilitarian values. The three forms of hate are essentially different from one another, just like the difference, for example, between passionate and spiritual love. The phenomenological structure underlying these differences, the hierarchical order of values, corresponds with the distinction between different classes of acts: vital or lived-bodily acts, like bad hate and passionate love; psychic or first-person-acts (*Ichakte*; ibid., 194), such as evil hate and psychic love; and spiritual or personal acts (since the values of persons occupy the highest level of values), such as devilish hate and spiritual love.

Due to Scheler’s dedication to the axiological meaning of hate, his analysis falls short on the descriptive psychology of the experience of hate. Favouring the description of love, hate appears to be its mere inversion. Considering a similar phenomenological approach, Alexander Pfänder’s “On the Psychology of Directed Sentiments” (1913), that has been explicitly endorsed by Scheler (see Scheler 1923, 176), the prospect of what the axiological symmetry entails becomes available.

## V. Pfänder’s emotional phenomenology as the foundation for Scheler

Just as Scheler, Pfänder concedes an essential symmetry between love and hate. However, his approach does not assume the centrality of values despite recognising their importance for all emotional phenomena. Exegetically, it is not an improbable hypothesis to claim that Scheler advanced Pfänder’s emotional phenomenology by an axiological perspective, yet, not without adapting it in the process.

Pfänder understands love and hate as directed sentiments (*Gesinnungen*; for a comment on the translation see Spiegelberg 1960, 186f.). Greatly resembling Scheler’s notion of ‘motions of temper’, directed sentiments are centrifugal (i.e., emanating from the subject to its object) “motions of life” (Pfänder 1913, 341) or “flows of feeling” (ibid., 364) that are essentially constituted by the antagonism of positivity and negativity. In a similar fashion, Scheler talks about “calm, steady beams that rest on their object” (Scheler 1923, 169) when introducing his idea of love. Pfänder subsumes love and hate under the two opposing orders aside (for example) friendliness in the group of benevolent directed sentiments and unfriendliness as its counterpart in the group of hostile directed sentiments.

Because Pfänder did not establish a proper axiology, his account on hate as a ‘momentary centrifugal flow of feelings’ rather resembles Scheler’s notion of intentional feelings than hate as a spontaneous act. Thus, Pfänder’s descriptive psychology of the respective experience complements Scheler’s act-phenomenological take on hate. As a first aspect, he describes feeling hate as a “acrid, burning, destructive” (Pfänder 1913, 365) experience, acidity being the distinguishing mark, diametrically opposed to the benevolent directed sentiments’ “warming



power of vivification” (ibid., 366). Moreover, this first aspect can be given in either a creeping or an aggressive manner. The second aspect of hate as a hostile directed sentiment is the “inner disunion” (ibid., 367) between the hating subject and its object. It is opposed to the uniting tendency of the benevolent directed sentiments. Another aspect of benevolent directed sentiments, such as love, is the affirmation of their object, as an “act of empowerment of being” (*Akt der Daseinermächtigung*, ibid., 368). Accordingly, the third aspect of negative directed sentiments can be characterized by an “act of negation” (ibid., 370) that deprives its object of its entitlement to being.

While Pfänder’s third characteristic of the directed sentiment bears great resemblance to Scheler’s comments, the second one is more ambiguous because Scheler explicitly repels from all metaphysical imagery of love as perfect unity – especially in the Platonic sense, famously depicted in the legend of the spherical people (cf. Holm-Hadulla and Wendt 2021). Nonetheless, Pfänder’s analysis helps to specify the psychological nature of the feelings of hate that is implied by Scheler’s symmetrical understanding of love and hate. This becomes increasingly clearer when considering Pfänder’s further analysis of the particular cases of hate. For example, he distinguishes the horizontally directed antagonism in hate between comrades from the downward directed hate, e.g. against the crippled or animals. In the latter case, proceeding to adopt destructive action becomes more probable. Also, when hating in a downward direction, the subject tends to maintain her confrontational stance while, when hating in an upward direction, a tendency to withdraw oneself from the hated object is more likely.

Pfänder expands his analysis of the directed sentiments by further detailed investigations, e.g., about the transcendent directed sentiments which ‘float’ above the momentary situation or about the desensitization for directed sentiments. However, these details prove of greater significance for the understanding of the specific characteristics of love and hate but not for the present investigation about their general nature. The axiological point of view is of primary interest. After refuting the colloquial idea that hate could be understood as a feeling, the resulting problem concerns the true nature of hate.

Both Scheler and Pfänder conceptualise hate as the counter-image of love. Yet, this approach threatens to disregard the phenomenal independence of hate. Curiously, Pfänder himself highlights the insufficiency of any psychological argument that claims that some phenomenon belonged to a category just because there is a convenient desideratum. Talking about the meaning of directed sentiments, he states: “Not because there is no space elsewhere, the motion of directed sentiments may be explained as an emotion even though emotions have often been treated as ‘shelter for homeless psychological phenomena’” (ibid., 353). Likewise, it is necessary to question the conception of hate as the counterpart of love in order to corroborate their axiological symmetry. This attempt of falsification, however, has been omitted by Scheler just as Pfänder.

## VI. Kolnai’s critical phenomenology of hate

In a minor footnote, Aurel Kolnai assessed in his 1935 “Attempt on hate” that Pfänder disregarded the consideration of asymmetries between love and hate. Kolnai assumes that Pfänder did not investigate them since he had “focussed on the formal varieties of directed sentiments” (Kolnai 1935, 162). Therefore, Kolnai’s text is the first contribution to a critique of the emotional phenomenology of hate. However, because he did not question the axiological meaning of hate, he primarily responds to Pfänder’s point of view and thus must be complimented by a second step tackling Scheler’s value-related ideas.

Kolnai does not deviate fundamentally from the general descriptive phenomenology of hate made by Pfänder. Kolnai, too, characterises hate by hostility and a tendency to destroy or at least suppress its object. Additionally, he delimits hate more clearly from other hostile sentiments. More specifically, his formula for hate comprises of “conflict of interest” and “dis-

favour” (ibid., 160). Most importantly, he highlights important particularities concerning the difference between love and hate.

Noematically, Kolnai claims that hate has a disproportionately smaller range of possible objects than love does. While love between either father and child, between spouses, or between citizens and their fatherland was principally unique in its respective form, for hate, “the inexistence of an object itself is in a strict sense unambiguous and monotonous” (ibid., 163). Even when being hateful becomes a personal disposition, the variety of hated objects does not entail different modes of hate but a “homogeneous hate for all life and the world” (ibid., 166). Similarly, Kolnai reasons that the transition from sympathy to love is more continuous than from antipathy to hate because the prior can be affirmed gradually while the latter repulses its object in a form of disruption after prior approximation.

Since Kolnai establishes asymmetry between love and hate, he also considers their co-existence. Scheler had also acknowledged this possibility but ultimately just with reference to different levels of values or types of bearers. Yet, Kolnai does neither mean to say that a subject may hate something about an object and love another thing at the same time. Nor does he believe that in every love there was some hate and vice versa. Rather, he assumes that there is ontological priority to love and that all hate is “in need of supplementation” (ibid., 175):

At all times, hate is heavier laden with the question-mark of love than contrariwise: the hilltops of love may rise above the lowlands of dispassionate everyday life, but the volcanos of hate are fuelled with a fire in whose embers love must always be suspected (ibid.).

Giving an example for this aspect of the asymmetry, Kolnai writes: “The more dedicated I am to the ideal of a human community, the fiercer do I have to be ‘initially’ against those who wish to destroy it” (ibid., 177). However, he does not simply claim that hate was necessary. Rather, he sketches two opposing extremes against which he places his own thought. The first extreme can be reduced to the formula: “love what is good and hate what is bad” (ibid., 184). It entails that hate is of equal importance than love. The second extreme consists of the belief that hate can be eradicated in some way, for example due to spiritual illumination. This idea is broadly similar to Scheler’s opinion. Quite on the contrary, Kolnai claims that hate expresses a “metaphysical consciousness of higher tension” (ibid., 178).

Ultimately, rejecting both alternatives, he concedes a priority of love without the irrelevance of hate: “‘Friend’ and ‘enemy’ are no relational components as in mathematical reciprocity; instead it is up to every human being to collect an overweight on the positive side” (ibid., 185). Therefore, he concludes that an ‘ordo odii’ would not be equally possible as an ‘ordo amoris’. But despite the priority of love, hate plays an important role in emotional experience that is not deficient – its source is as original as the idea of the devil, love, on the other side, can be traced back even further to the idea of the absolute good, God himself.

## VII. The autonomy of hate

Kolnai’s comments help to see that hate is different from love’s mirror image. Its place is not as fundamental in the structure of emotional experience. This also holds true for axiological considerations. The discovery of disvalues still relies on some affirmative foundation that makes the hateful subject devote itself to its object. Bollnow calls this the “pugnacious attitude of hate” that entails “a vivid dedication to the fellow human being” (Bollnow 2009, 11). In this sense, Kolnai claims that even she who hates the entire world might be motivated by a tacit hope for a better world which germinated in love for an ideal.

In present day culture, the notion of hate has been instrumentalized too recklessly in the conception of, for example, ‘hate crimes’ and ‘hate speech’. In line with the popular hyperbole of love as a guarantee for the all-encompassing good and hate as its evil counterpart, hate has been demonised. Over and above, framing love and hate as feelings, modernity has developed



an almost dogmatic stigmatisation of “hateful conduct”, meaning any attitude which entails the alleged feeling of hate. Ultimately, this cultural development has led to the phenomenologically unsubstantiated foundation of social normativity on the expurgation of hate.

Despite conceptualising hate and love as symmetrical, Scheler did not claim that hate itself was evil. When considering ‘devilish hate’, Mephisto’s paradoxical self-description in Goethe’s ‘Faust’ can provide elucidation: ‘I am part of that power which eternally wills evil and eternally works good’. For Scheler, ‘evil’ is the characterization of a preference of an inferior value over a superior value, not a characterization of the hate itself which might have discovered the inferior value in the first place. Only when a higher value is ignored because hate only revealed a disvalue of its bearer, Scheler deplors the occurrence of hate, for example in his book “The causes of the hate of Germans” (1917). A murder, however, he calls “worthy of hate” even though the murderer might be “worthy of love” (Scheler 1921b, 185).

Reflecting on the role of the symmetry of love and hate for current socio-cultural tendencies, phenomenology can contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of life’s emotional fabric. It is crucial to be dubious about hate as a social indicator for misbehaviour, especially if it is conceived as a feeling. Instead, hate should be rehabilitated as an act that can reveal disvalues, occasionally germinates in authentic love for something else, and accentuates the importance of love by contrast, ultimately bestowing meaning upon the experiences of life. Assuming that hate was essentially evil confuses it with viciousness. Vicious persons might hate more than saints do. Still, it is not hating that makes them vicious but their individual preferences.

Aurel Kolnai made a most memorable remark about the possible dissipation of hate. He found that it is more likely to dissipate all hate by virtue of a “hedonistic-positivist attitude” (Kolnai 1935, 178) than by virtue of love or anxiety. Without rejecting the eschatological idea of eternal and perfect love, it should be seen that – in mundane spheres – a profound emotional life will not be possible without hate. Trying to efface hate will always rather result in hedonistic abstinence from deeper meaning and values than the embracement of love. Nevertheless, it must be the content of future investigations whether this position can be subjected to further phenomenological investigation (see Wendt and Wendler, in press).

In summary, hate has an autonomous meaning that should be investigated by phenomenology. In this sense, Vendrell Ferran speaks about the “heuristic value” of the phenomenon in so far as it contributes to knowledge formation and the foundation of consecutive acts: “it can help us understand our human world and discover ugly and undesirable facets of the human being that we tend to overlook or disguise” (Vendrell Ferran 2018, 174). Axiologically, this amounts to a meaning of hatred in life which cannot be identified as the counterpart of love. As an ethical consequence, the popular identification of hate as the inversion of love is a misconception: In moral judgment, it is not self-evident that single cases of hate are bad just because love is believed to be good. Thus, contemporary concepts, such as ‘hate crime’ or ‘hate speech’ lose their ostensible justification which relies on abstract concepts rather than reflection on their experiential foundations.

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