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978-0-521-72179-0 - The Nature of Hate
Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Sternberg
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THE NATURE OF HATE

What is hate and why is there so much of it? How does it originate, and what can we do about it? These are some of the questions addressed in *The Nature of Hate*. This book opens with a discussion of how hate makes its presence felt in the real world. Then it discusses various definitions and theories of hate. Next, it describes a duplex (two-part) theory of hate. According to the first part of the theory, hate has three components: negation of intimacy, passion, and commitment. According to the second part of the theory, this structure of hate originates from stories people create about the target that, say, a group comprises enemies of God, or monsters, or vermin, or power-crazy tyrants, or any of a number of other stories. The book also discusses hate in the context of interpersonal relationships and surveys the connection of propaganda and hate. The role of hate in instigating terrorism, massacres, and genocides is analyzed, and possible cures for hate are discussed.

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Preface

THE NATURE OF HATE

Listen to the radio or television, or read the newspaper, and it is difficult to pass even one day without witnessing hate and its ugly consequences. As we write this preface, massacres believed to amount to genocide are occurring in West Darfur in the Sudan, and these massacres follow a long history of others that have occurred around the world in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Burundi, World War II Europe, and the earlier days of what is now the United States. Hate is not the only cause of these calamities, but it is certainly one of them. Moreover, the hate is often cynically instilled in citizens by the people who are entrusted to lead them, whether they are governmental leaders or even religious ones. To understand contemporary civilization, one must understand hate – its nature, causes, and consequences.

We have written this book in order to propose and elaborate upon our own views of hate. The original impetus for this book was a journal article, “A Duplex Theory of Hate and Its Development and Its Application to Terrorism, Massacres, and Genocide” (Sternberg, 2003). Since that article was published, we have had many more ideas about the nature of hate, and the junior author of this book, Karin Sternberg, has done a dissertation on the topic of hate (Weis, 2006). In this book, we present the views we have developed.

The book is intended for a general audience. It requires no special background knowledge in order to be understood. We discuss a variety of topics in the book: What is hate; what are some alternative theories of its nature; what is its structure; how does it develop; what causes it; what are its consequences; what can be done about it? We hope that, in writing the book, we will convey to our readers the importance of the topic, as well as the main ideas, at least of psychologists, about it.

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Our work on hate was preceded by work the senior author did on love (e.g., Sternberg, 1998a, 1998b). Indeed, the theory of hate we present draws heavily on ideas from the earlier theory of love. In the book, we discuss at some length relationships between love and hate, and why love can so easily degenerate into hate.

This book would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. It is not possible to name them all. We would like to thank Cheri Stahl for her help in preparing the book manuscript. We also thank John Dovidio for comments on an earlier version of the manuscript. Karin Sternberg would also like to express her gratitude toward her parents and sister Petra for their unwavering support.