TRAMES, 2026, **30(80/74)**, 2, 345–360

HATRED AS A TEST OF HUMANITY: UKRAINIAN SOCIETY AT WAR

Oleksandra Stebelska[1], Olesia Pankiv[2], and Oksana Onyshchuk[3]

[1]Optima Professional College, [2]Mykola Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy, and [3]Ukrainian National Forestry University

Abstract. Hatred is regularly described as the most destructive of human affects, yet it is rarely analysed as a distinct mode of relating to the Other. This article develops such an analysis and tests it against the experience of Ukrainian society during Russia's full-scale war. Drawing on the etymology of the Ukrainian *nenavydity* ("not to want to see"), on Fromm, Buber, Levinas and Scheler, and on recent empirical research, we argue that aggression, hatred and indifference are not degrees of a single continuum but three distinct ways in which the Other is present in the subject's world. Hatred is shown to be a double schism: it excludes the Other from a shared world and simultaneously narrows the hater's own axiological horizon. Unlike indifference, however, hatred still holds the Other in being. Humanity is therefore tested not at the threshold of hatred but at the threshold of indifference.

Keywords: hatred, aggression, indifference, dehumanization, ressentiment, the Other, Russo-Ukrainian war

DOI: https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2026.2.08

Received 27 August 2026, accepted 19 October 2026, available online 10 December 2026

1. Introduction

In societies at war, hatred ceases to be a theoretical problem. Since February 2022, Ukrainian public discourse has repeatedly returned to a question that is at once moral and philosophical: whether a society that is being destroyed can hate its destroyer without itself becoming something other than what it defends. The question is usually posed in the vocabulary of loss – of *rozliudnennia*, "de-humanization"

© 2026 Authors. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License CC BY 4.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0).

understood reflexively, as something that happens not to the enemy but to oneself. It is this reflexive worry, rather than the more familiar concern with hatred as a cause of violence, that motivates the present study.

The scholarly situation is paradoxical. In 2018, Agneta Fischer and her colleagues observed that hatred – characterized by Royzman, McCauley and Rozin (2005) as the most destructive affective phenomenon in the history of human nature – had remained comparatively under-researched in psychology, while sociology and political science had produced substantial empirical work on hate crime and hate speech (Fischer et al. 2018: 309). They attributed this to two circumstances: the difficulty of studying an emotion that respondents are reluctant to admit – forty Israeli interviewees first denied ever having experienced hatred and then described wishing to destroy an entire city – and the fact that hatred had long remained outside the canon of "basic" emotions, displaced in research by the neighbouring states of dislike, anger and contempt.

The last eight years have changed this decisively. Berit Brogaard's monograph (2020), the volume on the moral psychology of hate edited by Noell Birondo (2022), Íngrid Vendrell Ferran's four-types model (2024) and Thomas Szanto's phenomenological account of the collectivization and habitualization of hatred (2020) have made hatred a central topic of the philosophy of emotion. Empirical research has shown that hatred differs from dislike not merely in negative intensity but in its specific tie to moral convictions and moral emotions (Pretus et al. 2023), and that symbolic threats to worldview, values and identity predict hatred more consistently than realistic threats to resources or safety (Martínez et al. 2022). Most recently, Robert Sternberg has proposed the integrative theory REHIC – Real Hate in Context – extending his earlier duplex theory with an account of the real-world contexts of hatred, the FLOTSAM model of its propagation and a typology of reactions to that propagation (Sternberg 2026).

This body of work asks, for the most part, what hatred is and how it may be reduced. The question raised here lies elsewhere. We ask whether hatred can be understood as a distinctive *mode of human being* – not as an event in consciousness, nor as a state or a disposition, but as a structure of existence with consequences that may prove stable or irreversible. Our thesis is that hatred is a schism (Ukr. *rozkol*) which runs simultaneously between the subject and the Other and through the subject himself; and, further, that aggression, hatred and indifference are not degrees of one continuum but three different ways in which the Other is present in the subject's world.

This is not an abstract exercise. Survey data from four waves analysed in *Political Psychology* show that the proportion of Ukrainians reporting anger, hatred or contempt towards Russian citizens rose from roughly 15% before the full-scale invasion to 76% after it (Ash and Shapovalov 2025). A survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on 2–14 September 2025 records that an absolute majority in every region – from 92% in the west to 80% in the east – hold a negative attitude towards Russia, while 85% report a negative and only 8% a positive attitude towards Russians resident in Russia (KIIS 2025). These figures do not describe a

pathology. They are an intelligible response to a war of aggression accompanied by mass violence and by a widely shared perception of an existential threat. Precisely for that reason they call for philosophical rather than merely statistical interpretation: the question posed by Ukrainian culture after 24 February 2022 concerns not only the moral permissibility of hatred but what hatred does to the person who hates, and where the boundary between preserving and losing one's humanity actually runs.

The case is also of more than local interest. Ukrainian society today occupies a position that most theories of hatred do not anticipate. The literature typically addresses either the hatred of perpetrators, analysed through propaganda, dehumanization and genocidal mobilization (Staub 1989, Sternberg 2026), or hatred in protracted, symmetrical conflicts, where interventions aim at de-escalation on both sides. It has much less to say about a situation in which hatred is a morally intelligible response of the attacked to an attacker, and in which the demand to renounce it is experienced as a demand to renounce one's own moral judgment. Any general theory of hatred must be able to describe this position without either sanctifying hatred or moralizing about the victim.

Our method is descriptive-phenomenological: it aims not at causal explanation but at the reconstruction of the meaning-structures of the experience of hatred. This understanding of description follows Max Scheler's procedure as reconstructed by Kebuladze (2024). The phenomenological approach is supplemented by conceptual analysis distinguishing hatred from anger, contempt, disgust and indifference, and by a systematic confrontation of philosophical claims with contemporary empirical findings. The latter is essential: a philosophy of hatred that ignores how hatred is actually formed, transmitted and endured risks becoming moralizing – a danger to which the Ukrainian philosopher Oleh Khoma drew attention in a public polemic of 2023 to which we return in Section 3.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 develops the conceptual demarcation of aggression, hatred and indifference, beginning from etymology and moving through the empirical differentiation of hatred from anger, dislike, contempt and disgust to hatred as a mode of relation to the Other, and finally to the double schism and to indifference as its limit state. Section 3 tests this framework on the Ukrainian case, distinguishing two sources of hatred, examining the public debate about the measure of hatred, and identifying the practices through which humanity is in fact preserved. Section 4 draws the conclusions.

2. Aggression, hatred, indifference: a conceptual demarcation

2.1. The etymological clue: not wanting to see

Before aggression, hatred and indifference can be distinguished, it is worth attending to the word itself. The Ukrainian *nenavydity* derives from Proto-Slavic *nenaviděti*, glossed as "not to love; not to want to see", and relates to the verb *viděti*, "to see" (*Etymolohičnyj slovnyk* 2003). The idiom survives in contemporary usage: of a person one cannot bear, a Ukrainian speaker may say, "My eyes have not seen

you". Yet "not wanting to see" is not the mere absence of a gaze; it is an active refusal of it. The Other is not only negatively evaluated: he is deprived of the possibility of appearing before the subject in his own difference.

The Germanic line – English *hate*, German *Hass*, French *haine* – foregrounds a different aspect. Old English *hatian* meant to "feel extreme dislike; treat someone as an enemy", while German *hassen* could also carry the older sense of "to pursue, persecute" (Harper s.a., DWDS s.a.). French *haine*, despite the Romance affiliation of the language, derives from the Germanic root *hat-* and was originally associated with wishing evil upon another (Académie française 2024).

Hatred thus has an internally contradictory intentional structure. It turns away from its object yet cannot cease to be directed at it; it seeks to render the Other invisible while holding him at the centre of consciousness; it attempts to remove him from the shared world and by that very attempt remains dependent on his presence. The one whom the subject does not want to see becomes, paradoxically, the one from whom he can no longer look away.

It is this duality – withdrawal combined with directedness; avoidance combined with hostile activity – that allows the place of hatred between aggression and indifference to be specified. Aggression is primarily a movement against an obstacle or a threat; indifference cancels the significance of the Other. Hatred occupies a distinctive position between them: it seeks the removal of the Other while retaining him as an intensely significant object.

2.2. Aggression: benign and malignant

Erich Fromm distinguished two fundamentally different types of aggression: benign (defensive) and malignant (destructive) (Fromm 1973). Benign aggression is a phylogenetically grounded defensive reaction to a threat to life, freedom or vital interests. It is situational, adaptive, and normally subsides once the danger has passed. Such aggression is therefore not identical with hatred. Hatred begins where a negative attitude ceases to be a response to a particular threat and becomes a stable stance towards the very being of the Other.

In this respect, hatred is structurally closer to malignant aggression – the specifically human destructiveness that serves no biologically adaptive function and may be directed at humiliating, subjugating or eliminating another person. Yet hatred and destructiveness are not identical either: hatred is a stable emotional and semantic orientation towards the Other, whereas aggression is one of the possible behavioural expressions of that orientation.

For an understanding of hatred, it is therefore insufficient to register an aggressive impulse or a destructive act. One must move from the question of what the subject does to the Other to the question of who the Other has become for the subject. Unlike a situational reaction to a threatening action, hatred is directed at the Other as the bearer of a supposedly immutable malevolent essence.

2.3. Hatred, anger and dislike

"We hate persons and groups more because of who they are, than because of what they do. Hate has the goal to eliminate its target" (Fischer et al. 2018: 309). Hatred shares features with other negative emotions, above all with anger. One of the more important findings of recent research on emotion, however, is that hatred does not reduce to intense anger. Fischer and her co-authors show that anger and hatred are directed at the person in different ways. In anger we evaluate a particular act negatively and assume that the person's behaviour can be changed. Hatred is directed at the person as such: his negative traits are perceived as fixed and unalterable. Anger therefore motivates correction of the situation or of the other's conduct, whereas hatred more often issues in the wish to distance oneself from him, to harm him or to remove him.

Empirical confirmation of the qualitative difference between hatred and ordinary dislike has been supplied by Clara Pretus and colleagues. In a series of laboratory studies, they tested two hypotheses: that hatred is merely the extreme pole of negativity (the intensity hypothesis), or that it involves a distinct moral component (the morality hypothesis). Hated objects were indeed evaluated more negatively than disliked ones, but they were also more strongly associated with core moral convictions and moral emotions, even after negativity had been statistically controlled (Pretus et al. 2023). Hatred, then, is not simply intensified dislike: it is experienced as a response to something that touches the subject's moral values and identity.

This conclusion is complemented by the work of Cristhian A. Martínez, Jan-Willem van Prooijen and Paul A. M. Van Lange. Across four studies, they established that symbolic threats – threats to worldview, values and identity – predicted hatred more strongly and more consistently than realistic threats to resources or security (Martínez et al. 2022).

Two conclusions follow. First, hatred and anger or dislike are not identical emotional states. Second, hatred should not be understood merely as the opposite of morality or as its simple collapse. Hatred can arise within a system of moral evaluation: the capacity to draw a line between good and evil, between the worthy and the unworthy, is a condition of negative as well as positive feelings. This also helps to explain the resistance of hatred to rational objection. A subject may experience the demand that he relinquish his hatred as a demand that he abandon his own moral convictions.

2.4. Hatred, contempt and disgust

Hatred borders not only on anger but on other negative states, above all on contempt and disgust. Contempt is especially close, since it too involves a negative evaluation of the Other; but contempt manifests itself chiefly in stable rejection and social distancing. Disgust likewise motivates withdrawal, yet it presupposes the avoidance of contact with what is experienced as unacceptable or repellent.

In hatred, the negative relation to the object becomes more radical: the Other is perceived as the bearer of a stable negative disposition, the possibility of his change

is assessed as low, and the motivational orientation exceeds mere distancing, taking the form of a striving for his social, symbolic or physical removal (Fischer et al. 2018).

The experience of powerlessness that may accompany hatred deserves separate attention. It matters because hatred arises not only from a negative evaluation of the Other but from the experience of being unable to change him or to restore an acceptable order of interaction. This is the point at which hatred and ressentiment become comparable, an issue to which we return in Section 3.1.

2.5. Hatred as a mode of relation

Hatred is a negation of the Other, who ceases to be someone to be heard, understood or simply allowed *to be* Other. The Other appears as an object – someone about whom we supposedly know in advance who he is and what may be expected of him. He no longer holds any mystery. In this sense, hatred does not merely narrow the space of possible dialogue: it gradually produces a vacuum of dialogue in which the Other's reply can no longer change anything.

Martin Buber captured this shift in the mode of relation through the distinction between "I-Thou" and "I-It" (Buber 1970). In the I-Thou relation, the Other appears as an interlocutor, a living presence irreducible to our representations of him; the "Thou" remains open and to some degree mysterious. In the I-It relation, the Other becomes an object of description, evaluation, classification or use. Such a relation is in itself indispensable in everyday life; the difficulty arises when it becomes the only possible way of relating to another person. Hatred fixes the Other in precisely this status: he is no longer a "Thou" who can be addressed and from whom an answer may be received, but an "It", the bearer of a ready-made definition.

A related problem, recast in a different key, appears in Emmanuel Levinas. Consciousness in its drive to comprehend, explain, classify and subordinate inevitably extends this drive to the Other. The Other then ceases to be an independent reality and becomes an object that the "I" seeks to seize and dominate. Where the Other is reduced to what can already be explained and subordinated by the "I", his alterity is effectively denied, and the relation acquires the character of totality (Levinas 1969). The Other is deprived of the possibility of being otherwise than our consciousness takes him to be. Against this, Levinas insists on the fundamental unassimilability of the Other: he does not entirely fit into our knowledge of him and cannot be finally appropriated by consciousness. It is his alterity that disrupts the self-sufficiency and totality of the "I" and compels it to move beyond its own closure. The appeal of the Other becomes an appeal of conscience and responsibility; even ignoring it does not annul the fact that it has already been heard (Levinas 1969, 1987).

Hatred therefore does not merely attach a negative evaluation to the Other; it deprives him of the right to remain open, unfinished, capable of turning out to be other than we think. In this sense, hatred is not only an emotion but a distinctive mode of relation to the Other. That mode has an axiological dimension. Hatred narrows access to the value-fullness of the Other. In a Schelerian perspective, love "opens" the Other, allowing more to be seen in him than our evaluation already contains, whereas hatred contracts the axiological horizon within which the Other is

perceived (Scheler 1954). Through the lens of hatred, we perceive the Other within a one-dimensional negative horizon. Hatred may thus be regarded as a form of value blindness: the negative image of the Other becomes so all-encompassing that everything which does not correspond to it ceases to be visible.

2.6. Hatred as a double schism

The duality noted above can now be stated more precisely. Hatred is a schism in two dimensions at once, the intersubjective and the intrasubjective.

The intersubjective schism. Hatred removes the Other from the shared world – not from my field of vision but from the sphere of possible shared meaning. Analysing hybrid warfare, Yevhen Bystrytskyi describes it as a war of identities in which military destruction is combined with the propagandistic violence of post-truth, aimed at transforming the very reality of a community's identity (Bystryc'kyj 2019). In this context, hatred may be understood as a kind of ontological weapon: it is directed not only at the physical removal of the Other but at the destruction of the very possibility of a world shared with him.

The intrasubjective schism. On the one hand, hatred is directed at the negation of the Other, up to the wish to destroy him; on the other, its arrow is simultaneously directed at the one who hates, damaging him from within. The object of our hatred is most probably indifferent to what we feel, whereas it is we who are unbalanced by this feeling, which awakens and intensifies our worst qualities (Stebel's'ka 2025). Scheler's formula of the "self-poisoning of the soul" describes exactly this: repression proceeds in two steps – first the repression of the representation of the object that aroused the negative feeling, then the repression of the affect itself, which, denied external discharge, begins to act inwards; the consequence is a negative relation to one's own body, extending as far as a metaphysical dualism of the Cartesian type (cited in Kebuladze 2024).

The intersubjective and intrasubjective dimensions do not exist in parallel: they are one and the same schism seen from two sides. In hating the Other, we deny him the right to be Other and seek to remove him; and although we deny him a place in the shared world, he paradoxically remains permanently within our field of vision. Yet in denying the Other's right to his alterity, we inevitably destroy the integrity of our own life-world as well, transforming it into a homogeneous space in which there is no room for otherness as such. Together with the Other, the very possibility of an encounter with what is not myself disappears from our world – and with it the possibility of moving beyond our own self-identity. In negating the Other, the "I" ultimately closes in upon itself.

2.7. Indifference as a limit state of the schism

Elie Wiesel's widely cited formula – that the opposite of love is not hatred but indifference – is usually received as a moral admonition. It nevertheless contains an important ontological intuition: hatred and indifference assign the Other different places in the subject's world.

Hatred paradoxically holds the Other in being. It attests that before us is an Other who is experienced as unacceptable, hostile, dangerous or even unbearable – but who *is*. When the Other ceases to have any value-weight for us, even a negative one, the ground for an intense negative relation to him disappears as well. Where we see no value in the Other, feelings towards him vanish, and with them hatred (Stebel's'ka 2025). In this sense, hatred may be regarded as a limit form of negative recognition: the Other is negated, yet the very intensity of the negation testifies that he is.

Indifference has a different structure. It does not so much negate the Other as cancel the question of him, depriving him of moral and axiological relevance. The Other drops out of the field of attention and ceases to be someone with respect to whom questions of good, evil, responsibility or compassion are raised at all.

A cognate mechanism is described by Zygmunt Bauman through the concept of adiaphorization – the placing of certain actions, relations or persons outside moral evaluation. What ends up in such a zone is no longer considered in categories of good and evil and may be reduced to a functional, procedural or technical matter (Bauman 1993, Bauman and Donskis 2013). Adiaphorization can be accomplished without hatred, through distancing, the distribution of responsibility and the conversion of a moral question into a technical one. Hannah Arendt's figure of Eichmann is instructive here. The "banality of evil" is associated not with an excess of hatred or any other negative affect but above all with thoughtlessness, with an incapacity to reflect critically on one's own actions and to put oneself in the place of the Other (Arendt 1963). Evil proves possible not only where the Other is hated but also where he ceases to be an object of moral consideration and becomes the execution of a function, a procedure or an order. In her letter to Gershom Scholem, Arendt notes that evil is never radical but only extreme, possessing neither depth nor any demonic dimension; it can overgrow and lay waste the world precisely because it spreads over the surface, "like a fungus" (Arendt 2007: 470–471).

Nick Haslam's theory of dehumanization is of particular relevance here. He distinguishes animalistic from mechanistic dehumanization. In animalistic dehumanization, the Other is denied uniquely human attributes and assimilated to the image of an animal or a primitive, "lower" being. In mechanistic dehumanization, it is human nature that is denied – emotionality, warmth, individuality, agency – and the person appears as an automaton, a thing, a function or a statistical unit. The two forms have distinct emotional profiles. Animalistic dehumanization is often bound up with the humiliation of the Other and is accompanied by disgust and contempt. Mechanistic dehumanization presupposes emotional distancing and represents the Other as cold, robot-like, passive and devoid of depth; its characteristic emotional correlate is therefore indifference (Haslam 2006).

The three modes may now be summarized. *Aggression* arises primarily when the Other appears as an actual obstacle or source of threat. The negative evaluation is largely situational, and the aim is to remove the obstacle, stop the threatening action or restore a disrupted order. Aggression is typically episodic and does not in itself entail a denial of the Other's human status. *Hatred* alters the status of the Other. He is perceived no longer as the source of a particular threat but as the bearer

of a stable negative essence or disposition. The negative evaluation ceases to be situational and becomes enduring, while the motivational orientation may exceed the removal of a particular obstacle and take the form of a striving to distance, exclude or eliminate. The Other remains extremely significant – but his significance is negative. *Indifference* means that the Other ceases to be a significant object of moral and emotional attention. He may remain physically present, yet he loses axiological relevance. There is then no need even to seek his removal: his fate simply ceases to be a question for the subject. Structurally, mechanistic dehumanization, in which a person is reduced to a function, an object or a statistical unit, stands close to this mode.

It must be stressed that the triad "aggression–hatred–indifference" is neither a scale of gradually decreasing emotional intensity nor a necessary sequence of stages. Aggression does not necessarily generate hatred: it may remain a situational reaction to a concrete threat and subside once the threat is removed. Nor does hatred necessarily pass into indifference. Indifference is only one of the possible limit states of the rupture with the Other, one in which he loses even the negative significance that hatred still preserved. Moreover, indifference can arise without any preceding hatred, where the Other never entered the subject's axiological space at all. What is at issue, then, is not a linear scheme but different modes of the Other's presence in the subject's world, between which transitions are possible under certain conditions.

3. The triad under test: Ukrainian society at war

The practical significance of these distinctions emerges with particular clarity in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war. In a study conducted by Kateryna Skorokhod through in-depth semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian civilians, service personnel and veterans in March–June 2022, a high level of dehumanization of Russian military personnel was recorded, but its modes differed. For civilians, the dehumanization of the adversary simultaneously reinforced the self-identification of their own group as a bearer of humanistic values; among military personnel it took the more pronounced form of depersonalization of the adversary, whose destruction was perceived as a component of professional activity (Skorokhod 2022).

These results allow different regimes of a dehumanized relation to the enemy to be distinguished. In the first case, the Other retains a marked negative axiological significance, and the relation is structurally close to hatred. In the second, depersonalization and a functional attitude come to the fore, which brings this regime closer to the logic of adiaphorization. At the same time, the professional distancing of a soldier should not be identified with indifference: these are different psychological and ethical phenomena that may have outwardly similar manifestations. The distinction is not academic. It bears directly on how the moral condition of a society at war is to be assessed, and on what exactly should count as evidence of a loss of humanity.

3.1. Two sources of hatred: injury and powerlessness

Section 2.4 identified powerlessness as a component that may accompany hatred. Scheler's analysis of ressentiment shows why this component is decisive. Ressentiment arises from the experience of powerlessness, but only where the cause of one's own powerlessness is located in something external; the inability and unwillingness to see the sources of that powerlessness in oneself or in one's own community generates the search for an external enemy who is imagined to be responsible for it. The temporal and spatial structure of ressentiment is accordingly inverted: what is primary is not the external enemy but ressentiment itself, which then produces the representation of an enemy who allegedly deprived the community of its greatness in the past (Kebuladze 2024). Anatolij Jermolenko extends this analysis with the concept of hubris, in which ressentiment is sublimated into arrogance and a claim to superiority, and traces its ideological deployment in the twentieth century and in the doctrine of the "Russian world" (Jermolenko 2019).

This yields a distinction of two sources of hatred that the psychological literature, focused on appraisals and action tendencies, tends to leave implicit. Hatred may arise from *injury* – from real harm inflicted by a real agent – or from *powerlessness* that requires an enemy in order not to acknowledge itself as the cause of its own condition. Hatred of the first kind has an addressee; hatred of the second kind produces one. The first can in principle be metabolized by justice, recognition and accountability; the second cannot, because its object is constructed, and it is dissolved only by a return to self-examination.

Vendrell Ferran's typology, which distinguishes normative, ideological, retributive and malicious hatred, offers a complementary conceptual grid (Vendrell Ferran 2024). It allows a question that otherwise degenerates into rhetoric to be posed precisely. The hatred felt by Ukrainians towards the aggressor and the hatred cultivated by the aggressor towards Ukrainians are not one phenomenon. The first is retributive and normative in structure: it responds to injury and refers to a violated norm. The second is ideological: it is constructed by a narrative that precedes any injury, as documented in analyses of the extremist narratives deployed against Ukraine (Treyger et al. 2025). The ontological structure of the schism is common to both; their moral and political status is not. To ignore this difference is either to exculpate the aggressor or to demand that the victim cease to be a moral subject at all.

3.2. The measure of hatred: a public controversy

In 2023, a minor episode generated a revealing controversy in Ukrainian public discourse. After a Russian citizen was killed by a shark off the Egyptian coast, expressions of satisfaction appeared in Ukrainian social media, followed by an equally vigorous wave of moral condemnation of those expressions as evidence of *rozliudnennia* – of Ukrainians losing their own humanity. The philosopher Oleh Khoma objected that black humour is a very weak form of hatred, "almost vegetarian in the midst of a war", and that moralizing exercises about the damage

such reactions supposedly do to "our humanity" are symptoms of a peculiar hyper-civility; untimely moralizing, he argued, harms morality itself by hollowing it out into empty talk (Khoma 2023).

The objection is well taken with respect to *timing*, but it does not dissolve the question of the *measure*. Two things must be separated here. To demand of the victims of a war of extermination that they not hate is not an ethical requirement but a form of secondary victimization; on this point Khoma is right. Yet it does not follow that no distinction can be drawn within the field of hatred itself. Our analysis suggests where the distinction lies. Hatred that keeps the Other as one who *is* – even as an enemy, even as a person justly held responsible – remains within the space of the human, because it still presupposes an axiological relation to him. What ceases to be human is not the intensity of the negative relation but its conversion into adiaphorization, in which the fate of another person is no longer a question at all.

This reformulation has a practical consequence. It shifts attention from the policing of affect, which is both futile and unjust in wartime, to the identification of the specific practices in which the schism either stops or deepens: the attribution of responsibility as against the denial of humanity, the discharge of hatred into work as against its repression, and public discourse that keeps moral categories operative as against discourse that renders them merely technical.

3.3. What is tested: practices that preserve humanity

Three such practices deserve emphasis, and each has an empirical as well as a conceptual dimension.

The first is the *attribution of responsibility as distinct from dehumanization*. To hold a person, an institution or a state responsible is a judgment about guilt that presupposes evidence, degrees and procedures; it treats its object as an agent, and therefore as a human being. To deny humanity is to dispense with all of this. The two may sound alike in public speech, especially in wartime, and the philosophical task here is not to moralize but to keep the distinction available for reflection. It is this distinction, rather than the presence or absence of hatred, that separates the demand for justice from the logic of extermination.

The second is the *discharge of hatred into work*. Volunteer movements in Ukraine offer an instructive example: those involved plainly do not love the enemy, yet many of them do not experience destructive hatred, because the corresponding energy is redirected into socially useful activity. Such redirection does not abolish hatred; it prevents it from turning inwards (Stebel's'ka 2025). In Scheler's terms, what is thereby avoided is precisely the repression that converts affect into the self-poisoning of the soul. This has an institutional corollary: where legitimate channels of discharge – courts, reparations, documented accountability, public deliberation – are absent, hatred is more likely to be transformed into ressentiment and to seek an internal enemy.

The third is the *acknowledgement of the inward cost*. The intrasubjective dimension of the schism is not a metaphor. Research on Ukrainian populations has documented moral injury – the distress arising from events that violate a person's core moral

convictions – as a predictor of post-traumatic stress symptoms among both active-duty personnel and civilians (Zasiekina et al. 2024). Moral injury is not identical with hatred, but the two are structurally related: both concern a damaged relation to value, and both are aggravated when the injury goes publicly unacknowledged. This is where the philosophical analysis converges with the clinical literature on recovery, which identifies community acknowledgement and accountability, rather than the private management of feeling, as the conditions of repair (Herman 2023). It also indicates the proper order of any programme of "overcoming hatred": safety and justice first, then the work on the inward schism, and only then – and only where the wrongdoer has acknowledged the wrong – the question of forgiveness (Murphy 2003).

These considerations are consistent with one of the more counter-intuitive findings in the psychology of intergroup conflict: anger can be constructive precisely in the absence of hatred, since anger is addressed to actions and is therefore compatible with change, whereas hatred is addressed to being and renders change irrelevant (Halperin et al. 2011). The normative implication is not that a society under attack should cease to feel negative emotions, which is neither possible nor desirable, but that the intentional structure of the emotion matters: "they are evil" generates no obligation on the part of the Other except his elimination, whereas "they have done evil" generates an agenda of judgment, reparation and memory.

4. Conclusions

The analysis presented here supports five conclusions.

First, hatred is not an intensified form of anger or dislike. It differs from them in the status it assigns to its object: where anger addresses an action that can be changed, hatred addresses a supposedly stable malevolent essence, and its motivational horizon extends to the removal of the Other. This difference is not merely one of degree but of intentional structure, and it is corroborated by empirical evidence that hatred is bound up with moral convictions and with symbolic rather than merely realistic threat.

Second, hatred is a mode of relation, not only an emotion. Read through Buber's I-It, Levinas's totality and Scheler's account of value perception, it appears as the fixing of the Other in a finished definition and as a form of value blindness: the negative image becomes so encompassing that whatever does not fit it ceases to be visible. Etymology preserves this insight in the Ukrainian *nenavydity* – an active refusal of the gaze.

Third, hatred is a double schism. It removes the Other from the sphere of shared meaning and, by the same act, contracts the hater's own life-world into a homogeneous space in which alterity has no place. The intersubjective and intrasubjective dimensions are not parallel processes but one schism seen from two sides; its clinical correlate is the damaged relation to value described in the literature on moral injury.

Fourth, aggression, hatred and indifference are three distinct modes of the Other's presence in the subject's world, not three points on a single scale, and no necessary sequence leads from one to another. Indifference is nevertheless the limit state of the schism, because it withdraws from the Other even the negative significance that hatred still confers. Its mechanism is adiaphorization and its emotional correlate is mechanistic dehumanization – which is why evil requires neither hatred nor passion in order to be extreme.

Fifth, and consequently, the test of humanity in a society at war does not lie where public debate usually places it. It does not lie at the threshold of hatred, since hatred in response to a war of aggression is a morally intelligible reaction of people whose values have been assaulted, and the demand that they renounce it is experienced, correctly, as a demand that they renounce their own moral judgment. The test lies at the threshold of indifference: at the point where the question of another human being ceases to be asked at all. Accordingly, the criteria by which a society may judge itself are not the intensity of its negative emotions but the practices it sustains – whether it continues to distinguish the attribution of responsibility from the denial of humanity, whether hatred is discharged into work and into institutions rather than repressed into ressentiment, and whether the inward cost of hatred is publicly acknowledged rather than denied. To this extent, the philosophical task in wartime is neither to condemn hatred nor to justify it, but to keep visible the boundary beyond which the Other ceases to be a question.

Data availability statement

This is a theoretical study. No new data were generated or analysed. All empirical findings discussed in the article are drawn from previously published sources, which are cited in full in the list of references and are publicly available; the survey report of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology is available online at the address given in the references.

Acknowledgement

The publication costs of this articled were covered by the Estonian Academy of Sciences.

Addresses:
Oleksandra Stebelska
Optima Professional College LLC
Tbiliskyi Lane 4/10, Office 114
Kyiv, Ukraine
Email: cleanwave4@gmail.com
Tel.: +38(096)86-18-929

Olesia Pankiv
Mykola Lysenko Lviv National Music Academy
O. Nyzhankivskoho st. 5
Lviv, Ukraine
Email: pankiv.olesia@lnma.edu.ua
Tel.: +38(067)15-07-104

Oksana Onyshchuk
Ukrainian National Forestry University
Gen. Chuprynky st. 103
Lviv, Ukraine
Email: oksana.onyshchuk@nltu.edu.ua
Tel.: +38(096) 400 70 79

References

Académie française (2024) "Haine". In *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. 9th ed. Available online at https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A9H0068. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

Arendt, Hannah (1963) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the banality of evil*. New York: Viking Press.

Arendt, Hannah (2007) "The Eichmann controversy: a letter to Gershom Scholem". In Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, eds. *The Jewish writings*, 465–471. New York: Schocken Books.

Ash, Konstantin and Miroslav Shapovalov (2025) "Why most Ukrainians feel anger, hatred, or contempt toward Russian citizens after the 2022 Russian invasion". *Political Psychology* 46, 3, 511–529. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.13020

Bauman, Zygmunt (1993) *Postmodern ethics*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Bauman, Zygmunt and Leonidas Donskis (2013) *Moral blindness: the loss of sensitivity in liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Birondo, Noell, ed. (2022) *The moral psychology of hate*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brogaard, Berit (2020) *Hatred: understanding our most dangerous emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190084448.001.0001

Buber, Martin (1970) *I and Thou*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Bystryc'kyj, Jevhen (2019) "Nasyllja, identyčnist' i komunikacija". [Violence, identity, and communication.] *Filosofs'ka dumka* 2, 55–61.

DWDS (s.a.) "Hassen". In *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*. Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Available online at https://www.dwds.de/wb/hassen. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

Etymolohičnyj slovnyk ukrajins'koji movy (2003) [Etymological dictionary of the Ukrainian language.] Vol. 4: N–P. O. O. Potebnja Institute of Linguistics, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Kyiv: Naukova dumka.

Fischer, Agneta, Eran Halperin, Daphna Canetti, and Alba Jasini (2018) "Why we hate". *Emotion Review* 10, 4, 309–320. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073917751229

Fromm, Erich (1973) *The anatomy of human destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Halperin, Eran, Alexandra G. Russell, Carol S. Dweck, and James J. Gross (2011) "Anger, hatred, and the quest for peace: anger can be constructive in the absence of hatred". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, 2, 274–291. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002710383670

Harper, Douglas (s.a.) "Etymology of hate". In *Online etymology dictionary*. Available online at https://www.etymonline.com/word/hate. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

Haslam, Nick (2006) "Dehumanization: an integrative review". *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10, 3, 252–264. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr1003_4

Herman, Judith Lewis (2023) *Truth and repair: how trauma survivors envision justice*. New York: Basic Books.

Jermolenko, Anatolij (2019) "Resentyment i hibrys u konteksti stratehiji nasyl'stva ta komunikaciji porozuminnja". [Ressentiment and hubris in the context of the strategy of violence and the communication of mutual understanding.] *Filosofs'ka dumka* 2, 6–13.

Kebuladze, Vaxtanh (2024) "Koncepcija resentymentu Maksa Šelera ta jiji aktual'nist'". [Max Scheler's concept of ressentiment and its contemporary relevance.] *Filosofs'ka dumka* 2, 105–116. DOI: https://doi.org/10.15407/fd2024.02.105

Khoma, Oleh (2023) "Ne meni sudyty…". [It is not for me to judge….] Facebook post, 10 December 2023. Available online at https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0Jq3xRym7c3SnkokAAtyiTzoiYHYBYpPNdbzEywq3XxNtEQ7Yxjbyh7ZyduXn2ZNLl&id=100006443077185. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

KIIS (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology) (2025) "My i bez svitla bačymo, ščo vy – …": stavlennja ukrajinciv do Rosiji i rosijan. ["Even without electricity we can see what you are…": attitudes of Ukrainians towards Russia and Russians.] Report of 24 October 2025. Available online at https://www.kiis.com.ua/?cat=reports&id=1564&lang=ukr. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

Levinas, Emmanuel (1969) *Totality and infinity: an essay on exteriority*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel (1987) *Time and the Other*. Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Martínez, Cristhian A., Jan-Willem van Prooijen, and Paul A. M. Van Lange (2022) "A threat-based hate model: how symbolic and realistic threats underlie hate and aggression". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 103, 104393. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104393

Murphy, Jeffrie G. (2003) *Getting even: forgiveness and its limits*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pretus, Clara, Jennifer L. Ray, Yael Granot, William A. Cunningham, and Jay J. Van Bavel (2023) "The psychology of hate: moral concerns differentiate hate from dislike". *European Journal of Social Psychology* 53, 2, 336–353. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2906

Royzman, Edward B., Clark McCauley, and Paul Rozin (2005) "From Plato to Putnam: four ways to think about hate". In Robert J. Sternberg, ed. *The psychology of hate*, 3–35. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/10930-001

Scheler, Max (1954) *The nature of sympathy*. Trans. Peter Heath. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Skorokhod, Kateryna (2022) "Changes in attitudes toward the enemy in modern wars: dehumanization of Russian soldiers in the perception of civilians and the military of Ukraine". *Visnyk Xarkivs'koho nacional'noho universytetu imeni V. N. Karazina. Serija "Sociolohični doslidžennja sučasnoho suspil'stva: metodolohija, teorija, metody"* 49, 26–36. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26565/2227-6521-2022-49-03

Staub, Ervin (1989) *The roots of evil: the origins of genocide and other group violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stebel's'ka, Oleksandra (2025) "Nenavyst' jak rozkol v ljuds'komu isnuvanni". [Hatred as a schism in human existence.] In Volodymyr S. Voznjak, Vira V. Limončenko, and Marija S. Haluščak, eds. *Humanizm. Ljudyna. Čest': materialy XXXIII Vseukrajins'kyx ljudynoznavčyx filosofs'kyx čytan'*, 52–55. Drohobyč.

Sternberg, Robert J. (2026) "Real hate in context (REHIC): a theory of hate". *Theory & Psychology* 36, 5, 471–496. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543261418640

Szanto, Thomas (2020) "In hate we trust: the collectivization and habitualization of hatred". *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19, 3, 453–480. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9604-9

Treyger, Elina, Heather J. Williams, Luke J. Matthews, Khrystyna Holynska, Julia Matveyenko, Dan Cunningham, Tom Goode, and Katya Migacheva (2025) *The denazify lie: Russia's use of extremist narratives against Ukraine*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Available online at https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA3450-1.html. Accessed on 06.08.2026.

Vendrell Ferran, Íngrid (2024) "Hate: toward a four-types model". *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 15, 441–459. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-021-00568-z

Zasiekina, Larysa, Tamara Duchyminska, Antonia Bifulco, and Giacomo Bignardi (2024) "War trauma impacts in Ukrainian combat and civilian populations: moral injury and associated mental health symptoms". *Military Psychology* 36, 5, 555–566. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2023.2235256