INTRODUCTION

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In the summer of 1989, we met with a group of international scholars in Poland to exchange views on a particular type of altruism: the kind that some have called "heroic" altruism and that the conference organizers described as altruistic activity undertaken in extreme situations.

The topic of the conference emerged largely from recent studies of rescue activities undertaken by non-Jews on behalf of Jews during the Nazi occupation of Europe during World War II. Rescuers, as they are popularly called, risked their lives and frequently those of their families as well to help Jews survive the Nazi Holocaust. In a very real sense, rescue was an embrace: an act of enclosure and protective care in the midst of an ocean of unrelieved brutality. Moreover, the "other" whom rescuers embraced were neither family members nor coreligionists; in some cases, they were not even conationalists. In many cases, rescuers helped Jews despite their "outsider" status, the consequence of national and ethnic definitions that excluded them. While their numbers were very small—even by the most generous estimates, no more than one half of 1 percent of the total population under Nazi occupation—the very existence of rescuers suggests something important about the human spirit and its potential. In light of it, it seems less naive to envision a future without genocides and war, and even possible to imagine a global society marked by care.

Just as the topic evoked images of extreme evil and hope, so did the site of our meeting and its timing. Poland suffered one of the most cruel Nazi occupations and was the center of most of their
exterminating centers, yet it also mounted an impressive resistance. Testimonies about that period were everywhere: in the monuments on every few streets to those who had died, in the Warsaw ghetto remnants in the heart of the city, in Auschwitz where we visited, and in conversations with Poles. The scarcity of goods on store shelves, the long lines of people waiting patiently to enter the shops, and the unrepaired facades on buildings attested to the economic hardships Poles endured in the years following. But during that very summer of our conference, Communist and Solidarity representatives were meeting at the round table to see if they could forge unprecedented cooperative means to bring the country to a new political structure without violence. The symbolic significance of these multiple events—simultaneously grim and hopeful—was keenly felt by all of us.

The conference participants were a highly diverse group. Composed of scholars from multiple disciplines (historians, psychologists, social psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, educators, and social welfare representatives) and nations, their approaches to the topic ranged from highly theoretical to strongly pragmatic. Inherent in such diversity is both a threat and a promise: the threat of increasing fragmentation, polarization, and disconnectedness, and the promise of bringing mutual enrichment and cohesion out of isolating specializations and cultural specificities. The threat was quickly dissipated, for what eventually marked the lively exchanges and the resultant papers included herein was the sense of commonality of issues and shared problems, albeit expressed in the conceptual language particular to their respective disciplines.

The common underlying motif of the conference, expressed implicitly or explicitly, was the inadequacy of dominant theories to explain altruism—particularly heroic altruism, such as rescue. Such inadequacies focused on central issues.

One issue revolved around prevailing definitions of altruism and its relationship to moral theory. Behaviorist definitions try to avoid motivational issues, while concentrating on objective, measurable criteria. Other definitions have included motivational aspects, some insisting for example on specific internal states, such as empathy, lack of concern with restitution, specific values (such as love or compassion), personal norms, or principles of justice. Conference participants almost unanimously rejected behaviorist definitions as adequate. And while they also did not accept the
motivations identified by others as quite sufficient to explain rescue, they largely agreed that the issue of motivation was essential to any adequate definition of altruism.

Another issue revolved around the relationship of altruism generally and rescue specifically to morality and moral theory. While none disputed the idea that altruism resonates with moral implications, rescue itself appeared to imply moral themes that extended beyond Western conceptions of morality and prevailing moral theories. Neither the Kantian notions of justice nor insistence on pure selflessness appeared satisfactory to address altruism generally or the particular moral virtues of rescue.

The continuing debate over the paradox of altruism in the context of evolutionary theory surfaced as yet another issue. While notions of kinship and reciprocity might help explain some cases of altruism, they appeared inadequate to explain rescue behavior that was directed toward outsiders who were often strangers, and who constituted poor prospects for future reciprocity claims. Yet to rely on cultural explanations alone appeared equally unacceptable in view of real human biological constraints. Could evolutionary theory be reconciled or modified to account for behaviors such as rescue?

Just as evolutionary theory appeared inadequate to explain rescue, so did social psychological theory. If altruism is a trait that some people have and others do not, as implied in the notion of "an altruistic personality," then the world can presumably be divided into altruists and nonaltruists. But people often behave altruistically in one context and selfishly in another, and the quality of their altruistic responses also varies in the sense of their effectiveness and comprehensiveness. Given that many aspects of cognition and affect are subject to development, might it not be the case that altruism itself is an incremental developmental stage process, the potential for which all people have but not all develop fully?

Nor could social psychological theory adequately account for the influence of culture and the demands of specific situations. While apparently altruistic acts might share behavioral similarities, the meaning of such acts often differs depending on the culture in which they occurred. Thus, for example, rescue in the case of Denmark appeared to be largely an affirmation of national political traditions, whereas among Christian Reformed groups in Holland,
it appeared to be largely an affirmation of religious culture in which Jews were perceived as God's chosen people.

Finally, conferees unanimously agreed that the pragmatic implications of their work were of the utmost importance. The hope they shared in common was that their work would illuminate practice designed to create a better world society.

These issues, initially expressed at the conference, were subsequently refined in the written articles that followed thereafter. They serve as the organizational framework for this volume.

**PART 2: PHILOSOPHICAL, DEFINITIONAL, AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES**

The authors of part 2 address three central questions: What is an adequate definition of "altruism"? How is altruism related to rescue particularly and morality generally? And how well do our traditions of moral thought illuminate the phenomenon of altruism?

Rejecting ordinary forms of prosocial behavior as manifestations of altruism, Krzysztof Konarzewski (chapter 1) begins by arguing that the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust was a prototypical form of moral altruism. Heroic altruism of this type, says Konarzewski, requires both empathy and protest, two quite different motivational orientations. Whereas the former depends on some degree of social dependency or conformism, the latter requires a principled independence based on recognition of and commitment to the axiological foundations of community life. Since these are rooted in quite different and apparently irreconcilable psychological orientations, Konarzewski asks how both can be cultivated simultaneously in the same individual.

While Lawrence Blum (chapter 2) agrees emphatically that rescue was a qualitatively different activity from that implied in more routine kindly acts, he finds the term "altruism" itself insufficient to capture the moral resonances of rescue. Although agreeing with Konarzewski that rescue was unquestionably an altruistic act and an act of protest, Blum nonetheless argues that rescue involved moral principles beyond altruism. While acknowledging that morality requires universality—that is, extending one's concern to all human beings—he adds a distinctly innovative component by introducing the moral value of "affirming cultures." Whereas uni-
versatility denies differences and obscures them, preserving people
as a distinct people affirms their valued specificity.

Victor Seidler (chapter 3) takes Blum’s argument further. Rather
than liberating people and embracing them, the universalistic ra-
tional tradition, rooted in Enlightenment thought, is predicated
on an abstract humanity from which cultural identity is to be
trajected. In this tradition, feelings and self are regarded as man-
ifestations of egoism; thus, the price of freedom and equality is
self-denial. Seidler argues that Western moral theorists have em-
braced this notion with pernicious consequences. Inasmuch as the
language of altruism is tied to Christian/Kantian thought, neither
the concept of altruism nor conventional Western notions of mo-
rality or moral theory suffice to explain rescue. By way of contrast
with this tradition, which emphasizes “ethical purity,” he offers
the tradition of Judaism, which, he says, accepts emotions, self,
and individuality as well as social context as part of the human
condition and integral to moral behavior rather than in conflict
with it.

PART 3: SOCIOBIOLOGY AND MORAL ALTRUISM

Given that altruism is maladaptive at the individual level, in the
sense of being incompatible with reproductive success, how can
altruism generally and rescue behavior particularly be explained
in terms of evolutionary theory? Rejecting both exclusively bio-
logically based and exclusively culturally based explanations for
this paradox, Ian Vine (chapter 4) and Ronald Cohen (chapter 5)
attribute altruism to an interaction between biologically based
altruistic dispositions and cultural inputs. While kin selection, re-
ciprocity, and manipulation help explain altruism in part, says
Vine, they are inadequate to explain the self-sacrificial behavior
toward “outsiders” as evidenced in rescue behavior. He proposes
instead that an evolved subjective self-system enables humans to
transcend biological constraints and develop sympathy and a sense
of identity with a broad range of others. What genes do is provide
a range of possible behaviors, but it is culture and learning that
shape the selection of the range. Hence, he concludes, “our biology
courages us to be saints in some contexts and allows us to in
others. . . . But it remains a matter of choice which human options
we cultivate.”

Although he conceptualizes it somewhat differently, Cohen also
proposes an interactionist model between biology and culture, in which choice features. Altruism, including rescue, says Cohen, is based on both genetic and sociocultural evolution. Its genetic basis lies in an innate capacity for restraint that modifies dominance striving and provides a basis for morality. Congruent with the “dual inheritance model” advanced by Boyd and Richerson, he argues that while biological and cultural evolution are logically and empirically separate domains, “they are nonetheless united phenomenologically into a single process of descent with modification.” Hence, while not divorced from reproductive inheritance, both biology and culture are modifiable, the latter most particularly through role recruitment, population migrations, and diffusion of traits. Current societal trends (e.g., a rising concern with public versus private concerns, the end of Cold War tensions, and an increase in the nuclearization of family life), coupled with the phenomenon of rescue itself, lead Cohen to a very optimistic view regarding the possibilities for the evolution of what he calls “civil society,” in which norms and behaviors toward other persons and groups will take their welfare into account.

PART 4: THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENACTMENT OF ALTRUISM

The chapters in this section address the growth of altruism over the life span and the internal and external factors that mediate altruistic behavior. Dennis Krebs and Frank Van Hesteren (chapter 6) begin by asking whether there really are altruists and egoists or whether we are all a little bit of both. Rather than a trait that some people have and others do not, altruism, they argue, is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all people, and the capacity for it grows with social and cognitive development. Claiming that past approaches have failed to adequately address the stages of altruistic development and its interactional aspect, Krebs and Van Hesteren propose a “developmental-interactional” model consisting of seven cognitively based stage structures, the apex of which is “integrated altruism.” What distinguishes individuals possessing advanced stages is their more direct focus on enhancing the welfare of others as an end in itself, and their capacity to perform a broader array of more altruistic acts, as well as their capacity to respond more adequately. Van Hesteren (chapter 7) expands on the devel-
opamental aspect of the model, particularly as it relates to the most highly developed, ideal type. Drawing on theory and empirical research, he elaborates on the characteristics of this type, describing the coordination of characteristics within the personality, the forces that drive it, and the internal dynamics that mediate between structures and altruistic behavior. At the most advanced stage of "ideal" altruism, says Van Hesteren, individuals achieve a powerful and highly integrated sense of self-identity. Acutely self-aware, they are thus ever mindful of their internal standards and consistently "on the watch" for situations involving altruism.

The importance of self-awareness in altruism is also highlighted by Maria Jarzymowicz (chapter 8). Whereas "endocentric" altruism—which stems from a focus on one's own norms and standards—may result in an appropriate altruistic response when directed toward similar others, "exocentric" altruism—which stems from centering on the other—is more likely to result in an appropriate response when directed toward those who are dissimilar as well. Exocentric altruism, says Jarzymowicz, is more likely to occur among those who have a strong sense of self-other distinctiveness. On the basis of results from several empirical studies, she suggests that people with low self-distinctiveness experience identity problems; thus they have a greater need to differentiate themselves from in-group members, and are more likely to discriminate against dissimilar "out-group" others.

Like Krebs and Van Hesteren, as well as Jarzymowicz, Zuzanna Smolenska and Janusz Reykowski (chapter 9) also distinguish among types of altruism and altruistic motivation, and apply their conceptual framework to an analysis of rescuers' motivations. The motives of rescuers, they claim, were basically of three types: allocentric, normocentric, and axiological. Whereas allocentric motivations are induced by direct contact with a person in need and attention on his/her cognitive and affective state, normocentric motivations (similar to stages 3 and 4 in Krebs and Van Hesteren's model) are induced by the norms of significant reference groups, which, however, may be internalized in varying degrees. Axiological altruism (similar to stages 5 and 6 in the Krebs and Van Hesteren model) is motivated by indignation at the violation of moral principles relating to care and justice.

Leo Montada (chapter 10) also finds evidence to support the concept that people display different kinds of altruism in different situations. The motivation for prosocial activities, says Montada,
varies with the social structure and the relationships between the potential helper and the needy. On the basis of two empirical studies, Montada reports that moral outrage coupled with existential guilt were the best predictors of prosocial commitment with respect to disadvantaged people who are not personally known. However, in personal relationships between middle-aged daughters and elderly mothers, the best predictor was love realized as part of individual role behavior, such as the daughter's customary behavior, personal normative consideration, and the opportunity to help.

If developmental theorists are correct, the capacity for higher-stage altruism should increase with age. Elizabeth Midlarsky's studies (chapter 11) suggest that this implication may be correct. Individuals aged sixty-five to seventy-five were more likely to volunteer for a first-aid course than younger candidates (as long as the fee was not too high) and were more likely to give more altruistic reasons for doing so than younger volunteers. In general, the elderly reported a high involvement in helping behavior, and most attributed it to intrinsic factors.

Is heroic altruism, such as rescue, then a manifestation of advanced altruism? While none of the above authors tackle this question directly, they imply that without an understanding of its underlying motives and cognitive structures, the behavior itself cannot be properly assessed.

PART 5: EMBRACING THE "OUTSIDER"

Whereas the chapters described above concentrate on conceptual issues, the authors of this section discuss altruism in the context of concrete historical events. In highlighting the acts of Turks who saved the lives of Armenians during the Genocide of 1915, Richard Hovannisian (chapter 12) not only contributes a pioneering study of this phenomenon but also raises the issue of its cultural meaning. Although he attributes much of this activity to humanitarian motives, he is not certain they were altruistic. "How," he asks, "should one view the childless couple, or the family with no male children, who rescued, converted, and adopted Armenian infants and youngsters and loved and provided for them while forcing them to forget their ethnic and religious origins?" Hovannisian implies that by failing to affirm their cultures, these interveners failed to do what the highest level of morality requires—a point with which Blum and Seidler would probably agree. Yet Hovannisian acknowledges
that conversion and Turkification occurred in an historical and cultural context where they implied both the physical and spiritual well-being of their wards. Moreover, he asks, "If altruism means that there is no profit motive or gain for the intervener," then how does one categorize those who profited from their labor? The difficulty arises because in rural societies, "even the most humanitarian families required labor of all family members."

Whereas Hovannisian only alludes to the cultural context, Lawrence Baron (chapter 13) and Ewa Kurek-Lesik (chapter 14) emphasize it. Dutch involvement in rescue, says Baron, was facilitated by an historical tradition of religious tolerance and the high rate of Jewish assimilation into the mainstream. Despite these culturally supportive elements, however, the percentage of Dutch Jews who perished was among the highest in all of Nazi-dominated Europe, largely the consequence of an unfortunate convergence of specific situational characteristics and events that inhibited rescue. However, the Polish nuns who saved Jewish children did so despite pervasive Polish values and Catholic thought, which were permeated with anti-Semitism. Yet, as Kurek-Lesik observes, this same Catholic tradition also motivated them to help, for embedded within it was the ideal of responding to the suffering of all humanity. Unlike Hovannisian, she has no difficulty in categorizing their behavior as altruistic, even when they baptized and converted them. Given their commitment to save lives as the highest goal, and their belief that this was the best way to ensure their physical and spiritual salvation, as well as the absence of cultural norms regarding alternatively appropriate behaviors toward their charges, the sisters acted according to the best interests of their charges as they saw them.

As implied by the above authors, situations and culture can facilitate altruism, but only as they intersect with personal attributes and personal meaning. In the case of Dov Yirmiya, personal and political culture merged to produce what Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz (chapter 15) describes as a "political altruist." A passionately committed Israeli who fought in the War of Independence and the Lebanon War, Yirmiya is currently devoting all his time to helping Palestinians. Hertz-Lazarowitz calls his motivation empathic and political altruism, but his efforts to reconcile his particularist attachments—strong loyalty to his country and people—with the universalistic values implied by socialist/Zionist ideology has put him at the margins of Israeli society. In describing him as

PART 6: PROMOTING ALTRUISTIC BONDS

If society were to self-consciously decide to support the promotion of altruism, how might it do so? Noting that rescuers were marked by what they call "extensivity"—that is, a dual orientation toward attachments in interpersonal relationships as well as an inclusive sense of obligation toward multiple groups—Pearl and Samuel Oliner (chapter 16) launch this section by proposing eight social processes that can encourage an extensive orientation. Four of the processes they identify relate primarily to forming attachments to known others; they include bonding, empathizing, learning caring norms, and participating in caring behaviors. The remaining four deal primarily with developing a sense of obligation toward the broader society; they include diversifying, networking, reasoning, and forming global connections. This framework, they propose, can serve as a conceptual lens for analyzing current social institutions with the view of reinforcing, modifying, or adding components as necessary.

"WHAT KIND OF SOCIALIZATION IS REQUIRED TO RAISE CARING, COOPERATIVE, HELPFUL PERSONS?" ASKS ERVIN STAUB (CHAPTER 17). POINTING TO THE ROLE OF A SOCIETY'S IDEALS AND THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN, AND DRAWING ON EMPIRICAL RESEARCH, HE MAKES SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE NATURE OF SUCH EXPERIENCES IN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS. SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES TO PROMOTE CARING HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP WHAT STAUB CALLS "CONNECTED IDENTITIES." RATHER THAN MERELY AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ON THE ONE HAND, OR EMBEDDED ON THE OTHER HAND, PEOPLE WITH CONNECTED IDENTITIES HAVE A SENSE OF THEMSELVES IN RELATION. THUS, THEY FEEL BOTH CONNECTED TO OTHERS AS WELL AS APART, AND AT TIMES CAN STAND IN OPPOSITION TO OTHERS.

WHEREAS STAUB ADDRESSES THE INSTITUTIONS OF FAMILY AND SCHOOLS GENERALLY, DANIEL BOLAND (CHAPTER 18) CITES THE CASE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF ALTRUISM. WHAT ALCOHOLICS OFFER EACH OTHER IN THIS CONTEXT IS NONINTRUSIVE LISTENING, PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPERIENCE AND ITS ACCOMPANYING DESPAIR, NON-
threatening intimacy, honest supportive reassurances, as well as
tireless concern, time, attention, and empathy with no expectations
of personal reward. While recovering alcoholics practice altruism
through their supportive interchanges, adherents of the Bahá'í
faith, according to Wendy Heller and Hoda Mahmoudi (chapter
19), learn extensive altruistic norms primarily through its central
teachings. Rather than being focused on personal enlightenment
or salvation, its sacred texts are intended to transform civilization
by personal action that transforms individuals and their social
institutions. Spirituality, belief, and practice are inseparable in
the Bahá'í conception, say Heller and Mahmoudi, and they are
integrally joined to promote equality, equitable distribution of re-
sources, elimination of prejudice, and world peace.

Whereas autonomy, voluntarism, and choice are noted among
many contributors to this volume, for Wiktor Osiatynski (chapter
20), they are cardinal preconditions for altruism. On the basis of
an analysis of the collectivist model developed in the USSR, as
well as the collectivist rural village and the Russian Orthodox
religion of pre-Communist times, Osiatynski develops the idea that
philanthropy and charity may be possible in a paternalistic or
autocratic collectivist society, but that altruism cannot exist in it.