INTRODUCTION

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As the title suggests, the chapters in this section concern the growth of altruism over the life span and the internal and external factors that mediate altruistic behavior. In chapter 6, Krebs and Van Hesteren advance a "developmental-interactional" approach to altruistic personality that, they claim, counteracts the problems of past approaches. Krebs and Van Hesteren maintain that the patterns of altruistic behavior people display stem from and are shaped by the stages of development they have achieved, and that the forms of prosocial behavior that stem from higher stage structures are more altruistic than the forms that stem from lower stage structures. They suggest that the stages of development described by theorists such as Maslow, Piaget, Loevinger, Kegan, Selman, Hoffman, Haan, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Eisenberg correspond to one another along basic structural dimensions, and that each set of corresponding stage structures exerts a press toward a different type of altruism. The writers outline eight ideal types of altruism derived from the defining characteristics of corresponding stages of development, which they call undifferentiated responsiveness (Stage 0), egocentric accommodation (Stage 1), instrumental cooperation (Stage 2), mutual (Stage 3), conscientious (Stage 4), autonomous (Stage 5), integrated (Stage 6), and universal love ("stage 7").

The developmental-interactional approach to altruism advanced by Krebs and Van Hesteren raises several challenging questions. First, how do different cognitively based stage structures give rise to different types of altruistic behavior; what internal processes mediate the link between thought and action? Second, in what sense—on what basis—can the forms of prosocial behavior
that stem from relatively high stages be said to be more altruistic than the forms that stem from lower stages? Third, to what extent do the stages of development people are “in” correspond to one another, and, thus, to what extent do individuals display one form of altruism?

In answer to the first question, Krebs and Van Hesteren identify the process of perspective taking, the motivational state of empathy, and the need to behave in ways consistent with one’s self-concept and ideal self as central in the link between structures of knowing and forms of altruistic behavior. In response to the second question, Krebs and Van Hesteren advance six main reasons why the forms of prosocial behavior that stem from relatively high stages are more altruistic than the forms that stem from lower stages, namely, because they give rise to an increasingly sensitive understanding of others’ needs, because they mediate increasingly precise distinctions between the needs of others and one’s own needs, because they encompass an increasingly broad range of recipients (the Oliners’ “extensivity”), because they are increasingly effective at enhancing the welfare of others, because they are increasingly precisely directed toward deserving recipients, and because they mediate an increasingly focused acceptance of responsibility.

Finally—and this represents the interactional aspect of the model—Krebs and Van Hesteren depart from highly constructivist stage theories and assume (a) that individuals retain old stage structures after they acquire new ones, (b) that individuals may acquire different modal stages in different domains of development, and (c) that the forms of altruism individuals display are a product of the interaction between the stage structures they have acquired and the demands of the situations they face. Although stages may tend to converge structurally, and although individuals may tend to display patterns of altruism that stem from their modal stages, the model advanced by Krebs and Van Hesteren allows for considerable inconsistency across situations.

Building on the developmental (but not the interactional) model advanced by Krebs and Van Hesteren, Van Hesteren advances a bold assertion in chapter 7, namely that “it is not unreasonable to assume that some individuals reach the final stages of development across all domains,” and that the defining feature of the personalities of such people is their advanced capacity for altruism. According to Van Hesteren, individuals who have achieved the apogee
of altruism have reached the post–formal operational stage of cognitive development and the final stages in the development of perspective taking, empathy, care, justice, and, in general, self, or ego. Van Hesteren identifies Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa as individuals who have achieved this developmental acquisition. Van Hesteren invokes Maslow’s portrait of the self-actualizing personality as the best sketch of his ideally altruistic type.

There are four main reasons why Van Hesteren’s assertion is bold. First, it implies that domains of development may be highly integrated in some individuals at the highest levels. Second, related to the first point, it implies that the tension between care and justice noted by theorists such as Gilligan and Blum may be resolved at the highest stages. Third, in contrast with the interactional assumption of the model advanced by Krebs and Van Hesteren, it implies that altruistic behavior is highly consistent within individuals who have reached the final stages of development. And finally, it implies that the defining characteristic of advanced development is altruism.

In support of the first assumption, Van Hesteren argues that one of the basic functions of ego development is to integrate personality; indeed, Loevinger refers to her last stage of ego development as the stage of integration. Thus, almost by definition, individuals who have reached advanced stages of ego development also will have achieved advanced stages of development in other domains.

In support of the idea that considerations of care and justice are integrated at the highest stages, Van Hesteren appeals to evidence that post–formal operational thinking is equipped to coordinate the “left hemisphere” type of propositional logic involved in justice reasoning and the “right hemisphere” type of contextualized feelings involved in considerations of care. He cites Kohlberg and Power in support of the notion that care and justice are integrated at the “Stage 7” “ethic of responsible universal love, service, or sacrifice,” or agape. However, as indicated by other theorists cited by Van Hesteren, the relationship between care and justice is far from resolved.

The assumption that altruistic behavior is consistent across situations at the highest stages stems from the model advanced by Van Hesteren of the internal dynamics mediating between forms of development and altruistic behavior. This model is based on the assumption that the driving force behind both “vertical” development and “horizontal” consistency in behavior is the need to
uphold the values in one's ideal self and to be true to one's self (to behave in accordance with one's self-schema). Van Hesteren argues that altruism is an integral aspect of the identities of self-actualizing people, and thus that such people strive to behave altruistically. It is not entirely clear how the value of altruism achieves such regnancy in the self-actualized, but it seems to stem from ego development, advanced perspective-taking abilities, and the moral ideals of care and justice.

The heart of Van Hesteren's chapter is devoted to an explication of the dynamics mediating between internal cognitive and affective processes and altruistic behaviors in the altruistic personality. To this end, Van Hesteren draws from cognitive-developmental theory, humanistic writings, personality theory, information-processing models, social cognition, and research on the relationship between attitudes and behavior. On the affective side, Van Hesteren suggests that those who have reached the apogee of altruism are acutely and broadly empathic. Their advanced perspective-taking abilities enable them to understand clearly and exactly the needs of others and to adopt a broadly based social perspective. Drawing from Hoffman, Van Hesteren suggests that empathic affective charges may become associated with high-level principles of caring and justice, and such charges may be released in empathy-evoking situations, increasing the probability that individuals will behave in accordance with their moral principles.

More cognitive-developmentally, Van Hesteren cites Kohlberg in support of the idea that there is a monotonic increase in sense of responsibility with stage of moral development, and he quotes Blasi to the effect that this sense of responsibility stems from the need to be consistent with one's self, and that it mediates moral behavior. Hoffman also identifies a broadly based sense of responsibility for the "general plight" of the disadvantaged and an accompanying sense of existential guilt as inducements to altruism. (Montada supplies empirical support for the relationship between existential guilt and prosocial commitment in chapter 10.)

Finally, from a social cognitive perspective, Van Hesteren argues that exemplars of altruism possess an acute sense of self-awareness that reminds them of their internal standards and motivates them to behave in accord with them. In such people, altruistic constructs are readily accessible, and such people, in effect, maintain a "watching brief" for situations involving altruism. It is for reasons
such as these that such people tend to behave consistently altruistically across situations.

One of the main themes of this volume, woven through this section and others, is that individuals with an extensive identification with and sense of connectedness to others tend to behave more altruistically than individuals with more limited identities. In chapter 8, Maria Jarymowicz establishes that there is more to altruism than integration between self and other; inasmuch as altruism involves attending to the unique or distinct needs and qualities of others, it may be confounded by an absence of differentiation between self and other. Jarymowicz argues that self-other distinctiveness is necessary for "exocentric" altruism—altruism centered on the other, rather than on oneself—as opposed to "endocentric" altruism stemming from a focus on one's own norms and standards. Although individuals who have not adequately differentiated themselves from others might end up behaving altruistically to those who are similar to them, their altruistic overtures are apt to be inappropriate when directed toward those who are dissimilar. Lack of self-distinctiveness induces projection of one's own perspective and needs on others, rather than a sense of respect for others on their own terms.

Maria Jarymowicz summarizes the results of several empirical studies that explore the effects of self-distinctiveness. She suggests that people who have not adequately differentiated themselves from others experience identity problems, and shows that identity problems create a self-focus and "egocentricizing tension" inconsistent with exocentric altruism. People with identity problems display a need to differentiate themselves from in-group members, suggesting that me-we differentiation is more important for identity formation than me-they differentiation. And low self-distinctiveness is associated with imbalances in interpersonal control.

Jarymowicz also explores the implications of an absence of me-we distinctiveness, showing that individuals with low me-we distinctiveness feel more negative than individuals with high me-we self-distinctiveness toward individuals who are dissimilar to them, and that they are more prone to discriminate against members of out-groups. Apparently, a sense of distinctiveness between oneself and one's reference group is necessary to take the perspective of
people outside one's reference group, and the absence of this differentiation leads to an exclusionary tendency to treat out-group members with prejudice and hostility.

In chapter 9, Smolenska and Reykowski outline a model of altruistic motivation and the connection between cognitive processes and altruistic behavior. The first step toward altruism involves the recognition that another person is in need. Different people respond to such information in different ways. For some it is simply factual. For others it is upsetting, but it does not impel them to action. For others, it leads them to form a mental representation of a solution to the problem. But even this, argue Smolenska and Reykowski, is not enough to guarantee helping. In order for a "goal image" to evoke action, it must be charged with affect, and such affective charges define the motives of those who behave altruistically.

With this model in mind, Smolenska and Reykowski analyze the motives of individuals who rescued Jews during the Nazi occupation of Europe. Smolenska and Reykowski classify the motives of rescuers in three main categories: allocentric, normocentric, and axiological. Allocentric motives tend to be evoked by direct contact with a person in need. The focus of the helper's attention is on the cognitive and affective state of the victim. Normocentric motives stem from the activation of norms relevant to helping. Normocentric helping often occurs in groups and is facilitated by support from others. Norms may differ in the degree of internalization, ranging from those that are tied closely to the rules and roles of reference groups, through those that stem from a commitment to socializing institutions, to those that stem from the helper's self-concept and sense of identity. Axiological motives are instigated by violations of moral principles relating to care and justice. Axiological helping tends to be impersonal; it is often directed toward groups.

In common with Jarymowicz and Krebs and Van Hesteren, Smolenska and Reykowski distinguish among types of altruism. It is interesting to note the similarities and differences among the types of altruism derived by the different writers on the basis of their own data and theoretical orientations. Smolenska and Reykowski's allocentric motives correspond quite closely to Jarymowicz's exocentric type of altruism; and Smolenska and Reykowski's normocentric (and perhaps axiological) motives correspond to Jarymowicz's endocentric altruism. Krebs and Van Hesteren's "Stage 3" mutual and "Stage 4" conscientious altruism correspond
to Smolenska and Reykowski's normocentric types, and Krebs and Van Hesteren's "Stage 5" autonomous and "Stage 6" integrated altruism correspond to the axiological type.

These similarities notwithstanding, there are significant differences among the schemes. First, the Polish psychologists view each type of motive as developmentally equivalent and equal in altruism, whereas Krebs and Van Hesteren assert that the higher-stage forms are more altruistic than the lower-stage forms on several criteria. Second, in defining types of altruism on the basis of transformations in cognitive structure, Krebs and Van Hesteren make distinctions within types not made by the Polish theorists. For example, Krebs and Van Hesteren distinguish among types of empathy-based allocentric and exocentric motives on the basis of the stages of perspective taking that structure them, and they distinguish between types of normocentric and axiological motives in terms of the degree of internalization and universality of norms and principles.

A final difference lies in the extent to which each theorist defines types of people in terms of type of motive. Smolenska and Reykowski assume that all motives may coexist in the same person. Jarymowicz seems to assume more that different individuals are differentially prone to exocentric and endocentric forms of altruism on the basis of their degree of self-distinctiveness. Krebs and Van Hesteren adopt an additive-inclusive model that implies that individuals who have reached high stages of development may display all forms of altruism, but individuals fixated at lower stages will not have the higher forms available to them. Van Hesteren implies that individuals who have reached the highest stages of development will consistently display the highest forms of altruism.

In chapter 10, Leo Montada reports the results of two empirical studies designed to predict prosocial commitment, in the first case to three groups of disadvantaged people and in the second to mothers from their daughters. Montada finds that affective variables such as sympathy, moral outrage, and existential guilt were the best predictors of intentions to help the disadvantaged. Although sympathy predicted prosocial commitment quite well in itself, its effect was moderated significantly when combined with moral outrage and existential guilt. One may feel sorry for the unfortunate, but unless one feels that they do not deserve their fate and that they are unable to help themselves, one may not feel
inclined to help them. Unlike sympathy, moral outrage and existential guilt are associated with moral cognitions—giving rise to normocentric or axiological motives, in Smolenska and Reykowski's terminology. These moral emotions are associated with and housed in cognitions such as the perception of injustice to the disadvantaged, a sense of discrepancy between one's own privileged position and the position of the disadvantaged, and endorsement of the principle of need rather than the principle of equity. Individuals who feel moral outrage do not feel they are personally responsible for improving the plight of the disadvantaged, whereas those who feel existential guilt do.

When you change the social context and role relationships between individuals, the dynamics of prosocial behavior undergo a dramatic change. In the second study, Montada reports the results of a study on the prosocial commitment of middle-age daughters for their elderly mothers. Montada found that the factors that predicted prosocial commitment to the disadvantaged did not predict prosocial commitment to mothers. Although justice-related considerations such as the legitimacy of the mothers' needs and the daughters' sense of obligation affected the daughters' intentions to help, these factors failed to predict actual helping behavior. The best predictors of actual helping were role-related, normative factors such as the daughter's customary behavior toward her mother, the opportunity to help, the daughters' general attitudes toward supporting mothers, and the daughters' general willingness to accept responsibility. On the more affective side, as we would expect, daughters who were involved in mutually caring relationships with their mothers were more supportive than those who were not.

Montada's findings are consistent with the interactional aspect of the model advanced by Krebs and Van Hesteren and the motivational distinctions made by Smolenska and Reykowski—people display different kinds of altruism in different situations. When recipients of altruism are connected to their benefactors in role relationships, "normocentric" motives come into play, but when the needy are impersonal members of socially disadvantaged categories, "axiological" motives become more relevant.

Appropriately, the final chapter in this section, chapter 11, deals with altruism in the elderly. There is a pervasive tendency to view the elderly as dependent and in need of help; however, as implied by both developmental and evolutionary models of altruism, there is good reason to expect the capacity for altruism to advance with
age. Elizabeth Midlarsky reports the results of four studies that demonstrate that the elderly are more prone to altruism than most people assume. In the first study, Midlarsky reports an increase with age in the number of people who stopped in a shopping mall to donate to a fund for infants with birth defects. In the second study, Midlarsky reports that individuals aged sixty-five to seventy-five were more likely to volunteer for a first-aid course than younger adults, as long as the fee was not too high. When asked why they volunteered, the elderly gave more altruistic reasons than the younger volunteers, such as those based on the desire to be an effective helper. In an interesting offshoot of this study, Midlarsky exposed groups of trained and untrained subjects to a staged emergency. Although the younger subjects were more prone than the older subjects to intervene, the older subjects who had first-aid training were more likely to help than those who did not, and of all helpers, they were the most effective.

In the third study, Midlarsky asked a sample of elderly people, aged sixty-two to one hundred years, to report on their attitudes toward altruism and their history of altruistic behavior. Two-thirds of the sample reported providing considerable help to others, and although 39 percent said their level of helping had declined with age, 43 percent said they had maintained it at a relatively constant level, and 18 percent said their level of helping had increased over the years. The elderly reported a rich array of helping behaviors directed toward a variety of recipients. When asked why they helped, some cited external rewards, but most attributed their helping to intrinsic factors.

In the final study reported in the chapter, Midlarsky describes sending a sample of elderly people a personalized brochure outlining opportunities for volunteer work appropriate for them. She found that this intervention increased the level of self-esteem in the recipients. Midlarsky concludes that the elderly are well equipped to provide many kinds of effective help in our social system; they are a fertile but relatively untapped resource. Promoting opportunities for helping in the elderly is a worthy enterprise: the elderly have a lot to offer, and helping others makes them feel good about themselves.