Embracing the Other

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In their chapter (this volume), Krebs and Van Hesteren outline a model of the development of altruistic personality based on a hierarchy of stage-based types of altruism. Within their developmental-interactional perspective, true, or pure, altruism is construed as an ideal associated with the final stages of personal and social development. Building upon this work, an attempt will be made in this chapter

1. to flesh out the description of the pinnacle of altruistic personality—the most highly developed, ideal type—in terms of the end-stage characteristics of a variety of developmental theories;
2. to explain the coordination and integration of these characteristics within the structure of personality;
3. to discuss the forces that drive development and integrate personality;
4. to explain the internal dynamics mediating between cognitive and affective structures and high-level altruistic behavior.

Individuals such as Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer are often regarded as being ideal exemplars of what it means to be altruistic. Regarding Schweitzer, Cousins (1985) has said, "No other person
of his time furnished more evidence of the possibilities of creative human development or the altruistic reach of an individual human being" (11). While it is commonly acknowledged that people like Albert Schweitzer and Mother Teresa possess unique personality characteristics that make them more inclined to display high quantities of high-quality altruism in a variety of situations than other types of people, few attempts have been made to arrive at a theoretical understanding of such ideal altruistic personalities. It is hoped that the model presented in this chapter will contribute to a better understanding of the inner motivational dynamics of such people.

A PORTRAIT OF THE IDEAL ALTRUISTIC PERSONALITY

A point of departure in providing a portrait of the ideal altruistic personality will be the question, "What would an individual who had reached the end points of all forms of personal and social development be like and how would altruism be reflected in the makeup of such a person?" Proceeding in this manner will avoid the tendency inherent in the altruistic personality concept to suggest that altruism is all there is to personality and make it clear that an altruistic orientation is an integral aspect of a unified personality structure.

For the purposes of the model to be presented, it will be assumed that the cluster of personality characteristics identified by Maslow (1970) as being associated with self-actualization represents a hypothetical ideal of a person who has reached the final stages of development in all domains. In support of this position, it should be noted that a variety of developmental theorists have acknowledged the convergence of their higher stages with Maslow's self-actualization personality syndrome (e.g., Kegan 1982; Loevinger 1976). For example, in describing the "Integrated" stage of ego development, Loevinger (1976) suggests that "probably the best description of this stage is that of Maslow's Self-Actualizing person" (26). Maslow (1970) considered self-actualization to be a cohesive cluster of traits with a "common unity" (303) and found that an altruistic orientation was a highly salient, integral characteristic of the personalities of self-actualizing individuals.

Following Daniels (1984), it is assumed that "the processes of self-actualization and moral development may ... be simultaneous and equivalent" (28) and that, therefore, the end stages of a variety
of developmental theories may be regarded as reflecting the moral maturity characteristics of self-actualizing people. Several theorists (Daniels 1984; Simpson 1976) have suggested that there are strong, clearly evident parallels between Maslow's (1970) level(s) of self-actualization and Stages Six and Seven of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. In this regard, Daniels (1984) maintains that "self-actualization is primarily a moral concept, and that Maslow may have selected his sample of self-actualizing people largely on the basis of their moral maturity" (29). It is maintained in the model that the final-stage characteristics of the developmental theories of Hoffman, Gilligan, and Kohlberg represent the qualities of moral maturity possessed by the self-actualizing person and serve to explain why he/she is altruistically oriented.

In what follows, the final-stage characteristics of the theorists identified above will be summarized and their relationship to altruism will be discussed. The portrait will then be rounded out by way of suggesting how these characteristics are integrated by, and within, the ideal altruistic personality.

Integral to the makeup of the ideal altruistic personality are advanced perspective-taking and empathic capacities (i.e., cognitive and affective structures) that make possible a relatively full, precise, and deep understanding of the needs of others (see Krebs and Van Hesteren, this volume). Highly developed people are capable of experiencing genuine "empathic concern" (see Batson 1987) and are able to have "empathy for another's general plight" (see Hoffman 1982). That is, they have a "conception of self and other as continuous persons with separate histories and identities" (Hoffman 1982) and a "generalized empathic distress capability" (Hoffman 1982) through which empathically aroused affect is joined with another's overall life situation.

Closely associated with the advanced empathic capabilities of the ideal altruistic personality is a moral orientation defined by principles of care (cf. Hoffman 1987). Gilligan (1979, 1982) has argued that moral maturity involves the invoking of a universal principle of "care-responsibility" and has suggested that within this orientation "the infliction of hurt is the centre of moral concern and is considered immoral whether or not it can otherwise be construed as fair" (Gilligan 1979, 442). Building upon this interpretation, it is assumed that the moral orientation of the ideal altruistic personality is identified with the phenomenon of agape (see Nygren 1982; Sorokin 1950), which is an "ethic of responsible
universal love, service, or sacrifice—an ethic of supererogation" (Kohlberg and Power 1981, 349). It should be noted that an intimate relationship exists between principles of care and principles of justice (see Carter 1986; Kohlberg and Power 1981; Patterson 1977). Kohlberg and Power (1981) maintain that "although an ethic of agape goes beyond justice to supererogation, it still requires principles of fairness to resolve justice dilemmas" (352) and that "principles of reversible fairness are the only principles on which an ethic of agape could rest" (352). Regarding the relationship between justice and agape, Carter (1986) has argued that "it is agape that is the more fundamental and which enriches justice without rejecting its generally overwhelming claims" (83).

Having described the end-stage characteristics that serve to represent the qualities of moral maturity associated with the ideal altruistic personality, attention will now be given to briefly explaining how these characteristics give rise to, or increase the probability of, high-level altruism. First of all, sophisticated perspective-taking and empathic capacities make possible an in-depth understanding of others' needs. "The deeper one's understanding of the needs of others, the greater one's ability to be responsive to those needs, and the more one is able to offer high-quality altruism" (Krebs and Van Hesteren, this volume). Furthermore, the cognitive/affective structures that define universal principles of care give rise to moral imperatives that directly involve "promoting the welfare of others or preventing their harm or relieving the burden, hurt, or suffering (physical or psychological) of others" (Lyons 1983, 136). Generally speaking, individuals whose morality is defined by universal principles of justice and care are characteristically highly altruistic because an adherence to these principles results in a subordination of the self's individual lower-level interests to an orientation that involves a maximization of benefits for all (Krebs and Van Hesteren, forthcoming).

**THE INTEGRATION OF PERSONALITY**

An attempt will now be made to explain how the highest-stage characteristics that portray the ideal altruistic personality are integrated within his/her personality structure. In what follows, two interrelated interpretations of the term "integration" will be used. In the first usage, the term will refer to the coordination of cognitive and affective considerations in the making of altruistic moral judg-
ments on the part of the ideal altruistic personality. In the second usage, the term will refer to the organization, per se, of altruistic moral contents within the personality structure of the ideal altruistic personality. The ideas taken up in this section will constitute important reference points for the position taken up in subsequent sections that deal with the internal dynamics involved in moving from self-structures to altruistic behavior. It is important to keep in mind that the following discussion is based on the assumption that it is not unreasonable to assume that some individuals reach the final stages of development across all domains because the primary function of ego development is to integrate personality (see Noam, Kohlberg, and Snarey 1983).

In order to understand how the stage-derived characteristics of the ideal altruistic personality cohere as an integrated personality structure and how the internal dynamics of this type mediate altruistic behavior, an overarching concept of what it means to be a knower is needed (see Blasi 1988). While concepts like self, subject, person, and knower have traditionally been difficult to accommodate within the cognitive-developmental orientation (see Broughton 1981), recent neo-Piagetian theorizing about soft-structural developmental stages represents an attempt to account for them (e.g., Kegan 1982; Kohlberg, Levine, and Hewer 1983; Noam, Kohlberg, and Snarey 1983). Central to soft-structural interpretations of the self is the phenomenon of personal meaning making (see Kegan 1982). "Soft structural stages involve an ego or self consciously making meaning for itself....The focus is on the self or ego viewed as some totality, or system of meaning, that confronts the world of the other" (Kohlberg, Levine, and Hewer 1983, 30).

Particularly central to the integrative functions of the self at high developmental levels is the capacity for post–formal operational thought and dialectical reflection (see Basseches 1980; Kramer 1983). The post–formal operational status of the ideal altruistic personality involves a capacity for self-consciously coordinating the cognitive and affective structures that constitute, or define, various personal and social developmental subdomains. In a post–formal operational theoretical context, the self is construed as a "unifying regulatory structure" (Edelstein and Noam 1982, 410) that encompasses intellectual, moral, and social dimensions of development. Particularly significant in relation to the model to be presented is the capacity of the self to mediate cog-
nition and affect (see Edelstein and Noam 1982; Kegan 1982; Noam, Kohlberg, and Snarey 1983). In this regard, it is assumed that post–formal operational thought makes possible, or gives rise to, a "relativistic ethics of responsibility" (see Habermas 1990) that involves the coordination, or integration, of considerations of justice and considerations of care in the making of altruistic moral judgments in real-life situations. Such coordination of cognitive and affective considerations is possible at the post–formal operational level of functioning where reason represents one formal system that is consciously considered in relation to, and integrated or reconciled with, other possibly "mutually incompatible systems of knowledge" (Kramer 1983, 92).

It is assumed that the cognitive and affective high-stage structures that constitute, or define, the justice and care moral orientations give rise to conceptions of ideal self. For the purposes of the model, the moral contents represented by the justice and care orientations are understood to be integrated into the structure of personality by way of an ideal self-conception that Dabrowski (1964; Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970) has called the "personality ideal."

Personality ideal is an individual standard against which one evaluates one's actual personality structure. It arises out of one's experience and development. Personality ideal is shaped autonomously and authentically, often in conflict and struggle with the prevalent ideals of society. It is a mental structure which is first intuitively conceived in its broad outline and which serves as the empirical model for shaping one's own personality. (Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970, 175; emphasis added)

The "personality ideal" and its associated moral contents are considered, in turn, to be structured, or integrated, into personality by "self-schemata" (see Markus 1977, 1983). "Self-schemata are cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experience" (Markus 1977, 64). Self-schemata are assumed to be located within the identity structure of the individual in the manner of what Kelly and his associates (see Kelly 1955; Stefan 1977) describe as core personal constructs. "Core constructs are those which govern a person's maintenance process—that is, those by which he maintains his identity and existence" (Kelly 1955, 482).
THE "PERSONALITY IDEAL" AS A SHAPER OF DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

Given the high priority assigned to the values associated with the justice and care orientations in the values hierarchy of the ideal altruistic personality, there is strong "conceptual support" (see Daniels 1988; Frick 1982) for altruism within his/her "personality ideal." According to Frick (1982), a major issue that arises in relation to Maslow's (1970) "hierarchy of needs" has to do with the idea that the so-called meta needs of the individual are biologically weaker than his/her "deficiency needs." That is, it is apparent that "individuals do not automatically seek to fulfill the meta needs of self-actualization when all prior deficiency needs have been satisfied" (Frick 1982, 40). Frick (1982) has suggested that the phenomenon of "conceptual support" can serve to begin to explain how development beyond the deficiency categories of Maslow's (1970) needs hierarchy occurs. According to Frick (1982),

as the power of biological control decreases, the importance of the conceptual and symbolic powers of the organism increases and assumes more and more prominence in ordering, promoting, and directing personal growth in accord with the self-actualizing trends of personality development. In other words, the higher in the motivational hierarchy we move, the more important a conceptual orientation becomes to our continued development.... The major hypothesis set forth here, therefore, is that continued striving for the fulfillment of the meta needs within the self-actualization process requires, in addition to prior gratifications, some conceptual orientation or conceptual model toward one's own development. (41; emphasis added)

In the model, the "personality ideal" represents a "conceptual model toward one's own development" and is considered to be a shaper of personality development. The cognitive structures that define the universal principles of justice and care are thought to provide "conceptual support" for altruism within the "personality ideal." It should be noted that what Schwartz (1977) has called "personal norms" and what Staub (1984a) has termed "personal goals" might be considered a kind of "conceptual support" for altruism since they represent conceptually based prosocial-altruistic standards that an individual uses as guides for personal conduct. Staub's (1984a) characterization of a "prosocial orientation" in terms of a three-dimensional "cognitive network" is
particularly compatible with the way in which the phenomenon of "conceptual support" is being interpreted in the present model. Dabrowski (1964; Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970) considered "personality ideal" to be a "developmental dynamism" that becomes an increasingly pervasive moral motive force as a person progresses from Levels III and IV of his Theory of Positive Disintegration (i.e., the levels of Spontaneous and Organized Multi-Level Disintegration) to Level V, which is designated as the Level of Secondary Integration (see Hague 1986). As a high-level dynamism, the "personality ideal" is "postulated to be a shaper of development and behavior" (Dabrowski and Piechowski 1977, 76) and "the moving force of all that contributes to the full development of personality" (Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970, 80). It shapes personality because it "causes the individual to be troubled by the gap between what...is and what...ought to be" (Hague 1987, 354). It should be noted in this regard that self-schemata embody not only ideas about the individual's current self-view but also ideas about "possible selves," that is, notions about the kind of person an individual "would very much like to become" (Markus and Nurius 1986, 954).

At high developmental levels, people are motivated, in a particularly powerful way, by what Dabrowski (Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970) has called a "self-perfection instinct" and by what Puka (1983) has termed the "perfection principle" to close the gap between what "is" and what "ought to be." That is, they possess a strong tendency to strive toward actualization—to grow and develop and to fulfill their ideal selves. Such efforts to reduce "is-ought" discrepancies can be considered to occur on two interrelated levels. First, on the level of overall personality development (i.e., personality shaping), an individual may be motivated to close the gap between the kind of person he/she is and the kind of person he/she would be ideally. Second, on a specific behavioral level, an individual may be motivated to close the gap between the way he/she is behaving and the way he/she ought to be behaving.

FROM SELF-STRUCTURES TO ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR

A theoretical model will now be presented in which an attempt is made to explain the internal dynamics involved in moving from self-structures to altruistic behavior. Each aspect of the model stems from, and is consistent with, the work of other theorists.
and particular emphasis is placed upon integrating aspects of
cognitive-developmental theory with aspects of contemporary
schema-information-processing theory.

Following are the basic presuppositions that undergird the
model:

1. Stages of ego-development structure a sense of self that includes
   an ideal self or a "personality ideal."
2. At high stages, this sense of self is based on moral and behavioral
   standards that reflect the value of altruism: high-stage people
   view themselves as just, caring, and altruistic. These are im-
   portant aspects of their identity.
3. The primary reason why such people behave altruistically is
   because they strive to behave in a manner that is consistent
   with their behavioral standards of altruism, morality, and self.
4. Important aspects of such self-consistency strivings are self-
   conscious comparison to standard processes, empathic pro-
   cesses, and the experience of anticipated existential guilt.

The first two elements of the model have been previously discussed.
In what follows, an attempt will be made to explicate the general
nature of the self-consistency striving processes engaged in by the
ideal altruistic personality and to discuss two categories of internal
dynamics that serve to further illuminate the self-consistency striv-
ing phenomenon.

The model of the ideal altruistic personality is based on the
fundamental premise that individuals are motivated to behave in
a manner consistent with their behavioral standards because they
desire to uphold a sense of themselves as the kind of person they
value. More specifically, it is assumed that at the core of the in-
ternal dynamics characterizing the ideal altruistic personality is
a process of striving to behave in accordance with the moral ob-
ligations inherent in the "personality ideal."

Central to the fundamental premise underlying the model is the
assumption that, at high developmental stages, self-consistency strivings, mediated by "responsibility judgments," increasingly
come to characterize personality functioning in the moral domain
(see Kohlberg and Candee 1984). According to Kohlberg and Can-
dee (1984), "there is a monotonic increase in making judgments of
responsibility consistent with deontic judgments of rightness as
we move from stage to stage. This, in turn, means that there is a
monotonic increase in the proportion of subjects acting 'morally'
or in consistency with their deontic judgments made outside the situation" (57–58).

Blasi (1983, 1984) has interpreted the role of responsibility judgments and self-consistency strivings in a manner that is highly relevant to explaining the internal dynamics of the ideal altruistic personality. Blasi's (1983, 1984) self-model is an attempt to explore certain aspects of self-functioning that might serve to explain how, and under what conditions, a moral judgment leads to moral conduct. The basic contention in this model is that, in some instances at least, the outcome of making a moral judgment is a further judgment of responsibility in which the moral agent decides that he/she is obliged to engage in a morally positive action. Blasi (1984) suggests that the criteria for making such responsibility judgments "are related to the structure of one's self, or the essential definition of oneself" (129). Responsibility judgments are important because they tie abstract moral principles to the self—thus linking moral judgment and behavior.

The key to understanding how responsibility judgments contribute to moral behavior is the operation of self-consistency strivings. According to Blasi (1983), "The transition from a judgment of responsibility to action is supported dynamically by the tendency toward self-consistency, a central tendency in personality organization" (201). Self-consistency strivings and the responsibility dimension are inextricably associated with the concept of integrity. Blasi (1984) has explained the interrelatedness of these theoretical strands as follows:

The connection between moral identity and action is expressed through the concepts of responsibility (in the sense of strict obligation to act according to one's judgment) and integrity. These two concepts are closely related and derive their meaning from a view of moral action as an extension of the essential self into the domain of the possible, of what is not but needs to be, if the agent has to remain true to himself or herself. Responsibility, in this sense, stresses the self as a source of moral compulsion. Integrity, instead, emphasizes the idea of moral self-consistency, of intactness, and wholeness—all essential connotations of the self as a psychological organization. (132; emphasis added)

In the model, the "personality ideal," as previously described, is considered to be an aspect of the "essential definition of self" discussed by Blasi (1984). It is assumed that at high developmental levels one's "essential definition of self" has incorporated within it a concept of the person one would ideally like to be and that the
motivation for self-consistency striving is not only to live up to the
self that one is presently, but also to live up to the ideal self that
one aspires to be. In this way, self-consistency strivings may be
regarded as interacting with the "self-perfection instinct" (Dab-
browski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970) in that they serve as a
motive force not only in the direction of behaving in a manner
consistent with one's actual, present self but also in the direction
of behaving consistently with the self-ideal one regards oneself as
having the potential to become. The "self-perfection instinct,"
therefore, functions both to develop, or shape, personality and to
bridge the gap between self-structures and behavior.

In keeping with Blasi's (1983, 1984) interpretation of the con-
cepts of responsibility and integrity, it is argued that the ideal
altruistic personality (see Snyder and Kendzierski 1982) has a "be-
lieving means doing" orientation because the maintenance of a
sense of moral personhood is contingent upon consistently having
his/her beliefs, as these are represented in the "personality ideal,"
reflected in actual behavior. This "believing means doing" ori-
entation is assumed to become particularly prominent at advanced
developmental stages because it is only at these stages that an
individual is powerfully disposed to make moral "responsibility
attributions" that are in keeping with compelling, highly internal-
ized moral commands (see Kohlberg and Candee 1984). According
to Snyder and Kendzierski (1982), a "believing means doing" ori-
entation results from the use of so-called relevance strategies that
permit an individual to decide whether particular attitudes have
important implications for his/her actions. Snyder and Kendzierski
(1982) have described the relationship between "relevance strat-
egies" and a "believing means doing" orientation in a way that is
relevant to understanding how self-consistency strivings are in-
volved in the generation of altruistic behavior.

We propose that relevance strategies will effectively enhance correspond-
ence between attitude and behavior to the extent that they successfully
induce individuals to adopt a "believing means doing" orientation to
choosing their actions. This orientation effectively provides individuals
with an "action structure"...or a "plan" (cf. Schank and Abelson 1977)
for linking their attitudes and their behavior...It is as if an action struc-
ture mandates individuals to ask themselves the questions "Do I have a
general attitude that is relevant to this specific situation?" and "What
course of action does that attitude suggest that I pursue in this situation?"
and then to instruct themselves, "If that is what my attitude says that I should do, then that is what I must do." (181)

Having discussed the general nature of the self-consistency strivings engaged in by the ideal altruistic personality in living up to the moral imperatives of the "personality ideal," particular attention will now be given to two categories of internal dynamics that serve to further explain such strivings.

Self-Conscious Comparison to Behavioral Standard Processes

It is assumed in the model that self-conscious behavioral standard comparison processes are central to the self-consistency maintenance dynamics engaged in by the ideal altruistic personality in a situation where behaving altruistically is either a possibility or a necessity. Before discussing comparison to standard processes, per se, an attempt will be made to explain selected aspects of the behavioral standard activation process. In what follows, it will be argued that there are two reasons for a heightened likelihood that prosocial–altruistically oriented behavioral standards will be activated within the ideal altruistic personality in a potentially wide variety of situations.

First, the ideal altruistic personality is characteristically considered to have ready access to a rich and highly elaborated array of prosocial-altruistic constructs. The concept of construct accessibility (see Higgins and King 1981; Higgins, King, and Mavin 1982) is a particularly useful one in this context. According to Higgins and King (1981), "Construct accessibility is the readiness with which a stored construct is utilized in information-processing, that is, construct accessibility is concerned with stored constructs, their utilization in information-processing, and the likelihood of such utilization" (71). It is important to note that, according to Higgins, King, and Mavin (1982), the term "construct" is theoretically parallel to Markus’s (1977) self-schema dimension. Utilizing the concept of construct accessibility, it is argued that prosocial-altruistic constructs (i.e., prosocial-altruistic self-schemata and the behavioral standards they contain) are particularly accessible to the ideal altruistic personality because of their central location within his/her identity structure. That is, prosocial-altruistic constructs have
a high activation potential because of the central significance of altruism as a value and aspect of personal identity.

The second reason that prosocial–altruistically oriented behavioral standards have a high activation probability within the ideal altruistic personality has to do with the personal meaning that opportunities for behaving altruistically hold for him/her. Self-schemata at the core, or center, of an individual's identity structure are powerfully determinative of what kinds of life experiences and behavioral opportunities are valued and sought out. In the case of the ideal altruistic personality, the core-central self-schemata are comprised of prosocial-altruistic dimensions and so he/she tends to be particularly attuned to, or on the lookout for, situations of prosocial-altruistic relevance. This observational set is considered to directly increase the likelihood of prosocial–altruistically oriented behavioral standards being activated in situations where behaving altruistically is potential (see Rogers 1981). In the present model, then, the ideal altruistic personality is regarded as “maintaining a watching brief” (Rogers 1981, 208) for situations in which behavioral standards (i.e., those associated with the altruistic moral imperatives of the “personality ideal”) might apply.

A substantial body of literature and research has accumulated that deals with comparison to standard processes as dimensions of self-regulation and with the role of self-awareness in reducing, or eliminating, discrepancies between present behavior and the behavior implicit in self-defining behavioral standards (Carver and Scheier 1981; Gibbons 1990; Wicklund 1982). Furthermore, research relative to self-awareness theory within a prosocial-altruistic context has tended, with reasonable consistency, to suggest that self-awareness is an important mediator of helping behavior (Duval, Duval, and Neely 1979; Gibbons and Wicklund 1982; Reykowski and Smolenska 1980). It should be noted that there has been a tendency in the research conducted to date to pay only minimal attention to, or to ignore rather completely, developmental considerations that might serve to moderate the self-awareness-helping relationship.

Wicklund (1982) has provided the following account of the self-consistency striving dynamics set in motion by the self-aware state:

Self-awareness theory views the self-focused condition as a state of motivation. The individual is said to engage in self-evaluation to the extent that attention is directed toward a within self-discrepancy, for instance a discrepancy between a moral principle and morally relevant actions....
As a motivational state, self-awareness is presumed to move an individual to close the gap between behaviors and ideals. The results should be attempted achievements, morally consistent behavior, and generally greater internal consistency where the self is involved. (213)


It is assumed in the model that the ideal altruistic personality has a characteristic high degree of self-awareness due to a personality dynamism that Dabrowski (Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski 1970) has termed subject and object in oneself, "which involves constant objective and dynamic self-exploration" (78; emphasis added). This heightened self-awareness means that he/she is conscious, in an ongoing way, of the prosocial-altruistic values (i.e., prosocial-altruistic constructs) that are integral to (i.e., at the core of) his/her personal identity. These values, as James (1982) would put it, occupy the "hot place" in his/her consciousness and are, therefore, readily accessible (cf. Markus and Nurius 1987). This heightened consciousness of prosocial–altruistically focused values and the strong tendency to strive for self-perfection relative to the moral content of the "personality ideal" contribute to an habitual attunement to discrepancies that may arise between present behavior and the morally responsible behavior required in a helping situation. It should be made clear that in the case of the ideal altruistic personality a discrepancy between present behavior and the behavior implicit in the "personality ideal" is not necessarily experienced as a negative state of affairs and that the primary response to a perceived behavioral discrepancy is not avoidance (cf. Buss 1980). Given his/her self-perfection orientation, he/she is regarded as tending to construe such discrepancies as opportunities for maintaining a sense of moral integrity by behaving in a morally responsible manner.

**Empathic Processes and the Experience of Anticipated Existential Guilt**

Thus far, it has been suggested that self-conscious comparison to standard processes represents one category of internal dynamics that serves to explain, in part, the nature of the self-consistency
strivings assumed to mediate between self-structures and altruistic behavior at the high developmental level characterizing the ideal altruistic personality. The focus will now shift to a second category of such internal dynamics having to do with empathic processes and the experience of anticipated existential guilt. Such processes are claimed to complement the self-conscious comparison to standard processes previously discussed. To reiterate, these two complementary categories of internal dynamics, taken together, are intended to provide a reasonably full account of the inner meaning-making dynamics of the ideal altruistic personality.

In the case of the ideal altruistic personality, altruistic behavior is assumed to be mediated through the joint, or combined, influence of "empathic concern" (Batson and Coke 1981), "category (principle) driven empathic affect" (Hoffman 1987, 1989), and anticipated existential guilt (Friedman 1988; Hoffman 1982). Following an explication of the general empathic processes engaged in by the ideal altruistic personality in the generation of altruistic behavior, attention will be given to the "category (principle) driven empathic affect" and anticipated existential guilt dimensions, which are particularly relevant to understanding the phenomenon of self-consistency striving.

**Empathic Processes Engaged in by the Ideal Altruistic Personality.** In the model, it is assumed that once the ideal altruistic personality experiences empathic arousal in a generalized, global manner, he/she is able to bring to bear on this relatively undifferentiated response high-stage perspective-taking structures that serve to further clarify the nature and extent of the need state of the other by providing more information about it. This line of thinking is consistent with that of Krebs and Russell (1981), who have pointed out with regard to perspective taking (role taking) that "the motivation intrinsic to this process is to gather information, to improve understanding, to enhance knowledge: not to behave altruistically" (160). Since the ideal altruistic personality brings to bear on an initial generalized, relatively undifferentiated empathic response a highly sophisticated capacity for acquiring a "cognitive sense of the other" (see Hoffman 1982), he/she is able to arrive at an optimally full and objective understanding of the other’s need state. This enhanced understanding, in turn, is assumed to contribute to a heightening of (i.e., an increase in) empathic arousal (cf. Coke, Batson, and McDavis 1978). At the high
developmental level characteristic of the ideal altruistic personality, such heightened empathic arousal is experienced as a sense of "empathic concern" that gives rise to high-quality altruism that has as its "ultimate goal" reducing the other's need rather than relieving one's own "personal distress" (see Batson 1987; Batson and Coke 1981).

The empathic processes described above have to do with the experience of empathic arousal and "empathic concern" as a result of responding to what Hoffman (1987) has termed "the immediate stimulus event," that is, cues from the situation and from the person in need of help. A complementary, or additional, source of empathic arousal is the phenomenon of "category (principle) driven empathic affect" (Hoffman 1986, 1987, 1989). Building upon contemporary schema-information processing concepts, particularly the concept of "schema-triggered affect" (see Fiske 1982), Hoffman (1987, 1989) has suggested that empathic affect can be associated with, and be released upon the activation of, moral principles. According to Hoffman (1987), "as a consequence of being coupled with empathic affect in moral encounters, a moral principle may be encoded and stored as an affectively charged representation—as a 'hot' cognition or category" (72). Hoffman (1987) has explained the processes involved in the triggering of principle-associated empathic affect and their relationship to prosocial behavior. Given the complexity of the processes under consideration and the importance of having them as fully and as accurately represented as possible, Hoffman (1987) will be quoted at some length.

A person's affective and cognitive responses in moral encounters are due not only to the immediate stimulus event . . . , but also to . . . the affectively charged moral principles that one's action and other aspects of the stimulus event may activate. The empathic affect elicited in moral encounters may thus have a stimulus driven component and a component driven by the activated, affectively charged principle. This may have important implications for prosocial action. In some situations, for example, the empathic affect elicited by the stimulus situation alone may be too weak, perhaps because of the paucity of relevant cues from victims, to override the egoistic motives that may also be operating. But if one's caring principle were activated, its associated empathic affect might be released. This category driven component, alone or in combination with the stimulus driven component, may be powerful enough to extend the threshold needed to override the egoistic motives. Activating one's moral principles may thus provide an
additional source of empathic affect, with a resulting increase in one's overall motivation for moral action. The obverse side to this should also be mentioned. In some situations the empathic affect elicited by the stimulus event alone may be so intense that it produces the disruptive effects of "empathic overarousal" (Hoffman, 1978). In these cases, if one's caring principle were activated and the stimulus event assimilated to it, the category-driven component might reduce empathic affect intensity to a more manageable level. Thus the activation of an affectively charged moral principle may have a heightening or levelling effect and in general might function to stabilize one's level of empathic affect arousal in different situations. . . . In sum, empathy may play a significant role in determining whether one becomes committed to a moral principle by giving the principle an affective base. But once the principle is in place, activating it in future moral encounters may increase or decrease the intensity of one's empathic affective response. Moral principles may thus make it more likely that moral conflict will lead to effective moral action. (73; emphasis added)

Applying this line of thinking to the present model, it is maintained that the universal principles of justice and care, in the manner of an "affectively charged representation" or a "hot cognition" (Hoffman 1987, 72), have associated with them high-quality empathic affect. Furthermore, given their centrality within the identity structure of the ideal altruistic personality, these principles have a high activation potential. Hence it follows that the empathic affect schematically stored (associated) with these principles possesses a correspondingly high "triggering" propensity and that the ideal altruistic personality, therefore, experiences a high degree of "category (principle) driven empathic affect" in situations where behaving altruistically may be possible or required. As suggested by Hoffman (1987), such "category (principle) driven empathic affect" can serve to either increase empathic arousal or diminish it. In either case, however, the result is a heightened likelihood of behaving in a self-consistent manner relative to the moral principles with which the empathic affect is associated. That is, regardless of whether "category (principle) driven empathic affect" serves to increase empathic arousal in order to "override . . . egoistic motives" (Hoffman 1987, 73) or to reduce it in order to moderate the effects of empathic overarousal, the outcome is a strengthening of the motivation to behave in a manner consistent with one's self-defining moral principles.

The Experience of Anticipated Existential Guilt. The final phenomenon assumed to mediate altruistic behavior on the part of the
ideal altruistic personality and to explain the nature of the self-consistency striving engaged in by him/her is the experience of anticipated existential guilt.

In the model, the phenomenon of existential guilt is interpreted in keeping with the views of Friedman (1988) and Hoffman (1982, 1983). Drawing on the writings of Martin Buber (1969), Friedman (1988) suggests that "existential guilt is an ontic interhuman reality" (29) that serves as an inducement to assuming personal responsibility for the manner in which one relates to others and the world. Hoffman (1982, 1983) has provided an account of existential guilt that usefully complements Friedman's (1988) interpretation and that illuminates how the experience of existential guilt gives rise to, or mediates, altruistic behavior. In what is intended to represent a speculative theoretical analysis, Hoffman (1982) maintains that the quality of empathy experienced by an individual is a function of the developmental maturity of his/her capacity to arrive at a "cognitive sense of the other." Within this theoretical framework, perspective-taking stages are assumed to structure affective responses in the form of empathy, and the affective state of empathy, in turn, is assumed to provide a motivational impetus for altruism in some contexts (see Hoffman 1982; Krebs and Russell 1981). Furthermore, it is assumed that low-level types of altruism are mediated by empathic reactions structured by low-level stages or types of perspective taking, which involve a fair amount of self-interest (i.e., helping to relieve empathically experienced distress in the self), but higher types are more differentiated and more exclusively directed to the needs of the other (cf. Batson 1987; Batson and Coke 1981; Krebs and Van Hesteren, this volume).

At the highest level of empathic functioning, designated by Hoffman (1982) as "empathy for another's general plight," an individual has a strong tendency to experience existential guilt, which "may result from the combination of empathic distress and awareness of being in a relative advantageous position with respect to the victim" (Hoffman 1983, 30). The experiencing of existential guilt, as interpreted in the present model, is assumed to lead the ideal altruistic personality to take personal responsibility for alleviating the distress of the person or group in a less privileged position. Hoffman (1982) has described how responsibility self-attributions may contribute to transforming empathic arousal into guilt:
Once aware of the identity of others beyond the immediate situation, one’s empathic response to their general plight may be transformed into guilt if one feels responsible for their plight, or if one’s attention shifts from their plight to the contrast between it and one’s own relatively advantaged position. (303)

Hoffman (1982) goes on to suggest how, over the course of developmental maturation, guilt (including existential guilt) can become a motive force in its own right for prosocial behavior:

Although empathic distress is here viewed as a pre-requisite for the development [emphasis added] of guilt, it seems likely that guilt may become largely independent of its empathic origin. . . . That is, guilt may become a part of all subsequent responses to another’s distress, at least in situations in which one might have helped but did not. From then on, even as an innocent bystander, one may rarely experience empathic distress without some guilt. The line between empathic distress and guilt thus becomes very fine, and being an innocent bystander is a matter of degree. To the degree that one could have acted to help but did not, one may never feel totally innocent. Empathy and guilt may thus be the quintessential prosocial motives [emphasis added], since they may transform another’s pain into one’s own discomfort and make one feel partly responsible for the other’s plight whether or not one has actually done anything to cause it. (303–4)

In the model, it is assumed that the ideal altruistic personality type’s empathic response to the “other’s general plight” (see Hoffman 1982) is transformed into guilt (i.e., existential guilt) since he/she is highly motivated (see Blasi 1983; Kohlberg and Candee 1984) to make responsibility self-attributions that are in keeping with the altruistic imperatives of the self-defining, universally applicable principles of justice and care embodied by the “personality ideal.” The reasoning engaged in by the ideal altruistic personality in making such responsibility self-attributions might be as follows: “In light of my knowledge of the need state of this person in distress and my awareness of the discrepancy between my own relatively advantaged plight and the plight of the other, what do the moral principles that I have chosen to identify myself as a person demand of me in this situation?” The response to this question is, “If I am to continue to be able to live with myself, I must behave in a manner that is consistent with the altruistic demands of my self-defining moral principles. In other words, I must assume responsibility for responding to the need of the other in a way that is consistent with
my 'personality ideal' if I am to maintain my sense of integrity as a moral person."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this chapter to provide a portrait of the ideal altruistic personality by characterizing him/her as a knower who engages in identifiable altruistic moral meaning-making processes in deciding to behave altruistically. Particular emphasis has been placed upon the internal processes that mediate between the self-structures that characterize the ideal altruistic personality and altruistic behavior. The theoretical model is intended to explain why the ideal altruistic personality is strongly disposed to engage in high quantities of high-quality altruism in a variety of situations and it provides an example of how taking developmental considerations into account can serve to address long-standing issues related to the so-called generality, or cross-situational behavioral consistency, phenomenon (cf. Krebs and Van Hesteren, this volume; Staub 1980). The model is also intended to be a response to a loud and persistent call within the area of prosocial-altruistic behavior for theory development and theoretical integration (see Krebs and Miller 1985; Staub 1984b).

Future research might involve the use of qualitative research methodologies to validate and refine the theoretical model (see Van Hesteren 1986). Particularly appropriate for the study of the kinds of complex altruistic moral decision-making processes identified in the model are phenomenological-hermeneutic approaches that are uniquely well suited to exploring various aspects of human agency such as self-consciousness, intentionality, and judgment (e.g., Giorgi 1985). It is encouraging to note what appears to be a growing readiness on the part of altruism researchers to rely upon the use of qualitative methodologies in their work. In recent years, the research reported by the Oliners (1988) in The Altruistic Personality stands out as a fine example of how a qualitative approach can result in the "discernment of a human face" (Konner 1982) in the study of altruism.

While it is hoped that the model presented in this chapter sheds some needed light on the inner dynamics of highly developed altruistic people, I do not intend to have the last word on the topic. Instead, I will defer to Thomas Merton (1981), who, in a book
entitled *The Ascent to Truth*, seems to capture something of the essence of what all of this has been about.

Our nature imposes on us a certain pattern of development which we must follow if we are to fulfill our best capacities and achieve at least the partial happiness of being human. This pattern must be properly understood and worked out in all its essential elements. Otherwise, we fail. But it can be stated very simply, in a single sentence: *We must know the truth, and we must love the truth we know, and we must act according to the measure of our love.* (8)

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