

## STUDIES IN SCRIPT THEORY: II. ALTRUISTIC NUCLEAR SCRIPTS<sup>1</sup>

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*Summary.*—A serious lack in the extensive research literature on altruism, helping, and prosocial behavior is a personological perspective: a coherent theory of personality, coupled with case studies of committed altruists. This paper derived from Tomkins' script theory two versions of altruistic nuclear scripts (helping and reforming) in which altruism is the major agenda of a person's life. The formulations were tested with secondary analyses of data reported in four major naturalistic studies of committed altruists. Results were strongly supportive of Tomkins' theory and suggest the importance of distinguishing among various ways in which altruism may characterize a personality.

Is there a "Good Samaritan" personality? Huston and Korte (1976) posed this question several years ago, urging that our understanding of altruism would be greatly enriched by detailed naturalistic studies of committed altruists. Those authors attempted to derive a composite sketch of the altruistic personality by reviewing consistencies in findings of a research literature they criticized as overly dependent on nomothetic, laboratory-based studies of prosocial behavior.

Although studies of various forms of altruism, helping, and prosocial behavior have increased astronomically in recent years, serious personological study of altruism has not. Two formidable obstacles are readily discerned. First, the identification and intensive study of committed altruists is an intrinsically difficult task. Second, we have as yet no widely shared theoretical framework capable of guiding such inquiry. This paper attempts to foster work in the personological mode by deriving from Tomkins' (1979) script theory a formulation of two different kinds of "altruistic personalities," and then testing the derivations with secondary analyses of data reported in four relevant naturalistic studies.

The methods of personological inquiry necessarily differ from those of mainstream work in developmental and social psychology. For this reason (and for economy of presentation), the paper does not discuss a vast literature on altruism in developmental and social psychology or attempt to demonstrate connections with field and laboratory studies of altruistic behavior. The aim of this paper is to present and to test a theory of the origins and functions of altruism in individuals.

### AN OVERVIEW OF TOMKINS' SCRIPT THEORY

The theoretical framework invoked here is that of Tomkins' (1979) script theory. Since the theory is new, and unfamiliar to many readers, this section of

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the paper presents its distinctive features in terms of familiar rubrics of personality structure, dynamics, and development. The basic metaphor of Tomkins' theory is that of the person as a playwright, constructing his life story from the earliest weeks of life. The theory proposes radically new units of analysis, new principles of personality dynamics, and a relatively "time-free" conception of personality development.

### *Personality Structure*

Rejecting conceptions of personality as composed of "traits," describable as "types," partitioned into id, ego, superego, or organized around a core self-concept, Tomkins' theory proposes new units of analysis that recognize the heterogeneity of structures within personality. Basic units of analysis are scenes and scripts.

A *scene* (not necessarily an observable event) is an organized whole that captures salient features of experience: people, place, time, action, props, and psychological functions. The minimal definition of a scene is that it includes at least one affect and one object of that affect. Scenes vary as to their scope, importance, and interconnectedness. A "transient" scene, however vivid, does not become interconnected with other experience, and thus tends to disappear as a vital structure in personality. "Habitual" scenes become so practiced and automatic as to cease to evoke new thought or feeling. "Nuclear" scenes capture the person's most urgent, enduring, and unsolved problems. As such, they generate nuclear scripts that continue to grow via psychological magnification (defined below).

A script develops through the construction of a "family" of related scenes (cf. Wittgenstein, 1953) as perception of both similarities and differences between old and new experience leads to generation of individual rules for predicting, controlling, responding to, and creating personally meaningful events. Everyone possesses a number of scripts for dealing with life. The *meaning* of any given behavior depends on its embeddedness in a particular kind of script.

This last point may be illustrated by references to the altruism literature. (1) Transient altruistic scenes would be illustrated by a one-time donation to a cause, the return of a lost-letter, and similar isolated events.<sup>2</sup> (2) Habitual altruistic scripts might be represented by the mental health professional whose initial idealism has become a semi-routinized practice of professional skills. The phenomenon of "burnout" suggests the decay of such scripts. (3) Inter-mediate-level altruistic scripts correspond to "normative" altruism (Rosenhan, 1970): the kind of decent helpfulness expected of socialized people, but which

<sup>2</sup>Tasks employed in conventional research on altruism (intervention in an emergency, sharing of rewards, etc.) are ambiguous as *personality* data in the absence of anchoring information. Response in such contrived situations may be transient, habitual, intermediate, or nuclear.

remains segregated from one's personal dynamically important scripts. (4) Nuclear altruistic scripts represent the magnification of altruistic scenes into the major agenda of a person's life.

### *Personality Dynamics*

Two dynamic principles are postulated: affective amplification and psychological magnification. The short-term importance of any experience depends on its triggering of one or more innately-programmed affects: intrinsically rewarding affects of joy or excitement, intrinsically punishing affects of anger, distress, disgust, contempt, fear, or shame, or a "resetting" affect of surprise. Without engagement of affect, no experience is urgent enough to command consciousness.

Long-term importance of any experience depends on its psychological magnification: the interconnection of affect-laden scenes. This a process of growth whereby a family of related scenes is initially established and then expanded through the recruitment of ever more memories, thoughts, feelings, and actions. Psychological magnification accounts for the status of various scenes and scripts constructed by the individual. Transient scenes have not become psychologically magnified. Habitual scenes and scripts were *once* highly magnified but have ceased to grow. Intermediate-level scripts deal with events that are neither trivial nor passionately involving. The most dynamically significant components of personality are nuclear scenes that generate nuclear scripts organizing ever larger and more remote areas of a person's life.

### *Personality Development*

Script theory departs from currently influential ideas by insisting on a time-free conception of personality development that recognizes both continuity and discontinuity and rejects universal "stages" of development. While childhood experience need not account for one's dominant scenes and scripts, special attention is given to the socialization of affects in childhood (Tomkins, 1963) for such experience tends to pose issues of how one feels about feelings and may provide the "cast" of scenes subject to later psychological magnification.

### *Characteristics of Nuclear Scripts*

By definition (Tomkins, 1979), nuclear scenes and scripts capture the person's central, enduring concerns. By definition, they have become highly magnified. Certain features of nuclear scripts would be expected in any domain, and offer clues for the decoding of script structure, development, and dynamics. General characteristics of nuclear scripts may be summarized as follows:

1. There will exist a family of related scenes, generated in the process

of script formation. The nuclear script essentially consists of rules for interpreting, enhancing, defending-against, denying, or solving the "problem" given in the nuclear scene. Through the process of psychological magnification, the nuclear scene is represented in various loosely related specific scenes.

2. A key issue is whether the nuclear script is biased with respect to the ratio of positive to negative affects. In general, positive affect scripts tend to be magnified through the formation of *variants*, while negative affect scripts are magnified via *analog* formation (Carlson, 1981; Tomkins, 1979). Variants involve the detection of differences around a stable core. (For example, courtship progresses as one shares diverse experiences with the same partner.) Analog formation involves the detection of similarities in quite different situations. This is a more abstract, unconscious process, illustrated by the phenomena of transference in psychotherapy.

3. Differential magnification of *specific* affects (Tomkins, 1962, 1963) tends to dictate the nature of the resulting script. For example, positive affect scripts in which excitement is magnified will differ from those in which enjoyment is dominant. Similarly, negative affect scripts dominated by anger, fear, or shame would have distinctively different qualities. As noted above, one's history of socialization of affect would provide clues to differential magnification of specific affects.

4. Structurally, nuclear scripts may be roughly classified as monistic, dualistic, or pluralistic. A *monistic* script is clear as to the direction and distance of the "ideal scene"; it is organized around the preservation, enhancement, or restitution of a valued goal. A *dualistic* script embodies intrapsychic conflict, and has ambivalence at the core (for example, the model proposed in classical psychoanalytic theory). In a *pluralistic* script, the problem is that of bringing order into a life-space governed by multiple pressures and possibilities, as, for example, in the "identity crisis" experienced by many people in contemporary society.

This partial (and overly condensed) summary of principles of script theory may serve as a framework for considering a conceptual analysis of altruistic nuclear scripts.

#### *Altruistic Nuclear Scripts*

Although Tomkins (1979) has not specifically addressed the problem of altruism in his theoretical work, it is possible to derive from script theory a formulation of altruistic nuclear scripts. The balance of this paper is based on my own extrapolations from Tomkins' theory and an attempt to test the derivations with secondary analyses of existing data.

From the many faces of altruism, it seems useful to make a broad distinction between "helping" and "reforming" altruistic nuclear scripts. Helping and reforming are clearly altruistic—at least when embedded in nuclear scripts—in

that they involve non-normative efforts, costly to the individual, undertaken without expectation of reward. In a general way, helping scripts are concerned with the alleviation of suffering in individual others, while reforming scripts involve opposition to social conditions that oppress groups of others. In this conceptualization of "ideal types" helping and reforming nuclear scripts would be expected to share certain features, and to differ in others. The hypothetical commonalities and differences are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TWO ALTRUISTIC NUCLEAR SCRIPTS\*

Core Components	"Helping" Script	"Reforming" Script
Family of related scenes	(same)	(same)
Monistic script	(same)	(same)
Dual identification with victim of rescuer as	loss nurturant model	injustice moralistic model
Distress socialization	rewarding	mixed
Differential magnification of specific affects		
Enjoyment/Excitement	enjoyment	excitement
Distress/Anger	distress	anger
Shame/Contempt	shame	contempt

\*See text for explanation of terms.

*A family of related scenes.*—Altruistic nuclear scripts (like any nuclear scripts) generate a family of related scenes. Therefore, acts of helpfulness or reforming efforts should occur in many different contexts of the person's life.

*Monistic script structure.*—The altruistic nuclear script is basically a monistic one directed toward the restitution of a "good scene." The committed altruist is neither conflicted (dualistic) nor confused (pluralistic) about the value of altruistic service.

*Dual identification with victim and rescuer.*—An altruistic scene implies at least the two roles of victim and rescuer; if the altruistic scene is *nuclear* for an individual, there must be a strong investment of affect in both roles. Rendering help to another is then a symbolic saving of the self as well as an identification with a benign model.

Theoretically, it is at this point where helping and reforming nuclear scripts may be differentiated. Who is the victim? Who is the rescuer? Considered as ideal types, "helpers" are concerned with alleviation of human suffering, while "reformers" are concerned with correction of social injustice. Disregarding, for the moment, the considerable overlap in aims, it may be useful to exaggerate the differences. For the helper, identification with the victim is based on a personal experience of loss; identification with the rescuer is based on personal experience of a significant nurturant model. For the reformer,

identification with the victim is based on personal experience of injustice; identification with the rescuer is based on personal experience of a significant, morally concerned model. Both helping and reforming nuclear scripts are presumably based on critical socialization experience; both imply that something has gone wrong and that it is "fixable" by personal intervention.

*Distress socialization.*—Empathic distress (Hoffman, 1981) is considered to be a key component of altruistic response. Theoretically, this is rooted in a rewarding, rather than punitive, socialization of distress (Tomkins, 1963, pp. 88-111). A "... rewarding distress socialization produces in the child empathic distress at the suffering . . . of others, a willingness to communicate felt sympathy, a willingness to help the other and a belief that it is possible to do so" (Tomkins, 1963, p. 105). Punitive socialization of distress, in which distress becomes bound up with fear or shame, produces insensitivity to the suffering of self or other. But there is a mixed picture, in which "... in response to the distress of others there is no resonant awareness of distress in the self. Rather, every attempt is made to help the sufferer by encouraging him to be articulate about his complaints so that something can be done about them" (Tomkins, 1963, p. 97).

In the present conceptual analysis of altruistic nuclear scripts, a rewarding distress socialization should characterize helpers, while either a rewarding or a "mixed" socialization of distress would characterize reformers.

*Differential magnification of specific affects.*—Both helping and reforming versions of altruistic nuclear scripts are essentially positive-affect scripts. The predominance of positive affect guarantees that the inevitably punishing experience of negative affect encountered in an altruistic career will be absorbed so as to extend the range of scenes governed by the nuclear script and thus to strengthen an already magnified altruistic commitment.

However, helping and reforming nuclear scripts should be distinguishable on the basis of differential magnification of specific affects (Tomkins, 1962, 1963). Three contrasts are theoretically meaningful.

1. Among the positive affects, enjoyment and excitement should be differentially magnified by helpers and reformers, respectively. Enjoyment implies closeness, the savoring of familiar, shared experience. Excitement implies investment in novelty, risk, and adventure. Presumably, helpers are more concerned with restitution of safe, nurturant conditions for victims; reformers wish to change the more remote social forces responsible for oppression and human suffering.

2. Distress and anger may be seen as alternative experiences of punishment. Distress implies the absorption of punishment; anger implies the wish to administer punishment. Given a rewarding distress socialization, the helper is able to tolerate distress, and capable of empathic identification with the

distress of others. The reformer may be equally capable of experiencing empathic distress, but (in this formulation) is more invested in overcoming oppression, which requires the mobilization of anger.

3. Shame and contempt/disgust may be considered as alternative experiences of humiliation. Shame, in Tomkins' theory, is captured by the formulation "I want—but;" it results from the incomplete reduction of positive affect (Tomkins, 1963, p. 185). Contempt/disgust, in contrast, is captured by the formulation "I don't want;" it results from complete reduction of positive affect and implies a total rejection of the unworthy other or unworthy aspect of the self (Tomkins, 1963, p. 233). In the present context, a helping script would be supported by the person's vicarious shame in response to a victim; the reforming script would emphasize contempt for the unworthy oppressor.

To summarize, altruistic nuclear scripts have been described as special cases in which altruistic concerns have become the dominant themes in an individual's life. Two ideal types of altruistic nuclear scripts, helping and reforming scripts, were conceptualized in script-theoretic terms. This formulation was offered as a framework for further inquiry into the nature of a "Good Samaritan personality." The following sections of the paper attempt to test this formulation by examining data from four existing studies of committed altruists.

#### AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF HELPING NUCLEAR SCRIPTS

A test of the script-theoretic formulation necessarily poses two difficult requirements: (a) detailed case studies of appropriate subjects and (b) data collected independently of the theory to be tested. Both conditions are met in McWilliams' (1976) important case studies of "helpers."

McWilliams identified a pool of 20 potential subjects who met the following criteria: (a) repeated involvement in nonconforming acts of helping, (b) in the absence of socially defined obligations to help, (c) at a personal cost, without expectation of reciprocity, (d) in the context of a life free from evidence of pathology. Five persons were chosen (on the basis of independent judges' rankings) for intensive interviews and projective tests. McWilliams' case studies were reported in three sections: biographical information, projective data, and clinical interpretations in which interview and projective materials were organized from the standpoint of psychoanalytic theory.

A special problem in the use of these data should be noted. Since McWilliams proceeded with ". . . an open-ended investigation with no specific hypotheses being tested" (1976, p. 42), her data are admirably free from any expectancy effects. At the same time, the inquiry did not address certain key constructs in Tomkins' script theory. Where the data speak directly to script-theoretic issues (for or against), they are especially welcome for their independence; where the data are silent, they cannot be interpreted as disconfirming evidence.

### *Method*

Specific hypotheses derived from Tomkins' theory were tested by examining the "biographical information" sections of McWilliams' case studies for confirming or disconfirming evidence. Projective data and clinical interpretations were deliberately disregarded in order to minimize inference in testing the script-theoretic formulation. Postdictions in each of the four cases were for: (a) a family of related helping scenes; (b) monistic script structure (absence of conflict about altruism; absence of major competing life themes); (c) dual identification with victim and rescuer, as shown by (1) experience of loss and (2) presence of nurturant models; (d) rewarding distress socialization; and (e) differential magnification of specific affects of (1) enjoyment over excitement, (2) distress over anger, and (3) shame over contempt.

Four of McWilliams' cases clearly fit the conception of an altruistic nuclear script. The one excluded case was that of a 19-yr.-old college student whose general helpfulness and idealism did not suggest a *nuclear* script.

"A" was a 43-yr.-old architect, the father of two biological children and of five adopted children (variously handicapped, abandoned, or of mixed ethnic ancestry), responsible for a program of international adoptions of orphans.

"B" was a 33-yr.-old Puerto Rican woman, the wife of a small business owner, mother of four young children, an undergraduate student, and a full-time therapist in a community mental health center.

"C" was a 44-yr.-old professional photographer, mother of three children (two biological, one an Oriental adoptee), active in a program for the rescue of children in another country who would otherwise be doomed to lifetime quarantine with parents suffering a terminal disease.

"D" was a 78-yr.-old woman whose altruistic career included work as a medical missionary, teaching crafts to disabled veterans, early involvement in the civil rights and peace movements, and current work with prisoners and prison reform. (Note that this case gives evidence of both "helping" and "reforming" altruistic nuclear scripts.)

### *Results*

Among the 32 possible postdictions from script theory (4 cases  $\times$  8 specific items), 20 could be tested in McWilliams' data. Since McWilliams' interview schedule (1976, pp. 383-384) dealt with only two of the specific affects (anger and distress) postulated in hypothesis 5, no tests could be made for differential magnification of enjoyment over excitement, or of shame over contempt. In only one of the four case studies was it possible to make an unambiguous judgment of the nature of distress socialization in childhood, as given in hypothesis 4. Table 2 summarizes the evidence; fuller documentation is presented below.

TABLE 2  
SUMMARY OF RESULTS IN HELPING SCRIPTS\*

Hypothesis	Postdictions in Four Cases		
	Confirmed	Disconfirmed	Insufficient Information
Family of related scenes	A, B, C, D		
Monistic script	A, B, C, D		
Identification based on:			
Experience of loss	A, B, C	D	
Nurturant models	A, B, C, D		
Distress socialization	D		A, B, C
Magnification of			
Enjoyment/Excitement			A, B, C, D
Distress/Anger	A, B, C, D		
Shame/Contempt			A, B, C, D

\*Based on McWilliams (1976).

1. *A family of related helping scenes.*—The concept of a nuclear altruistic script implies that the person is responsive to helping implications in many different contexts. This was true for all four cases, as shown in the following excerpts from McWilliams' (1976) report.

[A's] helping takes a very personal as well as an institutional form. As the prime mover in an organization that reaches out to deprived or oppressed children throughout the world, he handles adoption issues, fundraising, educational efforts, and the various bureaucratic headaches of working internationally in a humanistic effort. As a parent, he has supplemented his two biological children with five sibling adoptees of different ethnicities and ages, all of whom previously suffered bereavement, abandonment and/or physical handicaps. Long before it became fashionable to adopt Vietnamese orphans, [he] was responding to the needs of parentless youngsters in that country by coordinating a major adoption program, running food distribution projects, and supporting indigenous welfare operations (pp. 59-60) . . . [He] confessed to a general difficulty in saying no to anybody, adding that sometimes this problem gets him into trouble. One example of this involved his taking the rap for someone else while in the Navy; another involved lending to a friend a piece of equipment that was not even really his to give, because "he had a need" (p. 70).

[B] has . . . a deep commitment which expresses itself in working extra hours, making special visits to the homes of patients in crisis, and investing herself most fully in the problems of psychotic and other severely disturbed clients and in multi-problem families . . . and she engages in various kinds of volunteer work on the side (p. 98) . . . [her] inability to turn down an appeal or ignore a perceived need leads to her being overburdened often enough (p. 107).

[C's] helping activities, all on an unpaid, volunteer basis, currently concern child welfare . . . previous and subsidiary involvements in helping include a concern with the physically handicapped and some service to wounded soldiers, in addition to numerous sacrifices for personal acquaintances (p. 186) . . . She has a terrible time saying no (p. 202) . . . An explicit description of her own attempts to help another [included] devotion to her difficult girlhood chum . . . a paralyzed friend . . . and her efforts to help a neighbor conquer a drinking problem (p. 216).

[D's] record of involvements in humanitarian efforts includes . . . a career as a medical missionary in China . . . participation in wartime as a "grey lady" in Army

compounds for the wounded . . . extensive work in the peace movement, long before it was a popular cause; lobbying and legislative work in the area of aid to troubled families; activity in the sphere of court reform . . . and her current work in prison reform, which includes regular visits to the "notorious" quarters for the criminally insane at a large state institution, where she apparently has gained the trust and friendship of the inmates (pp. 247-248).

2. *Monistic script structure*.—None of the four case reports showed conflict or confusion about the intrinsic worth of costly altruistic service, nor any major competing life themes. Although "C" has ". . . had to confront many internal doubts about the rightness of what she is doing" (p. 206), such doubts did not concern the importance of helping the children; rather, they involved a searching consideration of the potential costs of separation from families in the efforts to provide greater protection and care.

3. *Dual identification with victim and rescuer*.—Hypothesis 3 included separate but related expectations that helping nuclear scripts were based upon personal experience of loss and identification with nurturant models.

At least three of the four cases experienced significant loss in childhood. "A's" mother died when he was two years old, and his father when "A" was nine. Hardships and separations marked most of his youth. "B's" beloved father left the family in order to establish a home in the United States; their reunion several years later was marked by great difficulties in adjusting to an alien and threatening social world. "C's" earliest years were shadowed by her mother's (possibly psychotic) depression which left "C" in the care of another woman until age three; her childhood was marked by pressures to live out her mother's frustrated ambitions for a career in the performing arts which resulted in sacrifice of "normal" pleasures and peer-relationships in childhood. "D's" major loss consisted in her dethronement after the birth of a younger sibling. On the basis of her clinical analysis, McWilliams (1976) had no hesitation in speaking of "D's" "loss" in childhood; I have made a somewhat more conservative judgment (based on biographical information alone) of a possible disconfirmation of the prediction.

Identification with nurturant models was clearly present in all four cases.

"A" ". . . showed undiluted idealization [of his loving stepmother, and] . . . attributes his own activism to a combination of emulating [her] strength of character and empathizing with the plight of children" (p. 61). "B" identified with paternal grandparents ". . . whose home [was] . . . a refuge for the weary, needy, or simply gregarious . . . and an aunt who became for her a model of courage and calmness in the face of adversity" (p. 102). "C" found in her much older brother a significant model: "I like to think I'm like him . . . He was my father, my substitute father . . . very kind to me, very helpful" (p. 193). "D" credits her adored father with ". . . exerting the single most important influence on her development . . . 'He gave me a strong feeling that we were put on earth to serve and that the world should be better because we were in it'" (pp. 247-248).

4. *Rewarding socialization of distress.*—As noted above, only in the case of "D" were specific episodes of socialization of distress reported in sufficient detail to permit a confident judgment. This case was supportive of the hypothesis.

5. *Differential magnification of specific affects.*—The predominance of distress over anger was fully confirmed in all four case reports. For economy of presentation, the specific evidence will not be given; readers are referred to McWilliams' (1976) original report. However, no clear evidence bore on the predictions of differential magnification of enjoyment over excitement or shame over contempt.

To summarize, hypotheses derived from Tomkins' (1979) script theory were strikingly supported in a secondary analysis of McWilliams' (1976) important case studies. This analysis has neglected much of the richness of McWilliams' work to achieve a maximally objective test of a script-theoretic formulation. Although the interpretation of the findings given here differs from McWilliams' psychoanalytic formulation, it does not conflict with it in any major ways. What Tomkins' theory adds to the psychoanalytic approach is a theoretical account of the growth of psychological structures based on the differential magnification of affects.

#### EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF REFORMING NUCLEAR SCRIPTS

Reforming nuclear scripts are conceptually distinguished from helping nuclear scripts in several ways. Where the helper is working to alleviate the sufferings of individual others, the reformer is actively opposing a social order that oppresses and terrorizes groups of others. While reforming and helping nuclear scripts have many features in common, key differences are expected in the nature of the affective bases of childhood socialization and current character structure.

No existing studies of reformers match the richness and detail of McWilliams' (1976) studies of helpers. For a test of the script-theoretic formulation of reforming nuclear scripts, I have relied on three potentially relevant studies: Tomkins' (1965) portrayal of leaders of the Abolitionist movement in the early 19th century, London's (1970) account of Christians who devoted their efforts to the rescue of Jews under Nazi oppression in World War II, and Rosenhan's (1970) study of freedom riders in the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s. All three studies share a grave limitation as a field for testing the present script-theoretic formulation in that they offer insufficient information about individual reformers. Bearing that limitation in mind, it may yet be useful to attempt a test of the reforming nuclear script in reports of activists widely separated in historical time and geographical space who had in common heroic and dangerous efforts to save oppressed people.

Tomkins' (1965) study of the Abolitionist leaders long pre-dated his

formulation of script theory. It presented a general theory of commitment, illustrated with the careers of James Birney, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Theodore Weld in their effective leadership of the anti-slavery movement. The import of the study was to trace the process of initial resonance and deepened commitment to a social issue through the absorption of violence and suffering.

London's (1970) incompleted study of "rescuers" of Jews under Nazi occupation was based on tape-recorded interviews with 27 rescuers who had emigrated from Europe after 1945. The study sought insights into the commonalities in personality structure among the rescuers but eschewed drawing "conclusions;" vignettes from individual cases were reported.

Rosenhan (1970) used the same interview schedule employed by London in a study of participants in the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s. Originally seeking commonalities among supporters of the movement, Rosenhan came to make an important distinction between the "partially committed" who participated in one or two freedom rides and the "fully committed" who had devoted over a year to work on diverse projects. Differences between the two groups were conceptualized, but the report offered no information about individual subjects.

In the absence of detailed knowledge of the lives, experiences, and feelings of the activists portrayed in these three studies, it is impossible to be confident that they were guided by *nuclear* altruistic scripts in Tomkins' (1979) sense. However, Tomkins' (1965) abolitionist leaders, London's (1970) rescuers, and Rosenhan's (1970) "fully committed" participants in the Civil Rights movement all devoted extraordinary amounts of time and incurred grave risks in their sustained and dedicated work. However sparse the information, the published studies of these activists may reasonably be used for exploratory tests of the notion of reforming nuclear scripts.

#### *A Family of Related Scenes*

The careers of the abolitionists (Tomkins, 1965) clearly involved a growing family of related scenes as their deepening commitment led them into speaking, writing, imprisonment, organizational work, and travel in the cause. London's (1979) rescuers were not portrayed in sufficient detail to make a clear determination. However, it is obvious that many of his subjects became involved in diverse and extensive rescue efforts. Rosenhan's (1970) fully committed Civil Rights activists were notable for their diverse and sustained work, e.g., voter-registration, education, as well as the more dramatic freedom rides.

#### *Monistic Script Structure*

All of Tomkins' (1965) abolitionist leaders appear to have been guided

by monistic nuclear scripts. Garrison and Weld, in their different ways, were wholly dedicated to the anti-slavery cause, with no sense of doubt or confusion as to its worth. Phillips took longer to arrive at a full commitment, but then sustained it with great passion and effectiveness. Although Birney was never ". . . to be entirely free of doubts—of his own competence—or of the effectiveness of the struggle against slavery" (Tomkins, 1965, p. 165), he was clear as to the distance and direction of the goal and neither conflicted nor confused as to his purposes. Neither London's (1970) nor Rosenhan's (1970) study provides sufficient information to permit a check of monistic script structure among the rescuers or the freedom riders.

#### *Dual Identification With Victim and Rescuer*

Does identification with victims of oppression rest upon personal experience of injustice? Only London's (1970) report provides relevant information on this point. "Social marginality" was one of the three consistent findings among the rescuers; and the various examples suggest that a pattern of discrimination, friendlessness, and loneliness (which might be interpreted as experience of injustice) contributed to the rescuers' zeal and ability to work independent of others.

In contrast, all three studies clearly supported the expectation that reformers have identified with moralistic models. Tomkins notes that ". . . in all four families, moral and Christian zeal for the salvation of their children (and other sinners) were combined with great affection for their children. The parents provided the appropriate models for future reformers" (1965, p. 159). London tells us that ". . . almost all the rescuers tended to have very strong identifications with a parent [who was] a very strong moralist—not necessarily religious, but holding very firm opinions on moral issues and serving as a model of moral conduct. . . . This identification did not seem to be related to extraordinary warmth and closeness in family relationships" (1970, pp. 247, 249). Among Civil Rights activists, ". . . one or both parents of the Fully Committed were themselves fully committed to an altruistic cause during some extended period of the respondents' formative years" (Rosenhan, 1970, p. 262).

#### *Distress Socialization*

In none of the three studies were individuals' experiences of distress socialization described in sufficient detail to permit coding. (This is the least consequential of omissions, since either a "rewarding" or a "mixed" socialization of distress is consistent with the hypothesis.)

#### *Differential Magnification of Specific Affects*

Three patterns of differential magnification of specific affects were proposed in the basic hypothesis. Only Tomkins' (1965) and London's (1970)

reports provide any information on specific affects in the adult lives of their reformers.

1. *Excitement/enjoyment*.—All of Tomkins' abolitionists, as children, ". . . had abundant energy which they translated into vigorous play and into fighting with their peers . . . [and as adults] . . . had a zest for combat rather than a dread of it" (1965, pp. 159-160). London (1970, p. 245) reports that "Almost all the rescuers . . . seemed to possess a fondness for adventure. They had not only a desire to help but also a desire to participate in what were inherently exciting events."

2. *Anger/distress*.—Tomkins' (1965) study of abolitionist leaders offers the only relevant evidence. Garrison, who ". . . led the way with a frontal attack on the slaveholder [and] . . . had the greatest enthusiasm for nailing the sinner to the cross," along with Phillips, who was ". . . outraged, as a patrician at the tyranny of the mob," clearly magnified anger. Weld's affect profile is not clear. Birney's depression suggests anger directed toward the self and a magnification of distress that led to self-doubts about his role as an abolitionist. Neither London's (1970) nor Rosenhan's (1970) studies examined the specific affects of anger and distress.

3. *Contempt/shame*.—Again, the evidence comes largely from Tomkins' study of the abolitionists. Phillips' "patrician contempt," along with Garrison's arrogant delight in exposing the hypocrisy of upholders of slavery obviously signal the magnification of contempt. A more complex picture is given by Birney and Weld, whose contempt for the oppressors was partially masked by shame directed against the self. In London's (1970) report, the rescuers' cunning outwitting of the Gestapo implies (but does not demonstrate) the total rejection of the unworthy other implicated in the affect of contempt. Rosenhan's (1970) report is silent on this score.

To summarize, efforts to test a script-theoretic formulation of reforming nuclear scripts were frustrated by the absence of relevant information in three important naturalistic studies of committed altruists. Lacking appropriate information about individual reformers, it is possible to arrive at a tentative "box score" by using a study (rather than the individual case) as the unit of analysis

TABLE 3  
SUMMARY OF RESULTS IN REFORMING SCRIPTS

Hypothesis	Abolitionists*	Rescuers†	Freedom Riders‡
Family of related scenes	confirmed	no information	confirmed
Monistic script	confirmed	no information	no information
Identification based on: experience of injustice moralistic models	no information confirmed	confirmed confirmed	no information confirmed
Distress socialization	no information	no information	no information
Magnification of: Excitement/Enjoyment Anger/Distress	confirmed partially confirmed	confirmed no information	no information no information
Contempt/Shame	partially confirmed	no information	no information

\*Based on Tomkins (1965). †Based on London (1970). ‡Based on Rosenhan (1970).

and asking how many of the theoretical predictions were supported and how many contradicted in three diverse studies. Table 3 summarizes the findings. Among 24 possible postdictions (8 items  $\times$  3 studies), 11 were potentially testable in the data, while 13 were not. All 11 of the testable postdictions received either full or partial support, and none were disconfirmed. Adding to the implicit support of the script-theoretic formulation is the fact that the three studies spanned over a century, and dealt with committed altruists of extremely diverse backgrounds, in the service of very different oppressed people.

#### DISCUSSION

The script-theoretic interpretation of altruism offered in this paper is intended as a personological framework to supplement the variable-centered approaches that currently dominate inquiry. Results of the present studies offered considerable support for the formulation and suggest several points to be considered in future research. (1) The distinction between helping and reforming scripts was somewhat exaggerated in order to sharpen the conceptual focus. Tomkins' (1979) theory would allow many variations on themes of altruism and could account for the overlap between helping and reforming scripts found in some cases, e.g., Case D in McWilliams' study. Further, the reforming version of altruistic nuclear scripts might be better tested in studies of reformers who have undertaken service in behalf of their *own* membership and reference groups, for example, black leaders of the Black Liberation movement or feminist leaders of the women's movement. (2) Given the central importance of affect in script theory, future work might well examine *specific* affects (rather than merely positive or negative affect) in the psychological magnification of altruistic concerns. (3) The present studies suggest the fruitfulness of secondary analyses of existing published cases as a means of extending our inquiry beyond the limits of conveniently accessible subject samples. Much of the inevitable "circularity" of the case method may be by-passed when appropriate case materials are approached with a novel and independent conceptual framework.

Our understanding of the nature of altruism should be greatly enhanced through a study of the different roles altruism plays in functioning personalities. Tomkins' script theory promises important new insights toward the accomplishment of this task.

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