

An Evaluation of Stauffenberg's Actions in the Film Valkyrie (2008) from the Perspective of the Virtue of Altruism

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Abstract

Cinema is an effective means of cultural representation as it reaches all corners of the world through its narrative styles and products. Cinema portrays external realities and mental experiences in artistic, documentary, and dramatic forms, depicting various subjects with different themes. Therefore, every film in the information-flow medium of cinema has a conceptual and philosophical background. The film Valkyrie (2008), set during a period of war, depicts a character's efforts to alleviate pain by prioritizing others and endangering himself and his loved ones in the process. These efforts demonstrate his motivation for altruism. Cinema has benefited us by identifying, capturing, and examining altruism in a simulative sense. This study aims to reveal the contrast of altruism with "self-centeredness" and "egoism," which are seen as virtues by different philosophical thinkers, by discussing the characters in the film, especially Stauffenberg's stance on these virtues. The theoretical framework regarding these concepts has been created in the first subheading, and in the second subheading, the position of the character(s) compared to Stauffenberg has been determined within this framework. The first subheading entails a semantic analysis of altruism from the perspective of different thinkers, summarizing the difference between the concept and "egoism" and "self-centeredness." The second subheading includes a framework related to the fictional dimension of the film reviewing critical articles on "Valkyrie." Stauffenberg's struggle against Nazis during World War II has been examined considering apparent virtue. Using the qualitative content analysis method, the film has been analyzed, and Stauffenberg's altruistic stance is interpreted based on philosophical and moral data. The conclusion is that Stauffenberg acted in accordance with altruism, not with self-centeredness or egoism.

Keywords: Psychology of Religion, Positive Psychology, Morals, Virtue, Altruism, Valkyrie.

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Stauffenberg'ün Valkyrie (2008) Filmindeki Eylemlerinin Diğerkâmlık Erdemi Perspektifinden Değerlendirilmesi*

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Öz

Sinema, anlatsal tarzları ve ürünleri aracılığıyla dünyânın her köşesine ulaşmasıyla kültürel temsiliyetin etkili bir araçtır. Sinema sanatsal, belgesel ve dramatik şekillerde dışsal gerçeklikleri ve zihinsel deneyimleri tasvir ederek farklı temalarla çeşitli konuları işler. Dolayısıyla sinemanın bilgi akışı ortamındaki her filmi bir kavramsal ve felsefi arka plana sâhiptir. Savaş döneminde geçen Valkyrie (2008) filmi, kendisi ve sevdiklerini tehlikeye atıp başkalarını öncelikli tutarak, yaşanan acıyı hafifletmek için çaba sarf eden bir karakteri tasvir etmektedir. Bu çabaları, onun diğerkâm motivasyonunu gösterir. Çalışmada sinema, simülatif anlamda diğerkâmlığı tanımlama, sâbitleme ve inceleme yoluyla fayda sağlamıştır. Bu çalışma, diğerkâmlığın farklı felsefi düşünürler tarafından erdem olarak görülen “benmerkezcilik” ve “egoizm” ile karşılaştırmasını, özellikle Stauffenberg'in bu erdemlerle olan tutumu üzerine filmdeki karakterleri tartışarak ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu kavramlarla ilgili teorik çerçeve birinci bölümde oluşturulmuş ve ikinci bölümde karakterlerin (özellikle Stauffenberg) bu çerçevedeki durumları belirlenmiştir. Birinci bölüm, farklı düşünürlerin bakış açısından diğerkâmlığın bir semantik analizini yaparak kavram ile “egoizm” ve “benmerkezcilik” arasındaki farkı özetlemektedir. İkinci bölüm, filmle ilgili sinema kritiği yazılarını inceleyerek filmin kurgusal boyutuyla ilgili bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Stauffenberg'in II. Dünya Savaşı'nda Nazilere karşı mücadelesi, belirgin erdem göz önünde bulundurularak incelenmiştir. Nitel içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak film analiz edilmiş ve Stauffenberg'in diğerkâm duruşu felsefi ve ahlâkî verilerle yorumlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Stauffenberg benmerkezcilik veyâ egoizme değil, diğerkâmlığa uygun davranmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Psikolojisi, Pozitif Psikoloji, Ahlak, Erdem, Diğerkâmlık, Valkyrie

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Introduction

Cinema is an essential component of human culture and entertainment, with a history spanning over a century.¹ It has the power to transport us to different worlds, evoke emotions, and inspire us.² However, cinema is not just a form of entertainment; it can also have a profound impact on our moral and ethical values.³

Films can promote virtues such as courage, empathy, compassion, and honesty,⁴ or they can encourage vices and negative behaviors such as violence, greed, and selfishness.⁵ Therefore, the relationship between films and virtues has been a topic of interest for philosophers, psychologists, and film critics alike.⁶ This relationship raises important questions regarding the responsibility of filmmakers to shape our values and promote positive virtues through their art.⁷ Examining the relationship between films and virtues can provide insights into how cinema can affect our lives and our collective moral compass.⁸

The relationship between films and virtues is complex and multifaceted. Westacott argues that films can be a valuable tool for discussing

¹ David Bordwell - Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2016), 1.

² Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Motion Pictures* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 12.

³ Berys Gaut, "Film and Philosophy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta (Erişim 18 Mart 2023).

⁴ Bill Nichols, *Movies and Methods: An Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 17.

⁵ Robert C. Solomon, *The Big Question: A Short Introduction to Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2003), 128.

⁶ Plantinga, "Film Theory", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta (Erişim 18 Mart 2023).

⁷ Thomas Wartenberg, "Philosophy and Film", *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film*, ed. Paisley Livingston - Carl Plantinga (New York: Routledge, 2008), 6.

⁸ Roger Rosenbaum, "Virtue and the Movies: The Ethics of Film View-ing", *Philosophy Now* 98 (2014), 20-23.

moral issues and demonstrating the importance of virtues by examining the paradoxical relationship between virtues and vices and their complementary aspects.⁹ Sinnerbrink emphasizes that films can serve as a platform to explore virtue ethics, a philosophical approach that emphasizes the importance of virtues in moral decision-making, and that films can present impressive examples of virtuous behavior and provide a context for discussing moral issues.¹⁰ Kristjánsson and Cunningham highlight that films can provide insight into the complexity of human behavior and demonstrate the importance of virtues in overcoming vices.¹¹

It is seen as the responsibility of filmmakers to portray characters and their actions in line with society's moral and ethical standards and avoid propagating harmful ideas.¹² To handle morals and ethics in cinema may require a delicate balance between artistic freedom and responsibility. In short, filmmakers are expected to consider the impact of their work on society and strive to promote positive values, and address sensitive issues responsibly and sensitively.¹³

Studies on how screen-viewing and films affect people's behavior carry the tendency to investigate mainly the negative impacts of cinematic content on individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and actions. These research endeavors provide valuable insights into the potential consequences of film exposure on human behavior. A study investigates how

⁹ Emrys Westacott, *The Virtues of Our Vices: A Modest Defense of Gossip, Rudeness, and Other Bad Habits* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 197-198.

¹⁰ Robert Sinnerbrink, "Aristotle on Virtue and Film", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70/1 (2012), 57-58.

¹¹ Kristján Kristjánsson - Craig A. Cunningham, *Virtues and Their Vices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 126-127.

¹² Brian Winston, "Ethics and the Film Industry", *Film and Ethics: Foreclosed Encounters*, ed. Lisa Downing - Libby Saxton (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1-14.

¹³ Noël Carroll, "Art and Ethics", *A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. David Cooper (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1992), 403-408.

exposure to violent media (watching action films, playing violent computer and video games, and visiting violence-oriented Internet sites) influences the propensity for aggression exhibited by youth.¹⁴ Another study investigates the correlation between various personality traits, media consumption, preferences, and the tendency to engage in risk-taking behavior. Certain personality factors, namely sensation seeking, verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and instrumental androgyny, exhibited positive associations with exposure to violent films, horror films, as well as real crime and violent television, although to a lesser extent.¹⁵

In a study by Kubrak, attitudes toward elderly individuals were evaluated using a psychosemantic technique before and after watching a film. The findings revealed that postgraduate students showed positive attitude changes, while undergraduate students' negative assessments worsened. These divergent outcomes can be attributed to individual differences such as age, educational status, prior experiences, and pre-existing attitudes. The study highlights the role of pre-existing attitudes in mediating the impact of the film, emphasizing the influence of individual differences on media effects. However, the immediate changes observed after viewing the film were not enduring, underscoring the importance of identifying mechanisms that facilitate the long-term sustainability of these changes.¹⁶

Another study investigates the influence of film on participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward individuals with schizophrenia. A sample of 106 participants completed pre- and post-viewing ques-

¹⁴ Michael D. Slater vd., "Violent Media Content and Aggressiveness in Adolescents: A Downward Spiral Model", *Communication Research* 30/6 (2003), 714-716.

¹⁵ Kathryn Greene - Krcmar, "Predicting Exposure to and Liking of Media Violence: a Uses and Gratifications Approach", *Communication Studies* 56/1 (2005), 72-88.

¹⁶ Tina Kubrak, "Impact of Films: Changes in Young People's Attitudes after Watching a Movie", *Behavioral Sciences* 10/5 (2020), 86.

tionnaires after watching a 45-minute film excerpt. The films shown included fear-based inaccurate, likable-inaccurate, and educational-accurate portrayals of schizophrenia, as well as a control group. The findings revealed that participants in the fear-based inaccurate group exhibited significant increases in stigmatizing attitudes compared to those in the accurate and control groups. These participants also reported heightened negative affect and endorsed beliefs associating individuals with schizophrenia with unpredictability, dependency, and danger. These results support the hypothesis that negative and inaccurate portrayals of severe mental illness contribute to the reinforcement of stigmatizing attitudes. All in all, films have the potential of influencing viewers either in a good or bad direction by employing either prosocial qualities or the opposite.¹⁷

Altruism, or the practice of selfless concern for the well-being of others, is becoming increasingly prominent in cinema.¹⁸ It is an important aspect of ethics and morality that can shape people's perceptions and interactions with others. The handling of altruism in cinema requires careful consideration to avoid portraying it simplistically or naively.¹⁹ One approach to depicting altruism in cinema is to present characters who are motivated to help others, even at great personal cost. Such characters can serve as role models for viewers, inspiring them to consider the needs of others before their own. Additionally, cinema can be used to explore the positive impact of altruistic behavior on individuals and

¹⁷ Michael Shaun Perciful - Cheryl Meyer, "The Impact of Films on Viewer Attitudes towards People with Schizophrenia", *Curr Psychol* 36/3 (2016), 483.

¹⁸ Cem Pekman, *Özgeçilik ve Sinema* (İstanbul: Literatür Yayıncılık, 2021), 67.

¹⁹ C. Scott Dixon, "Altruism in Contemporary Hollywood Film", *The Ethics of Contemporary Hollywood*, ed. Robert Sinnerbrink (New York: Routledge, ts.), 122.

communities.²⁰ It is deemed important to present altruism in a nuanced manner, acknowledging the complexity of the concept and the multifaceted motivations behind it. By portraying the challenges and difficulties associated with altruism, filmmakers can create a more realistic portrayal of this concept and help audiences and researchers to appreciate its complexities.²¹

The film "Valkyrie" (2008) was chosen due to its inclusion of a faint flicker of positivity called altruism amidst the prevailing negative atmosphere, emotions, thoughts, and actions gripping Germany, Europe, and ultimately the world. Addressing the positive virtues present in a film where negative emotions, thoughts, and actions are scarce would create a vulnerability as it does not allow for a comparison with negativity.

Altruism is closely related to the psychology of religion as it explores the role of religious beliefs, values, and practices in promoting selfless and compassionate behavior toward others. This aspect substantiates the rationale behind the selection of this subject matter.

Studies that explore the partnership between the values of positive psychology and the psychology of religion are scarce. These studies examine how positive psychological principles and practices can be integrated with religious beliefs and practices to promote well-being and positive outcomes. They explore the role of spirituality, religious beliefs, and religious practices in fostering resilience, meaning, purpose, forgiveness, gratitude, and other positive psychological constructs. The aim

²⁰ Kristin M. Barton, "Altruism in Film and Fiction", *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Richard Eldridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 480-498.

²¹ Greenhill Pauline - Diane Tye, "Benevolent Warriors in Popular Culture", *Unsettling Assumptions: Tradition, Gender, Drag*, ed. Rob Cover - Alison Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 211-224.

is to understand how individuals' religious beliefs and practices can contribute to their psychological well-being and flourishing. Certain studies also investigate the potential benefits of interventions that combine positive psychology and religious/spiritual approaches. While the exact number of studies on the partnership between the values of positive psychology and the psychology of religion may vary, it is fair to say that they are not as abundant as studies focusing solely on positive psychology or religious psychology individually. However, the literature in this area is growing, and there is a growing recognition of the importance of integrating these two fields of study. Researchers are increasingly exploring the intersection between positive psychology and the psychology of religion to understand how they can mutually inform and enhance each other. For additional in-depth insights on this topic, it is recommended to consult the book titled "Handbook of Positive Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality," edited by Davis, Worthington Jr., and Schnitker (2023). It offers a comprehensive exploration of the integration between positive psychology and the psychology of religion and spirituality. The book covers a wide range of topics, including the historical perspective of positive psychology and the psychology of religion and spirituality, the role of virtues in these domains, theories of health and well-being, the framework of meaning, methodological considerations, cultural considerations, developmental considerations, happiness and well-being, character strengths and virtues, clinical and applied considerations, and future directions for the field. This book serves as a valuable resource for gaining a deeper understanding of the intersection between positive psychology and the psychology of religion and spirituality and provides insights into various aspects of this integration. Thus, this study endeavors to facilitate the convergence of these two domains.

1. The Place of the Virtue of Altruism in the Triangle of Egoism, Self-Centeredness, and Other-Centeredness

In ancient philosophy, altruism was not considered a significant virtue by system philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Despite the Greek origin of the term "benevolence," Plato did not emphasize its practice or list it among the four virtues. While Aristotle's *Ethics* contained excellent sections on friendship, loyalty was considered a means of personal empowerment rather than selfless giving without any personal gain, a notion that would have been surprising to Greeks.²² In contrast to complex concepts like democracy, multiculturalism, social justice, and equality, which emerged within specific social and economic contexts, altruism has inherent value and greater acceptance. Auguste Comte's *Systeme de Politique Positive* defined altruism as supporting the interests of others, formed by combining "ui" with "alter," the Latin term for "to the other," which is the French equivalent/original term for "altruism." H. Lewes, an English writer who studied Comte, evaluated the concept from a moral perspective while maintaining its original intent.²³

Altruism denotes actions that benefit others at the expense of oneself, regardless of motives, whether unconsciously or consciously based on one's biological structure. In social sciences, the authenticity and sincerity of such actions are evaluated in the context of the self-other relationship and from a psychological perspective. Thus, to investigate the motivation, consciousness, and sincerity of altruistic acts, it is essential to move beyond biological constraints and examine them from a psycho-

²² George Herbert Palmer, *Altruism: Its Nature and Varieties* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 1.

²³ Niall Scott - Jonathan Seglow, *Altruism* (New York: Open University Press, 2007), 1-2.

logical standpoint.²⁴

The definitions mentioned earlier prompt inquiries about the effectiveness and outcomes of altruistic actions, the usefulness of possessing an altruistic character, and the purpose of an altruistic action that does not directly benefit the suffering individual. Although one may not have control over the consequences of an altruistic act, if it is motivated by compassion, it involves empathic orientations such as understanding others' pain and making sacrifices. Altruism that stems from compassion involves putting oneself in another's position and relieving their pain for their benefit. It goes beyond an individual's moral stance and becomes a value-laden action that benefits others.²⁵

George Herbert Palmer, in his Ely Lectures, explores the origins of altruism. He narrates an anecdote of observing people eating less preferred grains out of consideration for others in need during his travels as a guest in people's homes. He regards this behavior as altruistic, which he considers a crucial and enigmatic virtue.²⁶

Nietzsche asserts that altruism is a manifestation of egoism rooted in envy. Altruistic people use others' actions to gauge their self-worth, and they develop a context for increasing it. Nietzsche argues that individuals who lack love use altruism as a pretext to demonstrate it through flawed contexts. He perceives altruistic individuals as seeking non-egoistic love through behaviors that are neither excessive nor empty. Nietzsche regards pity as the driving force behind taking an interest in someone else's misfortune or pain, which is a reflection of one's poten-

²⁴ Stephen G. Post, *Altruism & Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, & Religion in Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

²⁵ Lidewij Welmoed Niezink, *Considering Others in Need: On Altruism, Empathy and Perspective Taking* (Ridderkerk: Offsetdrukkerij Ridderprint B.V., 2008), V.

²⁶ Palmer, *Altruism: Its Nature and Varieties*, 1.

tial suffering. Even if an individual does not love someone who has fallen into the water, they may still rescue them unconsciously driven by self-interest. Nietzsche claims that this altruistic behavior only alleviates one's own pain.²⁷

Determining whether an action is truly altruistic involves considering whether it is motivated by self-interest or concern for others. Any justification for altruistic behavior must incorporate the desires of the self. This means that the belief that one's actions can benefit others can only be a motivating factor if the person desires something that includes the good of the other as well as their own good.²⁸

Altruistic actions can be analyzed from three perspectives. Firstly, the egoistic view posits that individuals engage in altruistic behavior only if they expect future benefits. Secondly, the self-centered view suggests that the donor's benefit includes the potential recipients' benefit as well. This means that the donor gives only if the pleasure of following others' preferences outweighs the pleasure of consuming the goods themselves. Lastly, an other-centered approach proposes that the helper's action stems from a personality trait resulting from artificial selection. This personality trait arises from an ethical gene, rather than a desire to increase the recipient's welfare. The egoistic individual thinks only of maximizing their own benefit. The self-centered individual considers their own benefit first but also includes others. The other-centered individual prioritizes others due to a genetic difference in their makeup.²⁹

The egoistic approach to altruism has some drawbacks. Observing others' happiness without giving anything might lead to more pleasure,

²⁷ Scott - Seglow, *Altruism*, 18-19.

²⁸ Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 80-81.

²⁹ Khalil, "What is altruism?", 99-102.

but egoistic altruists still donate their resources. This suggests that they empathize with the recipients. According to the egoistic approach, altruists must be masochists since they are willing to suffer harm for compensatory pleasure. Therefore, a rational masochist would be grateful to a poor recipient because poverty indirectly allows the donor to maximize their pleasure.³⁰ Becker's implication supports this perspective.³¹

Altruism is viewed positively by many, but some academics view it with suspicion due to the high moral tone associated with the term. Idealizing altruism weakens its foundation in real-life situations and can lead to religious, moral, and ethical dilemmas. Skilled manipulators can take advantage of altruists, increasing suspicion towards planned and intentional altruism. Succumbing to this danger, however, supports a completely selfish interpretation of humanity that excludes any serious reading of altruism. Altruism is not logical or other-centric when acting against self-interest, and it requires willing recipients. The more thoroughly altruism is examined, the closer it comes to a complete contradiction. It is impossible to imagine a society composed entirely of altruists in theory, and recipients are just as important as practitioners of altruism.³²

Khalil raises a question about differentiating between altruism and emotional foolishness when someone is motivated solely by the well-being of others. Even a relatively poor individual who donates most of their income to charities may be seen as an emotional fool. It could be difficult to identify precise limitations that differentiate between altruism

³⁰ Gary S. Becker, "Altruism in the Family and Selfishness in the Market Place", *Economica* 48/189 (1981), 13.

³¹ Becker, "Altruism in the Family and Selfishness in the Market Place", 13.

³² Colin Grant, *Altruism & Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 218.

and emotional foolishness.³³

Altruism is a challenge for evolutionary biology, which is based on Darwin's principles of individual selection and survival of the fittest. However, evolutionary biologists explain altruism through kin or group selection. Altruistic individuals do not gain direct individual benefits, but groups with altruistic members can provide other-centered help cycles, giving them an advantage over other groups. Kin selection predicts the selection of genes, even if it is detrimental to the group or the individual. Therefore, an individual who puts their kin or group before themselves exhibits short-term self-centeredness and long-term egoistic altruism.³⁴

Economists have examined altruism and recognize that it can have benefits beyond self-interest. Altruism is a significant phenomenon in some economic studies. However, economists acknowledge that altruism operates within the framework of fundamental economic theory and is viewed as an atypical benefit function. Altruistic individuals are regarded as having unconventional utility functions that diverge from typical rational actors within the classical economic paradigm.³⁵ Neoclassical economists assert that individuals strive to maximize their personal benefit when presented with alternative actions, such as investing or not, cooperating or not, or helping or not.³⁶

Psychology has traditionally considered altruism as covert person-

³³ Khalil, "What is altruism?", 98.

³⁴ Kristen Renwick Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perception of a Common Humanity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 161-162.

³⁵ Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perception of a Common Humanity*, 137.

³⁶ Christine Clavien - Michel Chapuisat, "The evolution of utility functions and psychological altruism", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences (2015), 2.

al gain, similar to economics and evolutionary biology, due to the assumption of universal egoism. However, this view began to shift in the mid-1970s with the recognition of the existence of altruism. The helping profession of psychology has also contributed to this change by encouraging psychologists to view other-oriented behaviors as genuinely altruistic. As a result, psychologists may now consider differences in identity formation and prioritize other-centered orientations, rather than being solely committed to the model of selfish identity and personality structure.³⁷

Psychology's focus on the self provides insight into empathetic altruistic motivation. However, the ego's helping behavior toward reducing someone else's distress may not necessarily be true altruism. Instead, the ego may be acting in an instrumental egoistic manner to reduce its own discomfort or feelings of guilt and shame. Hence, the ego's assistance may be seen as an instrumental egoistic response rather than a pure act of altruism.³⁸

Batson's study found that both empathy-based altruism and self-interest-based egoism could harm group well-being. The study showed that interventions promoting egoism and altruism increased concerns for individual well-being and decreased the importance of justice. In situations where group members were aware of distribution actions, participants incentivized towards altruistic behavior were not affected negatively by the publicity of their actions, unlike those incentivized towards egoistic behavior. Altruistic participants were less afraid of social sanctions than those in the egoism condition, which may have contributed to

³⁷ Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perception of a Common Humanity*, 179.

³⁸ C. Daniel Batson vd., "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 40/2 (1981), 291.

this difference.³⁹ A separate study found that empathy-driven altruism could prompt individuals to act in the interest of others, even if it means violating their own moral principles. This suggests that altruism may supersede individual or societal moral considerations. As demonstrated in the previous study, altruistic individuals are less concerned with social sanctions or transgressing social norms.⁴⁰

Not all individuals value altruism equally. Prioritizing the well-being of others may not be a priority for everyone. Some people may consider receiving help to require prioritizing oneself, leading them to perceive altruism as parasitic. This perception could create a potential risk of exploitation for personal benefit.⁴¹

Altruism is highly regarded but culturally illogical in some cases. Suspicion arises when an act appears altruistic but may be self-serving. It is often challenging to differentiate between altruistic and egoistic behavior. In organ donation, the absence of external motives and psychological assessments by medical professionals may help identify the donor's true intentions.⁴²

Studies suggest that individuals who prioritize altruism have longer lifespans than those who prioritize self-interest. Despite putting others before themselves, altruistic individuals may experience long-term personal benefits due to the positive impact of altruistic behavior on social connections, emotions, and stress levels. In contrast, egoistic behavior

³⁹ C. Daniel Batson vd., "Two Threats to the Common Good: Self-Interested Egoism and Empathy Induced Altruism", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 25/1 (1999), 5-13.

⁴⁰ C. Daniel Batson vd., "Empathy and the Collective Good: Caring for One of the Others in a Social Dilemma", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68/4 (1995), 630.

⁴¹ Kieran Healy, *Last Best Gifts: Altruism and the Market for Human Blood and Organs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5.

⁴² Healy, *Last Best Gifts: Altruism and the Market for Human Blood and Organs*, 13.

may provide short-term gains but can be harmful to relationships and lead to negative health outcomes. Although altruism is not always viewed positively, it can have significant benefits for individuals and society.⁴³

In the study of altruism, it is commonly recognized that the belief that altruistic behavior is beneficial is a crucial element. When someone receives help from an altruistic act, they may be more inclined to help others in the future. Furthermore, observers of altruistic behavior may feel more secure, knowing that they too could receive help when in need.⁴⁴

The explanation of altruism through sociocultural characteristics is limited. The effectiveness of sociocultural traits, such as religion or residing in a small town, to predict altruism is inconsistent when compared between altruistic and non-altruistic individuals. Monroe's study discovered that general sociocultural factors did not consistently emerge as predictors of altruism. Altruists who rescued Jews from the Nazis came from different backgrounds, including a Silesian countess and individuals with various educational levels. Gender, family size, birth order, and the family's social status are also not correlated with altruism.⁴⁵

Altruistic personalities can be observed in secular individuals, indicating religion may not be crucial for their development. However, religion and spirituality have been present in many cultures and throughout history, often associated with altruistic behavior. Moral teachers, seers, prophets, and founders of religions have garnered attention in altruistic

⁴³ Stephen G. Post, *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion and Service* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003), 30.

⁴⁴ Marilyn M. Helms - Ziad Keilany, "Beyond self-interest: A reexamination of neoclassical economics in group settings", *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 15/2 (1991), 194.

⁴⁵ Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perception of a Common Humanity*, 121.

contexts.⁴⁶

The bystander effect occurred in 1964 when 38 witnesses of Kitty Genovese's murder did not intervene or call the police. This phenomenon has been explained by individuals prioritizing their own benefit by avoiding potential risks of harm, humiliation, police involvement, or loss of time at work. Helping could be expensive or ineffective, which could decrease motivation to assist. The presence of many bystanders creates the perception that someone else will help, promoting egoism. Lastly, the third explanation proposes that others' inaction can lead to the perception that the situation is not critical, prioritizing society over the self.⁴⁷

Bystander apathy can be attributed to normative conformity, as people tend to conform to the group's appropriate course of action, leading to a lack of assistance. Providing aid breaks away from the group, challenging the social norm of conformity. As people seek social approval and avoid rejection, challenging the group is not reinforced and may be punished. Therefore, individuals who remain, bystanders, preserve their benefit maximization and exhibit conformist, egoistic tendencies, demonstrating a lack of altruism.⁴⁸

Altruism can arise in emergencies, creating an opportunity for moral benefit. Once individuals decide to help, they may be legally obligated to continue doing so under state laws. Altruism is not mandatory, but it can become an individual's primary duty.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Post, *Altruism & Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, & Religion in Dialogue*, 5.

⁴⁷ Helms - Keilany, "Beyond self-interest: A reexamination of neoclassical economics in group settings", 194.

⁴⁸ Helms - Keilany, "Beyond self-interest: A reexamination of neoclassical economics in group settings", 189.

⁴⁹ Helms - Keilany, "Beyond self-interest: A reexamination of neoclassical economics in group settings", 193-194.

Prosocial behavior is more prevalent in rural than urban areas, attributed to the high population density, which may cause stress, aggression, and less focus on others. Expectations of prosocial behavior from others in crowded places or a sense of responsibility in smaller communities may contribute to the difference. Individual outcomes may vary based on their level of engagement in crowded or uncrowded places, indicating that prosocial behavior is not solely dependent on sociocultural factors.⁵⁰

Ayn Rand's objectivist morality prioritizes egoism and individualism over altruism, deeming the latter as hindering personal goals by weakening an individual's power to sustain their life. According to Rand, one's moral objective should be their own life and happiness based on rationalism, which perceives altruism as unrealistic.⁵¹ Rand argues against a society that prioritizes criminal desires over virtuous individuals who suffer under the burden of altruism.⁵² While Rand acknowledges the benefits of trade and the division of labor in society, she opposes the belief that capitalism is immoral due to its conflict with altruism. In Rand's view, intellectuals supporting socialism uphold altruism and collective sacrifice as moral values, while she contends that those who reason within a capitalist system recognize the irrationality and ethical deficiencies of collectivist economic systems grounded in altruism, such as socialism.⁵³

Empirical evidence shows that individuals can display both ag-

⁵⁰ J. Philippe Rushton, "Urban Density and Altruism: Helping Strangers in a Canadian City, Suburb, and Small Town", *Psychological Reports* 43 (1978), 989-990.

⁵¹ Ayn Rand, *Bencilliğin Erdemi*, çev. Nejdet Kandemir (İstanbul: Plato Film Yayınları, 2013), 31-37.

⁵² Rand, *Bencilliğin Erdemi*, 43-44.

⁵³ Ayn Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1982), 81-82.

gressive and altruistic tendencies. The African wild dog is an example of a species that exhibits both aggressive and nurturing behavior. Similarly, humans may act aggressively towards non-family members but behave altruistically towards their families. In some contexts, aggression can also be seen as altruistic, as seen in worker bees defending their hive or kamikaze pilots. These examples demonstrate that aggressive and altruistic behaviors can coexist without being mutually exclusive.⁵⁴

Conclusions that can be drawn from the relationships between egoism, self-centeredness, and altruism are as follows: (a) the motivation for helping behavior can be egoistic, self-centered, or altruistic; (b) the label of altruism is based on the goal rather than specific behavior. The motivation for helping can include a mix of altruism and egoism (self-centeredness), and being altruistic doesn't necessarily mean being entirely selfless. (c) Increasing another's welfare is both necessary and sufficient to achieve an altruistic/other-centered end state.⁵⁵

2. Traces of the Virtue of Altruism in the Film *Valkyrie*⁵⁶ (2008)⁵⁷

The film portrays the attempted assassination of Hitler by German soldiers and politicians who had betrayed their values and allegiance during World War II on July 20, 1944. It was released in Turkish cinemas on January 30, 2009.

Valkyrie (2008) is a historical thriller directed by Bryan Singer and featuring a star-studded cast, including Tom Cruise, Kenneth Bra-

⁵⁴ Martin L. Hoffman (ed.), *Altruism and Aggression: Biological and Social Origins* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 191.

⁵⁵ Batson vd., "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?", 291.

⁵⁶ "Valkyrie", haz. Brian Singer.

⁵⁷ The information regarding the film in this article, unless otherwise cited with footnotes, has been obtained from the IMDb website and the critiques of the film accessed through the aforementioned site.

nagh, Terrence Stamp, Bill Nighy, and Tom Wilkinson. The film depicts the little-known assassination attempt on Hitler by German soldiers and politicians who had pledged their loyalty but eventually turned against him. Valkyrie is notable for its sympathetic portrayal of German officials and soldiers, typically cast as antagonists in Hollywood films, and for Singer's adept direction and technical skill in crafting a suspenseful and unpredictable storyline with a known outcome.⁵⁸

Valkyrie's director and cinematography team demonstrate their artistic abilities by showcasing meticulous attention to detail and thoughtful planning of cinematography. Symbolism is used in the film, with red representing the Nazi's war-oriented mentality and disregard for human life and freedom, while gray represents their callous nature. Stauffenberg's sacrifice is highlighted by the scene of his bloodied hand, while the aerial view of the pool with a swastika mosaic portrays the pervasive influence of Nazism. The director avoids manipulating the audience with powerful images, allowing impactful scenes to flow seamlessly without overshadowing the film's drama and artistic elements.⁵⁹

The first half-hour of the film establishes the background, character, and purpose of Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg. However, the source of his war wounds and his love for his wife are unnecessary for the audience to comprehend his desire to assassinate Hitler.⁶⁰

The film employs a direct narrative approach, keeping viewers engaged. While focusing on the failed assassination during World War II, it avoids delving into character ambiguities (Stauffenberg both being a Reich hero and anti-Hitler), and refrains from explaining conspirators'

⁵⁸ James Rocchi, "Valkyrie", *Common Sense Media* (Eriřim 07 Mart 2023).

⁵⁹ Brian Eggert, "Valkyrie", *Deep Focus Review*, 2008.

⁶⁰ Dana Stevens, "Depressed Suburban Nazi Backward-Agers", *Slate*, 23 Aralık 2008.

plans for Germany's future or plot's timing. The director concentrates on the altruism theme, allowing the audience to engage without excessive detail.⁶¹

The film's second half sees an increase in action with the *Valkyrie* operation, where the character Olbricht stands out as hesitant and anxious, failing to carry out orders. Olbricht's actions suggest a self-centered approach, contrasting with the altruism of Stauffenberg. Olbricht may have hidden motives or plans that were not revealed in the film. The failure of the assassination attempt may indicate that Olbricht had begun to fear the potential consequences of altruism, challenging the idea that it is a fixed and endless gain.⁶²

The film depicts the efforts of German soldiers and politicians, uncomfortable with Nazi Germany's actions, to plan and execute assassination and military coup attempts. Tom Cruise portrays Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, as one of the main figures in the film.⁶³

Cruise's performance as Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg in the film is a notable one, showcasing his character's weaknesses, ambitions, and actions with clarity. However, his American accent clashes with the predominantly British-accented cast, potentially undermining the credibility of the film. David Bamber's portrayal of Hitler using German-accented English adds to the seriousness and chilling nature of the character, creating an independent performance from the casting. This realistic portrayal of Hitler could help viewers better understand the importance of altruism in the film by emphasizing the weight of the cir-

⁶¹ Peter Rainer, "Review: 'Valkyrie'", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 02 Ocak 2009.

⁶² "Movie Review: *Valkyrie* (2008)", *Critical Movie Critics*, 04 Ocak 2009.

⁶³ Claudia Puig, "Tom Cruise fails to convince in sluggish 'Valkyrie'", *USA Today*, 23 Aralık 2008.

cumstances that Stauffenberg struggled against.⁶⁴

Cruise's casting as Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg in the film has been criticized by Berthold Graf von Stauffenberg, son of the historical figure, due to Cruise's affiliation with the totalitarian ideology of Scientology, which he believes makes it repulsive for him to play a character who fought against a similar system.⁶⁵ Cruise's affiliation with Scientology, a totalitarian ideology, conflicts with his portrayal of Stauffenberg's altruism, which may lead to negative assessments. Nonetheless, Cruise's inclusion in the cast will help spread the message of altruism worldwide, especially in countries more averse to Nazism than to Scientology.⁶⁶

Cruise's childhood desire to kill Hitler, which he expressed in an interview, may influence the audience's perception of the film as more than just an action film, but also as the realization of a childhood fantasy. This could lead the audience to view Cruise's portrayal of altruism more favorably, as his sincerity could increase the credibility of the film. The audience may also perceive the altruism represented by Cruise's character as a hopeless cause, which could deepen its impact.⁶⁷

Sources indicate that Valkyrie oversimplifies Stauffenberg's character, reducing him to a one-dimensional hero without inner conflict, and turning the story into a flashy adventure similar to many World War II stories, where black leather-clad, perfectly aligned German troops are captured with a crane, a scene that would have thrilled Leni⁶⁸ Riefenstahl. Despite this, his concern for others and their well-being may sug-

⁶⁴ Rainer, <https://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/Movies/2009/0102/p25s02-almo.html> (2 Haziran 2020).

⁶⁵ Roger Ebert, "The good German", *Roger Ebert* (Erişim 06 Şubat 2023).

⁶⁶ David Edelstein, "Graphic Violence", *New York*, 27 Aralık 2008.

⁶⁷ Xan Brooks, "Valkyrie", *The Guardian* (Erişim 06 Şubat 2023).

⁶⁸ "Leni Riefenstahl (1902–2003)", *IMDb* (Erişim 07 Mart 2023).

gest his altruism.⁶⁹ The absence of inner conflict in *Valkyrie* makes the protagonist one-dimensional and uninteresting, portraying Stauffenberg as a saint fighting in a historical ceremonial play. However, his concern for others suggests his altruism, enabling an analysis of the virtues portrayed in Cruise's actions.⁷⁰

The film examines altruism and failure under pressure and is praised for its attention to detail, including small decisions and subtle gestures. The screenplay features well-written dialogue but avoids directly addressing assassination and coup attempts against Hitler. Cruise's performance as Stauffenberg is uniform and lacking depth, unlike Branagh and Nighy who are more vulnerable and entertaining.⁷¹ Attention to detail, good acting, and a well-written screenplay help audience clear a path for a real-like simulation to assess altruism.

The film, which includes a nightly minute of silence,⁷² emphasizes the significance of the Nazi service oath in the German Armed Forces, as officers whom Stauffenberg convinces to join his plans refer to the irrevocability of their oath to Hitler. It depicts the conflict between individual and collective consciousness. The opening scene with the oath portrays Stauffenberg's anti-Nazi attitude and his altruistic personality.

The use of American English in the film aims to prevent the audience from being disconnected from the story or ridiculing the virtuous attitudes of the characters against the Nazis.

The inconsistency in the characters' language use, with some ac-

⁶⁹ Ebert, "The good German".

⁷⁰ Bob Mondello, "Third Reich Returns: 'Valkyrie,' 'Defiance' and 'Good'", *NPR*, 25 Aralık 2008.

⁷¹ Joel Odom, "Review: Where Mavericks Dare: 'Valkyrie'", *The Oregonian*, 24 Aralık 2008.

⁷² "Valkyrie: Trivia", *IMDb* (Erişim 07 Mart 2023).

tors speaking with English accents and others with German-accented English, creates a lack of consistency and makes it difficult for the audience to take the portrayal of altruistic virtues seriously and find it convincing, ultimately leading the film to deviate from its planned cinematic reality.⁷³

The British actors' excessive use can create an exaggerated portrayal reminiscent of Harry Potter, potentially making it difficult for viewers to believe the soldiers' readiness for a coup. However, the portrayal of a gentle, charismatic German official may be intended to create a profile embodying Stauffenberg's altruistic moral example, with David Bamber's portrayal of Hitler serving as an exception. Hitler's expression as Stauffenberg brings the document to be signed highlights his anticipation of the impending bomb explosion and the revenge he will take.⁷⁴

The film depicts Stauffenberg's diary as an inner voice, where he complains about various issues such as Hitler's broken promises, persecution of officers, civilian killings, prisoner torture, mass murder of Jews, and other issues. His critical thoughts show a focus on the well-being of others rather than personal gain, even putting himself at risk by recording them.

Stauffenberg's altruism is demonstrated by his willingness to sacrifice himself for the greater good and save Germany from Hitler's tyranny -which is slowly being suffocated by his grip-⁷⁵, as shown in the film during an air raid in Tunisia. Despite losing his eye, right hand, and two fingers of his left hand, he tried to save a wounded soldier instead of hiding. His determination and actions against Hitler cannot be attributed to

⁷³ Mick LaSalle, "Movie review: 'Valkyrie'", *SFGate*, 25 Aralık 2008.

⁷⁴ Anthony Lane, "Private Wars 'Valkyrie' and 'Waltz with Bashir.'", *The New Yorker*, 28 Aralık 2008.

⁷⁵ "Film Review : Valkyrie", *Bookie* (Erişim 06 Şubat 2023).

political opposition or ambition, but rather his love for his country and people.

High-ranking military officers and politicians approached Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg to join their plot to overthrow the Nazi regime during World War II. He was tasked with modifying Operation Valkyrie and implementing it after assassinating Hitler. However, the attempt failed due to human error, leading to the execution of Stauffenberg and his co-conspirators, postponing their altruistic attempt to impact Europe.

Stauffenberg's use of deception to get Hitler to sign the revised draft of the Valkyrie Operation may seem dishonest. However, his willingness to undertake a dangerous plan driven by altruistic motives, as portrayed in a scene where he prays for help from God in a bombed-out church, highlights the potential impact of altruism over personal moral principles.⁷⁶

Kenneth Branagh's character, General Henning von Tresckow, exemplifies altruism by planting bombs twice near Hitler and transferring command to Stauffenberg during a critical moment. Meanwhile, Tom Wilkinson's character, General Friedrich Fromm, displays a lack of altruism by attempting to avoid personal risk while appearing supportive of the conspiracy.⁷⁷

The film highlights the Resistance movement and the Nazi regime's rigorous efforts to suppress it. It portrays Germans as victims of war, as “people trapped in the front seat of a war machine spitting fire.” not responsible for the atrocities committed. The character of Stauffenberg exemplifies the political ties between the SS and the army. The film, however, does not depict Field Marshal Rommel's suicide due to

⁷⁶ Kyle Smith, “The Reich Stuff”, *New York Post*, 23 Aralık 2008.

⁷⁷ Ebert, “The good German”.

time constraints.⁷⁸

The film lacks specific scenes that demonstrate the urgency of the conspirators' actions and relies heavily on dialogue, limiting its dramatic storytelling and emotional impact. The screenplay assumes the audience already dislikes Hitler and focuses on secret meetings rather than reasons behind the characters' actions, resulting in a lack of emotional depth and inadequate evaluation of the film's themes, including altruism.⁷⁹

Stauffenberg's consideration for his family's safety over his own demonstrates his altruism. The flashback of his goodbye to his family during the helicopter ride further emphasizes this. In the film's final quarter, despite losing hope for the success of the operation, Stauffenberg remains focused on revitalizing it. He also tries to get news about his family, but their situation does not deter him from pursuing his goal. This is significant in evaluating Stauffenberg's actions as altruistic rather than emotionally driven.

Stauffenberg led the German Resistance movement, which believed that even if Hitler was killed, his cabinet or loyal Nazi soldiers would take control of Berlin. Cruise's portrayal of the character avoids exaggeration and displays the virtue of altruism without his usual trademark smirk.⁸⁰

When examining the real story and motives of Stauffenberg, whom Cruise plays, it can be seen that a cultured, art-loving man had many reasons to oppose the Supreme Leader. His disgust for the Final Solution may be one of them. However, the letters he sent to his wife years before the Valkyrie operation contain significant indications of his entrenched

⁷⁸ James Berardinelli, "Valkyrie (United States/Germany, 2008)", *Reel Views* (Erişim 06 Şubat 2023).

⁷⁹ Schwarzbaum Lisa, "Valkyrie", *Entertainment Weekly*, 24 Aralık 2008.

⁸⁰ Berardinelli, "Valkyrie (United States/Germany, 2008)".

anti-Semitism. In one letter, Stauffenberg writes, "Poland contained many Jews," describing them as "many people of mixed blood ... who are only happy when they are dominated." As Alex Ross wrote in his 1997 *Slate* review of a Stauffenberg biography, "Stauffenberg's attitude toward Jews can be sensed in this inscrutable sentence from a resistance manifesto: We want a New Order which makes all Germans supporters of the state and guarantees them law and justice, but we scorn the lie of equality and we bow before the hierarchies established by nature." The *Valkyrie* Operation is not a narrative/film about Stauffenberg's spiritual or intellectual transformation, or about becoming a better person. The film is a frequently intriguing but unsurprising story shot around a bomb placed in a briefcase that almost killed its targets. When it comes to the personalities and ideologies of the characters on the screen, the film can be considered ambiguous. At this point, it can be questioned whether a big-budget project designed to make a profit is obligated to fully present the facts about a historical figure. Examining the facts in more detail from a different perspective could lead to a more provocative and engaging experience for the viewer.⁸¹

Stauffenberg's potential racism is supported by evidence, but alternative interpretations suggest that his statements may be a result of observation and a common expression style. It is possible that he added expressions suitable for Nazi ideology to his letters as a precautionary measure, and that he moved away from racist ideas during the years in question.

Stauffenberg opposed the Nazis' treatment of Jews since the 1930s and was affected by the *Kristallnacht* attacks. However, the film's con-

⁸¹ Michael Philips, "'Valkyrie' stars Tom Cruise, Bill Nighy, Tom Wilkinson", *Chicago Tribune*, 16 Eylül 2014.

spirators did not have detailed information about the ongoing genocide, making it difficult to make negative inferences about their humanity and altruism. Nonetheless, Stauffenberg's altruism was fueled by humane emotions such as mercy and opposition to tyranny.⁸²

Stauffenberg's attempt to overthrow the Nazi regime, though not yielding immediate benefits for Germans or Europeans, can still be considered altruistic. Despite not having personal influence over the outcome, his endeavor to comprehend the agony of others and his commitment to eradicating it suggest that his actions were altruistic and potentially advantageous to others.

Stauffenberg's altruistic attempts were not known by the German people, but they set an example of selflessness. However, the SS officers and Reserve Army rejected his approach and executed him for impeding their goals. Stauffenberg's non-egoistic inclination resulted in his punishment, disproving Rand's promotion of egoism and individualism. Additionally, Stauffenberg's lack of unhappiness before execution casts doubts on Rand's theory of individual happiness within altruism.

Stauffenberg's altruism was not undermined by the lack of public awareness, but it prevented the German people from following his example and feeling confident in the knowledge that someone would act selflessly for the common good if another tyrant came to power.

Stauffenberg's altruism toward Hitler was not motivated by envy towards Hitler or personal gain. He acted during a turbulent period when Germany was facing heavy defeat, which suggests genuine concern for the well-being of his country and its people. Despite the possibility of post-war appreciation and reward, his motivations were not self-serving,

⁸² Roger Ebert, *The good German*, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/valkyrie-2008> (12 Mayıs 2020).

as he was willing to risk his life to create a better future for his country.

Stauffenberg's character in the film portrays him as not seeking validation or personal gain from the German people, but rather risking his loved ones and persisting in his altruistic mission to benefit others, despite facing defeat.

Stauffenberg's effort to alleviate the pain of Germans and Europeans cannot be seen as an attempt to eliminate his own suffering caused by others, as it is incompatible with prioritizing one's feelings.

Studying historical figures' altruism may lead to the assumption that their religious beliefs drove their actions. However, Stauffenberg's seemingly secular stance and humanistic values indicate that religious convictions are not necessary for altruism to take root. For, a secular lifestyle which encompasses individuals who adhere to a non-religious worldview, emphasizing rationality, humanistic values, ethical principles derived from secular philosophies, and prioritizing critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and personal autonomy, is what Stauffenberg holds on as seen in the film.⁸³ The virtue of altruism itself, regardless of any religious basis, liberated Stauffenberg from the limitations of egoism.

Altruistic behavior portrayed by characters in a dire setting, such as Nazi Germany, is more convincing when presented realistically, with rough and emotional language, rather than polished and polite characters using proper English. The use of gestures, facial expressions, and language does not necessarily contribute positively to the portrayal and credibility of altruism.

Stauffenberg's altruistic act, the attempt to overthrow Hitler and

⁸³ Phil Zuckerman, *Society without God: What the least Religious Nations Can Tell Us about Contentment* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 3.

seize control of Germany, may be considered a chance occurrence rather than a planned action motivated by the need to position oneself above others receptive to altruism.

Stauffenberg's actions may deviate from the altruistic ideal by placing himself at the center, but expecting individuals to adhere strictly to altruism is unrealistic, as self-interest may be involved. The film's portrayal of Stauffenberg does not suggest a focus on extreme self-interest.

Stauffenberg's actions aimed to benefit the German and European people, but personal enjoyment may have been involved. However, true altruism requires prioritizing the welfare of others over personal pleasure. Even facing death, his wish for the well-being of his people can be seen as part of his altruistic mindset.

Physical disability and psychological state did not exclusively drive Stauffenberg's altruistic actions. While his military rank and family life may have influenced him, altruism is not exclusively determined by sociological characteristics. Hence, people may display altruism in various circumstances, irrespective of their rank or family status.

Stauffenberg prioritized the benefits of his country without separating his interests from it, despite potential self-interest. The film's portrayal of him being admired by Hitler disregards those suffering from the war. However, his actions could be seen as motivated by other-oriented altruism.

Stauffenberg's shift from holding racist beliefs, as seen in his letters, to embracing humanity implies that his views on selflessness and altruism may have evolved over time. Olbricht's actions also demonstrate that individuals may not always maintain an altruistic stance. Stauffenberg's portrayal lacks nuance and fails to explore his shifting

beliefs and values.

Stauffenberg's self-sacrifice in a coup to benefit Germans aligns with the principle of the evolution of groups through altruistic individuals. However, from the perspective of Germans reaching the future, his self-sacrifice may not be considered altruistic, as it would in a way constitute his own salvation. Nevertheless, Stauffenberg's consideration of the well-being of Europe and oppressed communities places his altruism beyond the mere selection of Germans.

Given the social vacuum where Germany and Europe were suffering under Hitler, Stauffenberg did not have a specific obligation to pursue moral benefit or altruism. Moreover, neither the Germans nor the peoples of Europe were aware of his initiative until it was too late. Thus, it can be argued that if society were aware of his altruistic actions, they would hold him responsible for the quality and outcome of his initiative, preventing his resignation.

The question of whether an aggressive soldier who tried to kill Hitler to save the Germans and European peoples from destruction can be considered altruistic can be debated. While a mother who enters a burning house to save her children and sacrifices herself in the process loses her own integrity while saving her children, there are two sides to altruism: aggressive and sacrificial. Stauffenberg kills Hitler and saves the Germans, which can be viewed as an acquisition of the altruistic characteristic.

Results and Recommendations

Based on the data and comments, it can be said that in his initiative, Stauffenberg aimed to benefit the German "others" while anticipating his own harm. Additionally, to measure Stauffenberg's sincerity and

authenticity, attention can be paid to his decision not to go to his family or flee abroad even when the wind turned against the coup plotters towards the end of the film. Stauffenberg is sincere and genuine. What gives his actions a selfless label is not his conscious motivation. He acted quickly without seeking motivational feedback or conscious gain when his heart was tight for the future of his countrymen.

Stauffenberg is an altruistic person who does not think he exceeds societal boundaries, is not afraid of condemnation like Fromm, can explain his actions, expands his personal ethical boundaries for society and gets his hands dirty with his deadly plan, and harms his close friends. Stauffenberg is also an altruist by not hoping for benefits from his actions for himself or his close circle of friends. He is not self-centered by not dwelling too much on whether saving Germans gives him pleasure or will benefit him in the future. He is altruistic by not prioritizing his well-being and risking his own life and immediate family. Furthermore, the fact that egoist Fromm or self-centered Olbricht did not live longer does not diminish the ironic value of Stauffenberg's altruism.

Psychologists who use their power and resources for the benefit of others may not have difficulty accepting altruism as being different from sincerely negotiated actions. Their work is about trying to provide the good of others in a way unrelated to their own interests, provided that they do not focus too much on the benefits, such as earning money or using the results that emerge in consultations in their work. From this perspective, it can be said that Stauffenberg's action can be accepted as selfless by psychologists who are willing to examine his mental structure closely, starting from the assertion that an altruistic act without thinking about oneself is not possible.

As the study benefits from cinema evaluating altruism, to develop

the relationship between altruism and cinema, we can first consider the need for more complex and diverse altruistic characters and stories in films. This can serve to captivate audiences and encourage them to contemplate different types of altruistic behaviors, showcasing both the beneficial and detrimental aspects of altruism and providing academics with an opportunity to study the altruism/self-centeredness/egoism triangle both in real life and in simulated cinematic scenarios, ultimately yielding scientific insights.

To build on these findings, further research should explore the specific mechanisms by which exposure to altruistic themes in cinema influence pro-social behavior. For example, researchers could investigate whether certain genres or styles of films are more effective at promoting altruism than others, or whether repeated exposure to altruistic themes in cinema can lead to long-term changes in behavior.

In terms of practical applications, filmmakers and producers could incorporate altruistic themes and messages into their work to promote positive social change. Additionally, educators and youth leaders could use films with altruistic themes to teach children and young adults about empathy, kindness, and social responsibility. By leveraging the power of cinema to promote altruism, we can work towards creating a more compassionate and equitable society.

Future studies can examine the effects of films having/lacking religious themes, devout characters, or a religious message on measure and perdurance of prosocial influence experienced by viewers, and whether the presence/absence of elements about the psychology of religion and spirituality, as well as virtues of positive psychology such as altruism, in media content and films enhances/diminishes the potential of influencing the audience. Thus, such studies may contribute to strengthening the

partnership between positive psychology and the psychology of religion
and spirituality.

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