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Ambivalence, Guilt, and The Scapegoating of Minority Group Victims¹

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This study dealt with denigration of black victims by white harn-doers. It was assumed that white racial attitudes tend to be ambivalent, rather than simply prejudiced, sympathetic, or indifferent. It was also assumed that ambivalence about a given group increases the likelihood of guilt arousal in encounters with members of the group, and consequent resort to guilt-reductive behavior, such as denigration. Two experiments were done. In the first, subjects were assigned the role of "instructor" and administered strong or mild electric shocks to a black or white confederate "learner as punishment for errors." As predicted, pre- and postshock evaluations of the stimulus person showed greatest derogation in the Black Confederate-Strong Shock group. Next, the Black Confederate-Strong Shock condition was replicated, this time using subjects whose measured racial attitudes represented each of the four combinations of high or low prejudice, and high or low sympathy. As predicted, strongest derogation occurred among subjects who were both high on prejudice and high on sympathy (i.e., who were ambivalent).

Three decades ago Myrdal (1944) made the provocative suggestion that ambivalence was a central feature of white America's orientation

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toward blacks—an ambivalence rooted in the contradiction between the American democratic creed and existing racist practices. Yet research on white people's racial attitudes has continued to concentrate on prejudice, with little attention being given to such positive dispositions as sympathy for the underdog or concern over injustice (cf. reviews by Allport, 1954; Hyman, 1969; Harding *et al.*, 1968). The present research is concerned with the role of ambivalence in whites' reactions to blacks. It attempts to show that under certain conditions negative behavior toward blacks is more readily explainable as a manifestation of ambivalence than of simple prejudice.

Survey data provide some support for the notion that white racial attitudes are to a large extent ambivalent. For example, Brink and Harris (1964) reported that fully 71% of a nationwide adult sample, and even 56% of a southern sample, acknowledged that blacks were treated unfairly. Substantial majorities believed that blacks were discriminated against in jobs, education, and housing. Yet questions about amelioration of these inequities elicited strong resistance. According to the investigators "[The] majority view of whites was clearly that the Negro was pressing too hard, asking for too much." Such aggregate findings are, of course, merely suggestive, since they do not indicate what proportion of individuals actually held inconsistent views. But they fit with other attitudinal data. Campbell (1971) concluded on the basis of a large-scale survey of urban whites that roughly half of this population had racial perceptions and attitudes that were "ambiguous and conflicted." Further, both Woodmansee and Cook (1967) and Kaplan (1972) found a large measure of independence in white subjects' pro-Negro and anti-Negro responses on racial attitude scales, indicating a strong potentiality for individuals to have conflicting racial dispositions.

Common observation suggests that ambivalence creates a tendency toward behavioral instability, in which extremely positive or negative responses may occur toward the object of ambivalence, depending on how the specific situation is structured. Such extreme responses were studied by Gergen and Jones (1963) in an experiment on normal subjects' behavior toward the mentally ill, a group the investigators assumed was regarded ambivalently in this culture. Such ambivalence-induced amplification of responses is discussed in the psychoanalytic literature. Thus Freud (1961), who used the term ambivalence in reference to loving and hating the same person, believed that the conflict could be resolved by a "reactive displacement of cathexis," energy being withdrawn from one impulse and added to the other, opposite impulse. However, Freudian theory does not specify the conditions under which this

displacement of cathexis will occur. One possible condition involves arousal of guilt. Having an ambivalent attitude about a particular person or group may tend to increase one's susceptibility to feelings of guilt over actions that adversely affect that person or group, resulting in extreme behavior whose function is the reduction of guilt.

That harm-doers will often denigrate their victim has been demonstrated in several experiments employing white subjects and white stimulus persons (cf. review by Berscheid & Walster, 1969). Such denigration has been interpreted by Freedman (1970); Walster, Berscheid and Walster (1970); and others as a way of reducing the moral discomfort that results from hurting another (called "guilt" by Freedman, "Distress over inequity" by Walster *et al.*, and "dissonance" by Davis & Jones, 1960; Davidson, 1964; Glass, 1964). The common assumption is that denigration functions to justify the harmful act by lowering the worth of the injured person, and that the greater the discomfort of the harm-doer the stronger the tendency to denigrate.

In the experimental paradigms that have been used to study derogation of victims the subject is always given a nonaggressive rationale for inflicting harm (e.g., he is asked to take the role of "instructor in an investigation of human learning," and to give electric shocks to a "learner," as punishment for errors). The moral tension or discomfort experienced by the subject can therefore be said to be associated with harm-doing that was *unintentional*. In this type of situation, having an ambivalent attitude toward the other person should tend to heighten the arousal of tension after having delivered the noxious stimuli. That is, because the subject is predisposed to feel both hostile and sympathetic toward the other he will have an impulse to aggress against the other, but will experience the impulse as blameworthy. He will feel sorry for the other, but suspect himself of having enjoyed doing harm. Hence the subject will feel more culpable than he would if his initial attitude was one of simple hostility, friendliness, or neutrality.

If the initial attitude was simply hostile the other person would be perceived from the start as deserving harm, and there would be no strong need to justify the harm-doing through further derogation. If the initial attitude was simply friendly the subject would feel compassion for the victim and perhaps some guilt, but less guilt than if he had reason to suspect himself of gratifying a hostile impulse at the other's expense. Finally, if the initial attitude was neutral, or indifferent, there would be relatively little concern over the victim's plight and relatively little reason to question one's motives for obeying the experimenter's instructions.

The situation of the ambivalent subject is analogous to that of the sympathetic and fairminded business executive who has to take an action disadvantageous to a particular subordinate whom he happens to dislike for personal reasons. We would expect the executive to experience stronger moral discomfort over his action, to be more critical of his own motives, and to have a greater need to justify the action to himself, than would be the case if the same action had to be taken against someone he did not dislike. On the other hand, if an administrator were not concerned about being fairminded, taking an action disadvantageous to someone he disliked would arouse relatively little guilt.

Two experiments were done to test this line of reasoning. In the first experiment white subjects were required to give a series of either painful or mild electric shocks to a white or black confederate working at a learning task, as feedback for errors. Subjects were always assigned the "instructor" role with no option to refuse. This was done because previous research with white subjects and white confederates (Davis & Jones, 1960; Glass, 1964) had shown that derogation of a victim occurred only when subjects were made to believe they had freely chosen the harm-inflicting role. In the present investigation, however, it was assumed that all subjects would have some degree of ambivalence toward blacks, hence would tend to feel guilty about inflicting pain on the black confederate, even though they had not freely chosen to do so. It was also assumed that subjects would not be ambivalent about the white confederate, hence would experience relatively little guilt over harmful actions which they performed involuntarily.

Before and after delivering the series of shocks, subjects evaluated the stimulus person by means of an impression rating questionnaire. Before the second evaluation form was handed out, the confederate left the room and subjects in all conditions were told there would be no further contact with him. (This procedure was adopted because Davis and Jones had found that derogation occurred only when subjects believed they would have no further opportunity to interact with the victim.) It was predicted that postshock evaluations would show greater change in a negative direction in the high shock-black confederate treatment than in any of the other treatments.

In the second experiment only the high shock-black confederate condition was used, and subjects were preselected on the basis of their scores on measures of prejudice and sympathy toward blacks. The prediction was that derogation would be stronger among subjects who had relatively high scores on both prejudice and sympathy than among subjects who were relatively high on prejudice and low on sympathy, low on prejudice and high on sympathy, or low on both of these measures.

EXPERIMENT I

Method

Forty-three white male students at a college in New York City, between the ages of 18 and 23, participated in the experiment. They were contacted by telephone and offered \$3.00 for volunteering. The data of three subjects were excluded from the analysis reported below—in one case because of an equipment failure and in the other cases because of refusal to carry out the task. When the subject arrived at the laboratory waiting room, a male confederate, posing as a fellow subject, was already there. For half the subjects the confederate was black and for half he was white. One black confederate and one white confederate were used for the entire experiment. The experimenter, a white male graduate student, appeared almost immediately and escorted the men to a large room where they were shown to chairs. On the other side of the room were two tables, separated by a high wooden partition. Various pieces of electrical apparatus were on the tables. The men were told that they were about to participate in an experiment on extrasensory perception—dealing, among other things, with how people's first impressions influenced their ability to communicate through ESP. Therefore, their first task would be to give their first impressions of one another by filling out a rating form, with the understanding that the ratings would be seen only by the experimenter.

The men were given a 20-item questionnaire developed by Davis and Jones (1960). It consists of five trait clusters—likeability, warmth, conceit, intelligence, adjustment—each made up of four brief statements, two worded positively and two negatively. Ratings were made on a 6-point scale reflecting degree of agreement-disagreement with each statement.² After completing the questionnaire, half of the subjects received the Strong Shock instructions, and half received the Mild Shock instructions. The experimenter said:

The ESP experiment that we are going to do now requires one sender and one receiver. As you probably know, punishing incorrect responses is often an effective means of improving learning. We are interested in finding out to what extent one can learn to become an accurate receiver of ESP transmissions through practice. Therefore, the sender will be administering painful (slightly painful) electric shock to the receiver each time he makes an error. The shocks are physically harmless. Before we begin I would like to give each of you a sample shock and have you rate its intensity. We give these sample shocks because we seem to get slight variations in shock level from the electrical outlet, and we want to keep track of the actual pain level. (*For Strong Shock condition only:*) Incidentally, the sample shock is only one-half the strength of the shocks the receiver will be getting.

The confederate was asked to sit at one of the tables, on which there was an electrical cable with electrodes connected to it. The cable ran back to a hole in the wooden partition that separated this table from the other one. The experimenter placed the electrodes on the confederate's hand, went to the other side of the partition, and pretended to administer a shock by depressing a switch. The procedure was then repeated with the subject, except that a strong shock (3.5 mA) or a mild shock (0.5 mA) was actually delivered. Each man was then given a 28-point rating

² An obtained Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient of .87 for the before-shock ratings was in close agreement with the .90 value reported by Davis and Jones.

scale on which to indicate the painfulness of the shock he had just received. After this, the men drew lots to determine their roles. By prearrangement the confederate always got the receiver role. He was seated again at the table with the electrodes, which were attached to his hand, and the subject was seated at the table on the other side of the partition. On this table was a large metal box labeled "Shock Generator," which featured a row of switches supposedly activating progressively higher intensities of shock, as indicated by voltage numbers. The subject was told that he was to use only one lever, labeled "Slight Shock—30 V" in the Mild Shock condition, and "Strong Shock—135 V" in the Strong Shock condition.

A procedure was explained to both men whereby the subject, as sender, was to watch for the onset of a red or green light on a panel set in front of him, and to concentrate on transmitting the stimulus to the receiver during the 15-sec period that it was presented. Simultaneously, a white bulb on the receiver's table would be lit, informing him that his partner was attempting to transmit. At the end of each transmission period, the confederate was to indicate his response to the subject by pressing one of two buttons, labeled "red" and "green," which supposedly were connected to a pair of response-signals on the subject's panel. The subject was supposed to punish incorrect responses by depressing the shock switch. Each time this was done a loud click sounded and a light above the switch flashed on. No shock, of course, was actually delivered to the confederate but in the Strong Shock condition he behaved as though he was receiving shock, gasping audibly and moving in his chair whenever the subject depressed the switch. The two confederates were trained to behave as identically as possible in each shock condition. Twenty trials were run, on ten of which the confederate made "errors" and was supposed to be shocked by the subject. Using an electric timer, the confederate secretly recorded the duration of each shock.

After describing the procedure the experimenter left the room and did not return until the 20 trials had been completed. He then instructed the confederate to go to a room "down the hall," where an assistant would give him some questionnaires to fill out. After the confederate had left, the experimenter said:

We find it sometimes affects the way subjects fill out the questionnaires if they feel they will meet each other again, so when the experiment is over, please leave through this door and go directly to the elevator, so that you won't run into the other subject, who is filling out questionnaires on the other side of the building.

The subject was then asked to rate the confederate again on the personality impression scale. When he had completed the personality rating form he was given another questionnaire, which included several 7-point rating scales intended to assess his attitudes about the experiment, possible feelings of responsibility and guilt associated with giving the electric shocks, and perceptions of degree of pain and possible physical injury suffered by the confederate. There was also a 25-point rating scale for measuring the subject's general attitude about the use of electric shock on humans in scientific research.

Next, the subject was administered a second sample electric shock of the same voltage as the first one (on the pretext that its intensity might have changed somewhat in the course of the experiment) and asked to rate its painfulness on a scale identical to the one used previously.

A final questionnaire called for an evaluation of the experimenter. The latter handed the subject an envelope and left the room. Inside the envelope were the

rating form and a letter from the "Project Director" requesting a candid, confidential assessment of the experimenter's performance. The letter stated that subjects' assessments would in no way jeopardize experimenters' jobs, but would enable the Project Director to reassign them to other kinds of experiments or research work, if it seemed desirable. The evaluation sheet listed various experimenter characteristics (efficiency, sincerity, reliability, honesty, fairness, etc., to be rated by writing in numbers from 1 (definitely displayed characteristic) to 5 (definitely did not)). The subject was to place the completed form, unsigned, in a sealed envelope, and deposit it in a box provided for that purpose. The experimenter returned after the subject had dropped the envelope in the box and debriefed him.

RESULTS

Effectiveness of The Shock Level Manipulation

Subjects' ratings of the painfulness of the first sample shock, which they received before the ESP trials were run, provide a partial check on the effectiveness of the manipulation of shock level. The mean of the Mild Shock group's ratings ($N = 20$) was 4.6 (which was located at the upper end of the "not at all painful" region on the 28-point rating scale). The mean of the Strong Shock group's ratings ($N = 20$) was 12.0 (which was located at the lower end of the "moderately painful" region). For this difference $F = 27.04$ and $p < .001$. There were no differences associated with the race of the confederate or race and shock level combined. Another check on the shock level manipulation is provided by subjects' ratings of the painfulness of the shocks they administered to the confederate (keeping in mind that Strong Shock subjects may have tended to minimize these ratings as a way of reducing possible feelings of guilt). These ratings were made on a 7-point scale ranging from "not at all painful" to "extremely painful." The means for the Strong Shock and Mild Shock groups were 6.3 and 1.8, respectively, with $F = 241.01$ and $p < .001$ for the difference. There were no effects of the race of the confederate or a race \times shock interaction. Thus it appears that the manipulation of shock level was adequate.

Evaluation of the Confederate

The major dependent variable was the change in subjects' evaluations of the confederate's personality. The mean change scores are presented for each experimental condition in Table 1, along with the mean evaluations prior to the administration of shock. It can be seen that the four experimental groups did not differ significantly in their initial ratings of the confederate. But after administering shock subjects in the Strong Shock condition changed their evaluations less favorably than did subjects in the Mild Shock condition ($p < .05$)—an effect due entirely to

TABLE 1
MEAN BEFORE AND CHANGE SCORES FOR EVALUATION OF BLACK AND
WHITE CONFEDERATES RECEIVING TWO LEVELS OF SHOCK^a

	Experimental condition			
	Black confederate		White confederate	
	Strong shock (N = 10)	Mild shock (N = 10)	Strong shock (N = 10)	Mild shock (N = 10)
Before scores ^b	19.2	14.3	16.3	15.4
Change scores ^c	-11.9	7.2	0.0	-0.8

^a The higher the score the more favorable the rating.

^b There were no significant differences in Before scores.

^c For Strong vs Mild shock, $F = 4.66$, $p < .05$; for shock \times race, $F = 5.28$, $p < .05$. An analysis of covariance of After scores, in which Before scores were the covariate, yielded very similar results.

the change scores of subjects in the Black Confederate condition ($p < .05$ for the race \times shock interaction). Strong Shock-Black Confederate was the only treatment in which the postshock ratings were less favorable than the preshock ones. Thus the experimental prediction was upheld.

Other Findings

One of the main assumptions underlying the prediction was that subjects in the Strong Shock-Black Confederate condition would feel more culpable after delivering the shock than subjects in any other condition. Data from two items in the questionnaire administered immediately after the second evaluation of the confederate was completed were relevant to this assumption. These items dealt with how much responsibility and guilt the subjects experienced after giving the shock to the confederate. There were no group differences in self-ratings of felt responsibility. But self-ratings of guilt were higher in the Strong Shock condition than in the Mild Shock condition ($F = 22.95$, $p < .001$). There were no significant correlations within any shock-race treatments between guilt ratings and derogation. The apparent lack of association in the Strong Shock-Black Confederate treatment may have been due to a ceiling artifact in the guilt ratings. Most of the ratings in this treatment were clustered at the high end of the 7-point scale ($M = 6.0$).

An additional finding was that Strong Shock subjects, as compared with Mild Shock subjects, believed that the confederate had suffered greater physical injury ($F = 20.25$, $p < .001$). There were also three trends in which Strong Shock subjects appeared to believe more strongly that the experiment was a worthwhile and important experience ($F =$

2.88, $p < .10$), that the experimenter was intelligent ($F = 3.49$, $p < .10$), and that he was reliable ($F = 4.07$, $p < .10$). These nonsignificant differences suggest that Strong Shock subjects may have sought to reduce guilt by magnifying the value of the experiment and the competence of the experimenter.

Finally, the Black Confederate group perceived the experimenter as more reliable than did the White Confederate group ($F = 6.73$, $p < .05$), a finding that does not seem to be readily interpretable.

EXPERIMENT II

Method

Experiment II was intended to demonstrate that denigration of a black victim by white harm-doers is more closely associated with strong ambivalence toward blacks in general than with relatively unambivalent attitudes of prejudice, sympathy, or indifference. To accomplish this, an exact replication was done of the Strong Shock-Black Confederate condition of Expt I, except that a different experimenter and a different confederate were used (the original men being no longer available). In addition, subjects were classified into the following four personality types on the basis of racial attitude scores obtained on another occasion: High Prejudice-High Sympathy, High Prejudice-Low Sympathy, Low Prejudice-High Sympathy, and Low Prejudice-Low Sympathy.

The subjects were 26 white male students, between the ages of 18 and 22, who were recruited in the same manner and from the same college as the subjects in Expt I. At least 4 wk before, or 4 wk after participating in the experiment, they filled out a racial attitude questionnaire, ostensibly as part of another, unrelated project. The data of four subjects were excluded from the analysis—three because of refusal to administer the electric shocks and one because of refusal to fill out the personality rating sheet. These subjects were evenly distributed across the four attitudinal groups.

The attitude questionnaire contained two kinds of items, prejudice and sympathy. Prejudice was measured by three subscales, each consisting of ten dichotomous items, from Woodmansee and Cook's (1967) Racial Attitude Inventory: *ease in interracial contacts*, *subtle derogatory beliefs*, and *private rights*. The measure of sympathy was Schuman and Hardings' (1963) scale on *sympathetic identification with the (racial) underdog*. Each of its 13 items consists of a brief story in which a black person is exposed to an act of prejudice or discrimination; the respondent is asked to indicate which of four possible reactions he thinks the black person would have in the situation.¹ To classify the 22 experimental subjects attitudinally, their scores on prejudice and sympathy, respectively, were split at the median as evenly as possible, resulting

¹ To estimate the reliability of the prejudice and sympathy items for the present population, the questionnaire was administered to a total of 90 students at the same college as the experimental subjects. Reliability, as measured by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, was .69 for prejudice and .65 for sympathy, and the product moment correlation between prejudice and sympathy was $-.20$. These reliability coefficients were somewhat lower than those obtained by Woodmansee and Cook, but the correlation between prejudice and sympathy was highly similar to theirs, indicating that these attitudes were relatively independent of each other.

in four categories representing the various combinations of high vs low prejudice and high vs low sympathy. The experimenter was not acquainted with the attitude scores of individual subjects.

RESULTS

As in Expt I, the major dependent variable was the change in evaluations of the confederate. The mean change scores and preshock evaluations for each experimental condition are presented in Table 2. Before giving shock to the confederate, High Prejudice subjects tended to give somewhat less favorable evaluations than did Low Prejudice subjects ($p < .10$). Afterwards, High Sympathy subjects showed significantly less favorable change than Low Sympathy subjects ($p < .05$). However, this difference was due entirely to the ratings of subjects in the High Prejudice group ($p < .05$ for the prejudice \times sympathy interaction). Thus the experimental prediction was upheld.

It may be noted that the average ratings made of the confederate in Expt II are quite different from the average ratings obtained in the Strong Shock-Black Confederate condition of Expt I (shown in Table 1). There seems to be no satisfactory explanation of these differences, other than that a different experimenter and a different black confederate were used in the second experiment.

There were no additional findings, except for two nonsignificant trends ($p < .10$): Low Prejudice subjects as compared with High Prejudice subjects, and Low Sympathy subjects as compared with High Sympathy subjects, were somewhat more likely to view participation in the experiment as a "worthwhile and important experience." Neither tendency is readily interpretable.

TABLE 2
MEAN BEFORE AND CHANGE SCORES FOR EVALUATION OF
BLACK CONFEDERATE BY FOUR TYPES OF SUBJECTS

	Attitudinal type			
	High Prej.- High Symp. ($N = 7$)	High Prej.- Low Symp. ($N = 5$)	Low Prej.- High Symp. ($N = 5$)	Low Prej.- Low Symp. ($N = 5$)
Before scores ^a	4.1	1.2	17.8	11.4
Change scores ^b	-4.3	15.8	6.2	5.0

^a For High vs Low Prejudice, $F = 3.98$, $p < .10$.

^b For High vs Low Sympathy, $F = 6.87$, $p < .05$; for prejudice \times sympathy, $F = 7.22$, $p < .05$. An analysis of covariance of After scores, in which Before scores were the covariate, yielded very similar results.

DISCUSSION

The foregoing research shows that white male harm-doers are more likely to derogate a black victim than a white victim, and that derogation of the black victim is more likely to occur among subjects who are relatively high on measures of both prejudice and sympathy (i.e., who are relatively ambivalent) toward blacks, than among subjects who are high on only one of these measures, or low on both of them. These findings were predicted on the basis of three assumptions: that most white people tend to have an ambivalent attitude toward blacks, that ambivalence toward a victim heightens the arousal of guilt in harm-doers, and that under certain conditions derogation of the victim is likely to be used as a means of reducing guilt.

That derogation was a consequence of guilt arousal is not well supported by the results. In neither experiment was there a clear relationship between self-reports of guilt and evaluations of the confederate. However, the obtained guilt scores do not necessarily reflect subjects' actual levels of guilt arousal immediately after delivering the shocks. Not only was there an opportunity to reduce guilt through derogation before the self-ratings of guilt were obtained, but denial of guilt may also have been used by subjects as a guilt-reductive mechanism. This interpretation is consistent with Freedman's (1970) view of the matter. He has stated that "attempts to construct paper and pencil or interview measures of guilt have been notoriously unsuccessful and therefore we have never tried to collect them in our work." Nonetheless, one may ask whether it is really necessary to employ a guilt concept in order to account for the present results. Does not Lerner's (1970) "just world" hypothesis fit the data just as well? If we were dealing only with the findings of the first experiment, it could perhaps be argued that Lerner's postulated need to believe that people in this world "get what they deserve" and "deserve what they get" provides an adequate explanation. It would only be necessary to assume that subjects were predisposed to perceive blacks as more deserving of misfortune than whites. But the just world hypothesis cannot readily account for the results of the second experiment, in which ambivalent subjects were the only group whose ratings of the confederate were less favorable after the shock series than before it. Surely a predisposition to perceive blacks as deserving victims should have been strongest in the unambiguously prejudiced subjects (i.e., the High Prejudice-Low Sympathy group). Yet the latter group's ratings actually showed the greatest amount of favorable change after the shocks. Moreover a recent study by Regan (1971) suggests that guilt is a more important determinant of behavior toward people one has

harmed than is the need to believe in a just world (whereas the latter apparently is a more important determinant of behavior on the part of those who have *merely observed* the harm-doing).

Assuming that subjects used derogation of the black confederate to justify their harm-doing, and thereby reduce their guilt, a question arises as to why derogation was preferred over various alternative modes of guilt reduction, such as denial of responsibility, maximization of the positive aspects of the harmful action (e.g., by emphasizing the importance of the experiment), or minimization of the victim's suffering. A plausible answer is that requiring subjects to do a second evaluation of the confederate immediately after the shock series made derogation a highly available mode of guilt reduction. Several investigators have shown that altruistic behavior often follows harm-doing (cf. review by Freedman, 1970). It is interesting to speculate, therefore, what might have been the outcome of this study if instead of derogation, an opportunity to compensate the victim by performing an altruistic act had been made available. This might have produced more positive behavior toward the black victim than toward the white victim, with the tendency being strongest in subjects whose racial attitude was most ambivalent. Indeed, the ambivalence-guilt-arousal hypothesis implies this outcome.

It would be worthwhile to test the altruism prediction in future research, for confirmation would demonstrate the ability of the ambivalence-guilt-arousal hypothesis to account for extremely favorable, as well as unfavorable, behavior toward blacks. In addition, the generality of the hypothesis would be increased if it could be shown to apply to behavior toward other (i.e., nonracial) types of outgroups, such as the mentally ill, the physically handicapped, and the aged.

Some comments are in order about the validity of the prejudice and sympathy scales used in this study. Woodmansee and Cook (1967) found that the prejudice items were able to discriminate membership in groups of known racial orientation—e.g., segregationist college fraternities and the NAACP. The fact that in this study High Prejudice subjects gave lower personality ratings to the black confederate before administering the electric shocks than did Low Prejudice subjects provides additional evidence of validity. The sympathy scale, on the other hand, was not well validated by its authors, Schuman and Harding (1963). On the face of it, the items seem to tap degree of empathy for, or sympathetic identification with, the feelings and thoughts of blacks when confronted with acts of racial discrimination. The low but significant inverse correlation obtained in this study between the sympathy and prejudice scales in a sample of 90 men ($r = -.20$) at least suggests that the former scale is not tapping a *negative* disposition toward blacks. Moreover, there is no

indication in the present data that in the absence of strong prejudice, high sympathy led to greater postshock derogation of the black confederate than low sympathy. Hence, in light of the successful prediction of an ambivalence effect it seems a reasonable assumption that the sympathy items adequately measured what they were supposed to measure. It would of course be desirable in future studies to employ alternative techniques for assessing ambivalence, and to attempt to manipulate ambivalence experimentally.

Finally, it should be noted that the first experiment used only one confederate of each race, so that the results must be interpreted with caution. However, this problem does not appear to be of major importance, inasmuch as the main finding was a race \times shock interaction, based on change scores.

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External Referents and Past Outcomes as Determinants of Social Discontent¹

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Two experiments were conducted comparing the effectiveness of various patterns of outcomes in producing dissatisfaction, anger, and aggression. In Expt I, subjects, assigned the role of workers in a factory game, received either a uniformly high, a uniformly low, or a decremental pattern of outcomes from a hypothetical managerial elite. Half the subjects in each outcome condition were provided with external referents indicating the relative value of their outcomes. As hypothesized, when external referents were present, the low outcome schedule produced the most dissatisfaction, the high schedule the least, and the decremental schedule an intermediate amount. In the absence of external referents, the decremental schedule produced the most dissatisfaction. Similarly, when external referents were present, subjects receiving low outcomes awarded their managers the least valuable prizes; when external referents were absent, subjects receiving the decremental schedule awarded the least valuable prizes. The aggression measure was relatively insensitive to the independent manipulations. In Expt II, a modified aggression measure indicated that the decremental curve produced more aggression when external referents were absent than when they were present.

Major analyses of the preconditions for collective aggression point to some form of perceived injustice as the basic motivation for protest and rebellion (Davies, 1962; Feierabend, Feierabend, & Nesvold, 1969; Gurr, 1970). Nevertheless, there is considerable disagreement concerning the social conditions which are most likely to elicit this sense of deprivation. For example, Marx and Engels (1896) believed that revolutions are a product of the increasing misery of the working classes while de Tocque-

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