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The purpose of the present study was to design and validate a written instrument which would approximate the Kohlberg (1958) Moral Judgment Interview in yielded scores. Validity of the instrument was determined by whether it yielded age differences in moral stage scores. Kohlberg found age differences and he later postulated a relationship between moral stages and cognitive stages which predicts age differences.

The subjects were a non-random sampling of 57 seventh-grade students, 61 twelfth-grade students, and 50 college students.

The data were collected, using two comparable written instruments, one of which was an open-end questionnaire requiring self-structured responses; the other was an objective multiple-choice instrument.

Analyses of score differences within groups and between groups were done by the statistical procedures of analysis of variance and t-test for significance of the differences.

The open-end instrument discriminated the scores of seventh-graders and twelfth-graders, whereas the objective instrument did not discriminate among the three different groups at all.

ADAPTATION OF A MORAL JUDGMENT

INTERVIEW FOR A PEN

AND PAPER TEST

by

Madge Twiggs Schwarz

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Through the years, morality has been an oft-discussed topic, with historical figures advocating their particular morality, in keeping with the chronological times and the needs of society. Thus, morality, or the relevant code of acceptable social behavior, is a function of society and cannot be defined except in the context of the social system it is designed to uphold and represent. It is a way of controlling any society through perpetuation of that society's adopted value system, by way of written or unwritten customs, norms, laws, or mores. The Ten Commandments is an example of such a behavioral code, designed to preserve and control one specific society at a specific time in world history.

Traditionally, the terms "morality," "moral character," and "moral development" have been used synonymously to describe the process whereby children are thought to grow into "moral," "socialized" and responsible members of adult society. The interpretation of morality, in general, has often been left to the philosopher or the religious leader, the courts and the legal system, or to the community and the social system. The manifestation of morality has been considered, at different times, to be specific behavioral acts, associated with characteristic virtues (Hartshorne & May, 1928) or individual personality "types" (Havighurst & Taba, 1949); or it has been designated as non-specific behaviors associated with theoretical and intangible ideals or standards (Durkheim, 1961).

For the duration of the present paper, the following definition of morality will be relevant:

Morality is a character trait which is generally believed to enable one to classify behaviors or situations as "right" or "wrong," rather than conscientiously to judge them. Morality, in the sense of being an absolutist doctrine, is to be distinguished from culturally-relative "moral values," which are determined by cultural consensus only and embody no universal principles. "Morality" and the concept of "moral values" are often used as synonyms for "moral development"; however, they are erroneous synonyms because the former two terms refer to products of socialization, social learning, and conditioning, and are not developmental in nature (Kohlberg, 1971).

Conventional morality is distinctly different from the post-conventional or autonomous nature inherent in "moral development," a term which implies individual, internal, and natural development of moral thinking, rather than internalization of existing, sanctioned codes of behavior.

The following definition of moral development will be adhered to in the present study:

Moral development involves a continual process of matching a moral view to one's experience of life in a social world. Experiences of conflict in this process generate movement from structural stage to structural stage (Kohlberg, 1969, p. 119).

Each invariant, sequential stage is defined by its constituent attitudinal factors which serve as criteria for morally judging situations and behaviors. The six moral development stages, as discerned and labeled by Kohlberg, are more generally classified as constituent pairs belonging to sequential, invariant levels of moral development. One's moral development is assessed in terms of one's own moral thinking which is, in turn, characteristic of one of the six stages.

Moral reasoning is thought to be developmental and invariant. Although functioning at a specific cognitive level is a prerequisite for attainment of the corresponding moral level, true structural advancement in moral reasoning begins with stimulation of the given cognitive state by external situations requiring more adequate moral judgments. Therefore, moral development does not automatically accompany cognitive development; it is a natural, universal process with a fundamental cognitive basis. Neither "morality" nor "morals" adequately expresses this definition of moral reasoning.

One of the most recent and thorough approaches to moral development is Kohlberg's theory of moral developmental stages, which is based largely upon Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Kohlberg contends that neither totally inherent nor totally learned factors determine moral thinking. Rather, the interaction of cognitive functions with social stimuli results in a mental structure which predicts the adequacy of moral thought. As one matures mentally, he experiences social conflict, which stimulates moral thinking by challenging existing patterns of decision-making. Advancement in moral development parallels cognitive development, given sufficiently challenging social conditions, and it occurs in stages which are invariant and sequential. Kohlberg's approach, therefore, is centered about a hierarchy of moral stages, each of which is more integrated and more differentiated than the previous stage. The thinking representative of each stage, consequently, is progressively more sophisticated. The two highest moral stages are oriented to the purest forms of the ethical principles of equality, reciprocity, and justice.



The philosophical adequacy of Kohlberg's approach is founded on the universal nature of the moral principles it encompasses. Cross-cultural studies have shown that the same basic moral values and the same steps toward moral maturity are found in every culture and subculture of the world (Kohlberg, 1969; Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971; Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973). Consequently, this developmental approach is, above all others, valid even in the face of cultural relativism. It is oriented to those basic human rights which underlie all moral systems. These universally valid ideals, all of which are forms of justice, represent an undercurrent of moral thought, which is much deeper than a set of rules or regulations designed to ensure or prohibit specific acts of behavior. These rights are recognized in all cultures, and are upheld to differing degrees, by most cultural mores and laws. Cultural relativity predicts that some laws may be distorted by prejudice, ignorance, or superstition, or they may be manipulated to protect or serve an elite sect. However, although the essential nature of these basic rights may be distorted, the principles themselves are timeless ideals and represent that which "ought" to be in every culture (Kohlberg, 1971).

The days of slavery in the United States exemplify a period in time when the law designed to ensure one of several universal rights, the equality of all men, as stated in the United States Constitution, was subverted to ensure the equality of a select group of men; white men. Abraham Lincoln, long recognized as a philosopher in his own right, was a principled thinker who saw the hypocrisy inherent in conditional equality. By Martin Luther King's time, the laws

had been modified so as to give more strength to the American ideal of equality, but many were still conspicuously designed to serve the Caucasian race. Today, another debasement of the equalitarian principle is coming to the front; the current issue in the United States is that of sexual inequality, which, like racial inequality, slurs, distorts, and makes a farce of a basic human right.

Belief in the ideals of equality, reciprocity, the dignity of human life, and justice has been perpetuated over time because such principles are inherently valuable and morally right, in and of themselves. Therefore, their validity, derived from the inherently moral order of the universe, is independent of social endorsement.

Recognition of the universality of principled moral stages and the need for a moral education program that is not merely indoctrination of conventional behavioral codes, has prompted Kohlberg in recent years to focus his research on a practical method of moral education. Kohlberg and Turiel (1971) have become strong advocates of a moral education program designed to stimulate the school child's moral thinking in much the same way that guided learning techniques (Ojemann & Pritchett, 1966) have been designed to stimulate cognitive growth. However, putting this program to work offers a great challenge to teachers, since they must be prepared to discern and label moral development stages of their students. Kohlberg claims that stimulation of growth and progression to the next natural stage, which can be the only true objective of moral education, cannot begin until one's current functioning moral stage is determined. It is at this point that stimulation is directed, so as to create conflict, and hence, a recognition of the moral inadequacy of the current stage.



Kohlberg has developed an oral interviewing process which reveals age differences in functioning stages of moral thinking; it requires a great deal of time and can be given to only one person at a time. Although this process allows for much flexibility and probing, by the interviewer, of underlying thought structures, it is time-consuming and constitutes a laborious task for the average teacher.

The justification for this study lies in the assumption that moral education of children is a valid educational goal and in the need for teacher materials to realize this goal. A convenient instrument, possibly a structured, objective instrument, for ascertaining the moral development level of a group of people simultaneously that would closely approximate Kohlberg's own interview form may be a valid contribution to the study of moral development and to the application of resulting research findings. Moral educators may be aided in the task of implementing a valid educational program which perhaps otherwise would be impeded by the unnecessary barriers of the individual, time-consuming interviews.

It is expected that a valid instrument would reveal age differences in moral stage scores for two reasons: (a) Kohlberg found age differences (1958; 1963) and (b) the relation of moral stages to cognitive stages predicts age differences, since cognitive stages have been defined as age-related (Piaget, 1932; Ginsburg & Oppen, 1969; Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973).

Thus, the operable research question for the present study is this: Can the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview be adapted to a pen and paper instrument which will yield scores comparable to interview scores, showing age differences in moral development?

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to design and validate a written instrument which yields scores and age differences comparable to those found with the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview. The study was limited to a comparison of two written instruments over three age-groups.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review will include an account of early work done in the field of moral thinking and behavior; a detailed presentation of Piaget's theory of cognitive and moral development; an in-depth look at Kohlberg's moral philosophy and moral-stage theory, followed by a comparison of his theory with Piaget's; empirical evidence supporting Kohlberg's approach; and current research in moral development, including Kohlberg's work in and his philosophy of moral education.

#### Moral Development in Historical Perspective

During the mid-nineteenth century, before the area of morality and moral thinking was thought to be researchable, Emile Durkheim, a foremost French philosopher, advanced a view of morality and its place and function in society, which today is recognized as valid and insightful (1961). Durkheim purported a secular morality, based on a system of shared conceptions of the common good. This approach, encompassing a broader ideal than mere conformity to traditional standards, is dedicated to the preservation of society itself, and to the subordination of individual will to the needs and goals of the collective mass. Although this view necessarily defines morality as being relative to the specific social structure which nurtures it, differing through time and space according to the parenting social system, Durkheim contended that a complete and pure morality is

characterized by consistency, or a regularity of conduct, which is, in turn, constrained by some sense of authority or generality; the belief that what is right today is, and should be right tomorrow.

Morality, according to Durkheim, is "a social thing, being supra-individual, endowed with a kind of transcendent ideal (p. xx)," and is based on the assumption that society, itself "has an independent reality and existence which . . . retains its identity despite the endless changes that are produced in the mass of individual personalities (p. xxii)." This morality, with the social and the moral intertwined, is the one to which all are obligated. It is founded on reason, rather than revelation. Sanctioned by a rationality of broader validity than the mere coercion of the conventional, if not of the supernatural, it is a morality of post-conventional principles of common welfare. Abstract and idealistic, Durkheim's philosophy is recognized today by Piaget (1932) and others (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971) as representing those democratic principles upon which United States society is founded.

As interest grew in sociology, social psychologists began to view "moralization," or the act of becoming moral, evidenced by acceptance of and conformity to standard behavioral codes, as a key process to understanding and controlling human behavior. Thus, the focus of the first research attempts was on the manifestation of morality: moral behavior, moral "character," and moral "virtues."

The late 1920's produced a now-phenomenal study in moral character and behavior, completed by two giants in the field of moral research. Hartshorne and May (1928) collaborated in testing hundreds of children

in several school and three home situations, each of which was designed to provide opportunities for cheating on test-performance. Deception was repeatedly shown to be situation-specific. It was found that cheating on one test did not predict cheating on other tests; cheating behavior was shown to be dependent, to a considerable extent, on the nature of the test, and on the extent of effort required to cheat successfully. For example, more cheating was found on tests requiring only the addition of a checkmark to change an answer, than on tests requiring the addition or erasure of words or sentences to change an answer.

In the home situations (take-home tests) girls cheated more than boys, but no factor, including sex, brightness, and rank in class, was found to influence cheating behavior so profoundly as did the test itself.

However, from recorded observations of individual behavior, it appeared that individual fortitude was influential in the strength of the tendency to cheat. The researchers proposed that people possess varying levels of fortitude which facilitate cheating to different degrees, in different situations.

The tendency to [cheat] . . . exists in a measurable quantity peculiar to the individual. Whatever the motives, they operate to overcome just so much resistance and no more; this resistance can be arranged to begin with just no resistance at all and move up by measured steps to the point where no one will overcome it in order to cheat (Hartshorne & May, p. 387).

Resistance was also thought to be cumulative, with cheating behavior being proportional to the level of resistance accumulated.

"Those who overcome the greatest resistance in order to cheat will overcome also all weaker resistances . . . (Hartshorne & May, p. 389)."



By manipulating such factors as peer pressure, group values, punishment, and reward, as well as the test itself, Hartshorne and May found that honest behavior was determined more by situational factors than by internal conscience or character traits. Motives of deception, however, were attributed, in many cases, to personality traits as diverse as revengefulness, jealousy, aggressive greed, and compensatory and defensive tendencies.

In addition, learning theory was thought to play a major role in maintaining dishonest behavior. The researchers claimed that "Unless there is some change in resistance to the tendency to deceive, an increase in the profits from deception will increase the amount of deception (Hartshorne & May, p. 393)." On the other hand, attendance or membership in Sunday school and other organizations presumed to encourage honesty among its members was found to have no effect on cheating behavior.

Hartshorne and May are probably best known for their "bag of virtues" approach to moral behavior. Indeed, their entire research study was oriented to the behavioral manifestation of moral virtues. Lack of agreement on those qualities which constitute true virtues has been recognized in recent years as the most obvious inadequacy in this approach (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971; Blatt & Kohlberg, 1973): one man's honesty is another man's rudeness or insensitivity to others. This philosophy therefore puts one in the unfortunate plight of trying to be all things to all men.

Another well-known and clinically documented study in the moral field was that of Havighurst and Taba (1949). Studying internalization of moral standards by measuring character reputation, they

identified certain personality "types" as being influential on moral character development. Moral character, personality, and social environment appeared to be related in a systematic way, and the researchers concluded that moral character could not be usefully studied apart from total personality.

Investigating the relation of specific personal and environmental factors to character development, the team found the highest positive correlation coefficients resulting from comparisons of moral reputation and school achievement ( $r = .74$ ) and moral reputation and social class position ( $r = .52$ ). The hypothesis that good social adjustment contributes to good character was supported to the extent that the researchers were prompted to state that "Any young person who experiences success and security in home, school, church and other groups is influenced strongly to adopt the prevailing code of morality and to govern his actions accordingly (p. 182)." Social and group pressures were thus recognized as powerful determinants of conforming behavior.

However, like Hartshorne and May (1928), Havighurst and Taba found a very low correlation between religious activity and character reputation ( $r = < .34$ ). This may be a more significant finding than the comparable Hartshorne and May result, since reputation ratings often are influenced by outwardly conforming behavior, and may constitute positive exaggerations of actual standards and beliefs. Berkowitz (1964) has more recently reported social class but not religious activity, such as belonging to an organized church and learning conventional religious values, to be positively associated with general moral development.

By the late 1950's, at least one group of investigators was concerned with conscience development as a key area in moral research (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957). Conscience was perceived as level of internal self-control, which ideally, should be balanced against external controls, such as the fear of punishment. Characterizing conscience as "self-maintenance of control in the face of temptation and the occurrence of guilt feelings when temptation is not overcome," the researchers adopted the notion made popular by the psychoanalytic theory that true moral behavior is constraining in nature, primarily oriented to avoiding and resisting temptation.

One major factor thought to influence heavily the rate of conscience development was the childhood process of identification. Defining identification as a learning task through which the child identifies with and becomes intimately attached to the sex role and lifestyle of his like-sexed parent, Sears, et al. noted sex differences in rate of identification; boys were slower to fully identify with the father than girls were to identify with the mother. The investigators saw this difference as a function of mother-oriented child-rearing. Stating that sex-role identification is accomplished through a combination of trial-and-error learning, direct tuition, and role play, the team concluded that young males were lagging in appropriate sex-role identification because of their more difficult task of changing the focus of identification from the mother, with whom they spent a great deal of time, imitating her in return for her love, to the father, with whom they spent considerably less time for imitation or encouragement through praise and affection.



With such importance accorded to the identification process, it is not surprising to find that Sears, et al. considered age to be a prime factor in conscience development. The pre-puberty years were thought to be most important for solid character formation. Although considerable differences were recognized in the rate of development of internal control, most children were thought to be well into this process by the sixth year. So stated the authors, "There is a learning of internal control that goes on mainly in the years before puberty, perhaps even chiefly in the first six to ten years of life, which establishes the extent to which the conscience will operate throughout the rest of life (p. 367)."

Parental discipline techniques, surveyed separately, were found to be effective, to differing degrees, in prompting signs of conscience, such as guilt and confession. Warm, love-oriented techniques appeared to be most effective when complemented with withdrawal of love, upon transgression by the child. The investigators, however, were quick to note the possible discrepancies between apparent manifestations of conscience and true self-control. Becker (1964) has supported the evidence pointing to the effectiveness of love-oriented discipline.

Thus, early research in moral development was oriented to investigation of moral traits and identification of those factors thought to be influential in moral behavior. Emphasis was on the study of internalization of conventional moral codes and standards, and behavioral conformity to social rules. The study of morals and morality was often approached negatively; that is, a moral person was one who did not cheat.

### Piaget's Cognitive Stages and Moral Development

Although twentieth century research in the moral field has been voluminous, the Kohlberg approach to moral development is based largely on the work of one European scientist. From Piaget's (1932) ideas on developmental cognitive stages, Kohlberg vamped his theory of moral development, basing it on the natural advancement of logical reasoning. Because Piaget's account of reasoning, decision-making and mental function is so basic to Kohlberg's approach, a concerted effort will be made at this point to present the fundamental principles of Piagetian developmental theory.

Piaget identified four stages or eras, of cognitive development, after years of scientific observation and questioning of many children, including his own:

1. Era I, (approximately 0-2 years), the era of sensori-motor intelligence
2. Era II, (approximately 2-5 years), the era of symbolic, intuitive, or prelogical thought
3. Era III, (approximately 6-10 years), the era of concrete operational thought
4. Era IV, (approximately 11-adulthood), the era of formal operational thought (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, p. 1063).

According to Piaget, advancement in perception and understanding, or movement to the next stage occurs in broad terms when the child incorporates a new body or schemata of responses into his own existing repertoire of responses. When he has internalized or assimilated the new knowledge such that it becomes a part of his functional, cognitive

way of understanding and responding to the world, he begins operating at a higher level of cognitive development. The entire process of stimulation, assimilation, and progression is the result of organism interaction with the environment, and is subject to rate of physical maturation and opportunity for environmental stimulation.

The pattern of thinking in the young child who is probably at Era II of cognitive development, is characterized by the irrational processes of juxtaposition and syncretism. Juxtaposition presupposes the adjoining of unrelated events; the child's thinking is apparently independent of the need to form relationships. Each thought is unique unto itself, although it may be paired, in the same breath, with another totally irrelevant thought. This pattern ensures a lack of any internal consistency or necessity in the thinking process. The opposite of juxtaposition, syncretism presupposes the connection of everything with every other thing; unrelated things are falsely related in the child's mind. In addition, ego-centrism complicates the child's understanding to the extent that he is unable to place himself at another's point of view; he generally thinks for himself, without troubling to make himself understood by others. Implied is an "undifferentiated state in which cause is confused with reason, motive, and in a sense, consequence (p. 20)." Oriented to absolutes, rigid rules, and the ultimate power of adult authority, the child justifies the existence of the world by the fact that it does exist. He argues in the same way, by simply affirming or appealing to authority, but never by really substantiating his statements.

To the very young child at Era II, the world is both physical and psychical at once, an assemblage of willed and well-regulated actions and intentions. The idea of mere chance is absent from his thinking, leaving no room in the child's mind for fortuitous or inexplicable events; in simpler terms, everything can be justified.

According to Piaget, "There is . . . a universal tendency on the part of the child to avoid relations and to replace them by notions that can be thought of in themselves as something absolute (p. 127)." Since the child reasons only about isolated, or particular cases, generalization and, consequently, any sustained deduction do not come naturally to him. Necessity, reciprocity and reversibility are notably missing from the young child's reasoning. Such characteristics may give rise to those undesirable childhood attitudes referred to as stubbornness and willfulness.

With the cognitive foundation thus laid, the child of 2-5 years makes decisions and judgments with moral thinking that is similarly irrational and inconsistent. Operating at the first of two possible moral stages, labeled heteronomous by Piaget, the young child notably relies most on adult sanction, accepts rules as rigid laws, and judges situations according to their immediate physical consequences. Lasting until around the sixth year of age, the heteronomous moral stage is typified by the "tendency . . . to regard duty and the value attached to it as self-subsistent and independent of the mind, imposing itself regardless of the circumstances in which the individual may find himself (Piaget, 1932 p. 20)." Piaget refers to this trait as moral realism, to which he attributes three key features:

1. Duty is essentially heteronomous; it is valid simply because it is asked. To "do right" is to obey the will of the adult; to "do wrong" is to have a will of one's own.
2. Emphasis is on the letter, rather than the spirit, of the law.
3. Responsibility is viewed objectively; acts are judged according to their exact conformity to the rules (Piaget, 1932, p. 107).

When asked by Piaget which act was worse, breaking one cup while "pulling" a stealthy trick, or breaking fifteen cups in complete innocence, children at the heteronomous stage almost always said that breaking fifteen cups was worse and deserved more punishment because the damage was greater.

Because reversibility is lacking cognitively, the child is unable to enter into a relationship of mutual respect with adults. Unilateral respect for those in authority, which is the product of great amounts of restraint imposed upon the child by adults, provokes moral realism and the objective view of responsibility. Thus, Piaget believes the adult encourages unilateral respect for authority by imposing categorical obligations on the child before his mind has properly assimilated them. These obligations, whether practiced or not, acquire the value of ritual necessities, and forbidden things take on the significance of taboos.

In keeping with this pattern of thought the child's conception of justice is quite immature and rigid. Violation of any rule brings about automatic punishment, the most just form of which is retributive and severe in nature. To his way of thinking, then, the "best" forms of punishment are those incorporating isolation, deprivation, or other



expiatory measures. Piaget found that children under ages seven or eight interpreted most means for handling wrongdoing, even non-expiatory forms of punishment, such as reciprocity and censure, as being expiatory penalties deserved by wrong-doers.

Valuing retributive justice in this way (even up to age nine, this is true of about 50% of all children), the young child does not really understand the equalitarian principle upon which distributive judgment is founded (p. 255). Unilateral respect, a constant in the young child, does, by its very nature, constitute an obstacle to the free development of the principle of equality.

Justice, at this early cognitive stage, Era II, acquires the properties of imminence and immediacy. Wrongdoing is thought to incur its own punishment, automatically, from which there is no escape. In a story situation involving a punishment of falling into a creek from a rotting bridge that collapsed, Piaget found that little children tended to see this incident as a result of the bridge-crosser's "badness" and his "need" to be punished. Piaget also noted that children often perceive their own misfortunes as "punishments" from God. Again, the adult plays an important role in fostering such concepts, since parents often take advantage of everyday situations to teach their children a "moral" lesson by pointing out the imminence of God's justice through such phrases as "See, God is punishing you!" (p. 106)." Unilateral respect for ultimate authority is thus reinforced in a different but effective way.

Piaget contends that such one-sidedness is not harmful however, since unilateral respect tends, of itself, to grow into mutual respect

which gives rise to a tendency toward cooperation. Arrested moral development occurs only when there is a decisive inner submission to the will of others, or there is a willful, sustained revolt against developmental progression.

Transition to the autonomous, or more mature stage of moral development in Piaget's theory, is a natural advancement, occurring generally between the ages of six and ten years, and progressing through any of innumerable intermediate stages. At least one feature is distinctive in the thinking of a child in transition: his reasoning is approaching logic, becoming grounded on direct observation. Although he still has difficulty in reasoning from premises that he does not actually believe, his thinking still is far more advanced than that of the moral realist, who consistently confuses fantasy and reality.

Beginning the transition to higher moral thinking is a manifestation of a similar change that is occurring in cognitive structure. The child attains Era III which enables him to make operations upon concrete objects. He is able to maintain conservation of number, length, mass, and class membership, in the face of apparent change. Consequently, he begins some generalization and keeping of the rules, even in the absence of adult sanction. Consideration of intention begins to play a more significant role in the moral decision-making process. Piaget notes that it is not uncommon to find the tendency to judge acts according to consequence and the ability to judge according to intention co-existing in the same child (p. 129). Each cognitive and moral step forward is the result of increasing generalization and differentiation of assimilated skills and knowledge.

Concerning justice, the concrete operational child, as a result of his growing ability to formulate reciprocal relationships, begins to justify punishment as a means for putting things right; expiation is no longer as important as restoring the status quo. However, although the notion of reciprocal justice predominates over that of expiatory punishment, both notions may be found at all ages.

Growth of the concept of mutual respect fosters recognition of distributive justice and the notion of equality. The older child, generally, becomes more concerned with protecting the rights of the innocent than with punishing the guilty.

Accomplishing reversibility in thought, the ability to reason from another's point of view, and conservation of relationships, the child of 11 or 12 years becomes aware of the principle of equity and its adequacy as an operable principle, even superceding the principle of equality in some cases.

Advancing from the concrete operational stage, thinking becomes more abstract and deductive; one is better able to consider special or individual circumstances before judging an event or act. Views of punishment change to admit the adequacy of simple reciprocal measures, such as censure or restitution, where punishment is deemed necessary. The formal operational stage in cognitive development thus implies a strictness, necessity, and consistency characteristic of the mature reasoning process. Reasoning about pure possibility is not only possible, but highly probable. Reality exists in three recognizable and hierarchical planes: play, verbal reality, and observation, as opposed to the confusion of juxtaposed, non-hierarchical planes of reality and



play in the pre-concrete child. Autonomous moral reasoning is ideally attained once formal cognitive operations are stabilized. It is characterized by consideration of intention as the criterion for judging a situation, mutual respect, and retaliation and exchange.

Piaget (1952) contends that "The child's mind shows signs of having a structure of its own . . . (p. 200)," and that "there is the existence of a sort of law of evolution in the moral development of the child (p. 199)." Such statements imply an inherent pattern of development, each stage of which is unique and structurally different from the others; a pattern common to all children, always following the same direction, and thus dependent upon common growth factors.

Yet Piaget also mentions social and environmental factors which influence development; parents influence the attainment of reciprocity, mutual respect, and other principles of formal thinking by the examples they themselves set. Peer-group pressure becomes increasingly important to the older child:

At about the age of eleven or twelve, social life starts a new phase, obviously having the effect of leading children to a greater mutual understanding and giving them the habit of constantly placing themselves at points of view which they did not previously hold. This progress in the use of assumptions is probably what lends greater suppleness to the child's conception of modality, and teaches him the use of formal reasoning

Cognitive dissonance, stimulated by environmental novelty or problems, is necessary for the realization of the inadequacy of current thinking and resultant seeking of a more adequate level of reasoning which leads to progression to the next stage.

The developmental approach, therefore, refutes the notion of "wired-in" basic cognitive structures; rather, it purports such structures to be general forms of equilibrium, resulting from interaction between organism and environment. The use of stages as a structural framework is also significant in developmental theory. Specific characteristics are implied by a proposed developmental stage hierarchy:

1. Each stage, having its own structure, represents a mode of thinking that is qualitatively different from that of every other stage.
2. Consistency of level of response is implied by the notion of different developmental structures.
3. The stages form an invariant, sequential hierarchy, each stage being more differentiated and integrated than the preceding stage. The order of developmental stage progression cannot be changed, although cultural teaching and/or experience may affect the rate of progression.

As these characteristics are applied to cognitive development, it is important to note a most significant difference between the development of concrete operations and formal operations. It appears that the more adequate stage of formal reasoning is much more difficult to attain than its prerequisite stage of concrete reasoning. Specifically, all children, ultimately, attain some clear capacity for concrete-logical reasoning, generally between the ages of five and nine. The transition to formal thought, on the other hand, is extremely variable as to time, and for many people, it never occurs at all. In one study of 265 American parents and their children, the percentage of those displaying clear formal operational reasoning by age was as follows:

Age 10 to 15, 45%

Age 16 to 20, 53%

Age 21 to 30, 65%

Age 45 to 50, 57% (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, p. 1065).

The figures indicate that a surprisingly large proportion of Americans never develop the capacity for abstract thought, and of those who do, full formal thinking may not be attained until the third decade of life. In addition, there seems to be no further significant development of formal reasoning after age 30. The most obvious implication from the data, however, is that no cognitive stage can be equated with a definite age period, a contention which Piaget has held for many years.

In comparison, Kohlberg has viewed moral development as a parallel to cognitive development. Although his approach is largely an expansion of Piaget's two developmental moral stages, Kohlberg refers to cognitive stages as a prerequisite for formulation of moral thinking. The following section will be an explanation of Kohlberg's moral development theory.

#### Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory

After exploring developmental theory, and thus, heavily influenced by Piaget, Kohlberg (1958, 1963) ultimately postulated six invariant stages of moral development.

The six stages are grouped under three levels of moral development with their defining attitudinal characteristics as described below:

Level I. Preconventional level. Values reside in external happenings or consequences rather than persons or rules.

Stage 1. Orientation toward punishment and reward, unquestioning deference to superior power. The physical consequences of action regardless of their human meaning or value determine its goodness or badness.

Stage 2. Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Elements of fairness, reciprocity, and equal sharing are present, but they are always interpreted in a physical pragmatic way. Reciprocity is a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," not of loyalty, gratitude, or justice.

Level II. Conventional level. Value resides in good and bad roles and in maintenance of the conventional order of reward and punishment.

Stage 3. Good-boy orientation. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or "natural" behavior. Behavior is often judged by intention - "he means well" becomes important for the first time and is overused. One seeks approval by being "nice."

Stage 4. Orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. One earns respect by performing dutifully.

Level III. Postconventional or principled level. Value resides in the conformity of the self to some shared standard of judgment and defined rights and duties.

Stage 5. A social-contract orientation, generally with legalistic and utilitarian overtones. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Emphasis is on the legal point of view, but with consideration of the possibility of changing law in terms of social utility. Outside the legal realm, free agreement and contract are the binding elements of obligation.

Stage 6. Orientation toward ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical; they are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, pp. 1067-1068).

His original research consisted of 72 case studies of suburban Chicago delinquent and normal boys, aged 10, 13, and 16 years (Kohlberg, 1958). For each participant, measures of socio-economic status, popularity, and I.Q. were obtained.

The content of Kohlberg's taped interview observations consisted of the actual verbal solving, by each participant, of 10 hypothetical moral-dilemma situations, and the probing of the thinking underlying the subject's choice. Probing of underlying thoughts, or cognitive structure, was done by a series of predetermined questions concerning the subject's response.

Each taped statement was transcribed and rated on a 180-cell scale which classified it as to motivational aspect of thought (30) times stage of moral development (6) per aspect. Individual scores were computed for each of the 6 stages of moral development, based on the percentage of all the individual's statements which were of that given stage. Analyses of variance of the percentage usage of each stage of thought by the three age groups showed that the differences between them in usage of all types of thought but one (Stage 3) were found to be significant beyond the .01 level. Kohlberg ascertained the attitudinal factors which characterize each of the stages and thus determine moral judgment from the responses of the subject to moral dilemma situations.



Kohlberg has expanded on his approach considerably in the sixteen years of research since his original 1958 postulations, and the stage hierarchy has become more sophisticated. Stage 5 is now thought to have two substages of its own, the first of which is as described above as Stage 5, and the second being an approximation of Stage 6, with a belief in internal decisions of conscience, yet without clear recognition of rational or universal principles. Kohlberg has also documented a transition stage which develops during the change from conventional (Stage 4) to principled (Stage 5) thinking. Labeled Stage 4B, this step resembles, at least in content, Stage 2 thinking; at one time it was thought to represent temporary regression in moral development, but it was misplaced because the regression was not a structural one (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969).

Another advancement in theoretical construct is Kohlberg's more recent identification of three modes or basic forms or kinds of moral judgment: (a) judgments of the rightness and duty of an act; (b) judgments of desert or moral worth of action; and (c) judgments of the value and truth of norms, ends, and groups, apart from a particular act. Also identified were three elements or basic considerations which impose positive or negative value on acts, actors, or norms: (a) the future welfare and perfection of persons; (b) the past origin or present authority of persons and rules; and (c) justice: ideal symmetrical relations between action defining the claims of one person on another. Finally, Kohlberg has also delineated twelve basic issues which are aspects of moral decision-making, and are necessarily involved in related dilemma-solvings. Kohlberg labels the issues thus:

1. Social rules
2. The self, the ideal self, and conscience
3. Motive given for rule obedience or moral action
4. Helping roles, involving cooperation, helpfulness, and affection
5. Authority issues and roles, governmental roles
6. Civil liberties
7. Contract, promise, and reciprocity
8. Punitive justice
9. Life as a value and a right
10. Property
11. Truth
12. Self and sexual love (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971, pp. 432-433)

True to developmental theory, Kohlberg's approach defines the structure of each moral stage as being more differentiated and more integrated than that of the previous stage. Accordingly, at each higher stage, the same basic moral issue is defined in a way that is more differentiated, more integrated, and more general or universal. Taking one of the moral issues, value of life, for example, typical thought construction for each stage would be as follows:

- Stage 1. The value of a human life is confused with the value of physical objects and is based on the social status or physical attributes of its possessor.
- Stage 2. The value of a human life is seen as instrumental to the satisfaction of the needs of its possessor or of other persons.
- Stage 3. The value of a human life is based on the empathy and affection of family members and others toward its possessor.

- Stage 4. Life is conceived as sacred in terms of its place in a categorical moral or religious order of rights and duties.
- Stage 5. Life is valued both in terms of its relation to community welfare and in terms of being a universal human right.
- Stage 6. Belief in the sacredness of human life as representing a universal human value of respect for the individual (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, p. 1068).

Each step of development represents a better cognitive organization than the one before it, taking account of everything present in the previous stage, but making new distinctions and organizing them into a more comprehensive or more equilibrated structure.

Because of the close and even symbiotic relationship of moral and cognitive stages, it is appropriate at this point to compare the ideas of Kohlberg and Piaget according to their respective theories. It will be shown that, while Kohlberg's moral stages necessitate stable functioning at the parallel cognitive stage, they essentially constitute a more thoroughly analyzed and categorized expansion of Piaget's theory of moral developmental stages.

The first and most outstanding similarity of Kohlberg's approach to Piaget's approach, is the basic foundation in stages which represent a developmental sequence. Those characteristics thought to be structurally inherent to cognitive developmental stages, qualitative differentiation, consistency, invariance, and hierarchization, have been cross-culturally validated as typifying moral development also (Kohlberg, 1969; Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971; Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973).



In terms of mental structure and ability for decision-making, there is a positive correlation between cognitive development and readiness for advancement in moral development, according to Kohlberg and Gilligan (1973). Relations between Piaget's logical stages and Kohlberg's moral stages are presented below. Kohlberg clearly and consistently reminds the reader that all relations are such that attainment of the logical stages is necessary, but not sufficient, for attainment of the moral stages.

<u>Logical stage</u>	<u>Moral stage</u>
<u>Symbolic, intuitive thought</u>	<u>Stage 0:</u> The good is what I want and like.
<u>Concrete operations, Substage 1</u> <u>Categorical classification</u>	<u>Stage 1:</u> Punishment-obedience orientation
<u>Concrete operations, Substage 2</u> <u>Reversible concrete thought</u>	<u>Stage 2:</u> Instrumental hedonism and concrete reciprocity
<u>Formal operations, Substage 1</u> <u>Relations involving the inverse of the reciprocal</u>	<u>Stage 3:</u> Orientation to interpersonal relations of mutuality
<u>Formal operations, Substage 2</u>	<u>Stage 4:</u> Maintenance of social order, fixed rules, and authority
<u>Formal operations, Substage 3</u>	<u>Stage 5A:</u> Social contract, utilitarian law-making perspective
	<u>Stage 5B:</u> Higher law and conscience orientation
	<u>Stage 6:</u> Universal ethical principle orientation (p. 1068).

The first Piagetian stage listed is that period beginning after the era of sensori-motor intelligence. Characterized by symbolic intuitive thought, this stage has been intricately described by Piaget, but surprisingly little research on moral thinking has been done by

Kohlberg with children at this very young age (years 2-5). However, current Kohlberg researchers are beginning to explore methods for measuring moral thinking in preschool children by designing new dilemma situations, appropriate for the comprehension range of this age group, which allow for probing of reasoning at this difficult age (Gordon, 1974). The need for research in this area of moral development reflects the limits of Kohlberg's research, which has largely involved the interviewing of children in grades 4 through 12, and college students.

Presumably, however, Piaget's heteronomous stage thinking is active at this age, and the writer notes from personal experience, that in simple recitations of Piagetian dilemma stories to four-year-olds in an informal setting, responses were found to be quite similar, and in some cases, identical to those prototypical heteronomous statements documented by Piaget (Schwarz, 1973).

In the older preschool child, to whom reality and fantasy appear to be the same, and confusion of relations is typical, the decline of prelogical thinking begins generally between the ages of five and seven years, as concrete logical patterns of thought formulate cognitively. The child develops the stage of categorical operations, among others (Substage I), which sets the stage for attainment of the first premoral stage, or Kohlberg's Stage 1.

At this point, the child labels environmental experiences as good or bad, according to the way they affect his own welfare, which is his only point of reference. Oriented to superior and authority figures, the (Kohlberg) Stage 1 child imitates the adult and categorizes

his environment as he is instructed by or learns from the adult. Justification of the "goodness" or "badness" of an event is implied by its very existence, or is confused with other features associated with the event requiring explanation. For example, when asked, "Why does the sun not fall down?" the typical seven-year-old may say, "Because it is hot" or "Because it is high (Piaget, 1952, p. 227)." It will be remembered that syncretism is high at this age.

Substage II of Piaget's concrete operations corresponds to Kohlberg's Stage 2, which is still categorized as premoral thought, but is structured for the potential recognition of another's point of view. As the child develops the operations of transitive seriation and conservation, concrete thought becomes reversible and the child begins to establish reciprocal relationships. Other people are becoming important to him but at this immature stage, relationships are typically manipulated to his advantage. The child's view of reciprocal moral relations is a "blow for blow" philosophy, representing simple reciprocal exchange. He makes decisions upon the basis of that which is most real to him, in keeping with Piaget's view of the parallel-ing cognitive stage: "The concrete operational child adopts the hypothesis that seems most probable or likely to him (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, p. 1060)."

The transition from concrete operational thought to formal operations is regarded by Piaget (and by Kohlberg) as the most significant step forward in the cognitive developmental process. It heralds the beginning of abstract thinking and the ability to "reason about reason." It is at this stage that one is first able to consider

sheer possibility; hypotheses are established and tested in a sophisticated manner, which may include the isolation of variables and the arriving at deductive, systematic conclusions.

Kohlberg sees advancement into the first substage of formal operations as a necessary prerequisite for attainment of Stage 3 in moral thinking. A person at Stage 3 thinking, having developed the ability to order even triads of propositions or relations, becomes necessarily aware of his own position in relation to others. Lasting, mutual relationships become important as he sees himself from different perspectives. Concern for such relationships may necessarily foster the currying of others' favor. The immediacy of negative classes (of all not-nice, for example) may encourage the person at Stage 3 to categorize and stereotype.

Piaget's Substage 2 formal operations enables one to order or reverse relations, and thus to hierarchize and to set priorities through deductive reasoning. Accordingly, a person functioning at Kohlberg's Stage 4 moral development is concerned with the ordering and hierarchizing of society, and with maintaining the status quo. Values are ordered and given fixed positions.

True formal thought is possible only when the final substage of formal operations is mastered. A person at this level of cognitive development is able to perform "operations upon operations"; construction of all possible combinations of relations is the most probable mode of thought. Certainly this logical advancement with the ability to reason about sheer possibility establishes the foundation for the abstract, theoretical thinking characteristic of the fifth moral

developmental stage. At Stage 5, which Kohlberg refers to as principled, postconventional or autonomous, one is able to see the need for a social system, its control and maintenance, while at the same time recognizing the cultural relativity of all social systems. "The rejection of conventional moral reasoning begins with the perception of relativism, the awareness that any given society's definition of right and wrong however legitimate, is only one among many, both in fact and theory (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973, p. 1072)."

Admitting the necessity of law and order as a principle, but transcending a person's Stage 4 dedication to maintaining the status quo, the person at Stage 5 sees the best social order as that which meets the needs of the majority of the population, while providing for individual rights, liberties and responsibilities.

Vaguely aware of the universality of moral principles and distinctly aware of the relativity of cultural norms, it is the principled thinker at Stage 5 who can see the need for new or modified laws, or for the deletion of laws made obsolete by social change. Most importantly, the person at Stage 5 who is able to view all legal systems as culturally relative, is more able to clearly discern those values and rights which appear to be valid cross-culturally. Thus, he is better able to objectively judge those situations and events apart from the group to which he is tied or with which he himself is identified. Therefore, because of his increased insight into the structure of universal moral truths, the person at Stage 5 is probably more strongly committed to a system which maintains these ideals than a person at Stage 4 who supports his society simply to ensure the status quo or to avoid change which would interrupt familiar patterns of social control.



Another logical operation reached at Piaget's final Substage 3 is the systematic isolation of variables and true deductive reasoning. Since Kohlberg's Stage 6 of moral development is oriented to purely theoretical, ethical principles, it is evident that the highest level of logical comprehensiveness is necessary for the moral thinking typical of this stage. The principles upon which this highest developmental stage is based are abstract, philosophical ideas shown to be universally valid and consistent. Given the complex nature of this mode of thinking, and the rarely-attained conditions for its development, it is not surprising that few people make any realistic use of Stage 6 thinking (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974).

However, a truly morally-principled person, functioning autonomously at Stage 5 or 6, may manifest the lifestyle of a person functioning at Stage 4, since the more advanced moral thinker realizes the necessity of social control through law and order, custom, and tradition, for a civilized society.

Stage 7, which has been hypothesized by Kohlberg but not researched, is a horizontal expansion on the principled structure of Stage 6, and will be discussed later.

It should be re-emphasized at this point that Kohlberg cautions against equating cognitive and moral stages, and contends that all relationships between the two developmental hierarchies are that attainment of the logical stage is necessary but not in any way sufficient, for attainment of the moral stage. True to the developmental approach, Kohlberg sees natural progression in the moral realm comparable to cognitive progression; that is, progression is the result of organism



and environmental interaction. Cognitive development is, of necessity, the forerunner of moral development, but attainment of a cognitive stage does not imply simultaneous attainment of the moral stage. On the other hand, reaching a moral stage always implies attainment of the corresponding cognitive stage, since logical structure is basic to moral thinking.

However, moral judgment stages do not represent the mere application of logic to moral situations. In one study cited by Kohlberg and Gilligan in 1973, Kohlberg found that 60% of persons over age 16 had attained formal operational thinking, yet only 10% of subjects over 16 showed clear, principled moral thinking. It will be remembered that the transition from concrete to formal cognitive operations is not automatic. This accounts for the lag in principled moral thinking by many cognitively advanced persons. Those persons who have attained the higher levels of moral thinking have had experiences in which the lower cognitive and moral levels were inadequate.

The Kohlberg moral development theory has been shown to be intricately associated with and indeed, dependent upon Piagetian theory of cognitive stage development. It is appropriate at this point to delineate the boundaries of Piaget's moral stages and to compare them with Kohlberg's stages, the latter of which constitute a more thoroughly analyzed, expanded version of the former.

Piaget's first moral (heteronomous) stage is comparable to Kohlberg's Stage 1 of moral development in terms of orientation to authority and reward, and avoidance of punishment.

The second Piagetian moral (autonomous) stage is comparable in differing degrees, to Kohlberg Stages 2 - 6. The principles upon which it is based are found in Kohlberg's hierarchy, from Stages 2 - 6, but the mode of operating upon these principles, according to Kohlberg, is structurally different in each stage. For example, a person at Kohlberg's Stage 2 takes into account intention. Piaget (1932) describes intention as one of the first notable characteristics of autonomous thinking; but a person at Stage 2, knowing the intention, still typically uses the situation to his own advantage.

Accordingly, reciprocity is generally an influential factor in the thinking characteristic of both the Piagetian autonomous stage and the Kohlberg Stage 2. At Stage 2 of Kohlberg's hierarchy, reciprocity is not the ethical principle implied by the Golden Rule; rather, it is the instrumental philosophy of "I'll do unto you if you do unto me" and represents perfect reciprocal exchange. Obviously, Piaget had the more noble idea of just reciprocity in mind when he characterized his autonomous stage. However, Kohlberg maintains that just reciprocity is an idea that is not prevalent in one's thinking until attainment of Stage 5, and that the instrumental view of reciprocal relations must be reached and surpassed before the higher ideal of just reciprocity can be comprehended.

Piaget purports that the transition from the heteronomous stage to the autonomous stage may occur through any of innumerable intermediate stages. It is the writer's belief that thinking characteristic of Kohlberg's Stages 2 and 3 is probably comparable to that of Piaget's vaguely described intermediate stages, at which the child is not only

concerned with maintaining the rules and meeting the expectations of others, but is also beginning to actually believe in these standards to the extent of maintaining them in the absence of adult control. Thus, the prototypical person at Stage 3 adopts the role of peace-maker and relies heavily on stereotyped images of the "nice" and "not-nice." He is the one who smoothes things over in his own effort to be "nice," following the inclination to please and gain approval. It seems likely that the person at Kohlberg's Stage 2 or 3 is moving forward in transition as Piaget would presume, his skills and knowledge becoming more integrated and differentiated, ready to be applied in an original way.

Consequently, Kohlberg's Stage 4 appears to be most comparable to the autonomous stage Piaget describes, in which subjective responsibility is a predominant factor in moral thinking, for it is in the person who is highly oriented to legal equality and fairness that consideration of intention is given most regard. In addition, the main consideration of a person at Stage 4 is that justice be done according to the law, so as to maintain the existing social system. Violation of these laws occurs in degrees and ideally is never judged without a fair representation of all the facts. Orientation to Stage 4 guarantees consideration of intention, because of the provision for this factor in the American democratic justice system. Knowledge of intention does not necessarily predict the decision, however, because of the foremost orientation of Stage 4 to the law, its rewards, and its penalties which are designed to protect and maintain the existing social system. A person functioning at this moral stage is very likely to

agree that good intention must be considered, but is quick to ask, "What if everyone did it?"

The principled stages of Kohlberg's hierarchy incorporate those highest ethical principles of justice, reciprocity, and equality in their purest forms. Only at these stages, according to Kohlberg, can those noblest moral rights and values identified by Piaget predominate in moral thinking. Clearly, it is only at the most advanced developmental level, cognitively and morally, that man can transcend the legal and social limitations of his environment to comprehend these values as principles themselves. Herein lies the essence of autonomous thinking, which has been recognized and agreed upon by both Piaget and Kohlberg.

#### Newest Developments by Kohlberg

A further development in Kohlberg's theory has centered around the postulation of adulthood stages. Kohlberg and Turiel (1971) have theorized the possible existence of moral stages in adulthood which have cognitive-structural components. Although Kohlberg claims that these adulthood stages do not represent a new or higher logical stage, this represents a point of departure from Piaget's cognitive developmental theory. The only adulthood development mentioned by Piaget is a continuing development of the cognitive process in such cases as (a) the slow developer, who may not reach full formal operations until early adulthood; (b) those who operate at the formal level and whose continuing development brings about a "horizontal decalage" of formal thought, or an extension of application in other spheres of experience; and (c) those for whom continuing development brings about the

"stabilization" of formal thought, which necessitates the increased subordination or rejection of lower forms of thought (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971).

Kohlberg, on the other hand, suggests that there is a good probability of moral stage advancement, since the crises or turning points of adulthood identity are often of a moral nature. Increased experiences of personal interchange may serve as the necessary stimuli for transformation of moral ideologies. Moral development, of necessity, involves social role-taking and equilibration of role-taking in the form of reversible justice structures. Kohlberg clearly recognizes the influence of social and role-taking experiences on developmental advancement, as does Piaget (1952).

Thus, Kohlberg postulates the existence of a seventh stage of moral development, which, true to the developmental approach, can be attained only after each of the six former stages has been mastered. State 7 encompasses a vague, theoretical orientation to the ethical principles of Stage 6, and a resulting philosophy of life. Arriving at an adequate philosophy of life, according to Kohlberg, is a religious task, in the broadest sense of the term, culminating in the ultimate facing of cosmic infinity and personal finiteness. This necessitates not only a postconventional orientation to universal human ethical principles, but also a postconventional religious orientation which attempts to answer the ultimate of all moral questions, "Why be moral?" Perhaps such questioning and searching cannot be resolved by logical or rational reasoning alone, entailing as it does, such philosophic questions as "Why live?" and "How face death?" In Kohlberg's terms,



The characteristics of all these Stage 7 solutions is that they involve contemplative experiences of non-egoistic or non-dualistic variety. . . . (That which is) essential is the sense of being a part of the whole of life and the adoption of a cosmic, as opposed to a universal humanistic (Stage 6) perspective (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971, p. 55).

Such a cosmic perspective requires a shift from figure to ground, such that one sees himself from and identifies himself with the cosmic or infinite perspective. Not surprisingly, a sense of despair accompanies the beginning of a cosmic perspective, as one considers the meaninglessness of life in the face of death, then weighs it against the timeless nature of the cosmos. Finally, when one experiences a sense of unity with nature, of being one part of that whole, a sense of conviction emerges which "reveals the positive validity of the cosmic perspective implicit in the felt despair (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971, p. 57)." This conviction is a highly personal and individualized philosophy, representing no single universal ontological religious structure, since underlying cognitive structures are multiform.

Kohlberg admits that the logical structure of Stage 7 is vague and that its philosophical adequacy is hard to justify. In the longitudinal follow-up study of his own original research subjects, the concerns of ideas necessary for anything like a Stage 7 orientation were absent, even in those subjects reaching clearly principled thinking at young ages (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969). Kohlberg's approach to Stage 7, then, is through the back door, supported mainly by the logic that there is no reason to stop developing morally at Stage 6.



### Research Emanating from Kohlberg's Theory

In the sixteen years since Kohlberg's original research with suburban Chicago children, his moral development theory has stimulated much new research, not the least of which was Kramer's follow-up study of the 72 adolescent boys that Kohlberg interviewed in 1958 (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969). Retesting the same subjects at intervals until each reached the age of 25 years, Kramer was able to discern generally the ages of transition in terms of levels of moral development. Transition from the preconventional level (Stages 1 and 2) to the conventional (Stages 3 and 4) appeared to come no later than the twelfth or thirteenth year, with the principled level (Stages 5 and 6) if evident at all, appearing in late adolescence. A person thinking purely in Stage 6 was rare; most subjects fell heavily in the conventional level category. After high school, the majority of Kramer's subjects stabilized at Stages 3 and 4, although 25% of those who went on to college exhibited Stage 5 thinking as young adults. It is important to note, at this point, that more recent Kohlberg researchers have noted a great scarcity in Stage 6, 5, and even Stage 4 thinking among most population samples (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974). The discrepancy is accounted for by measurement error and continuous revision of the theory and scoring methods used by the interviewers. However, Kohlberg associates are currently attempting to define age norms for moral stage development through cross-sectional research with junior and senior high school students (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974).

The most significant finding from Kramer's research was the discovery of what appeared to be a retrogressive step in the developmental

process. Each of the subjects who ultimately reached Stage 5 thinking after college, experienced a drop in moral maturity scores from Stage 4 sometime between the last year in high school and the second or third year in college. The subjects appeared to be operating on a lower or more immature level of moral thinking, which was extremely relativistic and closely resembled the hedonistic and instrumental thinking characteristic of Stage 2. However, by age 25, each retrogressor had repossessed his former orientation to Stage 4 and even showed some Stage 5 structure in his reasoning. Kohlberg and Kramer concluded that the regression was functional rather than structural, since the former structures of Stage 4 were not actually lost by any subject. Later three fundamental differences between the Stage 2 person and the "retrogressor" were identified (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1973):

1. (a) The Stage 2 person claims relativity of all values except his own.  
 (b) The retrogressor denies any values, claiming that all values are relative.
2. (a) The Stage 2 person does not distinguish rights and duties from his own wishes and desires.  
 (b) The retrogressor is aware of rights and duties as distinct from his own wishes.
3. (a) The Stage 2 person has only a personal point of view or point of reference.  
 (b) The retrogressor has much more of a Stage 4 social perspective or point of view.

This retrogressive period has thus been defined as a transition stage spanning the gap between full conventional (Stages 3 and 4) and full postconventional (Stages 5 and 6) thinking, and has been labeled Stage 4 1/2 or 4B. Surprisingly, Stage 4B has not been accounted for in the latest scoring guide to the Moral Judgment Interview, reportedly

because it is not a true stage of the developmental process in the same sense as are the other full stages (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974).

The existence of a transition stage, however, is a significant discovery that has prompted great interest in adolescence on the part of Kohlberg. Attempting to explain the phenomenon of transition, he again returns to an examination of the parallel relations of cognitive and moral developmental stages. According to Kohlberg, once formal cognitive operations have stabilized, given the necessary social and environmental stimuli, conventional moral reasoning begins to take on an arbitrary or relativistic hue. This relativistic skepticism is an ethical skepticism, transcending the social identification principles of Stage 4. Universal moral principles are not yet clearly understood or identified, although there may be a vague awareness of their existence. It follows that persons, probably adolescents, going through this transition period, would be fairly non-committal toward these principles. Hypothesizing that persons in transition are probably trying to solve an identity crisis also, Kohlberg contends that arrival at an adequate philosophy of life becomes increasingly important at this point, to the extent that it takes on the characteristics of a "developmental task." Its only solution is the formation of a universal principled morality.

More recent research has revealed some differences in the transitional person studied by Kramer from 1958-1968 and the contemporary adolescent undergoing transition to postconventional thinking. The extreme relativism and doubt typical of the crisis era now appears both

earlier and much more pervasively in college students. Podd also found a difference in orientation in his contemporary transitional subjects (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973). Rather than being in a state of identity crisis, with only vague and uncertain commitments, his subjects appeared to be in a state of identity diffusion, with no sense of commitment. In effect, Podd found the transition period to be not so much a temporary developmental stage as a more stable, less crisis-like stage of low commitment.

Kohlberg has reasoned that these differences are likely due to the growth of a popular and profitable "counterculture" which preaches a "new morality," often pressuring the adolescent to be a philosopher before he is ready for it. It seems realistic to surmise that much of the identity diffusion and consequent dilemma-type feelings which plague adolescents may be the result of being faced with resolutions before the problems are yet realized. The pressure of the counterculture to accept half-answers before one even begins to question can hardly be expected not to affect the natural progression of moral thinking.

In an aside, Kohlberg has formulated his own analysis of the "counterculture" and its "new morality." While preaching the rejection of conventional morality, the counterculture advocates adopting a new philosophy which appears to be postconventional, yet really is a mixture of preconventional Stage 2 "do your own thing" and Stage 3 "be nice, be loving" themes. Thus the "new morality" actually constitutes another conventional system, complete with stereotypes, norms, and unwritten codes of conduct.

Since Kohlberg's theory has become known, different aspects of its structure have been challenged and studied in depth. One of the most noted studies of this type was undertaken by Rest (1968) who investigated the claim of stage hierarchy; that is, that each stage is structurally more differentiated and integrated than the stage preceding it, rather than being a mere extension of the principles of the lower stage. Assuming the hierarchy to be a valid construct, Rest worked from the hypothesis that attainment of a given stage, as ascertained by the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview, would determine one's comprehension of the other moral development stages; specifically, one would be able to comprehend the principles of his given stage, as well as those principles constituting any stage below his own, since they have already been organized and integrated within the current higher stage. Conversely, comprehension of higher stage principles would be difficult, since the reasoning process characteristic of these stages has not yet been attained.

Awaiting a time lapse of six months after giving 47 senior high school students the Kohlberg interview, Rest presented this subject sample with two sets of six prototypical statements, each representing one of the six stages of moral thinking. Each subject was asked to discuss these statements, which were responses to two of the original nine dilemma situations in the Kohlberg interview, and to compare the statements with his own view. Comprehension scores were obtained from these recapitulations. Subjects were then asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale, ranging from very poor to very good, and to rank order the statements according to preference.



A comparison of comprehension scores obtained from the structured-response instrument with the stage scores ascertained through spontaneous usage in response to Kohlberg's interview, showed a close relationship between the two sets of scores. More significantly, Rest found that subjects correctly interpreted the principles upon which statements representing their own or lower stages were based, but few subjects were able to recapitulate higher stage statements without reconstructing them to be characteristic of their own lower stages.

Some persons were able to comprehend statements representing thinking one stage higher than their own spontaneous stage ascertained through the interview. Therefore, Rest surmised that operation at a certain stage of moral thinking did not limit comprehension to that stage. In fact, there was considerable evidence that many persons did understand one stage higher (+1) thinking than they used routinely. Evidence for comprehension of thinking higher than one stage above (+2 or higher) the operational stage was scarce. Those whose comprehension level was higher than their functional level, for the most part, were shown to have used a substantial number of higher stage statements spontaneously in the pretest interview.

From the rating and ranking data, however, Rest found that subjects consistently chose higher stage statements as the "best" responses, even those who did not understand the principles upon which the statements were based. Ranking was generally in an inverted stage order, beginning with Stage 6 statements and proceeding systematically down to Stage 1 statements.



Rest's study added considerable support to the theoretical construct of a stage hierarchy, but it also added an insight into the nature of the decision-making process. It appears that a structured-response instrument may yield biased scores if used to determine individual moral stages through the process of selection of most adequate response. Rest indicated that highest stage statements were chosen because of their noble-sounding principles and ideas, which appeal to most people, even though they may not understand those ideas.

Another study (Turiel, 1969) was designed to test two developmental hypotheses upon which Kohlberg's typology is based:

1. The six moral stages form an invariant sequence.
2. The movement from one stage to the next is a restructuring and displacement of the preceding stage.

A sample of children was administered a pretest containing six situations from Kohlberg's interview. The subjects' stages were determined and those in Stages 2, 3, and 4 were retained for the remainder of the experiment. An experimental treatment, embodying exposure to new moral concepts, was administered two weeks after the pretest to all but a group of control subjects. One group of subjects was exposed to the stage directly above its own (+1), a second group was exposed to two stages above its own (+2), and a third group was exposed to the stage directly below its own (-1).

To assess the influence of the treatment, all subjects were administered a posttest which included the six situations of the pretest and the three that were used in the experimental treatment. The change in the scores of the pre- and posttests showed that there was significantly more use made of the +1 thinking than either the -1 or +2 modes

of thinking ( $p < .01$ ). Turiel concluded from these results that one cannot skip a stage, and that when exposed to new moral concepts, he can assimilate only those that are one stage above his own level. The hypothesis that the six moral stages form an invariant sequence was thus supported. The hypothesis that movement from one stage to the next is a restructuring and displacement of the preceding stage was also supported by the subjects' failure to accept -1 thinking, a stage that had been replaced by higher modes of thought although it may have been more easily understood than the higher modes of thinking (Turiel, 1969).

Another significant study yielding data which supported the results found by Turiel and Rest was that of Blatt (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1973), who designed a two-study program intended to raise the moral thinking of pre-adolescent and adolescent children via cognitive conflict and stimulation of higher stage thinking. Working with two experimental samples, Blatt pursued this objective through organized, systematic arguments challenging present-stage thinking, and overt, verbal persuasions advocating higher stage responses. The dilemma situations used to stimulate discussion were appropriately related to the two different population samples. Study I, which was actually a pilot study, was carried out in a Sunday school group of 11 upper-middle class Jewish children, aged 11 to 12 years, and used Biblical moral dilemma situations. The population sample used for Study II was a heterogeneous group of 132 sixth and tenth graders from four suburban Chicago public schools. New dilemma situations involving conflict with nine of Kohlberg's twelve moral issues were used with

the public school sample. Study II had two experimental groups, Experiment I, which was led by Blatt in the discussion procedure described above, and Experiment II, which was allowed to discuss the same moral dilemma situations, but without benefit of adult guidance, during the time that the researcher was meeting with Experiment I. The control group maintained their regular classroom activities during the discussion time. The entire program of Study II was carried out within the classroom setting.

The design of the program was comparable to the one described by Turiel (1969) and, like Turiel, Blatt, using the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview, found significant increases in +1 (stage) thinking at the posttest, as compared to pretest scores, in the Study I group and in the Experiment I group of Study II, both of which he led. This change in moral thinking appeared to be of a structural, developmental nature, since the increase was relative to each child's functioning stage, and was usually to the next stage up, although each child was exposed to the same stimuli (responses varying from Stage 2 to Stage 6) and thus was amply exposed to wide-range modeling of different levels of thought.

In contrast to Rest (1968), who found that persons advancing to 1 thinking on the posttest were already spontaneously using +1 thinking at least 20% of the time, Blatt found that those in his sample who showed a low frequency (under 20%) of 1 thinking on the pretest were those who displayed the clearest increase in +1 thinking on the posttest. Those showing clear pretest usage of +1 thinking showed little or no clear increase (4% or less) in +1 thinking on the posttest.

Blatt concluded that his classroom discussions led to the actual formation of a higher stage of thought, from the ground up, as opposed to Rest, whose findings suggested that simple passive exposure to  $\pm 1$  thinking was sufficient to complete transition to the next highest moral stage.

Of equal importance was Blatt's finding that of those who did move up one stage on the posttest, all maintained this advanced stage on the follow-up test, both of which included the same situations as the pretest, and two new situational dilemmas. Thus the results indicated that the developmental gains in moral thinking were not only stable over time, but that they also generalized to new verbal situations.

Aside from the data supportive of stage hierarchy construct, Blatt discovered a phenomenon not consistent with developmental theory: stage-skipping. In both the Study I group and in Experiment I of Study II, some subjects who were scored as operating at Stage 2 or between Stages 2 and 3 on the pretest were scored as operating at Stage 4 on the posttest, apparently skipping any stabilization at Stage 3 entirely. Blatt posited a number of plausible explanations for this rarity, but finally concluded that stage-skipping was due to measurement error. Indeed, when a follow-up test was given a year later, each stage-skipper had returned either to his original stage or to the next highest Stage 3. It is important to note at this point that Kohlberg currently maintains that any stage-skipping found in interviewed subjects is generally an error on the part of the scorer. Kohlberg bases his assumption entirely on the theoretical constructs of stage hierarchy and invariant sequence of developmental progression.

### Moral Education

The results reported by these studies indicate a most important consideration for the direction of future moral research: the possibility of induced change in moral development. Blatt's study has yielded strong empirical support for the possibility of developmental advancement which is stable over time and which promises to be generalized to other verbal situations. Thus, Kohlberg and Turiel have become recent and strong crusaders for moral education programs in public schools (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971). Insisting that moral principles themselves cannot be taught as such, the researchers claim the true goal of moral education ultimately to be facilitation of the child's own natural development into the higher stages of moral thinking, rather than indoctrination in programs designed to internalize within the child the arbitrary and fixed conventions of social institutions.

Traditionally, the approach to moral education in American schools has been in the form of character education, generally stressing the acquisition of virtuous habits and given to sermonizing. A current trend in many schools is the value-clarification approach, which skirts the ominous danger inherent in indoctrination. Seeking to avoid inculcating the child in any one value system and at the same time trying to protect the right of each child to determine for himself the value system by which he will live, educators have stressed cultural and value relativity, and tolerance of those value systems which are different from one's own. However, in this noble effort to avoid indoctrination, the important task of helping children recognize those values of universal validity has been neglected or



overlooked. Although acknowledging that value-clarification is a useful component of moral education, Kohlberg maintains that it is insufficient by itself in accomplishing moral maturity in individuals.

Another approach has followed the main points of Durkheim's philosophy: respect for majority rule and consensus; community values are to be respected because they are agreed upon by society. Still others have abandoned moral education altogether in favor of promoting mental health.

Kohlberg and Turiel see their approach to moral education as being free from indoctrination and geared toward helping the child reach his full moral, philosophical potential. Besides the support of accumulating evidence that higher stage stabilization is more predictive of ethical behavior than is lower stage stabilization, the authors believe there are a number of other valid reasons for the adequacy of their approach (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971). In their terms, moral education through stimulation of natural developmental progression (a) is based not on social authority, but upon natural authority of the most advanced stage; (b) is not an imposition of the thinking of an elite group of "moral experts" since structure does not predict content of moral thinking; (c) is not a private belief system like religion; it is the teaching of justice, which is not a violation of individual rights; it is, in fact, oriented to the preservation and transmission of individual rights; (d) leads to development of the principles of justice, which are inconsistent with prejudiced actions; and (e) represents universal moral principles which are defined independently of one's needs,



personal attachments, or customs and laws. Kohlberg and Turiel are also convinced of the adequacy of their approach over the popular behavioral approach of behavior modification, which is oriented to the changing of overt behavior and the application of technique irrespective of motives causing the behavior. Immediate behavioral change is not a valid criterion of effective moral education, since content of moral thinking is distinctly different from the underlying structure which determines how one thinks about a moral situation. Finally, the authors claim that the fundamental defect of focusing directly upon "good behavior," referring to the behavioral principle of positive reinforcement, is that the definition of such a notion may be relative only to the standards and biases of the teacher or judge. Furthermore, it does not directly lead to the development of moral fortitude, nor does it seem to have long-range or general positive effects.

The steps basic to an implementation of the developmental approach in moral education, according to Kohlberg and Turiel are these: (a) be aware of the child's current position in the stage hierarchy and his functioning stage; (b) match the child's level by communicating at a stage directly above his own (these first two steps are directly comparable to Piagetian ideas on cognitive stimulation and development and the "problem of the match" as cited by J. McV. Hunt in Ojemann & Pritchett, 1966); (c) focus on reasoning rather than on content of the child's decisions; and (d) help the child experience the type of conflict that leads to an awareness of the greater adequacy of the next highest stage.

Kohlberg and others agree that the great need now in moral education is the determination of optimal conditions for change; a rational approach to moral education is thought to be one of the most important areas for the improvement of public education.

#### Conclusions and Suggestions for Research

Much interest and a great deal of research in moral reasoning has been generated by Kohlberg's theory of developmental moral stages. Various constructs of the theory have been supported by other researchers, and much effort has been given to the formulation of a workable, non-indoctrinating program of moral education.

Further research, however, is needed in several areas of moral development which have been either overlooked or by-passed in favor of another interest. Some areas have been recently recognized as promising of significant insights into the developmental process. Ideas for future researchers have been evident in much of the literature.

An investigation of factors other than age which may affect the development of moral reasoning is needed. Although Kohlberg has been thorough in attempts to validate his theory through cross-cultural research, he has based moral stage norms for American youth primarily on interviewings of children and adolescents in major cities in mid-western and northeastern areas of the United States. Persons in other locales such as the politically and philosophically conservative areas and small-town areas of the United States should be interviewed for comparison. In addition, the influence of such factors as social class, personal value systems, and emotional security on rate of moral development has not been ascertained.

Important different age-groups have also been neglected as potential sources of new information. Very little research has been done with young children, especially with those under five years of age, presumably because of the difficulty of conveying a moral dilemma to those who are quite immature cognitively. Investigation of this age-group requires the development of new techniques for presentation of dilemma situations, such as slides, filmstrips, records, role play with dolls, or other concrete means of communication.

The possibility of stages in adulthood should be researched. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine existence of and movement into these stages. Middle- and older-aged groups should be interviewed for insight into the nature of Stage 7.

The discovery of a transition period between stabilized conventional thinking and principled thinking has raised several questions about developmental theory. Does the transition period ever indicate true, structural regression? How do social conditions influence the nature of this phenomenon?

Stage-skipping has also been found by other researchers (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1973), which Kohlberg contends is not consistent with developmental theory and is therefore due to measurement error. Research is needed to determine the significance of stage-skipping and whether it may be due to individual or situational factors, rather than to judgment error on the part of the scorer.

Another question of major importance for researchers is that of the relationship between functioning moral stage and moral behavior. Although Kohlberg bases a part of his claim for moral education on

certain studies which have shown higher moral stages to be predictive of consistent, ethical actions (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971), concentrated research efforts in this area are unfortunately lacking.

A final researchable area involves the framework of Kohlberg's proposed program of moral education. One of the most notable gaps in Kohlberg's approach is the lack of identification of specific environmental factors which may initiate or support advancement in moral reasoning. Determination of critical factors which promote or perhaps maintain principled thinking is a necessary prerequisite for successful moral education.

### CHAPTER III

#### PROCEDURE

Although the present research study was originally oriented toward the validation of one written, convenient, objective adaptation of the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview, the design was modified to include the comparison of two written instruments, one objective and structured, the other subjective and unstructured, both closely resembling Kohlberg's oral procedure in composition and in yielding of scores.

An objective instrument was designed using moral dilemma situations from Kohlberg's (1958) original interviewing technique reported in his doctoral dissertation. Each dilemma situation was followed by questions also designed by Kohlberg to prompt the solving of the dilemma.

For each question, six alternative solutions were constructed, each representing the thinking that is characteristic of one of the six moral stages. Each of the six alternatives was derived directly from prototypical responses recorded by Kohlberg whenever possible; for those stages not represented in his scoring appendix (predominantly Stages 5 and 6), appropriate characteristic responses were devised according to Kohlberg's definitions of those stages.

Because the revised Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview was not available for the pilot study to compare with the objective test, a written open-end version of the interview was developed which closely



approximated the interview in individual scores of moral development. The decision to compare the two instruments, with the hope of validating at least one, was the result of data analyzed from several pilot studies, in which it appeared that open-end questions allowing for unstructured, spontaneous solutions, revealed moral thinking which was consistent, to a considerable degree, with prototypical reasoning reported by Kohlberg.

A succession of pilot studies was done in order to revise the objective instrument's alternative choices, so that they were as similar as possible to current prototypical responses found by the researcher through the comparable open-end instrument. The first pilot test included a non-random sampling of approximately 50 college subjects, ranging from sophomores to graduate students, who were systematically randomized into two subgroups. Each subgroup was then asked to complete one of the two questionnaires, each of which was composed of only two of Kohlberg's original nine moral dilemma situations and six questions (three questions for each situation).

A second pilot study sample was a combination of two college freshman English classes, who were again systematically randomized and asked to complete one of the two revised questionnaires, each of which included all nine moral dilemmas and 27 questions (three questions for each of the nine dilemmas). These instruments proved to be too lengthy for written answers, and composition of both tests was revised to include six selected moral dilemma situations and 12 questions (two questions for each of the six dilemmas). Multiple-choice answers were revised to further match current prototypical statements and to correct for words and/or phrases in high-stage responses which appeared to be leading a majority of subjects to choose those responses.

The further-revised objective instrument with the multiple-choice responses was then given to a small class of graduate students for individual evaluations of reading complexity, and identification of leading or too-obvious words or phrases which appeared to indicate the "best" answer. Results from these evaluations were influential in the final revision of the two written instruments.

Thus, the completed research instruments which were used in the present study each contained six moral dilemma situations and twelve questions (See Appendix). The two questions which followed each situation were designed to probe two of the several vaguely-defined moral aspects recorded in Kohlberg's original research: (a) personal values and (b) justice. Directions attached to the front of the objective test instructed subjects to record selected structural responses by printing the corresponding letter (A, B, C, D, E or F) of those responses in the appropriate space provided on a separate answer sheet. Directions attached to the open-end instrument instructed subjects to write in their own answer to each question in the space provided on the test.

Because validation of either instrument necessarily required the distinguishing of age-group differences in scores (according to percentage distributions of moral thinking at comparable ages recorded by Kohlberg (1963) and his compelling argument of the parallel relationship of moral and cognitive stages (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973), at least two different age groups were needed for testing of the instruments. Children in seventh and twelfth grades were thought to be most likely to reflect cognitive stage differences and thus, moral stage differences.

Availability of college students prompted their inclusion in the population sample, also. Thus, the research design involved the testing of two instruments with three different age-groups.

One public school system agreed to provide two seventh grade classes and two twelfth grade classes as subjects, after a personal visit was made to the office of school officials which included verbal explanations of the research design and its purpose, and a presentation of the research instruments. This same procedure had been followed in approaching the two other school systems which denied the use of their students, probably because the questionnaire involved moral decisions.

The total population of subjects included a non-random sampling of 61 twelfth-graders, 57 seventh-graders, and 50 college students. The two younger age-groups attended public, consolidated junior and senior high schools, respectively, which were located in a small southern city. These students were bussed from surrounding urban and rural communities to the city schools, and were heterogeneous in social class, race, and intellectual ability. The two classes each of seventh- and twelfth-graders were selected by the respective principals, according to the heterogeneous requirement imposed by the researcher and according to teachers' convenience.

The college sample was composed of 50 non-randomly selected students who were predominantly freshmen and sophomores. A total of 143 college students were tested, but only 50 of those were randomly selected for analysis and comparison in the present study. The subjects were predominantly white and female; all were enrolled in an introductory

family development course at a southern, state-supported university. It is assumed that, on the average, the socio-economic background for this age-group was slightly higher than that of the younger, public school age-groups.

It is important to note that the college subjects were the only group to whom both tests were given. Thus matched pairs of scores on the two tests were obtained only for this group.

Testing of the college age-group was done according to the following procedure:

1. The researcher met with two successive classes of students on the same day, and administered the unstructured, open-end instrument. Identical verbal explanations of directions were given to each class before the marking of the questionnaires. The researcher remained with each class during the 50-minute periods allowed for answering the questionnaire. Clarification of directions or questions was given throughout the testing as students asked, but great care was taken to refrain from disclosing the nature of the research.
2. A time-lapse of three weeks was imposed.
3. The researcher met with the successive classes again three weeks after giving the open-end test, and administered the structured, objective test. Identical verbal explanations of directions were given to each group. The researcher remained with the groups during the 50-minute periods of allotted time for completing the instrument, taking care not to disclose the nature of the research while answering questions of procedure. On the average, students completed the objective instrument in less time than they completed the open-end test.

Tests were coded by number, so as to ensure corresponding matched pairs of scores.

Testing of the 118 seventh- and twelfth-graders followed this procedure:

1. The researcher met with both age-groups the same morning, in successive order: twelfth-graders were tested from 8:40 to 9:40 a.m., seventh-graders from 10:10 to 11:10 a.m.

2. A 10-minute verbal explanation describing the tests as opinionnaires was given to each age-group. The nature of the tests was not disclosed. Subjects then systematically randomized themselves by verbally ordering themselves by number. Odd numbered subjects were given the open-end instrument; even-numbered subjects were given the objective test.

3. Each age group was allowed 50 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The experimenter remained in the room with both age-groups during the testing periods in order to clarify questions of the subjects.

4. Two receptacles were placed on auxiliary tables in each room for deposit of completed tests, face-down.

5. Subjects who completed the instruments before the 50 minutes were over were asked to read or sit quietly at their seats so that there was no reward for finishing early. (The majority of twelfth-graders finished in 30-35 minutes, but most seventh-graders required approximately ten minutes longer. In most cases, subjects answering the objective instrument finished ahead of those answering the open-end test. At the end of the testing periods, the experimenter personally retrieved papers from those few subjects in each group who were still working.)



6. Because of interests expressed by the principals, each age-group was asked to write comments on the back of the test as to ease in reading and comprehension. (Resulting comments indicated the seniors were thinking qualitatively about the instruments, as the tone of their comments was generally of a judgmental nature; i.e., "The test was very good . . . it made me think" or "The test was stupid . . . irrelevant." Seventh-graders tended to respond in terms of ability to perform and understand the stories and questions; i.e., "I understood the test . . . could read it" or "I didn't understand it . . . didn't know what to write . . . ."

#### Scoring the Research Instruments

Scoring of the open-end instrument was based as closely as possible on the procedure reported by Kohlberg for scoring the oral interview (1958). Item scoring and global scoring was done according to the following procedure:

##### Item scoring

1. The complete answer to each question or item was read as a whole.
2. Individual ideas or statements represented in the answers were scored according to the stage each represented: prototypical statements appearing in the responses were scored first, exactly according to Kohlberg's tables of prototypical responses. Ideas inherent in the reasoning were then scored according to moral stage definitions. After this systematic scoring of the entire response, a tally was made of the stages represented. An item score was assigned to the response which represented the dominant stage of thinking in the

response. Dominant stage was determined by (a) the largest tally score, or (b) in the event that two or more stages were represented equally in the tally, the scorer made the judgment as to which stage of thinking seemed to be strongest in the stated reasoning.

#### Global scoring

1. Global scores for each individual were determined through the tallying of the 12 item scores and the ascertaining of the percentage of usage or representation of each stage from the tally scores. In the event that two or more stages were represented equally in the item tally, and their equal percentages were also the highest percentages found (for example, if 50% of the items were scored Stage 2 and 50% were scored Stage 3), the highest tied stage was recorded as the global score.

2. Global scores were stated in terms of dominant moral stage-- Stage 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.

Following is a presentation of selected responses from the sample protocols collected in this research. These responses are, for the most part, classical examples of typical stage thinking. Three characteristic responses are given for each moral stage, one from each age-group. Criteria for scoring each response are described after each response.

#### Stage 1. Orientation to authority, punishment and reward.

In answer to Question 10, concerning the decision to send either a troublemaker or a dying man to perform a suicidal mission in order to save the rest of a company of Marines, a seventh-grader's typical Stage 1 response was: "Let the troublemaker go. Because he desurs (deserves) it."

Right to life is viewed as indistinct from the wishes of the one in authority and is totally dependent upon obedience of arbitrary rules. Death is considered proper and automatic punishment for someone who has disobeyed the rule of cooperation.

Accordingly, a twelfth-grader's response to Question 3 which deals with the decision to allow a woman to die who is terminally ill, in intense pain, and who is asking to die, is: "No, I feel if God wants you to suffer he'll make you suffer no matter how much painkiller you take." Orientation to authority and imminence of justice is apparent. Right to life again is viewed as indistinguished from the wishes of the One in authority.

A college student elaborates further on the same question, in the reasoning of Stage 1: ". . . (the doctor) would be killing her with drugs same as if he would use a poison on a healthy person." Intention and relevant circumstances are not considered. Outright murder is not distinguished from euthanasia. Staying alive is ultimately and categorically right, while allowing death is ultimately and categorically wrong.

#### Stage 2. Orientation to instrumental hedonism.

In answer to Question 1, which concerns the right of a man to steal a drug in order to save his wife's life, a seventh-grader responds: "Yes. Becase (because) his wife needed the drug to live and the druggist wouldn't let him pay the rest later." Violation of the law is justified by personal need and benefit to the violator. It is implied that the druggist deserves to have his drug stolen since he refused to do what the husband wanted (to give him access to the drug).

A twelfth-grader responds at Stage 2 to the same question:

"Yes any in time when a person discovered something he not going to think people who was dieing (dying), just money." Again it is implied that the druggist deserves to have his drug stolen since he is so concerned with his own personal gain and is unwilling to "make a deal" with someone who needs a share of this gain (the rare drug). The druggist holds to a concept that is also characteristic of Stage 1: the value of property is greater than the value of life.

In answer to Question 5, which asks whether an escaped convict should be reported even though he is engaged in a profitable business which is helping others in several ways, a college student says of the one considering whether to report the convict:

No, it was none of his business. Heintz (the escaped convict) was hurting no one the worse. He was helping people. True it was begun in an illegal manner, but he and others will benefit whereas they would not if he were behind bars.

Justice is seen as simple exchange and reciprocal action. Reporting of the convict is judged to be unfair since the convict has done nothing personally to the reporter. Life is seen as the possession of the owner, to be manipulated as the owner wishes. Personal gain is valued above justice.

Stage 3. Orientation to social approval and stereotypical concepts of good and bad.

A seventh-grader answers in response to Question 7 which poses the decision of whether one Marine should be sent on a suicidal mission to save the rest of the company or if each man should just try to escape the best he can: "Leave nobody behind because if everyone goes every-one will be doing there (their) job and helping out the Marines."

The stereotype of a good Marine is prominent; the sense of what one ought to do is the basis for this reasoning.

A twelfth-grader responds to the question of mercy-killing in Question 3:

If she is that bad with pain and feels that she can no longer stand it, the doctor should consider giving her the small dose. But if she has enough faith in God, she shouldn't want to decide when her life will end.

The tendency to please is evident in the decision to compromise the woman's request for enough painkiller to effect her death; the stereotypical image of what a good person ought to do is present and great value is placed on unrealistic faith in a realistic situation.

A college student invokes stereotypical "oughts" in his answer to the dilemma of the husband who steals in order to save his wife's life in Question 1:

No, (he should not steal) but actually I don't blame him. The druggist should not have made the drug's cost so high that the average person could not afford it. He seems very heartless and insincere in his work. He works for money rather to invent a cure.

Identification with the one of good intention is typical of Stage 3 thinking; the value placed on property is less than the value placed on helping others, being "nice," or doing what one ought to do.

Stage 4. Orientation to law and order, and maintenance of the status quo.

A seventh-grader responds to Question 9 which asks whether a sick man or a troublemaker should be sent on a suicide mission: "I think he (the Marine captain) ot (ought) to send the troublemaker because the sick man might not make it." Concern for efficiency and getting the job done overrides other considerations in judging the situation. Emphasis is on maintaining the present welfare of the Marine company.



In response to Question 8, which asks for a judgment of the suggestion to draw straws as a means for selecting the Marine who is to carry out the suicide mission, a twelfth-grader states: "I think this was a bad suggestion. The captain should have stayed to destroy the bridge (the suicide mission). Responsibility is something that should never be put aside." Orientation to authority and the responsibility inherent in it is prominent in this reasoning: great value is placed on responsibility, which is necessary for maintenance of the status quo, i.e., everyone doing his duty.

A college student responds to the dilemma of whether to order a sick man or a troublemaker to go on the suicide mission in Question 9 on the basis of efficiency, social utility, and rehabilitation of one who can still be of use to the Marine company: "The sick man (should go) because he would weaken the crew anyway (and) perhaps die. Perhaps the troublemaker could help lead or learn his lesson."

Stage 5. Orientation to the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number, and consideration of basic human rights and duties.

A seventh-grader responds to Question 7, which asks for a decision on whether one man's life should be risked for the rest of the company of Marines: "I think he (the captain) should order a man back, because if he (the captain) went back the rest of the men might not make it." Recognition of the value of many lives over the value of one life is evident; the one who can best help the rest of the company escape (the captain, because of his leadership ability) should not be sent on the mission, since this would be defeating the purpose of saving as many lives as possible.

A twelfth grade student responds to mercy-killing in Question 3 with Stage 5 thinking: "Yes (the woman should be given the lethal dose of morphine) but only after Heintz and his wife had talked together about the matter and agreed that that would be the best way." The validity of ethical principles is based on consensus of the group or of relevant persons.

In answer to whether an escaped convict should be reported even though he is currently supporting the building of a badly-needed hospital in Question 3, a college student states: "No-Heintz (the escaped convict) has proven to be quite a humanitarian. If he were sent back to prison, it would be a great loss to the community, or perhaps the world." Contribution to the welfare of the community is more important than punishment of one who is judged to have paid his debt to society in a more useful way than through confinement.

Only one global score of Stage 5 was found among the entire population sample of 168 subjects. The subject exhibiting predominantly Stage 5 thinking was a college subject.

#### Stage 6. Orientation to universal moral principles.

Though Stage 6 responses were very rare among seventh-graders, one subject in this age-group in one sentence demonstrated some sense of the equality of life for all men in response to the question asking for valid criteria for judging whether a troublemaker or a sick man should be sent on a suicide mission in Question 10: "The sick man already have trouble but just because the other man is a troublemaker does not make him no different if he was the sick man both has the right to live."

Although the cognitive functioning of this student appears to be at a lower stage than that of formal operations, which is necessary for Stage 6 moral thinking, recognition of the concept of equality of life, which is evident in these comments, is classic Stage 6 reasoning, and it appears in Kohlberg's prototypical statements illustrating Stage 6 (Kohlberg, 1958). Statements invoking the principle of equality of life were rarely found in any age-group in the present study.

Consideration of the ultimate worth of human life, as totally distinct from the value of all other life forms is the basis for a twelfth-grader's thinking on the question of whether humans should be mercy-killed since pets are often killed for humanitarian reasons in Question 4: "A person is a human being and should not be treated like a dog no matter what the circumstances are."

A college student also invokes the equalitarian principle in deciding the validity of drawing straws as a means for selecting the man who should go on the suicide mission in Question 8: "Drawing straws would probably be the fairest solution to the problem. Everyone would have the same chances for staying behind (going on the mission) or retreating."

Pure Stage 6 reasoning was found very rarely in any age-group and there were no subjects in the entire population who received a global score of Stage 6. However, isolated incidences of Stage 6 reasoning did appear in each age-group.

It is important to note that among most subjects, responses were spread over several stages and apparent stage-skipping similar to that reported by Blatt (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1973) was found. Current Kohlberg researchers claim that spread of responses over as many as three consecutive stages is extremely rare, and is probably due to scoring error. This same assumption supposedly accounts for findings of stage-skipping, a concept which is inconsistent with developmental stage theory, and therefore, does not normally appear (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974).

Differences in age-group cognitive levels are apparent in sentence construction and coherence of ideas. Many of the seventh grade subjects had difficulty in matching nouns and verbs, spelling, and in other basic areas of writing skills. From the prototypical responses found in the present study, it appears that reasoning and the ability to communicate it becomes more sophisticated with age. If these intellectual differences are based on inherent cognitive ability, they should be predictive of moral reasoning differences (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1973).

Scoring of the objective instrument was done according to the following procedure:

1. Each of the 12 answers or items were given an individual score determined by matching the selected letter from A through F on the answer sheet with the corresponding stage represented by the reasoning of the selected answer.

2. Global scores were computed in the same manner as on the open-end instrument, by ascertaining that stage which had the

highest percentage of representation among the total number of responses or items.

3. Tied scores were also solved in the same manner as on the open-end instrument, by assigning the global score to the highest-tied stage.

The scores of the subjects in each age-group were then analyzed to determine differences between the two tests and among the three age-groups.



## CHAPTER IV

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was done to determine whether a valid pen and paper test could be constructed for measuring stage of moral development. In order to answer this question, two different tests based on the original Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview, were constructed and given to three different age groups. One of the tests requested self-structured responses in answer to open-ended questions about moral dilemma situations, while the other test requested selection of one of six preconstructed responses representing the six moral developmental stages, in answer to the same moral dilemma questions. The subjects were three age-groups of seventh-graders, twelfth-graders, and college students who were predominantly freshmen and sophomores. The responses of each subject were scored in terms of moral stage. These data were analyzed to see if either of the two instruments could differentiate moral stages among the three age-groups. Because of the supposed relation of moral stages to cognitive stages, it was expected that moral stage score differences would be found in seventh-graders and twelfth-graders, who were assumed to be at different cognitive stages of development. It was not expected that college students necessarily would be differentiated from twelfth-graders because of similarity in age, and supposed similarity in cognitive functioning.

### Reliability of Scoring Open-End Instrument

Reliability of scoring for the open-end instrument was accomplished by having a trained person score blindly a sample of 30 open-end tests, drawn at random from the total population of open-end instruments. Training of the independent scorer involved two, two-hour sessions in which the researcher verbally described Kohlberg's moral development stages and reviewed prototypical statements of each; one two-hour session in which the independent scorer blindly scored practice protocols in the presence of the researcher, and finally, a one-week practice session on the part of the trained scorer in which she blindly scored protocols selected from the original sample after the random drawing of 30 had been made. The independent scorer was then allowed one week to score the 30 unseen questionnaires.

The data from both scorers were analyzed for agreement in a matched-pair analysis of variance, a statistic which yields both the correlation between scorers and an indication of whether there is a difference between the mean ratings of the two scorers. The resulting correlation coefficient was .75, and the F for the difference between the means was not significant. Thus, adequate scoring reliability can be assumed.

### Validation of the Open-End Instrument

A single classification analysis of the variance was first done to measure the differences in the average stage scores for the three age-groups: seventh-grade, twelfth-grade, and college freshman and sophomore students. The average stage score for each group was

determined from the dominant stage score of each subject in that group. The seventh-graders' mean stage score was 2.43 which indicates that generally, they were between Stages 2 and 3 in moral development. The mean moral stage of twelfth-graders was 3.17, indicating that they were somewhat advanced in Stage 3 thinking. College students appeared to be slightly ahead of twelfth grade subjects with a mean moral stage of 3.26 (See Table 1).

TABLE 1

Analysis of the Variance and t-Tests of Dominant Stages on the Open-End Test for Seventh-Grade, Twelfth-Grade, and College Students

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2	6.66	8.5 ( $p < .01$ )
Within groups	107	.79	

Mean-Stages Scores

Seventh-grade (n = 28)	2.43
Twelfth-grade (n = 30)	3.17
College (n = 50)	3.26

Differences between Means

Grade 7 vs grade 12	-.74*
Grade 7 vs college	-.83*
Grade 12 vs college	-.09

\* $p < .05$

Results of the analysis indicated that there were significant differences among the mean stage scores of the three groups. In order to locate the source of these differences, multiple t-tests were performed, using the a method as described by Tukey (Bruning & Kintz, 1968, p. 112). In keeping with expected age differences, findings from the t-tests showed that twelfth-grade students had significantly higher mean scores than seventh-grade students. College students also scored significantly higher than did seventh-graders. When compared with twelfth-graders, college subjects scored somewhat higher, although not significantly so. It is not clear from the literature whether college students should have higher stage scores than seniors in high school. The most prominent study including college-age students was done by Kramer (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1961), who first identified a transition period in early college students and Stage 5 thinking in post-graduate students around age 25. Current Kohlberg researchers claim that postconventional thinking (Stages 5 and 6) is much more rare than previously supposed, and indeed, Stage 6 is so rare that scoring procedure for it is not provided in the most recently revised scoring guide for Kohlberg's oral interview (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974). At any rate, although the twelfth-grade and college-age samples in the present study may have differed slightly in composition, the college subjects perhaps being of a higher socio-economic class on the average, there was little reason to expect much difference in the scores of the two groups because of their closeness in age.

These results lend some support for the validity of the open-end technique, in that they fit the hypotheses given in the literature. Rest (1968) and Blatt (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1973) used comparable age groups and published the frequency distributions of the number of subjects in the different moral developmental stages. Rest used 47 twelfth-grade subjects from a middle-class suburban Chicago high school; Blatt had a more complicated study, but 66 of his subjects (in Study II) were in the 11-12 year age range, which is quite close to the present study's subgroup of 12- and 13-year old seventh-graders. However, half of Blatt's sample consisted of black, upper-lower class and lower-lower class subjects; the other half was made up of white lower-middle class and upper-lower class subjects. For this reason, Blatt's younger population sample is probably a better approximation of the composition of the present study's comparable age-group than Rest's subjects are to the high school senior group of the present study.

Table 2 shows the frequency distributions and Chi-square analysis comparing relevant groups from the present study with Rest's and Blatt's studies. According to Kohlberg's (1963) earlier frequency distribution, Stage 4 thinking would be expected to predominate in high school seniors, then Stage 3, Stage 5, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 6. For seventh-graders or 13-year-olds, Kohlberg found Stage 4 to predominate again, but it was followed closely by Stage 3, then Stage 5, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 6. More recent researchers however, claim that even Stage 4 is quite difficult to reach by adolescents, since out of 1,000 protocols of junior and senior high school students scored in the last year, only four or less than 1% of these subjects were judged to be functioning fully at Stage 4 (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974).



TABLE 2

Comparison of Frequency Distributions and Percentages of  
Dominant Stages from Open-End Instruments  
of Blatt, Rest, and the Present Study

Moral development stage	Grade 12				Grade 7				College	
	Rest		Pres. Study		Blatt		Pres. S.		Pres. Study	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Stage 1	1	02	0	00	17	26	7	25	0	00
Stage 2	6	14	9	30	29	44	7	25	9	18
Stage 3	17	40	7	23	15	22	9	32	20	40
Stage 4	12	30	14	47	5	08	5	18	20	40
Stage 5	6	14	0	00	0	00	0	00	1	02
Stage 6	0*	00	0	00	00	00	0	00	0	00
Total	42		30		66		28		50	

\*Note. —Rest had pre-selected five high stage subjects for his sample, but they have been removed from Table 2. Stages having all zero's were not included in the analyses reported below.

#### Chi-Square Analysis

	$\chi^2$	df
Present Study grade 12 vs Rest grade 12	10.2 ( $p < .05$ )	4
Present Study college vs Rest grade 12	6.8	4
Present Study grade 7 vs Blatt grade 6	4.5	3

The Chi-square results, for twelfth-graders, shows the subjects from the present study and Rest's groups to be significantly different. Though the present study has a somewhat greater percentage of subjects at Stage 4 than does Rest, it has no subjects at Stage 5, while 14% of Rest's subjects achieved this stage. In addition, 30% of the present study's subjects fall in the stage 2 category (none being found predominantly at Stage 1), while only 16% of Rest's group fall into the combined categories of Stages 1 and 2.

A comparison of the college group with Rest's high school subjects, however, does not yield a significant Chi-square between distributions. In fact, the college subjects of the present study achieved slightly lower scores than Rest's sample of high school seniors. Only 2% of the college students reached Stage 5 for example, while 14% of Rest's seniors reached this stage.

The Chi-square for the comparison of the present study's 11-12 year age-group with Blatt's is not significant; thus, the distributions do not differ.

Although the evidence is not perfect, it tends to favor the validity of this open-end approach. The fact that Rest studied middle-class suburban Chicago adolescents may account, somewhat, for the higher scores of his subjects over the scores of the comparable age-group of the present study, which was a southern urban/rural adolescent population, heterogeneous in social class, race, and intellectual ability.

With these considerations in mind, therefore, it might be expected that the college subjects would be more similar to Rest's group in terms of scores, since they were likely more similar to Rest's group in composition characteristics, including social class, which Blatt later found to be associated with differences in measures of moral development (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1969).

In the comparison of seventh-grade subjects, accordingly, it might also be expected that Blatt's group would be more similar to the group in the present study, since Blatt included many lower-class subjects in his sample; and, it will be remembered that no differences were found to exist between these two groups.

In summary, the bulk of the evidence approaches original expectations; it indicates that the open-end questionnaire agrees with other findings ascertained through Kohlberg's oral interviewing technique. It is important to note, however, that of the 80 subjects in the present study, ranging from the twelfth-grade up, including 50 college students, only one subject achieved a score as high as Stage 5, while Rest found that six out of his 42 subjects achieved this stage. Aside from the difficulty of reaching Stage 5, and even Stage 4, as reported by contemporary Kohlberg investigators, it is possible that the open-end format requiring a subject to write instead of freely verbalizing, tends to prevent achieving the more abstract, highest stages. The Kohlberg scorers have found that subjects tire of writing and do not reach as high a stage as they might during an oral interview (Kohlberg, summer workshop, 1974). Present evidence does not answer this question; further research may be needed to clarify, for example, whether

a subject's score may be affected by his avoidance of words he cannot spell, or other hindrances that may be due to the requirement of putting explanations of moral reasoning into written form. Sentence and word complexity were informally measured in the present study by syllable count, and it appeared that complex questions asking for a solution to a moral dilemma predicted the selection of a high stage answer.

#### Validation of the Objective Instrument

The first step in analyzing the data obtained from this questionnaire was identical to the process used in analysis of the open-end instrument: A single classification analysis of the variance was done to measure the difference in the average stage scores among the three age groups. Results of this procedure showed that there were no significant differences between the mean stage scores of the groups (See Table 3). Thus the major evidence for validity of the objective instrument is lacking.

TABLE 3

Analysis of the Variance and Mean Stage Scores on the  
Objective Instrument for Seventh Grade,  
Twelfth Grade, and College Subjects

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	2	2.67	1.4
Within groups	107	1.98	
<u>Mean Stages</u>			
Seventh grade	4.41		
Twelfth grade	4.90		
College	4.92		

All means on the objective test were over 4.0, or Stage 4, which strongly suggests that the instrument did not discriminate between groups because of a "ceiling effect," resulting from the large number of subjects in all groups who achieved high stage scores. The distributions of stages detailed in Table 4 illustrate this clearly.

The basic question is why the scoring is so high as to obtain a ceiling effect with the objective instrument. Rest (1968) postulated two reasons for subjects' consistent ranking of high stage answers as the most appropriate response to dilemma situations in an objective test:

TABLE 4  
Frequency Distributions and Percentages of  
Dominant Stages on Objective Instrument

Moral development stage	Grade 12		Grade 7		College	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
Stage 1	1	03	2	7	0	00
Stage 2	3	10	1	3	2	04
Stage 3	0	00	5	17	3	06
Stage 4	3	10	7	24	1	02
Stage 5	11	35	3	10	15	30
Stage 6	13	42	11	38	29	58
Total	31		29		50	



1. Selection of a high-stage response does not necessarily indicate true comprehension of it; it may be chosen because it sounds "better" or more noble than the other answers.

or

2. Seeing the response in written form, one is able to truly comprehend it, since the structure of the response is already delineated, and one does not have to form it in his mind, "from scratch."

The present study was not designed to test either of these postulations, but there is some indirect evidence that may shed some light on the plausibility of each.

Rest found in verbalizing situations, that few subjects could comprehend over one moral stage higher than their dominant stage, which was determined through the Kohlberg Moral Judgment Interview. Therefore, for each college subject in the present study, the highest stage reached at least twice on the open-end questionnaire was recorded. (It will be remembered that the college sample was the only one of the three groups which was given both tests and therefore was the only group for which there were matched scores.) These stages were then paired with the dominant stage the subjects attained on the objective test, and the differences were tallied. Subjects whose highest stage on the open-end test was Stage 5 or 6 were deleted from the comparison, since they could not achieve objective scores more than one stage above their own open-end scores.

A comparison was made to see how much higher the dominant objective test scores were than the highest twice-attained scores on the open-end instrument. The latter score was subtracted from the former, to get a difference score, or a plus (+) score, which would indicate that the objective score was higher (See Table 5).

TABLE 5

Distribution of Difference Scores between the Highest Stage Reached Twice on the Open-End Instrument and the Dominant Stage Reached on the Objective Instrument by College Students

<u>Degree of difference</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
-2 stages	2	4
-1 stage	3	6
0 stages	4	8
1 stage	16	32
2 stages	21	42
3 stages	<u>4</u>	8
	50	

In Rest's study, only about half of his subjects could comprehend one stage above their dominant stage as ascertained by Kohlberg's interview. In the present study, 41 out of 50 or 82% of the subjects scored at least one stage higher on the objective test than the highest stage reached twice on the open-end questionnaire.

Table 5 shows difference scores of all subjects. More important to note, however, is that of the 40 subjects who had highest-reached scores of Stage 4 or below, 25 or 63% had a dominant stage score of at least two stages higher on the objective instrument. (The other ten subjects had highest-reached scores of Stage 5, and thus could not gain more than one stage on the objective questionnaire; of these ten, however, seven did score one stage higher.)

Rest claimed that comprehension, at best, goes only one stage higher than the stage of operation which is used spontaneously. Thus, it might be argued that since a majority of the subjects in the present study scored two or more stages higher on the objective questionnaire, it seems less likely that they were actually comprehending the objective statements or answers in terms of their moral developmental status.

A more compelling argument, however, is based on the logic implying a relationship between a subject's ability to verbalize thinking typical of a moral stage and his ability to comprehend such thinking when presented with it in an objective format. By analogy, it would be expected that a person who does well on an open-end test in some school subject would also do well on a multiple-choice or other objective test in that subject area. This reasoning leads to the speculation that there should be a correlation between the highest-reached stages on the open-end instrument and the dominant stage reached on the objective instrument. In addition, there should probably be a relationship between the dominant stages reached on both instruments.

Neither of the two correlations testing these relationships was even suggestive of significance. The  $r$  between highest-reached (open-end) stages and dominant (objective) stages was .07, and that between dominant stages on the two instruments was .02. Thus, no relationship was found between the subjects' ability to verbalize and their ability to comprehend moral thinking.

It is suggested that some subjects may be truly comprehending higher stages on the objective test, but probably many others are

choosing the "best" or most abstract answer in order to do well or to please the investigator. Using the vocabulary of psychological testing, some subjects may have a response set.

Whatever the reasons for the ceiling effect on the objective test (which is a researchable question) it is evident that in its present form, the instrument is not distinguishing between different age-groups' levels of moral development. In comparing the objective test with the open-end test across seventh- and twelfth-grade age-groups the difference in scores was significant, the objective scores being consistently higher than the open-end scores for the same age level.

The ceiling effect resulting from the large numbers of high-stage scores on the objective instrument prevented it from distinguishing age-groups, unlike the open-end instrument, which did distinguish age-groups in moral development levels.

It is questionable, therefore, whether the measurement of individual levels of moral development is feasible or even possible with an objective instrument.

## CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Moral reasoning was long thought to be a process of internalization of cultural rules, or an overt conforming action, manifested in socially sanctioned behaviors and virtues. More recently, Kohlberg has postulated that moral reasoning is developmental in nature, paralleling Piagetian cognitive development. Kohlberg has designed an oral interview technique which yields individual scores of moral development in terms of functioning moral stage. Since moral development has a cognitive basis, Kohlberg recommends that moral education be implemented in traditional classrooms as a basic "subject" to be taught to school students. However, developmental theory implies that there will be a "problem of the match" which can be solved only when the current moral development stage is known.

The purpose of this research was to adapt the time-consuming interview to a pen and paper instrument which could be given to an entire group at one sitting. Being more convenient and less time-consuming to score, this instrument would therefore be an aid to teachers in promoting development of a higher level of moral reasoning among their students.

Two written instruments were developed by the researcher. One was an open-end questionnaire allowing for self-structured responses, and the other was an objective, multiple-choice questionnaire. Both instruments were based on Kohlberg's original interview



(1958) and were identical in construction in terms of moral dilemmas provided and questions requiring solutions to the situations.

The alternative choices on the objective instrument were based directly on prototypical responses reported by Kohlberg (1958) or on his definitions of each moral stage. Each alternative choice represented reasoning characteristic of one of the six developmental moral stages postulated by Kohlberg.

Validation of both instruments was based on the yielding of age-group differences in moral development scores. The criterion for judging validation was based on Kohlberg's (1963) original findings, and on his contention that moral development parallels cognitive development, the latter of which has been described in terms of age-related stages (Piaget, 1952, Ginsburg & Opper, 1969).

A total of 168 subjects in three age-groups, seventh-graders, twelfth-graders and college subjects were used. Each of the two younger age-groups were sub-divided. Half the subjects in each age-group were given the objective instrument and half were given the open-end instrument. Each of the college subjects was given both instruments; thus matched pairs of scores on the two tests were obtained for this age-group.

Analysis of the data showed that the open-end instrument discriminated the scores of seventh-graders and twelfth-graders, whereas the objective instrument did not discriminate among the different groups at all. Reliability ( $r = .75$ ) in scoring of the open-end questionnaire was achieved through comparison of a sample of scores given by the researcher with scores given by a trained, independent scorer.

The objective instrument appeared to produce a "ceiling effect" resulting from the consistent selection of high-stage responses by a large majority of subjects in each age-group.

No relationship was found between scores on the two tests in the college age-group, for which there were matched pairs of scores. It was suggested, therefore that many subjects were not actually comprehending the high-stage responses they were selecting on the objective instrument, but they may have been responding to "best"-sounding answers and thus orienting to a response set early in the answering process.

The possibility of a response set raises the question of whether the measurement of individual levels of moral development is feasible or even possible with an objective instrument.

It is recommended that further exploration of the discriminating ability of an objective instrument be pursued, since an objective instrument is far more efficient than a complex interviewing process or an open-end instrument. Teachers who are not steeped in the Kohlberg theory but who are interested in promoting moral development among students would be greatly helped by such an instrument.

Future research should be oriented toward identifying those words, phrases, or ideas implied in the alternative choices which may be leading subjects to orient to a response set. It is also suggested that the objective instrument be expanded to provide for pro and con alternatives for each moral stage, since Kohlberg contends that structure does not necessarily predict content of moral thinking.

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## APPENDIX

## THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Open-End Instrument

This questionnaire is designed to determine how some people think about different situations, how they make decisions, and the reasoning behind their decisions.

You are asked to write a response to each of the following six problem situations; being certain to state why you feel the way you do.

Please read the following directions first:

1. Read each situation, then write in your answer to each of the two questions which follow each situation. Please write your answer in the space provided, but use only two or three sentences to answer; just enough to answer the question and to show why you answered it that way. In other words, please write in the reason you feel the way you do.
2. There are six problem situations with two questions each, making a total of twelve questions to be answered. You will have fifty minutes to complete the form; please pace yourself so that you can answer each question and complete the entire questionnaire.
3. This is a research project; please be as honest as you can. Please do not discuss the situations in any way with anyone until the class is dismissed.

## Situation I

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was made by a druggist in the same town, who had recently discovered it. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging 5 times what it cost to make the drug. He paid \$400 for the raw materials, and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heintz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going

to make money from it, so I won't let you have it unless you give me \$2,000 now." So Heintz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

Question # 1. Should Heintz have broken into the store to steal the drug?

Question # 2. Heintz broke into the store to steal the drug, and the druggist, who was in a back office, heard the noise and went into the store with a gun. He could not see clearly who Heintz was, but he started shooting at him. Heintz was confused as to whether to shoot back or just try to escape. What are your feelings about this?

## Situation II

The drug didn't work, and there was no other treatment known to medicine which could save Heintz' wife. So the doctor knew that she had only about six months to live. She was in terrible pain, but she was so weak that a good dose of painkiller like ether or morphine would make her die sooner. She was almost crazy with pain, but in her calm periods, she would ask the doctor to give her enough ether to kill her. She said she couldn't stand the pain and she was going to die in a few months anyway.

Question # 3. Should the doctor do what she asks and give her the drug that will kill her?

Question # 4. When a pet dog is badly wounded, it is killed to end its pain, but it is against the law to end a human life for the same humanitarian reason. How do you feel about this?

### Situation III

Heintz' wife died, and Heintz went to jail for breaking in and stealing the medicine. He was sentenced for ten years, but after a couple of years, he escaped from prison and went to live in another part of the country under a new name. He saved money and slowly built up a big factory. He gave his workers the highest wages and used most of his profits to build a hospital for work in curing cancer. Twenty years had passed when a tailor came from Heintz' home town and recognized the factory owner as being Heintz the escaped convict whom the police had been looking for back in his home town.

Question # 5. Should the tailor report Heintz to the police?

Question # 6. How do you feel about Heintz' predicament now? What should he do?

### Situation IV

In Korea, a company of Marines was way outnumbered and was retreating before the enemy. The company had crossed a bridge over a river, but the enemy were mostly still on the other side. If someone went back to the bridge and blew it up as the enemy were coming over it, it would weaken the enemy. With the head start the rest of the company would have, they could probably then escape. But the man who stayed back to blow up the bridge would probably not be able to escape alive; there would be about 4 to 1 chance he would be killed. The captain of the company has to decide who should go back and do the job. The captain himself is the man who knows best how to lead the retreat to safety. He asks for volunteers, but no one will volunteer.

Question # 7. Should the captain order a man to stay behind at the bridge, or stay behind himself, or leave nobody behind?

- Question # 8. The captain proposed that they should draw straws, but some men did not want to do that. How do you feel about it as a solution?

#### Situation V

The captain finally decided to order one of the men to stay behind. One of the men he thought of was one who had a lot of strength and courage but who was a bad troublemaker. He was always stealing things from the other men, beating them up and wouldn't do his work. The second man he thought of had gotten a bad disease in Korea and was likely to die in a few months anyway, though he was strong enough to blow up the bridge.

- Question # 9. If the captain was going to send one of the two men, should he send the troublemaker or the sick man?

- Question # 10. Actually, it seems that the troublemaker deserves some punishment, and the sick man doesn't. Why should the sick man have to give up his life to save the troublemaker? What is the fairest thing to do?

#### Situation VI

In another country, during the war in Europe a city was often being bombed by the enemy. So each man was given a post he was to go to right after the bombing, to help put out the fires the bombs started and to rescue people in the burning buildings. A man named Diesing was made the chief in charge of one fire engine post. The post was near where he worked so he could get there quickly during the day but it was a long way from his home. One day there was a very heavy bombing and Diesing left the shelter in the place he worked and went toward his fire station. But when he saw how much of the city was burning, he got worried about his family. So he decided he had to go home first to see if his family was safe, even though his home was a long way off and the station was nearby, and there was somebody assigned to protect the area where his family was.

Question # 11. Was it right or wrong for him to leave his station to protect his family?

Question # 12. What do you think about the fairness of the city's plan?

### Objective Instrument

#### Directions.

1. Reach each Situation in the questionnaire, then the two questions which follow each Situation. Answer each question by marking on the Answer Sheet the letter of the one statement following the question with which you most closely agree. There are six statements following each question from which to choose. The statements are ordered A through F; please be sure your answer on the answer sheet is in the form of a printed, capital letter, A, B, C, D, E, or F. Please choose only one answer for each question.
2. Go through the questionnaire quickly, reading each Situation and corresponding questions individually. Answer the questions you can, then go back to those which need more thought. Pace yourself so that you will have time to complete the entire questionnaire. There are six Situations, followed by two questions each, so that you will write twelve answers.
3. You will have 50 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Individual questions will be answered before and anytime during the marking of the questionnaire.

#### Situation I

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging 5 times what it cost him to make the drug. He paid \$400 for the radium, and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heintz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him



pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it, so I won't let you have it unless you give me \$2,000 now." So Heintz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

Question # 1. Should Heintz have broken into the store to steal the drug?

- A. If society does not provide some legitimate means to the drug, then Heintz should not be held responsible for stealing.
- B. Stealing is justified because of Heintz' great and natural concern for his wife.
- C. It is all right for Heintz to steal the drug because he needs it so badly.
- D. It would be the right thing to do, even if it was a stranger whose life was at stake.
- E. Since Heintz' life is more important than a drug, it would be better for him to let his wife die than for him to go to jail for stealing.
- F. Stealing is all right in this situation only if the drug is absolutely necessary and sure to work, and if Heintz sincerely intends to pay it back.

Question # 2. Heintz decided to steal the drug and broke into the store. The druggist heard the noise and went into the store with a gun. He could not see clearly who Heintz was, but he started shooting at him. Heintz was confused as to whether to shoot back or just try to escape. What are your feelings about this?

- A. Heintz should shoot back; it's either his life or the druggist's.
- B. The druggist should have yelled a warning before he started shooting.
- C. It is all right to shoot someone who is stealing.
- D. The druggist had a legal right to protect his property by shooting.
- E. The druggist should not be so greedy; he should be nice to Heintz who is trying so hard to save his wife.
- F. Heintz was forced to steal the drug to save his wife's life, and he is justified in this case to defend himself by shooting back.

### Situation II

The drug didn't work, and there was no other treatment known to medicine which could save Heintz' wife. So the Dr. knew that she had only about six months to live. She was in terrible pain, but she was so weak that a good dose of pain-killer like ether or morphine would make her die sooner. She was almost crazy with pain, but in her calm periods, she would ask the Dr. to give her enough ether to kill her. She said she couldn't stand the pain and she was going to die in a few months anyway.

Question # 3. Should the Dr. do what she asks and give her the drug that will make her die?

- A. A life full of pain is no good to anybody and there really is no use for her to live.
- B. It really should not be the Dr.'s decision, because all life is of equal value and no one person has the right to take a life.
- C. The Dr. should give her something else to ease the pain; it would be outright murder if he does as the woman asks.
- D. Although it is legally wrong to mercy-kill, there are other factors in this situation to consider; the greatest drawback is that it could lead to legalized mercy-killing.
- E. Something should be done to relieve the woman's awful suffering and the agony of her husband, who is watching her die; still, mercy-killing is a horrible thing.
- F. If the law allowed it, the Dr. maybe should go ahead and do it in this situation. It's more like suicide, really, and the woman herself should be responsible for the decision.

Question # 4. When a pet dog is badly wounded, it is killed to end its pain, but it is against the law to end a human life for the same humanitarian reason. How do you feel about this?

- A. You don't love animals in the same way as people; we would be killing off our own species.
- B. Animals should not be mercy-killed either.
- C. The best thing to do is to get an agreement with everyone concerned, not just the sick woman, on what should be done.
- D. It is against the law to mercy-kill a human being.

- E. If a person wants to die, it's his life, and the decision should be completely up to him.
- F. People have different and deeper feelings from animals, and they just should not be treated the same way as animals are treated.

### Situation III

Heintz's wife died, and Heintz went to jail for breaking in and stealing the medicine. He was sentenced for ten years, but after a couple of years, he escaped from prison and went to live in another part of the country under a new name. He saved money and slowly built up a big factory. He gave his workers the highest wages and used most of his profits to build a hospital for work in curing cancer. Twenty years had passed when a tailor came from Heintz's home town and recognized the factory owner as being Heintz the escaped convict whom the police had been looking for back in his home town.

Question # 5. Should the tailor report Heintz to the police?

- A. The tailor should not report Heintz because Heintz really doesn't need anymore trouble and if he is told on, he may seek revenge.
- B. The tailor should try to understand Heintz's actions, even though he broke the law; the tailor should not tell.
- C. Although punishment for Heintz may be less if he is reported now, the tailor should consider the importance of the factory and the need for Heintz to run it.
- D. The tailor should try to keep a good relationship with both Heintz and help the police, too; the best thing would be to tell the police but try to persuade them to be merciful.
- E. It would not be fair to report a person who is serving the community so well and doing so much for everyone else.
- F. It is the tailor's duty to report Heintz, because he did break the law.

Question # 6. How do you feel about Heintz's predicament?

- A. Heintz has more than paid his debt to society for stealing and escaping.
- B. Heintz wasn't all that bad in the first place, and it would be better not to make him go through all that again.
- C. Heintz should definitely be given another chance because he doesn't need to steal anymore.

- D. Heintz should not expect mercy; he should be forced to complete his prison term.
- E. Heintz is not going to become a criminal now after 20 useful years as a good citizen, and he should be left alone.
- F. Heintz should be corrected for the wrong he did by escaping.

#### Situation IV

In Korea, a company of Marines was way outnumbered and was retreating before the enemy. The company had crossed a bridge over a river, but the enemy were mostly still on the other side. If someone went back to the bridge and blew it up as the enemy were coming over it, it would weaken the enemy. With the head start the rest of the company would have, they could probably then escape. But the man who stayed back to blow up the bridge would probably not be able to escape alive; there would be about 4 to 1 chance he would be killed. The captain of the company has to decide who should go back and do the job. The captain himself is the man who knows best how to lead the retreat to safety. He asks for volunteers, but no one will volunteer.

Question # 7. Should the captain order a man to stay behind at the bridge, or stay behind himself, or leave nobody behind?

- A. The one person who should not go is the captain, who is more important than the others for leading the group, and he should be spared.
- B. It is wasteful to risk losing the whole company; the best thing for everyone is for one man to stay behind and do the job.
- C. The captain should order someone to stay behind, but he must be responsible for whatever happens to that person.
- D. The decision should be to save the greatest number of lives you can, because many lives together are more useful than the one life that may be lost.
- E. Every man for himself; if the captain wants to blow up the bridge, that's his problem.
- F. A man should stay behind and blow up the bridge, and he will be greatly rewarded for it; besides doing something good for his country, he will probably also become a great hero.

Question # 8. The captain proposed that they should draw straws, but some men did not want to do that. How do you feel about it as a solution?

- A. It's better than ordering someone to do the job, although an order is a sure way to solve the problem.
- B. It is more fair to draw straws; that way no one will have hurt feelings.
- C. By drawing straws, each man would have as much chance of not being picked as every other man; and this way, the captain could not protect his favorites.
- D. Drawing straws is not a good solution if it leads to not sending the best man for the job.
- E. There is no advantage to drawing straws; it wastes time and just causes arguments.
- F. Drawing straws is the only way to respect each man's equal right to live; there is no singling out except by chance.

#### Situation V

The captain finally decided to order one of the men to stay behind. One of the men he thought of was one who had a lot of strength and courage but who was a bad troublemaker. He was always stealing things from the other men, beating them up and wouldn't do his work. The second man he thought of had gotten a bad disease in Korea and was likely to die in a few months anyway, though he was strong enough to blow up the bridge.

Question # 9. If the captain was going to send one of the two men, should he send the troublemaker or the sick man?

- A. The captain should send either the troublemaker, or both men to make sure the job gets done.
- B. It would be better to lose one man than two, since the safety of the whole group depends on everyone sticking together; he should send the sick man.
- C. It would be doing the sick man a favor to let him go and earn his reward before he dies.
- D. If the captain sends the troublemaker in order to punish him, it would be like sentencing him to death without a trial.
- E. The troublemaker can still perform his own tasks, and in the long run, he will be more useful to the company since the sick man will die. Besides, if the troublemaker is sent, he could desert, so the sick man should go.



- F. The man who doesn't have anything to lose and nothing much to live for should go; probably the sick man, since life probably has little pleasure left for him now.

Question # 10. Actually, it seems that the troublemaker deserves some punishment, and the sick man doesn't. Why should the sick man have to give up his life to save the troublemaker?

- A. He really shouldn't because a troublemaker is just no good in a group; they're really better off without him.
- B. The troublemaker shouldn't be punished because he hasn't been all that bad.
- C. The lives of both men are equal and worth the same, and they should be treated the same.
- D. The troublemaker should not go because he can make up what he stole.
- E. The captain really should send the troublemaker, because he is a danger to everyone and could kill somebody.
- F. The troublemaker is not really a criminal and he should not be punished as such.

#### Situation VI

In another country, during the war in Europe, a city was often being bombed by the enemy. So each man was given a post he was to go to right after the bombing, to help put out fires the bombs started and to rescue people in the burning buildings. A man named Diesing was made the chief in charge of one fire engine post. The post was near where he worked so he could get there quickly during the day but it was a long way from his home. One day there was a very heavy bombing and Diesing left the shelter in the place he worked and went toward his fire station. But when he saw how much of the city was burning, he got worried about his family. So he decided he had to go home first to see if his family was safe, even though his home was a long way off and the station was nearby, and there was somebody assigned to protect the area where his family was.

Question # 11. Was it right or wrong for him to leave his station to protect his family?

- A. Diesing is expected by the government to fulfill his responsibility, and he should, even though it means putting the welfare of the whole city over the welfare of just his family.

- B. Everyone should have equal protection. If Diesing deserted his post, there would be no one to help those near his post; the right thing to do is to stay.
- C. Diesing should save his family; he needs them more than anyone else.
- D. Diesing should stay at his post because the government has assigned it to him, and he is supposed to obey the government.
- E. Diesing is still helping, no matter which he does, so he should make sure his family is safe first.
- F. It's Diesing's duty to stay; if he left, someone could be killed or the whole city destroyed because of him.

Question # 12. What do you think about the fairness of the city's plan?

- A. The city is right to try to protect as many people as possible, not just families.
- B. The city has the plan all worked out and knows what is best for its own people.
- C. The plan should not allow some men to leave their posts for their families while other men have to stay; it should be fair to everybody.
- D. The plan is a fair one, providing for the protection of as many as possible, and the men at the post should not allow their fears for their families to interfere with their responsibilities under the plan.
- E. It is a good plan because there is no need for a man to desert his post; each man's family is being protected by the man at the post nearest the family.
- F. The plan is really unfair, because every man should take care of his family first.