7. Piaget, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Others on Moral Development

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When confronted with a group of parents who asked me "How can we help make our children virtuous?" I had to answer as Socrates, "You must think I am very fortunate to know how virtue is acquired. The fact is that far from knowing whether it can be taught, I have no idea what virtue really is.". . . It appears, then, that we must either be totally silent about moral education or else speak to the nature of virtue.

–Lawrence Kohlberg[1]

I. Piaget on Moral Development

Piaget's Methods for Studying Moral Development

Piaget believed that observing children playing games and querying them about the rules provided a realistic "lab on life" for understanding how morality principles develop. In his book *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (Piaget, 1932/1962), he studied children playing the game of marbles. The fact that only boys played this game seemed to impose a limitation on the generality of his findings, so he also studied a girl's game called *îlet cachant*, a kind of primitive hide-and-seek. But his most important observations were made on the boys – a fact that incurred later criticism, as will be seen shortly.

Piaget often used a practiced technique of feigned naivety: He pretended to be ignorant of the rules of the games and asked the children to explain them to him. In this way he was able to comprehend the way that the children themselves understood the rules, and to observe as well how children of different ages related to the rules and the game.

On first thought it might seem odd that Piaget believed he could learn all important aspects of moral development by observing children's play. But as Ginsburg and Opper (1988, p. 96) note, "On closer inspection it would seem as if the rules

governing the game of marbles fulfill all the defining conditions of a moral system. The rules control how individuals behave toward one another in terms of the actions which comprise the game, they determine individual and property rights, and they are a cultural product which has been passed down from generation to generation . . . The rules have been developed largely by children. Therefore, the child's conception of the game . . . is subject to little adult influence."

(As an interesting side note it should be mentioned that studying game strategies to learn about behavior and morality is now very much an accepted part of research in psychology and economics. ***Game theory*** can be used to simulate competitive or cooperative conditions in which either selfish strategies benefit only the individual, or cooperative strategies can mutually benefit all parties, as in Robert Trivers (1971) studies of ***reciprocal altruism*** – see Robert Wright's, 1994, *The Moral Animal* for other game theoretical studies of human behavior. Here is another instance in which Piaget seemed ahead of his time!)

A second technique used by Piaget in studying moral understanding was to relate a short story or scenario that described some form of misbehavior by a child or by an adult. He then presented the children with possible corrective actions that might be meted out to the offender and asked the children to tell him which were fair and just and which were not, and why. If a child neglects a chore, for example, after repeated requests, what is an appropriate punishment or correction? Here Piaget distinguished between ***expiation*** (atonement) and ***reciprocity*** as punishment strategies. Expiation meant that some form of punitive action (e.g., spanking; confinement) would be invoked in which the offender must "pay the price" for the offense. In contrast, reciprocity implies setting things right. With reciprocity the child must be made to see the consequences of his or her neglect, and to clearly understand the need to behave in a more cooperative manner.

Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

Children's Understanding of Rules. Piaget observed four stages in the child's development of moral understanding of rules, based largely on his observation of children's games:

- The first stage characterizes the sensorimotor period of development (children under four years) in which the child merely handles the marbles in terms of his existing motor schemes. Play is purely an individual endeavor, and " . . . one can talk only of ***motor rules*** and not of truly collective rules" (Piaget, 1932/1962, p. 27, emphasis added).

- In the second stage, about ages four to seven, game playing is ***egocentric***; children don't understand rules very well, or they make them up as they go along. There is neither a strong sense of cooperation nor of competition. Recalling from Chapter 4 that egocentric children at the preoperational stage seem to have "collective monologues" rather than true dialogs, these observations do not seem surprising.

- The third stage, at about ages seven to ten or eleven, is characterized by ***incipient cooperation***. Interactions are more social, and rules are mastered and observed. Social interactions become more formalized as regards rules of the game. The child learns and understands both cooperative and competitive behavior. But one child's understanding of rules may still differ from the next, thus mutual understanding still tends to be incomplete.

- In the fourth stage, beginning at about age eleven or twelve, cooperation is more earnest and the child comes to understand rules in a more legalistic fashion. Piaget calls this the stage of ***genuine cooperation*** in which ". . . the older child shows a kind of legalistic fascination with the rules. He enjoys settling differences of opinion concerning the rules, inventing new rules, and elaborating on them. He even tries to anticipate all the possible contingencies that may arise" (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988, p. 98). But in terms of cognitive development this stage overlaps Piaget's formal operational stage; thus here the concern with abstraction and possibility enters the child's imagination.

Children's Moral Judgments. Piaget's studies of moral judgments are based both on children's judgments of moral scenarios and on their interactions in game playing. In terms of moral judgments, Piaget found that younger children (around ages four to seven) thought in terms of ***moral realism*** (compare to "realism" in Chapter 4) or ***moral heteronomy***. These terms connote an absolutism, in which morality is seen in terms of rules that are fixed and unchangeable (heteronomy means "from without"). Guilt is determined by the extent of violation of rules rather than by intention.

Piaget's Method: Sample Dialog Between a Researcher and a Child

The following dialog is revealing (from Piaget, 1932/1962, pp. 124-125):

Q: Is one of the boys [who broke teacups] naughtier than the other?
A: The first is because he knocked over twelve cups.
Q: If you were the daddy, which one would you punish most?
A: The one who broke twelve cups.
Q: Why did he break them?
A: The door shut too hard and knocked them. He didn't do it on purpose.
Q: And why did the other boy break a cup?
A: He wanted to get the jam. He moved too far. The cup got broken.
Q: Why did he want to get the jam?
A: Because he was all alone. Because his mother wasn't there.
Q: Have you got a brother?
A: No, a little sister.
Q: Well, if it was you who had broken the twelve cups when you went into the room and your little sister who had broken one cup when she was trying to get the jam, which of you would be

punished more severely?

A: Me, because I broke more than one cup.

Clearly this child understand that the boy who broke twelve cups did not do this intentionally, yet he still claims that this boy was more guilty (deserved greater punishment) than the one who broke just a single cup while doing something he wasn't supposed to be doing. Older children and adults find his idea of justice perplexing.

The second stage in making moral judgments comes later, usually around age 10, when children come to realize that rules have arbitrariness and are formed by mutual consent for reasons of fairness and equity. This applies equally to society's laws, game rules, and familial standards of behavior. Older children realize that rules are not fixed and absolute, but that they can be changed as the need arises. Piaget called this second stage ***moral autonomy***.

Once again, egocentricism plays into moral heteronomy, as the child is unable to see rules from the broader perspective of another child or adult, or of society in general. Conversely, moral autonomy requires just such an ability.

Piaget also noted that the stages of moral understanding are not entirely discreet. Children become capable of certain autonomous judgments before others, depending on the situation, just as horizontal décalage characterized the understanding of his conservation tasks for cognitive development. In actuality, the stages of morality overlap one another to some degree.

Gender and Moral Development

Piaget found that the games that girls played were nowhere near as complex as the boys and their marbles in terms of rules and options. Piaget did compare the stages of morality between the two sexes, noting both parallels and some differences. Both have stages of moral heteronomy and autonomy, for example. But the fact that the girls' games were simpler makes precise comparisons difficult. Piaget stated that: "The most superficial observation is sufficient to show that in the main the legal sense is far less developed in little

girls than in boys. We did not succeed in finding a single collective game played by girls in which there were as many rules, and above all, as fine and consistent an organization and codification of these rules as in the game of marbles . . ." (p. 77). Piaget seemed to be saying that conclusions gender differences are necessarily tenuous because the observations were superficial and due to the lack of opportunity – the girls' games were simpler, and therefore comparisons were difficult. Yet he did see girls as being less concerned with (and less rigid about) rules in general, and more ready to relax them: They appeared to be less concerned with "legalities." But elsewhere Piaget appeared to equate concern with legalities as signs of advanced development: ". . . the juridico-moral discussions of the fourth stage [of moral development] may be compared to formal reasoning in general" (p. 47). Do girls then have a less sophisticated, and therefore deficient sense of moral understanding? Carol Gilligan (1982) believed that this was Piaget's message. She criticized Piaget and other (male) psychologists of harboring negative views of feminine morality, as will be seen following a consideration of Lawrence Kohlberg's extension of Piaget's work.

But in defense of Piaget, Eliot Turiel (2006, p. 807) noted that "In considering Piaget's ideas, Gilligan imposes certainty where ambiguity exists. Piaget did maintain that girls are less interested than boys in 'legal elaboration' and that 'the legal sense is far less developed in little girls than in boys' (Piaget, 1932[/1962], p. 69 & 75)" but that ". . . in Piaget's view, the developmentally advanced level of autonomous morality was organized by concerns with mutuality, reciprocity, and cooperation. Piaget saw a strict legal sense for fixed rules that left little room for innovation and tolerance as part of the less advanced form of heteronymous morality. Thus, it is not at all clear that Piaget regarded girls to be less advanced than girls because he thought that girls were oriented to tolerance, innovation with rules, and cooperation" (p. 807). Thus Piaget's observations do suggest that he observed some gender differences, but these differences are somewhat nuanced; and indeed, one could say that he actually saw girls' moral understanding as in some ways actually more advanced than boys'.

II. Kohlberg and Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg admired Piaget's approach to studying children's conceptions of morality. If Piaget saw children as little logicians, Kohlberg viewed them as moral philosophers. Unlike so many other psychologists who concerned themselves with morality, such as Freud, Skinner, and later Albert Bandura in his research on observation learning and role models, Kohlberg believed that it was not possible to study moral understanding without also coming to grips with philosophy, or more specifically, what could possibly be meant by "morality" (per the opening quote to this chapter; also see Kohlberg, 1968; Turiel, 2006).

In brief, Kohlberg assessed morality by asking children to consider certain moral dilemmas – situations in which right and wrong actions are not always clear. He was not concerned with whether the children decided that certain actions were right or wrong, but with their reasoning – at how they arrived at their conclusions. The story of "Heinz Steals the Drug" is one of his best known examples (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 19):

> 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 ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000 which is 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 for it later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that?

Kohlberg's Levels and Stages of Morality

Based on his study of children's responses to such dilemmas, Kohlberg (1958, 1963) expanded Piaget's two stages into six, organized into three levels – each level consisting of two stages – as follows. Note that cross-references are made, where appropriate, to Piagetian and Freudian levels of development.

Level I: Preconventionl Morality. The preconventional child thinks of morality in terms of the consequences of disobedience to adult rules in order to avoid punishment. Behaviors are "good" or "bad" depending on their consequences, or in other words, behavior is guided by rewards and punishments. The child at this stage does not comprehend the rules of society.

- ***Stage 1.*** This first stage has been called "punishment and obedience," or "***might makes right***." Obey your parents, or these powerful authority figures will physically punish you. The child's understanding is that punishment must be avoided for her/his own comfort. The child is still unable to view the world from the perspective of others (Piaget's egocentricity), and behavior is largely guided by Freud's pleasure principle (is id dominated) – although the ego begins to emerge as the child understands that reality calls for discretion.

- ***Stage 2.*** By stage 2 the child recognizes that there is mutual benefit in cooperation. This stage has been called "***instrumentalism***" or "***look out for number one***" or "***what's in it for me.***" The child is a bit less egocentric at this stage, recognizing that if one is good to others then they in terms will be good to you. There is now the notion that everyone looks out for their own needs, but that proper social exchanges are on a "tit-for-tat" basis. In Freudian terms, the reality principle has emerged to a greater extent at this stage.

Level II: Conventional Morality. At this level the child begins to grasp social rules and gains a more objective perspective on right and wrong. Freud would equate this level with superego development, or the formation of a conscience. In these stages Piaget's egocentrism has largely or entirely vanished.

- ***Stage 3.*** Stage 3 can be called "interpersonal relationships" or "***good girl/boy***." The major motivating factor in good behavior is social approval from those closest to the child.

- ***Stage 4.*** Maintaining social conventions or "***law and order***" are brief but apt descriptions of the fourth stage. This sense of order becomes generalized beyond close others to society at large. The concept of "doing one's duty" is crucial here.

Level III: Postconventional Morality. At this level the emphasis is no longer on conventional, societal standards of morality, but rather on personal or idealized principles.

- ***Stage 5.*** This can be called the "***social contract***" stage. The understanding is that laws, rules, and regulations are created for the mutual benefit of all citizens. Laws that are unjust ought to be changed. People at this stage understand and believe in democracy in action.

- ***Stage 6.*** This is the stage of "***universal ethical principles.***" Right and wrong are not determined by rules and laws, but by individual reflection on what is proper behavior. One might think here of Kant's categorical imperative in which right and wrong apply equally to all, without regard to consequences (Chapter 3), except that modern ethicists understand the importance of the situation: What is wrong in most circumstances (e.g., lying) might be justifiable in others. But essentially, personal ethical values (e.g., a belief that all life is sacred) take precedence over any and all laws and conventions. In other words, laws are useful only as long as they serve the common good. Civil disobedience (such as the civil rights "sit-ins" in the 1960s) is justified by the circumstances (in this case segregation of the races). As a biblical example, think of Jesus, who said in response to the Pharisees that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not men for the Sabbath." Kohlberg believed that few people actually reach this stage, but those who do are of the stature of Mohandas Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr.

Table 7.1 shows some possible responses to the "Heinz" dilemma, both pro (Heinz should steal the drug) and con (Heinz should not steal the drug). At stage 6 no reasonable "con" response could be found for this particular dilemma. Note that these examples do not by any means exhaust the possibilities for children's or adults' rationalizations for Heinz's behavior.

The examples in Table 7.1 are reasonably straight forward; in fact, they are simpler than the more elaborate answers normally given by children. It takes some training as well as familiarity with guidelines (of Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) to become facile at classifying children according to their narrative reports.

Kohlberg's theory is really one of cognitive development (per Piaget) as applied to moral understanding because he believed that children developed their moral principles primarily though thinking about them. The progression through the stages cannot be accounted for by simple maturation or development of the nervous system. The child must grapple with these moral issues as they arise, and as with Piaget, disequilibrium occurs; for instance, when a child realizes that punishment for an unintentional infraction seems somehow unfair. Nor did Kohlberg believe that moral understanding was primarily due to learning of social mores because neither parents nor peers can teach new modes of thinking.

Kohlberg's (1958) doctoral dissertation, upon which he formulated his basic theory, studied 84 boys, most of whom he continued to study over the next couple of decades in his longitudinal research. As a result of his ongoing research he refined his methodology. He also dropped the sixth stage from his research program because so few people ever seem to reach this stage. Thus although this stage is not well-studied, it still retains some theoretical interest. But it is well to remember that the average person does not even attain the fifth stage; postconventional morality is rare, even among adults.

Although research generally supports Kohlberg's stage theory insofar as children's understanding of morality is concerned there are some notable exceptions.

Criticisms and Limitations of Kohlberg's Stage Theory

Cognition versus Affect. Kohlberg's studies stressed the cognitive factors in moral understanding. It should be easy to see in reviewing his stages that the higher levels require more advanced levels of cognitive development. But moral judgments can also be influenced by emotions. This is evident, for example, when a jury bases their verdict not strictly on the right or wrong in a defendant's actions, but also on their impression of his or her character.

Moral Understanding versus Moral Action. An assumption that one might all too easily make is that a person's moral understanding guides her moral behavior. While this is undoubtedly true to some extent, it cannot be said that moral behavior is anything close to perfectly predictable based on even the reliable classification of a person or child into one of Kohlberg's levels. To put it differently, understanding what is right does not necessarily translate into doing what is right. Social psychologists have come to understand the tremendous power of the situation in determining the course of behavior, as opposed to belief in abstract principles of morality. Someone may do a good deed like stopping to help a stranded motorist for any number of reasons; because it "seems right," because of guilt, because it will increase one's own self-image as a "good" person, because it might bring recognition from others, or simply because one has the time. One might fail to help because there are plenty of other people passing by, and surely one of them will stop (social psychologists refer to this ***diffusion of responsibility***).

According to Harré (1983) people respond to different kinds of situations utilizing different levels of morality; and these are based more on societal expectations than on abstract moral reasoning. For example, Harré believed that people in the business world operate more at stage 2 (self-interest); that married couples are guided by stage 3 (mutual exchanges guided by the expectation of approval); and that the legal system is based on stage 4. (For other views on situational determinants of morality see Krebs and Denton, 2005).

Table 7.1
Brief Examples of Some Possible Responses to Kohlberg's "Heinz" Dilemma for Each Stage

Level	*Stage*	*Responses*
I	1: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* He could get in trouble with his wife and family otherwise.
I	1: Con	*Heinz should not steal the drug:* He could go to prison.
I	2: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* He will be happy when his wife is cured she can again be there for him.
I	2: Con	*Heinz should not steal the drug:* The druggist deserves to be rewarded for his efforts in developing the drug.
II	3: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* Heinz's wife and family will recognize that he did the right thing by them.
II	3: Con	*Heinz should not steal the drug:* People will think him a thief.
II	4: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* He must do what's right for his wife, but he must also accept his punishment.
II	4: Con	*Heinz should not steal the drug:* Stealing is wrong, no matter the circumstance.
III	5: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* His wife's need outweighs the druggist's. The law should be lenient with him, or even changed.
III	5: Con	*Heinz should not steal the drug:* Although druggist is unethical, he nonetheless is legally entitled to compensation.
III	6: Pro	*Heinz should steal the drug:* Saving his wife is morally a better choice than obeying the law because life itself is sacred.

Moral Hypocrisy in Expressed Attitudes Versus Actual Behavior?

Writing in the Atlantic Monthly political commentator and satirist P. J. O'Rourke (2006) discovered that the political and social values portrayed in recent Gallup polls do not seem to match up with reality, as least as he sees it.

Here are some statistics he presents from the Gallup organization. The Gallup poll is based on stratified random sampling, with the margin of error plus or minus five percentage points. As an exercise, the reader can evaluate these for him/herself.

- Teens reporting that young people should abstain from sex before marriage: 56%. (Girls only: 64%.) (*Note:* The Rutgers University National Marriage Project reports that 65% of young people have sex before they leave high school, a number that some think conservative.)

- Seventy-two percent consider abortion morally wrong (compared with 17% of adults), yet only 42% of teens think that having a baby outside of marriage is acceptable.

- Although less than 50% think that having sex before marriage is acceptable, 62% state that they believe that "young people are responsible enough to be sexually active" (p. 156).

- Only a questionable (to O'Rourke) 17% of teens claim to occasionally use alcohol; only 9% say that they have ridden in a car with a teen that is driving under the influence of alcohol.

- In response to the question "What are teens doing after school?" 44% say homework, just 12% say that they play video games, and only 5% say they talk on the phone.

Still, it can be argued that behaviors which are congruent with Kohlberg's stage descriptions depend on a cognitive understanding of that particular level of morality; which in turn assumes a certain degree of cognitive development. In other words, a person may have developed a high degree of moral reasoning in Kohlberg's hierarchy, yet under some conditions engage in behaviors that do not at all exemplify that presumed level of understanding. Furthermore, the motivations for a person's specific actions in a given situations are multifarious.

Cultural Variations. As with Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Kohlberg believed his stages to be universal. Despite differences in cultures with regard to manners and morals, Kohlberg still believed in the universality of his stages because they referred to general patterns of thinking rather than to specific cultural ideals. For example, if showing disrespect for one's father is taken more seriously in Shanghai than in Nova Scotia, this might differentially affect children's beliefs about the severity of punishment for such behavior within these two cultures, yet their reasoning processes would still be the same.

But still, the thinking underlying the stages may itself differ across cultures. Kohlberg's concepts of postconventional morality reflect Western philosophical ideals based on Enlightenment values of individualism freedom and rights. Kohlberg himself questioned the universality of the last two stages, finding these rarely reached by most of those he studied. His postconventional stage 6 in particular might represent a philosophical ideal that is accessible to select sages, such as Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi, and so on; but certainly not to the average person. Also, just as Piaget's formal level of cognitive development may never emerge in certain cultures in which abstract reasoning (at least as we in our culture understand it), even stage 4 may not be attained in some village-centered agrarian or hunting/gathering cultures.

Also in contrast to ***individualistic cultures*** (such as the United States, Australia, and Western Europe), which place a high value on independence, ***collectivist cultures*** value harmony and ***interdependence*** within the group (family, community, or

company), and these concerns usually outweigh those of the individual. To varying extents Asian, African, and Latin American cultures tend to be more collectivist than our own (see Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995) [2]. Differences in moral reasoning can thus be expected based on those different values.

A person from a collectivist society might place the responsibility for obtaining the drug less on Heinz himself and more on his family or on his community (Tietjen & Walker, 1985). Here, Kohlberg's scoring system, which positions a person at a higher level of morality (stage 4, for instance) based on her/his understanding of justice in a legalistic sense, would appear flawed when viewed in the context of a differing cultural perceptions.

Gender Differences. As was noted, Kohlberg's original work was done only on boys. Gilligan (1982) found this troubling; first, because results were necessarily limiting, based as they were on just one gender, and second, because Gilligan believed that girls and women use different standards from boys and men in making moral judgments. Her concerns are amplified in the next section.

III. Carol Gilligan

Gilligan's "Different Voice" and the Morality of Caring

Carol Gilligan's 1982 book *In a Different Voice* is now a classic in the psychological literature. In it Gilligan challenged psychology for its narrow sexism in studying (in most cases) men, and then generalizing their results to both genders. The implicit assumption psychologists (who were, in the early history of field, mainly men themselves) made was that men were the "prototype" of the species. This assumption was also reflected in what is now considered the sexist language of the early literature, where a typical subject of study was invariably referred to as "he." Today students might find it strange to see books with titles like *Man's Search for Meaning* and *Man's Search for Himself*, respectively authored by existential psychologists Viktor Frankl (1959/1984) and Rollo May (1953) (why not substitute "People's" for "Man's"?). But then there was always the caveat that "man" was

the name of our species (which *of course* included women as well!).

But Gilligan's book was more than a feminist critique of everyday sexist biases. In it she developed theoretical ideas of her own; principally for present purposes that women and men differ in their conceptions of moral understanding. She claimed that, whereas boys' and men's are concerned with a morality based on rules and abstract principles of justice, girls' and women's are based on care and compassion. She contrasted her ***morality of care*** with Kohlberg's ***morality of justice*** and she criticized Kohlberg for stressing just one side of the equation, namely, the masculine. To quote Gilligan (1982, p. 18):

> Prominent among those who thus appear to be deficient in moral development when measured by Kohlberg's scale are women, whose judgments seem to exemplify the third stage of his sex-stage sequence. At this stage morality is conceived in interpersonal terms and goodness is equated with helping and pleasing others. This conception of goodness is considered by Kohlberg and Kramer (1969) to be functional in the lives of mature women insofar as their lives take place in the home . . . . Yet herein lies a paradox, for the very traits that traditionally have defined the "goodness" of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in moral development. In [Kohlberg's] version of moral development, however, the conception of maturity is derived from the study of men's lives and reflects the importance of individuation in their development.

Thus Gilligan assumed that Kohlberg's scale systematically discriminated against women by generally placing them lower on his morality scale. Here are some of her anecdotal accounts of the differences between a girl (Amy) and a boy (Jake), both aged 11, in their approaches to the Heinz dilemma:

> Fascinated by the power of logic [Jake] locates truth in math, which he says "is the only thing that is totally logical." Considering the moral dilemma to be "sort of like a math problem with humans," he sets up an equation and proceeds to work out the solution (p. 26).

In doing so, Jake tried to weigh the value of a life and contrasts this with the money the druggist would make from the sale.

Amy's account is more equivocal, and would score lower on Kohlberg's scale. Yet it is thoughtful, and it also reflects the morality of care. Asked whether Heinz should steal the drug she replied:

> Well, I don't think so. I think there might be other ways besides stealing it, like if he could borrow the money or make a loan or something, but he really shouldn't steal the drug – but his wife shouldn't die either (p. 28).

Gilligan was careful to make the point that Amy and Jake do not fit stereotypical girl-boy molds either: Amy wanted to be a scientist, Jake an English teacher.

What the Research Shows

Common sense or everyday experience might suggest that there really are differences in the ways men and boys as compared to women and girls approach morality with regard to their relative weightings of justice versus care. But so-called common sense and ordinary experience can also lead to misperceptions and stereotyping. So the real question is: what does the actual research show?

The picture here is not exactly crystal clear; it is mixed, and the hypothesis that gender differences in moral understanding remains questionable, with some studies suggesting that such gender differences do exist; but most studies do not, and support for Gilligan's thesis to date is weak at best (Jafee & Hyde, 2000; Turiel, 2006).

Gilligan effectively used individual case studies (such as those of Amy and Jake) to buttress her arguments, along with a smattering of cultural "common sense" beliefs about the relative roles of women and men – along with limited empirical data. But further studies have, on the whole, failed to confirm her ideas.

Still, Gilligan's notions of the morality of care versus the morality of justice may retain their cogency, and perhaps they do suggest that Kohlberg may have overlooked an important source of moral reasoning by neglecting the ethos of care; or at least by giving it less weight than justice in his hierarchy.

Perhaps the real truth is that some boys and men do embrace a morality of care and concern; and likewise, some women and girls are more logical and less sociable in their worldviews. Is one point of view concerning moral judgments more advanced or civilized than the other? Are there two separate "tracts" or dimensions to moral reasoning? These are indeed questions worth pondering, as well as hypotheses for further research.

IV. Other Views – Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner, and Albert Bandura

Freud, Skinner and Bandura are major theorists whose perspectives on development, including development of morality, are considered in great depth in later chapters. Here, for comparative purposes, some of their ideas concerning the specific area of morality are considered briefly.

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

Freud believed that the ego – the rational part of the human psyche – grew out of the primitive id, which was more instinctual. The id is the component of the personality that operates on the so-called pleasure principle. Present at birth, the id simply wants instant gratification. The ego develops later in response to the reality principle; in other words, the infant must learn to delay gratification.

Freud believed that around the ages of three to six the child develops sexual feelings toward the opposite sex parent. This introduces an element of competition and rivalry in family relations. The little girl, for example, feels competition with her mother for the affection of her father. The dynamics by which the child resolves these conflicts is referred to as the Oedipus complex in boys, and the Elektra complex in girls. In brief, due to anxiety, the child represses or eliminates from consciousness these feelings, which Freud considered to be sexual, and learns to identify with the opposite sex parent – girls with their mothers, boys with their fathers. In doing so, the child develops a conscience, or superego –

that part of the personality that understands "should and shouldn't."

As will be seen later, there is more to all of this. But in short Freud believed that boys developed castration fears and girls envied boys their penises during this period of development, which were the causes of their anxieties. Because boys' castration fears were greater, their resolution task was harder, and thus they developed stronger superegos than did girls.

To quote Gilligan (1982, p. 7) on Freud:

> Having tied the formation of the superego or conscience to castration anxiety, Freud considered women to be deprived by nature of the impetus for a clear-cut Oedipal resolution. Consequently, women's superego – the heir to the Oedipus complex – was compromised: it was never "so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men." From this observation of difference, that "for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men," *Freud concluded that women "show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection and hostility"* (quotes are from Freud, 1925/1961, pp. 257-258, emphasis added).

Clearly Freud saw men as more rational and more ethical, at least in terms of their conceptions of justice. In contrast he saw women as more easily influenced by emotion. To him this implied that women were incomplete in their understanding of morality when compared to men.

The Learning Tradition: Skinner and Bandura on Moral Development

B. F. Skinner (1971) saw moral development from the standpoint of a behaviorist in that moral behavior reflected the child's past conditioning: the child learns morality through social reinforcement (rewards and punishments) in response to his or her actions. Social approval or disparagement is provided first by the child's parents, later by powerful social institutions including schools and legal and religious bodies. True to his behaviorist leanings, Skinner did not view moral behavior as rooted in character, but simply as responses to social conditioning.

Albert Bandura (e.g., Bandura, 1999; Bandura & Walters, 1963) emphasized social aspects of development far more than did any of the other theorists so far discussed. He demonstrated that much of children's learning is through observation of others, a process called observational learning or modeling. Rather than posit complex family dynamics, rivalries, anxieties and repression per Freud, Bandura believed that gender differences in any sort of behavior – including morality – are largely due to learning of appropriate roles from observing the actions of adults and peers, including vicarious reinforcement (i.e., imagining the consequences of their behavior).

In every society, women and men have different role expectations. They are rewarded for what is considered role-appropriate behavior, and punished for behaviors that are considered inappropriate. For example, boys are not rewarded and may even be punished for playing with dolls.

Parents are the initial role models for what their culture considers children's gender appropriate behavior, but they also learn from other adults, from their peers, or from watching television or movies. Not only do children learn gender schemas through observation they also learn morality because they understand that they will be rewarded for good behavior and punished or at least not rewarded for misbehavior.

As children develop they internalize the values that they learn along the way. Bandura did not view people as reactive or mechanistic the way Skinner did, nor did he think of them as being governed largely by unconscious forces, per Freud. Rather he saw people as active agents capable of self-regulating their behaviors. That is why mature people who have strongly internalized certain values will often act true to their beliefs even when they are punished for doing so. Bandura (1999) gives the example of Sir Thomas More, who was beheaded by King Henry VIII for refusing to compromise on his religious convictions by allowing him to wed Anne Boleyn.

But Bandura is not a stage theorist. He does not discuss any specific stages in the development of morality. Some regard this as a weakness in his otherwise broad perspective on psychology.

V. A Brief Comparison of Theorists

The theorists discussed in this chapter differ with respect to the importance they place on rewards and punishments, the active or passive nature of the child, the role of cognition and social interactions, discrete stages versus continuous development, and the identification process in the development of morality.

Turiel (2006, p. 791) noted that the behaviorists and Freudians were reductionistic in their understanding of moral development in that they both viewed moral behavior as under the control of psychological compulsions: "In the Freudian view, an internalized conscience or superego compels behavior, and in the behaviorist conception, actions are compelled by habits of behavior." In contrast, Bandura and the social cognitive learning theorists, as well as the cognitive developmentalists Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan, saw children as active agents in their own development, including their understanding of morality. Bandura stressed observational learning or modeling (of "good" and "bad" behavior by adults) by which children learn to identify with their parents or others. Freud as well thought children learned to identify with adults, but as a matter of fear of parental retribution. Thus in different ways, Freud and Bandura both stressed identification processes in moral development. But for Freud, morality was always a conflict between the desires of the individual (the "pleasure principle") and the demands of society. This compromise was an uneasy one, with the ego mediating the demands of the id and the superego.

Piaget and Kohlberg saw things differently. Both observed that, through social interaction, children develop a sense of empathy or concern for the feelings of others. Even at a fairly young age children spontaneously learn the value of sharing. Children's moral understanding (especially for Kohlberg) could be seen as more positive, even altruistic[3], rather than as negative and avoidant: as they mature, children behave well because they learn compassion by learning to see things from another's perspective (also a form of identification); and they do not behave well simply in order to avoid aversive consequences. Although the latter, too, can be a

motivating factor, especially in the earlier stages of development, it is given less weight in Kohlberg's system as the child matures.

As was typical in Skinner's psychology, he assigned no role to thinking. Also typical was Freud's belief that unconscious oedipal anxieties underlay moral development rather than conscious thought. By contrast, Bandura, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan all placed a strong emphasis on cognition – the role of thought and judgment – in moral development.

Developmental scientists generally agree that socialization factors are also important in moral development. For Freud, these played out mainly in family dynamics (e.g., fear of the father; jealousy of the same sex parent; sibling rivalry). But for Bandura, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan, peer interactions were at least equally important. The latter three were especially concerned with the ways in which children learn empathy and rules while interacting with one another (e.g., in playing games).

Finally, Freud and the cognitive developmentalists were primarily stage theorists in terms of moral development whereas Skinner and Bandura, in the learning theory tradition, were not.

On Inculcating Morality: What's a Parent to Do?

Building character in children seems a worthy goal. Research identifying three styles of parenting (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Turiel, 2006) shows these to include (a) assertion of power, using mainly punishment, (b) disapproval and withdrawal of affection, and (c) what researchers call ***induction***. The latter consists of a reasoned approach with children in which parents facilitate their understanding of morality by careful explanation, including pleas for the concern for the well-being of others. Of these three, induction has been shown consistently to be the most successful method for disciplining children. This finding seems consistent with Kohlberg's view of the child as moral philosopher; the child

resists blind authority but responds empathetically to a reasoned approach.

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For Thought and Discussion

1. If you have children, or have an opportunity to observe them: When playing games such as tag or go fish, can you see as did Piaget the different levels of understanding between children of different ages? Discuss these.
2. In your own experiences how do boys and girls differ in their play patterns with respect to settling differences of agreement about the rules?
3. Can you relate from your experiences with children cases in which boys and girls were punished (perhaps subtly) for engaging in behaviors thought to be gender-inappropriate?
4. How did your parents handle your moral education? If you have children of you own, how do you attempt to teach them morality?
5. Which type of parenting style (power, disapproval, or induction) is illustrated in each of the following scenarios:
   a. "How do you think it would you feel if Tommy bit you?"
   b. "If this behavior persists I won't speak to you."
   c. "Do that again and I'll whap you good."
   d. "By sharing your treat you'll make somebody else happy, too."

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Notes

1. Kohlberg (1970, pp. 57-58), cited in Turiel (1998, p. 866).
2. I worry about the dangers of stereotyping cultures as much as I do about the individuals from those different cultures. As an example, labeling both Japan and Bolivia as "collectivist" cultures may make them seem very similar when in fact they are otherwise quite diverse. Though both may be contrasted to the U.S. on at least this one dimension, the broader view is that peoples differ, even within a given society or culture, and the world itself is not static but constantly changing.
3. See Eisenberg, Fabes, and Spinrad (2006) for an extended treatment of the development of prosocial (or altruistic) behavior.