CRITIQUES OF KOHLBERG'S MODEL OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT: A SUMMARY *

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This article presents a critical evaluation of the most influential research-based model of moral development in academic psychology and in schools of education. The model is that of Lawrence Kohlberg (l97la, l98l, l984) who proposed a developmental series of cognitive stages, or levels, in human moral development. More specifically, Kohlberg posited a series of six universal stages of moral development through which all people go, though most people stop at some level before reaching Stage 6. The rate of passage between stages varies from individual to individual, as it can be affected to some degree by external factors. Kohlberg's basic research strategy was to present hypothetical moral dilemmas to children and young adults, and then to analyze the reasons they gave for believing that one course of action, rather than another, should be followed. He claimed to have observed six distinct patterns of moral reasoning.

Kohlberg was interested in the person's dominant pattern of moral reasoning: he was concerned with the form and process of the thought used, not with the actual moral decision made. Two people might disagree about what is to be done but use the same kind of reasoning, or they might come to the same decision but for very different reasons. Like so many modern psychological thinkers, Kohlberg was primarily concerned with structure and changes in structure (process), not in particular content.

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Kolhberg claimed that when a person is studied over a number of years, evidence shows that he goes through the proposed series of moral reasoning patterns. Each pattern representes a qualitatively distinct «stage» in the person's life. The sequence of stages is the same for all people, though as noted, most never get to the higher stages: that is Five and Six. According to Kohlberg, nobody ever skips a stage, and no one ever regresses to an earlier stage. He did, however, allow that people may show a mixture of two adjacent stages since a person can be in transition between two stages. [1]

1. The Basic Concerns of Kohlberg's Model

Behind Kohlberg's reasoning and years of experimentation lay two major concerns. First, Kohlberg knew that moral relativism especially individual relativism, was, in spite of its present-day popularity, bankrupt. If everyone could select his own values, society would cease to function. Second, Kolhberg wished to avoid all «indoctrination,» or direct teaching of what is moral, as he believed that to push for particular moral positions or values would violate the spirit of democracy in a pluralistic society; in particular, it would violate the requirement that government schools be neutral.

Kolhberg thought his model answered these two basic concerns by demonstrating that natural reasoning—that is, the natural development of the mind, led to one and only one fundamental understanding of the moral life. The ultimate natural solution was found in the concept of justice, as expressed in the highest stage of cognitive development, Stage 6.

It should be clear, even from the above brief presentation, that Kohlberg's approach was a serious intellectual venture, and there is no doubt that he generated a great deal of research and important thinking about the psychology of moral reasoning. Such activity is a genuine contribution. But the central issue is: what is the validity of Kohlberg's model? This question has produced much comment, controversy and criticism within the academic community. Major published criticisms will be summarized here; for a deeper understanding the reader should see the references, especially those cited frequently or given emphasis.

1.1. The critique of the concept of the «completely good self»

The nature of the «self» that controls and uses the person's cognitive apparatus is not analyzed by Kohlberg. Still, like Rousseau, like the

humanistic psychologists (e.g, Fromm, Maslow, and Rogers), and like the Values Clarification theorists (e.g., Raths, Simon), Kohlberg appears to assume that the self is intrinsically entirely good. There is simply no recognition of a natural human tendency to aggression, self-deception, exploitation of others, narcissism—in short to evil.

The notion of an autonomous intrinsically good self is one that has been severely criticized as seriously unrealistic. Psychoanalytic theorists from Sigmund Freud (e.g., the death instinct) to Melanie Klein (primal envy and rage) to Jacques Lacan (the ego as wrapped in illusion) have persistently proposed that unconscious violence, envy and deceptiveness often lie behind conscious thought. They have decried as an «illusion» the idea that the conscious ego (or self) reliably, much less always, knows why it does what it does. In recent years, as psychologists have reflected on events such as the Holocaust, the rise of urban crime, the growth in ethnic and racial violence, and bitter conflict all around the world based on intractable hatreds, they have come to the conclusion that the human self can hardly be described as completely and simply «good.» (For additional evidence supporting this interpretation, see Vitz, l994, MacIntyre, l98l, and Wallach and Wallach, l983).

Many scientists, e.g., the ethologists K. Lorenz, N. Tinbergen, have long observed that humans have a strong natural tendency to aggression which under various circumstances becomes quite dysfunctional (unjust); our sexuality is well known to warp human judgment. For an excellent discussion of these issue by a psychologist, see Campbell (l974).

Other evidence comes from many experiments in social psychology which document a common propensity for people to interpret their behavior in a favorable light, often to the detriment of others. This bias, called the «self-serving bias,» expresses itself in the reliable tendency for success to be attributed to one's own efforts while failure is seen as due to external circumstances or others' incompetence. For discussions of this widespread «narcissistic» bias in which we see ourselves as better and more deserving than others, see Bradley (l978), Zuckerman (l979), Myers (l98l); Miller and Porter (l988).

Indeed, the implicit position that there is no natural human tendency to «evil,» in and of itself, makes Kohlberg's model suspect as a model of moral development. Even at the lowest stages where such «selfishness» can be observed, it is the result of a developmental and cognitive failure, not the natural and common pursuit of self-interest.

Certainly, the application of any abstract principle to a concrete situation often involves complex and problematic reasoning. Such rea-

soning, when applied to a particular situation allows many opportunities for distortion in line with one's self-interest—often unconscious self-interest.

Rest (1980), a colleague of Kohlberg's, claimed that the highest stages of moral understanding could not be misused or distorted by self-interest, no matter how sophisticated the attempt: that is, it would be impossible to construct a Stage 5 or Stage 6 moral argument for such things as genocide. According to Rest, once a certain cognitive understanding of justice has been reached, the concept cannot be seriously contaminated by such ugly things as sadistic motives, self-interest, needs for power, or vengeance. He offered no evidence for this claim, however, and it is not hard to question it. After all, any principle of justice must also contain a rationale for who is to receive justice. For example, consider the issues of slavery, abortion, and cruelty to animals. All these moral problems revolve around the issue of who is a person, and what kinds of life are entitled to receive justice. In the past, slaves were not considered fully human, and were considered the property of their owners. Likewise, many today do not consider an unborn baby to be fully human; thus, it can be disposed of like physical property. Finally, many conservationists argue that certain animal species must be protected, even at great cost to humans. In short, the issue of justice throughout history has been intimately connected to the question: who (and what) is even entitled to «justice»?

1.2. The feminist critique

Kohlberg's theory has been criticized as androcentric in that it expresses a characteristically masculine view of morality. Carol Gilligan, a colleague of Kohlberg at Harvard, has made this point effectively (1977, 1982, 1987). Gilligan pointed out the initial 1958 study, which remained the core of empirical support, was run exclusively on young American male subjects, from which Kohlberg then generalized to all human beings in all eras. Gilligan also claimed that Kohlberg's preoccupation with «male» values—such as rationalism, individualism, and liberalism—is responsible for the fact that adult females were sometimes found at lower stages than males. Males tended to be closer to Stage 4; females to Stage 3. (Stage 3 is «good boy-nice girl»; Stage 4 is «system-maintaining morality,» e.g., law and order.)

Kohlberg, Levine and Hewer (1984a,b) responded by noting that any difference between males and females on the moral development scale was generally small and not of any real substance. Furthermore, when the difference was substantial, they claimed that this is due to the fact that the males in question had more education than the lower-

scoring females. According to Kohlberg, men and women will have equal moral development scores if education, status of job and other environmental factors are held constant. (As we will see, however, Kohlberg's response to this criticism is unsatisfactory.)

Gilligan succinctly summarized the different approach to moral problems often taken by female subjects. Let us consider Kohlberg's best-known dilemma, that of Heinz. Heinz must steal a drug from a village druggist since it costs much more than he can pay, or else he must let his wife die. Gilligan wrote:

> Here in the light of its probable outcome—his wife dead, or Heinz in jail, brutalized by the violence of the experience and his life compromised by a record of felony—the dilemma itself changes. Its resolution has less to do with the relative weights of life and property in an abstract moral conception than with the collision it has produced between two lives, formerly conjoined but now in opposition, where the continuation of one life can now occur only at the expense of the other. Given this construction, it becomes clear why consideration (for women) revolves around the issue of sacrifice and why guilt becomes the inevitable concommitant of either resolution (1977, p. 512).

She continued:

> The proclivity of women to reconstruct hypothetical dilemmas in terms of the real, to request or supply the information missing about the nature of the people and the places where they live, shifts their judgment away from the hierarchical ordering of principles and the formal procedures of decision-making that are critical for scoring at Kohlberg's highest stages... the women's judgments pointed toward an identification of the violence inherent in the dilemma itself which was seen to compromise the justice of any of its possible resolutions. This construction of the dilemma led the women to recast the moral judgment from a consideration of the good to a choice between evils. *(ibid.)*

Gilligan quite correctly proposed that in giving exclusive moral weight to justice, Kohlberg overlooked the moral worth of other principles, especially an ethic of caring: of mercy. (For a more recent statement, see Gilligan and Attanucci, 1988.)

Hogan and Emler (1978), two other critics of Kohlberg, also criticized this bias of his, by alluding to Shakespeare:

> This, the female virtue of mercy, becomes a Stage 3 conception. but, as Portia reminds Shylock, mercy qualifies justice... «though justice

> be thy plea, consider this, that in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation. We do pray for mercy.» (p. 529).

In spite of Gilligan's effective and well-known critique, Kohlberg showed no inclination to modify his model. To introduce a major new principle—such as caring or mercy, involving empathy and interpersonal sensitivity—would have compromised the coherence of his abstract cognitive representation of moral development. (For a discussion of the hermeneutical conflict between the models of Kohlberg and Gilligan, see Brown and Tappan, 1991.)

1.3. The moral relativity critique.

A central philosophical difficulty in Kohlberg's model is his assumption that moral development can be characterized as a development in morally-neutral rational competence, without regard to actual moral decisions: moral content. As noted earlier, Kohlberg emphatically rejected moral relativism and believed that his approach avoided the errors of relativism:

> The cognitive-developmental or progressive view [Kohlberg's view] claims that, at heart, morality represents a set of *rational principles of judgment and decision* valid for every culture... Our research into the stages in the development of moral reasoning, then, provides the key to a new approach to moral education as the stimulation of children's moral judgment to the next stage of moral development (emphasis Kohlberg, 1978, p. 14).

Now when psychologists such as Piaget talk about stages of intellectual development, they not only speak of the development of greater cognitive flexibility and differentiation, but they also show that the higher level leads to correct or more nearly correct answers. They show how the child has a better understanding of an agreed-upon external, objective truth, such as a truth of logic or a fact about perceptual reality.

But with morality the idea of reality testing—of being right—is rejected by Kohlberg, since he claimed that there is no external or objective possibility of being right. This preoccupation with mental structure and its development, without an objective standard leads to the moral relativism that Kohlberg supposedly rejected. To demonstrate this we begin with the question: Why and how does a person move from a lower to a higher stage? A person at a lower stage discovers that moral questions become too complex and too confusing in terms of the concepts currently being used. The pressure for cognitive integration and equilibrium leads him to formulate a new set of principles in

order to handle moral issues more adequately. At each new and higher stage the person is cognitively integrated in a way that allows him to resolve the cognitive dissonance which facilitated the growth. This cognitive development is greatly aided, according to Kohlberg, by role-taking. (Role-taking for Kohlberg means the tendency to react to others as like the self, and to react to the self's behavior from the other's point of view.) Kohlberg posited that the impulse to take the role of others is natural, and that this leads to a natural concern for fairness and justice. This role-taking in increasingly more varied and complex moral situations is therefore central to moral development.

Kohlberg's general strategy required that his concept of cognitive adequacy be value-neutral. He did not claim that the role-taking tendency and the pattern of reasoning it sets in motion are «good.» These are simply natural facts—i.e., universal developmental characteristics of the human mind, similar to other forms of natural growth and development. In spite of this claim of value-neutrality, Kohlberg was, however, frequently ambivalent on the matter. He said, for example: «At every stage, children perceive basic values like the value of human life, and are able to empathize and take the roles of other persons...» This is not just a descriptive comment for it suggests that people at all stages recognize life as good, and indeed it suggests that life is, in fact, good. His tendency to slide, without noticing, back and forth from neutral descriptions of morality, to the implicit valuing of such things as life and role-taking abilities, to the value of development per se, and finally to the valuing of the justice principle, is a common confusion in Kohlberg's system.

Ultimately, Kohlberg's system is profoundly relativistic. Let us look in some detail at certain statements by Kohlberg. Here I am endebted to the philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff (1980), whose analysis I will often follow below.

Kohlberg stated (1971a, p. 43) that he did not believe that «moral judgments describe objective states of the world in ... the same way as scientific judgments describe objective states of the world.» Instead, moral judgments and norms are ultimately to be understood as universal mental constructs which regulate social interaction. (This shows the basic Kantian foundation of Kohlberg.) Thus, Kohlberg writes: «A higher conception of the value of love or a higher conception of moral emotion... is not directly truer than a lower conception.» He goes on, in a most peculiar passage, to say:

> Our claim that Stage 6 is a more moral code of thought than lower stages is not the claim that we can or should grade individuals as

> more or less moral. We argue elsewhere that there is no valid or final meaning to judging or grading persons as morally better or worse. Judgments on persons as morally good or bad or judgments of praise and blame are not justified by the existence of universal moral principles as such. At the highest stage, the principle of justice (or the principle of maximizing human welfare) prescribes an obligation to act justly (or to blame the unjust) or give us rules for meting out blame to the unjust. Although there are some rational grounds for punishment, there are no ultimately rational or moral grounds for blaming other people. From a moral point of view, the moral worth of all persons is ultimately the same; it is equal (Kohlberg, 197la, p. 48)

What did Kohlberg say here? Wolsterstorff struggled nobly with this confused passage, first observing that Kohlberg's basic point is that it is never right or wrong, as such to do something. Instead, actions are right or wrong only relative to a certain principle. Relative to the justice principle, an action might be wrong. But relative to a utility principle, the same action might be right. And Kohlberg seems to be arguing that there is no way to determine whether any principle is more right or wrong than another. Apparently it is not possible to choose an incorrect principle. Wolsterstorff concluded: «All one can do is apply correctly or incorrectly whatever principle one has chosen.» (Wolterstorff, p. 88)

If Wolterstorff's interpretation is correct, then Kohlberg holds that morality is relative to some principle but there is no way to choose among principles. Kohlberg considers there to be no absolute moral basis for making a moral judgment about principles of morality. Despite his frequent denials of the validity on moral relativism, he ends up at a relativism of moral principles.

But Kohlberg did defend his highest principle of justice on certain external grounds, namely it had the following three properties: it is universal in that it applies to all persons and actions. Second, it is prescriptive in that it states what should be done. Finally, the principle of justice is autonomous, for it makes no appeal to any other authority, or to what anyone else believes on moral matters.

If Kohlberg meant that these criteria describe the nature of a principle at the highest level of natural development, he has a problem. First, there are other possible principles besides justice that would fill the same requirements, such as those based on utility, or on mercy—and above all on a principle of responsible love—but are simply ignored by Kohlberg. There are also times when he seems to imply that his criteria for a principle are themselves intrinsically good. In addition, Kohlberg spoke of his concept of autonomy—that is, independence

from any authority (other than the self)—as a desirable quality. When he slips into this mode of expression, he has of course violated his pose of neutrality by taking an ideological stance.

1.4. The «no moral responsibility» critique

One problem that results from the model's characterization of how cognition and the moral life develop is that there is no rationale within Kohlberg's system for holding a person responsible for his moral choices. One can hardly be responsible for inadequate moral development. Many people have never had an adequate environment (or in some cases, adequate mental endowment) for the higher moral stages to develop. If superior moral life depends on complex cognitive development, how can one be blamed, much less punished, for moral failure? Many adults are scored at Stages 1, 2 or 3: is this their fault? Is Kohlberg arguing that criminals are just inferior at moral cognition—rather like being «bad at math»?

This weakness is also one of the reasons why Kohlberg, after trying to apply his strictly «non-judgmental» cognitive approach, admitted that in the actual school setting, specific indoctrination is needed. That is, Kohlberg eventually acknowledged that direct teaching of right and wrong is necessary in the classroom. In this admission, Kohlberg (1978a) departed from his long-held earlier rejection of this approach. Power, Higgins and Kohlberg (1989) give a detailed treatment of this change.

1.5. The critique of Kohlberg's atheism

Kohlberg classified any appeal to God as authoritative. It is an appeal to rules which automatically puts a person down to Stage 4, or possibly lower. This position comes from Kohlberg's placing the authority of the autonomous individual, instead of the authority of God, at the center of his system. Thus his model is explicitly atheistic in its understanding of the moral life. Such atheism is an assumption made by Kohlberg on necessarily non-empirical and non-rational grounds. (For Kohlberg's rejection of divine authority, see 1981, pp.312-318.) The basic religious idea that «true autonomy»—that is, true freedom, including freedom from the self and its narcissism—comes from the love of God appears to be antithetical to Kohlberg's system. In any case, obedience to God or obedience to the self are both obediences to a kind of authority.

Here is Kohlberg's description of his scoring system which makes this anti-religious bias very clear. The respondent, a boy named Richard, was asked for his moral reaction to mercy killing. He replied:

> I don't know. In one way, it's murder; it's not a right or a privilege of man to decide who shall live and who should die. God put life into everybody on earth and you're taking away something from that person that came directly from God, and you're destroying something that is very sacred; it's in a way part of God and it's almost destroying a part of God when you kill a person. There's something of God in everyone.

Kohlberg commented:

> Here Richard clearly displays a Stage 4 concept of life as sacred in terms of its place in a categorical moral or religious order. The value of human life is universal, it is true for all humans. It is still, however, dependent on something else, upon respect for God and God's authority; it is not an autonomous human value (Kohlberg, 1970, pp. 111-112).

Kohlberg simply assumed that the principle of obedience to self, a value currently held by many Americans, is higher than one based on obedience to God. And after all, this belief in the presumed autonomous self is a cultural norm and really belongs perhaps at the Conventional Level-Stages 3 and 4. Post-modern critiques of the modern self as a social construct that is now understood as false, empty or disintegrating are proposed by Baumeister (1987, 1991); Cushman (1990); Gergen (1991); Landy (1993). Certainly, Kohlberg's belief can be viewed as the result of the indoctrination of his own mid-20th c. American secular social environment. Furthermore, it is not at all clear how this last answer is a standard Stage 4 answer. That is, it is not obviously directed at «system-maintaining.» Apparently, a belief in the sacredness of life and a concern for God's presence in everyone, to Kohlberg, is equivalent to a common stage 4 «right wing» defense of «law and order.»

Kohlberg was fond of citing the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a presumed example of Stage 6, the highest moral stage. And yet Kohlberg completely failed to grasp how King's political and moral stature was an expression of his religious commitment. Here is a representative quotation from King, from the night before his assassination: «I just want to do God's will.» (King, 1969, p. 316). In short, though Kohlberg promoted him to Stage 6, King is presumably a classic stage 4 person in his statement about the fundamental source of his principles.

1.6. The empathy and emotion critique: The rejection of Stage 1

Kohlberg assumed that the moral life is primarily determined by rational, logical, or cognitive factors. In other words, human rationality as expressible in verbal form is the essential ingredient of the moral

life. This common tendency for cognitive theorists to neglect emotional, innate, imagistic, and non-verbal aspects of human psychology has received growing criticism in recent years, e.g., Zajonc (1980), Siegel (1978). (Vitz, 1988, has referred to this assumption as «left-hemisphere imperialism.»)

Kohlberg completely neglects the evidence for the powerful emotional and non-verbal determinants of morality. Let us look at some of the evidence. Yarrow and Zahn-Waxler (1977) show that children only a year old have a capacity for compassion and for various pro-social behaviors. There is good evidence that a reliable capacity for empathy, as well as the ability to show feeling for others, begins at a very early age. This empathy leads to altruistic or «good samaritan» behavior, even by some one-year-old children. According to Piaget, and also Kohlberg, children this young are so cognitively undeveloped that they cannot «think» about doing good. They are at a stage of simple selfishness. The now-considerable evidence for empathy and early emotion based helping actions leads psychologists like Hoffman (1978, 1983, 1991a) to propose a very early empathic—or emotional—basis for altruism. In many respects, Gilligan's position about the interpersonal foundation of women's moral thought is reinforced by this recent work on empathy, especially Hoffman's. (See also Gilligan and Wiggins, 1987.)

In general, Kohlberg's understanding of the moral life of young children seems seriously inadequate, rather like the projection of adult abstract thought backward onto children. Far more impressive contributions to a psychological understanding of the emergence of morality in children are found in the work of Kagan (1981), of Hoffman (1983, 1987) and of Turiel (1983).

The evidence for empathy as central to early moral life represents a strong criticism of Kohlberg's Stage 1. It is important to note that such moral responses in the very young are unlikely to be mediated by cognition—much less by articulated responses to «dilemmas.» That much important human behavior is determined by emotional responses occurring long before any cognition is present, is argued persuasively by Zajonc (1980). The convincing evidence for simple, compassionate moral life in very young children means that Kohlberg's Stage 1 is simply unconvincing.

1.7. The empirical critique: the inability to find various stages.

Schweder, Mahapatra and Miller (1987) point out (p. 15) that only 1 or 2 % of all responses are post-conventional (e.g., Stage 5 or 6) and that even pure pre-conventional responses (Stages 1 and 2) are infrequent. The vast majority of responses fall into the conventional cate-

gory: Stages 3 and 4. One must conclude that most subjects in all cultures think of morality in terms of the group. This implies either that Kohlberg's system really only distinguishes between two categories, or that his interview method and scale fail to address important aspects of his respondents' moral life

A major empirical critique has focused on Stage 6, the model's highest stage. The central issue is the lack of evidence for anyone reaching this level—at least for anyone who took Kohlberg's moral development test. Stage 6 is characterized by the universal ethical principle of justice. Kohlberg eventually admitted (l984, pp. 270-274) that Stage 6 is a hypothetical stage with no real empirical support. However, he maintained Stage 6 at the theoretical level: he was committed to it as the truly highest stage, just one to which people rarely rise. As mentioned, Kohlberg personally judged Martin Luther King, Jr. to be at Stage 6, but he never looked at King's thought very, and of course King never took Kohlberg's test.

The failure actually to find people at the sixth and highest stage has been a serious blow to the system, empirically speaking a point made by several critics, e.g., Reed (1987). Furthermore, the recent implication that stage regression may occur suggests additional problems. In this regard, see a trenchant criticism of Kohlberg's assumption that later mental structures are always superior to earlier ones in Flanagan (1991, pp. 191-95).

1.8. Over-dependency on language: Critique of all stages

The basic notion of cognitive stages has come under severe criticism, even Piaget's cognitive and perceptual stages, primarily because evidence for such stages has depended on children's verbal capacities (see Brown & Desforges, l979; Siegel, l978). For example, Schiff (l983) has shown that the child is capable of demonstrating conservation of length long before he reaches the 6 to 12-year-old stage, proposed by Piaget. Specifically, the child is capable of conservation by age 4 1/2 if the task does not require a verbal response. The typical failure of psychologists to find conservation at the earlier age was due to the child's lack of linguistic sophistication; it was not because the child could not grasp the concept. (For another critique of Piaget's stages, see Gelman and Baillargeon, l983).

Schweder (l982a) makes this point in his claim that Kohlberg has a naive understanding of the meaning of children's language. For example, Kohlberg asked a l0-year old child «Why shouldn't someone steal from a store, anyhow?» When the child replied, «It is not good because there might be someone who could see you and call the police,» it was classified as a Stage 1 response. Schweder made the following wager

with Kohlberg: «I will bet that 7-to-l0 year-old children do not define rightness or wrongness by punishment. I will bet that Kohlberg's l0-year-old does not mean that because you might get punished it is wrong to steal, but instead means to state that someone will call the police because it is wrong to steal...In my experience when the issue is pressed further and children are asked questions like, `what if there were no punishment?' or `what if no one could call the police?' they maintain the act would still be wrong. In the mind of the child transgressions are punished because they are wrong, not vice versa.» (p. 424)

Schweder goes on to point out that we are now quite aware that Piaget, with respect to objective cognitive stages, seriously underestimated the operational capacity of young children and the idea of Piagetian stages of cognitive development has taken a beating. (See Schweder, Mahaptra and Miller, l987, p. 13; Schweder, l982b.) Also, much of this literature has shown that the content of the task is decisive in how a child thinks about it and that thinking is often very task-specific.

Likewise, there is every reason to think that Kohlberg's reliance on verbally-presented abstract dilemmas and on the subject's ability to give various complex verbal responses has distorted our ability to understand children's important early moral life. Indeed, the moral life of many adults is probably seriously underestimated, if one must depend on the sophistication of their verbal skills as the sole index to their morality. This point is supported by Kalam (l98l) who also pointed to statements scored at different stages that are identical except for the wording. For example:

> The judge should punish Heinz... because a judge has to punish people... (Stage 1)
>
> Because it's expected of judges to give sentences when people deserve them (Stage 3)
>
> Because a judge is obligated to judge from the legal point of view (Stage 4).

These statements, as Kalam (p. 219) noted, differ in verbal sophistication, but they mean much the same thing.

1.9. The methodological critique of the Kohlberg scale

Important criticisms of Kohlberg's model have focused on his scale for measuring a person's stage of moral development. This

scale—Moral Maturity Scale—was never standardized. That is, after more than 25 years of research, the actual dilemmas and the procedures for scoring were not fixed even at the time of Kohlberg's death. (For the last discussion of the scale by Kohlberg, see Kohlberg 1984, Part III.) The scale was under constant revision and these changes make earlier experiments using earlier scales hard to interpret. And of course the scale's reliability and validity cannot be measured until the measurement procedures have been standardized. As a result of this problem (and of others discussed here) many knowledgeable researchers who are not Kohlbergians simply do not think that Kohlberg's stages exist. Different patterns of reasoning about morality exist, but large numbers of psychologists do not accept these as natural stages of moral growth.

Another methodological difficulty has been Kohlberg's almost exclusive focus on abstract rather fantastic dilemmas, such as that of Heinz. Few people, if any, ever face such dilemmas, which are far removed from the concrete moral conflicts that are typical of the actual lives of human beings. This abstract unreal quality has led Kohlberg's critics, and even Kohlberg himself, to describe them as «science fiction» dilemmas.

1.10. Structure vs. content: the empirical critique

A major methodological critique was developed by Kalam (1981) in a study conducted in India that tested Christians, Hindus and Muslims on Kohlberg's scale. Kalam's little-known critical study is important since it was done in collaboration with Kohlberg and with Kohlberg's associate Anne Colby, and because the criticism focused on an important assumption of Kohlberg's model—in fact, on a major assumption of most cognitive psychology. Kohlberg assumes that the structure of thought and reasoning can be measured in a way that is independent of the content of the person's thought.

For Kohlberg, as already noted, this means that each stage of moral development is a way of thinking—a way of processing information or a kind of logic—that is independent of what the person is thinking. Kohlberg's method of identifying each stage, therefore, must be independent of the moral issue being thought about. Kalam in his doctoral thesis provides extensive evidence that Kohlberg's scale repeatedly confuses the content of the subject's moral thought with its structure. Kalam's work thus shows that Kohlberg's fundamental internal logic is seriously compromised. Let us look at some of Kalam's evidence on the content-structure issue.

Certain «elements» (formerly called «motives» or «concerns») and

which always have a particular content are associated only with certain stages. In theory, each «element» or «concern» should occur at each stage but be treated by a different structural principle. For example, the «concern» with «maintaining equity» does not occur until Stage 4, «social contract or freely agreed to» doesn't occur until Stage 4. «Avoiding punishment» does not occur in the scoring manual after Stage 3. Good and bad reputation doesn't occur after Stage 4. And «justice» doesn't occur as a concern at Stages 1, 2, or 3. In short, an easy way to learn Kohlberg's coding system is to treat each of his six stages as a content or concern. His rationale for content-free principles ofmoral thinking is simply unconvincing when the scoring manual is looked at closely.

In addition, as Kalam (l98l) also showed (pp. l69-7l), Kohlberg assumed that anyone who has heard about his six stages can, with some months of practice, learn to use his scoring manual (e.g., Colby et al, l980). This ability to score all 6 stages is seen as the result of the scorers' being «capable of seeing things from the subject's viewpoint.» People at Stages 3 and 4, for example, can learn to score responses at higher stages. Elsewhere, however, Kohlberg explicitly claimed that higher stages are the result of a stage of cognitive organization that cannot be reached by ordinary learning (Kohlberg, l969, p. 348). But how can a scorer learn to score—to recognize—all levels of Kohlberg's system unless he or she is also at Stage 6? A distinguishing mark of the cognitive developmental approach is that it is «difficult for individuals to understand and recapitulate reasoning of higher stages, and especially reasoning more than one stage above their own stage...» (see Rest, Turiel & Kohlberg, l969). The fact that people can learn to use the Kohlberg scoring system, whatever their own stage level, strongly suggests that the scoring system is responding to content differences—that is, to differences in issues and vocabulary and not to differences in moral principles. Either that, or in fact it is relatively easy to move all the way up to Stage 6 thinking.

Kohlberg admitted that his scoring system of the l960's and early 70's mistook «concerns» for structure. (See Kohlberg, l976, p. 43; Kohlberg, el al., l978, p. 34) The problem is that even his last revised system (l984) is quite similar to his earlier ones. In addition, much of the Kohlberg research using the earlier system has continued to be cited in support of the model.

Kalam concluded by saying:

> My criticism is not just of the validity and reliability of the instrument [the scoring system], but of the very theoretical foundations on which

> it is built... [namely, that Kohlberg has separated content and structure]... As long as these basic claims remain unestablished, all the reports about psychometric reliability, consistency, validity, etc. amount to nothing... Kohlberg and his associates have devised an ingenious system to squeeze people's moral judgments into five or six arbitrary pigeon-holes (pp. 222-223)

1.11. Structure vs. content: the theoretical critique

As noted, Kohlberg assumed that the natural direction of moral development is toward increasingly internalized cognitive moral controls at the end of which the individual is socially and morally autonomous. Each individual will thus ultimately discover for himself a natural cognitive morality that owes nothing important to cultural or historical heritage. Curiously, however, Kohlberg argued that the social environment is a major stimulus that drives moral cognitive development. Somehow this environment is not supposed to affect the content of a person's morality, o nly its structure.

Schweder (l982) noted that there is a trade-off between rationality and relevance, and that if moral concepts are to be made fully rational, they must be emptied of content and made devoid of relevance to every-day decisions. In contrast, if moral concepts are to be made relevant to actual moral problems, then they must be enriched with non-rational assumptions, i.e., content. For example, the formal principle of justice reduces to the abstraction «treat like cases alike and different cases differently.» But this principle does not state which likenesses and differences count. Thus, the formal principle of justice says nothing about how particular people are to be treated. We all acknowledge, for example, the many conditions in which children will be treated differently from adults, but of course this raises the issue mentioned above about whether to include unborn children, animals, and so forth.

1.12. The ideological critique

Perhaps the most frequent criticism of the Kohlbergian model has been that it embodies ideological assumptions that are presented as part of a supposedly scientifically verified theory (see Simpson, l974; Sullivan, l977; Bennett & Delattre, l978; Hogan & Emler, l978; Sampson, l98l; Levin, l982; Schweder, l982a; Schweder, et al., l987; Kilpatrick, l992.)

One sign of such an ideological and cultural bias is the fact that a moral judgment score depends a great deal on education level. For example, in various studies in which males scored higher than females

in moral development, Kohlberg argued that this is due to the average greater education and job status of men. Such an observation immediately raises serious issues of bias in Kohlberg's test. Typical human experience does not reliably suggest that better educated people—men in particular—are reliably more moral. This question becomes acute when one reads the comments by Rest (1980) about research in which it was found that moral judgment scores increase with education, as follows:

Junior high school students	22
Senior high school students	32
College students	42
Graduate students in business	52
Students in liberal Protestant seminary	60
Doctoral students of moral philosophy and political science	65

No doubt Ph.D.'s doing research on moral education presumably top the scale! The curious thing is that after describing these results, Rest (1980) made the following qualification: «Remember that a moral judgment score ... should not be used as an indication of who is a better person, or who behaves more responsibily» (p. 544). This disclaimer implies that there is no true «value» associated with a high score on a moral development scale. But only four pages later, Rest contradicted himself. He says that moral judgment scores are not just a measure of cognitive or intellectual competence, but that they measure how morally a person behaves as well. Thus, he proposed that such scores predict behavior—and he means morally superior behavior, such as being more cooperative, not cheating, etc.

This issue is extremely important. At times, Kohlberg or his associates have claimed that they are only measuring the level of cognitive competence with which a person reasons about morality: thus, is the person intellectually skilled with regard to moral issues? Here, no value judgment is being made about who is more moral. When Kohlbergians argue this way, the model is justly criticized by its detractors as trivial. One does not have to be a behaviorist to see that a model of moral thought unrelated to moral action is close to being meaningless and useless. Responding to this criticism, Kohlberg and Candee (1984), and others like Blasi (1980) and Rest (1980) began to claim, on the basis of some very modest evidence, that people with high moral development scores actually do behave better: they are more moral people.

But the Kohlbergians cannot have it both ways. They cannot argue that people with high scores (e.g., doctoral students) are not morally better than others, and then someplace else say that they are.

Let us return to the claims that the model is pervaded with ideology. Keep in mind the assertion that high scores are associated with higher levels of education and with high social status—and that Kohlberg came to the point of claiming that high scores predict, on average, more moral behavior. This would predict, for example, in this country and throughout much of the world, that since on average husbands have more education and higher status jobs, they should be more moral than their wives. Although the author is a husband he would not wish to assert such a claim. Neither has it been my experience that graduate students or college professors are generally more moral than school teachers or farmers or waitresses, nor has it been my experience that physicians are more moral than nurses, etc. It is true that some groups, such as lawyers on average, have higher intellectual skills or more practice in verbal or abstract reasoning than, say, farmers. But this fact does not make the former more «moral» than the latter. The relationship between intellectual skills and the practice of morality is problematic at best.

The most common ideological bias attributed to Kohlberg is that his system is an expression of Western liberal social and political ideology (e.g., Sullivan, 1977; Bennett & Delattre, 1978; Hogan & Emler, 1978; Schweder, 1982a). Kohlberg did admit the intellectual origins of his system in Western liberal thought, for example, his debt to Rawls (1971), and through Rawls to Kant, but he denied that this origin affected the «objectivity» of his system (Kohlberg, Levine & Hewer (1984b).

Thus, one looks in vain in the writings of Kohlberg for concern with issues such as sexual morality, abortion, freedom from government controls, etc. Instead the agenda of moral topics covered in the Kohlberg literature was the standard liberal, socialist, and secular one of 1960 to 1985.

Schweder's ideological critique has been especially strong. He has characterized Kohlberg as follows:

> Kohlberg believes that reason is on the side of those who oppose capital punishment, hierarchy, tribalism, and divine authority.... He holds out for secular humanism, egalitarianism, and the Bill of Rights as rational ideals or objective endpoints for the evolution of moral ideas. [He also believes that] the history of the world and the history of childhood is the story of the progressive discovery of the principles of the American Revolution. (Schweder, 1982a, p. 421)

Schweder sums this up as «liberalism has become destiny.»

A dominant theme in Kohlberg's essays is that morality results from the development of reason. «What Kohlberg seeks is a conceptualization of what is moral derived from premises that no rational person could possibly deny by means that no rational person could possibly avoid—preferably deductive logic.» (1982a, p. 422)

Schweder pointed out, however, that Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) has made it clear that there is no rational justification for moral positions that is possible within the framework of Western culture established at the time of the Enlightenment. (This point is even clearer in MacIntyre, 1988.) MacIntyre (1981, pp. 11, 70) concluded, for example, that «moral debate [e.g. over such matters as abortion], is rationally interminable.» Or as Schweder commented, «Two hundred years of brilliant reflection has yet to produce any consensus about the nature of that purported `objective' morality.» (1982a, p. 422) Put differently, modern Enlightenment philosophy has been built out of premises which are themselves non-rational, and which any rational person can reasonably deny.

1.13. The sexual morality critique

As noted above, Kohlberg failed to address abortion as a moral issue. Whatever one's position on abortion, this is certainly one of the central moral dilemmas of our day. If Kohlberg's model has nothing to say on this issue, his model looks irrelevant. If it does bear on this issue, one would like to see how. In view of Kohlberg's other standard stances on moral questions, the model is probably pro-abortion. But that remains to be seen. Gilligan (1982), arguing from a general Kohlbergian notion of post-conventional morality, makes it clear that a pro-abortion decision is often an expression of the «highest» level of women's moral reasoning. (The decision to abort a child is interpreted by Gilligan as an example of a woman's greater concern with *caring!)*

Let us turn, however, to Kohlberg's response to more standard issues of sexual morality. Take the case of adultery, which involves betrayal, and almost always lying and deceit—all ultimately issues of justice. Furthermore, in view of the frequent painful and destructive effects of adultery on children (e.g., intense parental conflict, and often divorce) the issue of justice for children and society at large might well arise. But Kohlberg never turned his model to such concrete and everyday issues of sexual morality. There are no discussions of sexual dilemmas in Kohlberg 1981 or 1984; Lockwood, 1978, also noted the absence of sexual dilemmas in Kohlberg's work (p. 46). The reasons for this neglect of sexual issues have been noted and commented upon by

Kalam, 1981, pp. 199-204) and are discussed below. Kohlberg (1971b, p. 21) made what appears to have been his only published interpretation of a sexual moral dilemma in the following case:

> A boy and a girl fall in love in high school and get married right after graduation. They never had sexual relations before marriage. After they are married the girl finds that she doesn't like having sexual intercourse, it just makes her feel bad and she decides not to have intercourse with her husband. Reluctantly her husband persuades her to go to a marriage counselor and she asks the marriage counselor, «Do I have an obligation to sleep with my husband, we want to stay married but do I have an obligation to sleep with him?»
>
> What advice should be given? Does the wife have an obligation or not?
>
> Then we go on. The wife says she wants to stay married and the husband says the same thing, but goes on to say, «I met another girl and I want to have sexual relations with her. I asked my wife if she minded since she wouldn't sleep with me, if I sleep with somebody else and she said, `No, it wouldn't bother me.' Is it alright for me to sleep with this other girl or would it be wrong to? (Kohlberg, 1971b, p. 21; quoted in Kalam, p. 202).

Kohlberg's answer to this problem demolishes all his claims about his sixth stage morality (Kalam, p. 202). Kohlberg says:

> The real problem is that *nothing has been specified* in this situation. There really is nothing in the act of sex, per se, which is right or wrong. *We haven't been given what we need to determine rightness or wrongness of a choice from a moral point of view.* We're not clear what the implications of this act are in terms of respect for persons, equity or human welfare in these situations. As a result, we can't define clear obligations or rights or wrongs though the situation isn't morally neutral (Kohlberg, 1971b, pp. 20-21; emphasis added by Kalam).

Kohlberg acknowledged here that his stages, especially Stage 6 with its principle of justice—are at a loss because «nothing has been specified.» «We haven't been given what we need to determine rightness.» Kalam asked: «By whom?»—and goes on to note that Kohlberg is looking for direction from someone else, because his Stage 6 principle cannot solve the dilemma. In doing this, Kohlberg is looking outside of the autonomous self for direction—a classic lower stage of morality. After all, Stage 6 principles are supposed to be able to handle all major moral conflicts.

Elsewhere, as Kalam noted (1981, pp. 199-204), Kohlberg is not so

reluctant to provide what needs to be «specified» to determine what is right and wrong. For example, consider how he set up the «Captain's Dilemma»:

> A charter plane crashed in the South Pacific. Three persons survived, the pilot and two passengers. One of the passengers was an old man who had a broken shoulder. Theother was a young man, strong and healthy. There was some chance that the raft could make it to the safety of the nearest island if two men rowed continuously for three weeks. However, there was almost no chance if all three of the men stayed on the raft. First of all, the food supply was meager. There was barely enough to keep two men alive for the three week period. Second, a storm was approaching and the raft would almost certainly capsize unless one man went overboard. This man could not cling to the raft and in all likelihood, would crown. A decision had to be made fast. The captain was strong and the only one who could navigate. If he went over there was almost no chance the other two would make it to safety. If the old man with the broken shoulder went, there was a very good probability, about 80%, that the other two could make it. If the young man went overboard and the old man and the captain stayed chances were a little less than 50/50. No one would volunteer to go overboard.
>
> What should the captain do? Should he:
>
> a) order the old man overboard?
> b) should they draw staws? (Note: the captain has the option of including himself in the draw or not)
> c) let all three of them stay?
>
> (Kohlberg, l978b, pp. l57-l58)

Kohlberg's Stage 6 answer to this problem is to draw lots where everyone has a 50% chance of survival. He is opposed to any one volunteering to sacrifice his life for the others since the volunteer is not getting true justice in this case. He is also opposed to all three deciding to stick together and luck it out.

Kalam rightly noted that Kohlberg's solution here is based on a morality of quantity. That is, that two lives lived for a number of years is better than three lives lived (in a spirit of mutual encouragement, self-sacrifice and love) for an uncertain, presumably short, period. Here Kohlberg—in terms of his own theory—was using a quantative measure of human life, and was therefore operating at Stage 1 or 2, where physical qualities determine the value of human life (Kalam, p. 201).

More to our present concern which is Kohlberg's general neglect of sexual dilemmas, in the «Captain's Dilemma» Kohlberg was quite willing

to specify what was «needed» in order to come to a solution, while in the «Sexual Dilemma» he was not, for reasons that are not clear.

1.14. The narrative critique

In recent years, psychologists have made an impressive argument that there are two fundamentally different types of human cognition. One type is abstract, rationalistic, scientific, and propositional; the other is described as concrete, emotional, imagistic, and narrative in character. Major theorists who make this claim include the cognitive psychologist Bruner (1986) who described one as «propositional,» and the other as «narrative» thought. Others who provide a similar analysis are Pavio (1978), Spence (1982), Tulving (1983), and Sarbin (1986). (For a summary discussion of this issue with special reference to moral development, see Vitz, 1990.) Now, Kohlberg's model of moral development is exclusively based on an understanding of cognition as consisting of only the abstract and propositional type. The idea that the moral life develops through the hearing and reading of stories, through the moral imagination, through the concrete narrative or story aspects of a moral conflict or dilemma is completely absent from Kohlberg's model. Some of this failure has already been noted in the critique of Kohlberg as overlooking empathy (e.g., Hoffman) and in the feminist critique of Gilligan who pointed out how women often tried to supply concrete details to make the moral dilemma more specific.

1.15. The virtues critique

The traditional approach to moral development,based on the virtues, was explicitly disparaged by Kohlberg as irrelevent, useless and empirically unsupported.

One of the major pieces of research used to reject the older approach is that of Hartshorne and May 1928; Hartshorne, May, & Maller, 1929; Hartshorne, May, & Shuttleworth 1930. These volumes describing the results of an extensive series of studies done in the 1920's became well known and were often cited as presenting evidence against the teaching of virtues by any method. This interpretation of the Hartshorne and May research was, however, seriously flawed. First, those who rejected Hartshorne, et al. failed to acknowledge the many findings that did support the teaching of virtues and character development. For example, certain high morale schools and teachers did produce students who behaved better (Hartshorne & May, 1928, pp. 323, 338), and teacher ratings of trustworthiness did correlate with behavioral measures of honesty (e.g., Hartshorne & May, 1928, p. 410).

It is true that Hartshorne and May concluded that their results did

not support the position that such traits as honesty, for example, are consistent across all settings. That is, moral behavior was at times found to be specific to the particular setting or kind of temptation. Such a finding would not surprise most virtue-oriented moralists, and it certainly would not surprise novelists or storytellers for whom character is complex and context is always important. In any case, Hartshorne and May's studies taken at face value are quite consistent with a general honesty factor as part of personality or character, but with specific and situational qualifications.

Even more important, however, is the very strong case for the Hartshorne and May position made by the psychologist Rushton (1980, 1984), who reanalyzed the Hartshorne and May data. He pointed out the high correlations, typically of the order of .50 and .60, between teacher ratings of children's honesty and the more reliable Hartshorne and May measures based on combining behavioral tests (Rushton, 1984, p. 273). Rushton thus showed that Hartshorne's results have been consistently misunderstood in the psychological literature, especially by Kohlberg (e.g., 1984, pp. 498-509). Rushton (1984, p. 273) concluded that

> not only did total scores within the battery of altruism tests and measures yield evidence of consistency, but so too did measures of self-control, persistence, honesty, and moral knowledge. Indeed there was evidence for a pervasive general factor of moral character (e.g., Hartshorne et al., 1930, p. 230, Table 32).

On the basis of this and much other evidence such as the studies of Dlugokinski and Firestone (1974), Rushton (1980), and Rushton and Wheelwright (1980), he concluded that there is a trait of altruism in which some people are consistently more empathic, generous, helping, kind, and that this trait is readily perceived by others. Rushton (1984) also concluded that the consistently altruistic person is likely to have an integrated personality, strong feelings of personal efficacy and well-being, and what generally might be called integrity (1984, p. 279).

From this kind of work, it is clear that the notion of moral traits or virtues is alive and well within contemporary psychology. Other recent major contributions to this tradition by psychologists and educators include: Isaacs (1984), Coles (1986), Oliner and Oliner (1988), Lickona (1991), Kilpatrick (1992) and Bennett (1993).

Theoretical support for the traditional concept of the virtues has also received very extensive treatment in the writings of important philosophers in the last two decades (Pieper, 1966; Murdoch, 1970;

Geach, 1977; Foot, 1978; Wallace, 1978; Perelman, 1979; Dykstra, 1981; Hauerwas, 1981; MacIntyre, 1981, 1986; Meilaender, 1984).

Finally, in what is probably the only extensive longitudinal study of moral character, Peck (1960) reported substantial evidence for different reliably measured moral traits that are stable over time and consistently related to good character. This important study in most respects supported a character and social context approach to moral development.

1.16. Recent philosophical critiques

The philosopher Owen Flanagan (1991) has developed an extended critique of Kohlberg—one often using psychological evidence as well. Flanagan's basic thesis is that moral thought is heterogeneous and cannot be characterized by any one principle or type of person. He interprets the entire emphasis on abstract, rationalistic justice as a seriously flawed understanding of the great variety of qualitatively different types of moral thought. For example, he operates on the assumption «(1) That «justice is not the only virtue of individuals or societies; (2) That it is not the most important or most necessary requirement in all forms or aspects of ethical life; and (3) That it is not required or even desirable as a motive in certain domains of life» (p. 112).

Flanagan's treatment provides a detailed philosophical critique of both the underlying assumptions and the stages of moral development proposed by both Piaget and Kohlberg. Some of Flanagan's criticisms had been made by others and have been summarized previously in these pages. Others are not familiar and the reader should see Flanagan's book in detail. The essential argument woven throughout is that:

> ...the heterogeneity of the moral life is a deep and significant fact... it seems simply unbelievable that there could be a single ideal moral competence and a universal and irreversible sequence of stages according to which moral personality unfolds and against which moral maturity can be unequivocally plotted. (p. 195)

Many conceptual inconsistencies have been noted in Kohlberg's published writings. For example, Schweder (1982a) reported numerous occasions when Kohlberg made a statement in one essay and contradicted it later, often in the same essay. For example, in one essay he wrote that «a culture cannot be located at a single stage»; in a later essay, Kohlberg wrote that cultures are «highly stage-consistent across legal, religious and ethical systems.» Kohlberg wrote that Stage 6 ethics cannot identify what is right or wrong. Somewhat later Kohlberg con-

tradicted himself saying that Stage 6 reasoning leads to «morally right conclusions about specific dilemmas,» for example, opposition to capital punishment.

Reed (1987), a major critic of the confused nature of Kohlberg's philosophical and metaethical assumptions, has pointed out that R.M. Hare, John Rawls, and William Frankena are assumed by Kohlberg to share his metaethical position. However, as Reed showed, these authors do not agree among themselves, or with Kohlberg, on the matter of the definition of morality or how to secure it.

Reed identified many philosophical inadequacies in Kohlberg. For example, he noted that Stage 5—moral judgment—is not shown by Kohlberg to be superior to Stage 4—reasoning. That is, Stage 5 reasoning is not shown to handle dilemmas and moral ambiguities that Stage 4 failed to deal with. Thus, there is no obvious cognitive dissonance at Stage 4 that is shown to be resolved by Stage 5. Reed commented that Kohlberg's failure here is «devastating to his position.» (1987, p. 447)

2. *Conclusion*

What is perhaps most striking about Kohlberg's model is that, despite many years of popularity, especially in education, it suffers from a remarkable number of grave weaknesses, many of which constitute, by themselves, grounds for rejecting it. In spite of Kohlberg's rebuttal of his critics (e.g., Kohlberg, Levine and Hewer, 1984a,b), the system has not recovered from the multiplicity and gravity of the critiques, and at present there is no convincing reason to accept Kohlberg's system.

Attempts to revive the Kohlberg model have taken two directions. One approach, that of John Gibbs (1991a,b), has been to combine Hoffman's empathy model with Kohlberg's cognitive stages. (For a discussion of difficulties with this approach, see Gibbs, 1991c; Hoffman 1991b.) Another strategy has been to drop many of the criticized aspects of Kohlberg's model but keep the «valid» core; this has been the recent contribution of Puka (1991). But see Brown and Tappan (1991) for a sharp rejection of Puka. Probably the best single summary of the present complex situation can be found in the three volumes of Kurtines and Gewirtz (1991).

In any event, since Kohlberg's death in 1987, the weaknesses in his model have become increasingly clear and, in spite of salvage attempts, it appears to be receding as a focus of research and theoretical interest in the United States.

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NOTE

[1] Very briefly, Kohlberg's stages are: Preconventional stages—Stage 1: punishment and obedience orientation; Stage 2: instrumental relativist orientation. Conventional stages—Stage 3: interpersonal concordance or «good boy-nice girl»; Stage 4: «law and order» orientation. Postconventional stages—Stage 5: social contract/legalistic orientation; Stage 6: universal ethical principle of justice.

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SUMARIO: EXPOSICIÓN DE LAS CRÍTICAS AL MODELO DE KOHLBERG DE DESARROLLO MORAL.

Este artículo hace una exposición de las críticas más relevantes que ha recibido el conocido modelo de desarrollo moral de Kohlberg. Concretamente, las críticas que se presentan son las siguientes: la crítica del sí mismo completamente bueno, la crítica feminista, la crítica del relativismo moral, la crítica de la carencia de responsabilidad, la crítica del ateísmo del autor, la crítica de la empatía y la emoción, la crítica empírica sobre los estadios, la crítica de la excesiva dependencia de Kohlberg respecto al lenguaje, la crítica normativa, la crítica sobre metodología de los estudios, la crítica acerca de la relación entre estructura y contenido, la crítica ideológica, la crítica sobre su tratamiento de la moral sexual, la crítica narrativa y la crítica acerca de las virtudes. Estas críticas son expuestas y valoradas en el desarrollo del artículo. Los autores principales con los que se dialoga, aparte de Kohlberg y Piaget, son: Gilligan, Hoffman, Rushton y Schweder. También son tenidos especialmente en cuenta Bruner, Flanagan, Hartshorne, Kalam, Kurtines y Gewirtz, MacIntyre, Rawls, Rest, Vitz y Wolterstorff.

KEY WORDS: Moral Education, Kohlberg, Theories of Moral Development.