AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORG LIND

By Helen Haste, University of Bath, England.

KEY WORDS

Moral Competencies, Discourse, Democracy, Measurement, Education

ABSTRACT

Georg Lind talks about the meaning and measurement of moral competencies, which he sees as crucial to bridge the gap between moral ideals and action, and to maintain modern democracies, which rely on the enactment of shared moral ideals. Lind has carried out and inspired one of the largest research programs in moral psychology, including longitudinal, cross-cultural, and experimental studies. His new methodology, the Moral Judgment Test has been translated and adapted into many languages. Lind has also contributed much to the improvement and dissemination of educational methods to foster moral competencies. The intellectual and biographical roots of his interests are explored.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr. Georg Lind is Professor of Psychology at the University of Konstanz, where he teaches Educational Psychology. After studying Psychology, Philosophy, Linguistics, and Economics at the Universities of Mannheim, Braunschweig, and Heidelberg, he earned his Ph.D. in the Social Sciences at the University of Konstanz in 1984, and his second Ph.D. (Habilitation) at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany in 1991.

Lind is an internationally renown scholar who has served as a visiting professor for education and educational research at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the University of

Konstanz (both Germany), the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico. He has written and edited several books and many articles in German and English. His main books are "Moral Development and the Social Environment," (Precedent Publishing, Chicago, 1985), and "Can Morality be Taught?" (Logos, Berlin, 2002, in German).

Since his times as a university student, Lind has been interested in moral psychology, which once flourished in the 19th century, but virtually vanished thereafter, until it was revived by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget in the 1930s and especially by the late Lawrence Kohlberg, who was professor of Education and Social Psychology and directed the Center for Moral Education at Harvard University. Like Piaget and Kohlberg, Lind sees moral thought and behavior at the heart of human personality and social interaction. Only when we develop the capacity to translate our moral ideals into moral action, he argues, can we live and work together in peace. Hence, he considers this competence as crucial for modern democracies, in which commonly shared moral principles (partly laid down in constitutions and international conventions of human rights) are expected to replace the former authority of kings and dictators. Lind has carried out and inspired one of the largest research programs in moral psychology, including longitudinal, cross-sectional, and experimental studies with more than 40,000 respondents of various ages, gender, social group, and cultural backgrounds. His Moralisches-Urteil-Test [Moral Judgment Test] has been translated and adapted into many languages, including English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Bask, Russian, French, Hebrew, Dutch, Flemish, Czech, Philippino, and Macedonian. Chinese and Japanese adaptations are under way. He has also contributed much to the improvement and dissemination of educational methods to foster moral competencies in schools and universities.

Dr. Lind's web-site makes many of his published and unpublished writings available: http://www.uni-konstanz.de/ag-moral/

He is married to Gisela Kusche and has three children: Gregor, Antonio and Glenda.

The interviewer, Helen Haste is Professor of Psychology at the University of Bath, England. She has been working on moral development and the development of social and political values for over 30 years and has published extensively in this field. She is currently working on citizenship issues. Her other research fields include metaphors and culture, science and society, and gender. She is currently President of the International Society for Political Psychology.

INTERVIEW

Haste: I`ll start by asking you about your concept of moral competence. I think that this is the core concept with which you are working. Is this the case?

Lind: Yes it is. Let me explain what I mean by moral competence. We are puzzled by the fact that there is often a wide gap between our moral ideals and attitudes on the one hand and our behavior on the other. Even when we have very good intentions we often do not, or cannot, behave morally. This gap is less surprising once we take into account how difficult it is to act upon one's own moral principles. What do they mean in a concrete context? What follows from them in a particular decision-making situation? For example, what does justice mean in concrete terms? Or what should we do when basic moral principles come into conflict with each another, as in mercy killing, abortion, genetic cloning, military retaliation, censorship, etc.? Consider for example people who are oppose abortion on the grounds of protecting life, and at the same time defend capital punishment.

We used to think that if people respond differently to these issues, it is because they have different moral principles. People behave badly because, we thought, they had either no, or deficient, moral ideals. But research has clearly refuted this belief. Rather it seems that differences in opinion and behavior result more from the different ways people reason about them in concrete situations. For example, most people believe that they should help someone in distress. Yet not everyone actually helps in a concrete situation when help is needed. Why this difference? In a very thoughtful experiment, Sharon McNamee found that the intention to help was a necessary but not sufficient condition for helping. Helping primarily occurred when the respondents not only intended to help but had also a high level of moral judgment competence.[1]

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1   McNamee (1977).

Obviously, certain situations present a difficult moral task to us, which we can solve only if we have developed a sufficient level of moral judgment competence. Merely having good intentions or high moral ideals does not suffice.

Helen Haste: So by competence are you talking about the capacity to translate reasons, or principles, or intentions into action or does this competence somehow also include generating those intentions and being able to formulate that reasoning?

Lind: The latter, in a way. But the main focus is on how to resolve conflicting principles that call for different action, which brings you into a dilemma. If whatever you do, you transgress some of the principles you believe in, that's a dilemma situation. Another difficulty can be situations in which non-moral drives or forces ask you to do something that is not moral.

Haste: Like what?

Lind: Well, if you feel somebody needs help, you should actually help. But if you are short of time or you just don't feel well, you may say: Well, I should help here but I can't. Another important counter force to doing what you think you should do for moral reasons is that once you publicly commit yourself to a certain opinion on an issue it is hard for you to revoke that opinion just because you have re-evaluated it in the light of moral principles[2]. You feel you have to be consistent with your own opinion and those of your comrades once you have committed yourself. So your moral conscience doesn't have the opportunity anymore to reassess your convictions and your opinions on that issue.

Haste: So the crucial point is not about the relationship between reason and behavior, it's actually about managing internal dialogues and conflicts around one's moral position; revising as you say, one's moral perspective in the light of experience, and reasoning, and other people's dialogues as well.

Lind: Yes, the capacity to come eventually to better decisions through deliberating on your own, and through moral dialogue and discourse with others. This competence is not a sufficient condition to come to a right decision, you still will make mistakes, but it's a necessary condition and it's important for improving the moral quality of decision-making processes.

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2   See, for example, Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. See also Keasey (1974).

Haste: Some people might ask you about moral emotion. Many people, particularly people who are not trained in moral psychology, immediately ask the question. "What about people's emotions and feelings?" What role, if any, does moral emotion play in your competence model or haven't you addressed that yet?

Lind: I have addressed it explicitly. In line with Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, I think one cannot separate cognition and emotion in any way. One can differentiate between them, look at different aspects of behavior in terms of emotion and of cognition but both are always inseparably part of human behavior.

In fact, I started out with moral emotions, moral affects. Moral affects usually arise first in a dilemma situation, in a concrete behavior situation, and this constitutes the actual task to be resolved: How to cope with one's emotions, how to deal with them. It's easy to solve a moral problem in theory, but it's difficult to solve it once your moral emotions and other emotions are aroused. So my definition of moral competence includes the emotional side of the process just as much as the cognitive side.

Haste: Just to recapitulate: You say "coping with one's emotions." You are not simply saying as it were, "finding ways of removing emotion from the situation." You talk about moral emotions being incorporated. Can you give an example?

Lind: If I see somebody being treated unjustly, immediately my moral emotions will be aroused. Only then will I start to think about it. So emotions drive our life. They are, as Piaget says, the energetic aspect of behavior. We cannot and we should never try to get rid of emotions, they are an essential part of our life. But what does it take to bring these emotions together, to make them less destructive, such that they do not produce conflicts that cannot be resolved? Here we come to education. Only when we can deal with emotions can we teach kids how to cope with them in their own life—and also with the emotions of others, of course. This is just as important as dealing with one's own thoughts and cognition.

Haste: Can you say to what extent you are doing is original? In a way it's a very exciting integration of a number of different aspects, but somebody who isn't familiar with the field of moral psychology might say: Well, isn't this all common sense?

Lind: In some way this is common sense, but unfortunately not in psychology. In everyday life we know that things have different properties. Let's take the example of a ball. It is round, it has a shape, it has the property of color, it's maybe red, and we know we cannot take these different properties or aspects of the ball apart. We cannot take scissors and cut out the redness of the ball. In psychology, it seems we try to do just that—and that's a problem. We have tried to cut out emotion from behavior, and cognition from behavior, separated them in different pieces, substantiated them, written separate books on cognition and emotion. At universities, we have chairs for emotion, chairs for cognition. We are doing something that actually cannot be done. Now we have a problem: How can we bring these things together again?

My argument is that they cannot be put together because we have done something wrong at the very beginning by pulling them apart. Piaget would say you cannot take them apart, though you can of course distinguish them. I can perceive cognitive aspects of behavior separately from affective aspects. This is possible. But you cannot cut out or separate these aspects into discrete pieces. And that I think is the fault of psychology; it accounts for a lot of problems we have in psychometrics. Only if we try to measure cognitive and affective aspects simultaneously with the same set of behavior can we get a true image. This is what we have been working on for 25 years.

Haste: I see your point. You are taking quite a deep and wide perspective of Piaget. Many people who have only experienced Piaget superficially would regard him as the ultimate guru of cognitivism and will not see any emotion in his work at all. Is that a fair comment?

Lind: I regard these commentators as partly right since a selective reading can create that impression. Nevertheless, I think if you take the whole Piaget and look at his writings, he said over and over again that you must not take emotion and cognition apart and see them as separate things. I have found at least a dozen places in Piaget's writing where he insists on what I have called the non-separability theory of cognition and emotion.

Haste: Interesting. Now you mentioned measurement. What you are probably best known for internationally is your Moral Judgment Test (Moralisches-Urteil-Test). Tell me about the test. In particular, I want to know how it reflects your concept of moral competence. Perhaps you tell me how it all started.

Lind: Well, measurement is nothing else but observation in a systematic scientific way. Observation and measurement are our contacts with reality, our way of benchmarking or testing our theories, whether they are empirically valid, that is, whether they can be substantiated or supported by reality. So measurement and observation have a very important function in the development of a science, a way to test our theories and sort out good theories from bad theories. There is no other way to do that. So we have to be very aware of the importance of measurement and observation, but also of problems. Wrong observations can impede the development of a science. If you do bad or inadequate measurement, you have no way to make inferences about the validity of a theory.

To give you an example, there was a very elegant study by Emler and his associates[3] on the question of whether moral competence is really a competence, or just a social attitude or a political ideology. Emler argued that if moral responses were the sign of a competence, then it should not be possible for people to simulate a higher level of moral reasoning than they actually have. However, if moral reasoning just reflected an ideology or an attitude that served some function of social adaptation, then it should be possible to produce moral reasoning at any level, lower or higher. So he gave respondents the Defining Issues Test, a questionnaire measure of moral reasoning level devised by Jim Rest[4].

Individuals were then divided into three groups according to their self-declared political stance: Leftists, Neutrals, Rightists. In fact, Leftists had scored higher on the DIT measure than the other groups. The respondents were then asked to fill in the test again, but this time they should fill it in as if they were members of the opposite political group. So those who were on the Right, had to fill it in as political Leftists and those on the Left had to fill it in as Rightists. The prediction was that those on the left, who had a higher DIT score, would lower their judgment scores in the second experiment, and those on the right, who had lower scores initially, would produce *higher* scores. This was the critical prediction. It should be true if morality was merely an *attitude*. Yet if morality was a *competence* this should not be possible. It turned out, that it was indeed possible for the Rightists to produce higher moral judgment scores than they had got before.

Nick Emler and his associates concluded from this finding that moral judgment was just an attitude or ideology which served an adaptive function. That is, people would adopt the moral ideology of the group to which they belonged. But the authors also mentioned the possibility that

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[3]   Emler et al. (1983).

[4]   Rest (1986); Rest et al. (1999)

the DIT was actually not measuring a competence, but only measuring attitudes. In that case, the experiment just showed that the instrument was inadequate. But if this was true, nothing can be said about the theory of moral judgment competence, because the whole experiment was not dealing with it.

What would happen if we would repeat this experiment with a good measure of moral competence? Would Kohlberg's theory of moral competence still be refuted? Well, we did repeat this experiment with our Moral Judgment Test (MJT), and the findings clearly supported the notion of moral competence. The Rightists also got lower MJT scores than the Leftists, but they were not able to produce higher MJT scores when asked to simulate the responses of Leftists.

Haste: So, was Emler's study the impetus for you to develop the Moral Judgment Test?

Lind: The starting point was earlier, when I read older studies like the one by Max Levy-Suhl, a German psychiatrist living and practicing in Berlin before World War I.[5] He found that juvenile delinquents have similar moral values and principles to non-delinquent youth. So he wondered what made them become delinquents if they actually have high moral standards. He speculated that something having to do with intellectual developmental growth could explain this difference. Piaget did his studies on the moral judgment of the child in the 1930s.[6] He also focused on this gap between moral behavior and moral thought. That may explain his heavy emphasis on the cognitive aspect. Before, research only emphasized the emotional aspect of moral behavior. The cognitive aspect was hardly addressed by anyone before Piaget.

Haste: Now before we talk about the actual measure itself let us talk about some background. You obviously come out of the Kohlbergian tradition. Perhaps you can say something about that. To what extent do you ground your concept of moral competence in Kohlbergian theory?

Lind: Kohlberg has been very influential on my thinking in many ways. When, at the end of my studies at the University of Heidelberg, I was told about Kohlberg's work for the first time, I was struck by the concept of moral competence that he used in his early writings and by the heavy emphasis on cognition. And I was also struck by the fact that he declared the field of morality and values as a proper field of scientific investigation and psychological research, which was

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5   Levy-Suhl (1912).

6   Piaget (1965/1932).

hardly addressed in my courses. At least at German psychology departments, values and morality were mostly excluded from scientific research and from my education. I thought psychology had nothing to do with moral judgments. But, of course, I sensed that applying psychology in psychotherapy and education had a lot to do with morality, and therefore we had to somehow deal with it. Reading Kohlberg encouraged me to take up morality as a topic of scientific research. For me, he gave this topic academic credibility and dignity.

Haste: Kohlberg of course used an open-ended measure of moral reasoning in which individuals respond to a number of moral dilemmas and open-ended questions. The individual's moral position is elicited in the interview. Scoring of moral reasoning depends upon the level of moral competence expressed in answers to those open-ended questions. You can find out how complex a person's moral reasoning is by pushing them to give more and more complex answers to the questions about the moral dilemmas. Now when Jim Rest developed the Defining Issues Test, he deliberately created a multiple-choice form where the statements were derived from the different Kohlbergian stages of moral reasoning. Respondents express their preferences for the different statements in terms of how good an answer they are perceived to be.

Now, in your measure you do not do the same as this although there are some parallels. Perhaps you can say something about the development of your measure and the relationship between both Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview that elicits people's reasoning and James Rest's Defining Issues Test, which presents people with a set of choices.

Lind: Well, let's start out with Kohlberg's interview method. I should mention here Kohlberg's original definition of moral judgment competence: The ability to reason according to universalizable moral principles and act in accordance with these principles[7]. In his definition, acting upon one's principles was part of the definition. There was no separation between hypothetical thinking and real action. It was incorporated. Moral principles that were not robust enough to inform real action are actually not psychologically real.

In his dissertation and in his Heinz Werner Memorial Lectures[8], where he talked about the meaning and measurement of moral judgment competence, Kohlberg set very high and convincing standards for the validity of a measurement instrument. However, over 20 years he

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7   Kohlberg (1964).

8   Cf. Kohlberg (1956, 1984).

developed several versions. In the first version, he used a holistic approach. The scorer first read through and globally rated the person's stage of moral reasoning, and then went back and tried to validate this judgment through sample responses given by the respondent. Essentially, Kohlberg followed the classic hermeneutic approach, where you set up a measurement hypothesis and then you go deeper into the material and try to find out if your hypothesis is true or not. Later on, Kohlberg changed the instrument several times. To make it compatible with mainstream psychometrics he created an instrument which, I think, has moved away from his original intentions. The interview scoring was streamlined to fit the criteria of item analysis and item test construction and so lost most of its initial quality. The holistic approach was gone and so was the core idea of *counter arguments*.

So I did not start out with the concrete measurement that Kohlberg was then using. Instead, I started out from Kohlberg's original *intentions* and asked myself if there could be a better way to measure moral judgment competence, a way that would preserve some good ideas in the original interview method, for example, his probing into the respondent's moral conscience or moral reasoning by confronting them with *counter arguments*. I thought this was a good way to assess genuine moral judgment competence By confronting the respondent with counter arguments, that is arguments from an opposing stance, I would find out whether the individual was really trying to act upon them or whether these principles were just being used by him or her to rationalize opinions. In the subsequent revisions of Kohlberg's measure, this idea got mostly lost.

So I set out to produce an instrument of my own. I was convinced that the original measure of Kohlberg was good and that the findings were valid and trustworthy. But when I looked around in the academic community, I saw a lot of suspicion, lack of trust in these findings because they were produced by an interview method that involves subjective interpretation for scoring. I feel that the general public has a right to this kind of data: Psychological measurement should try to be as free as possible from subjective interpretations of responses. I felt that if we could design an instrument that captured Kohlberg's original intentions and still be fully objective in the sense that its scoring can be computerized and doesn't need any interpretation of the subjects' responses, the findings would gain much credibility in both the scientific community and the general public.

Haste: How did you develop your measure and what does it consist of?

Lind: The big problem, as I saw it, was how to define and operationalize a *moral task*. When you measure a competence you need to define the relevant task. For instance, to measure mathematical competence you need to design mathematical tasks. In the moral domain we have hardly any tradition in designing moral tasks. We have Hartshorne's and May's early studies.[9] They designed what they thought were moral tasks, but these tasks have been widely questioned. For instance, they designed tasks intended to create the temptation to cheat, and then they looked at how often children cheated. This measured the children's behavior against some standard external to them, but it was questionable whether the behavior was really a sign of moral competence rather than a sign of something else, such as conformity. Other researchers have used tasks that were not feasible because they roused moral concerns, such as the prison experiment by Zimbardo or the Milgram experiment on obedience to authority [10].

But how could we find a moral task that would show us how well a respondent can reason morally? For an answer I turned to Jürgen Habermas. His theory of communicative action and communicative ethics[11] suggested to me that the ability to engage in a moral discourse with one's opponent would show whether somebody could really apply moral principles, and do so not only theoretically but also in a situation which was emotionally charged. That was the basic idea of the moral dilemmas. We confront respondents with counter arguments, as Kohlberg originally suggested, and as Keasey also found to be very productive in the study of the moral development of children[12]. Through this we hoped to see whether respondents were able to base their moral judgments really on moral principles rather than on other considerations like opinion agreement.

Haste: Can you describe in brief what you were actually doing in the test. When I take the test what would I be doing?

Lind: The standard version, used in most research, is very brief. The respondent is confronted with two moral dilemmas. So, for example, in the euthanasia dilemma, a woman who is terminally ill asks her doctor to give her an overdose of morphine to shorten her suffering. The respondent is asked: Do you think the doctor did the right thing, or was he wrong, or something

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9   Hartshorne & May (1928-1930).

10   Milgram (1974).

11   Habermas (1981).

12   Keasey (1974).

in between? Most respondents tend to be very engaged in this question and become emotionally aroused. This sets the stage for the subsequent experiment.

The experiment itself consists of twelve arguments designed to reflect positions in favor and against the doctor's behavior. Each pro-argument represents one of the six Kohlbergian stages[13]. We wanted to ensure that the arguments are qualitatively different, that is, they each have a different moral quality. The same stages were used for constructing the counter arguments.

To score the responses we look closely at the counter-arguments. For example, if the respondent rejected them all because they oppose his or her opinion, he or she would get a low judgment competence score. If the respondent differentiates in line with the moral quality of the arguments and if these judgments are morally consistent regardless of pro- or con-arguments, they would get a very high score. So we look at the whole response *pattern* of a respondent rather than at isolated responses or stages, and through this we can identify how far the response is determined by moral concern in the context of other concerns, e.g., the respondent's concern to rationalize his or her opinion on mercy killing or other issues. All this is done through an explicit algorithm and not through subjective ratings.

Haste: Would I be asked how much I agree or disagree with a statement or how valid I see this statement to be as an argument for why the doctor is right to kill the woman?

Lind: It's not just agreement versus disagreement. As a respondent, you are asked to rate several arguments ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. So what you show me is that you apply your moral principles even if they are at odds with your opinion on the issue at stake.

Haste: How do you judge my moral competence? You said you are not just testing my stage of moral reasoning. Demonstrate why what you are doing is more effective than the DIT.

Lind: Well, I'm not using the concept of stages here for several reasons. First I see that the literature doesn't support that idea that people develop stage by stage, there is a gradual process involved, there is some decalage across different situations. So the notion of stepwise progression and stage-wise development is very idealistic, very theoretical. It has been shown to be insufficient in many respects. That's why I'm not scoring stages. Second, with the MJT I

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[13]   For the Kohlbergian stages of moral reasoning, see Kohlberg (1984).

leave it up to the individual to define which is the most adequate level of reasoning for him or herself. Then I score whether the respondent judges in accordance with his or her *own* preference of moral reasoning. So the MJT adapts to the individual's perspectives and preferences and does not impose external standards on the measurement of the individual's moral competence. Consequently, the index I constructed tells you something about the degree to which the individual consistently makes judgments in accordance with his or her moral preferences, not with external, philosophical standards. Therefore, it also adapts easily to cultural differences.

Haste: So a stage-two-reasoner could be morally more competent in your terms than somebody who was a stage-four-reasoner?

Lind: That's an extreme example, but it makes the point. In theory somebody can say: I feel comfortable with reasoning at stage two. If he or she were able to do this consistently without any exception, then that respondent would get a high test score. Empirically this is hardly ever the case. When a real moral issue is at stake, everyone seems to make the same judgments about the adequacy of certain types or levels of reasoning: they prefer Kohlberg's stage-6-reasoning over stage-5-reasoning, and this over stage-4-reasoning and so on. This is a well-established finding.[14]

We must emphasize this because there are also dilemmas and problems in life, which don't require reasoning at stage 6, and which can be perfectly well solved on lower stages. Even in Kohlberg's interview I feel there are some dilemmas which can be adequately solved at lower stages and don't require stage 5 or 6 reasoning.

Haste: I think that is the key point. We know from the distribution of moral stages in Kohlberg's longitudinal data that the majority of young adults score at stage 3 and the majority of people in their twenties score at stage 4. Very few people score at stage 5 and almost nobody scores at stage six. So you are not measuring moral stages but something that correlates with moral stages. Is that right?

Lind: Yes. I believe we measure more purely the competence aspect of moral judgment than those other measures. Let me illustrate this on the basis of three longitudinal studies: The one Kohlberg did with his scoring system, Jim Rest's study with the DIT, and our study with the

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14   Lind (2002); Rest (1986).

MJT. If you take the findings of these three studies and project them onto one common scale, let's say from 1 to 100, you will make a surprising discovery. (Note that Kohlberg himself did not hesitate to use a continuous scale, namely the MMS or moral maturity score, ranging from 100 to 500, for presenting his findings.) When you look at the mean scores of the same age groups and how they develop over time you find that although they are on different levels, the scores behave similarly. They rise continuously with level of education. Contrary to common belief, it's very difficult to score high on the MJT. The MJT's moral competence scores are always lower than the respective scores on the DIT and on Kohlberg's interview. This is another indication that the MJT contains a difficult moral task and thus is a competence measure. The other two instruments may also pose some difficulties for a respondent, but to a lesser extent[15].

Haste: You can't fake this measure, you say, can you tell me how you have tested faking?

Lind: We have tested it in two experiments. As I said, one was identical to the experiment that Emler did. We used university students of different political orientations. Instead of using the DIT we used the MJT. The findings were clear. Those on the Left who had higher scores originally, could simulate the lower scores, but those on the Right, who were asked to simulate high scores, could not.

The second, very interesting experiment was done by Wolfgang Wasel, a former student of mine. He did not use abstract categories like political orientations as an instruction but used real people who were collaborating very intensively over a certain period of time. He asked the respondents to simulate the moral judgment competence of a person they knew well and whose moral judgment score was known to the experimenter. Again, low scorers had to simulate people with high scores and vice versa. Respondents could not fake MJT scores upward. Wasel found that low scoring persons could not simulate high scoring persons, but high scoring persons could simulate low scoring persons. The accuracy of simulation by high scorers was also much better than the accuracy of the simulation by low scorers. High scorers obviously were able not only to get high judgment scores, but also to understand and correctly perceive the competence level of other people.

Haste: What do you do with your instrument? Can you measure an individual's moral competence with your instrument or is it just a group test?

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15   See Lind (2002).

Lind: The Moral Judgment Test was designed as an instrument for research and evaluation studies. For two reasons, it was not designed for individual diagnostics or for selection. First it's a rather short test and it only produces robust results if you use it with several respondents. Tests for individual diagnostics need to be more extensive.

Second it was not constructed for use in sensitive situations like those involving selection. Theoretically, it could be used for this because it is a competence test that cannot be faked, but it is too short, and many intervening variables can distort the findings. These usually cancel out when you use it as a group test. So you would come to wrong conclusions about an individual's skills in moral judgment. To use it for selection or individual diagnosis, I would consider that to be an abuse of the MJT.

Haste: More than 40,000 people have taken the test in a variety of different studies internationally. Were they all research studies?

Lind: They were all research studies. Some of them were longitudinal studies. Some were cross-sectional studies, some were experimental and intervention studies. The MJT has been translated and culturally validated for many languages and more translations and adaptations are on the way. It is being translated into Chinese and Japanese, and has already been translated into English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Hebrew, French, Czech, Macedonian, Finnish, Flemish, Russian. Most of the relevant studies involved not just translations but also cultural validations. We set high standards for the cultural validity of the MJT-translations. These standards go far beyond what is usually done in psychology. Studies have to be carefully designed and conducted before any real research is done with the new version. This takes a lot of work, time, and money. But everybody who has gone through this process and adapted the MJT carefully is very happy about that. The test is trustworthier and the comparability of the studies across different language versions is enormously increased.

Haste: So presumably if anyone wanted to be informed about the results of all these studies they would contact you for information. They haven't been brought together in one volume?

Lind: Some volumes are out. My main book is *Can Ethics Be Taught?* which summarizes the findings of many studies on the question of what drives moral development: genes, or social

pressure, or education? The answer comes out very clearly. It is education[16]. Unfortunately, this book has not yet been published in English. We are working on that now. At the Association for Moral Education Conference in Vancouver in 2001 I presented for the first time data from most of these studies on the validity criteria, preference hierarchy, Quasi-Simplex, and other technical things. We find an unusually high degree of agreement between the results across the nations. Although the C-Score, the central score, varies widely between different countries and different groups, the validity criteria converge[17] almost perfectly across all these studies.

Haste: So it's valid internationally even if the actual groups score differently?

Lind: Yes, that's right.

Haste. Another of your major interests, perhaps your real interest, lies in education, educational practice, teaching teachers and applying the concepts in education. Can you talk about that in some more detail?

Lind: Actually, when I set out to research this within the context of the international longitudinal study in the mid-1970s, I had three major questions in mind: First, can we observe and measure moral judgment competence in an objective way? Second, is what we measured relevant for other life areas, for other behavioral areas, where we think it should be relevant? Third, what are the factors that change and promote this competence? Is it an inborn drive? Social pressure? My hypothesis was that education is the main force behind moral development. But when we started out we had no proof for this. Now we have lots of evidence. At present, we are studying the question: what exactly is it in the learning environment that promotes it? The answer to this question should help us develop educational methods and programs to foster moral competencies. For about 15 years, I have been engaged in programs to foster moral and democratic competencies in schools and adult education.

We are able now to identify factors in the educational environment that produce higher levels of competence. These are opportunities for responsibility taking and for guided reflection, as Norman Sprinthall and Alan Reiman have suggested.

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16   Lind (2002). See also Lind, Hartmann, & Wakenhut (1985); Lind (1986, 1987, 2000a, 2000b).

17   Tables and figures are to be found on Lind's Web-site: http/www.uni-konstanz.de/ag-moral/

Haste: So what specifically are you advocating for classroom and school practice?

Lind: The core concept is dilemma discussion, discussing moral dilemmas in classrooms. That idea was suggested by Moshe Blatt and Lawrence Kohlberg in the late 1960s[18]. They found that the very method they used for measuring moral competence in interviews could also be used for promoting this moral development. It was further developed into the concept of Just Community and was later extended and supplemented by Higgins, Power, Berkowitz, Oser, and others as well as myself. I came across it when Kohlberg and Ann Higgins invited me to visit the Just Community program school sites in New York[19]. I was very impressed when I saw kids discussing difficult moral issues at a very high level of discourse.

A meta-analysis of intervention studies revealed unusually high and consistent effects of this method[20]. Yet, this method was very much based on intuition, which made it hard teach to student teachers. It needed further elaboration. So for the past 15 years, I have been working to make it more teachable.

What makes the dilemma discussion work, I think, can be described in terms of Norman Sprinthall's notion of role-taking-opportunities, which I already mentioned, and which goes back to Kohlberg and Piaget. It is not only important that we teach children moral values as part of the curriculum; we must provide opportunities for students to try out their new knowledge in a realistic context. Unless we give students this opportunity, we hardly get any true moral development. Opportunities to take up moral responsibility in real situations help kids to grow morally. Education can provide these opportunities and also provide opportunities for guided reflection. When the child comes to a point where he or she fails, frustration might become so great that it hampers moral-cognitive growth. The importance of these two kinds of opportunities has become clearer and clearer to me over the recent years. I believe that we should enlarge these opportunities in our schools to promote moral judgment competence in all children, and train our teachers to provide them in their classes.

Haste: Kohlberg's Just Community is very close to the ideas of John Dewey. Do you feel close to the work of John Dewey, a major pioneer in education?

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[18]   Blatt & Kohlberg (1975).

[19]   Power et al. (1989).

[20]   Lind (2002).

Lind: The catchword of "learning by doing," for which Dewey is famous, had a very rich meaning for me. Unless we let the students do something for which they can take their own responsibility, they will not really grow and mature. Another lesson was his sense of the close interdependency between democracy, morality, and education. That was something that impressed me. It taught me that democracy cannot do without education and moral development, and that moral development and education cannot do without democracy. That's the point Kohlberg picked up in his Just Community concept. Democracy is an aim and a means at the same time. We need democracy as the basis for good education and we can maintain and improve democracy only by education and development. No one has better and more consistently emphasized this interrelationship than John Dewey.

Haste: You have talked about your ideas, but ideas do not exist in isolation. Earlier you talked about the role of your professors at Heidelberg where you became interested in Kohlberg's theory. But did this build on previous ideas? Had you had some of these interests in your youth?

Lind: Accounting for one's own biography is always difficult. You never know how much your remembrance is painted by your present thinking. But if I remember correctly, all the ideas of values, morality, principles, consciousness have been with me even when I was a little child. I remember my parents trying to teach us moral values like honesty and altruism and I was confronted with the problem of applying these moral values adequately in my life.

One day, I remember, when I was about eight or nine years old, I looked out of the window and saw a beggar standing in front of our house, playing the violin to make money. I felt so sympathetic toward him that I went back in the kitchen, took some money lying there (which actually my mother put there for buying food), and gave it to the beggar. I didn't realize that this money did not belong to me and was needed for buying something else. I was just preoccupied with my wish to help a poor guy. A couple of minutes later my mother came back and said: Where is the money? I mumbled: I gave it to the beggar. And she rushed out and explained to the beggar that this was not money meant for him. So the beggar gave her the money back. I do not know whether I was more ashamed about stealing the money or for my mother, who took the money back from the beggar.

This example, I think, shows that I was already a very moral person at that time in the sense that I had a strong moral sensibility, but certainly not in terms of moral judgment competence. Later,

when I was about 13, I saw for the first time a movie about the concentration camps. In the movie you could see naked dead people on the ground, and you could see who was still alive, but who looked dead. It was horrible. It was even more horrible to think that this had happened just a few years before I was born, imagining that your own parents' generation was involved in that, either actively or passively tolerating it. Somehow being responsible for that.

Haste: How did you handle that? Did you talk to your parents about it?

Lind: I tried to bring that up later. But my parents were very reticent about this. They insisted that they didn't know anything about the Holocaust. I remember that my Dad wanted to believe that as a soldier in the war, he never killed anybody but always shot over the heads of the enemies. I do not know whether this was true or was just being said to avoid further questions. But at that time I didn't want to ask anymore because I feared the truth. I avoided talking to Jewish people for many years because of that feeling of guilt. Actually Larry Kohlberg was the first Jewish person with whom I could talk without being embarrassed.

Haste: You said your father had been a member of the SS. Was he a National Socialist?

Lind: I think that in his heart he was a socialist. And he sympathized with socialists, but due to his middle-class background he probably never considered joining the socialist or communist party. So I think it was his compromise that when the Nazis rose, he hoped that they were creating socialism with a patriotic touch.

Haste: So in some ways the values that you grew up with, even though your father had been a member of the Nazi Party, were socialist values. And were these the values from which your interest in justice came?

Lind: Moral values like altruism and justice were certainly one source of my interest in moral development and education. Yet the second, equally powerful question was: "How can we prevent a Nazi Dictatorship from happening again in Germany or elsewhere?" This question stimulated a lot of discussion with my friends, I remember, and it stays with me until today. We considered many possibilities and always came to the conclusion that nothing would be a real safeguard against a new kind of Hitler. Some believed that Hitler was not dead yet, but lived in Egypt or Latin America. What would happen if he came back? Would people in Germany immediately turn to him again? What could be done to prevent this?

Haste: You felt nothing could be done?

Lind: There was one solution, a kind of enlightened dictatorship, which became very popular in Africa after decolonialization. People hoped for an enlightened dictator, that is a person who was raised as a Christian by missionaries and would become a benevolent dictator, and raise his people to the level of modern democracy by dictatorial means. In Germany, also many thought this would be a better alternative to the still immature democracy we then had. Of course, this solution turned out to be faulty, because you cannot teach democracy by dictatorial means. Another elitist idea was to give the vote only to those people who had a certain level of education. But we felt that this solution was also problematic because it would create the rule of an elite and not a true democracy. Actually, we never found a really good solution. So this question was always nagging me.

Haste: Was that a driving force in the development of your position?

Lind: Thanks to the works of Dewey, Kohlberg, Piaget, and others I now know of a better solution that can be summarized in one word: Education. It's a very difficult solution, very expensive, very time-consuming, but I think it's the only solution that will work. As our research over the past four decades has shown, education seems to be the only way to stabilize and develop a democratic society.

Haste: Did you encounter any personal moral dilemmas in your adolescence or your early adulthood? A grown-up version of your experience with the beggar?

Lind: Not really, I remember that I was sometimes a little shocked by my moralistic views. I was so fenced in by my moral emotions that I also treated other people in an unjust way. I sometimes engaged in some small transgressions, just to prove to myself that I was an average human being. I transgressed moral norms like Dostoevski's Raskolnikov, but for the opposite reason. Whereas he wanted to test whether he had any moral emotions at all, I wanted to emancipate myself from them. Maybe we both were just different examples of what Kohlberg called "Stage-4 1/2-reasoners."

Haste: Did you get involved in politics?

Lind: Yes. I was a member of the student parliament and I engaged in non-violent political activism, like demonstrations and strikes. It started in the late 1960s. As part of my study I had to take a course on anthropology, which *per se* is a good thing, but the professor, who was a known Nazi, taught us racist anthropology. We had to measure head sizes and do all the things Nazi anthropologists had been doing. This was a ten-hour course. I was bewildered. So I organized a strike to get rid of this course. And we got rid of it. The university government immediately deleted the course from our curriculum.

Another incident got me more deeply involved in creating an "alternative university." Our psychology department chair pronounced that psychoanalysis is rubbish, not academic and not scientific. So I organized a lecture series with psychoanalytic practitioners. Unfortunately the first lecturer turned out to have nothing to say but bad jokes about his clients. This experience made me turn away from psychoanalysis for some time. Originally I got into Psychology through extensive reading of Freud's work, also Heinz Hartmann's. These writings were very appealing to me. But then I had this frustrating encounter with a real psychoanalyst. I came back to psychoanalysis much later, rereading and re-understanding it.

Haste: And your present position?

Lind: Well, I think many of the things for which Freud is praised I still don't like very much: *The Interpretation of Dreams,* for example. But some of his writings, like *Civilization and its Discontents,* I would like to reread. Modern offshoots, like Kohut's *Self-Psychology*, are very appealing to me as an academic and experimental psychologist.

Haste: We have mentioned Kohlberg several time, and his influence on you.

Lind: I met Kohlberg for the first time in Starnberg (Bavaria) in 1978 when he gave a lecture. In the discussion afterwards, I was impressed by how eager he was to learn about criticism of his theory, how he could stand very harsh criticism from some in the audience. My criticism was: Why did you deviate from your original approach? Why did you change and give in to mainstream psychology? I felt that Kohlberg was the first person who immediately grasped what the intentions of my research were.

Haste: You first met Kohlberg in 1978, but you came across his ideas in 1972. So what did you do in-between these years? Did you get into research on moral development?

Lind: In 1973, I joined the special research unit on "Educational Research" at the University of Constance. I became a member of a group that was going to do an international longitudinal study on the development of the student's personality, that is, the impact that university life and university education have on the personality and outlook of students[21]. Within that framework I was asked to contribute a psychological perspective. I looked at several areas like Heinz Heckhausen's motivation theory, attribution theory and other social psychological approaches, and learning theories (students' learning processes). Actually it was students that turned me toward Kohlberg's work again. I elaborated a research agenda for the project and proposed it to my colleagues in the project team.

It also fit into their research interests in political socialization, educational socialization, gender development, and so on. This was really a unique opportunity for me. I worked on that research project for thirteen years. For two years I worked intensively on measurement issues and developed my own test. I hardly had contacts with the Kohlbergian group, with a few exceptions. Roland Wakenhut particularly challenged and supported my work. He adapted my method for his own studies in the German army. I would also like to mention Tino Bargel and Gerhard Portele, who both contributed to the development of the Moral Judgment Test.

Haste: So when you met Kohlberg in 1978 you found him sympathetic. But you said he also was influential at other points in your career, and that you visited the Center for Moral Development at Harvard.

Lind: When I met him he invited me to come over to Harvard and present my work to his famous Friday colloquium at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He also urged me to contact other eminent scholars like Norma Haan, John Broughton, Jim Rest, Elliot Turiel, and Ted Fenton. So I went on a tour for about ten weeks and made presentations at universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Minneapolis, Berkeley, and Pittsburgh. Unfortunately Kohlberg was not present at my Harvard presentation, because he became very ill then, which I didn't know before I arrived. But I talked to many of his collaborators: Anne Colby, John Gibbs, Mark Lieberman,

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21   The research consisted of three overlapping longitudinal studies of university students covering the time from their last year in school to their first years in work after graduation (from 1976 to 1986). It was concurrently done also in four other European countries: Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, and Yugoslavia. See, e.g., Bargel et al. (1982); Sandberger & Lind (1979). The research staff at the University of Konstanz consisted of Hansgert Peisert (director), Tino Bargel, Gerhild Framhein, Barbara Dippelhofer-Stiem, Johann-Ulrich Sandberger, Hans Walter, and the author.

Dan Candee, Clark Power and many others. I also got to talk to William Perry extensively about his schemes of ethical and intellectual development.

Haste: So you found your intellectual community really through the Kohlberg group. What effect did this have on you?

Lind: A mixed effect. I got valuable feedback and criticism that made me rethink my work. But also I was a little disappointed. I felt that some of Kohlberg's collaborators and disciples didn't really understand what he originally was trying to achieve. In some way they caused him to make intellectual compromises in order to get stipends and grants for them. This made me understand much better what happened to Larry Kohlberg's thinking in the late 1970s, when he revoked some of his ideas and suddenly subscribed to the concept of *indoctrination*.

Haste: But you consider yourself as a Kohlberg disciple, don't you?

Lind: In some sense I do, I owe a lot to him. My work is based on his work and he is an important reference point for me. My ambition is to add something to what he has achieved even though I'm critical of his core postulate of invariant sequence. But I'm not a disciple in the literal sense, nor am I a Neo-Kohlbergian. I never studied with him; I have never been a believer. I rather saw myself as a colleague. He helped me setting up a just community project in Germany[22], and I advised him on analyzing data from his school projects in New York. I started to teach Kohlberg's work in my courses, and he lectured on my Moral Judgment Test in seminars at Harvard.

Haste: He wasn't the only influence on you. You mentioned Habermas.

Lind: I was reading Habermas' work much earlier than Kohlberg's or Piaget's. Habermas' work made a great impression on me. He was able to translate abstract social philosophy into empirical research. He collaborated in a famous study on students' political ideologies and political activism in Germany the early 1960s[23]. His theory of communicative action helped me to understand better social-psychological processes.

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22   Cf. Lind & Raschert (1987), Lind (2002), Oser & Althof (1994).

23   Habermas et al. (1969/1961).

Haste: So who else on a personal level, apart from Kohlberg, was important for you?

Lind: Paul Meehl. I always admired him because he was going beyond test construction, thinking about validity and about science of science[24]. So I was very excited when he asked me to explain to him the rationale of the Moral Judgment Test at length in a private session. He would lean back in his chair, close his eyes and say: "Go on!" I started out by heavily criticizing the MMPI, his brainchild, and the current conceptions of reliability and validity, and the very narrow methodological ideas behind them. I argued that we need to overcome this kind of psychometrics to make psychology a more respectable science. I was quite bold for a young guy without a Ph.D. yet. After I finished he said: "See, on the one hand there is such a huge amount of data and knowledge gathered with the MMPI, so we cannot just discard it. It's valuable in itself, even though I also see its pitfalls. What you have got there is dramatically new and it seems to be very fruitful. So, stick to it. Show empirically that you have a point and so on." Hearing this from someone like Paul Meehl was wonderful and motivating for me.

Haste: Now, we talked about mentors and key people. There comes a point when one starts realizing that one disagrees with them very strongly on some important issues. And this itself is a growth experience. Did you have this experience with Larry Kohlberg? Where do you consider you depart from Larry Kohlberg and where do you follow him?

Lind: My basic criticism was, and still is, that, in the end, he created an instrument for measurement[25] which is at odds with what he initially intended to do. Initially he conceived of morality as holistic, something that can be looked at only in a holistic way by looking at patterns and structures. But in the latest version of the Kohlberg Interview the responses are as atomized as in any other psychological test. Each single response is seen as a representation of some underlying disposition. By doing so, the structural or relational properties of the response pattern are dissolved. It seems that Kohlberg was forced to do this because he came under heavy attacks from mainstream psychology[26]. I think these attacks were unfair. They did not take into account what Kohlberg and Piaget were aiming at and they took for granted that prevailing psychological psychometrics were sacrosanct. My criticism was and still is that methods are only means to

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24   See, for example, Meehl (1958; 1978).

25   Colby et al. (1987).

26   Cf. Kohlberg (1984).

something. They must follow the theory and not the other way round. That was Kohlberg's original idea too, which he elaborated in his Heinz-Werner memorial lectures.

Haste: You said you believe in the importance of dialogue and engagement between persons in educational work. Do you find Kohlberg too individualistic?

Lind: Yes, even though he spoke about dialogue and social rhetoric, actually in his theoretical work he was individualistic. He wrote mostly about the individual's development regardless of the social context. I challenged him on that point, when he gave a lecture at Fribourg in Switzerland. I had the impression that he did not quite understand what I meant.

Haste: It is a kind of paradox. After all his Just Community work was very much about social context.

Lind: The "dialogical" Kohlberg was a complete surprise for me, after having known him only through his writings. When he first invited me to sit in a dilemma discussion session at one of his projects in New York, I was struck by two things: First he was really interested in group-life and developing the moral atmosphere of the class in the school and not so much in the individual. Second, I was astonished that I never heard him talk about his stages in the schools. Rather he was encouraging the students to develop their own moral views and moral theories and questioning each other's. He did not impose his moral theory or stage-model or anything on the students. So when you look at his practical work in schools you find that he was not individualistic at all, nor was he a defender of his stage-model. So, it seems, really two Larry Kohlbergs existed, a monological and a dialogical one.

Haste: And yet, when he wrote about Just Community Kohlberg did actually write of its effects on moral stage progress. He didn't really work out or incorporate the social-dialogical dimensions of the group as a theoretical construct, as opposed to seeing it as a kind of educational means to an individual end. Is that a fair comment?

Lind: I would say it's not quite fair because he was very sensitive to these issues. I think Clark Power proposed to incorporate Durkheim's work in the Just Community concept and introduced methods to assess moral atmosphere. Kohlberg was very ready to accept this. When Ann Higgins introduced social psychological concepts like the concept of "Pluralistic Ignorance," taken from

Floyd Allport, he was also ready to incorporate them into the Just Community model. Yet, in measurement, he did not elaborate the dialogical aspects of moral development.

Haste: Is there anything we have left out about influences on your life or on the development of your intellectual biography?

Lind: Well, I should mention my parents and some of my teachers, who not only tried to instill me with high moral ideals, but also gave me a lot in terms of self-confidence. They kept me from becoming too narrow in my intellectual interests and my intellectual development in that they always emphasized the importance of having a broad view of the world. This is something that stayed with me. I also want to mention Fritz Oser, Norman Sprinthall, Lois Thies-Sprinthall, Alan Reiman, and Rheta deVries. They helped me to move gradually from research psychology to education and teacher training. That I am still doing basic research in this field, I especially owe to numerous students and younger colleagues who challenged me through their studies and questions.

Haste: What do you think your major achievements have been?

Lind: I would say that I have constructed the first measure that can be shown to be a true measure of the competence aspect of morality. Kohlberg's interview method in many respects comes close to that ideal, but has some drawbacks, as I have pointed out[27]. So I think this is the real achievement. The second achievement, I would dare to say, is that I have made the dilemma-discussion method more teachable. So the dilemma discussion method can now be more easily incorporated in a general explicit curriculum, whereas before, the method as Kohlberg and Blatt designed it, was more an intuitive one. I hope that through this I have helped to make dilemma discussion part of teaching and education on all levels and across all fields of study as a means to promote moral and democratic competencies in all children.

Haste: What about your failures? What do you regret?

Lind: It's hard to think of a single major failure, it's rather this continuous experience of failures, which is probably inevitable when you always explore new fields. I hope that I was able to learn from these mistakes in a productive way.

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[27] Lind (1989).

Haste: What were the main constraints on your intellectual development if anything?

Lind: Ignorance, Bertrand Russell would say. All evil stems from ignorance. It is a general experience that we never know enough and so this is the biggest enemy, I think, we have in life and especially in science.

Haste: Is what you want to achieve the widespread use of the moral dilemma practice method in schools?

Lind: I really believe that to maintain democracy and to develop it, it's essential to improve our education in terms of moral education, in terms of fostering moral judgment competence and moral discourse competence. The method of choice seems to be dilemma-discussion. As we have shown through a lot of research, within this method we can very effectively foster moral judgment competencies and the moral atmosphere and learning culture in schools. Children learn to have dialogues and discussions and they learn to make use of other's moral expertise for solving moral problems. Often we try to solve moral problems by ourselves. We do not dare to ask a friend or a stranger to help us solve them, because we are afraid of negative responses. During a moral dilemma discussion you can see how students open up to each other, how they really move to a higher level of moral discourse, not only amongst themselves, but also with opponents. Once teachers have learned how to convene a dilemma discussion, most become enthusiastic about it. The students, they report, respond very favorably and also develop a greater motivation to learn other subject matter.

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