

## AP Psychology



### 4.3 - Moral Development

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## Moral Development

- Infants are not born with a concept of morality
- All moral reasoning or beliefs about what is right and wrong must be learned in some way
- Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) specialized in moral reasoning. His stage theory is considered a milestone in Developmental Psychology

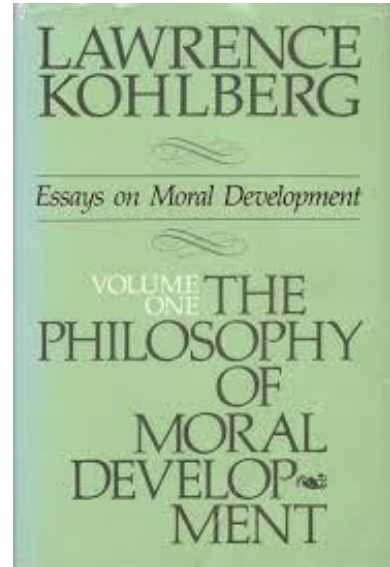


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## Moral Development

### • Kohlberg's Research

- Kohlberg created a list of 10 hypothetical moral dilemmas and asked them to 72 boys from the Chicago suburbs. The boys were 10, 13, and 16 years old
- After being presented with the dilemmas, Kohlberg and his associates interviewed each subject.
  - Kohlberg focused on the form of moral reasoning being used
- Concluded that the subjects' responses could be categorized into three levels of moral development



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## The Heinz Dilemma

- A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

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## Moral Development

### • Preconventional Morality

- Typical of young children
- Makes moral judgements based upon avoiding punishment
  - Egocentric reasoning is limited to how their choice will affect themselves
- Example: Preconventional responses stated that Heinz should not have stolen the medicine because he would be put in prison and labeled a bad person



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## Moral Development

### • Conventional Morality

- Typical of adolescents and young adults
- Make moral judgements based on compliance with society's rules and values
  - Conventional standards of what is right and wrong are learned from parents, teachers, peers, and the media
- Example: Conventional responses stated that Heinz should not have taken the medicine because stealing would mean breaking the law



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## Moral Development

### • Postconventional Morality

- Typical of adults
- Develop personal standards of what is right and wrong. They define morality in terms of abstract principles of justice
- Example: Postconventional responses stated that Heinz should have stolen the medicine because his wife's right to life outweighed the druggist's right to private property



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## Moral Development

### • Criticism of Kohlberg's Theory

- Carol Gilligan criticized Kohlberg for failing to include women in his research design
- Argues that Kohlberg's theory fails to sufficiently account for differences between experience and outlook between males and females
- Gilligan contends that the moral concerns of men emphasize justice while the moral concerns of women focus on caring and compassion



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