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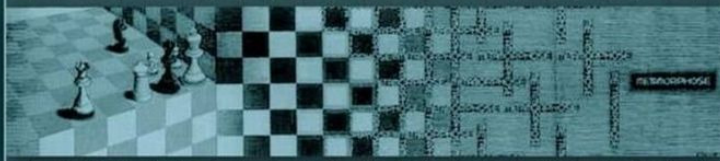
Fedor Kozyrev

# QUANTIFYING THE MORAL DIMENSION



*Edited by Julia Ipgrave*

**Fedor Kozyrev**

# Quantifying the Moral Dimension. New steps in the implementation of Kohlberg's method and theory

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## Аннотация

The book presents the results of an educational survey and a new instrument for diagnostics of moral judgment capacities based on the dilemma method. This instrument is proposed for the quantitative assessment of aspects of the personal moral development and in particular to detect morally gifted children. Reflections on the results include a revision of Kohlberg's 6-stage model of moral development and wider considerations regarding constructivist approaches to moral and religious psychology.

# Содержание

# Quantifying the Moral Dimension New steps in the implementation of Kohlberg's method and theory

Fedor Kozyrev

*Dedicated to the memory of John M. Hull*

Julia Ipgrave *Editor*

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# Editor's Foreword

This compact work tells of an enterprise bold in both its subject and its design. Its focus on morality places this project in linear descendancy from the interest of the ancients in education for moral living and civic virtue. It also connects it back to the western Enlightenment's quest for knowledge of moral truths, and to the subsequent internalisation of the subject with 20 century psychology's exploration of the moral consciousness of the individual and the development of that consciousness from childhood. The subject of moral education has a rich background. Looking forward, it has also acquired a new urgency as the dizzying speed of technological, scientific developments and startling changes in our environmental, public health, demographic, economic and political contexts make for a complex present and uncertain future. We may not know what world we are preparing our young people for, but it is perhaps more important now than ever before to examine principles for reasoning and action that will hold good in the face of unforeseen challenges and hitherto unimaginable possibilities. th

The interest of this work is practical. Its aim is to present something of application and benefit to existing educational contexts, and so it is not the place for philosophical first-principles theorisation. Rather it straight away aligns itself

with constructivist pedagogies. Morality is treated as a process, as an operation. While acknowledging that it is inevitably a simplification, the author nevertheless adopts for its usefulness, the measurement of progress in a subject's ability for moral judgment as an indicator of the development of moral consciousness.Where that moral consciousness and judgment is deemed to be of great significance to the individual's negotiation through the world and the right ordering of that world, then the assessment of young people's progress towards that consciousness, and of the effectiveness of educational systems in promoting that consciousness, becomes important. This brings us to the boldness of the method presented in this work.

The memorably named ONYX test (for the "Assessment of moral discernment and coherence of judgment") described here constitutes this work's real innovation and contribution to the field. There is boldness in its advocacy of quantitative methods for the measurement of the moral qualities of individuals. The author goes so far as to write of the "instinctive repulsion" some might feel, nevertheless, he argues convincingly for an elaboration and accurate usage of quantitative methods as a way of countering trends of depersonalisation and preventing the manipulation of data by those seeking to control all aspects of human activity. He demonstrates this elaboration and usage in the chapters that follow. We find the ONYX test is far from the blunt instrument

that critics of quantitative methods fear. The dilemma scenarios of the test are so devised as to capture subtleties of human motivations and understandings, and new technologies have brought greater sophistication to quantitative methods so that it is now possible to process numbers of a magnitude, in a complexity of relationships and with a speed unimaginable before. The results of the tests, as set out in this work, supply valuable insights into the maturation of moral consciousness and the effect of different educational environments on this. They raise interesting questions for further exploration and reflection, such as that of individual "giftedness" in the moral dimension. There are also some suggestions of the influence of cultural factors on the moral judgments of these Russian young people potentially opening up a new area of intercultural comparison. Above all, they encourage the wider use of such an instrument in other educational institutions and regional and national settings.

It is to enable the wider dissemination and use of such an instrument that this English version has been produced. There can be no better tribute to the vision, insight and dedication of Fedor Kozyrev, designer, research and author of this project, than the replication of his model in many and diverse settings and the accumulation and cross comparison of valuable data on the crucial question of the moral ordering of our lives and world.

*Julia Ipgrave*

# Introduction to English edition

This volume highlights one aspect of an extended experimental initiative in the field of school education that has been undertaken by a group of scholars in St. Petersburg over the last decade. The main purpose of the work was the development of new approaches to moral and religious education and their methodological equipment. The initiative was welcomed by the state after a new National Curriculum, or Federal State Standards of Education, (as it is called in Russian), came into operation in 2010—2011. Two major changes in school policy were especially significant in this respect. Firstly, the concept of Personal Moral and Spiritual Development and Formation was introduced in 2009 and later became part of Federal Standards. It gave the green light for producing a religious education syllabus and the inclusion of moral and religious topics in school curricula. Secondly, the idea of personal school attainments was reconsidered and formulated in terms of competences instead of knowledge and skills. Three types of attainments were identified: 1) special or subject attainments linked to certain disciplines, 2) meta-subject attainments consisting mostly of universal learning skills, and 3) personal attainments reflecting changes in cognitive, communicative, emotional and behavioural dimensions of students' psyche. Evaluation of personal attainments became quite a new task

for Russian educational system and obviously not an easy one. Scholars who dared approach these new challenges had a good chance for obtaining grants. I was among them.

In 2011 I became a supervisor of a state supported scientific project based at one of St. Petersburg's comprehensive state schools which received the status of a laboratory. The main target of the project was the development and trialling of an experimental programme of Spiritual and Moral Education, based on the interpretative approach. In fact, six years after the start of the project we had two big educational programmes on RE, approved by several school principals, covering the whole period of secondary and high schooling (from 5 to 11 grades) and a good number of didactical resource s for different extracurricular activities. The ideas of J. Hull, M. Grimmitt, R. Jackson, T. Cooling and other outstanding British scholars were extensively presented in all of these programmes but this is a subject for another book. Here we focus on the diagnostics of personal attainments that was also among the priorities of the project. Although not the primary task, it nevertheless attracted and brought to our team specialists in psychological diagnostics from several academic institutions and methodological centres whose considerable contribution was critical for the successful completion of the project. Alla Doumcheva, the docent of the psychology department at St. Petersburg Academy of Post-Diploma Pedagogical Education played the main role in this cooperation and became my main partner for the whole period

of research. I express my gratitude to her. th th

The main parts of this study were originally published in Russian in 2016 under a deliberately ambiguous title that can be translated into English either as «Dimension of Subjectivity» or as «Measurement of the Subjective». A preface by A. Doumcheva opened the book. The main difference of the current English version besides language, is its single focus on a test for diagnostics of moral judgment competence called ONYX, while the double focus of Russian version paid equal attention to another diagnostic tool called Q-sorting. The difference is determined by the much better acquaintance of the English speaking academic audience with Q-sort technique and the availability of English literature on this topic. In Russia this technique is still generally seen in a too narrow way as an attachment to the Carl Rogers' and is used in accordance with this vision. For this reason one of my tasks was to stimulate Q-sort usage in Russian educational research. Yet the English edition is not simply an extract from the original book. Some clarifications, additions and improvements were brought into the text, especially regarding some theoretical issues tackled in my previous publications in Russian. [1] *Self Concept*

Besides theoretical observations this book contains a bulk of empirical data collected during our surveys in St. Petersburg schools. How interesting and informative can they be for

[1] Козырев Ф. Н. Измерение субъективности: Конструктивизм в практике педагогического исследования. – СПб: РХГА, 2016

the Western reader? In order to answer this question I want to refer to the educational research project REDCo (2006—2009) funded by the European Commission and intended to evaluate the role of religion in education for the increase of both dialogue and conflict in the transforming societies of European countries. I was a member of the team coordinating the project's activity in Russia. The sample for empirical studies used in that project was similar to the sample for further studies described in this book with several schools participating in both projects. What we found during REDCo was a large spectrum of commonalities in religious and moral beliefs of students from different countries. Students from St. Petersburg occupied a middle position in many issues related to religion. In some aspects they could be estimated as less religious (for instance in their attitude toward religious education), in other aspects (such as contemplating religious matters) more religious than an average European. One point only made our students distinct from their Western peers. In reaction to the statement «Religion belongs to private life» only 2% of our respondents disagreed with it, and it was an astonishing figure compared to almost a half disagreeing with it in many European countries and two thirds disagreeing with it in England. Paralleled with some other findings this result was interpreted then as a sign of a special or type of religiosity distinctive of Russian students and probably rooted in collective historical consciousness (Kozyrev & Valk 2009, 326, 335, 340, 346). While keeping in mind this particular

point, one may take the REDCo experience as a ground for caution in the extrapolation of data presented in this volume to the European context. *hidden asocial*

The theses of this book were presented and discussed at many conferences inside Russia and on a few occasions abroad. One of them was ISREV-2014 in York. Another was a couple of meetings (2013, 2015) in Klingenthal (France) organised in the frame of post-REDCo activities for participants of REDCo project. I express my gratitude for this opportunity to REDCo and post-REDCo coordinator Prof. Wolfram Weisse.

I know exactly where my interest for educational studies came from. It was in 2000 in Kappel (Switzerland) that I first met John Hull at a seminar organised by the RE-network (coordinated by Walter Sennhauser). It was from him that I first heard about J. Fowler's stages of faith as well as about Kohlberg. Professor Hull did much more to excite my interest in the field and years later, having become a professor myself, I used to start my lectures on pedagogy with a story about how one English lecturer persuaded me in an hour or two that pedagogical science exists, although I had doubted it for many years before despite the dozens of lectures on pedagogy I had to attend during my post-graduate education.

The last time I met John Hull in Birmingham, was in his house and several months before he passed away. I told him about our research work and about my plans for revising Kohlberg's model. He listened carefully and encouraged me to continue the work.

Between these two meetings there were many others, and I had a privilege to have John as my guest in St. Petersburg where he came as a missioner of new movements in RE. I dedicate my book to the memory of this great man. Let it be a small reimbursement for the courage, energy, and generosity with which he shared the best achievements of British and, indeed, world pedagogical science with me.

# 1. Constructivism in the practice of pedagogical research

We start with considerations of constructivism because constructivist thinking is the very bedrock of the attempt to trace patterns of moral judgment presented in this book. Our understanding of this relationship did not come to us in the course of experimental work. It had been there from the beginning shaping the whole project. Constructivism (as we understand it) was our theoretical framework. So, let's start from the beginning.

The end of the last and the beginning of the current millennium were marked by the growing influence of constructivism in pedagogical practice. The image of a of consciousness (Locke) impressed with unequivocal stamps by means of a "didactic machine" (Comenius) has ultimately been substituted with the image of a self-developing system, the main determinant of which lies not outside but inside. Constructivism in its radical forms proposed an end to the search for any linear connections between external stimuli and the psychic reactions of the organism and a switch to the study of the internal regulators responsible for a kind of "filtration" of the experience, i.e. its selection, amplification or reduction through perception and further interpretation. Constructivism

made a decisive step to break with behaviourist tradition when it shifted the focus of study from the subject's reactions to the subject's internal world. As for comparison with experimental psychology, constructivism gave it a push toward a holistic orientation in line with gestalt-psychology but sublimating its notion of the existence of implicit integral perceptional structures and associating them not with the subconscious but with cognitive characteristics of the consciousness. *tabula rasa*

The vital impulse for this shift came from Kant and his doctrine of the transcendental structures of consciousness. These structures were named differently after Kant: either noetic elements (Husserl) or the tacit dimension (Polanyi) or cognitive schemas (Piaget) or personal constructs (Kelly). Whatever the terminology, the names referred to implicit structures acting beyond the horizon of the conscious but accessible for scientific and particularly experimental exploration and description. Using a naturalistic analogy, according to the premises of constructivism these structures are responsible for the formation of our conceptions, commitments and outlook just as our digestive organs are responsible for the construction of molecules that constitute our body.

So, we take as a foothold for all the philosophical and pedagogical endeavours of constructivism the Kantian notion of the reconstruction of the outer world by the mind, that is, the belief that knowledge is not obtained in a passive fashion but is actively construed by the cognitive subject. Yet

this constructivist offspring of Kantianism offered something new. It was the intention to perceive knowledge as an construction quite contrary to the initial Kantian vision of the spontaneous action of factors inherited by human nature. This turn toward socio-cultural factors emphasised the potential role of education and socialisation in personal formation. And it is not a coincidence that the idea of socio-genesis, first formulated by the Piaget's disciple Pierre Janet, found such fruitful ground in the constructivist field. It is enough to mention the culture-historical theory of Lev Vygotsky. *artificial*

The conviction that constructs may be purposefully affected by means of education seems to contradict the initial constructivist thesis about the priority of the internal over the external. However, this reverse takes place at another level of tackling the problem. The transition from behaviourist to constructivist paradigm entails the enrichment of pedagogy with important theoretical notions and methodological principles. Perhaps the most important among these is the notion of the active and selective participation of the subject in the assimilation of the matters delivered to that subject and the consequent principle of . According to this, any external impact on an organised system causes its stronger or weaker resistance. The more complex and coherent the system, the more difficult it is to intrude into it without damaging its existing structures. In the extreme, any attempt to inculcate an idea or a value into someone's mind will produce a painful

reaction or rejection similar to what often happens with tissue transplantation. This principle was grasped and fixed in the concept of  by one of the first constructivists, William Stern. The internalisation of external matters, according to Stern, is feasible only after the transformation of other's intentions into own intentions of the developing person and after he or she grants place to these formerly alien aims and matters in the universe of his/her previously internalised contents and aims. *resistibility intraception*

But what happens if a new experience or new knowledge does not fit the existing conceptual frame or set of representations? For instance, a child who used to perceive his parents as omnipotent beings suddenly finds that they are as dependent on some other's will as he is on them. Obviously, he has to give up his existing idea of a hierarchical system of relations and change it for a more complex one, incorporating another, higher level of power. Thus, Piaget's doctrine of the developmental process as a set of progressive leaps in the direction of the extension of cognitive schemas became the cornerstone of the most fruitful constructivist movements. Structural theories of personal development built on this base put forward one more principle common for constructivism, namely the quantum character of self-development. In fact, this principle is a derivative of a basic constructivist premise about the existence of active internal structures responsible for the organisation of experience. Any sort of discontinuity of a transition presupposes non-

uniformity of an object or a milieu in which it takes place, that is, it presupposes structure. This is because the very steadiness of structures is due to their ability to resist external influences up to a certain critical point and to change abruptly beyond this point. When Max Planck discovered the quantum effect, it became clear that atoms have structure. Observations made by Piaget and his followers convinced them that something similar takes place in the realm of the psyche. Personal constructs do not change through our life gradually and smoothly. They have a tendency to stay unchanged (resistibility), so each occurrence of a new construct is preceded by a break-up of an old one. The inner world of a human being resembles a kaleidoscope, in which one complex and coherent pattern replaces another without intermediate stages. The mission of education is to prevent recycling and to evolve the process into a progressing line coordinated by a pedagogical ideal. This is what Piaget recognised as the main perspective of personal development and defined in terms of progressive changes of schemas.

Another heuristic point in Piaget's doctrine was a statement about the inseparability of two processes, one of which was the assimilation of external matter by the mind and another was the transformation of the mind by this matter. «The mind organizes the world by organizing itself». This famous aphorism of Piaget let radical proponents of constructivism consider cognition and education as modes of activity whose primary aim is rather the arrangement of a human's inner world than comprehending the

world around. The interaction of constructs with the outer world results not only in the adjustment of the latter to the demands of the former. Constructs themselves are adjusted to reality. Piaget conceptualised these two sides of the same process in physiological terms of assimilation and accommodation, the latter being responsible for the change of constructs and allowing in particular the consideration of the cognitive development of a human being as a form of evolutionary variability and as a sort of biological (and social) adaptation to the environment via self-organisation. In this biological discourse constructivism grants affinity with synergetics and borrows its conceptual framework and its theoretical potency.

It is worth restating that constructs dwell mainly beyond the conscious. They are not merely complexes of notions, as it was in the example with parents given above. They consist of psychological states and acts preceding rational activity. Included in this category may be acts of intentionality, apperception, intuition, motivation, semantic conjugation, that is, involvement in a certain language game (Wittgenstein) and in a hermeneutic circle of a culture, subjection to the pressure of metanarratives (Lyotard) and social prejudices (Gadamer) etc. From this point of view any investigation of the conscious on the constructivist premises is always a deep inquiry – an attempt to get a glimpse into the dimension of the psychological life of a person that is hidden from his/her own eyes. Many schools of psychology attempt it, but in different ways. The peculiar

features of the constructivist approach are better seen in its contraposition with Freudianism.

Many celebrated scholars, disciples of Freud himself included, criticised psychoanalysis for its dangerous insularity, not allowing researchers to get beyond legitimate interpretations. H. Olport, for instance, claimed that the desire to seek hidden motives and complexes in all psychological phenomena results in a sort of methodological presbyopia in which a psychoanalyst cannot see and take into account obvious and open motivations. Monolithic and strictly focused in its method, this school comes close to the point where the hermeneutic circle turns into a vicious one. The researcher armed with an omnipotent theory is quite unlikely to be interested in facts that do not fit that theory. Much more interesting for him are facts that support the theory, so the theory starts serving itself, a process that was brilliantly described by T. Kuhn regarding science in general. We deal here with the basic problem of scientific investigation, namely that of theoretically encumbered fact, the one that neo-positivists and phenomenologists struggled with a hundred years ago. Freudianism is a bright but far from unique example of the dialectics of advantages and disadvantages of the empiric-analytical method. The firmer the theory, the more logically coherent it is, the more sophisticated and exact its methodical equipment, the narrower is the set of phenomena that can be lassoed by it without distorting truth. As a consequence of its brave (and in many ways successful) reduction of the

human psyche to basic human instincts Freudianism distorted beyond recognition the image of the healthy psyche and finally lost the taste for its study and concentrated on abnormalities. The return of the complete and healthy personality into psychology as a result of overcoming a reductionist temptation was the achievement of scientists belonging to humanist and phenomenological schools – A. Maslow, C. Rogers and others.

The mention of Carl Rogers is especially appropriate here because his with its methods of study is a paradigmatic example of the constructivist approach to personality. His Self Concept is in fact a mega-construct by means of which people evaluate themselves. The differences from Freudianism in this approach are not only the much lower level of reduction (Self Concept consists of seventy or more respondents' judgments regarding most aspects of his/her private and social life) but also the more cautious and modest position of a psychologist in making diagnoses. The new wave of psychology explicated by Rogers advances together with a phenomenological culture of research, prescribing avoidance of hasty evaluations and awareness of prejudices absorbed unnoticed alongside methodological standards. *Self Concept*

Rudimentary to this movement was W. Dilthey's project of or . The opposition of explanative and descriptive psychology correlates with the distinction he proposesbetween natural sciences () and human sciences (). Freudianism and constructivism occur in this scheme on different sides, as long

as the former hastens to give explanations for tacit dimensions of psychological life while the latter seeks to uncover these dimensions for observation and reflection. J.-P. Ricoeur called psychoanalysis an archaeology of the soul meaning not only its concern with the past as the cause of the present condition of the patient but also its habit to reproduce the whole from its fragments. Anamnesis comes in this case as a result of the particular combination of pieces fished out of the stream of information by means of an instrument tuned in advance to catch highly specific psychological structures. Other things are filtered out. Constructivism, on the contrary, motivates the researcher to collect and to include in analysis as many descriptions as possible in the mode of C. Gyrtz's doctrine or that of literary criticism and to elaborate (or adjust) criteria for diagnostics afterwards on the basis of the collected data. The reproduction of a hidden pattern is achieved in this mode not through the application of a universal scheme to the particular case and the excogitation of missing pieces but through resorting and reshuffling numerous data until reaching the maximal likelihood. *descriptive structural psychology Naturwissenschaften Geisteswissenschaften*

So the aspiration to minimize the damage of reduction (that is the deliberate impoverishment and simplification of the rich whole, associating it with an abstract model, projecting onto it a chosen plan, neglecting details etc.) determines the main difference between constructivism and former empiric-

analytical methods of studying hidden psychological processes. This feature brings constructivism close to the humanities. At the same time a characteristic for the former is the wider application of analytical procedures, quantitative methods and statistics than is usual for the latter. It even has sights on not just the disclosure but also the or measurement of the dark side of psychic reality. *quantification*

In this respect constructivism implies the principle of complementarity (N. Bohr). On the one hand the aspiration to observe intact the structure of its object means abstaining from its complete disassembly and employing instead the technique of drawing or sketching a portrait. At this level of description constructivism operates as a rule with integral moulds or patterns of individual and collective psychic complexes. On the other hand, a construct is by definition something consisting of elements. Accordingly, it is hardly possible for constructivism to reject the use of analytical procedures, of modelling and programming constructs. As a result of the implementation of this approach the mould of psychic complexes emerges as a "digital" image produced according to certain formulated rules from identifiable elements. This mosaic-style reconstruction of the psyche as a method corresponds perfectly to the mosaic nature of its referent – to the nature of a construct. *holistic atomistic*

As a platform for the synthesis of humanities and empiric-analytical approaches constructivism incorporates a wide range

of ideas and methods from structuralism (in a generally-scientific, not in a specifically psychological meaning) and hermeneutics. Structuralism is a pole of attraction for the harder branch of constructivism aiming at the maximal formalisation of description and preferring the abstraction, mathematical language and methods of exact sciences. Representatives of this branch are inclined to consider constructs as , apt for mathematical representation. Not coincidentally Piaget used the term of cognitive schema for the basic concept of his structural theory of development. Constructivism of this sort has a strong nomothetic tendency toward the discovery of universal laws. The border between structuralism and constructivism at this pole is blurred yet the probable criterion for distinguishing between them may be the more dynamic vision of constructs assumed by constructivism. *schemes*

The softer branch of constructivism tends toward the pole of the humanities. It borrows from the humanities-style idiographic set of ideas its focus on the concrete and unique, the idea of the hermeneutic circle, its contextual approach to the interpretation of data, its concern about the problem of the compliance of the researcher's and respondent's "horizons of interpretation" and their belonging to one and the same "language game". The construct in this version is regarded as a personal rather than a scheme, and group patterns play the roles of "meta-narratives" (Lyotard), shared within (sub) cultures and responsible for the formation of "narrative

identities" (Ricoeur). As the language of mathematics is not suitable here it is substituted with the language of narration, hence models are replaced by plots and the roles of formula are often played by metaphors. Yet general constructivist commitment to analysis stays alive and takes in the idiographic frame of reference, a form of preference for ipsative scales. The diversity and the uniqueness of personal narratives obstruct significantly the perspective of finding general regularities and orient the researcher toward the ideal of better understanding as promoted by the Dilthey's project of structural psychology. At the same time a matured hermeneutical tradition with its notion of prejudices directs the researcher toward recognition of socio-cultural conditionality of psychic phenomena and makes constructivism more successful than structuralism in this respect. *narrative*

For constructivism its position on the border between humanities and positive sciences is a stimulus for innovative activity in its methodology. Here it can build on the ideas of cybernetics and synergetics, of information theory and the theory of systems, of semantics and semiotics, of theoretical and applied linguistics, of non-parametrical statistics and of other new fields of study generated in the space of interdisciplinary integration. Of special interest here are the methods that allow the detection, identification and quantification of hidden factors and parameters as soon as they are the primary focus of constructivism itself. are the first among the parameters that

are a-priori ascribed to constructs. One of the first attempts in the pre-paradigm history of constructivism to try the constructivist idea of measuring psychic properties belongs to J.-F. Herbart. He has chosen the intensity of perceptions as the parameter for detection. He relied on activity, the first of the two basic characteristics of constructs Modern constructivism does not abandon this perspective. The rigidity/permeability of constructs (Kelly) that can be measured in the series of subsequent tests is but one example of such a dynamic characteristic. However, the mainstream of constructivism today has taken another direction connected to the measurement of another parameter – that of integrity. This turn was dictated by the revolution in computer facilities that provided an ordinary researcher with unprecedented and almost unbelievable opportunities for the statistical processing of data. These enabled the realisation of the above-mentioned strategy of data reshuffling and the reconstruction of the psyche in the form of "digital moulds". Figuratively speaking, if a researcher of former times was given a million pieces to make one big image he would probably doubt whether his life would be long enough for completing this puzzle. Today the researcher has an opportunity to hand over this task to a machine that will resolve the task in a couple of minutes. Some of these new technologies, such as factor analysis, were imported by constructivism from other scientific schools. Some came out of its own workshops. Tests on moral capacities (the main topic of this book) belong mostly to the second category.

*Activity and integrity*

Constructivism bases its strategy on a humanities-style determination to overcome the toxic consequences of reductionism. But unlike other humanities movements it tries to achieve this aim not at the expense of achievements in computer techniques, mathematical statistics and analysis but through their more intensive usage. The binding pedantry of old science is overpowered by means of reconsidering the role and the potency of the methodological equipment of exact sciences. No more is it an idol on the pedestal of the infallibility of positive knowledge but an instrument in the palette of means for the researcher to use creatively..

Constructivist devotion to quantitative methods should be regarded neither as a result of compromise between the humanities and natural sciences nor as a return to ideals of positivism inspired by (really existing) dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of methodology of the humanities. Rather it should be regarded as a response to the challenges of the information era. The mass of information, the ongoing specialisation of scientific knowledge, the growing complexity of methods create a new form of esotericism, based on the impossibility for a mere mortal to understand the way of obtaining published data, or even more so to evaluate the reliability and consistency of their conclusions. The choice is either to capitulate to the power of scientific corporations and their sponsors or to improve abilities to resist manipulation through the methodological

training of consumers of knowledge and developing institutions of independent expertise.

Constructivism occupies an active position in this respect. It is ready to struggle for scientific uprightness with mathematically formulated facts to hand, armed with the achievements of post-positivist epistemology and emancipated from the illusion of scientific impartiality, tempered with the skepticism of Popper's fallibility and relativity. But in order to win in this way its methodological level of expertise must exceed that of scientific «scribes and Pharisees» who still insist that the researcher is for the method just as man is for the Sabbath and not vice versa. Contemporary scientific creativeness should confront the methodological narrowness of the former school not with voluntarism but with methodological sophistication that includes skills in different techniques and more adequate understanding of the role of personality in producing scientific knowledge. It seems as though constructivism more than any other scientific movement is able to show that the historically determined rise of the influence of the humanities in scientific knowledge does not necessarily mean the refusal of the positivists' tool, but rather a more qualified usage of it. This may be the historical mission of constructivism.

So, the constructivist programmes of psychological and pedagogical diagnostics include the following principles:

– targeting the detection of hidden psychic structures (constructs) responsible for the interpretation of reality;

– acknowledgment of the dynamic nature and socio-cultural conditionality of constructs, emphasis on the social factors of their formation, including the narrative identity of the subject;

– interactive and flexible research strategies, improvising with the available set of methods and step by step correction of programmes in accordance with research results;

– contextual interpretation of phenomena under study, aspiration for semantic homogeneity of contents and means of expression;

– holistic devotion to the priority of the whole over the sum of parts, intention to represent the psyche in forms of integral patterns;

– "digital", or combinative way of building and presenting patterns from discrete units which allows an analytical dismantling;

– wide application of psychometric technologies for quantifying selected parameters in universal and ipsative scales;

– using existent and developing new methods of multidimensional statistics and analysis for more effective operation with clusters and data sets;

– focus on the phenomena of coherency, coordination, hierarchical subordination and functional specialisation of psychic structures as a source of self-organisation and development of personality.

# 2. ONYX: A new moral judgment test

## 2.1. Historical background

ONYX is a transliteration of a Russian acronym. The full name of the test reads like “Assessment of moral discernment and coherence of judgment”. The meaning would be more properly represented if the word “moral” were relocated and placed before the word “judgment”, but this would make the abbreviation unpronounceable in Russian. What is more, the name of the stone would be lost in this case, and it would be a pity because onyx is a good symbol for the test. Like any stone our test is a solid cohesive thing but besides that it has a striped structure, just like onyx.

The idea of quantifying and measuring the moral qualities of a person cannot but cause an instinctive repulsion. Yet science has a history of breaking its way through the cordons of intuitive prejudices and instinctive protests. Anatomy is a good example showing how the once blasphemous practice of studying the human body gave new opportunities for healing. Is it impossible that results of the “anatomy of the soul” will bring forth good fruits in the future for pedagogical practice? Of course, the latter case is much more complicated not least because it is much more difficult to come to agreement about what is to be measured.

A unifying theory is necessary in this case not only at the stage of the interpretation of data but at the very beginning while designing the approach. Differences of concepts about light or gravity were not obstacles to using scales or differentiating stars according to their luminosity because the ability to distinguish heavy from light and dark from bright lies in the commonality of sensual perception. Moral properties are not generally valid in the same sense.

Attempts to build a general theory of morality and establish common criteria of what it is to be moral have a long history. Of special interest in this respect is Socrates' reasoning presented in Plato's dialogue «Hippias Minor». In this dialogue Socrates asks his collocutor to think what is more immoral – to behave badly when you know what is right and what is wrong or to do it when you don't know. Hippias, as the majority of us would, answers immediately:

– And how, Socrates, can those who intentionally err, and voluntarily and designedly commit iniquities, be better than those who err and do wrong involuntarily?

But this answer does not satisfy Socrates:

– And now I cannot agree in what you are saying, but I strongly disagree <….> and my opinion, Hippias, is the very contrary of what you are saying. For I maintain that those who hurt or injure mankind, and speak falsely and deceive, and err voluntarily, are better far than those who do wrong involuntarily.

Argumentation for this shocking conclusion is built on

a sequence of analogies. Who is the better musician: the one who produces cacophony voluntarily or the one who can't play properly? Who is the better athlete: the one who pretends that he has a pain in his knee and doesn't want to run fast or the one who can't run fast? Socrates does not find a reason why we should make an exception for moral actions in this sequence. And Hippias does not find contra-arguments except for a mere appeal to moral feeling:

– O, Socrates, it would be a monstrous thing to say that those who do wrong voluntarily are better than those who do wrong involuntarily!

– Socr.: And yet that appears to be the only inference.

Probably it could be regarded as a mere sophistic exercise, more so as Socrates confesses finally that he does not agree with himself in his conclusion. But in the history of pedagogy the nontrivial line of reasoning presented by Socrates in this dialogue appears from time to time among the thoughts of the most venerable scholars. Herbart in his «Textbook in Psychology» () claims that ethics attains its strength not in appeals for good behaviour addressed to human will but in the clarity and cohesion of moral vision or insight which constitutes a special competence. He called this competence (or moral sense) and insisted time and again that this competence is not innate but is to be developed and trained by means of education. Being a variant of aesthetic judgment, this competence is more related to ideas of beautiful and ugly than to that of due and improper, and accordingly,

the best means for its development are to be found not in logic and law but in the field of humanities. In his earlier work «The Science of Education and the Aesthetic Revelation of the World» he particularly focuses on this connection between ethics and aesthetics and on the role of humanities in moral education. The quality of moral judgment in complex situations depends on how rich, balanced, and comprehensive personal perceptions are. And humanities widening the horizon of a learner are able to prevent at the same time the one-sidedness of this judgment. Furthermore in Herbart's system «the one-sided person approximates the egoist, even when he will not notice it himself, because he relates everything to the small circle of his own life and thought» (Meijer 2006). We have here a clear antecedent of Piaget's theory that relates the moral development of a person to a process of successive of ego and also a historical bridge from Socrates' doubts about the morality of the morally ignorant to those modern scholars who base their evaluations of morality on concepts of moral competences. *Lehrbuch der Psychologie moral judgment decentration*

According to Piaget, changes in mental abilities accompanying maturation are a key for all aspects of personal development. Processes of moral (and spiritual) development are paralleled in this approach with processes taking place in the cognitive domain. To become more moral means first of all to acquire more elaborated cognitive tools and to operate logical schemas of growing complexity that ensure more comprehensive

awareness of the existence of another ego. While the substantial aspect of moral development is described as assimilation or interiorisation of external matter, its formal aspect appears as accommodation, that is, the transformation of cognitive structures ( in Piaget's terms) under the influence of external matters for their better assimilation. Accommodation is generally directed toward decentration of ego, that is, toward successive unlocking of egocentric schemas. *schemas*

Thus Piaget and later his disciple Lawrence Kohlberg reduce the development of moral consciousness to the progress in a subject's ability for moral judgment. Certainly, it is a serious simplification, but it opens a door for using quantitative methods in diagnostics. Theoretically established a developmental vector constitutes a reference axis for the coordinated measurement and comparability of its results. However conventional it is, this coordination is better than nothing. In the situation of diverse axiological systems and pedagogical ideals it provides an opportunity to convert a highly nonproductive controversy about the priority or appropriateness of different systems of values into a more productive discussion about levels of consistency of empirically detected values with the conventional scale.

Using a mathematical analogy, evaluation of moral achievements on the personal way to excellence may be compared to the measurement of lengths of multidirectional vectors. As an ideal, to achieve a formal evaluation strictly abstracted from substantial aspects we need to supply each vector

with units dividing it into a certain number of equal segments. In the situation of the multitude of directions we anticipate that the comparison of results will be a highly impracticable task. However, the powerful tools of statistics available today grant researchers courage that overcomes fears. Moreover, a number of procedures that proved their effectiveness, such as a factor analysis, function exactly via the projecting of multidirectional vectors to different axes. We can start at least with marking one chosen direction. And it is what Kohlberg did in 1964 when he offered a first quantified scale for comparison of moral abilities. The worth of the scale was to a large extent determined by a good choice of the vector direction, the joint merit of Kohlberg and Piaget.

L. Kohlberg's structural model of moral development will be discussed later, in chapter 4. For the moment it is worth noticing that despite its heuristic significance it seems as though it is not the model itself that constitutes the main historical achievement of Kohlberg but rather the attached method that has proved the validity of his theory. This method widely known as moral dilemma method was the first to base evaluation of the level of moral consciousness not on self-assessments or declarations showing the awareness of the respondent about social demands but on the ability to understand moral situations. The idea was to reveal the motivation standing behind the moral decision of a respondent in a certain situation. It was expected to reflect the development of moral consciousness not at the level

of theoretical knowledge about ethical norms and rules but at the level of their implementation. Moreover, the identification of higher stages of moral development with the ability for "post-conventional" moral judgment meant the demand for the respondent to exhibit some signs of autonomy in order to show good results in the test.

Kohlberg's methodological approach met extensive criticism. Besides the axiomatic objection against the reduction of morality to cognitive aspects, the main points of his critics may be presented as follows:

– The scheme of successive moral development embedded into the method groundlessly claims to be universal. It does not take into account the socio-cultural determinacy of morality.

– The method is time consuming and non-effective. As interpretation of interviews is a complicated procedure not apt for unification, the risk of impartiality and subjectivism of diagnoses is too high.

– Successful execution of the test depends a great deal on the linguistic and communicative abilities of a child. In fact, the method misses its target.

Despite its reasonableness the criticism did not discredit the dilemma method, but on the contrary stimulated attempts at its improvement and became a powerful factor that helped to spread quantitative approaches in the field of personal moral development studies. The conversion of the interview into the form of a written standardised test may be regarded as the

most important result of the international movement for the rehabilitation of Kohlberg that started already in his lifetime. Among the most successful implementations of his idea one should point out the Moral Judgment Test (MJT), designed in 1975 by Georg Lind, a German researcher from the University of Constance, and the Defining Issues Test (DIT) designed in 1974 by a group of scholars from Minnesota University (USA) under the leadership of a Kohlberg's disciple James Rest. Both tests are recommended by their authors as instruments for measuring the level of development of moral consciousness and for assessment of efficiency of educational institutions and programmes in moral education. Tests proved their validity on samples that included in total more than 800 000 respondents all over the world. Their results are published in dozens of papers. ONYX is a product of a deep modification of these two foreign analogues.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.