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**OBITUARY: GEORG LIND (1947-2021)**

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**Abstract**

Georg Lind's obituary. I outline a synthesis of the biography and pay a final tribute to Georg Lind. I emphasize the importance of his research program on moral competence, with more than four decades and one of the largest programs in Moral Psychology. From this, I point out his personal and academic trajectory, his encounter with Kohlbergian theory, and some of his main achievements and recognitions he received.

**Keywords:** Georg Lind; moral competence; moral psychology.

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**Resumo**

Obituário de Georg Lind. Traço uma síntese da biografia e realizo uma última homenagem a Georg Lind. Ressalto a importância de seu programa de pesquisa sobre a competência moral, com mais de quatro décadas e um dos maiores programas em Psicologia Moral. A partir disso, pontuo sua trajetória pessoal e acadêmica, seu encontro com a teoria kohlberguiana, e alguns de seus principais feitos e reconhecimentos que recebeu.

**Palavras-chave:** Georg Lind; competência moral; psicologia moral.

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Georg Lind passed away, at his home in Konstanz (Germany), on November 30, 2021, after a short illness, at the age of 74. He became worldwide known for his vast research program, considered one of the largest in Moral Psychology (Haste & Lind, 2002), around the Kohlbergian construct of moral competence. This program is commonly associated with his elaboration of a moral competence assessment methodology, the Moral Competence Test (MCT) – previously called Moral Judgment Test (MJT), renamed in 2014. However, his program includes the various longitudinal, cross-cultural, interventional and experimental studies that he developed throughout his academic career, since the 1970s.

Lind was also one of the critics of the reductionist view of Moral Psychology, focused on the cognitive aspect of moral development, and he was involved in the movement to expand the horizons of this field of research, along with other moral psychologists, philosophers and educators. In this sense, he proposed the so-called double-aspect theory (Lind, 2000) seeking to emphasize that moral competence integrates both cognition and affectivity, conceiving them as distinct but inseparable aspects of the human development. The commitment that his work started to assume with Democracy is revealed by the power of the moral competence to achieve a truly plural and democratic society.

Born on June 24, 1947 in Gleisweil (Germany), since childhood Lind faced with the problem of applying moral values such as honesty and altruism, that his parents tried to teach him, properly in his life. In an episode that marked him, at the age of eight or nine, Lind gave some money from his mother, that was to buy food, to a beggar who played violin, in front of his house, to earn money. When she learned of what had happened, his mother went after the beggar, explaining the situation to him, and he returned the money. Lind recalls that “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” and that, furthermore, “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” (Haste & Lind, 2002, p. 204).

Later in his life, around age 13, Lind came across with the issue of the Holocaust, which made him indignant that it happened just a few years before he was born, that his own parents’ generation was active or passively involved in it. When he questioned his parents, they were very reticent and insisted that they knew nothing about the Holocaust, even though his father had been in the military, as a soldier in the war, and a member of the German Schutzstaffel (SS).

From then on, a question that always haunted him was “How can we prevent a Nazi Dictatorship from happening again in Germany or elsewhere?”. Among the flawed and elitist solutions that were thought of at the time, was that of an announced dictatorship, which would elevate its people to democracy by dictatorial means, or that of giving the vote only to people who had high schooling. Lind went to understand a better solution thanks to the works of John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget and others, which is Education. In his studies, Lind would defend that Education seems to be the only way to stabilize and develop a democratic society.

As a teenager, and then as a college student, Lind would become involved in student parliament and nonviolent political activism such as demonstrations and strikes. At the university, for example, he led a protest to exclude from the curriculum an anthropology course offered by a professor, who was a known Nazi, who taught racist anthropology. On another occasion, the head of the psychology department at one of the universities he attended declared that Psychoanalysis is rubbish, not academic and not scientific. Then he organized

lectures at the university with psychoanalytic practitioners. But the bad experience with the first speaker of these lectures made him move away from Psychoanalysis for some time (Haste & Lind, 2002).

Lind graduated in 1966 from Southmoreland High School, Pennsylvania (United States), and in 1967 from Gymnasium Weierhof, Bolanden (Germany). He studied Psychology as a major and philosophy, economics and linguistics as minors at the universities of Mannheim, Braunschweig and Heidelberg in Germany. In 1973, he obtained his Masters in Psychology from the University of Heidelberg, in 1984 his Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the University of Konstanz, and in 1991 his second Ph.D., now in Philosophy, from the Catholic University of Eichstätt, all being German universities. His thesis defended in 1984, entitled *Inhalt und Struktur des moralischen Urteils. Theoretische, methodologische und empirische Untersuchungen zur Urteils- und Demokratiekompetenz bei Studierenden* [Content and structure of moral judgment. Theoretical, methodological and empirical investigations into the judgment and democratic competence of students] (Lind, 1985), was made available by him in open access on the internet.

As Lind (2021, online) himself once wrote on his personal blog: “I have several research interests, but my main topic, which dates back to my high school days, is moral-democratic competence which is essential for democracy as a way of life. Since 1973 I have been involved in research on, and teaching of, this topic”.

Given his interest in Moral Psychology since his student days, it was in the work of the American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, within the Piagetian tradition, that Lind directed his studies. In an interview granted to Helen Haste in 2002, the author explains this encounter as follows:

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. [...] At least at German psychology departments, values and morality were mostly excluded from scientific research and from my education. [...] 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 & Lind, 2002, p. 194).

After his Master's, In 1973 Lind joined the Special Research Area on Educational Research at the University of Konstanz, carrying out a multinational longitudinal study on the socialization and personality development of university students, where he worked until 1983. During this period, he focused on the literature of measurement and, in 1977, he developed the first objective and experimental instrument for measuring moral competence, the MCT (at the time still called MJT), inspired by Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview (MJI) (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). The first publications on the MCT date back to 1978 (Lind, 1978a; 1978b). Today, the MCT was already validated in 41 languages and is continuously used in research on morality.

Despite having come across Kohlberg's ideas in 1972, and working with them in research from 1973 onwards, Lind only met him personally in 1978, when Kohlberg gave a lecture in Starnberg (Germany). At the time, he was impressed by his receptivity to, and ability to withstand, very harsh criticism from some in the audience to his theory. Lind felt that Kohlberg was the first to understand what his research intentions and potential were. Kohlberg invited him to go to Harvard University, where he taught from 1968 to 1987, and present his

work, which made Lind meet several of his collaborators. The two remained in relative contact since then, until Kohlberg's early death in 1987.

In addition to a methodology for measuring moral competence, Lind also developed a methodology that could develop it, the Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion (KMDD) (Lind, 2006; 2019). Also inspired by Kohlberg's work on the discussion of moral dilemmas (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975) and the instrumentalization of moral education programs, the "Just Community" (Kohlberg, Power & Higgins, 1997), Lind created the KMDD focusing on the promotion of moral competence and, from that, designed a training and certification program for KMDD-Teachers. He was invited to train teachers and teacher students to use the KMDD in many countries, such as Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, Poland and Switzerland.

Lind joined as a professor of psychology at the University of Konstanz in 1993, and was later appointed adjunct professor in 1999, where he served until his retirement in 2010. He also served as a visiting professor at Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany), at the University of Illinois in Chicago (United States), and at the University of Monterrey, in Monterrey (Mexico), in addition to being invited, even after his retirement, to several other universities and institutions to give lectures and workshops, in addition to the aforementioned KMDD training courses, and to continue with his research activities, which he did until the end of his life.

In addition, Lind had an active participation in several entities and research institutions around the world, among which we can highlight: in 1989, he became a member of the American Educational Research Association (AERA); he was a longtime member of the Association for Moral Education (AME); and in 2020, together with colleagues from several countries and former students, he

founded the Institute for Moral-Democratic Competence (IMDC). He also maintained a website (<http://moralcompetence.ne>) and a blog (<https://mct2kmdd.com/dr-georg-lind/>), both still up until now, for the availability of many of his written, published and unpublished, and dissemination of news and events.

In 2019, he published the extended version of his book “How to Teach Moral Competence. New: Discussion Theater” (Berlin, Logos), which received the 2021 Outstanding Book Award by the Moral Development and Education Special Interest Group (MDE-SIG), held by AERA. This book has also been translated into Greek, by professor Katerina Mouratidou, from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece), into Spanish, by professor Fernando Mejia, from Los Andes University (Colombia), into Chinese, by professor Shaogang Yang and professor Lei Kang, both from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (China), and into Korean, by Professor Gyun Yeol Park, from Gyeongsang National University (South Korea). In his blog, Lind (2021) had announced that a new Spanish translation of the book, by professor Daniel Tello, from University of Concepción (Chile), and Cristina Moreno, from University of Monterrey (Mexico), and a Portuguese translation, by professor Patricia Bataglia, from São Paulo State University (Brazil), are in preparation.

The author of this Obituary was involved with this last translation, with Patricia Bataglia being one of his Master’s advisors. As Co-Founder of the Academic Books Curatorship “Angela Maria Brasil Biaggio”, from Editora Gradus, the Brazilian publisher of this book, he intermediated the contact between the author, Lind, the Editor, Gradus, and the translator, Patricia. However, while writing his Master’s thesis (Silva, 2022), he received the news of Lind’s death. The work on moral competence supported this Master’s research as its basic theoretical framework. His last contact with Lind had been two weeks earlier, when

they exchanged emails regarding the translation of this book and Lind shared with him the recording of a Conference he held at the University of New South Wales (Australia), via video conference.

His unexpected death shocked not only the present author, but his family, research colleagues, former students and people who knew Lind, both in Germany and abroad. Lind was admired as a bright, positive person, full of energy and a good sense of humor. Lind is survived by his wife, Gisela Kusche, and his three children, Gregor, Antonio and Glenda. This great loss is also regretted for the field of Moral Psychology, which now finds itself orphaned by yet another of its great exponents.

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