APPROVAL

Name: Philip Gordon Laird
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of thesis: Self-exculpation for Moral Transgressions

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. R. Mistlberger

Dr. D. Krebs
Senior Supervisor

Dr. L. Ogloff

Dr. R. Corrado

Dr. D. Paulhus
External Examiner
Department of Psychology
University of British Columbia

Date Approved: 4-8-93
PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Self-exculpation for Moral Transgressions

Author: Philip Gordon Laird

(signature) (name) (date) Apr 15/73
ABSTRACT

Social-cognitive research has shown that people often make biased judgments about various behaviours. This study examined biases in situations of moral transgression. One hundred and twenty participants recalled one of four types of transgression: transgressions they committed against others, transgressions others committed against them, transgressions they observed others committing against others, and transgressions they committed against themselves. Participants made a variety of judgments about the perpetrator's causal and moral responsibility for these transgressions. Participants then responded to Kohlberg's test of moral development. As expected, perpetrators consistently minimized their culpability for the transgressions they committed. Contrary to prediction, however, those describing their victimizations (by self and other) did not consistently maximize the culpability of the perpetrator for the transgressions committed against them. Observers who identified with the victim tended to respond as victims by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator. Victims who identified with the perpetrator tended to make moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability. After identification was considered, both perpetrators and victims made self-exculpating judgments. Overall, participants who scored relatively high on Kohlberg's test tended to judge the perpetrator to be more causally and morally responsible than participants who scored relatively low on Kohlberg's test. Higher scoring participants who responded from the perpetrator's perspective tended to hold the perpetrator (themselves or those whom they identified with) more culpable than lower scoring participants who responded from the perpetrator's perspective. The results are consistent with Kohlberg's two routes relating moral judgment to moral action.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been completed without the assistance of many friends and colleagues. I would like to thank my supervisory committee, Drs. Dennis Krebs, James Ogloff, Raymond Corrado, and Del Paulhus (external examiner) for their support and assistance. I would also like to thank Sandra Vermeulen, Danielle Krebs, Kathy Denton, and Casie Laird for their help at various stages in this project.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Ray Koopman, Dr. Chris Roney, Elizabeth Michno and Joan Foster for their help with statistical problems and their technical assistance.

Special thanks must be extended to my senior supervisor, Dr Dennis Krebs, who devoted countless hours to this project and encouraged me to strive for my best.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Lester and Maureen Laird, my brothers and sister, Mark, Steve and Kristi, my wife, Casie, and the Lord Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength to carry on.
DEDICATION

For Believing in Me When I Didn't Believe in Myself,

Casie
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgments about Various Types of Victimization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationalizing Judgments about Negative Events</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Present Study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Reasoning Development</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results and Discussion</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Exculpation by Perpetrators and Victims</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating Moral Maturity to Self-Exculpation by Perpetrators and Victims</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Discussion and Conclusions</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Exculpation for Moral Transgressions</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relation Between Self-Exculpation and Moral Maturity</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Present Study and Directions of Future Research</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mean number of times each transgression was listed for self or other as</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>perpetrator ans self or other as victim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mean number of times each cause was listed for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Means and F-scores for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim for items on the CMQ</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Relating closeness of perpetrator-victim relationship to MOC for</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>self-other, other-self and other-other groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regression analyses relating MMS to MOC across all subject groups and within each subject group</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

On May 19, 1991, Amy Fisher, a Long Island high school senior, attempted to murder Mary-Joe Buttafuoco, a housewife and mother. This crime quickly attracted the attention of the mass media and the general public. Although the incident superficially appeared to involve a clear-cut criminal act, as the plot unravelled, it became evident that the background was quite sordid. Mary-Joe claimed that Amy was a psychologically unbalanced teenager who had fanaticized about having a relationship with her husband, Joey. Amy claimed that Joey had engaged in sexual relations with her and had pressured her into a life of prostitution. On January 3, 1993, two movies simultaneously broadcasted the events preceding the crime. The CBS broadcast, entitled "The Long Island Lolita" depicted the incident from a perspective in which the Buttafuoco's were the victims. This movie portrayed Amy as a spoiled brat and a cold-blooded murderer. The ABC broadcast, entitled "The Amy Fisher Story", portrayed the incident from a perspective in which Amy was a victim of circumstance. This movie depicted Joey as a manipulator who preyed on the innocent young girl. Although this chronicle also portrayed Amy as a murderer obsessed by jealous rage, the movie indicated that some blame for the crime should be placed on factors external to Amy, such as Joey, Amy's parents, adult men who had used Amy for sexual gratification, and the circumstances surrounding the incident. Needless to say, the two portrayals of the same incident were drastically different, illustrating how diversely people may perceive the same incident when they view it from various roles (perpetrator and victim). As one news reporter stated, "There are three sides to every story, his, hers and the truth".

As the media portrayal of this crime exemplifies, it is common for people's perspectives to influence their judgments concerning a victimization. Often the biased
perceptions of people involved in a transgressions obscure the actual event. Social psychological research has shown that numerous factors are important when objective observers are asked to determine the degree of causal and/or moral responsibility attributed to an individual for his or her actions. These factors include, (a) whether the perpetrator was of sound mind or suffering from limited mental capacities (Fincham & Roberts, 1985), (b) whether the perpetrator was young or old (Fincham & Roberts, 1985), (c) whether the action of the perpetrator was voluntary or accidental (Fincham & Schultz, 1981), (d) whether or not the perpetrator had consumed alcohol prior to the transgression (Gustafson, 1991), (e) the degree to which the immoral action was morally reprehensible (Hart & Horne, 1959), and (f) whether or not future interactions between perpetrator and victim are expected (Knight & Vallacher, 1981).

In contrast to legal cases and public interest issues, which focus almost exclusively on major victimizations, most social psychological research has focussed on less severe victimizations of the type common in everyday life (i.e., Baumeister, Stillwell & Wotman, 1990; Fincham, Beach & Baucom, 1987; Fincham & Roberts, 1985). Although all individuals either involved in, or passively observing, a victimization will display some reaction to the event, the degree and nature of this reaction will likely depend on the individual's role and perspective concerning that event.

When one individual victimizes another, there are two main roles (perpetrator and victim) and two possible perspectives (self or other). Crossing the two roles and the two perspectives, people could react to the following four types of transgressions - incidents in which:

1. self (perpetrator) victimizes other (victim),

2. other victimizes self,
3. other victimizes other, and
4. self victimizes self.

The main purpose of this study was to compare people's judgments about these four types of victimizations.

**Judgments About Various Types of Victimizations**

**The Perpetrator: Self as Victor of Others**

Past research has shown that perpetrators tend to attribute their own undesirable behavior (perpetrations) to external factors (e.g., victim, poverty, provocation) and the undesirable behaviors of other perpetrators to internal factors (Storms, 1973; West, Gunn, & Chernicky, 1975). These findings are consistent with the actor-observer effect, which stipulates that whereas people attribute the behavior of others to internal sources they attribute their own behavior to external sources (see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In one recent study, Baumeister, Stillwell and Wotman (1990) used autobiographical narratives to compare the ways perpetrators and victims conceptualize moral transgressions. Whereas both victims and perpetrators described similar types of transgressions, perpetrators were more likely than victims, (a) to deny that any lasting negative consequences resulted, (b) to state that there were external or mitigating circumstances, (c) to state that the incident could not have been prevented, (d) to state that the victim provoked the incident, and (e) to state that the victim was partly the cause of the incident. Consistent with previous research, Baumeister et al. (1990) showed that perpetrators are inclined to divert blame from themselves and

---

Both perpetrators and victims described transgressions involving: broken promises and commitments; violated rules, obligations, or expectations; betrayal of secrets; unfair treatment; lies; conflicts over money; etc.
toward mitigating circumstances and/or the victim when they make judgments about the transgressions they have committed against others.

This research suggests that people are inclined to make biased judgments about the transgressions they have committed against others by minimizing their personal culpability for the incident and by maximizing the culpability of other people (especially the victim) and/or circumstances. Baumeister suggests that because the perpetrations one commits are likely to be perceived objectionably by others, the self-definition of the perpetrator will be bombarded by undesirable traits, such as dishonesty, untrustworthiness, and/or immorality. The resultant incongruous conceptions of the self will likely elicit a great deal of displeasure and anxiety in the perpetrator regarding the incident. Thus, the perpetrator will be highly motivated to make biased judgments about his or her causal and moral contributions to the incident in a manner that minimizes his or her culpability.

The Victim: Others as Victimizers of Self

Although it is conceivable that only actors (perpetrators) tend to distort their perceptions of moral transgressions, some research has suggested that victims also make biased judgments about the perpetrations committed against them. Compared to the judgments about negative events that befall others, people tend to make more external attributions, displace responsibility, and avoid blame for negative events that occur to them (Fincham, Beach, & Baucom, 1987; Harvey, Town, & Yarkin, 1981, etc.). One of the most prevalent ways people externalize responsibility for negative events that occur to them is to blame someone else - to say they were victimized. Thus, victims were
expected to self-exculpate\(^2\) for their victimization experiences by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator.

As well as documenting the accounts of perpetrators regarding their victimizations of others, Baumeister et al. (1990) obtained narrative accounts from victims. Victims were more likely than perpetrators to, (a) portray the perpetrator's intentions as incoherent, arbitrary, contradictory, senseless, immoral, inconsistent, hurtful and/or malicious, (b) state that the incident damaged his or her relationship with the perpetrator, (c) state that his or her anger (toward the perpetrator) was justified, and (d) state that he or she should not share the blame for the incident. As expected, this research supports the presumption that victims tend to self-exculpate by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator. Snyder and Higgins (1988) theorized that blaming others is the purest form of excuse-making. Thus, it is logical to assume that those who are victimized by others will be likely to excuse their negative outcomes (victimization experiences) by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator.

The self-serving bias. A great deal of research has shown that people tend to take credit for their successes and deny responsibility for their failures (Whitley & Frieze, 1985, 1986; see Zuckerman, 1979, for a review). This tendency to present oneself in a favorable light has been termed the self-serving bias. Past research, investigating judgments people make about the victimizations they experience is consistent with the self serving bias - when a person is victimized by another person, the victim tends to

\(^2\) Although it may sound illogical that someone could self-exculpate by blaming someone else, it is plausible that by directing a disproportionate amount of blame to the perpetrator, the victim minimizes the amount of blame he/she directs toward him/herself. In effect, therefore, the victim is self-exculpating by maximizing the blame he/she attributes to the perpetrator.
make self-serving judgments primarily by diverting causal and moral responsibility away from him/herself and toward the perpetrator. Thus, victims tend to make self-serving judgments by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator.

Past research has indicated that the self-serving bias serves an adaptive function. By attributing the negative events we experience to external factors, the individual actively engages in behavior that protects his or her self-concept (Miller, 1976; Zuckerman, 1979). Other researchers, however, have theorized that the self-serving bias results from the unrealistic demands placed on our everyday cognitive processes. For example, one way the self-serving bias may be cognitively maintained is through the self-reference effect: When information is relevant to our self-conceptions we process and remember that information better (Higgins & Bargh, 1987; Kihlstrom, Cantor, Albright, Chow, Klein, & Niedenthal, 1988; Reeder, McCormick, & Esselman, 1987). Thus, we may be more cognitively prepared to process information that is consistent with our self-definitions (that we are 'good') and discount the information that is inconsistent with our self-definitions (that we are 'bad'). Because of cognitive processes like the self-reference effect, people may not process or remember their negative outcomes (victimizations) accurately and may tend to make self-serving judgments as a result. Although there are different explanations for the self-serving bias, the effect of this bias regarding moral transgressions is clear - people will tend to minimize their personal culpability for, and will blame the perpetrator and circumstances for, the transgressions others commit against them.

Explaining self-blame in the context of the self-serving bias. In contradiction to the self-serving bias, some research has suggested that victims sometimes blame themselves for their victimization experiences (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Frieze,
1979; Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Studying victim self-blame, Frieze (1979) found that although neither assaulted nor non-assaulted women differed in assigning blame to male abusers (perpetrators) in hypothetical situations (81% and 79% of blame assigned to males), when questioned about actual abuse situations, abused women attributed an average of 50% of the blame to themselves. Thus, when women identified with their perpetrators, they were more likely to blame themselves for their victimizations. To explain self-blame, Janoff-Bulman (1979) hypothesized that,

...there are two different types of self-blame, one representing an adaptive, control-oriented response, the other a maladaptive, self-deprecating response... it is proposed that the control related self-blame focuses on one's own behavior, whereas the esteem related self-blame focuses on one's character (p 1799).

According to Janoff-Bulman, behavioral self-blame can be adaptive for the victim because it leaves the victimized person with a sense of control over future negative outcomes. Those who engage in characterological self-blame, however, may not cope as well with victimizing circumstances because characterological traits are difficult to change.

Although most research indicates that people maximize the culpability of the perpetrator for their victimizations, the research on self-blame in victimizing situations suggests that the self-serving bias may assume more than one form. Construing behavioral self-blame as an expression of the self-serving bias is consistent with the findings of Miller and Ross (1975) who found that people are sometimes willing to take responsibility for failure when they can attribute the failure to some factor over which they may have future control. Likewise, the self-serving bias, as a means of future control, may sometimes take the form of behavioral self-blame. Thus, it is clear
that people tend to make self-serving attributions about their victimization experiences either by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator (self-exculpating) or by engaging in behavioral self-blame.

The Observer: Others as Victimizers of Others

Legal cases involve observers (judge and/or jury) making judgments about the causal and moral relation between an actor and an immoral or illegal action. Based upon the way we search for objectivity in our legal system, it would be logical to expect those who observe a victimization to be the most objective judges of the moral culpability of those involved in a transgression. Nonetheless, whereas some researchers have found that people who objectively view immoral acts tend to perceive the actor as the causal agent (Burger, 1981; Forsyth & Scott, 1984), other researchers have found that observers sometimes blame the victims for their own negative outcomes (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Thus, although one would expect observers to be the most objective judges of an immoral act, research has shown that observers, like perpetrators and victims, sometimes make inaccurate judgments.

According to Lerner, people sometimes blame the victim in order to maintain the illusion that they live in a just world. Encountering a person who has been harmed by no fault of his or her own evokes anxiety in the observer (Lerner, 1980). This anxiety can be relieved by reinterpreting the situation such that the victim is blamed - preserving the observer's belief that the world is just. According to this theory, people have a socialized need to believe that there is a relationship between personal outcomes and personal worth - that people get what they deserve. The tendency to blame the victim, in order to preserve a belief in a just world, has been construed as a motivational form of the self-serving bias - people believe that the negative event was the fault of the victim.
in order to cognitively minimize the possibility that the same negative outcome (victimization) could happen to them (Tetlock & Levi, 1982). The tendency to blame the victim is stronger when the attributor is more similar to the victim because the probability that the same victimization could happen to the attributor is increased. This increased threat of victimization leads to increased anxiety in the attributor which leads to a stronger motivation for the observer to derogate the victim.

Although the tendency to blame the victim is sometimes quite strong, Lerner qualifies his theory by adding that the observer(s), "...may not derogate (blame the victim) because they...identify too strongly with the victim" (Lerner & Miller, 1978, p.1042). Arguably, most individuals do not observe transgressions in a 'passive' manner. Based on the events that unfold (especially the moral reprehensibleness of the incident) and/or the observer's relationship to the victim, the observer may sometimes side with the victim. Thus, whereas observers may sometimes blame the victim, they may also sometimes excuse the victim, depending upon the extent to which they identify with the victim and/or perceive the victimization as a personally threatening experience.

Although Lerner contends that the need to blame the victim may result from a justice-motive, it is equally conceivable that the need to blame the victim may be a self-protective response. According to the defensive attribution hypothesis, individuals tend to brace themselves against the notion that severe negative outcomes can occur by chance (Walster, 1966). Burger (1981) concluded that when people do not identify (perceive him or herself as dissimilar) with the victim of an accident, they tend to attribute greater responsibility to the victim as the accident becomes more severe. Nonetheless, when people do identify (perceive him or herself as similar) with the victim, they attribute less responsibility to the victim as the accident becomes more severe. Thus,
the impact of victim identification may be a consequence of the self-serving bias rather than of sympathetic or empathic concern for the negative experience of the victim.

In summary, a sample of research on people judging the infractions (harmdoings) of others against others seems to supply mixed results: Some people tend to blame the perpetrator, some people tend to blame the victim. Some studies seek to resolve this inconsistency in terms of identification with the victim. Nonetheless, across a number of situations, one would expect the tendency for some subjects to blame the perpetrator (those who identify with the victim) to balance the tendency for other subjects to blame the victim (those who are motivated to believe the world is just). Thus, we expected a random group of observers to make moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability.

The Self-Victimizer: Self as Victimizer of Self

Although most incidents of wrongdoing involve one person treating another person in an immoral or unfair way, it is plausible that people may sometimes consider themselves to be objects of their own wrongdoings. Although no research has investigated incidents where self victimizes self, based on past research investigating other types of victimizations, it is plausible to assume that people making attributions about their victimizations against themselves may respond in one of two ways. On the one hand, people may not want to view themselves as a victim, so they may be motivated to attribute to themselves the role of victimizer - "I victimized myself" (I didn't study hard enough, I wasn't careful enough, etc.). Consistent with the research on self-blame, this type of behavioral attribution regarding one's own contribution to a victimizing incident may enable the person to experience an enhanced sense of control over similar future negative outcomes. In this way, attributing to him/herself the role of victimizer may serve a
self-serving function for a person who has been victimized by empowering the person with a greater sense of personal control over future victimizations.

On the other hand, perpetrators may be inclined to say they indirectly victimized themselves in order to preserve a relationship. Since guilt serves primarily to equalize the balance of power and to redistribute emotional distress in interpersonal relationships (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherington, 1992), the perpetrator may perceive him or herself to have victimized him or herself indirectly via guilt feelings. Thus, the outward expression of guilt (enabling the perpetrator to assume the victimized position) may serve a self-serving function for the perpetrator by preserving the relationship. This display of guilt may serve to alleviate the interpersonal tension resulting from a moral transgression. Thus, victimizers who say they victimized themselves may sometimes be motivated to respond as victims and blame the perpetrator or they may sometimes be motivated to respond as perpetrators and minimize the blame they attribute to the perpetrator. It was expected that when describing their victimizations against themselves, peoples' roles as both victim and perpetrator would conflict and they would tend to make more moderate judgments concerning the moral and causal responsibility of the perpetrator.

**Operationalizing Judgments About Negative Events**

Investigators have assessed judgments about negative events in a wide variety of ways. In order to assess the culpability of the perpetrator, both attributions of causal and moral responsibility are necessary. Two of the most popular methods of assessing causal responsibility are based upon Kelley's and Seligman's theories of attribution. Whereas Kelley's theory focuses on the actors' past behavior patterns, Seligman's theory is concerned with the dimensions of causes. Although measures of moral
responsibility incorporate causal factors, they extend the causal focus to include dimensions of harmdoing such as intentionality, justification, excusability, blameworthiness and responsibility. Thus, for measuring attributions people make about moral transgressions, both measures of causal and moral responsibility were used.

**Kelly's Covariation Model**

According to Kelley (1967), people integrate three types of information from their past experiences (covariation dimensions) to derive causal explanations for present events. First, distinctiveness concerns whether or not the actor behaved in the same manner in different situations and/or toward different people. Second, consistency concerns whether or not the actor behaved in the same manner over time in similar situations toward this person. Last, consensus concerns whether or not other people behaved in the same manner across the same types of situations, toward the same person. Based on Kelley's formulation, people attribute maximum causal responsibility to the actor by making internal attributions characterized by low consensus and distinctiveness, and high consistency regarding the actor's negative behavior. Conversely, people divert causal responsibility from the actor by making external attributions characterized by high consensus, distinctiveness and consistency regarding the actor's negative behavior.

**Seligman's Attributional Style Model**

Seligman's theory centers on the dimensions of causality: The locus dimension pertains to whether the cause is attributed to the actor's dispositions or to circumstances; the stability dimension pertains to whether or not the cause is likely to change; and the globality dimension pertains to whether or not the cause is specific to the incident in question (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel & Baeyer, 1979). According to
Seligman, people attribute maximal causal responsibility to the actor by making stable and global attributions about causes that are internal to the actor. People attribute minimal causal responsibility to the actor by making external attributions (circumstances and/or other people). Seligman's test has been used extensively in clinical settings as a measure of depressive attributional style. Seligman contends that some people employ a 'helpless' attributional style that, when combined with consistent negative outcomes, leads to depression.

**Measuring Moral Attributions**

Although much of the research on attributions about negative events has employed either Kelley's or Seligman's theories to derive measures of causation, researchers investigating moral infractions have focussed more on issues of blame, responsibility and punishment (Fincham & Roberts, 1985; McGraw, 1987a). Unfortunately, a great deal of confusion exists concerning the exact nature of moral responsibility and it's relation to causal responsibility. Some researchers have discovered empirical distinctions between causal and moral judgments (e.g., Fincham & Jaspers, 1979, Fincham & Schultz, 1981; Harvey & Rule, 1978; Reeder & Spores, 1983; Shaver & Drown, 1986), and have suggested that separate measures of responsibility, cause, and blame should be used (Fincham & Roberts, 1985). Shaver and Drown (1986) argue that research has failed to make the necessary distinctions between these measures. Whereas attributions of causality are based upon the conditions which produce a particular outcome, responsibility is based on the awareness of the effects of one's actions, which include:

...the stimulus person's (a) causal contribution to the production of the effect, (b) awareness of the consequences of the action being taken, (c) intent to bring about an event, (d) degree of volition (absence of external coercion) and
(e) appreciation of the moral wrongfulness of the action being taken.

(Shaver & Drown, 1986, p. 701).

In addition, blame is distinguishable from causation and responsibility because blame adds a punitive aspect to the judgment:

...blame.. is reserved for those whose intentional actions bring about harm, provided that there is no satisfactory excuse or justification .. for the actions being taken (Shaver & Drown, 1986)

Based on past research, the present study incorporated Kelley-type and Seligman-type questions as well as questions pertaining to moral responsibility and blameworthiness (justification and excusability). All such questions were integrated into a single questionnaire and were rated on seven point scales. Because the present study asked about wrongdoings, judgments were expected to fall into the 'blame' category (not justifiable or excusable). Because attributions of causality and responsibility are necessary prerequisites for judgments of blame, people were expected to respond consistently across all measures of causality, responsibility, and blameworthiness.

Thus, the present study not only investigated self-serving judgments, but also extended such judgments beyond the causal domain and into the moral domain. Subjects were expected to make self-exculpating judgments. Self-exculpating judgments are those types of judgments that minimize the person's causal and moral responsibility for a victimization committed against the person and/or a perpetration committed by the person. Self-exculpating judgments are consistent with the self-serving bias and the actor-observer effect but they extend these attributional biases into the moral domain by incorporating measures of responsibility, blame, excusability, justifiability, and guiltiness.
The Present Study

Relevant Past Research

Most past research has been concerned with elucidating factors that influence judgments people make about transgressions committed by others against others. In contrast, the main purpose of this study was to compare judgments about incidents in which individuals treat self and others immorally and are treated immorally by self and others. Most past research has employed hypothetical accounts of prefabricated scenarios (i.e., Fincham, Beach & Baucom, 1987; Fincham & Jaspers, 1979; Fincham & Roberts, 1985; Janoff-Bulman & Timko, 1985; Gustafson, 1991; McGraw, 1985; Reeder & Spores, 1982), some researchers, however, have asked subjects to make judgments about actual events they have experienced or have observed (Baumeister, Wotman & Stillwell, 1992; McGraw, 1987b). The present study investigated judgments about real-life moral transgressions from various perspectives.

In one study investigating judgments about real-life transgressions, McGraw (1987b) asked subjects to recall and describe a situation in which they caused harm to someone else, were harmed by the actions of another person, or observed someone harming another person, and to make judgments about the harmdoer's behavior. The main finding of this study was that individuals feel a greater sense of guilt and responsibility when they accidentally hurt others compared to when they intentionally hurt others. It seems that when people intentionally hurt someone, they feel their behavior is more justified. In contrast, accidental transgressions are surprising to the perpetrator as well as to the victim. Thus, the perpetrator of an accident fails to cushion his or her self-concept, prior to the accident, in a self-protective way. McGraw showed that perpetrators of an accidental transgression self-exculpate less than perpetrators of
an intentional transgression. Relating this finding to the present study, perpetrators
should make strong self-serving judgments about the intentional transgressions or
wrongdoings they commit against others.

In another study, Baumeister, Wotman and Stillwell (1992) asked subjects to
describe incidents in which they rejected another individual (rejector's) and incidents in
which another individual rejected them (would-be lovers) within the context of a 'love'
relationship. These researchers found that rejectors conceptualized the incident very
differently from would-be lovers. Although the study did not specifically investigate
self-exculpation, a number of findings suggest that people make distorted judgments that
present themselves in a favorable light. First, subjects reported more cases of being
loved in vain (rejector's viewpoint) than of loving in vain (would-be lover's viewpoint).
According to Baumeister et al., this finding is logically impossible because a given
individual should experience fewer rejector compared to would-be lover experiences on
the grounds that people sometimes fail to know that another loves them. These
researchers explain this 'logical impossibility' as a consequence of people's tendency to
inflate the number of reported experiences in which another loved them. Thus, one way
in which subjects make self-protective attributions is by minimizing the salience of
victimization experiences3. Second, although rejectors are perceived to be in control of
the relationship, rejectors stated they felt constrained by the external demands of the
incident, most specifically, the behavior of the would-be lover. Thus, rejectors seem
prone to attribute incidents in which they reject another to the situation and/or to the

3 This finding runs contrary to the hypothesized self-serving tendency for people to
blame the perpetrator by maximizing their victimizations. It seems that victims
sometimes may not want to see themselves as victims and may be motivated to minimize
such experiences.
victim in order to minimize their own personal culpability for the incidents. Relating these findings to the present study, both perpetrators and victims should make self-serving judgments about the wrongdoings committed by them and against them.

Questions to be Addressed and the Direction of The Present Research

Research investigating the judgments people make about actually-experienced moral conflicts gives rise to numerous questions concerning the nature of attributions about moral transgressions. First, do people make more favorable (less harsh) judgments about real-life moral transgressions committed by them compared to transgressions committed by others? Second, do people make harsher judgments about the moral transgressions committed against them compared to the transgressions committed against others? Third, if people do make biased judgments, exactly how do people distort these judgments; specifically, do individuals respond consistently or differently on Kelley's, Seligman's and moral responsibility questions? Fourth, does identification with a perpetrator or victim influence the type of attribution the individual makes regarding various types of moral transgressions, and if so, how? Finally, do other variables, such as seriousness of transgression described and the nature of the perpetrator/victim relationship affect the type and degree of attributions subjects make regarding such experiences?

This study differed from both McGraw's (1987) and Baumeister's (1992) studies in a number of respects. First, McGraw asked subjects to recall situations in which 'harm was caused' that was either foreseen or unforeseen, justified or unjustified. Answering according to these instructions, subjects may have described either transgressions or accidents. In contrast, the present study focussed specifically on attributions made about moral transgressions or wrongdoings. Second, the main emphasis of the McGraw study
was on the source and degree of guilt following a situation in which one caused harm, whereas the main emphasis of the present study is on differences between people's attributions about transgressions committed by them (against self and others) compared to transgressions committed by others (against self and others). Finally, McGraw made no attempt to relate her findings to moral reasoning levels, whereas in this study, the relation between attributions about transgressions and moral reasoning levels (as measured by Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview) was determined.

Baumeister et al. (1992) focussed on a specific type of interpersonal conflict - that of social rejection - whereas I asked subjects to describe incidents in which they wronged (self or other) or were wronged (by self or other). For the present study, a between-subjects design was used so that responses from previous incidents would not contaminate later responses and between group differences could be measured more accurately. Baumeister et al. used a within subjects design. The present study focused upon the differences in attributions subjects made regarding incidents in which they wronged (self or other) or were wronged (by self or other) whereas Baumeister et al. focussed on the emotional reactions and subjective distress caused by rejecting another or being rejected by another. Last, in this study, moral reasoning levels were compared to the relative degree to which people make self-serving attributions. Baumeister et al. (1992) failed to investigate this potentially important relationship.

To investigate some of the issues raised by past research, Laird and Krebs (1991) conducted a pilot study investigating moral attributions in which subjects identified a moral transgression where they had wronged someone else (perpetrators) or someone else had wronged them (victims). Compared to victims, perpetrators were expected to rate their own behavior as more situational and distinct and less normative and
consistent. They were also expected, (a) to list external causes and rate them as more global and stable, (b) to rate their transgressions as more justifiable and excusable, and (c) to rate themselves as less responsible and blameworthy. Compared to perpetrators, victims were expected to rate the victimizer's behavior as more dispositional and consistent, but less distinctive and normative. They were also expected, (a) to list internal causes and rate them as more global and stable, (b) to rate their victimizations as less justifiable and excusable, and (c) to rate their victimizers as more responsible and blameworthy.

As expected, the subjects consistently made self-exculpating judgments on Seligman-type questions, Kelley-type questions, and most moral responsibility questions\(^4\). Thus, compared to victims, perpetrators minimized their causal and moral responsibility by more strongly rating their actions as, externally induced, distinctive, inconsistent over time, relatively normative, excusable, and justified. They also tended to make external, unstable, and specific attributions of cause. Conversely, victims maximized the perpetrator's causal and moral responsibility by more strongly rating the perpetrator's behavior as internally induced, not distinctive, consistent over time, not very normative, unjustified, and inexcusable. They also tended to make more internal (to the perpetrator), stable and specific attributions of cause. Consistent with the predictions of the following study, Laird and Krebs (1992) found that perpetrators tend

---

\(^4\) Interestingly, subjects did not rate themselves as being less responsible or blameworthy when they transgressed against someone than when someone transgressed against them. This suggests that people may be as willing to hold themselves responsible for a misdeed as they are to hold others responsible for a misdeed, but may find it easier to excuse their own actions.
to self-exculpate by minimizing their culpability for the transgression they commit, and
victims tend to self-exculpate by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator.

The present study extended the findings of Laird and Krebs (1992) in three main
ways. First, as mentioned previously, the present study decomposed the role
(perpetrator versus victim) x voice (self versus other) confound by adding two
additional groups completing the perpetrator (self vs other) x victim (self vs other)
matrix. Second, the present study investigated other important factors such as
relationship between perpetrator and victim, identification with perpetrator or victim,
and the most significant causal factor leading to the incident. Last, the present study
measured the moral reasoning level of the subjects using Kohlberg's Moral Judgment
Interview.

**Moral Reasoning Development**

The addition of Kohlberg's test of moral reasoning allowed for the examination of the
impact of individual differences in moral development on the degree to which subjects
self-exculpate. Like early attribution theories, Kohlberg's theory of cognitive-
development assumes that people make judgments and inferences in rational-deductive
ways. Extending Piaget's (1932) concept of heteronomous and autonomous moral stages,
Kohlberg's theory centers on the structures (way the person organizes his or her
thought) rather than on the content (what is actually thought) of the individual's moral
thinking. His test evokes moral judgments about the behaviors of hypothetical
characters. In this way, Kohlberg argues, the measure is designed to assess moral
competence rather than moral performance.
The relationship between moral judgment and moral action. Kohlberg assumed that people construct meaning in terms of their present stage of moral development (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). Since Kohlberg also assumed that higher stages were better or more moral stages of thought, one might assume that people who score higher on Kohlberg's test engage in more moral, and less immoral, behaviors than people who score lower on Kohlberg's test. This assumption has received some support from research showing that people who engage in more conventionally immoral behavior score relatively low on Kohlberg's test (see Blasi, 1980, and Hayes & Walker, 1986, for reviews). Some research suggests that people who score at relatively low levels on Kohlberg's test may adopt more immoral lifestyles because they are inclined to make excuses, and evade responsibility for their wrongdoings (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984). Thus, people at low stages of moral maturity may tend to make biased judgments about the immoral acts they engage in because lower stages are more susceptible to excuses and evasions of responsibility than higher stages of moral thought (Bartek, Krebs & Taylor, 1993; Kohlberg, 1984).

Kohlberg and Candee (1984) specified two routes by which moral judgment relates to moral action. The first route suggested by Kohlberg and Candee is based on a judgment of the rightness of a particular act. According to Kohlberg and Candee, people who score at lower stages of moral maturity make more immoral deontic judgments than people who score at higher stages of moral maturity. The first reason why the higher-stage subject should engage in more moral, and less immoral behavior than the lower-stage subject is because the higher stage subject should tend make more moral deontic judgments about
the rightness or wrongness of a particular act. Based on the first route suggested by Kohlberg and Candee, we expected higher-stage subjects to judge all types of perpetrations (committed by them or against them) more harshly than lower-stage subjects.

The second route suggested by Kohlberg and Candee is based on the actor's judgment of his or her responsibility, or accountability to engage in the most moral course of action. According to Blasi, the higher-stage subject feels a greater sense of responsibility to act morally,

The criteria used to arrive at responsibility judgments are related to one's self-definition or the organization of the self. The transition from a judgment of responsibility to action is supported by the tendency toward self-consistency. Following an action inconsistent with one's judgment of responsibility, guilt is experienced as an emotional response to the inconsistency within the self (p. 57, as cited in Kohlberg & Candee, 1984).

Thus, the second reason why the higher-stage subject should engage in more moral, and less immoral behavior is because the higher-stage subject tends to feel a sense of responsibility to engage in the most moral course of action. Based on Kohlberg and Candee's two route model, perpetrators who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should, (a) make harsher judgments of the "wrongness" of their moral transgressions, (b) judge their immoral actions (transgressions) as less consistent with their conceptions of right and wrong, and (c) feel a greater sense of guilt over their failure to

Nonetheless, Kohlberg and Candee show that lower stage subjects often do make moral deontic judgments.
behave morally responsible than perpetrators who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test.

"Structural parallelism". Moral reasoning development may also relate to the extent to which perpetrators self-exculpate via cognitive and social perspective-taking development. Past research has suggested that cognitive development and social perspective-taking skills are necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisites for moral development (Selman, 1976; Walker, 1982). This "structural parallelism" should relate to the extent to which subjects self-exculpate in two ways. First, higher-stage subjects should process information in a more accurate and objective manner than lower-stage subjects because they tend to have more advanced cognitive structures available to them. Second, higher-stage subjects should make less egocentric judgments and should be better able to understand the perspectives of others. The research on "structural parallelism" suggests that high-stage subjects should self-exculpate less than low-stage subjects. Thus, (a) perpetrators who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should make harsher judgments of their culpability (make less self-serving judgments) than perpetrators who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test, and (b) victims who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should make more moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability (make less self-serving judgments) than victims who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test.

Moral development and the present study. Based on the research reviewed here, a few predictions concerning the relationship between moral reasoning and self-exculpation are plausible. The first hypothesis is clear, perpetrators who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should make harsher judgments of their (the perpetrator's) culpability than perpetrators who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test.
Based on the first route suggested by Kohlberg and Candee (1984), the second hypothesis is that subjects who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should make harsher judgments of the perpetrator's culpability than subjects who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test, regardless of their perspective. The hypothesis regarding victims is less clear. On the one hand, the first route suggested by Kohlberg and Candee would suggest victims who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should judge the perpetrator more harshly than victims who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test. On the other hand, however, research on "structural parallelism" suggests that victims who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test should make less self-serving judgments about their victimizations and should thus make more moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability than victims who score relatively low on Kohlberg's test. To summarize, (a) I expected moral maturity to be a strong predictor of the extent to which perpetrators minimized their culpability for the transgressions they committed, (b) I expected moral maturity to be a significant predictor of the extent to which all subjects minimized the perpetrator's culpability, and (c) I tentatively expected moral maturity to be a significant predictor of the extent to which victims minimized the perpetrator's culpability for the transgressions committed against them.

Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned research, the following six hypotheses were proposed: (a) Compared to non-perpetrators, perpetrators were expected to minimize their own culpability (self-exculpate) by rating their transgressions as less serious, listing less serious transgressions (as judged by objective raters), more often listing an external cause (victim, others, circumstances, etc.), and rating themselves as less causally and morally responsible; (b) Compared to non-victims, victims were expected
to maximize the culpability of the perpetrator (self-exculpate) by stating that their victimizations were more serious, listing more serious victimizations (as judged by objective raters), more often attributing the cause to the internal qualities of the perpetrator, and rating the perpetrator as more causally and morally responsible; (c) The main hypothesis of this study was that there would be an interaction between the tendency for perpetrators to self-exculpate and the tendency for victims to self-exculpate. Subjects describing transgressions they committed against others were expected to make the least harsh judgments of the perpetrator (themselves). Subjects describing transgressions others had committed against them were expected to make the harshest judgments of the perpetrator. Subjects describing incidents in which they had observed another individual victimizing another individual were expected to make moderately harsh judgments of the perpetrator. Individuals describing transgressions they committed against themselves were expected to display a conflict between their roles as both perpetrator and victim and make moderately harsh judgments of the perpetrator as a result; (d) The fourth hypothesis was that there would be an inverse relationship between moral maturity and the extent to which subjects minimize the perpetrator’s culpability. Subjects who scored relatively high on Kohlberg’s test were expected to judge the perpetrator as more morally bad (more culpable) than subjects who scored relatively low on Kohlberg’s test, regardless of their perspective in the transgression; (e) The fifth hypothesis was that there would be a positive relation between moral maturity and the extent to which victims minimized the perpetrator’s culpability. Victims who scored relatively high on Kohlberg’s test were expected to hold the

---

6 Unless this group showed stronger overall identification with the victim.
perpetrator less culpable (make less self-serving judgments) than victims who scored relatively low on Kohlberg’s test; and (f) The last hypothesis was that there would be an inverse relationship between moral maturity and the extent to which perpetrators self-exculpate. Thus, I expected perpetrators who scored relatively high on Kohlberg’s test to make harsher self-judgments (engage in less self-exculpation) than perpetrators who scored relatively low on Kohlberg’s test.
Method

Participants

One hundred and twenty introductory psychology students (60 males and 60 females) participated in the study for course credit. They ranged in age from 17 to 45 years ($M = 20; SD = 3.8$), in reported GPA from 1.4 to 4.0 ($M = 2.9; SD = .51$), and in the number of years of post secondary education attained from 0 to 14 years ($M = 2.30; SD = 1.8$). Participants were recruited from the Simon Fraser University Psychology subject pool. One hundred and twenty-three participants completed the questionnaires. Three participants' responses were not included in the data analysis because the participants failed to complete one or more questionnaires. Each of the remaining 120 participants was asked to report and make judgments about three transgressions. All participants furnished at least two incidents. Six participants failed to disclose a third incident.

Procedure

Participants completed a causal and moral responsibility questionnaire (CMQ - see APPENDIX A), followed by Form A of Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview (MJI - see APPENDIX B). Order was not manipulated in this study for two reasons: (a) to prevent the Kohlbergian standard questionnaire from priming subjects to recall certain types of moral transgressions and (b) to prevent a perspective bias: People respond to Kohlberg’s dilemmas from the perspective of an impartial observer, which was one of the four perspectives manipulated in this study. To avoid these potential confounds, the CMQ was always given first, followed by the MJI.
Volunteers were randomly assigned to one of four groups differing in terms of the type of transgression to which participants responded (see Figure 1). Thirty participants (15 males and 15 females) described and made judgments about three incidents in which either:

1. another person victimized another person,
2. the participant victimized another person,
3. another person victimized the participant, or
4. the participant victimized him or herself.

Causal and Moral Responsibility Questionnaire - CMQ

Participants in each group were given the following instructions (information in brackets refers to information that was different for different groups):

In the space below, please identify an incident in which you (were, observed someone being) wronged (by) another person (yourself). By wronged, we mean treated immorally or unfairly, by your standards. Please describe the incident in as few words as possible. For example, 'I (he/she) stole his/her (my) wallet', 'I (he/she) molested him/her (me)', 'I (he/she) broke a promise to him/her (me)', 'I (he/she) spread rumors about him/her (me)', etc.

Participants then responded to a number of questions about the transgression they listed, with their answers constituting the dependent variables of the study. In particular, participants were asked: What was the primary reason why you (this person) wronged this person (you, yourself, the other person)?; When did the incident occur?; How
close were you to the individual you wronged (who wronged you)?\(^7\) (rated on a seven point scale); What do you think was the primary cause of the wrongdoer's (your) behavior?. Participants also stated how serious they felt the incident was and how long ago the incident occurred (both rated on a seven-point scale).

Following the above questions, participants were asked a number of attribution-type questions designed to assess the degree to which they attributed causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator. First, participants responded to a series of Kelley-type questions, for example, "to what extent do you think you (the person who wronged you) would treat that person (you) in the same way in the future?". Second, participants responded to a series of questions designed to assess the degree of moral responsibility attributed to the perpetrator, for example, "to what extent was your (the perpetrator's) behavior justifiable?". Third, participants responded to a series of questions adapted from Seligman's Attributional Style Questionnaire, for example, "is the cause you listed above due to something about you (the person who wronged you) or something about other people or circumstances?". Finally, participants rated the extent to which they believed the perpetrator felt guilty for his or her actions. Participants rated their attributions on 7-point Likert scales.

**Scoring and Interrater Reliability**

The four open ended questions were scored by objective raters:

**Seriousness of transgressions.** Seven independent raters (3 males, 4 females) rated the seriousness of each transgression described by the participants (on a seven point scale). Each transgression was copied onto a separate form where it was reworded

---

\(^7\) For obvious reasons, this question was deleted from the questionnaires given to individuals asked to describe incidents in which they wronged themselves.
such that all transgressions were described in terms of a passive observer watching the immoral act. Thus, raters were blind to the group from which the responses came. Following a highly significant coefficient alpha (.94), mean seriousness ratings were computed.

**Classifying the transgressions.** The transgressions described by the participants were categorized into one of five broad groupings: Physical and emotional abuse, property abuse, violations of trust, deception, and unintentional harm. Within these general groupings, transgressions were categorized into subtypes of offenses, ranging from sexual abuse to accidents. Within each subtype, specific transgressions were ranked according to the relative seriousness of the transgression, from most serious to least serious, consistent with the ratings of objective raters (see APPENDIX C).

One third of all incidents (ten from each subject group) were randomly selected for interrater reliability. There was 91% agreement between the raters within the same subcategory. Within each broad transgression category, there was 93% agreement between raters, kappas .90 and .91 respectively.

**Causes.** Answers to two open-ended questions pertaining to the reasons for and causes of the transgressions reported were classified by a rater into five classes of cause: (a) negative causes located in the perpetrator, (b) neutral causes located in the perpetrator, (c) interpersonal causes related to the perpetrator and victim relationship, (d) negative causes located primarily in the victim, and (e) causes external to both the perpetrator and victim. Some of these causal classes contained subcategories. In total, nine causal subtypes were employed (see APPENDIX D for the causal classification scheme). Although most subjects listed only one cause, some participants listed two causes. Only the primary cause was classified.
One-third of the questionnaires (ten from each subject group) were randomly selected for interrater reliability. There was 79% agreement for causes classified by subtype. There was 87% agreement between raters for causes classified within the same broad category, kappa .76 and .84 respectively.

**Other-other identification with the perpetrator or victim.** Objective raters rated the extent to which observers (who made judgments about transgressions others committed against others) appeared to identify with both the victim and perpetrator on three point scales (see APPENDIX E). The raters based their judgments on observers' responses to all open-ended questions. Numerous factors were considered in these ratings: reference to the observers' relationship with either the victim or the perpetrator, reference to the victim or the perpetrator by name, the extent to which the observer seemed to understand the behavior of the perpetrator and/or the plight of the victim, and the extent to which the observer felt that he or she would have done what the perpetrator had done and/or felt as the victim had felt in the same situation. The scores for victim identification and perpetrator identification were then integrated to form an overall identification score using the following formula:

$$\frac{2 \times (\text{victim score} - \text{perpetrator score}) + 8}{2}$$

This formula weighted the scores for both victim and perpetrator identification equally and created a seven-point scale on which higher scores reflected greater identification with the victim.

One-third of the questionnaires (10) were randomly selected for interrater reliability. The correlation between raters' ratings for victim identification was .83,
The correlation between raters' ratings for perpetrator identification was .87, and the correlation between the raters' ratings for overall identification scores was .89.

Self-other and other-self identification with the perpetrator or victim. All participants except those who described transgressions they committed against themselves, reported the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. These relationships were scored according to a standard seven point scale (from 1 = distant to 7 = extremely close - see APPENDIX F). Although participants rated their subjective feelings of closeness to the other individual involved, the standard, objective score of relationship closeness was employed to control for individual differences in subjective ratings. The correlation between the standard relationship relevance score and the subjective closeness score was high (.87) indicating strong subject-rater agreement about what constituted an important relationship. The more relevant/close the perpetrator-victim relationship, the more the perpetrator/victim was thought to have identified with the perpetrator/victim.

Self-self identification with the perpetrator or victim. Self-victimizer's in the self-self group identified three types of conflict, (a) conflicts where they transgressed against others, but indirectly victimized themselves, (b) conflicts where they were victimized by others, but felt they victimized themselves, and (c) conflicts where they truly victimized themselves. Identification scores were based upon whether they identified with their role as perpetrator, whether they identified equally with their roles as perpetrator and victim, and whether they identified with their role as victim (see APPENDIX G).
Kohlberg Questionnaire (Form A of the MJI)

Kohlberg's test of moral reasoning (The Moral Judgment Interview, or MJI) consists of two hypothetical dilemmas. The subject is asked to resolve each dilemma in terms of what he or she feels the hypothetical character in the dilemma ought to do. Next, the individual responds to a series of questions designed to elicit the subject's reasons (structure) for resolving the dilemma in the manner that he or she did (content). Subjects were given Kohlberg's test in questionnaire format. Form A was administered to all groups. In the first dilemma of Form A, a hypothetical character must decide whether he should steal a drug and save his wife's life or not steal the drug and let his wife die. In the second dilemma, subjects are informed that a police officer has discovered that the man stole the drug. Subjects are asked whether or not the officer should report the man and, if reported, whether or not a judge should sentence the man.

Scoring and interrater reliability. Scoring Kohlberg's dilemmas involves classifying interview judgments by issue, norm, and element, and seeking matching criterion judgments in the scoring manual that specify these responses' stage structure (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). After stage scores have been obtained for all scorable judgments, the scores are weighted and summed to produce a measure of moral maturity. Moral maturity scores are obtained by summing the weighted issue stage scores, dividing by the sum of the weights and multiplying by 100. Thus, a continuous array of scores is obtained from 100 (corresponding to Stage 1) to 500 (corresponding to Stage 5).

Twenty-five interviews were randomly selected for interrater reliability. Both the original rater and the second rater were experienced in scoring Kohlbergian moral dilemmas. For moral maturity scores (MMS), there was 80% agreement within 25 points and 84% agreement within 33 points. The correlation between raters was .73.
Results and Discussion

The results will be presented and discussed in two main sections dealing with: (a) The nature and extent of perpetrators' and victims' self-exculpation, and (b) the relationship between individual differences in moral maturity and the extent to which subjects self-exculpate for moral transgressions. In the first section, tests of the hypotheses relating to self-exculpation by perpetrators, self-exculpation by victims, and the interaction between perpetrator and victim self-exculpation, will be conducted. In the second section, tests of the hypotheses relating individual differences in moral maturity to the extent of perpetrator and victim self-exculpation, will be conducted.

Self-Exculpation by Perpetrators and Victims

It was hypothesized that perpetrators and victims would make self-exculpating judgments about numerous aspects of moral transgressions committed by them and against them. In this section, tests comparing judgments made by perpetrators (self-other and self-self) to judgments made by non-perpetrators (other-other and other-self) and judgments made by victims (self-self and other-self) to judgments made by non-victims (self-other and other-other) were conducted on (a) subjective and objective ratings of seriousness, (b) types of moral transgressions described, (c) types of primary causes listed, (d) Kelley-type, Seligman-type, and moral responsibility questions, and (e) an overall minimization of culpability composite.

Ratings of Seriousness

Subjects' ratings of seriousness. To test whether perpetrators rated their transgressions as less serious than non-perpetrators and victims rated their victimizations as more serious than non-victims, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANOVA was conducted on the subjects' ratings of seriousness. This analysis
yielded a significant perpetrator main effect, $F(1, 112) = 14.23; p<.001$. Neither the
main effects for sex, $F(1, 112) = .80$, victim, $F(1, 112) = 1.56$, nor any of the
interactions, was statistically significant. As hypothesized, participants rated the
transgressions they committed as less serious than the transgressions committed by
others (see Figure 2). Contrary to prediction, participants did not consider the
transgressions committed against them to be more serious than the transgressions
committed against others.

Objective ratings of seriousness. To test whether perpetrators listed less serious
transgressions than non-perpetrators and victims listed more serious transgressions
than non-victims, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANOVA was conducted on
raters' ratings of transgression seriousness. This analysis yielded a significant
perpetrator main effect, $F(1, 112) = 27.81; p<.0001$, and a significant victim main
effect, $F(1, 112) = 10.65; p<.002$. Neither the main effect for sex, $F(1, 112) = 1.16$,
nor any of the interactions was statistically significant. As hypothesized, perpetrators
listed less serious transgressions than non-perpetrators. Contrary to hypothesis, non-
victims listed more serious incidents than victims. Thus, subjects seemed reluctant to
see themselves as victims of serious transgressions (see Figure 2).

Rating incidents as less serious or listing less serious incidents. To investigate
the relationship between subjects' ratings of seriousness and raters' ratings of
seriousness, a regression analysis was conducted with subjects' ratings of seriousness as
the dependent variable and raters' ratings of seriousness as the independent variable.
This analysis revealed that raters' ratings of seriousness predicted subjects' ratings of seriousness, $r = .42; F(1,118) = 25.63; p < .0001$. To test whether the perpetrator effect observed on subjects' ratings of seriousness was a function of objective differences in the seriousness of the transgressions, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for objective ratings of seriousness, was conducted on the subjects' ratings of seriousness. Neither the main effect for perpetrator, $F(1,111) = 3.83$, the main effect for victim, $F(1,111) = .04$, nor the main effect for sex, $F(1,111) = .33$ was statistically significant. This analysis did yield a covariate effect, $F(1,111) = 12.73; p < .001$. This finding indicates that the perpetrator main effect observed on subjective ratings of seriousness was primarily due to the subjects listing less serious incidents for the transgressions they committed than for the transgressions committed by others. Overall, both objective and subjective raters seemed to rank the transgressions according to a consistent hierarchy of seriousness. Subjects in all groups consistently rated the transgressions they described as more serious than the raters rated them. This result likely reflects the subjects' personal, detailed experiences with the transgressions.

Group Differences in the Types of Transgressions Listed

Table 1 contains the mean number of transgressions mentioned by self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim within each transgression category (maximum = 3). To test whether perpetrators listed different transgressions from non-perpetrators and/or victims listed different transgressions from non-victims, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) x 4(type of transgression) ANOVA, with repeated measures on the last variable, was conducted on the mean frequency scores for each of the four broad
transgression categories\(^8\). Neither the main effect for transgression type \(F(3, 336) = 1.50\); nor any of the interactions was statistically significant. Thus, even though between group differences in reported transgression seriousness were observed, subjects reported similar types of transgressions across groups.

---

Insert Table 1 about here

---

**Group Differences in the Types of Cause Listed**

Table 2 contains the mean number of primary causes mentioned by self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim within each broad causal category. To test whether perpetrators listed different causes than non-perpetrators and/or victims listed different causes than non-victims, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) x 5(type of cause) ANCOVA, with repeated measures on the last variable and controlling for transgression seriousness, was conducted on mean frequency scores across the five causal categories. This analysis yielded a main effect for causal category, \(F(4, 448) = 27.26; p<.0001\); a causal category by perpetrator interaction, \(F(4, 448) = 15.83; p<.0001\); a causal category by victim interaction, \(F(4, 448) = 3.58; p<.01\); and a causal category by sex interaction, \(F(4,448) = 2.43; p<.05\). None of the other interactions was statistically significant. Raters' ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, \(F(1,111) = .64\). Comparing causal categories, subjects tended to list the perpetrator's negative attributes, a problem in the perpetrator-victim relationship, or an external cause more often than non-negative characteristics of the

---

\(^8\)Transgressions scored as unintentional harm were too few (\(N = 5\)) to be analyzed.
perpetrator or negative characteristics of the victim. Inasmuch as this analysis revealed two-way interactions involving the causal categories, further ANCOVA’s were conducted for each cause separately.

Insert Table 2 about here

---

**Negative characteristics or states of the perpetrator.** A 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, yielded a main effect for perpetrator, \( F(1,111) = 28.74; \ p < .0001 \). Neither the main effects for victim, \( F(1,111) = .39 \), nor sex, \( F(1,111) = .05 \) was statistically significant. Raters’ ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, \( F(1,111) = 1.27 \). As expected, non-perpetrators more often stated that negative attributes of the perpetrator caused the transgression than perpetrators (see Table 2). Contrary to expectation, victims did not attribute their own victimization experiences to negative attributes of the perpetrator more often than non-victims (see Table 2).

**Non-negative/neutral characteristics or states of the perpetrator.** A 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, yielded main effects for perpetrator, \( F(1,111) = 9.49; \ p < .005 \), and sex, \( F(1,111) = 7.70; \ p < .01 \). The main effect for victim was not statistically significant, \( F(1,111) = 3.29 \). Raters’ ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, \( F(1,111) = .16 \). As predicted, perpetrators were more likely to state that the perpetrator’s (their own) non-negative or neutral qualities caused the incident than non-perpetrators (see Table 2). Unexpectedly, men (\( M = .37 \)), more often than women (\( M = .13 \)), stated that the perpetrator’s behavior was caused by the perpetrator’s non-
negative or neutral characteristics. It is conceivable that men more often excuse the perpetrator's actions by attributing such actions to non-negative qualities than women because men are more likely to commit immoral acts (Lee, 1984).

**Problems in the perpetrator-victim relationship.** A 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, yielded a main effect for sex, F(1,111) = 6.16; p<.02. Neither the main effects for perpetrator, F(1,111) = .02, nor the main effect for victim, F(1,111) = 1.97 was statistically significant. Raters' ratings of transgression seriousness was a significant covariate, F(1,111) = 4.11; p<.05. There were no differences between self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim in the number of times each subject listed the perpetrator-victim relationship as the primary cause. Unexpectedly, women (M = .98), more often than men (M = .67), reported the cause to be some problem in the perpetrator-victim relationship (see Table 2). It is plausible that this unexpected main effect for sex was a function of the different ways men and women conceived of the moral transgressions. Some researchers, such as Gilligan (1977, 1982), suggest that women tend to perceive moral transgressions in terms of the relationships between two individuals whereas men tend to perceive moral transgressions in terms of the competing justice-based interests of either the victim or the perpetrator.

**Characteristics or states of the victim.** A 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, yielded a main effect for perpetrator, F(1,111) = 11.21; p<.002 and a main effect for victim, F(1,111) = 10.61; p<.002. The main effect for sex was not statistically significant, F(1,111) = .00. Raters' ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, F(1,111) = .03. As predicted, perpetrators more often stated that the negative characteristics of the victim
caused the incident than non-perpetrators (see Table 2). Also as hypothesized, victims less often stated that the negative characteristics of the victim caused the incident than non-victims (see Table 2). As expected, perpetrators in the self-other group most frequently listed the victim as the primary cause of the transgression whereas victims in the other-self group least frequently listed the victim as the primary cause.

Causes external to both the perpetrator and victim. A 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, yielded a main effect for victim, $F(1,111) = 7.40; p<.01$. Neither the main effects for perpetrator, $F(1,111) = 2.07$, nor sex, $F(1,111) = 1.20$ was statistically significant. Raters’ ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, $F(1,111) = .50$. Contrary to prediction, victims more often listed external factors as the primary cause of the transgression than non-victims (see Table 2). It is plausible that whereas people who describe their own victimizations may be motivated to divert responsibility from themselves by attributing the victimization to external factors, those describing the victimizations of others may be motivated to place causal responsibility on one of the individuals involved (either the perpetrator or the victim). As observed in previous analyses, people seem reluctant to portray themselves as victims or the objects of intentional harm. When victimized, people seem to want to believe the incident was caused by external factors.

Evidence of Self-Exculpation on CMQ Attribution Questions

To examine differences in causal and moral attributions made about transgressions committed by the subjects versus transgressions committed by others and transgressions committed against the subjects and transgressions committed against others, a 2 (perpetrator) x 2 (victim) x 2 (sex) x 14 (attribution question) MANCOVA,
controlling for transgression seriousness, was conducted on the attribution questions comprising the CMQ. This analysis yielded: a main effect for perpetrator, $F(14, 98) = 10.87; p<.0001$; a main effect for victim, $F(14, 98) = 2.19; p<.02$; a perpetrator by victim interaction, $F(14, 98) = 2.02; p<.02$; a perpetrator by sex interaction, $F(14, 98) = 2.58; p<.005$; and a covariate effect $F(14, 98) = 3.78; p<.0001$. Neither the main effect for sex, $F(14, 98) = .80$, nor any of the other interactions was statistically significant.

As predicted, on all, except one, Kelley-type, Seligman-type, and moral responsibility questions, subjects attributed less causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator (themselves) for the transgressions they committed than for the transgressions others committed (see Table 3). Contrary to prediction, victims did not consistently attribute more causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator than non-victims. Victims did, however, consider the perpetrators' behavior less distinct than non-victims, compared to the perpetrators' past behavior (see Table 3). A perpetrator by victim interaction was observed on the question concerning the inconsistency of the perpetrator's actions, $F(1, 111) = 11.55; p<.001$ (see Figure 3). As predicted, perpetrators in the self-other group rated their transgressions as relatively inconsistent with their regular behavior. Contrary to expectation, however, victims in

---

9 The predicted effect was not evidenced on the question relating to the consistency the perpetrator's behavior compare to his or her past behavior. This lack of effect may have been due to the inability of subjects to strongly distort the prevalence of past incidents.
the other-self group also rated the perpetrators' behavior as relatively inconsistent with the perpetrators' regular behavior (see Figure 3). It is possible that subjects who are victimized by others may be motivated to rate the perpetrator's actions as inconsistent in order to preserve the expectation that they will not be harmed by the perpetrator in the future and to discuss their victimization as a one-time event. As observed in previous analyses, it seems as though subjects are especially prone to minimize the magnitude of their victimization experiences.

A perpetrator by sex interaction was observed on questions concerning the relative situational influence causing the transgressor's behavior, $F(1, 111) = 5.08; p<.03$ and the consistency of the perpetrator's behavior compared to his/her past behavior, $F(1, 111) = 6.65; p<.02$. In both cases, females self-exculpated in a more extreme fashion than did males (see Figure 4). It is plausible that the commission of immoral acts is more incongruent with the self-definition of women than the self-definition of men. This greater incongruity may result in women self-exculpating more extremely than men in order to minimize the potential threat to their self-definitions. It is equally plausible that because women commit fewer immoral acts than men (Lee, 1984), women may self-exculpate more extremely than men to maintain a sense of behavioral self-consistency.
The seriousness of the transgression affected only those questions relating to issues of moral responsibility: the degree to which the transgressor's behavior was justifiable, $F(1, 111) = 12.16; p<.001$; the extent to which the transgressor should be blamed for the incident, $F(1, 111) = 9.41; p<.005$; the degree to which the transgressor's behavior was excusable, $F(1,111) = 15.25; p<.0005$; and the degree to which the transgressor felt guilt for his or her transgression, $F(1,111) = 9.27; p<.005^{10}$. Transgression seriousness did not affect judgments of causal responsibility.

Consistent with past research, judgments of the relative immorality of a perpetrator's behavior is influenced by the seriousness (moral reprehensibility) of the transgression (Hart & Horne, 1959). Regardless of the perspective of the attributor, the more serious the transgression, the more the transgression was rated as unjustifiable and inexcusable, and the more the perpetrator was rated as blameworthy and experiencing less guilt for his or her transgression.

**Overall Self-Exculpation by Perpetrators and Victims**

**Aggregating the data.** To identify the underlying structure of the data, coefficient alphas were computed for each of the three theoretically-derived composites. The coefficient alphas for these composites (Kelley-type: .84; Seligman-type: .64; and moral responsibility questions: .74) were lower than the coefficient alpha for all questions combined (.88$^{11}$). Thus, using three composites was not justified and an overall, minimization of culpability (MOC) composite was constructed. For some questions, the

---

$^{10}$ Raters' ratings of seriousness was not a significant covariate for the extent to which the transgressor was responsible for the incident, $F(1,111) = .24$. This was the only moral responsibility question for which raters' ratings of seriousness did not covary.

$^{11}$ The alpha coefficients for the individual subject groups were: other victimizes other (.85); self victimizes other (.59); other victimizes other (.81); self victimizes self (.52).
scale was inverted such that higher scores reflected greater perpetrator self-exculpation. The items were then added together and divided by fourteen to derive a minimization of culpability score.

**Minimization of culpability.** To test whether perpetrators consistently minimize the perpetrators' culpability more than non-perpetrators and whether victims consistently maximize the perpetrators' culpability more than non-victims, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, was conducted on the MOC composite. This analysis yielded a main effect for perpetrator, F(1,111) = 91.65; p<.0001 (see Table 3). Neither the main effects for victim, F(1,111) = 1.57, sex, F(1,111) = .21, nor any of the interactions was statistically significant. Raters' ratings of transgression seriousness was not a significant covariate, F(1,111) = 3.21. As predicted, subjects consistently minimized the perpetrators' culpability for the transgressions they committed (against self and others) more than non-perpetrators. Contrary to prediction, victims failed to maximize the culpability of the perpetrator more than non-victims.

**Evidence for self-exculpation by perpetrators.** This study provided strong and consistent evidence that people make self-exculpating judgments about the transgressions they commit against both self and others. Compared to non-perpetrators, perpetrators, (a) listed less serious transgressions, (b) less frequently listed their negative attributes as causal agents, (c) more frequently listed the victim as the primary cause, and (d) judged themselves as less culpable on Kelley-type, Seligman-type, and moral responsibility questions. Consistent with past research, people made judgments in a manner that minimized their culpability for the transgressions they committed.
Evidence for self-exculpation by victims. This study provided comparatively weak support for the hypothesis that victims make self-exculpating judgments by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator. Compared to non-victims, victims, (a) rated the behavior of their victimizers as less distinct, and (b) less frequently listed their own negative attributes as the primary cause of the incident.

Why don't people self-exculpate as strongly when they have been victimized as when they victimize? There are two possible reasons for this apparent difference. First, this study was not particularly sensitive to the prevalence of victim self-exculpation because subjects only made attributions about the perpetrator on Kelley-type, Seligman-type and moral responsibility questions. Possibly, if subjects had made attributions about victim, victim self-exculpation might have been more evident. Consistent with this explanation, victims in the self-other group never listed themselves as the primary cause of the transgression (see Figure 5). Second, whereas some researchers have found that it may frequently be adaptive to blame others for transgressions they commit against us, it may sometimes be adaptive to make self-blame attributions (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). It is conceivable that because the victim's attributions of causal and moral responsibility for an immoral act may take on more than one form (self-blame and/or perpetrator-blame), a consistent self-exculpating style of blaming the perpetrator was not evidenced in this study. Although this explanation is plausible, the finding that victims rarely stated that they were the primary cause of the incident ($M = .03$) indicates that victims rarely engaged in self-blame. In direct contradiction to past research investigating self-blame, victims in the other-self group never listed themselves as the primary cause of their victimization (see Figure 5). Nonetheless, it is conceivable that although they did not state that they (the victims)
were the primary cause of the incident, they may have directed some of the blame for the transgression onto themselves, moderating the extent to which they maximized the culpability of the perpetrator.

__________________________

Insert Figure 5 about here

__________________________

**Perpetrator by victim interaction.** The main hypothesis of this study was that there would be an interaction between the self-exculpating judgments made by perpetrators and the self-exculpating judgments made by victims. Although the trends were in the predicted directions, the expected perpetrator by victim interaction was not statistically significant. As shown in Figure 6, this interaction failed to receive support because observers in the other-other group responded similarly to victims in the other-self group and self-victimizers in the self-self group responded similarly to perpetrators in the self-other group.

__________________________

Insert Figure 6 about here

__________________________

To explain the absence of a difference in the judgments made by subjects describing the transgressions they committed against others and subjects describing the transgressions they committed against themselves, it is possible that self-victimizers in the self-self group may not have experienced any conflict between self-exculpating from their role as the perpetrator and self-exculpating from their role as the victim, as we expected. Rather, self-victimizers may have attended only to their role as perpetrator because they only made attributions about the perpetrator's causal and moral
self-exculpated when making attributions about their perpetrator role, self-victimizers rarely stated that the victim was the primary cause (see Figure 5). Thus, it seems subjects in the self-self group responded as perpetrators when making attributions about the perpetrator and responded as victims when making attributions about the victim.

Turning to the absence of difference between the other-other and other-self groups, it is plausible that observers in the other-other group adopted the perspective of the victim, thus, in effect putting themselves in the other-self group. This might help to explain why the self versus other victim effect was not manifested in this study. One could hypothesize that if subjects were asked to make attributions about a victimization where they shared a relationship with the victim and a victimization where they did not share a relationship with the victim, then the self versus other victim effect may be observed from the perspective of observer who display various types of identification.

Another explanation for the absence of difference between the other-self and other-other groups is that some victims may have made moderate judgments of the perpetrators’ culpability because they identified with the perpetrator. Based on research investigating blame-based attributions in situations of family violence (Frieze, 1979), it is possible that victims in the other-self group may have been reluctant to maximize the culpability of the perpetrator in situations where they identified with the perpetrator, reducing the expected tendency for victims to self-exculpate by maximizing the perpetrator’s culpability.
Identification with the Perpetrator or Victim

The previous discussion provided three possible explanations for the absence of support for the hypothesized interaction. In the following section, the impacts of identifying with the perpetrator or victim were considered.

The impact of observers' identifying with the victim. To test the possibility that observers in the other-other group identified more strongly with the victim than with the perpetrator, which prompted them to respond to the transgressions as though they were the victims (i.e., like individuals in the self-other group), a regression analysis was conducted with the mean identification scores as the independent variable and the MOC composite as the dependent variable. This analysis yielded a strong negative relationship, $r = -.55$, $F(1,28) = 12.04$; $p<.002$. As hypothesized, the more observers identified with the victim, the more they maximized the culpability of the perpetrator. Victims also tended to identify with the victim ($M = 5.08$). Thus, one reason for the absence of support for the expected perpetrator by victim interaction is that observers (other-other) tended to respond as though they were victimized by the perpetrator.

Self-victimizers identifying with the victim, perpetrator or both. To test the possibility that self-victimizers in the self-self group identified with their role as perpetrator more strongly than they identified with their role as victim, self-victimizers were re-categorized on the basis of whether they responded primarily from their role of perpetrator (on at least two out of three transgressions), whether they responded from both their roles as perpetrator and the victim equally (on at least two out of three transgressions) and whether they responded primarily from their role of victim (on at least two out of three transgressions). A 3 (role) x 2(sex) ANCOVA, controlling for transgression, seriousness was conducted on the MOC composite. Neither
the main effect for role, $F(2,23) = .42$, the main effect for sex, $F(1,23) = .46$, the role by sex interaction, $F(2,23) = .44$, nor the covariate effect, $F(1,23) = .36$ was statistically significant. Thus, although more self-victimizers responded from the role of perpetrator ($n = 14$) than responded from the role of victim ($n = 03$), there were no differences between the self-victimizers responding as perpetrators, self-victimizers responding as both perpetrators and victims, and self-victimizers responding as victims on the MOC composite. Self-victimizers tended to minimize the perpetrator's culpability when making attributions about the perpetrator's causal and moral responsibility, regardless of which role they assumed. This finding likely reflects their making attributions only about their role as perpetrator.

**Group differences in relevance of perpetrator-victim relationship.** Before investigating the effects of relevant perpetrator-victim relationships on the extent to which victims maximized the culpability of the perpetrator, it was necessary to examine whether people in the different groups were dealing with differentially relevant perpetrator-victim relationships. Thus, a 3(condition)$^{12} \times 2($sex$)$ ANOVA was conducted on the ratings of relationship relevancy. This analysis yielded a main effect for sex, $F(1,82) = 6.03; p<.02$. Neither the main effect for condition, $F(2,82) = 2.79$ nor the condition by sex interaction, $F(2,82) = .22$ was statistically significant. As expected, the types of perpetrator-victim relationships described by subjects in the self-other, other-other and other-self groups did not differ in relevancy. Consistent with previous findings, the transgressions described by females ($M = 4.75$) were

---

$^{12}$ Only three subject groups were used for this analysis because those describing transgressions they committed against themselves did not list perpetrator-victim relationships, for obvious reasons.
characterized by more relevant perpetrator-victim relationships than the transgressions described by males (M = 3.96). As mentioned previously, some researchers, such as Gilligan (1977, 1982), suggest that women tend to perceive moral transgressions in terms of relationships whereas men tend to perceive moral transgressions in terms of individual justice. Thus, whereas women may be more sensitive to moral transgressions committed within the framework of interpersonal relationships, men may be more sensitive to moral transgressions stemming from an individualistic justice-motive.

The relevance of relationships. To investigate the extent to which relationship relevance moderated subjects' judgments of the perpetrators' culpability, regression analyses relating relationship relevance to minimization of culpability were conducted for the self-other, other-self and other-other groups. The relevance of the perpetrator-victim relationship was not related to the degree to which perpetrators in the self-other group minimized their culpability, F(1,27) = .22 (see Table 4). This finding suggests a pervasive tendency for subjects to excuse their own transgressions, regardless of how much they identify with victim. The relevance of the perpetrator-victim relationship was highly related to the degree to which victims in the other-self group minimized the perpetrator's culpability, F(1,27) = 4.29; p<.05 (see Table 4). As expected, the more the victim identified with his/her perpetrator, the less judgmental the victim was of the perpetrator. Victims may more strongly defend the actions of the perpetrator when they identify with the perpetrator in order to justify continuing the relationship, or because people may not want to think poorly of those with whom they share a close relationship. The relative closeness of the perpetrator-victim relationship was not related to the
degree to which observers in the other-other group minimized the culpability of the perpetrator, $F(1, 28) = .14$ (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Reanalyzing Minimization of Culpability

Discounting the effects of close relationships and identification with the victim. The previous analyses indicated that the absence of a perpetrator-victim interaction may have resulted from observers' identifying with the victim and/or victims identifying with their perpetrators. Thus, observers in the other-other group who identified with the victim ($n = 19$) and victims in the other-self group who identified with the perpetrator ($n = 14$) were left out of the following reanalysis.

To reanalyze whether perpetrators minimize the perpetrators' culpability more than non-perpetrators and victims maximize the perpetrators' culpability more than non-victims, a $2(\text{perpetrator}) \times 2(\text{victim}) \times 2(\text{sex})$ ANCOVA, controlling for transgression seriousness, was conducted on the minimization of culpability composite. This analysis yielded a main effect for perpetrator, $F(1, 76) = 60.65; p<.0001$, a main effect for victim, $F(1, 46) = 15.41; p<.001$, and a perpetrator by victim interaction, $F(1, 76) = 8.32; p<.006$. Neither the main effect for sex, $F(1, 76) = .84$, nor any of the other interactions, was statistically significant. After deleting victims in the self-other group who identified with the perpetrator and observers in the other-other group who identified with the victim, the proposed hypotheses were supported. Compared to non-perpetrators, perpetrators attributed less culpability to themselves for the transgressions they committed. Compared to non-victims, victims attributed more
causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator for the transgressions committed against them. Most importantly, perpetrators in the self-other group attributed the least causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator (themselves). Victims in the other-self group who did not identify with the perpetrator attributed the most causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator. Both observers who did not identify with the victim and self-victimizers attributed moderate amounts of causal and moral responsibility to the perpetrator (see Figure 7).

Whereas perpetrators self-exculpated by minimizing their causal and moral responsibility for the transgressions they committed regardless of their relationship to their victims, victims self-exculpated by maximizing the culpability of perpetrators for transgressions committed against them only when they failed to identify with the perpetrator. Observers tended to make moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability unless they identified with the victim. When observers identified with the victim, they tended to respond as though they had been victimized. To summarize, although people tend to divert responsibility from themselves for their perpetraitions and victimizations, victims make moderate judgments about the perpetrator when they identify with the perpetrator and observers maximize the culpability of the perpetrator when they identify with the victim.
Relating Moral Maturity to Self-Exculpation by Perpetrators and Victims

Group Differences in Moral Maturity

To confirm that groups were similar in moral maturity, a 2(perpetrator) x 2(victim) x 2(sex) ANOVA was conducted on MMS. This analysis failed to yield significant main effects for perpetrator, \( F(1, 112) = 1.21 \) or victim, \( F(1, 112) = 2.49 \). There was, however, a significant main effect for sex, \( F(1, 112) = 5.98; p<.02 \). Females scored significantly lower on Kohlberg's test than did males. Although, in a meta-analysis of past research, Walker (1984) concluded there were no sex differences in moral maturity, some researchers, such as Gilligan (1982), have suggested that Kohlberg's test is biased against women and that women tend to score lower than men.

The Relationship Between Moral Maturity and Self-Exculpation

To test whether there was an overall relation between scores on Kohlberg's test and minimizing the perpetrator's culpability, a regression analysis was conducted, with MMS as the independent variable and minimization of culpability as the dependent variable, across all subjects. This analysis yielded a significant negative relationship, \( r = -.29 \), \( F(1, 118) = 7.79; p<.01 \). Moral maturity predicted the extent to which subjects minimized the perpetrators' culpability. People who scored relatively high on the MJI held the perpetrator more culpable than people who scored relatively low on Kohlberg's test (see Table 5).

The relation between moral maturity and the MOC composite was examined separately for each group. As Table 5 shows, the regression analyses for each group...
yielded the following results, (a) self victimizing other, $r = -.47$, $F(1,28) = 7.79; \ p < .01$, (b) self victimizing self, $r = -.29$, $F(1,28) = 2.60$, (c) other victimizing other, $r = -.43$, $F(1,28) = 6.27; \ p < .05$, and (d) other victimizing self, $r = -.10$, $F(1,28) = .27$. As predicted, perpetrators in the self-other group who scored relatively high on the MJI were less inclined to self-exculpate than perpetrators who scored relatively low on the MJI. Interestingly, observers (other-other) who scored relatively high on the MJI held the perpetrator more culpable than observers who scored relatively low on the MJI. It is possible that observers who scored relatively high on Kohlberg’s test were less tolerant of immoral conduct committed by others than observers who scored relatively low on Kohlberg’s test. It is also possible that moral maturity modified the judgments of those who identified primarily with the perpetrator in the same manner that moral maturity modified the judgments made by perpetrators. Moral maturity was not a significant predictor of MOC for victims in the other-self group or self-victimizers in the self-self group.

Identification and the Relation Between Moral Maturity and the MOC composite

One plausible explanation for the unexpected strong relationship between MMS and the MOC composite for observers in the other-other group was that moral maturity modified the judgments of those who identified with the perpetrator in the same manner that moral maturity modified the judgments of the perpetrators. It is equally possible that moral maturity modified the judgments of perpetrators who identified with the victim differently from perpetrators who did not identify with the victim, self-victimizers who identified with the perpetrator differently from self-victimizers who did not identify with the perpetrator, and victims who identified with the perpetrator differently from victims who did not identify with the perpetrator.
To test the possibility that moral maturity modified the judgments of subjects who identified primarily with the perpetrator more strongly than subjects who did not identify primarily with the perpetrator, regression analyses were conducted separately, (a) for perpetrators in the self-other group who identified and did not identify with the victim, (b) for self-victimizers who identified primarily with the perpetrator role and self-victimizers who did not identify primarily with the perpetrator role, (c) for observers who identified with the victim and observers who identified with the perpetrator, and (d) for victims in the other-self group who identified and did not identify with the perpetrator. As documented in Table 5, the regression analyses for each subgroup yielded the following results, (a) self-other: Identification with victim, r = -.21, F(1,13) = .61; no identification with victim, r = -.70, F(1,12) = 11.47; p<.01, (b) self-self: Identification with the perpetrator, r = -.67, F(1,9) = 7.24; p<.03; mixed identification or identification with the victim, r = -.09, F(1, 17) = .14, (c) other-other: Identification with victim, r = -.24, F(1,17) = 1.02; identification with perpetrator, r = -.64, F(1,9) = -.64; p<.05, and (d) other-self: Identification with perpetrator, r = .13, F(1,13) = .21, no identification with perpetrator, r = -.35, F(1,12) = 1.70. As expected, the judgments of observers in the other-other group who identified with the perpetrator were more strongly modified by moral maturity than the judgments of observers who identified with the victim. Similarly, the judgments of perpetrators in the self-other group who failed to identify with the victim were more strongly modified by moral maturity than the judgments of perpetrators who identified with the victim. Consistent with these findings, the judgments of self-victimizers who identified with the perpetrator were more strongly modified by moral maturity than the judgments of self-victimizers who displayed mixed identification and self-victimizers.
who identified with the victim. Although there was a relatively consistent negative relationship between MMS and MOC, the judgments of subjects who displayed mixed identification or identified primarily with the victim were not significantly modified by moral maturity.

Surprisingly, the relationship between MMS and MOC was not statistically significant for perpetrators who identified with their victims. This finding could be explained in two ways. First, it is possible that being emotionally involved in a relationship may diminish the effectiveness of a person's rational-deductive processes in mediating the person's judgments of his or her moral transgressions. Thus, for perpetrators who identified with their victims, moral maturity may have mediated the judgments of those who score relatively high on Kohlberg's test in the same way that moral maturity mediated the judgments of those who scored relatively low on Kohlberg's test. Second, involvement in a relationship may empower lower moral reasoners to act more responsibly than higher moral reasoners. Thus, perpetrators who identified with their victims and who scored relatively low on Kohlberg's test may have felt as strong a need for consistency between their deontic judgments and their judgments of responsibility as perpetrators who identified with their victims and scored relatively high on Kohlberg's test. Future research should investigate how identification with the perpetrator or victim influences the relationship between moral maturity and minimization of the perpetrator's culpability.

Comparing those who do and do not identify with the perpetrator. It is possible that the negative relationship between MMS and the MOC composite observed across all subjects was primarily due to the strong negative relationship between MMS and the MOC composite for subjects who made judgments from the perpetrator's perspective. To test
this possibility, subjects were divided into a group that identified primarily with the perpetrator, and a group that displayed mixed identification or identified primarily with the victim. Regression analyses revealed that moral maturity was a strong predictor of the extent to which subjects who made judgments from the perpetrator's perspective held the perpetrator culpable, $r = -.54$, $F(1,34) = 13.90; p<.001$. Moral maturity was also a significant predictor of the extent to which subjects who displayed mixed identification or identified with the victim held the perpetrator culpable, $r = -.22$, $F(1,81) = 4.28; p<.05$. Further analyses revealed that moral maturity was a significantly better predictor of the extent to which those who made judgments from the perpetrator's perspective held the perpetrator culpable than of the extent to which those who displayed mixed identification or identified with the victim held the perpetrator culpable for the transgression, $F(2,115) = 8.65; p<.0005$.

To summarize the observed relation between moral maturity and minimization of the perpetrator's culpability, there was a relatively consistent tendency for subjects who scored relatively high on the MJI to judge the actions of the perpetrator more harshly than subjects who scored relatively low on the MJI. There was a significantly stronger tendency for higher-scoring subjects who responded from the perpetrator's perspective to make harsher judgments of the perpetrator's culpability than lower-scoring subjects.

---

13 Subjects who identified primarily with the perpetrator were, (a) perpetrators in the self-other group who did not identify with the victim, (b) observers who identified with the perpetrator, and (c) self-victimizers who identified with the perpetrator. Subjects who displayed mixed identification were, (a) perpetrators in the self-other group who identified with the victim, (b) self-victimizers who identified with both the perpetrator and victim, and (c) victims in the other-self group who identified with the perpetrator. Subjects who identified primarily with the victim were, (a) observers who identified with the victim, (c) self-victimizers who identified with the victim, and (d) victims in the other-self group who did not identify with the perpetrator.
who responded from the perpetrator's perspective. As would be expected from the model proposed by Kohlberg and Candee (1984) moral maturity was a significantly better predictor of the extent to which those responding as perpetrators minimized the perpetrator's culpability than of the extent to which those not responding as perpetrators minimized the perpetrator's culpability.
Self-Exculpation for Moral Transgressions

This study provided strong and consistent evidence that people self-exculpate when they make judgments about the transgressions they commit (against self and others) compared to the transgressions others commit (against self and others). People minimized their culpability for the transgressions they committed by listing these incidents as less serious, less frequently caused by their own negative attributes, more frequently caused by their neutral attributes, more frequently caused by the victim, less internally and dispositionally caused, less consistent, less global, more distinctive (in terms of future behaviors), more normative, more justifiable and more excusable than the transgressions committed by others. They also minimized their culpability by rating themselves as less blameworthy, less responsible, and more guilt-ridden than they rated other perpetrators.

The strong tendency for perpetrators to minimize their culpability for the transgressions they commit is consistent with past research that has shown that whereas perpetrators tend to attribute their own undesirable behavior to external factors (eg. victim, poverty, provocation), they attribute the undesirable behaviors of other perpetrators to their internal characteristics (Storms, 1973; West, Gunn, & Chernicky, 1975). Consistent with the findings of Baumeister, Stillwell and Wotman (1990), people who described transgressions they committed tended to divert responsibility away from themselves, and toward victims and external circumstances. This study extended the findings of Laird and Krebs (1992) by revealing that perpetrators made self-exculpating judgments regardless of whom they victimized (self or others).
This study provided comparatively weak evidence that people self-exculpate for transgressions committed against them (by self and others) primarily by maximizing the culpability of the perpetrator. Consistent with some past research (Fincham, Beach & Baucom, 1987; Harvey, Town, & Yarkin, 1981; Laird & Krebs, 1992; Snyder & Higgins, 1988), victims less frequently listed themselves as causal agents and rated the perpetrator's behavior as less distinct than non-victims. Some findings, however, suggested that victims sometimes make self-serving judgments in other ways. Victims tended to minimize the impact of their victimizations by listing less serious victimizations than non-victims and by listing external causes more frequently than non-victims. Although not hypothesized, these findings are consistent with research on the self-serving bias demonstrating that people tend to minimize the impact of their negative experiences (Whitley & Frieze, 1985, 1986; Zuckerman, 1979). It is conceivable that because being a victim is not an enviable position, victims may make self-serving judgments by minimizing the impact of their victimizations (Baumeister et al., 1992).

Contrary to expectation, victims did not consistently maximize the culpability of perpetrators more than non-victims on the CMQ because victims in the self-other group sometimes identified with the perpetrator and because observers in the other-other group tended to identify with the victim. Whereas victims who did not identify with the perpetrator tended to maximize the culpability of the perpetrator, victims who identified with the perpetrator tended to make moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability. This finding is consistent with self-blame research showing that victims who identify with their perpetrators attribute more blame to themselves and less blame to their perpetrators (Frieze, 1979). Whereas observers who identified with the victim
responded as though they had been victimized, observers who failed to identify with the victim made moderate judgments of the perpetrator's culpability. Consistent with these findings, Lerner (1980) found that observers do not derogate the victim when they identify with the victim.

The main hypothesis of this study, that there would be an interaction between the tendency for perpetrators to self-exculpate and the tendency for victims to self-exculpate, was not initially supported. Nonetheless, when the tendency for victims to identify with the perpetrators and the tendency for observers to identify with the victim were considered, the proposed interaction received strong support. Perpetrators in the self-other group made the least harsh judgments of the perpetrator (themselves). Victims in the other-self group who did not identify with the perpetrator made the harshest judgments of the perpetrator. Observers in the other-other group who did not identify with the victim made moderate judgments of the perpetrator. Self-victimizers in the self-self group also made moderate judgments of the perpetrator, relative to the judgments made by perpetrators in the self-other group.

**The Relation Between Self-Exculpation and Moral Maturity**

Consistent with the model proposed by Kohlberg and Candee (1984) concerning the relation between moral judgment and moral action, the findings from this study suggest that there were two routes through which moral maturity mediated the judgments people made about moral transgressions. First, moral maturity mediated people's judgments about the relative immorality of the transgression. People who scored relatively high on the MJI consistently held the perpetrator more culpable for his or her wrongdoings than people who scored relatively low on Kohlberg's test, regardless of their role in the moral transgression. Consistent with the first route suggested by Kohlberg
Self-Exculpation

and Candee, higher scoring subjects seem to make harsher judgments of the culpability of all people who commit transgressions.

Second, moral maturity mediated people's judgments about their responsibility for engaging in immoral conduct. More morally mature participants who made judgments from the perpetrator's perspective self-exculpated to a lesser extent than less morally mature participants who made judgments from the perpetrator's perspective. As found by Bartek, Krebs and Taylor (1993), "the types of justification that stem from high stages of moral development are stronger than those that stem from lower stages because they are less susceptible to excuses and evasions of responsibility." Compared to those responding from the perpetrator's perspective who scored relatively low on the MJI, those responding from the perpetrator's perspective who scored relatively high on Kohlberg's test tended to make harsher judgments of their own immoral conduct, (a) because they perceived such actions to be more "wrong", and (b) because they judged themselves more irresponsible for engaging in the immoral acts.

Although this research is consistent with Kohlberg and Candee's moral judgment-moral action model, this study provides mixed support for the hypothesis that higher moral reasoners self-exculpate less than lower moral reasoners. For participants who responded from the perpetrator's perspective, there was an inverse relationship between moral maturity and self-exculpation. In contrast, for subjects responding from the victim's perspective, a positive relationship between moral maturity and self-exculpation was not observed. In fact, victims who scored relatively high on the MJI displayed a weak tendency to make harsher judgments of the perpetrator than victims who scored relatively low on the MJI (see Table 5). Consistent with Kohlberg and Candee's model, advances in moral maturity seem to lead to greater condemnation of the
immoral acts committed by us or against us. Thus, whereas higher moral maturity appears to diminish the magnitude of self-exculpating judgments made by perpetrators, higher moral maturity seems to accentuate the magnitude of self-exculpating judgments made by victims.

To summarize, it is evident that people make different types of judgments about victimizations when they respond to these incidents from different roles (victim or victimizer) and perspectives (self or other). Although some roles seem to exert a more powerful influence on the attributor (perpetrators self-exculpate more unidirectionally than victims), people tend to make judgments about both their perpetrations and their victimizations in ways that present themselves in a positive light. Other factors, however, such as closeness of the perpetrator-victim relationship may serve to moderate the extent to which victims maximize the perpetrator's culpability. Such factors, however, seem to have little impact on the extent to which perpetrators minimize their own culpability. One factor that does have a strong impact on the extent to which perpetrators minimize their culpability is moral maturity. Regardless of their role, subjects who scored relatively high on Kohlberg's test tended to condemn the actions of the perpetrator more than subjects who scored lower on Kohlberg's test. Moral maturity was a significantly better predictor of the degree to which those responding as perpetrators minimized their own culpability than the degree to which those not responding as the perpetrator minimized the perpetrator's culpability.

Limitations of the Present Study and Directions of Future Research

Although the present study has added to the research on self-serving biases, the actor-observer effect, and just world theory, and has documented the effects of individual differences in moral reasoning on the prevalence of self-exculpation, further research
should take into account the limitations of the present study and direct its investigations to the issues outlined below.

One plausible explanation for the lack of a strong tendency for victims to self-exculpate was that subjects made attributions about only the causal and moral responsibility of the perpetrator. When they described incidents in which they or others were victimized, they were not asked to make judgments about the victims' causal and moral responsibility for the victimization. Thus, future research should investigate whether victims self-exculpate when they make judgments about their own causal and moral responsibility for transgressions committed against them (by self or other). It is plausible that evidence for victim self-exculpation would be stronger when making attributions about his or her own culpability for transgressions committed against them than when making attributions about the perpetrator's culpability for transgressions committed against them.

According to the self-serving bias, people tend to take credit for their successes and deny responsibility for their failures (see Zuckerman, 1979 for a review). The present study investigated whether people deny responsibility for their negative outcomes. Future research should investigate whether people make self-enhancing attributions about the positive (altruistic) behaviors they commit and the altruistic behaviors that are bestowed by others on them. If people were to make internal attributions for their positive behaviors and external attributions for the positive behaviors of others, the findings of these studies could not be explained by the actor-observer effect.

It is plausible that the self-exculpating judgments elicited from subjects in the present study did not result from a tendency for people to distort their perceptions of
past events in a biased manner, but rather, that subjects recalled past incidents in a biased way. Thus, when recalling their perpetractions, subjects may have been motivated (selectively chose) to reveal those incidents that supported their biased theories of themselves (that they are good people). In contrast, when recalling their victimizations, subjects may have been motivated (selectively chose) to reveal those incidents that supported their biased theories of others (others are worse than they are). Future research should investigate peoples' judgments about moral transgressions from various roles and perspectives using prefabricated scenarios. By controlling the information surrounding the transgression, the researcher could observe whether self-exculpation results from selective recall or motivated distortions.

This study found that the effects of identification with the perpetrator or victim has a powerful effect on the degree to which people minimize the perpetrator's culpability. Future research should manipulate the type and strength of identification with the perpetrator or victim. Although some past research has considered identification with the victim (Lerner, 1980; Burger, 1981) future research should investigate the impact of identification more closely and should observe the effects of identification on moral judgments.

Last, the present research established that moral maturity was a significant predictor of the extent to which subjects minimize the perpetrator's culpability. It was concluded that the relationship between moral reasoning and minimization of the perpetrator's culpability may be a function of the two routes specified by Kohlberg and Candee (1984). Future research should investigate this possibility more closely examining the relation between moral reasoning and types of judgments people are asked
to make in order to better understand the role of moral maturity mediating the judgments people make of the perpetrator's actions.
References


Table 1

Mean number of times each transgression was listed for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Abusing Self or Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Sexual/Physical Abuse</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Emotional/Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>(.16)</td>
<td>(.54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Compromising Values</td>
<td>(.48)</td>
<td>(.63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Abusing Self or Others' Property</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Violating Trust of Self or Others</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Breaking Contracts</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
<td>(.42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Blaming/Accusing Self or Others</td>
<td>(.35)</td>
<td>(.45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Deceiving Self or Others [Truth Norm]</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Unintentionally Harming Self or Others</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Abusing Self or Others</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Sexual/Physical Abuse</td>
<td>(.21)</td>
<td>(.49)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Emotional/Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>(.49)</td>
<td>(.62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Compromising Values</td>
<td>(.49)</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Abusing Self or Others' Property</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Violating Trust of Self or Others</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Breaking Contracts</td>
<td>(.25)</td>
<td>(.43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Blaming/Accusing Self or Others</td>
<td>(.42)</td>
<td>(.38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Deceiving Self or Others [Truth Norm]</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Unintentionally Harming Self or Others</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Numbers in parentheses denote mean number of times that subcategory was listed per subject.
Table 2

Mean number of times each cause was listed for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Negative</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>28.74***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Neutral</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>9.49**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Interaction</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Negative</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>11.21**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. External</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressures/Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Negative</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Neutral</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Interaction</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Negative</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>10.61**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. External</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>7.40**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressures/Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * prob < .05; ** prob < .01; *** prob < .001
Table 3

Means and F-scores for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim for items on the CMQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min. of Culpability</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>91.59***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situationality</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>49.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>38.70***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consist. (past)</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinc. (past)</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>47.99***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consist. (future)</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>49.95***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct. (future)</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>67.26***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiability</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>13.64***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>9.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>7.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excusability</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>11.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externality</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>6.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>32.04***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>4.73*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>51.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min. of Culpability</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situationality</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consist. (past)</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinc. (past)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>14.30***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consist. (future)</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct. (future)</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justifiability</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excusability</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externality</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * prob < .05; ** prob < .01; *** prob < .001
Table 4

Relating relevance of perpetrator-victim relationship to MOC composite for self-other, other-self, and other-other groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Group</th>
<th>Mean Relevance</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>F-Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self - Other</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Other</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-Self</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>4.29*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * prob <.05
Table 5

Regression analyses relating MMS to MOC across all subject groups and within each subject group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Groups</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-other (n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with victim (n = 15)</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No identification with victim (n = 14)</td>
<td>-.70</td>
<td>11.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-self (n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with perpetrator (n = 11)</td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>7.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed or identification with victim (n = 19)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-other (n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with perpetrator (n = 11)</td>
<td>-.64</td>
<td>6.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with victim (n = 19)</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-self (n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with perpetrator (n = 15)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No identification with perpetrator (n = 14)</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Subjects (n = 120)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with perpetrator (n = 36)</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>13.90***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed or identification with victim (n = 83)</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>4.28*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * prob < .05; **prob < .01; ***prob < .001
Figure Caption

Figure 1. Decomposition of the role (perpetrator x victim) by voice (self x other) confound and descriptions of the subject groups.
### Transgressor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Self group - subjects in this group described incidents in which they wronged themselves.</td>
<td>Other-Self group - subjects in this group described incidents in which they were wronged by another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Other group - subjects in this group described incidents in which they wronged another person.</td>
<td>Other-Other group - subjects in this group described incidents in which they observed another person wronging another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure Caption

Figure 2. Subjects' and raters' ratings of seriousness for self or other as perpetrator and self or other as victim.
Ratings of Seriousness for Self or Other as Perpetrator or Victim
Figure Caption

**Figure 3.** Perpetrator by victim interaction observed on mean inconsistency of perpetrators' behavior.
Perpetrator by Victim Interaction - Mean Inconsistency of Perpetrator's Behavior

![Graph showing mean inconsistency of perpetrator's behavior between Self and Other. The graph includes lines indicating Self as Perpetrator and Other as Perpetrator.](image)
Figure Caption

**Figure 4.** Perpetrator by sex interaction observed on mean inconsistency and mean situationality of perpetrators' behavior.
Perpetrator by Sex Interaction on Mean Inconsistency of Perpetrator’s Behavior

Mean Inconsistency

Perpetrator by Sex Interaction on Mean Situationality of Perpetrator’s Behavior

Mean Situationality
Figure Caption

Figure 5. Mean number of times victim was listed as the primary cause for each subject within each subject group.
Mean Times Victim was Listed as the Cause by Each Subject Within Each Group

Mean Times Victim was Listed (max. = 3)

Subject Group

Self-Other | Self-Self | Other-Other | Other-Self

0 | 0 | 0 | 0
Figure Caption

Figure 6. Mean MOC scores for each subject group.
Mean MOC Scores For Each Subject Group

Subject Group

Mean MOC Scores

Self-Other

Self-Self

Other-Other

Other-Self
Figure Caption

Figure 7. Mean MOC scores for each subject group after deleting victims who identified with the perpetrator and observers who identified with the victim.
MOC Scores Eliminating Observers who ID with Victim and Victims who ID with Perp

Mean MOC Scores

Subject Group

- Self-Other
- Self-Self
- Other-Other
- Other-Self
APPENDIX A

The Perpetrator: Self as Victimizer of Others

In the space below, please identify an incident in which you wronged another person. By wronged, we mean treated immorally or unfairly, by your standards. Please describe the incident in as few words as possible. For example, "I stole his/her wallet", "I molested him/her", "I broke a promise", I spread rumors about him/her", etc.

Answer the following questions about this incident in the appropriate spaces, for questions using numbers for answers for answers, write the appropriate number in the space to the left of the question.

1. What was the relationship between you and the person whom you wronged? (best friend, mother, father, stranger, etc.)*
2. What was the primary reason why you wronged this person?*
3. When did the incident occur? Answer this question in the number of weeks, months or years ago.*
4. How serious was the incident?
5. How close were you to this person?
6. Did you behave this way because of the type of person you are or because of the type of situation you were in?
7. How many other people would have done the same thing as you did if they were in the same situation?
8. How long ago did the incident occur?
9. How often have you behaved like that toward that person?
10. How often have you behaved like that toward other people?
11. To what extent do you think you would treat that person in the same way in the future?
12. To what extent do you think you would treat other people in the same way in the future?
13. To what extent was your behavior justifiable?
14. How responsible were you for the incident?
15. To what extent should you be blamed for the incident?
16. How excusable was your behavior regarding this incident?
17. What do you think was the primary cause of your behavior?*
18. Is the cause you listed above due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
19. In the future, do you think this cause will influence your behavior?
20. Is the cause something that just influences the behavior in question or does it influence all areas of your life?
21. How much guilt did you feel regarding this incident?

The Victim: Others as victimizers of self

In the space below, please identify an incident in which you were wronged by another person. By wronged, we mean treated immorally or unfairly, by your standards. Please describe the incident in as few words as possible. For example, "someone stole my wallet", "someone molested me", "someone broke a promise to me", someone spread rumors about me", etc.
Answer the following questions about this incident in the appropriate spaces, for questions using numbers for answers, write the appropriate number in the space to the left of the question.

1. What was the relationship between you and the person who wronged you? *
2. What was the primary reason why this person wronged you?*
3. When did the incident occur? Answer this question in the number of weeks, months or years ago.*
4. How serious was the incident?
5. How close were you to the person who wronged you?
6. Did the person who wronged you behave this way because of the type of person he or she is or because of the type of situation he or she was in?
7. How many other people would have done the same thing as the person who wronged you did if they were in the same situation?
8. How long ago did this incident occur?
9. How often has the person who wronged you behaved like that toward you?
10. How often has the person who wronged you behaved like that toward other people?
11. To what extent do you think this person would treat you in the same way in the future?
12. To what extent do you think this person would treat other people in the same way in the future?
13. To what extent was his or her behavior justifiable?
14. How responsible was he or she for the incident?
15. To what extent should he or she be blamed for the incident?
16. How excusable was his or her behavior regarding this incident?
17. What do you think was the primary cause of his or her behavior?*

18. Is the cause you listed above due to something about the person who wronged you or something about other people or circumstances?

19. In the future, do you think this cause will influence his or her behavior?

20. Is the cause something that just influences the behavior in question or does it influence all areas of his or her life?

21. How much guilt do you think the person who wronged you felt?

The Observer: Others as victimizers of others

In the space below, please identify an incident in which you observed someone being wronged by another person. By wronged, we mean treated immorally or unfairly, by your standards. Please describe the incident in as few words as possible. For example, "he/she stole his/her wallet", "he/she molested him/her", "he/she broke a promise", he/she spread rumors about him/her", etc.

Answer the following questions about this incident in the appropriate spaces, for questions using numbers for answers, write the appropriate number in the space to the left of the question.

1. What was the relationship between the person who was wronged and the person who wronged this person? (best friend, mother, father, stranger, etc.)*

2. What (do you think) was the primary reason why this person was wronged?*

3. When did the incident occur? Answer this question in the number of weeks, months or years ago.*

4. How serious was the incident?

5. How close was the person who was wronged to the wrongdoer?
6. Did the wrongdoer behave this way because of the type of person he or she is or because of the type of situation he or she was in?

7. How many other people would have done the same thing as the wrongdoer did if they were in the same situation?

8. How long ago did the incident occur?

9. How often has the wrongdoer behaved like that toward the person who was wronged?

10. How often has the wrongdoer behaved like that toward other people?

11. To what extent do you think the wrongdoer would treat the person who was wronged in the same way in the future?

12. To what extent do you think the wrongdoer would treat other people in the same way in the future?

13. To what extent was the wrongdoer's behavior justifiable?

14. How responsible was the wrongdoer for the incident?

15. To what extent should the wrongdoer be blamed for the incident?

16. How excusable was the wrongdoer's behavior regarding this incident?

17. What do you think was the primary cause of the wrongdoer's behavior?*

18. Is the cause you listed above due to something about the wrongdoer or something about other people or circumstances?

19. In the future, do you think this cause will influence the wrongdoer's behavior?

20. Is the cause something that just influences the behavior in question or does it influence all areas of the wrongdoer's life?

21. How much guilt do you think the wrongdoer felt regarding this incident?
The Self-victimizer: Self as victimizer of self

In the space below, please identify an incident in which you wronged yourself. By wronged, we mean treated immorally or unfairly, by your standards. Please describe the incident in as few words as possible.

Answer the following questions about this incident in the appropriate spaces, for questions using numbers for answers, write the appropriate number in the space to the left of the question.

1. What was the primary reason why you wronged yourself?*
2. When did the incident occur? Answer this question in the number of weeks, months or years ago.*
3. How serious was the incident?
4. Did you behave this way because of the type of person you are or because of the type of situation you were in?
5. How many other people would have done the same thing as you did if they were in the same situation?
6. How long ago did the incident occur?
7. How often have you behaved like that toward yourself?
8. How often have you behaved like that toward other people?
9. To what extent do you think you would treat yourself in the same way in the future?
10. To what extent do you think you would treat other people in the same way in the future?
11. To what extent was your behavior justifiable?
12. How responsible were you for the incident?
13. To what extent should you be blamed for the incident?
14. How excusable was your behavior regarding this incident?
15. What do you think was the primary cause of your behavior?*
16. Is the cause you listed above due to something about you or something about other people or circumstances?
17. In the future, do you think this cause will influence your behavior?
18. Is the cause something that just influences the behavior in question or does it influence all areas of your life?
19. How much guilt did you feel regarding this incident?
APPENDIX B

In Europe, 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 make. The sick woman's husband,
Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he
could only get together about 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, having tried every legal
means, Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug
for his wife.

1. Should Heinz steal the drug? Why or why not?
2. Would it actually be right or wrong for Heinz to steal the drug? Why would it be
   right or wrong?
3. Does Heinz have a duty or obligation to steal the drug? Why or why not?
4. If Heinz doesn't love his wife, should he steal the drug for her? (In other words, does
   it make a difference whether or not Heinz loves his wife?) Why or why not?
5. Suppose the person dying was not his wife but a stranger. Should Heinz steal the drug
   for a stranger? Why or why not?
6. Now suppose that it's a pet animal he loves dearly that is dying. Should Heinz steal to
   save the pet animal? Why or why not?
7. Is it important for people to do everything they can to save another's life? Why or
   why not?
8. It is against the law for Heinz to steal the drug. Does that make it morally wrong?
   Why or why not? If no, on what basis should Heinz distinguish between what is legally wrong and what is morally right?

9. In general, should people try to do everything they can to obey the law? Why or why not?

10. How does this general rule apply to what Heinz should do in this particular case (when his wife needs a drug that he cannot obtain legally)?

11. In thinking back over the dilemma, what would you say is the most responsible thing for Heinz to do? Why is that the most responsible thing for Heinz to do?

   Heinz did break into the store. He stole the drug and gave it to his wife. In the newspapers the next day there was an account of the robbery. Mr. Brown, a police officer who knew Heinz, read the account. He remembered seeing Heinz running away from the store and realized that it was Heinz who stole the drug. Mr. Brown wonders whether he should report that it was Heinz who stole the drug.

1. Should Officer Brown report Heinz for stealing? Why or why not?

2. Suppose Officer Brown were a close friend of Heinz, should he then report him? Why or why not?

   Continuation: Officer Brown did report Heinz. Heinz was arrested and brought to court. A jury finds him guilty. It is up to the judge to determine the sentence.

3. Should the judge give Heinz some sentence, or should he suspend sentence and let Heinz go free? Why is that best? What should the judge base his decision on?
4. In general, should people be punished when they break the law? Why or why not? How does this general rule about punishment apply to how the judge should sentence Heinz for this particular crime?

5. Heinz was doing what his conscience told him when he stole the drug. Should a lawbreaker be punished if he is acting out of conscience?

6. Thinking back over the dilemma, what would you say is the most responsible thing for the judge to do? Why is that the most responsible thing for the judge to do?
APPENDIX C

Transgression Classification System.

I. Physical and emotional Abuse

A. Sexual/Physical Abuse
   1. Child Molestation
   2. Rape
   3. Sexual Assault
   4. Manslaughter
   5. Physical Assault (beating up)
   6. Physical Intimidation (threatening, hitting)

B. Emotional/Social/Verbal Abuse
   7. Discriminating Against/Ostracizing/Disrespecting

C. Compromising Values
   8. Neglecting Responsibility to Protect Self or Others
   9. Surrendering/submitting to the wishes of others or self

II. Property abuse
   10. Stealing
   11. Cheating people out of property (money/things)
   12. Vandalism

III. Violations of Trust

   A. Breaking Interpersonal Contracts [Contract Norm]
      13. Cheating in Relationships (adultery)
      14. Breaking Promises
      15. Violating Confidences
B. Falsely Accusing/Blaming Self or Others

16. Wrongful Punishments
17. Verbal (blame-based) Judgments

IV. Deception

18. Academic Cheating
19. Lying
20. Manipulation for Personal Gain (not for property: see 13)
21. Failing to Disclose

V. Unintentional Harm

22. Accidents
APPENDIX D

Causal Classification System

I. Negative attributes of the perpetrator
   1. Negative disposition/traits
      eg. immoral, selfish, inconsiderate, immature, greedy, proud, etc.
   2. Negative states/moods
      eg. angry, frustrated, guilty, afraid, depressed, lonely, etc.

II. Non-negative or neutral attributes of the perpetrator.
   3. Positive characteristics/states/motives
      eg. caring, well-meaning, likeable, happy, etc.
   4. Distracted States/Motives
      eg. lack of effort, lack of forethought, lack of concentration, etc.

II. Interpersonal Causes (problems between the perpetrator and victim)
   5. Negative Motives/Needs
      eg. to get revenge, to deceive, to avoid, to hurt, etc.
   6. Dyadic problems/pressures
      eg. lack of communication, lack of trust, lack of positive regard, etc.

III. Negative attributes of the victim
      eg. jerk, moody person, bully, etc.

IV. Social-Environmental Pressures/Problems
   8. Social pressures/problems
      eg. peer, family, society, school, upbringing, home life, etc.
9. Environmental pressures/problems

eg. alcohol, drugs, stress, illness, situation, etc.
APPENDIX E

Scoring Relative Victim and Perpetrator Identification

0  No evidence of identification.
1  Some minimal level of identification. Subject seems to view things from the target's (victim's or perpetrator's) perspective at least in a small part, but only minimally.
2  Moderate level of identification. Subject clearly views the situation from the target's point of view; there is clear evidence that the subject empathizes or sympathizes with the target, but not fully and exclusively.
3  Strong level of identification. Subject views the situation almost or completely from the target's perspective; There is evidence that the subject clearly and exclusively identifies with, empathizes with, and/or sympathizes with the target.
APPENDIX F

Classifications of Relationships According to their Relative Importance

7 = Very important relationship characterized by strong interpersonal and/or familial bonds.
   eg. mother, father, brother, sister, wife, husband, children, etc.

6 = Important relationship characterized by relatively strong interpersonal bonds.
   eg. best friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.

5 = Somewhat important relationship characterized by weak interpersonal and/or familial bonds.
   eg. in-laws, extended family, friend, etc.

4 = Functionally important relationship characterized by some external need for individuals to support a relationship.
   eg. teacher, employer, client, lover, etc.

3 = Weak relationship characterized by in-group identification.
   eg. colleague, peer, co-worker, etc.

2 = Insignificantly important relationship characterized by knowing or knowing of the person.
   eg. acquaintance, classmate, etc.

1 = Negatively important relationship characterized by not knowing or having severed ties with the person.
   eg. stranger, enemy, ex-friend, ex-boy/girlfriend, etc.
APPENDIX G

1 = Identification with perpetrator - Subject described a transgression where he/she transgressed against another person, but indirectly victimized him/herself. Thus, the subject responded according to his/her role as perpetrator.

2 = Mixed identification with perpetrator or victim - Subject described a transgression where he/she truly victimized him/herself (the subject neither victimized nor was victimized by someone else). Thus, the subject responded according both his/her roles as perpetrator and victim.

3 = Identification with victim - Subject described a transgression where he/she was victimized by another person, but felt he/she victimized him/herself. Thus, the subject responded according to his/her role as victim.