

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EMOTIVE  
THEORY OF VALUE JUDGMENTS

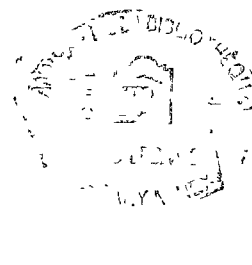
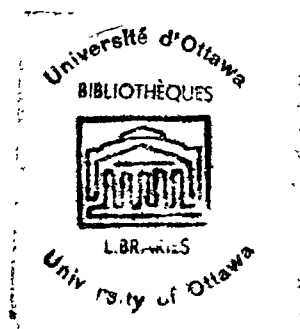
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DISSERTATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Until recent times only two types of analyses of value judgments were known: the objectivistic and the subjectivistic type. The former is characterized by its insistence that value is something on the object-side, while the latter maintains that value is something completely dependent on the subject.

In the second decade of this century, a third type of analysis of value judgments was put forward, namely, the emotivist type. This is a view that evaluations have no reference either to the properties in objects outside nor to the states of mind of the subjects uttering those evaluations. Having no referents, evaluations are logically (though not grammatically) incomplete phrases by means of which the speaker vents his emotions.

Since this peculiar interpretation of statements of value gained a considerable ground in the Anglo-American philosophical circles, it would not be completely useless to study the framework of linguistic analysis within which it works, to point out its dependence on the positivistic criterion of meaning, to analyze its genetic explanations of ethical and aesthetic phenomena, to expose the ambiguity of its terminology and to show its incapability of solving the

problem of justification which arises in connection with any evaluation we make.

It should also be not out of place to present our own view as to what evaluative statements are and how is it possible for them to be theoretically significant.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theoretically (or cognitively) meaningful statement is one which describes certain states of fact or points out the relationship of terms as in mathematics. Practically meaningful statement is one which has no logical referent but nevertheless performs certain functions, such as exhortations, command, wish, etc.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE NOTION OF ETHICAL ANALYSIS

The emotive theory which we are about to discuss and examine is inseparably bound to a type of philosophy called logical positivism or logical empiricism and to the well known work, Meaning of Meaning, published by two prominent British literary critics, Ogden and Richards, in 1923. But before we begin to trace the origins and the growth of this curious interpretation of value judgments in general and moral judgments in particular we should make certain preliminary remarks concerning the nature of the object of our study and the terminology used or mentioned during our discussion.

Our study deals not with a system of morality but with a possible interpretation of the meaning that any evaluative, including moral and aesthetic, statement may have. Emotivism<sup>1</sup> is not a system of directives or norms, it provides no criterion on which to judge an action right or wrong and an object good or bad. It does not purport to uphold and defend any system of morals, nor does it - at least in as far as it

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<sup>1</sup> Emotivism "got its name from the distinction between cognitive and emotive meaning first brought to the attention of a considerable public by C.K. Ogden and I.A. RICHARDS in The Meaning of Meaning, (1925)". Phillip Blair RICE, On Knowledge of Good and Evil, New York, Random House, 1955, p. 9.

is an analysis - directly abolish morality as it has sometimes been claimed.<sup>2</sup> Emotivism is not even an analysis of moral phenomena themselves, but only of our way of speaking about such phenomena. It moves on the level of metalanguage, that is to say, it makes a world of discourse - namely, the evaluative discourse, the object of its study. As it is well

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<sup>2</sup> Reverend Martin D'ARCY, for instance, concludes his article, "Philosophy Now", in Criterion, 1936: "Under the pretence of ultimate wisdom it [namely, Ayer's book, Language, Truth and Logic], guillotines religion, ethics and aesthetics, self, person, free will, responsibility and everything worth while. I thank Mr. Ayer for having shown us how modern philosophers can fiddle and play tricks while the world burns".

C.E.M. JOAD blames the emotivists for having destroyed morality: "If there is no objective right and wrong, if moral judgments are ... merely ejaculations of emotions of approval and disapproval, then one cannot demonstrate that fascist practices are evil; one can only express dislike of them. A Critique of Logical Positivism, Chicago University Press, 1950, p. 148.

And Mr. Barrows DUNHAM of Temple University wrote concerning emotivism: "No philosophy would better please the fascists themselves, since moral questions could then be safely left in the hands of the police".

It seems to me that if the emotive analysis of ethical judgments were correct, no one could blame the emotivists for the consequences that might follow in the sphere of action; on the contrary, one could only congratulate the emotivists for having found the truth about moral judgments. The view that emotivism destroys morality is based on the fallacy of considering emotive (or any other) analysis of value judgments as a normative system. I agree, however, that the emotive interpretation has not arisen so freely from prejudices and preconceived positivistic ideas as its adherents claim. But to acknowledge this is different from saying that emotivism as a possible ethical analysis destroys morality. It is true, of course, that if the emotive analysis is false, yet taken seriously, it will very likely break down the objective morality, but this effect will follow only indirectly: the analysis itself is neutral.

known, philosophy as a whole is considered by logical positivists such an analytic study of language. Ethical analysis deals with the language of morals, aesthetic analysis with the language of fine arts, epistemological analysis with the language of science, etc. But in neither case does philosophy deal with experience or proclaim any truth about external reality. As Albert and his associates explain this notion of philosophy, "Viewed as analysis, philosophy deals with the language used in speaking about actual objects, and not with the objects themselves: it operates on the level of language rather than experience".<sup>3</sup>

We shall see that the emotivists deny that value-statements express propositions,<sup>4</sup> consequently we should

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<sup>3</sup> Ethel M. ALBERT et al., Great Traditions in Ethics, New York, American Book Co., 1953, pp. 325 f.

<sup>4</sup> At this point we should inquire what precisely do these philosophers mean by ever-recurring words: utterance, statement, judgment and proposition.

Max BLACK defines UTTERANCE as "Words or other signs actually pronounced by a speaker, writer or other user of signs". (Critical Thinking, p. 446) C.L. STEVENSON uses the term "utterance" as a "convenient synonym for Peirce's term 'token', which he contrasts with 'type' ... The distinction is simply this: If a man repeats the same sentence ten times over, he has spoken only one sentence if we mean type sentences, but ten sentences if we mean token sentences or utterances of the type sentence". (Ethics and Language, p. 165, n.8). There is no question of a proposition being expressed by an utterance.

A STATEMENT, in Black's words, "is an explicitly formulated assertion, command, desire, judgment, and so forth", in contradistinction to 'suggestions' the most expressive of which are those "of the speaker's feelings (and especially feelings of approval and disapproval)". (Critical Thinking, pp. 163 f.). In the majority of positivistic writings, however, statement could not be taken as a command or desire;

speak not of value statements or value judgments but of value utterances. However, the accepted usage hinders even them who do not believe that there are any value judgments at all

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it might be synonymous only with "assertion" or with "judgment".

JUDGMENT - as defined by the Dictionary of Philosophy can mean two things: (a) "The mental act of asserting (affirming or denying) an assertible content. Traditionally a judgment is said to affirm or deny a predicate of a subject... Since a judgment in this sense always involves a truth claim it is either correct or erroneous". (b) "That which is asserted in an act of judgment, often called a belief or a proposition. That which is judged may merely be contemplated or considered instead of being asserted or denied".

Similar view as to the quiddity of "judgment" is expressed by A.C. EWING: "A judgment should be distinguished from the words used to express it and still more from the outward expression to other people of what is judged, being a mental thought or act, which may be carried out in silence..., and consists in seeing that something is true or in deciding to accept something as true. What is thus affirmed as true, as distinguishable from the words in which it is expressed is called by contemporary philosophers a proposition". (Ethics, p. 115).

PROPOSITION, as already noted by Ewing, is "the content of meaning of a declarative sentence, i.e., a postulated abstract object common not only to different occurrences, of the same declarative sentence but also to different sentences (whether in the same language or not) which are synonymous, or, as we say, mean the same thing. (Dictionary of Philosophy)

Proposition may be equated with judgment, but sometimes it is taken to denote judgments. "Traditional logicians generally have defined a proposition as a judgment expressed in words, or as a sentence expressing a judgment, but some say or seem to hold in actual usage that synonymous or intertranslatable sentences represent the same proposition". (Dictionary of Philosophy).

Max BLACK writes that "whenever we know, believe, doubt, or disbelieve something, whatever it is that we are knowing, believing, doubting, or disbelieving is a proposition. (Thus when I believe that pain is an evil, what I believe, i.e., that pain is evil, is a proposition)". (Critical Thinking, p. 19). It is the proposition that can and must be either true or false. "If something could be either true or false, that thing is a proposition, and every proposition must be either true or false. (Thus if someone says, 'That's a

to substitute consistently the word utterance for the word judgment. Sometimes they put such words in quotation marks to indicate that they are used in an improper sense, e.g., 'judgment' of value, normative "statement", etc. <sup>5</sup>

Emotivists also tend to generalize their theory so as to include not only moral and aesthetic statements but any normative statement whatever. They do recognize certain differences among value statements, but they consider them to belong to the same general category of expressive or emotive language - as opposed to the cognitive or symbolic or scientific language.

When logical positivists and all the others who might propound an emotive view declare that moral and aesthetic judgments are not really judgments but expressions of feelings, dispositions, emotions, attitudes, and so on, they are not referring to every statement of moral and aesthetic theories or of everyday normative judgments; they are careful to point out that they refuse to grant the status of propositions only to purely normative and evaluative utterances. They distinguish these normative utterances from the factual and

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lie', I know that the person to whom he has objected must have asserted a proposition. For a question of truth has been raised)". Critical Thinking, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Quotation marks may be used for two purposes. First, to indicate that the word is mentioned rather than used, e.g. "Cleveland" has nine letters; and secondly, to show that a word is used in an improper or unconventional sense, e.g. The "judgment" of intrinsic value has the same grammatical structure as the judgment of scientific fact. Logical positivists want to show in this second case that "judgment" when referring to moral or aesthetic situations is not really judgment but utterance - a sequence of words expressing no proposition.

analytical judgments which, as they recognize, are quite numerous in treatises on value.

If we grant, for instance, the greatest happiness for the greatest number principle, we can certainly form many meaningful statements about certain actions, whether they are conducive to this end or not, whether they are better conducive to this end than some other actions, whether it is convenient for us to perform them, etc.; we can foresee their implications and consequences; we can discuss the psychological and sociological conditions which will favor or disfavor an effective employment of such means. All such statements can truly be said to be true or false, depending upon our knowledge, our correct apprehension of such states of affairs; they are subject to empirical verification. We only need certain empirical inquiries, observations and tests, in order to determine their truth or falsehood. The certitude of such statements shares the certitude of the statements of natural sciences. Needless to stress, there can be no apriorical verification of such statements. Very often, ethical analysts of the emotive type include in this "scientific" ethics all the accounts of the factual state of affairs in different societies, the customs and mores, or the psychological conditioning in regard to norms to which an individual has been subjected and the effects which such conditioning had on him; Carnap, Ayer and Reichenbach consider such descriptions to be

called ethical, though they might just as well belong to anthropology, sociology and psychology. As it was pointed out before, the emotivists do not delegate statements of these enquiries to the realm of non-sense. The question here is simply this: Will these particular means serve the assumed end? To answer it, all the natural and social sciences may be employed. But nothing could be said in justification of the end itself; the fact that I adopt it, or that the majority of the people adopt it, and thus make it a value for me or for us, does not warrant a normative conclusion that I or anyone else should adopt that end.

We may also have an analytic ethics, that is, ethics consisting of a system of definitions. We may define for instance "good" as "that which is conducive to the preservation of human race". In the light of this definition we may analyze the statement, Prevention of disease is good, in the following manner: if prevention of disease is conducive to the preservation of human race, then the above statement is true; if it is not so conducive, the above statement is false. In this way we can determine a priori the truth value of any ethical statement, as long as we have an ethical system consisting of a network of such definitions of valuational terms.

But commonly recognized as peculiarly ethical statements are those whose predicates denote moral values, for instance, Murder is wrong, Truthfulness is good, etc. People

commonly believe that uttering such sentences they are really saying something, either about the objects out-there, or at least about their own psychology. If someone says to them, Murder is good, or, Truthfulness is bad, they believe to have been contradicted in a way different from that as they would be when someone said to them, No, Murder is not evil, or, No, Truthfulness is not good; in other words, they believe that the contradiction is not merely the result of a logical negation of their statements by the opponents.

It is this type of statements which the emotivists proclaim to be pseudo-statements; statements which have a correct grammatical structure and for some reason or other claiming to express propositions, but which really do not express any propositions.<sup>6</sup> According to the emotivists, such statements do not express anything which could be true or false; the predicates employed in them do not refer to any property, neither in the object which such statement is conceived to characterize in some way nor in the subject who pronounces such utterances; value predicates do not add anything to the content of such utterances. To say, Stealing money is evil, is to say nothing more than, Stealing money!!! - the number of exclamation marks or the tone of the voice indicat-

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<sup>6</sup> In positivistic terminology, words denote concepts, statements express propositions.

ing that the utterer disapproves of such action, or that he wants others to disapprove of it, or that he commands them to disapprove of it, or that he wants to persuade them to feel about it the way he does.

On what basis do the emotivists deny that value statements express propositions? Is it that they achieved an insight into the nature of such statements, an insight which eliminates the contention of traditional moralists and of people in all times that ethical and aesthetic statements do say something, give information about something, pronounce a judgment on something? Or is their position a logical outcome of their sensist point of departure? Ayer claims the former, but the numerous critics claim the latter. We shall see later that value statements are excluded by emotivists on the basis of the logico-positivistic criterion of meaning, regardless of their claim that the emotive view is based on a disinterested, neutral analysis of value statements themselves. Their mistake lies in viewing such statements in relationship to a preconceived and extremely narrow criterion of meaning rather than in relationship to the experiences to which such statements point and about which they claim to say something.

In order to see better the novelty <sup>7</sup> and the nature of emotive views, we should consider the possible analyses of value statements and indicate how the emotive analysis differs from others. Following the commonly accepted, if not the best, division of the types of ethical analysis into objective, subjective and emotive ones, we are very likely to be reminded of Comte's three stages of development of human mind; here too we are successively freed from objective values by the second analysis and from the subjective values by the third analysis; we are left only with meaningless noises not differing in kind from interjections such as "Alas!", "Oh, oh!", or even from animal cries.

There are subdivisions, of course, in each of the three types. Objective analysis, for instance, could be either naturalistic or non-naturalistic. The naturalists rely

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<sup>7</sup> It is not unanimously admitted that emotive views are novel. Professor W.K. FRANKENA of the University of Michigan, for instance, sees the roots of emotivism in the British Moral Sentiment School (Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume et al.); his colleague C.L. STEVENSON, a prominent emotivist, on the other hand, claims that Hume was a naturalist trying to draw normative conclusions from the fact the most men have a sense of benevolence. As to agreement and disagreement, these philosophers may have correctly apprehended the agreement or disagreement in belief, including the belief about attitudes, but not that in attitude; yet it is precisely this latter disagreement which is essential to value judgments.

I am inclined to agree with Professor STEVENSON in considering emotivism a product of the present century - at least in as far as it has been presented in terms of value judgments as pseudo-judgments.

on the fact that some individual, or group of individuals, accept an action to be right or wrong, an object good or bad. A.C. EWING defines naturalistic ethics as "the theory that to say some action is right or some experience good merely means that most men, or most men in a certain group, tend to have a particular kind of feeling about it or that it tends to the satisfaction of most men's desires".<sup>8</sup> We may ask, however, what normative conclusions can we draw from such descriptions of fact. Such descriptions are of importance to psychology or sociology, but they do not contribute in the least to the formation of normative judgments. In ethics we ask, Why should I, or anyone else, or everyone, do this or that? The fact that most people do it does not, in itself, justify the should. It will likely point to the right direction until I get my own insight into the nature of the case and understand the call of values, but it is possible that the majority is wrong.

Ethical naturalism, then, fails as far as normative statements are concerned. "The making of a description, of a statement, is a sociological or psychological fact. But the description made is to be distinguished from the fact that it has been made. It cannot even be derived from this fact; for that would mean that we can deduce 'Napoleon died on St.

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<sup>8</sup> A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 2.

Helena", from 'Mr. A stated that Napoleon died on St. Helena', which is obviously not possible".<sup>9</sup>

The non-naturalists,<sup>10</sup> on the other hand, proclaim the chief ethical concept to be indefinable and unanalyzable. Whereas the naturalists would point to the good, for instance, whenever there was something conducive to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the non-naturalists would say that that which is conducive to the greatest happiness of the greatest number might be a good but that good as such cannot be exhaustively analyzed into that which is so conducive.

It is clear that in both cases we are dealing with a property in the object, compound and definable in one case, and simple and indefinable in the other. In fact we should classify as objective any theory which maintains that our value judgments depend in some way on the object outside, or inhere in it.

Any objective view according to A.C. Ewing, excludes the following three contentions concerning ethical judgments: "(a) that they are not really judgements at all, (b) that they are false or that we are never justified in thinking them true, (c) that they are merely judgements about one's own psychological state or dispositions. Any of these

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<sup>9</sup> Karl R. POPPER, The Open Society and Its Enemies, Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> The non-naturalists are referred to by Rice and others as intuitionists, while the naturalists are also called empiricists. Cf. F.B. RICE, On Knowledge of Good and Evil, p. 10.

three alternative views may be called subjective". 11

This brings us to the second possible types of ethical analysis, that is, the subjective types. These rest their claim that value judgments are judgments about subjective relations on the well-known fact that the speaker is always involved and that different speakers have different opinions about the same object or action. They commit the fallacy of reductionism by identifying the subjective element in formulation of value judgments with the content of such judgments. They say that the speaker is merely saying something about his own feelings when pronouncing a value judgment; he is not characterizing the object in any way. In Ewing's words, "the simplest form of the subjectivist view is that according to which ethical judgements, though genuine judgements, assert only that the person who makes the judgement has or tends to have certain feelings. 'This is good or right' on such a view becomes 'I have [or tend to have] an emotion of approval on considering this". 12

The categories of truth and falsehood are applicable to value statements: they are either true or false, depending on whether the speaker at the time of stating his propo-

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11 A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 2.

12 A.C. EWING, op. cit., p. 4.

sition really had the type of feeling in question. The disagreement which may result between two speakers passing a value judgment upon an object or action does not concern any property in the object or action in question but only their attitudes towards them. In fact, the contradiction is only apparent because, as G.E. Moore pointed out <sup>13</sup> both of the speakers could be right, even though one says for example, "Abortion is evil" and the other says, "Abortion is good". One is not putting in question the assertion of the other; he is not contradicting him; he is just stating that he feels differently from the other.

While both the objectivists and the traditional subjectivists "assimilate ethical concepts to the logical categories of 'properties' and 'subjective relations' respectively the supporters of the imperative doctrine assimilate all ethical sentences to the class of interjections - exclamations, ejaculations, commands and so on". <sup>14</sup> These analysts which we termed the emotivists, might be classed as subjectivists, yet there is a very important point of difference which justifies them to have a separate classification: while the subjectivists affirm that value judgments are genuine -

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. his Ethics, New York, Henry Holt, 1912, Chapter III, and his article, "The Nature of Moral Philosophy", in the Philosophical Studies, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1922, pp. 310-339.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen E. TOULMIN, The Place of Reason in Ethics, Cambridge University Press, 1950, p. 49.

though not informing us about the object but about the speaker's feelings towards the object - the emotivists contend that the speaker does not say anything, does not speak about anything, and that statements of value are pseudo-statements. Pronouncing something to be valuable, the speaker verbally expressed his feelings towards it; but he could have expressed his feelings otherwise, though perhaps not so well for communicating it to others. When a man says, "Lying is wrong", he is not saying anything about lying, nor is he saying anything about his feelings towards lying; he is expressing those feelings in a way similar to that when he exclaims 'Ouch!' upon a pain of stepping on a thorn, or when he shouts 'Hurrah!' in a battle. When he exclaims 'Ouch!' he is not concerned with persuading people to feel the way he does; when he shouts 'Hurrah!', he is concerned with persuading others; but in neither case is he formulating a judgment about anything.

3. Toulmin considers emotive interpretation as a logical conclusion to a dispute between the objectivists and the subjectivists:

'When two people are in ethical disagreement', said the first philosopher, 'they contradict one another. If they are to do this, there must be something in the object they are discussing for them to contradict one another about. Therefore, goodness must be a property of the object'.

'Nonsense!' replied the second philosopher. 'Goodness is no property of the object. All they are doing is expressing divergent reactions to the object: the contradiction is only apparent. It is in their attitudes towards the object, not about any property of it, that they disagree'.

'A plague on both your houses!' retorts our third philosopher. You're both overlooking the rhetorical force of ethical judgements. People who have ethical disagreements are not talking about any property of the object either. The truth of the matter is that they are not 'talking anything', for there isn't anything for them to 'talk about' - all they are doing is answering each other back, and bringing pressure to bear on each other to behave differently'.<sup>15</sup>

Phillip Blair Rice, a prominent scholar of contemporary ethics, speaks of the first two types of ethical analysis - the objective and the subjective - as representing all types of cognitivist positions - in contradistinction to ethical non-cognitivists which are the emotivists and the "Philosophers of Ordinary Language" or "Oxford Philosophers".<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Rice equates the emotive non-cognitivists with Logical Positivists and the Ordinary Language non-cognitivists with Informalists. Cf. On Knowledge of Good and Evil, p. 10. It seems to me possible, however, that an opponent of Logical Positivism might consistently hold emotive views if he succeeded in isolating value judgments from the positivist criterion of meaning and still find them what logical positivists consider them to be namely ejaculations, commands, persuasive definitions, etc.

This division is justifiable as long as we distinguish that the term "non-cognitivist" is not standing merely for the emotive ethical analyses, and the term "cognitivist" for the analyses which consider the cognitive part of ethical statements and the symbolic function of ethical terms as primary.

Common to all non-cognitivists is the view that "moral and other valuational judgments should be interpreted primarily <sup>17</sup> as attempts, not to convey knowledge, but to do something else". <sup>18</sup> However, when we consider how they conceive this function of the value statements which goes beyond conveying information, we see that there are really two schools of thought among the non-cognitivists.

Among the adherents of emotivism we may count Rudolph Carnap, Hans Reichenbach, Alfred Jules Ayer and Charles Lealie Stevenson who "has advanced a modified form of this position". <sup>19</sup> To the second group we may count Ludwig Wittgenstein, George E. Moore (in some respects), Stephen Toulmin, Richard M. Hare, Stuart Hampshire, Margaret Macdonald, J.L. Austin, H.L.A. Hart and others.

Both types of non-cognitivists maintain that the basic mistake of the cognitivists consists in that they treat

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<sup>17</sup> Italics mine! It should be noted that some emotivists admit that normative ethical judgments are not devoid of information, though they still consider this function of conveying information to be secondary.

<sup>18</sup> P.B. RICE, op. cit., pp. 8 f.

<sup>19</sup> P.B. RICE, op. cit., p. 9.

normative judgments as referring to properties at all. To the question, Is value a property? all the non-cognitivists give a negative answer. Phillip B. Rice contends that "they mean to deny not only that goodness is a mere property, but even that it is a property plus".<sup>20</sup> They do admit that reference to properties is involved in value judgments, but they do not admit that there is one single property which we could consider as the stable core of descriptive elements in such judgments or in the meaning of value terms.

The emotivists consider any descriptive element in ethical terms as hopelessly variable and the uniformity of their meanings always depending on a non-cognitive factor. Furthermore,

there is no simple defining property of intrinsic value, but any property can serve the purpose if in the particular case, we approve of it without regard to the consequences of the object and try to persuade others to approve of it also. Emotivism, in its cruder forms, expresses the presuppositions of the impressionistic critic who conducts the soul on an adventure among masterpieces and does not try to analyze the properties which define the beautiful. It also voices the attitude of the solid citizen who says, 'I don't know if it's art but I like it'.<sup>21</sup>

The Ordinary Language Philosophers, on the other hand, reject the view that the meaning of value judgments is preserved by treating them simply as commands, exclamations or

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<sup>20</sup> P.B. RICE, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

expressions of wishes as the emotivists do. They think that the meaning of value judgments is over-simplified if we, having isolated the expressive or imperative functions of language, consider them as a typical sphere where such function is exemplified in its purity. According to the informalists, "the important and characteristic functions of a term like 'good' or 'right' may be to facilitate the performance of a task, or to recommend an action, or to ascribe to something or someone a function or an obligation", <sup>22</sup> and not merely to ventilate speaker's emotions and arousing them in the hearer.

Another distinction between the emotivists and the informalists concerns the question of "reasons" presented in justification of a value judgment. Emotivism seems to suggest that anything goes, that any kind of reason which is apt to move a hearer is relevant. <sup>23</sup> Informalism, on the contrary, tries to escape this relativism by saying that men have a direct, quasi-intuitive awareness of the necessity to offer

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<sup>22</sup> B.P. RICE, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Charles L. STEVENSON, for instance, says: "To choose a definition is to plead a cause, so long as the word defined is strongly emotive". (*Ethics and Language*, p. 210). The contents of the definitions of an ethical term are not to be taken as characterizing the object; they are chosen for the sake of mere persuasion. Any definition might be good enough to persuade the hearer; there are good and bad definitions only in relation to this end and not in relation to our knowledge of good and evil which, according to emotivists is not possible since objective good and evil do not exist.

only certain kinds of reasons to validate our valuational conclusions. We somehow distinguish "good reasons" from "bad reasons": some of the properties to which these reasons point are relevant and some irrelevant, "but there is no common and systematic structure exemplified by the properties referred to, so that we could hope to express the descriptive element in a coherent body of theory, as the cognitivists have assumed through their search for a set of comprehensive principles".<sup>24</sup>

Having seen the character of ethical analysis in general and the emotive analysis in particular we should consider the setting in which this peculiar interpretation of value statements took rise and developed to the present wide-spread acceptance by many Anglo-American and even other philosophers. In this connection we should study The Meaning of Meaning by Ogden and Richards and the Vienna School of Logical positivism.

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24 B.P. RICE, op. cit., p. 89.

## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTIVE AND EMOTIVE FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

The distinction between the cognitive and the interjectional, or between the symbolic and the expressive use of language was recognized by grammarians and linguists long before the appearance of Ogden and Richards' Meaning of Meaning. This is evident from the textbooks on syntax where we find recorded a distinct part of speech called INTERJECTION. "Oh", "Ha, ha", "Alas", "Ouch", "Hurrah", etc., are classed as interjections.

In this century - under the general pressure of semantic preoccupation - the linguists sought to discover what precisely the language is and what functions of language can be distinguished. They found that much larger portions of our language are interjectional in character than it had been believed before and classed as a comparatively insignificant part of speech. In fact, they found only two basic functions, one of which is the interjectional or expressive. In the new scheme, this division does not remain merely by separating the interjections from other parts of speech; it runs all down the line from nouns and adjectives to verbs and adverbs. There are only very few words such as highly technical terms and perhaps some particles such as prepositions and conjunctions that are devoid of the interjectional or emotive charge; all the others are a mixture of emotive and cognitive elements, in some prevailing the latter in others the former.

What is language? According to Louis H. Gray, language is "any means of expressing emotional or mental concepts by any living being or beings whatsoever, and of communicating them to, or receiving them from, other living beings".<sup>1</sup>

In this definition itself we already have the basis for the distinction between two types of language - the emotive (langage affectif) and the logical or cognitive (langage logique). Furthermore, it is not accidental that in Gray's definition the mention of the emotional language comes first: it is first in reality. The language of children, and especially the language of non-human beings, is emotive to a much higher degree than the speech of adult humans.<sup>2</sup> We have intellectual language proper only when speaker's intention is to communicate some idea which does not seek immediate and tangible results. But though the emotive language is chronologically prior to the intellective, it does not disappear even in the most advanced stages of development. "It persists", Gray writes, "as a vital component in language of the severest intellectuality".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louis H. GRAY, Foundations of Language, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1939, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Some linguists, e.g. I.A. RICHARDS, even believe that at first there was no symbolic language: "... there can be no doubt that originally all language was emotive; its scientific use is a later development, and most language is still emotive". The Principles of Literary Criticism, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1924, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> Louis H. GRAY, op. cit., p. 97.

It is not an exaggeration to say that such extensive and penetrating studies of the functions of language by linguists and philosophers alike have received their impetus from the epoch-making study of meaning by Ogden and Richards. Their Meaning of Meaning first appeared in 1923 and has received many reprints. The following passage is quoted by almost every emotivist as a kind of indisputable fact which justifies his peculiar analysis of value statements:

"Good" is alleged to stand for a unique, unanalyzable concept... This peculiar ethical use of "good" is we suggest, a purely emotive use. When so used the word stands for nothing whatever, and has no symbolic function. Thus, when we so use it in the sentence, "This is good", we merely refer to this, and the addition of "is good" makes no difference whatever to our reference. When on the other hand, we say "This is red", the addition of "is red" to "this" does symbolize an extension of our reference, namely, to some other red thing. But "is good" has no comparable symbolic function; it serves only as an emotive sign expressing our attitude to this, and perhaps evoking similar attitudes in other persons, or inciting them to actions of one kind or another... Of course, if we define "the good" as "that of which we approve of approving", or give any such definition when we say "This is good", we shall be making an assertion. It is only the indefinable "good" which we suggest to be a purely emotive sign. The "something more" or "something else" which, it is alleged, is not covered by any definition of "good" is the emotional aura of the word. <sup>4</sup>

According to Ogden and Richards, when we use words symbolically, we make statements - "the recording, the

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4 C.K. OGDEN, and I.A. RICHARDS, Meaning of Meaning, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1936, p. 125.

support, the organization and the communication of references".<sup>5</sup> When we use words emotively, on the other hand, no references are directly involved, for we strive in this case merely to express our feelings or excite feelings and attitudes in others. To exemplify the difference, "If we say 'The height of the Eiffel Tower is 900 feet', we are making a statement, we are using symbols in order to record or communicate a reference, and our symbol is true or false in a strict sense and is theoretically verifiable. But if we say 'Hurrah!' or 'Poetry is a spirit' or 'Man is a worm', we may not be making statements, not even false statements; we are most probably using words merely to evoke certain attitudes".<sup>6</sup>

Since we may be using the same sentence symbolically on one occasion and emotively on the other, and since two men may be using the same utterance differently at the same time, how do we determine the particular function? The two authors answer: "The best test of whether our use of words is essentially symbolic or emotive is the question - 'Is this true or false in the ordinary strict scientific sense?' If this question is relevant when the use is symbolic, if it is clearly irrelevant then we have an emotive utterance".<sup>7</sup> We may

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<sup>5</sup> Meaning of Meaning, p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

utter certain words, phrases or sentences for the sake of references, or for the sake of evoking attitudes. Our aim will determine and at the same time reveal the particular function.

The question comes to us, What are truth and falsehood "in the ordinary strict scientific sense"? The two authors answer: They are qualities of statements which purport to communicate a reference: if the reference is such as a statement affirms it to be, then that statement is true; if the reference is not such then that statement is false. And in so far as any statement is made to communicate something it can be and indeed must be either true or false. This is the scientific or symbolic use of statements and only here may we speak of truth and falsehood of statements in a "strict" sense. If a genuine statement is true, it has achieved its end: it correctly communicated the reference; if a genuine statement is false, it is a failure, it has not achieved its end, it is self-defeating.

Sometimes we may use - at least Richards seems to maintain so in his Principles of Literary Criticism - genuine statements in certain contexts in such a way as to evoke different kinds of feelings, but insofar as they are directed towards this end, their truth or falsehood is not important; that is to say, we may use true or false statements effectively towards evoking feelings and attitudes. We can speak

of truth and falsehood only when we consider such statements symbolically, but we cannot do so when we consider them to be used emotively.

In the emotive sphere we may speak only of success or failure of the speaker's intention to change or create feelings. Whereas in science false statements do not achieve their goal, in the sphere of action false statements may achieve it. "For scientific use of language a difference in the references is itself a failure: the end has not been attained. But for emotive language the widest differences in references are of no importance if the further effects in attitude and emotion are of the required kind".<sup>8</sup>

It is possible to express feelings and to create them in others by completely meaningless phrases, by certain sounds and gestures, by isolated emotively charged terms. However, it is much more common to achieve this by statements - preferably true ones - which do have a reference but which are not made for the sake of communicating that reference but for expressing and evoking feelings. To quote Richards again, "Many arrangements of words evoke attitudes without any reference being required en route. They operate like musical phrases. But usually references are involved as conditions for, or stages in, the ensuing development of

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<sup>8</sup> I. A. RICHARDS, Principles of Literary Criticism, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1954, p. 268.

attitudes, yet it is still the attitudes not the references which are important. It matters not at all in such cases whether the references are true or false. Their sole function is to bring about and support the attitudes which are the further response".<sup>9</sup>

We may ask here: The responses to what? If references are not important, if even mere nonreferential phrases and combinations of words can evoke feelings and attitudes, to what are we really responding? Richards might say that we are responding to an object which those meaningless phrases presented to our imagination. If so, then those nonreferential phrases are not so meaningless after all. Richards apprehended correctly the nature of ethical and aesthetic "feelings" as responses, but he provided us with no object to which we are supposed to respond.

Not only an object is presupposed but also our grasp of its importance, its value. An element of intellectuality is present in our inward and outward, silent or verbal responses in the realms of ethics and aesthetics. Meaningless phrases, certain sounds, gestures, and tones of voice by the speaker in face of an object might make us pay attention to it, reflect on it, study it; false judgments about that object might deceive us; but our response will always be

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<sup>9</sup> I.A. RICHARDS, op. cit., 257 f.

proportioned in quality and intensity to our perception of that object. On the psychological level our response will be adequate if we act genuinely upon the knowledge of the object and our perception of its value; on the axiological level, our responses will fall short of adequacy insofar as we have not completely grasped the nature of the object and its importance or insofar as we have been deceived by false judgments, by our clouded vision of the world of values, by our own negligence, and so on. The nature of values demands an adequate response on this axiological level, but we are in an egocentric predicament that we have to act on the other level; although we do know at the same time that we should strive for an exhaustive knowledge of values and for an unconditional readiness to respond to the call of values.

The role of "subjectivity" in value responses as well as the distinction between the axiological and the psychological aspect of such responses is clearly brought out by Professor von Hildebrand: "To prefer a higher to a lesser good constitutes the most essential correspondence between the value and the response, and one which from the moral point of view plays the greatest role. The pure value response will always be imported in a degree corresponding to the rank of the value... It must be stressed however that all these necessary relations between the value on the object side and the inner word of the value response exist

only insofar as the value has been grasped and understood, and not necessarily with respect to the value which the object possesses in reality". 10

The intentionality of value response, that gap which divides the consciousness of an object and its qualities on the one hand, and our response to it on the other, makes some of Ogden's and Richards' statements inconceivable; when they write for instance, that "it is not necessary to know what things are in order to take up fitting attitudes towards them..." 11 we spontaneously ask, What are we responding to? and What is the thing toward which we take up a fitting attitude? We must first grasp the sublimity of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in order to be moved by it and respond enthusiastically to it. We must first grasp the nature of injustice in order to assume any attitude to it. But the reductionistic myth of the "scientific" pseudo-philosophy identifies object with our response to it, "the sublimity of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which we grasp, with our experience of being moved by it or enthused by it". 12

There is a positivistic assumption in Ogden and Richards' interpretation of the functions of language, namely

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10 Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, New York, David McKay Co., 1953, p. 239.

11 C.K. OGDEN and I.A. RICHARDS, Meaning of Meaning, p. 159.

12 Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 126.

the assumption that we cannot speak of reality but only about classes of sense-perceptions (which we consider them as objects and give them different names), and about our noticing certain feelings and expressing them. Sciences, according to them, can give us knowledge, but no 'vision of reality'; the criterion of this knowledge is its usefulness. Ethics, aesthetics, religion and metaphysics cannot give us any kind of knowledge. They write: "It ought to be impossible to pretend that any scientific statement can give a more inspiring or a more profound 'vision of reality' than another. It can be more general or more useful, and that is all. On the other hand, it ought to be impossible to talk about poetry or religion as though they were capable of giving 'knowledge'<sup>13</sup>". On their view, to speak of scientific knowledge of reality is just as non-sensical as it is to speak of mystical revelations or metaphysical intuitions. Sense data are the ultimate elements about which we can speak sense.

Yet surely, if their view were so evident as they seem to imply, how is it conceivable that the world had to wait for them to discover this? Their answer, by implication is: Almost all of the traditional philosophers as well as the common sense of all times were mistaken and we are right. This deception of the whole tradition, however, is easily

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<sup>13</sup> C.K. OGden and I.A. Richards, Meaning of Meaning, p. 158.

explainable and humanly justifiable for "the temptation to a philosopher when concerned with a subject in which he feels a passionate interest to use all the words which are most likely to attract attention and excite belief in the importance of the subject is almost irresistible".<sup>14</sup> Ogden and Richards, on the other hand, seem to consider themselves strictly as analysts, that is, disembodied spirits examining our language, at least when they speak professionally. Their motto is supposed to be: inveniatur veritas, pereat mundus.

From the above quotation, it seems that they believe that the traditional philosophers and all the people on the level of common sense are using "the words which are most likely to attract attention and excite belief in the importance of the subject" without actually believing in what they say. This, I think, is ungrounded and contradicted by experience: one might use convenient words to deceive others, but he knows that he is trying to deceive; whereas in the case of metaphysicians, moralists and theologians, this simply is not the case. These people might conceivably be deceived themselves - not by words but by consideration of facts - but they cannot be accused of intentionally deceiving everyone - including themselves. I think we can trust them at least as much as we can trust Ogden and Richards

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<sup>14</sup> C.K. OGDEN and I.A. RICHARDS, Meaning of Meaning, p. 157.

and other semanticists that they believe they are saying something when making a statement and that they believe to be true what they say. At least they intend to speak, and believe that they are speaking, of something. This is evident from the fact that one often tries to contradict another in regard to some fact - which would make no sense if they believed that their statements carry no more referential weight than for instance interjections like "Ouch!" or "Alas!" and the cries of animals.

Perhaps Ogden and Richards would not insist on saying that moralists and common sense people are merely trying to persuade someone about something they do not believe; perhaps they would phrase their analysis in such a way as to show that people really intend to speak, but that in reality they should not do so since they are using language in a non-referential mode when speaking of values, reality and the supernatural world. But surely, to say to everyone that he should not intend to speak of beauty, moral values, reality, etc., or that he should not think that he is saying anything when speaking of such objects, seems to me a little naive. Yet this is precisely what Ogden and Richards as well as all the emotivists who proclaim metaphysical and axiological judgments to be pseudo-judgments, are really saying.

We do not deny the importance of distinguishing the symbolic and the emotive functions of language; we readily grant this prise de conscience of emotive functions as one of those great discoveries which make up the philosophia perennis. But we do deny the artificial separation of the cognitive or symbolic and the emotive functions. We oppose Ogden's and Richards' standpoint which suffers both from this artificial separation of the two functions of language and from a crude form of scientism which reveals itself especially in their preoccupation with the symbolic functions. Two passages from Thomas C. Pollock's critique of the Meaning of Meaning may be quoted profitably in this connection. Mr. Pollock says: "... I do not find adequate theory of the uses of language which requires us to assume that in more complex poems - in 'Troilus and Cressida', for example, or 'Paradise Lost' - the words are used primarily to produce effects in emotion and attitudes, with anything else evoked by the poem, including intellectual processes, at most contributory to these effects..." 15

Not only Pollock but also such prominent positivists as Stevenson and Black, as well as the philosophers of

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15 "A Theory of Meaning Analyzed: A Critique of I.A. Richards' Theory of Language" in The Second American Congress on General Semantics (M. KENDIG, ed.) Chicago: Institute of General Semantics, 1943, p. 435.

Ordinary Language, who could conveniently employ Ogden and Richards' distinction in their ethical and aesthetic qualify it. Thus Max Black writes in his Critical Thinking: "One and the same utterance may convey factual information (true or false), embody aesthetic insight, express social conformity, and do a number of other things all at the same time. For this reason, any attempt to isolate "pure" types of language uses (such as "scientific", "poetic", "ceremonial", and so on) would be of little help to us".<sup>16</sup>

If this mistake of tight isolation of the two functions of language is serious and disastrous to value statements if they are assigned to this isolated emotive realm, we may be dissatisfied with the analysis of language in the Meaning of Meaning even more when we find that it suffers also from scientific prejudices: it is preoccupied with the symbolic functions and judging everything from the point of view of knowledge which, according to positivists, is found only in the cognitive realm.

As Pollock observes:

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<sup>16</sup> Max BLACK, Critical Thinking, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952, p. 166.

Mr. Richards' central theory of the uses of language has grown out of a controlling interest in the problems of scientific or 'symbolic' communication. The general structure and the key-terms of the theory are designed for the analysis of the so-called 'symbolic' use of language. As a consequence, the definition of the 'non-symbolic' or 'emotive' use is forced to accommodate itself to the theoretical position which remains. The resulting analysis of the 'emotive' use, which certainly is intended to include poetry and apparently also 'other literary experiences' is almost inevitably unsatisfactory. 17

The authors of the Meaning of Meaning are of course very eager to point out that no evaluation of any function of language is involved in their analysis; that is to say, that the fact that knowledge is associated exclusively with the symbolic function does not imply that moral, aesthetic, metaphysical and religious spheres, which are closely associated with the emotive functions and consequently cannot be said to belong to the realm of knowledge, are classified as inferior disciplines. They stress firmly that their analysis shows merely what are scientific and what are moral, aesthetics, metaphysical and religious utterances; which of them convey information, and which of them express something of the speaker's emotional state. Yet, it seems to me, a classification of our ethical, aesthetic, metaphysical, and theological statements as nonsense, that is, as mere emotional exhortation, can hardly be taken otherwise than as a complete

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17 T.C. POLLOCK, op. cit., p. 434.

eradication of them, for if such statements do not make sense, they have not achieved their purpose and no one would continue to make them.

The fact that their approach is favoring the symbolic function would not be so serious if they did not equate this function with the statements of positive sciences exclusively. Having enumerated different symbolic roles that language has to perform they write:

Besides this referential use which for all reflective, intellectual use of language should be paramount, words have other functions which may be grouped together as emotive... The importance of the emotive aspects of speech is not thereby minimized, and anyone chiefly concerned with popular or primitive speech might well be led to reverse this order of approach. Many difficulties, indeed, arising through the behaviour of words in discussion, even among scientists, force us at an early stage to take into account these 'non-symbolic' influences. <sup>18</sup>

If that type of referential use which they conceive to be the only one that is referential should be paramount for "all reflective, intellectual use of language", we would not have any knowledge whatsoever besides that which the positive sciences are capable of giving us. There is according to them no knowledge in the light of final causes; no knowledge of right and wrong; no revealed knowledge; there are only provisional hypotheses which concern the observed

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<sup>18</sup> C.A. OGDEN and I.A. RICHARDS, op. cit., p. 10. Italics mine!

sense-data, and analytic statements which are true or false by definition. Everything else is mere exhortation of feelings and emotions - be it a theological dogma, a metaphysical intuition, an aesthetic or ethical insight, or a simple animal cry.

A logical development of this position into extreme value relativism is found in Richards' Principle of Literary Criticism. The question is raised, What is value? In asking this question we are not trying to find out what are some ultimate values but what is the criterion by which we can proclaim an object valuable. Is value a property of objects? Is it something out-there, independent of our thinking and wishing, or does its existence depend on us in some way? Richards answers: "Anything is valuable which will satisfy an appetency [desire - conscious or even unconscious] without involving the frustration of some equal or more important appetency".<sup>19</sup> And further: "The importance of an impulse [appetency or aversion] can be defined .. as the extent of the disturbance of other impulses in the individual's activities which the thwarting of the impulse involves".<sup>20</sup>

One could accuse Richards of deserting the emotive position propounded in the Meaning of Meaning and becoming a naturalist since "X is valuable" seems to be for him equi-

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<sup>19</sup> I.A. RICHARDS, Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

valent to "X will satisfy more appetencies than it frustrates". Charles L. Stevenson accuses him so, at least insofar as Richards' definition of value is concerned.<sup>21</sup> Yet, by saying that value is that which satisfies more appetencies, one does not commit himself to the view that something is valuable because most people, or because I most of the time, think that it satisfies more appetencies than it frustrates; he only commits himself to the view that something is valuable because - and only so long as - he desires it, or because - and only so as long as - somebody desires it. Consequently it is possible that two apparently contradictory statements such as, Murder is bad, and, Murder is good, both be true in the sense that I expressed feelings towards the same object on two different occasions as my emotional constitution compelled me to do. And this is a purely emotive position.

This type of subjectivistic relativism denies to value any objectivity: value is that which is desired by someone, and it is value to someone else only insofar as it is desired by someone else. If truthfulness is a value to most people, it may or may not be a value to me. There is no question of counting the pros and the cons in order to

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ethics and Language, Yale University Press, 1944, pp. 8-11, 15.

determine a value - as it would be necessary if Richards' position were naturalistic.

Richards realizes that our language is not a good tool for such subjectivistic views; that is is deceptive if his analysis of value is correct; that the truth about values and value judgments was so difficult to discover precisely because of the deceptivity of our language. He writes in his Principles: "We are accustomed to say that a picture is beautiful, instead of saying that it causes an experience in us which is valuable in certain ways. The discovery that the remark, 'This is beautiful', must be turned around and expanded in this way before it is anything but a mere noise signalling the fact that we approve of the picture was a great and difficult achievement".<sup>22</sup>

Richards does not seem to realize, however, that even in his supposedly detached, completely neutral and purely analytical account of value statements, certain awareness of objective value is presupposed. He writes for instance that in critically discussing a poem, "we may be talking about the artist's experience, such of it as is relevant, or about the experience of a qualified reader who made no mistakes, or about an ideal and perfect reader's possible experience, or about our own actual experience".<sup>23</sup> Now, what experience is 'relevant'? If value does not depend on anything than

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p. 20. <sup>22</sup> I.A. RICHARDS, Principles of Literary Criticism,  
<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

desire, then any experience of desire, or its satisfaction, should be good enough. What is a qualified reader? Does an interest in artistic or moralistic literature make one qualified, especially when we consider Richards' view that in this sphere no matter how much literature we have digested, we have had nothing to do with knowledge? Is a qualified reader not one who has himself achieved certain insights into the realm of values, one who knows something about the nature of values and disvalues, their conditions for realization in actual life, and so on? Furthermore, what does it mean, on Richards' own view, to speak of "making mistakes" if no value utterance expresses anything which could be said to be true or false? It is precisely because the valuational discourse is not outside the category of knowledge that it makes sense to speak of "making mistakes". Finally, what is an "ideal and perfect reader's" experience of value? This phrase again presupposes that there is such a fact as cognition of values and that some cognitions fall short of perfection.

With all its flaws and fallacies, Ogden's and Richards' views have been adopted by many positivistic ethical analysts to account for their own exclusion of value judgments from the domain of "sense" on the basis of the positivistic

criterion of meaning. What was not offered by the authors of the Meaning of Meaning, namely, the explicit positivistic system, was invented by the Vienna Circle and its remnants after the Dispersion of 1933.

## CHAPTER III

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOTIVE ANALYSIS BY THE VIENNESE CIRCLE

Soon after the close of the First World War a school of philosophy arose in Vienna, though its members verbally deny that it is a philosophical school or that any philosophical theses are propounded by it. To avoid the question whether it is a school of philosophy we shall refer to this group of thinkers as members of the Vienna Circle; what this Circle is will be clear from the activities of its members. What especially interests us is the pronouncements of the Circle on philosophy, in particular the value theory, and we shall not specifically consider whether these pronouncements themselves could be said to be philosophical.

1. EMPIRICAL TRADITION AT VIENNA. The University of Vienna had a long tradition of empirical and metaphysical thought. It was especially inspired by the empirical and utilitarian elements of progressive thought in England ever since the second half of the nineteenth century brought more academic liberties to the universities of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thus we find there Thomas Gompers who lectured from 1869 to 1880. The famous mechanist Ernst Mach was associated with the University for four years (1861-1864 and 1865), succeeded by Professor Boltzman (1902-6) and other lesser defendants of traditional empiricism.

Paralleling the empirical line was a strong attempt to revive the Aristotelian and Scholastic logic: Bolzano, Brentano, Höfler and Meinong were leaders in this attempt. Yet they never succeeded in extinguishing the Humean and Comtean spirit.

When Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein published their main works, they were greeted warily and studied carefully by many in Vienna. Especially certain physicists and mathematicians were impressed by Russell's "scientific" philosophy, by his attempts to find the foundations of mathematics in logic, and by his treatment of the concepts of natural science. Wittgenstein's Tractatus, on the other hand, directed their attention to the uses of language and the problems of "sense", "nonsense" and communication. The Meaning of Meaning helped them in this latter way, too, though curiously enough it is not acknowledged by them often except in connection with the problems of value judgments.

2. THE "THURSDAY SEMINAR". When Moritz Schlick was appointed professor of philosophy in 1922 he desired to have a discussion group of professors and students which would try to delimit philosophizing to a legitimate sphere; for he thought that many treatises in the history of philosophy were written because questions were asked wrongly or even illegitimately and because the question of verifiability of

philosophical statements was not deemed important. Schlick succeeded in forming a group which met in the so-called "Thursday Seminar" and published periodically the official voice of the group, Erkenntnis. Success was almost immediate, at least in so far as the participants were concerned. In spite of the fact that the members were both professional philosophers as well as natural and social scientists differing on many points, one could see the general program in the making.

The general view of the group is characterized by a scientific outlook. There is no intention to make special philosophical assertions; on the contrary, there is a denial of the possibility of making philosophical assertion that would be genuine. There is an explicit attempt to harmonize the conclusions of natural and social sciences, to clarify the specific concepts of those sciences, to pass for knowledge only that which is communicable to others and to create a neutral symbolic language of a unified science.

The aim and work of these thinkers is very excellently summarized by Max Black: "The analytic method adopted by the Viennese circle culminates in the judgment that there are distinctive philosophical problems. Speculative philosophy must be transformed into a new methodology, the analysis of linguistic forms... Their chief concern is to consolidate the achievements of scientific discovery by

analyzing the limitations and essential structure of the language in which all knowledge must be expressed".<sup>1</sup>

Among the prominent members who participated at one time or another in the "Thursday Seminar" are, in addition to the animating spirit, Moritz, Schlick, the sociologist Otto Neurath of Vienna, the physicists Rudolph Carnap and Phillip Frank of Prague, Hans Reichenbach of Berlin, Alfred Tarski of Warsaw, and Professor Scheffer of Harvard.<sup>2</sup>

When the group was dissolved in 1933, its members fled to the free world and continued their work there, especially in U.S.A. If we be permitted to speak of the Viennese Circle tradition of today, we should add to the original list of members at least the Englishman Russell and the Frenchman Longevin; we should also mention the international journal, Philosophy of Science, and the British periodical, Analysis, to indicate the recent published contributions of the type chartered in Vienna before Schlick's

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<sup>1</sup> Max BLACK, "Introduction", in Rudolph Carnap's The Unity of Science, London, Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1934, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Schlick was assassinated in 1936 by one of his former students who was psychologically unbalanced. Carnap came to the United States and taught for several years at the University of Chicago; now he succeeded the late Hans Reichenbach at the University of California in Los Angeles. Frank is associated with the Physics Department of Harvard University. Tarski and Scheffer are still lecturing in the United States.

death. This tradition is now more commonly referred to as logical positivism, or logical empiricism.

3. SOURCES OF LOGICAL POSITIVISM. Among the influences which moulded the views entertained by the members of the Viennese Circle and their followers we should stress particularly two: Hume, and Wittgenstein. An acute ethical critic even states that logical positivists in fact "may be regarded as having reverted to the views of Hume".<sup>3</sup> And reading Carnap, one could indeed agree with this. Carnap quotes Hume's famous paragraph from the Enquiry: "It seems to me, that the only objects of the abstract sciences or of demonstration are quantity and number... All other enquiries of men regard only matter of fact and existence; and these are evidently incapable of demonstration... When we run over libraries, persuaded by these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion".

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<sup>3</sup> Sir W. David ROSS, Foundations of Ethics, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939, p. 3.

Then Carnap says: "We agree with this view of Hume, which says - translated into our terminology - that only the propositions of mathematics and empirical science have sense, and that all other propositions are without sense".<sup>4</sup>

Yet it would be a mistake to think that logical positivists merely endorsed, and perhaps improved on, Hume. Their position can hardly be separated from that of Wittgenstein, though they are reluctant to accept some of his teachings.<sup>5</sup> By most logical positivists he is acclaimed as one of the founding fathers of their criterion of meaning. His views on logical truth, on metaphysics and on ethics lent themselves very well to their purpose.

That which has sense, Wittgenstein says, are propositions; they can be true or false. But there are no philosophical propositions. To quote from his Tractatus:

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4 Rudolph CARNAP, Philosophy and Logical Syntax, London, Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1935. John LAIRD also considers Hume's philosophy to be amenable to a logico-positivist translation: "We ask any philosophical volume whether it treats firstly of logical syntax and vocabulary, or, secondly, of an empirically verifiable piece of natural science. If not we commit it to the flames". Recent Philosophy, London, Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1936, pp. 184 f.

5 Wittgenstein's Tractatus, says a prominent scholar in analytic philosophy - "advanced a theory of the nature of logical truth... and a view of metaphysics and ethics which was quite congenial in outline to positivists". Morton WHITE, The Age of Analysis, New York, The New American Library, 1955, p. 228.

"The totality of true propositions is the total natural science (or the totality of the natural sciences)". And "Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences". Philosophy has nothing to say about the world. Nor is the structure of the world an object of philosophy. "The object of philosophy is but the logical clarification of thoughts... Philosophy is not a doctrine but an activity... A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations".<sup>6</sup>

But now, let us consider with Karl Popper one of Wittgenstein's sentences, for example, 'Philosophy is not a doctrine but an activity'. "Surely", Popper says, "this is not a sentence belonging to a 'total natural science (or the totality of the natural sciences)'. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein, it cannot belong to 'the totality of true propositions'. On the other hand, it is not a false proposition either (since if it were, its negation would have to be true, and to belong to natural science). Thus we arrive at the result that it must be 'meaningless' or 'senseless' or 'nonsensical'; and the same holds for most of Wittgenstein's propositions".<sup>7</sup>

This self-defeating consequence is seen even by Wittgenstein himself and stated towards the end of his

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<sup>6</sup> Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, London, Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1922, pp. 75-77.

<sup>7</sup> Karl POPPER, The Open Society and Its Enemies, Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 282, n. 51 (1).

Tractatus in the following sentence: "My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless..."<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note that Wittgenstein was not admitting here a failure of his treatise to solve the problem of meaning. He believed that he had achieved something with his senseless propositions, for in the Preface to the Tractatus he claims: "The truth of the thoughts communicated here seems to me unassailable and definite. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the problems have in essentials been finally solved". In other words, he believes, unjustifiably on his own premisses, "that we can communicate unassailably and definitely true thoughts by way of propositions which are admittedly nonsensical, and that we can solve problems 'finally' by propounding nonsense".<sup>9</sup>

4. THE LOGICO-POSITIVIST CRITERION OF MEANING AND THE PROBLEM OF VERIFICATION. In spite of Wittgenstein's failure to justify a purely analytic approach to the problems of philosophy, the members of the Vienna Circle continued to employ his criterion of sense, - that is, the necessity of empirical verifiability of propositions - in their dealings with traditional philosophical problems. They refused to

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<sup>8</sup> Tractatus, p. 189.

<sup>9</sup> Karl POPPER, op. cit., p. 282, n. 51 (1).

call their statements philosophical, for they considered themselves outside of, and above, the traditional philosophical disputes - being concerned with the logic of language rather than with reality. Thus Carnap writes about their work: "Any new philosophical school, though it reject all previous opinions, is bound to answer the old (if perhaps better formulated) questions. But we give no answers to philosophical questions, and instead reject all philosophical questions, whether of Metaphysics, or Epistemology. For our concern is with Logical Analysis".<sup>10</sup>

One of the basic tasks of the logical analysis, according to them, is the finding of verification method for a given proposition.<sup>11</sup> The first question is: Is such and such a proposition true or false and how can we be sure that

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<sup>10</sup> Rudolph CARNAP, The Unity of Science, p. 21 f.

<sup>11</sup> The early logical positivists, for instance Schlick and Carnap, maintained that the meaning of a proposition is simply the way in which it is verified, the path of its verification. The question arose, however, What are you verifying? What is it?

Later a proposition was said to have meaning if it was conclusively verifiable by sense experience. In other words, the meaning of a proposition came to be distinguished from its verification. But, it was objected, since most statements of natural science are not conclusively verifiable, are they to be treated as meaningless? Again the positivists had to retreat to more modest requirement: a proposition is meaningful if it is at least inconclusively verifiable and reducible to statements which are conclusively verifiable. Yet even this modified criterion would exclude most statements of sciences. It was necessary for positivists, e.g., Ayer, to allow a statement its meaningfulness, if there is at least some empirical evidence for it, if it is verifiable at least in principle if not in fact.

it is such? They speak of two kinds of verification, the direct and the indirect verification. The first is applicable for instance to a proposition asserting something about a present perception: if one says, "I hear music playing", his statement is verified if he does hear music; it is disproved if he does not hear it. An indirect verification, on the other hand, has to do with a possible test or observation which would verify or disprove a proposition if certain conditions were fulfilled. "There are mountains on the other side of the moon" is a proposition for which we can prescribe a theoretically possible sense observation in order to test it. On the other hand, as Carnap says, "from the proposition: 'The Principle of the world is Water' we are not able to deduce any proposition asserting any perceptions or feelings or experiences whatever which may be expected for the future".<sup>12</sup> For this reason it asserts nothing. Such theses "are deprived of empirical content, of theoretical sense: they are pseudo-theses".<sup>13</sup>

There is a second class of propositions, the analytic or verbally self-evident propositions, which are either tautologies or self-contradictions. All such propositions are genuine and have theoretical sense. Their truth or

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<sup>12</sup> Rudolph CARNAP, Philosophy and Logical Syntax, pp. 16 f.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

falsehood is determined by an analysis of the constitutive terms alone, without any reference to sense experience as is the case with the propositions of fact.

These two classes of propositions, that is, the empirically verifiable propositions of fact and the analytic propositions, constitute, according to the Vienna Circle philosophers and other logical positivists the totality of meaningful propositions. And here again we may detect a striking similarity between the contemporary and the traditional empiricism. Hume, for instance, said that all non-analytic knowledge is based on experience if it is to be called knowledge. Logical positivists, in their quest for the unity of science (scientia, knowledge), expressed the same thought in an all-inclusive "maxim that a sentence makes a cognitively meaningful assertion, and thus can be said to be either true or false, only if it is either (1) analytic or self-contradictory or (2) capable, at least in principle, of experiential test". 14

5. REFLECTION OF VALUE THEORY AND OTHER TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS. It is clear that typically philosophical statements of value, being and knowledge do not meet

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14 Carl G. HEMPERL, "Problems and changes in the Empirical Criterion of Meaning", in Semantics and the Philosophy of Language (L. LINSKY, ed.), pp. 139-163, The University of Illinois Press, 1952, p. 163

the positivist criterion of meaning, or sense; that is, they are neither empirical hypotheses nor analytical statements. Consequently, they are considered by logical positivists as nonsense, outside the scope of knowledge. One of them stated more recently: "Knowledge divides into synthetic and analytic statements; the synthetic inform us about matters of fact, the analytic statements are empty. What kind of knowledge should ethics be?"<sup>15</sup>

We have already seen that this so-called empiricist criterion of cognitive meaning, or of cognitive significance is self-refuting, yet it is solely on its basis that logical positivists exclude as meaningless whole areas of human discourse as well as all philosophical statements.<sup>16</sup> Their criterion of meaning is the kaleidoscope through which they look upon every problem; in fact, the logical analysis of language consists precisely of looking at every proposition through this arbitrarily accepted instrument.

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<sup>15</sup> Hans REICHENBACH, The Rise of Scientific Philosophy, University of California Press, 1951, p. 276.

<sup>16</sup> In spite of the claim that emotive interpretation of value judgments is independent of the positivistic criterion of meaning, a strong doubt to it is raised by many reliable authorities. Morton White, for instance, writes that "the attack on metaphysics and ethics followed from a very vigorous use of what is called "the empiricist criterion of meaning" and a refusal to recognize anything but mathematical and empirical statements as meaningful". The Age of Analysis, p. 205. C.D. Broad, W.D. Ross, A.C. Ewing, J.C.M. Joad, and many others advance similar charges against the emotive analysts.

How low they look upon the traditional philosophical treatises is evident from Feigl's writings. He considers them as typical expression of "immature attitudes" which "try to explain experience in ways which lack the distinguishing marks of science. Certain of these pre-scientific modes of explanation, like the magical, the animistic, and mythological, are nearly extinct; others, like the theological and the metaphysical, still prevail". And he writes further: "Throughout its history, philosophy has been the particular stronghold of verbal magic. By purely verbal means it has tried to explain things which only science could explain or which cannot be explained at all".<sup>17</sup>

6. THE LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE. With the discovery, or rather, with the creation of the empiricist criterion of meaning, such verbal magic as philosophy (in the traditional sense) has no chance of survival. We have now a legitimate zone where we can speak of knowledge, and whatever is outside this zone cannot pass for knowledge. Professor Langer of Radcliffe College dramatizes this picture suggested by logical positivists in the following remarkable passage:

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<sup>17</sup> Herbert FEIGL, "Introduction", Readings in Philosophical Analysis, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, p. 19. Cf. also his article, "Logical Empiricism", in Twentieth Century Philosophy, (D. RUNES, ed.), New York, Philosophical Library, 1947, pp. 375-416, where he entertains similar views.

The knowable is a clearly defined field, governed by the requirement of discursive projectability. Outside this domain is the inexpressible realm of feeling, of formless desires and satisfactions, immediate experience, forever incognito and incommunicado. A philosopher who looks in that direction is, or should be, a mystic; from the ineffable sphere nothing but nonsense can be conveyed, since language, our only possible semantic, will not clothe experiences that elude the discursive form". 18

The "clarification" of language and meaning initiated by the Vienna Circle was continued by the members after the dispersion. We have now at least three disciplines which deal with the logical analysis of language. Feigl labels them as PRAGMATICS, SEMANTICS and SYNTAX. The first discipline "investigates the functions of language in its full biological, psychological, and sociological setting. Here language in its relation to behavior is the primary object of study". The following two branches of logico-linguistic analysis are considered by the same author as successive steps of abstraction. "Semantics", he says, "analyzes the meaning of terms and expressions. Its studies center about the relation of designation and the concept of truth. While pragmatics is interested predominantly in the expression and appeal function of language, semantics explores the symbolic or representative aspect of language. Syntax, finally,

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18 Susanne K. LANGER, Philosophy in a New Key, Harvard University Press, 1942, p. 88.

ignores even the meaning-relation and studies exclusively the connections of linguistic signs with each other. It systematizes the purely formal, structural rules for the formation of sentences and the transformation rules of logical derivation".<sup>19</sup>

If the field of the knowable is exhausted by the natural sciences and by mathematics, what happens to philosophy? It is delegated to the feeling-sphere. It belongs to the logical "beyond" which Wittgenstein called the "unspeakable" and which both "Russell and Carnap regard as the sphere of subjective experience, emotion, feeling, and wish, from which only symptoms come to us in the form of metaphysical and artistic fancies. The study of such products they relegate to psychology, not semantics".<sup>20</sup> Semantics can only point out what the statements of, let say, metaphysics and ethics state - in anything, but it goes no further. While the semantic analysis reveals, according to them, that philosophic statements do not state anything, it still remains to be investigated why they have been made, why those who made them thought they were saying something, and why they had such an influence. And these are purely psychological problems.

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19 Herbert FEIGL, Readings in Philosophical Analysis, p. 7.

20 S.K. LANGER, op. cit., p. 86.

We shall not concern ourselves here specifically with the positivistic denial to metaphysics the character of knowledge; we only want to stress the fact that they did so explicitly on the basis of their criterion of meaning. This is not always admitted in the case of value judgments for some authors claim that they arrived at a non-cognitivist, more specifically, an emotive position purely through the consideration of value statements themselves. However, at least two authors, Carnap and Reichenbach, frankly admit that they deny the status of genuine judgments to value utterances simply because the empiricist criterion of meaning does not permit them to do otherwise. Carnap even puts ethics in the metaphysical bag and throws it with all its contents to the sphere of feelings and passions. He writes in this connection:

Ethics raises the question of the basis of validity of moral standards (principles of value) and of the specification of valid norms. Answers are given by Idealists, Utilitarians, Intuitionists, etc. Here again we reject the questions themselves in view of their metaphysical character. <sup>21</sup>

#### 7. LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ELEMENTS OF VALUE.

Wittgenstein had proclaimed long before Carnap that "there are no ethical propositions". <sup>22</sup> Though he wrote almost

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<sup>21</sup> Rudolph CARNAP, The Unity of Science, pp. 23 f.  
<sup>22</sup> Tractatus, p. 91.

nothing about ethics, we can see how sceptical he was about any rational ground beyond the statements of value from the comments he supposedly made in conversations and discussions. C.H. Waddington reports that he declared of "the endeavor to find an intellectual basis for ethics: 'This is a terrible business - just terrible. You can at best stammer when you talk of it'." 23

Professor Schlick, the early leader of the "Thursday Seminar", at Vienna, is one of the logical positivists who has given most attention to ethics. He "rejected absolute values as meaningless and stressed the need for testing all ethical formulations by reference to 'experience'." 24 His ethical essays were translated and collected under the title Problems of Ethics. They contain seeds of every type of ethical emotivism propounded by the later logical positivists.

Schlick was also concerned with the so-called "descriptive or scientific ethics", that is, with ethical beliefs found in societies and in individuals, with the evolution of such beliefs, with the impact they have on the

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23 C.H. WADDINGTON, Science and Ethics, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1942, p. 7.

24 Ray LEPLEY (ed.), Value, A Cooperative Inquiry, New York, p. 9. Cf. SCHLICK's Problems of Ethics, esp. pp. 184-186, 190 and 194.

lives of the people, etc. But these, as he recognized it, are problems of anthropology, sociology, psychology and other disciplines, and not of ethics par excellence, that is, the normative ethics. Schlick thought he was presented with a dilemma, "that ethics must be either a 'science' or 'non-sense'." <sup>25</sup> He decided that ethics is a science, but only in so far as it is descriptive. And this ethical science is most properly a department of psychology. <sup>26</sup>

Similar views on ethics as science are entertained by Schlick's spiritual followers Carnap and Ayer. <sup>27</sup> None of the positivistic authors holds that normative ethical statements could pass the empiricist criterion of meaning. Norms, according to them, do not give us any knowledge - neither about the actions or objects outside, nor about our own interior lives; they merely vocalize our feelings, as one says "Oh", or "Ha, ha!". They are not genuine statements but verbal combinations which have no real significance; they should be treated "as 'expressions' in a different sense, namely as 'expressions' of emotions, feelings,

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen TOULMIN, The Place of Reason in Ethics, p. 175.

<sup>26</sup> "In so far as ethical questions have any meaning, and can therefore be answered, ethics is a science... The central problem of ethics is a pure question of psychology". Problems of Ethics, pp. 1, 21.

<sup>27</sup> AYER writes: "Ethics, as a branch of knowledge, is nothing more than a department of psychology and sociology". Language, Truth and Logic, p. 112.

desires. They are not symbols for thought, but symptoms of the inner life, like tears and laughter, crooning, or profanity".<sup>28</sup> The fact that norms seem to say something is a grammatical illusion; for they are usually expressed, not in the form of imperatives - as they really should be - but in indicative sentences in which ethical predicates are used in a grammatically identical way with those used in genuine statements of fact. Moral predicates, however, have in their opinion, "no intelligible meaning and... moral judgements are really deceptive expressions of irrational impulses. Neither moral standards, nor merit, nor responsibility, nor freedom have any real significance..."<sup>29</sup>

To see clearly in what category of human discourse the positivists put ethical and other value utterances, we should quote an exposition of their basic view by Stephen Toulmin:

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<sup>28</sup> S.K. LANGER, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas E. HILL, Contemporary Ethical Theories, New York, Macmillan, 1950, p. 9.

There are - he says by way of explanation - those spontaneous reactions, like blushing, smiling, laughing and weeping, which play an important part in our relations with our fellows, and which mean (indicate) so much to those we meet. Next, there are the manner and tone of voice in which we speak, which convey to a hearer nuances difficult to put into writing. With these we may class ejaculations like 'Blast!' and 'Hurrah!', which, without stating anything, release our feelings of annoyance or jubilation; and those stimuli, by means of which we move others to act - 'Gee up!' and 'Whoa!', 'Stop!' and 'Stand to attention!' The whole force of each of these is rhetorical; the blush, the manner, the curse, the command, all evince feelings - and so (it is said) do ethical utterances. <sup>30</sup>

Words such as "value", "good", "right" or the like have no reference. They are "like interjections long drawn out - a very big Ha! or a most prolonged Ugh!". <sup>31</sup>

8. THE QUESTION OF TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD OF VALUATION-AL STATEMENTS. Since ethical and other value utterances do neither assert nor deny anything but express only an emotional attitude of the speaker toward an object, it is clear that no question of their truth or falsehood can arise. To explain the same thing in Feigl's terms, some (that is, the distinctly ethical) statements of value are applied to no facts, consequently the designation - rules of language are completely broken; we have logically incomplete state-

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<sup>30</sup> Op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> John LAIRD, The Idea of Value, Cambridge, England, 1929, p. 307.

ments which, thanks to the emotive charge of ethical predicates, act as subtle imperatives.

9. TYPES OF EMOTIVE ANALYSIS. Most of the logical positivists - and all of those who participated in the "Thursday Seminar" at Vienna - hold in common that value sentences are emotive, yet not all hold the same view as to the type of emotive meaning involved. "The sentence, 'Cheating is wrong'", - a group of ethical scholars explains - "may be taken to mean: (1) 'Don't cheat!' (imperative); (2) 'I wish you wouldn't cheat!' (optative); (3) 'Cheating!!!' in a tone of disgust (exclamatory); and (4) 'I disapprove of cheating - you should disapprove as well!' (persuasive)".<sup>32</sup> The imperative theory is maintained especially by Rudolph Carnap, the optative by Bertrand Russell, the exclamatory by Alfred Jules Ayer, and the persuasive by Charles Leslie Stevenson, though we should not draw this classification too tightly because the tenets of one theory do not necessarily exclude the tenets of another. Ayer, for instance, believes that ethical judgments may not only express the feelings of the speaker, but also at the same time arouse feelings in the hearer; so does Carnap. But since Ayer stresses the former tendency of ethical utterances we may call him an

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<sup>32</sup> Ethel M. ALBERT et. al., Great Traditions in Ethics, New York, American Book Co., 1953, p. 327, n. 3.

interjectionist; and since Carnap stresses the latter tendency of ethical utterances, we may conveniently call him an imperativist.

10. EXTREME SCIENTISM OF EMOTIVE ETHICAL ANALYSTS.

I think it is evident that such exclusion of value judgments from the sphere of knowledge is a result of deep-rooted scientific prejudices. It is not by coincidence that all prominent emotivists are logical positivists, accepting dogmatically the empirical criterion of meaning and believing blindly in the omniscience of the natural sciences. They recognize as legitimate only the "scientific reason"; this is the reason which - to use Messner's characterization of it - "relies on the methods of the natural sciences alone. It recognizes as real knowledge only what can be put to the test directly or indirectly by sense experience".<sup>33</sup> The logical conclusion is that "man can know nothing about a meaning and destiny of his existence; life has for each of us only whatever meaning we shall severally choose to give it".<sup>34</sup> Our actions have no rational justification, and our discourse on values and reality is meaningless.

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<sup>33</sup> Johannes MESSNER, Ethics and Facts, St. Louis and London, B. Herder Book Co., 1952, p. 257. Similar observation of "scientific reason" in contemporary philosophy is made by Professor von HILDEBRAND: "Things that transcend the world of physics, chemistry and physiology are no longer taken as belonging to an autonomous reality, but are all placed on the level of images, illusions, semblances, which are looked at as mere thrilling, subjective 'experiences'." The New Tower of Babel, London, Burns and Oates, 1954, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Messner, op. cit., p. 296.

## CHAPTER IV

### POSITIVISTIC PREMISSES AND OF THE EMOTIVE INTERPRETATION OF VALUE STATEMENTS

We have seen that the emotive analysis of statements of value is a non-cognitivist type of analysis according to which value statements do not express any propositions but are simply expressions of approval and disapproval at the time when they are pronounced or written. They are not statements of any object outside nor of the speaker's feeling of approval and disapproval; they are simply verbal ventings of emotions analogous to animal cries and to primitive human expressions of pleasure and pain.

We have traced the origins of such an interpretation of value statements, and then we have suggested that emotive analysis is a result of positivistic prejudices. It will be appropriate to develop our topic of prejudices further and to inquire how the relationship between general positivistic principles and the emotive analysis is viewed first by the emotivists and then by their critics.

Both Carnap and Reichenbach - two original members of the Viennese Circle - frankly admit that their ethical analysis follows the general model of linguistic analysis, with the criterion of meaning as the point of reference. Ayer and Stevenson, however, believe their ethical "analysis to be valid on its own account".<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Jules AYER, Language, Truth and Logic, New York, Dover Publications, 1950, p. 20.

attacks on the criterion of meaning do not in any way affect ethical analysis.

Yet, we may immediately reply to Ayer that even if the emotive analysis should not entail any of the positivistic theses, it is still clear that such an analysis was actually made by men who were greatly concerned with giving an account of ethical judgments which would be consistent with their basic principle, that is, with the logico-positivistic criterion of meaning. In support of our contention we may quote Ayer himself: "Considering the use which we have made of the principle that a synthetic proposition is significant only if it is empirically verifiable, it is clear that the acceptance of an 'absolutist' theory of ethics would undermine the whole of our main argument".<sup>2</sup>

Several authorities on contemporary ethics, however, seem to believe that the positivistic views not only served as a guiding principle but are actually entailed by the emotive analysis of value judgments. Thus Ross first recapitulates Ayer's account: value judgments appear to be synthetic, but "they cannot with any show of justice be represented as hypotheses, which are used to predict the course of our sensations".<sup>3</sup> Ayer, observes Ross, rejects subjectivism and utilitarianism and thus it would seem that

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<sup>2</sup> Language, Truth and Logic, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

naturalistic analysis will not do and that propositions containing ethical predicates are a priori, that is, in Ross' terms, "judgments in which we express not the results of observation but a direct insight. But the positivists cannot accept this view, since they have committed themselves to the view that all a priori judgments are pure tautologies and that only empirical hypotheses have factual content, and since, as they admit, it is clear that when we say that something is right or good, we are not uttering a tautology".<sup>4</sup> They proclaim them, consequently, to be pseudo-judgments.

The late Professor Joad brought forward the same charges. In examining Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic, Joad states that Ayer "is precluded from adopting such that is the objective view by his general repudiation of metaphysics, since judgments that 'so and so is good or right' are not empirically verifiable, and are, therefore, consigned by Ayer's general theory to the category of metaphysical, that is to say, of meaningless statements".<sup>5</sup>

Popper exposes this exclusion of statements of value from the realm of knowledge in another way. Both the objectivists and the emotivists, he says, recognize clearly

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<sup>4</sup> Sir W. David Ross, Foundations of Ethics, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Cyril C. Joad, A Critique of Logical Positivism, Chicago University Press, 1950, p. 114.

that "it is impossible to derive a sentence stating a norm or a decision from a statement stating a fact; this is only another way of saying that it is impossible to derive norms or decisions from facts".<sup>6</sup> However, the reason why the objectivists believe norms not to be deducible from facts is that they are ultimate and irreducible; the emotivists, on the other hand, have other grounds. They believe, in Popper's words, that "the reason why norms cannot be deduced from factual propositions is that norms are meaningless; but this", says Popper, "indicates only that (with Wittgenstein's Tractatus) they define 'meaning' arbitrarily in such a way that only factual propositions are called 'meaningful'."<sup>7</sup>

Albert and his associates, in their textbook of ethical theories, also believe that on the emotive view ethical judgments, "being neither confirmable by experience nor true by definition... must be looked upon as literally meaningless expressions; if they have any meaning, as they seem to have, it must be an emotive meaning".<sup>8</sup>

We might agree with positivists that a criterion of meaning is needed; we might even accept their criterion

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<sup>6</sup> Karl R. POPPER, The Open Society and Its Enemies, (2 vols.), Princeton University Press, 1950, Vol. II, p. 205, n. 5 (1).

<sup>7</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Ethel M. ALBERT et al., Great Traditions in Ethics, New York, American Book Co., 1933, p. 327.

as it stands by some positivistic authors: a proposition is meaningful if it is verifiable by experience. But we cannot accept their concept of "experience".

Let us consider an ethical judgment, "Lying is wrong". In positivistic translation it reads, "Lying!!!", where the number of exclamation marks indicates the intensity of the feeling of disapproval. Why is it translated in such a way? Because the term "wrong" does not refer to any sensible property in the object to which it is applied nor to any state of mind of the person who made the utterance. The only justification for its use in sentences is its emotive charge.

The source of trouble then is a term which has no reference to any sense property. But why should every term refer to a sense property? Because the emotivists - as thorough-going empiricists want to uphold a special criterion of meaning: a proposition is factually meaningful if and only if it is verifiable in sense experience. "Empirical", to them, means nothing more than "sensible", and this fact makes their criterion fatal to any statement of value. As Joed points out,

... it is ... only the arbitrary limitation of the concept of experience to sensory experience which prevents logical positivists from according unbiased consideration to what is prima facie such an obvious interpretation of the moral and the religious consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

The intuitive experiences of intellect are not sense experiences and cannot be used to verify or disprove any proposition. Intuition, according to them, is a remnant of the metaphysical age; whatever it is that deludes us into thinking that there is a form of genuine or even superior cognition called intuition cannot be used to determine the meaningfulness of a proposition because such cognition is private, intersubjectively unverifiable, and as such useless from the point of view of scientific method. Yet Joad argues,

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<sup>9</sup> C.E.M. JOAD, op. cit., pp. 133 f.

the experiences which I undergo in the case of moral conflicts do introspectively take place. If the experiences result in a victory over what is known as temptation, no action may be taken and there is, therefore, nothing to observe and nothing to give rise to sensory experiences. Hence, the statement "a struggle against temptation occurred", is, on Ayer's view, meaningless in such a case, because no sensory observation is relevant to its verification. If the struggle is unsuccessful, action may be taken which is felt at the time to be wrong and is subsequently followed by remorse. In this case there is overt behavior, giving rise to sensory experiences both in the agent and in the observer of the action. But the occurrence of those sensory experiences is relevant to the verification only of the statement "such and such an action was performed"; it is not relevant to the statement "a process of moral struggle occurred while the agent sought to resist the performance of an action which he felt to be wrong". And what sense-experience is relevant to the verification of the statement "remorse was subsequently felt"? Does Ayer, then, deny that moral struggles occur or that remorse is felt, or would he say that the former do occur and that the latter is felt are meaningless statements? <sup>10</sup>

It seems, then, that the basic logico-empiricist or logico-positivist fallacy is the extreme sensism which underlies their criterion of meaning. On their view nothing could be admitted as experience unless it is either a simple sensation or a collection of sensations; and no statement could be called "true" unless its predicate refers to a sense datum or a collection of sense data. "Truth", writes Messner in regard to the positivistic interpretation of reality by 'scientific reason', "is thus restricted by the facts

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<sup>10</sup> C.E.M. JOAD, op. cit., pp. 60 f.

of sense experience. Everything else is beyond the reach of true knowledge. Hence all questions which transcendent this sphere simply cannot be answered". 11

It is interesting to note that Ayer and other emotivists did recognize the fact long before pointed out by Moore that ethical judgments are unique and unanalyzable, or, as Ayer says, "absolute" and "intrinsic", but precisely because of the sensism underlying their criterion of meaning they draw false conclusion that since value statements are not analyzable, they are only ventings of emotions, or expressions of feeling. "In drawing this conclusion", writes Joad, "Ayer ... has been misled by his refusal to recognize that a factual statement can have meaning even if it is not verifiable in sensory experience". 12

To claim that "empirical" is equivalent to "sensory" and to pronounce such terms as right, evil, beautiful, and so on, meaningless because they are not symbols for sense properties of objects is a purely arbitrary position which cannot account for all human experiences. We are not claiming that there are, or may be, other senses through whose channel, we would receive experiences relevant to "empirical" verification of axiological and metaphysical statements.

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11 Johannes MASNER, Ethics and Facts, St. Louis and London, S. Herder Book Co., 1952, pp. 297 f.

12 JOAD, op. cit., p. 135.

Stace's attempt to bring solution to the problem of value statements in this direction seems to me a complete failure. One would think that he opposes sensism of logical positivists when he writes: "... it is mere dogmation to confine the term experience to sense experience..." But then he continues: "There may be non-physical senses of which we have no knowledge. Mystics claim that direct non-physical experiences sometimes come to them... And I know of no ground but prejudice for refusing to listen to their claims... For a genuine empiricism the term experience ought to mean any direct objective impinging of the world upon any conceivable mind. To say that non-physical experiences are not objective is merely to beg the question..."<sup>13</sup> It seems to me clear that Stace is fighting for the power of intellect to penetrate deeper into reality than the senses, to understand that which senses perceive but cannot understand; he is fighting for admitting the possibility of existence of certain other faculties similar to, or on the same level, as the senses. We, on the other hand, are claiming that sense perceptions are not the end of our knowledge, though all our knowledge begins with the senses. We also wish to use terms such as "truth", "proof", and others, in a material mode, or at least not to limit them to their formal

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<sup>13</sup> W.T. STACE, The Concept of Morals, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1937, pp. 300 f.

use as logical positivists do. On their view, to quote Feigl, "a sentence is true, if its terms are so applied to fact that none of the designation rules of the language in question are violated".<sup>14</sup> On our view, truth consists in conformity of the intellect to the thing known. It has nothing to do with the rules of language, though we firmly hold that the communication of truth has to take language into account.

Even the informalist type of non-cognitivists recognize that their emotivist colleague "wishes to limit the meaning and scope of 'reasoning'. For him, 'truth', 'falsity' and 'proof' or 'verification' are features of logical, mathematical or factual statements only, and strict proof or factual verification the only kind of good reasoning which can be said to support any statement".<sup>15</sup>

If sense experience is the only factor in verifying a statement of fact, then we cannot prove a simple statement of fact. For how could we know that there is no such thing as non-sensory experience merely by sense experience? As Swing points out, "how can we ever know by sense-experience that there is not a part of the meaning of a statement that

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<sup>14</sup> Herbert FEIGL, "Introduction" to the Readings in Philosophical Analysis (H. Feigl and Wood Sellars, edd.), New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen S. TOULMIN, The Place of Reason in Ethics, Cambridge University Press, 1950, p. 54.

we cannot verify? The fact that we do not have any sense-experience of such a part proves nothing, since the point at issue is whether there is something in what we mean beyond sense-experience; and how can we ever know by sense experience that there is not?" 16

What the emotivists actually do is this: they define "knowledge" in their own way, and whatever does not fall under their definition of knowledge must be nonsense, feeling or what not. 17 If the proof for a statement is not such as is given either in natural sciences (inductive) or in mathematics (deductive), then it is not a proof. And if experience is not a simple sense experience accountable completely by physiology and experimental psychology then it is to be treated as an arbitrary logical construction made out of habit by our mind. No wonder, then, that statements of value, as well as the basic principles of epistemology and metaphysics are viewed by them with great suspicion and even exiled to the world of irrational impulses and feelings. The intentional character of our moral and aesthetic life is completely ignored; they put "all the significant value

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16 A. J. EWING, "Meaninglessness", *ibid* 46 (1937), pp. 347-364, p. 349.

17 As Messner so well put it: "Logical positivism" invents a notion of what it wishes to take as true knowledge, and then says that nothing can be true knowledge which does not fit into this notion". Ethics and Facts, p. 301.

responses - such as love, enthusiasm, reverence - on a level with the merely unintentional feeling states, as no more than meaningless sensation".<sup>18</sup> They want to explain everything by "scientific" method and they refuse to recognize as ultimate fact nothing but sense-data: everything else must be reducible to them. Genetic explanations are their favorite devices to give a "scientific" account of moral and aesthetic experiences. It does not seem to occur to them that such experiences should first of all be examined as they appear and then be treated as the basic data of ethical and aesthetic analyses, even if they could not be coordinated with other established data or put into a preconceived system.<sup>19</sup>

We may ask the emotivists why they simply endorse the positivistic criterion of meaning as if it were a self-evident, eternal truth; why do they analyze every statement from the point of view of this arbitrarily selected device and exclude as meaningless all those statements which cannot be empirically (= sensibly) verified. Are they not condemning ethics, not because its judgments are not meaningful, but because they are not meaningful in their sense? And this, I think, is a distortion of ethical judgments,

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<sup>18</sup> Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, The New Tower of Babel, London, Burns and Oates, 1954, p. 148.

<sup>19</sup> We can readily agree with Karl POPPER who believes that "... the reluctance to admit that norms are something important and irreducible is one of the main sources of the intellectual and other weaknesses of the more progressive circles in our time". The Open Society, Vol. II, p. 205, n.5(1).

not a clarification of them. It is just a logical game, consisting of making valid deductions from an unjustified axiom. Ewing's critique of emotivism on this point is especially acute. He writes: "If the sceptic<sup>20</sup> demands for judgments in ethics a logical proof as we have in mathematics, or an empirical inductive proof as we have in natural science, he is condemning ethics because ethical cognition is not like other kinds of cognition but has its own distinctive nature, which is like condemning empirical evidence because it is not mathematical or mathematical proof because it is not empirical".<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Not only Professor Ewing but also many others consider the emotive and other non-cognitivist analyses as sceptical. Thus, Thomas HILL, in his classification of ethical theories, writes: "In terms of their accounts of the meanings of the moral predicates, they are as follows: (1) Skeptical theories, according to which ethical predicates have no intelligible meaning at all but are merely emotive expressions..." Contemporary Ethical Theories, p. 5. C.D. BROAD states: "The most radically sceptical view is that what appear to be moral judgments are not really judgments, i.e., assertions of knowledge or opinion, at all: but are mere expressions of a certain kind of emotion". "Some of the Main Problems of Ethics", in Readings in Philosophical Analysis (Herbert Feigl and Wood Sellars, ed.), (pp. 546-586), p. 548. Borrowing DUNHAM expresses a similar view when he writes that the positivistic criterion of meaning on the basis of which the emotivists exclude ethical judgments from the realm of sense "is an assumption which results from taking science and mathematics seriously, while indulging an emancipated scepticism toward ethics". Man Against Myth, p. 254.

<sup>21</sup> A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 34.

The subject is too serious to play games with it. We should dismiss the exclusive concern with the rules of language and examine the experiences in relation to the language used to express them. "To settle the question of the nature of 'ethical judgements'," says Ewing, "what is called for is a careful examination of our state of mind in making them".<sup>22</sup> We find in such an examination that in making a statement of value we at least intend to say something, pronounce something which could be true or false; we also find that we at least believe we are being contradicted and that we contradict others in certain cases of disputes concerning values; further we find that we at least feel that certain acts should be done and certain acts avoided; and finally, it is clear that we at least believe that we can rationally justify or condemn certain actions and not merely persuade others to feel in the same way as we do towards those actions. G.L. Broad's penetrating paragraph on this point seems to me to attach an unresolvable doubt to the validity of any emotive interpretation of value judgments:

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<sup>22</sup> A.C. EWING, Ethics, London, English University Press, 1953, p. 121.

Suppose I assert, deliberately and reflectively and not merely talking like a parrot, that A on a certain occasion ought not to have broken a promise which he had made to B. Then, prima facie, the following things seem to be true: (1) That in uttering this sentence... I am asserting an opinion (correct or incorrect) which I hold, and not merely expressing an emotion which I feel. (2) that the opinion which I am asserting is not merely about my own feelings or wishes or beliefs. In saying that A ought to have kept his promise to B, I seem to be asserting about A and B and their relationship something which is no more about me and my attitude towards them than if I had asserted that A is B's second cousin. (3) That what I assert about A's breach about his promise to B, viz., that it was wrong and ought not to have happened, is something unique and peculiar, though perfectly familiar and intelligible to everyone. It cannot be expressed by any form of words which does not contain the words "right" or "ought" or some others which are obviously mere verbal translations of them. 23

However, as soon as we mention the word introspection, they refuse to admit the validity of our account of moral and aesthetic experiences. They maintain that an object is looked at objectively only if it is viewed from the outside and if a scientific account of it can be given. Since they believe that only natural science has a word about facts, and the behavioristic psychology - on their view - is the only psychology that can be called scientific, introspection is nothing but a wild goosechase of metaphysicians and seers.

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23 G. D. BROAD, "Some of the Main Problems of Ethics", in Readings in Philosophical Analysis, pp. 547 f.

Thus behavioristic outlook is another presupposition which precludes the emotivists to see clearly what is involved in our moral and aesthetic experience and consequently in our way of speaking about those experiences. Of course, logico-positivistic analysis of ethical statements admittedly deals only with the logic of language, with the formal structure of language, and not with the objects to which ethical language is related. Their consideration of moral experiences is limited to genetic explanations of those experiences - but in this case they are no longer on philosophical plane (understood as linguistic analysis) but on the plane of psychology. And however useful and elucidating such explanations may be from a purely scientific point of view, we shall try to show that they - regardless of their truth or falsehood - do not in any way affect statements of value, for they answer the why and not the what of those statements.

## CHAPTER V

### CRITIQUE OF GENETIC EXPLANATIONS

Having assigned ethical and other value judgments to the realm of nonsense, the emotivists seem to suspect that their account is unacceptable unless some additional non-analytic<sup>1</sup> explanation of our existing moral and aesthetic beliefs is given. They see that for certain beliefs of this kind men did not hesitate to sacrifice many a selfish pleasure and even to give their own lives. The beliefs, for instance, that lying is evil, or that murder is wrong, are commonly upheld as something self-evident and absolutely certain, and any opposition is crushed in one way or another. Furthermore, the view that there are degrees of perfections: of beauty, of goodness, and so on, is so common and pre-supposed in all spheres of value discourse that it simply cannot be ignored even by the theory which labels value judgments as expressions of feelings.

Explanations offered by emotivists for the existence of ethical and aesthetic beliefs are mostly genetic in character. These are scientific theories about the origin and

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<sup>1</sup> That these explanations are not analytic (= philosophic in positivistic sense) is recognized even by AYER when he writes concerning the question, "What are the moral habits of a given person or group of people, and what causes them to have precisely those habits and feelings"; "This enquiry falls wholly within the scope of the existing social sciences".  
Language, Truth and Logic, p. 112.

development of beliefs in individuals, in modern primitive and civilized societies and in prehistory. They are based on certain facts established or assumed by the so-called social sciences - psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, and economics; and they are subject to empirical verification by means of observation, experimentation and induction in so far as social sciences may be said to employ the scientific methods.

The genetic "explanations" offered are various: that value judgments have foundation in irrational impulses, feelings, emotions;<sup>2</sup> that our value judgments are a direct result of the conditioning to which we have been suggested; that habits of individuals and customs of the society to which individuals belong, through constant change and modification, force us to make the value judgments we in fact make, and so on. The "relativity of morals" is the main "fact" presented by them in support of the view that ethical and other value judgments are nothing but expressions of feelings made possibly with a view that they will create similar feelings in others. The emotive theory "asserts that in ethical attitudes and judgments there is an ultimate irrational factor, an emotional element which is apt to

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<sup>2</sup> The ambiguity of the emotivist terminology is notorious. Cf. Ch. VI for a further discussion of this point.

differ from person to person, especially if temperament, training and environment differ markedly... The assertion of a moral rule can therefore never be anything more than an expression of the demands of one's self, or the imposition of the demands of the feelings of one individual or group upon another".<sup>3</sup>

Some extremists, like Westermarck, even claim that objectivity of ethical judgments is not only questioned in some way but disproved by the fact that they are based on emotion.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, to Ayer, genetic explanations provide a conclusive solution to the puzzle presented by the fact that so many beliefs seem to us self-evident, moral precepts categorical, values absolute and intrinsic. He maintains that there are no specifically moral contents of any judgments, and that everything called "moral" is reducible to other, non-ethical factors. He writes: "When one comes to pursue the psychological enquiries which constitute ethical science, one is immediately enabled to account for the Kantian and hedonistic theories of morals. For one finds that one of the chief causes of moral behaviour is fear, both conscious and unconscious, of a god's displeasure, and fear of the enmity of society".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Campbell A. GARNETT, The Moral Nature of Man, New York, Ronald Press, 1952, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. his Ethical Relativity, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1932, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Language, Truth and Logic, pp. 112 f.

Often it is argued that individual's valuations are a result of his conditioning, training, education. That is the reason why we find so many conflicting views as to values even among members of the same society, the same community, the same clubs. We could reduce any value judgment to the non-axiological factors such as fear of punishment, expectation of rewards, and others which played any role in the speaker's training and education.

Now these are much greater claims than that according to which the emotions provide only a necessary psychological condition without which one could not be in the fit state to intuit moral and aesthetic values. We deny the former claims, but we certainly admit the latter one. We can wholeheartedly agree with A.C. Ewing who states: "There is no doubt that we may see for ourselves later the truth of what we are first taught on authority... The fact that we were first taught in ethics by somebody else need not raise doubts of it in our mind provided we can see ethical truths for ourselves now, unless indeed we are to have similar doubts of mathematics... After all most people only come to know in the first instance that  $5 + 7 = 12$  or that the three angles of an Euclidian triangle are equal to two right angles because their teacher told them so".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A.C. EWING, Ethics, English Universities Press, 1953, p. 124.

What should we say about the genetic explanations? Do they achieve their purpose, namely, to reduce valuational to non-valuational factors, and to show that the essential defect of the traditional ethical theories as well as of common sense is to treat "propositions which refer to the causes and attributes of our ethical feelings as if they were definitions of ethical concepts".<sup>7</sup> In other words, do they prove that any value statement whose origin and development they are explaining is false or that it is even a pseudo-statement?

Definitely they do not prove nor disprove anything in ethics - regardless of their own truth or falsity. It is possible, for instance, that a genetic theory provided a true answer to the question, Why X lied to Y on a certain occasion. But this would in no way affect the proposition, Lying is wrong. In other words, genetic explanations might give a true account of statements of fact, but they cannot give any account of statements of value. The statement, "A thinks it is wrong to steal from B", is a statement of fact; but the statement "It is wrong to steal", is a statement of value. One can indeed show why A thinks it is wrong to steal, how he came to the idea of wrong, of stealing (as distinguished from taking), and of many other things, but this is not to show whether the statement Stealing is wrong, is true or false, meaningful or meaningless.

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<sup>7</sup> G.J. AYER, op. cit., p. 113.

Supposing it were proved that whenever X tells truth to Y, he is in a state of fear either from Y or from society or from a god; and that whenever he tells lies to Y, he is not afraid of anything. Can we infer from this fact that telling truth is nothing but fear of punishment, and lying the state of relief from this fear - as many emotivists try to explain truth and lie? I think such inference to be false. Fear may induce one to tell truth, but this is only the cause for his action. Fear may induce us to do many other things which we would not call telling truth. In fact, knowledge of truth is presupposed before fear can cause us to tell it. Similarly, the removal of fear may make us feel unrestrained in many respects, but this does not mean that lying which we might practice in this state of unrestraint has anything to do with fear; only our practice of it (or of anything else) may be related to it.

The emotivists are very often confused by the fact that value judgments are accompanied by strong feelings. Gradually they come to ignore that there is a difference between the two and they simply proclaim such judgments to be nothing but a verbal outburst of feelings, emotions, irrational impulses. This, seems to me, is incompatible with the common conception of value judgments as norms and with the fact that we recognize the distinction between a norm and the action of the people in regard to that norm.

The statement, "I like telling lies", does not establish a norm, "Telling lies is right"; in other words, it does not claim any necessity and universality. Norms, on the other hand, present themselves as necessary and universal, regardless of how individuals at different times feel. My irrational impulses, my likes and dislikes, my selfish desires, cannot establish a norm, but this is precisely what the emotivists maintain when they say that typical value judgments are mere expressions of such impulses. Yet, asks John Wild, "why should the desiderative element in obligation be thought of as a blind eruption of arbitrary impulse and thus identified with raw appetite? Many facts seem incompatible with such a conclusion. Because I want something it does not follow that I ought to want it. There are many cases where obligation conflicts with blind impulse and raw desire".<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, many emotivists - especially Stevenson - stress the fact that reasons can redirect existing desires, feelings, attitudes. Is it not possible that such cognitive evidence could itself guide our moral actions and mould our desires in the direction of that which has been rationally apprehended as worthy of desiring, of approval, of doing? To quote again Professor Wild:

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<sup>8</sup> Plato's Modern enemies and the Theory of Natural Law, Chicago University Press, 1955, pp. 215 f.

if such evidence (true or false) may thus moderate desire, why can it not elicit and direct such active tendency in the first place, as the facts of moral experience seem so clearly to indicate? Thus, suddenly becoming aware of certain facts, expressed in certain judgments that are true or false, acute suffering before me, and powers at my command, I may suddenly experience a new sense of obligation having nothing to do with my raw appetites and even radically opposed to them".<sup>9</sup>

Guilt-complex is another favorite phrase in the emotivist psychological explanations of certain types of moral behavior. They consider guilt as a morbid condition arising from the fact that the "sinner" knows he has done something which he had been taught was wrong; this condition may be intensified by fear of consequences. But are the emotivists really speaking of guilt? Are they not rather describing the psychological conditions of a specific person who feels guilty and then equate these conditions with guilt? Yet it is evident that such psychological conditions are a consequence of an insight into the nature of values: the man who feels guilty must have first recognized that he ignored certain call of value, for instance, the call for respect of a person, of life, of truth, and so on. "The consciousness of guilt and repentance", says Messner, is primarily by no means feeling of guilt but insight into the wrong done ensuing in the resolution to change in attitude..."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law, p. 216.

<sup>10</sup> Johannes MESSNER, Ethics and Facts, St. Louis and London, B. Herder Book Co., 1952, p. 308.

One of the prominent emotivists, Professor Stevenson of the University of Michigan, maintains that "This is right" means simply "I approve of this; do so as well".<sup>11</sup> We might admit that a genetic explanation might give a satisfactory account as to why we apply terms such as "right" and "wrong" to the specific actions to which we actually apply them. But, says Joad,

the reason why we call X right is not the same as what we mean when we say that it is right. Now, either the word "right" carries some specific meaning not coterminous with "conducive to the advantage of self or group" or "felicific" in respect of self or group", or it does not. If it does not, if its meaning is exhausted by the concepts of happiness and advantage, if, in other words, to say "X is right", is to make an ejaculation of emotional approval for what is thought to conduce to advantage or to promote happiness, why use the word, "right" at all? Why not speak directly of happiness and advantage, as we do when we make judgments which express feelings of pleasure or adduce considerations of self-interest.<sup>12</sup>

We might add: Why should we not say, "I approve of this and I want that you too approve of it", instead of saying, "This is right"? - if the two statements are equivalent!

To say that moral judgments are really commands and not statements is also a kind of genetic explanation. Emotivists recognize that norms call for actions, that they cannot be merely recorded as true and then left to the whim

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. his Ethics and Language, Ch. 11, (pp. 20-36).

<sup>12</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 128.

of individuals. However, they draw from this fact a false inference, namely, that norms are commands in a disguised form. The reason why we take them as directives is not because they are disguised commands but because they are statements of value (as distinguished from statements of fact) and as such involve a recognition of the demands of that value: to find truth valuable is to find also a demand that truth be loved and respected, regardless of circumstantial personal preferences: to find love disvaluable is also to recognize that one should not tell lies.

Obviously, this recognition of the call of values is radically distinct from saying that value judgments are commands; for it presupposes knowledge of values, and follows it. Perhaps one could get confused by considering some special cases of moral judgment such as "you ought to do so-and-so". Using such and similar phrases we want to induce the other to comply with our wishes; we may strengthen our demand by using vehement language and by threatening with punishment if he will not obey. In this sense we do use such words as "you ought to do so-and-so" as an imperative. However, we should consider some other modes of speech if we want to do justice to the signification of "right" or "ought"; we should examine, for instance, the cases where our judgment of obligation refers to a third person: "he ought to do so-and-so"; or to the past: "you ought to

have done so-and-so"; or to an unfulfilled past condition: "if this and that had been the case, you ought to have done so-and-so"; or to a contrary to fact condition: "if this and that were the case, you ought to do so-and-so", and so on. We see clearly that "ought" has the same meaning in all these cases and we see just as clearly that it does not express a command. It is true that we may use the present indicative form, "you ought to do so-and-so", to induce someone to act in a certain way, but this fact does not justify us to conclude that the apparent statement is in reality an imperative. As Ross points out, "What distinguishes its meaning from that of the genuine do so-and-so" is that one is suggesting to the person addressed a reason for doing so-and-so, viz., that it is right. The attempt to induce the person addressed to behave in a particular way is a separable accompaniment of the thought that the act is right, and cannot for a moment be accepted as the meaning of the words 'you ought to do so-and-so'.<sup>13</sup>

Not only do we admit a necessary psychological condition for any belief: we also admit the very important role of education in formation of our ethical and aesthetic beliefs. But the fact that we learn to evaluate objects and actions in a certain way does not make any of our valuations false, nor does it reduce those valuations to expressions

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<sup>13</sup> W. David Ross, Foundations of Ethics, p. 34.

of our own or our teacher's likes and dislikes. We can achieve genuine insights of our own after the teacher has pointed certain values to us; we can also sharpen our capacity to perceive values and to make more accurate judgments on them. Plato had recognized this role of education, and Maritain seems entirely in agreement with him when he treats of aesthetic perception:

Like the virtue of art itself, taste, or the capacity to perceive beauty and pronounce a judgment on it, presupposes an innate gift, but can be developed by education and instruction, chiefly by the study and rational explanation of works of art. All things being equal, the better informed the mind is of the rules, the methods and the difficulties of art, and above all of the end pursued by the artist and his intentions, the better it is prepared to receive by means of the intuition of the senses the intelligible splendor emanating from the work and so spontaneously to perceive and relish its beauty. <sup>14</sup>

We pointed out that genetic explanations of moral and aesthetic experiences provide merely the psychological, sociological and historical aspects of such experiences; such explanations do not show that moral and aesthetic elements are reducible to a-moral factors. But even if they could do that, they would still not touch the genuine character of the end-product, that is, of the experiences which we now recognize as moral; for this would be equivalent to showing that a house is nothing more than a collection of bricks,

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<sup>14</sup> Jacques MARITAIN, Art and Scholasticism, London, Sheed and Ward, 1939, p. 164, n. 55.

that nation is nothing more than a collection of individuals, that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is nothing but the sum-total of its notes, that Renoire's Bal à Bougival is just an arrangement of patches of colors, and so on. An acute ethical analyst writes in this connection:

Suppose it could be shown that what we take to be the desire to do what is right as such has developed, either in the history of each individual or in that of human race, on regular principles out of desires which were all purely non-moral... It would be a fallacy to conclude that what we take to be the desire to do what is right as such is not what it appears to be, but is really just one or a combination of purely non-moral desires. An account of the stages out of which something developed in a regular way is one thing, and an analysis of it as it is when fully developed is another. But it is very common to confuse the two and to imagine that one has shown that the end-term of such a process just consists of the earlier terms in a disguised form. <sup>15</sup>

I think we are justified in concluding that the introduction in ethical literature of long passages concerned with giving a genetic account of our moral and aesthetic experiences is a futile attempt to undermine ethics and aesthetics; and I might add that they are also a door-lock keeping us in the shadows of the cave rather than a key to the light of truth: they hinder us from

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<sup>15</sup> Charles D. BROAD, "Some of the Main Problems in Ethics", in Readings in Ethical Analysis, pp. 560 f.

achieving genuine insights into the realm of values by directing our attention to the causes of an individual's beliefs instead of to the contents of those beliefs. We should delegate such explanations to social sciences and let them be judged by the tests of scientific method.

## CHAPTER VI

### CRITIQUE OF EMOTIVIST TERMINOLOGY

Despite the claim of the philosophers who conceive philosophy as a logical clarification of language, one does not need to read very far in the emotivist ethical writings to see that many of the basic concepts of their value theory are undefined, or defined poorly, and presented to the reader as univocal. Such are, for instance, "expression", "feeling", "emotion", "attitude", "command", "right", "emotive language", "cognitive language", and many others. It would be of interest to us to examine some of them, to determine some possible meanings of these terms and to point out how improperly they are used in ethical analysis.

#### 1. "ANALYSIS OF EXPRESSION"

According to emotivists, judgments of value are pseudo-judgments because they are expressions of feelings, emotions, attitudes. In what sense can value judgments be said to "express" feelings? Expression means first of all a transparency of a person's face, voice, movements. In this sense we intuit in others such phenomena as fear, joy, and so on; we are reading them in a person's face, in his voice, in his way of walking. There is no question of propositions involved here, since the other is not stating that he fears or that he rejoices; on the contrary, he may be speaking of something else, or may not be speaking at all. He is not intending to convey to us that he fears or rejoices, yet

we can "read" these phenomena on his face, in his voice, in his actions. This sense of "expression", says von Hildebrand, is the most authentic one; it "refers to the intuitively given transparence of psychical entities in a person's face or in his voice or movements. In this sense we say that a face expresses joy, a voice expresses fear, a way of walking expresses an affected or sophisticated attitude. In this sense, too, we say that a certain face expresses kindness, purity, intelligence".<sup>1</sup>

The emotivists cannot intend this sense of "expression" to be applicable to value judgments since they are not analyzing persons' faces at the time of making a value judgment, nor are they interested in the voice of the speaker to determine his feelings; they are interested in sentences made with the intention to proclaim something valuable or disvaluable. It is true that they often equate such sentences with phrases pronounced in a special tone of voice, but this is different from "reading" in someone's voice a particular expression. It is different because in one case, namely, in saying "Killing is evil", and then translating it into "Killing!!!" pronounced with a voice of disapproval, one is still intending to convey something. C. S. Broad

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, New York, David Mackay Co., 1953, p. 123.

points out <sup>2</sup> that there is actually no more than a verbal difference between the original and the translation - if we admit that value judgments are expressions in the first place. There is, of course, more than a verbal difference between saying, "I feel so-and-so" and merely exclaiming because I have that feeling. We will see later whether the relation between the emotivist translation and the original value judgment could be of this kind, but at this point it is important for us to realize that the authentic meaning of "expression" has nothing to do with verbal or non-verbal signs made to convey information, nor with any causal relation between a feeling and an exclamation. When we say that a voice expresses fear, or that a face expresses joy, we are reading - so to say - between the lines, though the lines themselves are independent of the feeling in question. We may see someone's fear even when he speaks of weather; his joy even when he is under the pressure of physical discomforts.

We have a different sense of "expression" when we mean by it an exteriorization of our feelings, such as singing, tears, and even certain words, phrases and sentences. As von Hildebrand observes, "tears may be an expression of sorrow, singing an expression of joy, or jumping in the air

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. his article "Some of the Main Problems of Ethics", in Philosophy, XXI, pp. 99-117.

an expression of exuberant cheerfulness. In this sense certain words or even sentences may be called expressions of our joy, our sorrow, our fear, our enthusiasm".<sup>3</sup>

It is this sense of "expression" which is usually intended when it is said that value judgments are expressions of feelings. We quite agree that neither tears nor phrases nor such sentences are statements, that they do not express anything which could be called true or false. Consequently, we also agree that the emotivist theory does differ essentially from the ordinary subjectivistic theories which claim that value judgments are statements about the speaker's feelings.

But our problem now is to determine whether value judgments are really expressions in this sense. Are we really exteriorizing our feelings with the judgment, "Killing is evil", as we are with an interjection, "Ouch!" when we step on a thorn, or when we shed tears of joy and sorrow? This seems to me is contrary to experience. "Great music", says von Hildebrand, is given as beautiful to me, the quality of beauty revealing itself univocally as a property of the object; it stands before my mind as distinct from physical experiences of my soul, such as joy, serenity, being moved, or sorrow and anxiety. The moral nobility of an act of

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<sup>3</sup> Christian Ethics, p. 123.

charity is clearly given as a property of the act, as something of the object's side, definitely distinguished from any psychical happening in the soul".<sup>4</sup>

It seems plausible to many people to believe that statements of what is right and wrong, beautiful or ugly, and other valuations, are nothing but expressions of an individual's feelings. The fact that we differ in evaluating is often brought to the support of this belief. However, as we try to determine what is meant by "expression", which sense of the term is intended to be applicable to value judgments and then to compare the emotivist claims with our experience, we see that we have been deceived by an innocent term into subscribing to a most subjectivistic view which would not be destroyed even if "expressions of feelings" were maintained to fall under the jurisdiction of the categories of truth and falsehood.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. ANALYSIS OF "FEELING"

The term "feeling" is not as univocal as it is implied by the emotivist writers. The acute ethical analyst

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<sup>4</sup> Christian Ethics, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> "Even if /the emotivist/ admitted that value-judgments can be true or false, the main basis for his relativism would not be overthrown: if value-judgments really do only refer to feelings independently of the more logical question whether they can be true or false, then values would truly be something entirely subjective".

D. von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 123.

von Hildebrand observes that "feeling" is "sometimes used to denote mere states, such as fatigue, depression, irritation, anxiety: sometimes for experiences, such as bodily pain or pleasure; and sometimes for meaningful affective responses, such as joy, sorrow, fear, enthusiasm".<sup>6</sup> Into which of these three categories are feelings of value supposed to belong? They are not comparable to fatigue or anxiety which have nothing to do with the objects which we are evaluating; then there would be no question of how we feel towards certain objects or actions: we could express our feelings independently of moral and aesthetic acts and objects, and this is not claimed even by the emotivists.

Value feelings also cannot be on the level of bodily pain and pleasure - for the same reason. They may be comparable to the affective responses, and these take us back to the objects: we could not rejoice unless we first recognized certain value over which to rejoice; we could not fear unless we perceived something as dangerous to us; similarly we could not condemn killing as evil unless we first intuited its disvalue; we could not rejoice over a sunset unless we saw some beauty in it. [And if the emotivists object that one can rejoice when he has drunk wine, even though there is no object involved here, we can still rely on the evident

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<sup>6</sup> Christian Ethics, p. 121.

difference between let us say joy over the conversion of our friend and between joy because of we know not what when we are intoxicated. It is merely the poverty of language which prevents us from pointing the difference between the two cases verbally<sup>7</sup>.

In any case, the question still stands: which of the senses of "feeling" is to be meant when one says that value statements are "expressions of feelings".

### 3. ANALYSIS OF "ATTITUDE"

Maintaining that value judgments concern attitudes rather than feelings - as Stevenson does - is probably much better, provided that we include as constituents in the concept denoted by that word some elements of reason and will. Yet we must not forget that the term "attitude", too, is vague. The question to be asked is, Wherein lies the difference between "attitude" and "feeling"? Professor Joad provides a penetrating answer for us. The difference, he says, lies,

First... in the inclusion within the concept of attitude of the apprehension of an objective situation. This apprehension is both cognitive and normative; it purports, in other words, to inform us not only of the existence, but of the desirability or undesirability of something other than ourselves; feelings on the contrary give us no information except about ourselves.

Secondly, attitude includes an element of will. One wills a particular line of conduct relatively to an apprehended situation... We conclude that it is rational to desire (or to deplore) a certain state of affairs and then will to bring about (or to diminish) the state of affairs whose general character we rationally apprehend.

But it is very doubtful that the word "attitude" carries such a clear cut meaning and distinction from "feeling" in the writings of Stevenson; for both of these terms in so far as they are utilized by that author are rooted in his emotivistic preconceptions. There is no question of an insight into values and consequently no recognition of the call of values. No wonder, then, that despite his efforts to show that one should not stop short discussing only the basic principles of ethics but study also the concrete ethical problems and the methods of solving them, he does not do justice to actual human moral consciousness and the certitude about the basic ethical norms. As for the meaning of "attitude" he tries to explain it by relating the term "to purposes, aspirations, wants, preferences, desires, in short, interests; attitude is accordingly a very

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7 C.E.M. JOAD, A Critique of Logical Positivism, pp 126 f.

vague word... only a very inexperienced person could believe he is capable of really changing the thief's attitude by purely emotive means as, for instance, by inspiring fear that he is asking for trouble with the police or that he is going to ruin his life. Secondly, if someone considers him as a hopeless case and hands him over to the police or the psychologist, he would be sure that the fact that stealing is objectionable is independent of his and the thief's attitude and "persuasion" in the sense of an emotive category".<sup>8</sup> Yet, according to Stevenson, one would be simply expressing his attitude towards thieves in different ways, and this is the essence of ethical disagreements.

Stevenson's view that value judgments are expressions of attitudes fares then no better than the view that value judgments are expressions of feelings, because it rests on a vague concept of attitude which - in his sense - is hardly distinguishable from feeling.

##### 5. ANALYSIS OF "RIGHT"

Another ambiguity lies in the emotivist usage of the term "right" and comparable normative terms. Ordinarily we say that if an action is right it is right in the same way as an argument is valid or a statement true; in other words, we believe that an action cannot be right and wrong, that the principle of contradiction applies here as elsewhere.

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<sup>8</sup> Johannes MESSENER, Ethics and Facts, p. 207.

The attempt of Stevenson to show that an action could be right at time t and wrong at time t,<sup>9</sup> does not affect in any way the character of universality of rightness. It is true that an action may be wrong at time t but be right at time t; e.g., that stealing is wrong generally but right in self-preservation. But Stevenson does not for only this kind of relativity of right; he is claiming that if a man says "Murder is evil" at 11 a.m. and "Murder is good" at 12 a.m., he was right in both cases. In fact, he could be changing his mind every minute and be right all the times, for "right" means "that which the speaker approves".

These implications of subjectivism which tries to give any meaning to value terms had been recognized long ago in G.E. Moore's Principia Ethica and were repeated in his "Reply to My Critics". The great father of philosophical analysis states: "No single person who said of the same action on two different occasions that it was right or would be right, would ever be saying the same thing about it on the one occasion as he said it on the other, since on the one occasion he would be saying that he approved of it at that, and on the other would be saying that he approved of it at that other, different, time".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. his article, "Moore's Arguments against certain Forms of Ethical Naturalism", in The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, (P.A. SCHLIPP, ed.), pp. 69-90.

<sup>10</sup> George E. MOORE, "A Reply to My Critics", in The Philosophy of G.E. MOORE, (pp. 535-677), p. 552.

Moore also recognized that no two persons could be using "right" in the same sense, for if "right" means "that which is approved by the speaker", then the statement, Honesty is right, affirmed by two different persons would not mean the same thing. In Moore's words, "no two people, who, using it ["right"] in this way [i.e., in Stevenson's sense], said of the same action that it was right or would be right, would ever be saying the same thing about it, since one would be saying that he, at the time of speaking, approved of it, while the other would be saying that he did..." 11

#### 6. ANALYSIS OF "COMMAND"

The identification of value statement with commands is another issue which seems to rest either on a misunderstanding of value judgments or on a false notion of command.

Supposing we state, Killing is evil. We certainly refer to a characteristic property, attribute, of the act of killing; we are characterizing killing in a certain way. But are we expressing any prohibition? We are not expressing it, though we are pointing to a fact which demands of us not only to affirm it, but also to follow its call. It is not enough to recognize that killing is a disvalue; it is necessary to follow its demand, namely, that one should avoid and prohibit that act. In stating that killing is evil we refer, as von Hildebrand says,

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11 The Philosophy of G.E. Moore, p. 558.

to something which is, on the one hand, the reason and basis for the prohibition, and from which, on the other hand, the prohibition logically follows. The same applies when we state that charity is good. We must realize that the connection between both facts - the goodness and the command to goodness - is evidently such that the goodness is the principium, and the command, the principiatum. Thus, it is impossible to substitute the command for the value because the command, as soon as it is a moral command and not a mere positive command... necessarily presupposes the value of the object to which it refers. 12

To what specific kind of command should value judgments be equivalent? Emotivists believe that the statement, "Killing is evil", is equivalent to, "Avoid killing!" or "Do not kill!"; "This picture is beautiful" to "Like this picture!"; Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake is sublime" to "Appreciate the Swan Lake"; yet is not their translation only a logical sequence of the original and presupposing truth of the original? Value has to be recognized before a command to respond to it can follow. Von Hildebrand is very insistent on this point. "Not only does one definitely mean something else", he writes, "but the very reason for commanding such responses is precisely the value of the object. This involves the same confusion as if one would say, 'It is true that Caesar was murdered in 43 B.C.', and make this statement synonymous with the command to be convinced of it". 13 And he comments further on the emotivist identification of value

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12 Christian Ethics, pp. 127 f.

13 Ibid., p. 127.

judgments with commands: "It would be just as nonsensical if one said that truth is nothing but the command to be convinced of something. In reality the truth of a sentence is presupposed in its independence in order to require conviction and oblige belief in it".<sup>14</sup>

If value judgments on the one hand do not state anything and are on the other equated with commands, then it is clear that the emotivists consider commands as something completely devoid of reason. Since there is no question of truth and falsehood involved in value judgments (because they are really commands), it follows that it does not matter by what means do we "support" them; at least we cannot prove rationally that some "reasons" behind our commands (expressed in the form of value statements) are more cogent than others, since there is no logical relationship between such reasons and the command which they are supporting. Scientific facts, propaganda, police tricks, or brain washing, are on equal level; we can judge their "support" only by the efficiency they exhibit.

This emotivist belief that the value of "reasons" supporting the commands is to be considered solely by the efficiency of such "reasons" indicates a gross misunderstanding of the term COMMAND: it is maintained by them "that the function of a command is to affect the hearer causally,

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<sup>14</sup> Christian Ethics, p. 128.

or get him to do something".<sup>15</sup> Yet, telling someone to do something, and getting him to do it, are logically distinct. As Hare points out,

to tell someone that something is the case is logically distinct from getting (or trying to get) him to believe it. Having told someone that something is the case we may, if he is not disposed to believe what we say, start on a quite different process of trying to get him to believe it (trying to persuade or convince him that what we said is true). No one, in seeking to explain the function of indicative sentences, would say that they were attempts to persuade someone that something is the case. And there is no more reason for saying that commands are attempts to persuade or get someone to do something; here, too, we first tell someone what he is to do, and then, if he is not disposed to do what we say, we may start on the wholly different process of trying to get him to do it.<sup>16</sup>

Command is not equivalent to getting someone to do something; it is equivalent to telling someone to do something. A command answers the question, What shall I do? The hearer may or may not follow it, but we were not trying to get him, or influence him, to follow it. As Hare points out, "we may tell someone, either that something is the case, or to do something; here there is no attempt at persuasion (or influencing or inducing or getting to). If the person is not disposed to assent to what we tell him, we may then resort to rhetoric, propaganda, marshalling of additional facts, psychological tricks, threats, bribes, torture,

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<sup>15</sup> Richard Mervin HARE, Language and Morals, Oxford, 1952, p. 13. Italics mine!

<sup>16</sup> Language and Morals, pp. 13 f.

mockery, promises of protection and a variety of other expedients. All of these are ways of inducing him or getting him to do something; the first of these are ways of inducing him or getting him to do something; the first four are also ways of getting him to believe something; none of them are ways of telling him something".<sup>17</sup>

Our purpose in giving a command is not to influence the hearer to act in a certain direction; our purpose is to tell him what he is to do, leaving him with his own reason to consider the facts, the reasonableness of our command, and then to decide of his own account to act as he was told. Propaganda and other forms of persuasion is not addressed to his reason; it is a means of getting him to do something; it aims at getting him to decide and to act in a particular way. In Hare's words, "telling someone to do something, or that something is the case, is answering the question, 'What shall I do?' or 'What are the facts?' When we have answered these questions the hearer knows what to do or what the facts are - if what we have told him is right. He is not necessarily thereby influenced one way or the other, nor have we failed if he is not; for he may decide to disbelieve or disobey us, and the mere telling him does nothing - and seeks to do nothing - to prevent him doing this. But persuasion is not directed to a person as a rational agent, who is asking

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<sup>17</sup> Language and Morals, p. 14.

himself (or us) 'What shall I do?'; it is not an answer to this or any other question; it is an attempt to make him answer in a particular way". 18

#### 7. ANALYSIS OF "EMOTIVE" AND "EXPRESSIVE" LANGUAGE

The emotivists make an artificial distinction between the descriptive, referential, cognitive or theoretical meaning and the expressive, interjectional or emotive meaning, a distinction which, if not critically examined and kept in mind as only a working description, may do much harm to our considerations of value judgments. This distinction, to be sure, has a foundation in reality, for feelings certainly are involved in our pronouncements on values; in fact, feelings are a necessary reaction to our recognition of values. But to make an insurmountable wall between the two types of meaning is to deform the true nature of communication and meanings. It is true that we could not always point out what kind of meaning is primarily involved in a phrase or sentence. Ambiguous use of words is quite frequent and may extend even to grammatical moods. When a mother says "Naughty!" to her child, she may mean nothing more than "Stop!". But she could mean by it something else. And "the entire distinction... between the emotive and the referential use of language", comments John Laird, "seems very much

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18 Language and Morals, p. 15.

overdrawn, and the interjectional application of it a huge exaggeration".<sup>19</sup> He further points out that language of, let us say, some passage of emotive literature, is not merely interjectional because it "is not devoid of referential meaning".<sup>20</sup> If language had no referential meaning, there would be mere noises which would not be capable of producing the specific type of feeling in the hearer; in other words, there would be no object to which the hearer could respond, no object towards which he would assume an attitude or in face of which he would experience certain feelings.

If there ever was a passage of emotive literature, it is the following one in verse:

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
 You cataracts and hurricanes, spout  
 Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!  
 . . . . .  
 Rumble thy bellyfull! Spitfire! Spout, rain!  
 Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my slaughters:  
 I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness:  
 I never gave you kingdom, called you children,  
 You owe me no subscription...  
 ...O! O! 'tis foul!<sup>21</sup>

Yet this passage is emotive precisely because the words, phrases and sentences have a referential or descriptive meaning. It has a very rich descriptive meaning - about the Lear's daughters and about their character; about Lear's

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19 The Idea of Value, Cambridge, England, 1929,  
 p. 308.

20 Ibid., p. 308.

21 William SHAKESPEARE, King Lear, Act III, sec. 2.

character, his feelings; about the specific situation in which these words are spoken, about the nature of meteorological and physiographical phenomena, and so on. How could this be possible if language were purely emotive? Here, says Carl Britton, the emotive theory presents many puzzles:

What, in more detail, is the explanation of the fact that words have this peculiar power of relieving emotional tension in a poet, and also of exciting emotional tension in his audience? Have they this power in virtue of being verbal signs with reference, or merely as physical events - sounds or marks on paper? Obviously their reference must be very important, even here: for, after all, most of the sounds that poets use are individually symbolic and not mere jingles. But if the dynamic use of words does depend, at least in part, upon their reference, can we say that, after all, the language of poetry is informative, whatever else it may be? Again, could we say that the emotive meanings of words enable the poet to convey a peculiar sort of truth - a truth verified, not in the senses, but in emotion? May we even go so far as to say that 'Poetic Truth' includes facts about the more intimate structure, or the more fundamental physis of the word? And if poetry does convey a peculiar sort of truth, to what canons of logic are its propositions amenable? If not the logic of science, perhaps to some alternative logic - if indeed, this term has any sense at all. 22

Another author, from among the emotivist sympathizers themselves, criticizes the artificial isolation of the two functions of language in view of the fact that we can form about any event or relation a number of statements which range from primarily descriptive to primarily emotive in function. He writes:

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22 Communication: A Philosophical Study of Language, New York and London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1939, p. 14.

The tendency to contrast some valuative statements which commonly have a high degree of emotive stimulus-capacity with factual statements which ordinarily have a high descriptive stimulus-capacity and then to regard this difference as "inherent" or "irreducible" difference between factual and valuative statements shows failure to recognize that all events and relations may be subject matter for both factual and valuative statements and that in different contexts and with different intents each form of statement varies from the completely descriptive in reference and function to the completely expressive and/or emotive in reference and function. 23

Similarly, exclamations and commands - if value judgments be so regarded, could not be understood, unless they embody some information that the person uttering the command or exclamation wants something to be done or that he has certain feelings. 24

We do not object to recognition of the two basic uses of our language; for it is evident from experience that we often intend to use words emotively, perhaps just as often as we want to preserve certain words completely neutral, detached, "scientific". But the fact that most of our discourse lies between the two poles - the emotive and the descriptive - does not permit us to divide our actual use of language into two isolated spheres and to proclaim one conceptual, the other one devoid of concepts. For then we should remain silent most of the time; as Ralph Barton Perry observes, "if verbal usage were to be so amended as to leave

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23 Ray LEPLLEY, "Verifiability of Value", in Value: a Cooperative Inquiry, (R. Lepley, ed.), p. 82.

24 Cf. E.F. CARRITT, Ethics and Political Theory, p. 32.

only exclamations, exhortations, complements, and insults, on the one hand, and rigorous scientific concepts, on the other hand, most people all of the time, would have to remain mute. Statements which employ such terms as "good" and "bad" may, and usually do, convey objectively meaningful concepts, either expressly or by implication".<sup>25</sup>

It seems that if we consider any utterance (in its context) we will find some information about the speaker himself and about other matters. In regard to the information conveyed by an utterance, Max Black speaks of personal and impersonal aspects of that utterance. Personal aspect is "the information given about the speaker, and more especially about the attitudes, feelings, and wishes that caused him to make the utterance".<sup>26</sup> He divides the personal aspects into the expressive and the dynamic ones. "The utterance is expressive insofar as it is caused by the speaker's feelings or attitudes, without any desired effect on a hearer. An involuntary cry of pain or joy is markedly expressive in this sense. The utterance is dynamic insofar as it is caused by the speaker's desire to produce actions or other effects in a hearer; a command or a question is markedly dynamic in this sense".<sup>27</sup> Black, however, would not admit that value

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25 R.B. PERRY, Realms of Value, p. 8.

26 Critical Thinking, p. 167.

27 Ibid., p. 167.

judgments are pure expressions as Ayer believes, or that they are pure dynamic devices made with the purpose of producing actions, or that they are a combination of the two aspects and nothing more. For he is speaking of information about the speaker, and this is orthodox subjectivism condemned by the emotivists. Black's notion of the subjective aspects of an utterance - if regarded as the only aspects of value statements - could only support the traditional subjectivism according to which such statements are true if the speaker really has the feelings in question and false if he does not.

However, Black recognizes also the impersonal aspects which he defines as "whatever other information may be conveyed by the utterance", <sup>28</sup> and these may, and (according to objectivists) must, be present in value judgments.

Why assign, then, to the purely emotive realm all evaluative discourse which at least claims to be concerned with objects absolutely autonomous, independent of the speaker's psychological condition, and independent of the vote of the majority, if even the poetical and explicitly interjectional language which does not forward any such claims, depends for its effects on the references which it embodies.

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<sup>28</sup> Critical Thinking, p. 167.

Such a mistake could only be made by men who have a set of preconceived ideas about the functions of our language and who want to compartmentalize those functions for the purpose of eliminating the troublesome statements of value from the sphere of rational discourse.

## CHAPTER VII

### EMOTIVIST ANALYSIS AND THE PROBLEM OF JUSTIFICATION

As we noted, the emotivists maintain that statements of value are expressions of our feelings, usually having an additional function of attempting to evoke similar feelings in others. These expressions have no cognitive sense, are not statements about anything, but simply proposals of our feelings, desires and attitudes to serve as norms for everyone. When one says, Murder is evil, he is expressing an adverse feeling toward the act which we call murder and in addition wants others to share his feelings. Carnap says that this expression is equivalent to a command, Don't kill!

However, if value judgments are not really judgments and do not state anything which could be said to be either true or false, how are we justified in making them and how can we expect anyone to follow them? Why should we impose our feelings upon others by means of emotive language or by other forms of persuasion.

All the emotivists agree that statements of fact can somehow justify certain expressions of desire and feelings and condemn others. When we argue, says Ayer, we argue about matters of fact which are somehow relevant to our expressions of feelings, but the expressions themselves cannot logically contradict each other.

Stevenson, too, believes factual statements to be relevant to ethical and aesthetic issues. He devotes almost his entire Ethics and Language to the nature and methods of ethical disagreements. Having pointed out that peculiarly ethical disagreement is one in attitude and not one in belief, he begins to inquire what methods could be used to resolve it. First he finds that in certain cases a mutual consideration of facts resulted in an agreement between two or more disputing parties who differed in attitude toward some object or action. Then he makes an explicit assumption that all disagreement in attitude is ultimately rooted in disagreement in belief.<sup>1</sup> From here on it was easy for him to adduce that since science has the word about facts, it can be invoked to support or to condemn statements of value.

Stevenson, however, sensed a further question. If in ethical disputes we make this inference from a factual reason to an ethical conclusion, is our step valid? He reached the conclusion that it is not valid in any ordinary sense of "valid" because the relationship between our normative conclusion and the reasons supporting it is neither of the logical type where the conclusion necessarily follows from the premisses, nor of the scientific type where the inference is made as a generalization from a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Charles L. STEVENSON, Ethics and Language, p. 136.

observed phenomena. The relationship between norms and facts is only psychological<sup>2</sup> and as such may appear reasonable or cogent to one person but not to another, or to one person at time t, but not at time t<sub>1</sub>. There is no possibility of proving a norm by a valid argument. "When E [evaluation] is supported or opposed by R [reasons], R neither proves nor disproves the truth of the descriptive meaning of E. So unless 'valid' is to have a misleadingly extended sense, the question 'Does R permit a valid inference to E?' is devoid of interest".<sup>3</sup>

Stevenson's explanation that the relationship of validity between a value statement and our "reasons" behind it is "devoid of interest" hardly satisfies our common sense thinking. Toulmin asks: "If a man tells me that it is right for him to kick niggers around because everyone else does, is it of no interest whether his argument is valid or not?"<sup>4</sup> Joad is even more sarcastic about such a view: "We may feel, most of us", he says, "that kindness is better, but feelings

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<sup>2</sup> "The reasons which support or attack an ethical judgment ... are related to some judgment psychologically rather than logically. They do not strictly imply the judgment in the way that axioms imply theorems; nor are they related to the judgment inductively, as statements describing observations are related to scientific laws. Rather they support the judgment in the way that reasons support imperatives". C.L. STEVENSON, Ethics and Language, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> C.L. STEVENSON, Ethics and Language, p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> The Place of Reason in Ethics, p. 39.

have no authority over those who do not share them, and we have, therefore, nothing to say to the guard in the concentration camp who prefers cruelty, we can only make noises expressive of our feelings of repulsion".<sup>5</sup>

It seems that we are left simply with our preferences which we try to rationalize through scientific facts. There is no possibility of rational ethics, no possibility of moral justification ultimately; one desire is as good as another, and one method to change or redirect it as good as another - as long as it is efficient. Sometimes mere oratory will change the hearer's feelings or attitude toward an object or action; at other times subtle propaganda will be more efficient, and at still other times brainwashing will do the job best. When our opponent questions what we consider an obligation, we can only persuade him by emotive words or even by physical compulsion; we cannot show him that his views are not correct, since there is no question of theoretical cognition involved, no moral or aesthetic world to be known. The best method would be to explore exhaustively the physiological foundation of our feelings and behavior and then try to regulate them by changing their foundations with drugs.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that "the central 'ethical' property [of terms] - capacity to move the hearer - is conceived by Stevenson as a natural property, but a property in the first instance of the verbal sign itself (e.g. 'good' or 'ought') and not a property of the thing or object signified by the ethical sentence". Phillip B. RICE, On the Knowledge of Good and Evil, p. 64.

Stevenson himself explicitly says that "any statement about any matter of fact which any speaker considers likely to alter attitudes may be adduced as a reason for or against an ethical judgment".<sup>7</sup> Persuasion seems to be the method, and naturally it is not a persuasion to an objectively cogent belief but to the temporary wants of the speaker.

All these curious implications of the emotivist view follow from their original mistake of refusing to grant to norms the status of propositions, thereby removing all cognitive element from valuational discourse. But they also cut themselves from the efficacy of "reasons" about which they speak. For if statements of value "are neither true nor false, not only would such 'judgments' not be strictly provable..., but nothing whatever could be said in their support. For to say something in their support would be to say something which makes their truth more likely, but they can no more be true on this view than a blow can be true".<sup>8</sup>

It is true that "reasons" may help to change my feelings so that I will make in the future different evaluations of the same objects or actions, but they will not prove my previous evaluations false and my future ones correct.

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<sup>7</sup> Ethics and Language, p. 114.

<sup>8</sup> A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, p. 12.

"Reasoning" could only predispose people to feel the same way as we do. It is just one form of persuasion, very likely not even the most effective one. And to keep our language clear, we should refuse to speak of this kind of rhetoric predisposing the hearer to feel in a certain way as reasoning. Stevenson has not shown us any possibility of rational justification of norms if they are what he believes them to be, namely, expressions of feelings and attitudes. His Ethics and Language has not lifted the emotivists from their scepticism. They can, of course, still act in accordance with their likes and dislikes, but - as Ewing points out - "as the theoretical sceptic cannot claim that there is any justification for any of his acts, that any act is more rational than any other possible act".<sup>9</sup>

One will readily ask the emotivists: Why should I want my state of mind to be changed since there is no question of objective right or wrong but merely of personal feelings? If I like to steal, why should I not entertain my like, especially if I am a skillful thief? If I enjoy torturing prisoners, why should I not go ahead and enjoy myself? It is true that if someone informs me about certain facts such as particular circumstances and consequences of my actions, I may come to feel differently, perhaps the way my

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<sup>9</sup> Ethics, p. 126.

informer feels. But this will not justify my future behavior; it will merely show that I have been persuaded, subtly or openly. My new feelings, however, will not indicate that I have achieved an insight the state of facts, namely, that stealing or torturing is objectively the thing to be rejected.

Similarly, when I try to decide what is my duty in a given case, I am, according to the emotivists, trying to decide how I should feel about the action in question. And when I seek advice on an ethical matter, I want to be brought into certain emotional state in regard to that problem; I want to be persuaded by the other to feel in a certain way. There is no question of recognizing something as imposing upon me and demanding from me an adequate response.

Again, on the emotive view, no logical contradiction in evaluations is possible; there are only different policies, different proclamations of attitudes, different aims. When one says, Fratricide is wrong, and the other says, Fratricide is right, there is no logical contradiction; each of the speakers is merely venting his own emotion and perhaps trying to arouse similar feelings in the other. One cannot present any logically valid argument to prove that the other should feel differently; one could only persuade him to do so - using any conceivable means for that purpose: emotive language, enumerations of scientific

facts which are connected with the act or object in question, brainwashing, drugs, physical torture and so on.

The emotivist interpretation of value judgments cannot account for justification of any value statement whatever nor for a rational use of any value term. And a simple reflection on our moral and aesthetic life clearly contradicts such an interpretation. We know that certain things are right and certain others wrong; that some value statements contradict others; that in a moral deliberation we are trying to find out something and this is an attempt to discover truth; and we know that we do not merely want to be influenced or persuaded when asking for moral advice. Even the emotivists are conscious of this; they see that their analysis is not quite consistent with our concrete experience. That is the reason why Ayer speaks of argumentation on the factual level that might bear on our evaluations; and that is the reason why Stevenson speaks of "supporting reasons" behind our value utterances. The emotivists simply cannot accept the consequences of their own theory. Barrows Dunham reports the case of a leading advocate of the theory: "[Reichenbach] demonstrates in eleven pages that there is no ethics and in fifteen subsequent pages that one can be ethical anyway. He could not endure his own views. Having demolished morality, he wrote:

"Does that mean resignation? Does it mean that there are no moral directives, that everybody may do what he wants?

I do not think so..." 10

"But of course it does", 11 concludes Dunham, and we can readily agree with him. For once we know that we have no rational ground for doing something, or opposing something, we will begin to act on what is merely subjectively satisfying, and that we could hardly interpret otherwise than as moral resignation.

Before we conclude our critique of specific emotivist fallacies, we should point out that there is a self-destructive element in the theory: to endorse the emotive interpretation of value judgments may be to deprive the theory itself of its object. Black asks in this connection: "Would not a wide-spread acceptance of his [Stevenson's] analysis tend to destroy the present persuasive character of ethical utterances and so leave his theory without an object?" 12

Even while ethical terms still preserve their emotive charge, the emotive analysis does not succeed in finding adequate grounds for one to accept any value statement.

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10 Dunham's quotation is from Hans Reichenbach's Rise of Scientific Philosophy, Berkeley and Los Angeles, The University of California Press, p. 207.

11 Giant in Chains, p. 232.

12 Max BLACK, "Some Questions About Emotive Meaning", in Philosophical Review, LVII (1948), p. 126, footnote (40).

Again, Black observes: "This is good" is analyzed into "I approve of this" (uttered with warmly expressed approval, equivalent to saying, 'Do so as well'). All that would seem to be relevant to the ethical issue (Was the speaker right in saying, 'This is good?') would seem to be (a) that the speaker approves the object, (b) that he wants us also to approve. And these grounds would seem quite inadequate, however 'contagiously' his judgment is expressed".<sup>13</sup> But what is so interesting about knowing the likes and dislikes of the speaker?

When we consider an ethical judgment, Lying is wrong, we are not interested in the likes or dislikes of the people; that might be of interest to sociology or psychology; the philosophical question about such a judgment is whether it is correct or incorrect; and whether the object or action approved or disapproved is worthy of approval or disapproval. Of course, the analysts will try to escape our criticism by saying that they want to determine what - if anything - could such an utterance mean. And we may grant that their inquiry is legitimate. But the point is that they should not try to answer this question merely by relating such utterances to their criterion of meaning but by relating them to experience. The experience, however, shows that the meaning of a value

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<sup>13</sup> Philosophical Review, LVII (1948), p. 125, footnote (37).

utterance is not exhausted by, "approval or disapproval, by the speaker of an object or action". Experience points to the fact that approval or disapproval follows the recognition of certain value or disvalue, that it is logically secondary and dependent on something.

If the problem is serious in the case of fully working emotive terminology, it becomes even more serious when such terminology loses its emotive strength - which would happen quite readily once we had fully accepted the emotivist view. The late Professor Joad warned the emotivists about this consequence of their theory in his acute Critique of Logical Positivism:

If I consistently believe that the statement, "stealing is wrong", does no more than express an emotion of horror at stealing, it will presently cease to express the emotion of horror. Not to put too fine a point on it, I shall cease to believe that stealing is wrong. <sup>14</sup>

And further,

Can a man really continue to feel indignant at cruelty, if he is convinced that the statement, "cruelty is wrong" is meaningless? An emotion of indignation may, indeed, be felt; it may even be expressed; but it will not long survive the conviction that it is without authority in morals or basis in reason. <sup>15</sup>

Again, if we are conscious that the moralist is merely trying to persuade us, or even to command us, to feel

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<sup>14</sup> Philosophical Review, p. 146.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

and act as he does, we would soon start to ignore him; "if we believed", writes Aiken, "that our protagonists were merely trying to influence us, and not to give us logical or empirical reasons for changing our minds as well as our hearts, we would very shortly conclude our discussions with them".<sup>16</sup> Similarly, commands will not have their intended effect unless we have a reason to obey them. In case of moral commands, we should have a specifically moral ground for obeying them, and such a ground could only be our own insight into the nature of the moral actions in question and the status of the authority issuing the command. We are always led to the grounds of approval, desire, command - namely, to the recognition presupposed in all these acts that something is worthy of approval, worthy to be desired, worthy to be done. We are led from the pure linguistic considerations to our moral and aesthetic experiences themselves, and only at this point do we become genuine empiricists.

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<sup>16</sup> Henry David AIKEN, "Ethics and Language", (Book Review), in Journal of Philosophy, XLII (1945), pp. 468-69, p. 469.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL AND AESTHETIC PHENOMENOLOGY

A striking fact about the emotivist theory of value judgments is its flat contradiction with common sense and with everyday experiences. Although Ayer explicitly states that "the philosopher has no right to despise the beliefs of common sense", it is easy to see that neither he nor other emotivists do not really despise them. How could their basic tenet that statements of value are meaningless be said to respect beliefs of common sense? How could their equation of the proposition "Almsgiving is good" with an exhortation "Almsgiving!!! Let us all practice it!!!" be squared with our experience which certainly tells us that the two sides of this equation are not equivalent? No matter what the explicit claims of emotivists are, their actual doctrines indicate that they ignore experience. C.E.M. Joad, in examining Ayer's ethical analysis, remarks:

... when one remembers that the upshot of his theory is to stigmatize the beliefs of commonsense people about ethics - as, for example, that some things are wrong, and that a man ought to do his duty - as groundless and meaningless, it is hard to credit the assurance that the beliefs themselves are embraced and that it is only their commonsense analysis which is rejected. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, pp. 124 f.

The emotivist analysis is often offered in the form of translations. "This is good" means, "I approve of this"; "This is bad" means "I disapprove of this", and so on. Are such translations faithful to experience? Do I really mean by saying "Fratricide is wrong" nothing more than "I dislike fratricide" (and perhaps "I want you and everyone else to dislike it")? Definitely I mean something else, even though I may imply this also. When a man pronounces a proposition, "This is good", he means, observes Joad, "that this is good, whatever anybody may happen to think or feel about it. In other words, he believes that there are ethical qualities which really belong to objects such as people, their characters, situations and lines of conduct, and there are independent ethical principles by which these qualities can be judged and assessed. The ordinary man in other words, is an unreflecting ethical objectivist".<sup>2</sup>

There is normative meaning of value terms embodied in the ordinary discourse. When one states a norm - that is, when he pronounces an indicative sentence containing an ethical or aesthetic predicate, he is not merely expressing a personal taste; and when he expresses a norm in the imperative mood, he is not merely expressing a wish that other people would behave so-and-so. On the contrary, "when people

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<sup>2</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 23.

use the adjective good in its characteristically moral sense, they mean that such and such an end is worthy to be desired. They do not, as a rule, mean merely that such and such act is done or that such and such end is desired".<sup>3</sup>

It is possible, and very often a fact, that I desire something, yet know that I ought not to desire it, that it is not worthy to be desired, that it is wrong for me to desire it. I may like to steal, for instance, yet I know I should not like it. How is one to translate this state of affairs into emotivist terms? Stealing is bad, yet I desire it. I suppose it should be translated as "I don't like stealing (= stealing is bad), yet I like stealing". There is certainly a contradiction here, if we take the emotivist equations seriously, a contradiction which does not arise on the common-sense level. When I say "Stealing is wrong" I mean precisely that - if I had correctly apprehended stealing as a disvalue. I know that stealing is wrong even if I like it or if someone else likes it. The questions: Is stealing wrong?, and Do I like stealing?, are logically independent of each other: a positive reply to one does not imply a positive reply to the other and a negative reply to one does not imply a negative reply to the other. The problem of ethical life is not how I feel but how I should

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<sup>3</sup> Dunham BARROWS, Giant in Chains, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1953, p. 230.

feel. The opposition between desire and duty, in other words, is unexplainable on the emotive view: "This is what I want to do" and "this is what I ought to do" is a recognition of mankind which cannot be translated according to the emotivist model.

Feelings, as it is universally noted, play a very prominent role in ethical and aesthetic life. The emotivists noted this, but they confused the presence of strong feelings in the utterer of value judgments with the content of such judgments. Recognition of an obligation, for instance, is very likely to produce certain typical feelings, but - as an ethical critic points out, "unless the vast majority of people are entirely deceived about it, the obligation recognized does not itself consist of emotions, nor does its existence chiefly depend upon the emotional states of the person subject to obligation".<sup>4</sup>

It is clear to common-sense that an action becomes object of feeling of approval or disapproval only in so far as it is already believed to be right or wrong; that a picture creates a feeling of like or dislike only in so far as it is beautiful or ugly. Stevenson himself says that the statement "This is good" is almost equivalent to "This is worthy of approval".<sup>5</sup> but he twists the issue by claiming

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<sup>4</sup> Garnett, A. CAMPBELL, The Moral Nature of Man, New York, The Ronald Press Co., 1932, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. his Ethics and Language, p. 107.

that this is so only because "worthy" adds more emotive force to the expression of approval. So, he says, "X is worthy of approval" is equivalent to "I approve of X's being approved by others". But let us try to translate the statement "I approve of X because X is worthy of approval". Does it really mean, as it should on Stevenson's view, "I approve of X because I approve of X's being approved by others"? Approval follows the apprehension of value in the object; it presupposes it and consequently cannot constitute it. "When people say something is worthy of approval", writes Garnett, "they mean to assert that it has some factual characters of the kind they call good. When a number of people ... agree that an action is good, they agree that it has such factual characters and that their emotions of approval are merely a normal and appropriate response to recognition of the existence of such characters".<sup>6</sup>

In our valuational discourse we constantly use comparatives and superlatives. We say, for instance, that it is better to live honestly than to live dishonestly, or that one picture is more beautiful than another. What could "better" and "more beautiful" mean on the emotivist view? According to emotivists the meaning of value judgments is exhausted by the feelings they express; in other words, the content of value judgments is composed exclusively of

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<sup>6</sup> Op. cit., p. 67.

feelings which they express. Now are one man's feelings better than another's in the sense of being more truly felt? "What, indeed", asks Joad, "could it mean to say that one man's feelings were better than another's on Ayer's, or ... on any view?" <sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, how can the emotive theory explain the sharp differentiation by common-sense between ethics and aesthetics? Ayer says that the statement, "This action is wrong" indicates that the speaker "is simply evincing moral disapproval of it". Does "moral" stand for some specific quality of disapproval? If not, our question between ethics and aesthetics still stand. Joad, again, asks: "Why moral approval and disapproval, if there is no uniquely moral factor in the universe to be at once the source and the object of the moral feelings which are our response to it?" <sup>8</sup>

Another problem for the emotivists is a differentiation - on the common sense level - between the meaning of ethical terms, e.g., "right" and "good". If only approval is expressed by these and comparable ethical terms, then there could be no distinction of meaning between them. Yet, it is more than a question of idiomatic use according to which we apply "right" to actions and "good" to things. We recognize,

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<sup>7</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

for instance, degrees of moral goodness - while we do not recognize degrees of moral rightness: an action is either right or wrong. Furthermore, we recognize even in regard to actions distinct factual characteristics which enable us to speak of both rightness and goodness of an action. Almsgiving, for example, is morally right, but it is also morally good: the person giving alms performed an action which is permissible, but he also performed an action which is morally meritorious, because he may not have done moral evil by not performing that action, yet he has performed it. All of these distinctions would be impossible if ethical and other value terms concerned only the approval or disapproval of the speaker.

There is a further dichotomy between ethical judgments and the statements of feeling: we recognize the former to claim an authority and publicity while we do not recognize anything like it in the latter. To quote Professor Joad, "we expect other people to share our ethical judgments and feel that they are moral obtuse if they do not, and we expect ourselves and others to act in accordance with their dictates and feel that we and they are wrong if we do not. Now, we do not entertain any similar convictions and expectations in regard to the deliverance of our judgments of feeling".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 139.

According to emotivists, the statement, "Stealing from the poor is wrong" is equivalent to "Stealing from the poor!!!" pronounced with a voice of horror and disapproval. In the same way, "Headache is nuisance" should be equivalent to "Horrible headache!!!" Yet why do we moralize our disapproval of stealing but not our disapproval of headache? Is it not because in the case of moral approval or disapproval we have fixed our gaze on something objective, a value or a disvalue on something which is claiming authority over every rational being, whereas in the case of personal dissatisfaction we have correctly apprehended the situation as applying only to our own biological well-being? It is commonly recognized, for instance, that whatever is an obligation for one person is an obligation for every person in precisely the same situation; this is recognized not because we believe that the same situation would work on every person's emotional constitution but because we believe that a particular situation can create an obligation for every rational being, however he feels about it at one moment or another.

Again, we may ignore or suppress an unpleasant feeling and experience joy over the conquest of pain, but we do not consider as a satisfactory solution to ignore an obligation, whether pleasant or unpleasant. The response to moral feelings, in other words, is completely different from the response to non-moral ones: we treat moral

feelings with a respect not accorded to other types of feeling. In responding to something subjectively satisfying we do not find that our response is due to the object; only in the response to moral and aesthetic values do we hear the call for response binding us unconditionally.

On the approval theory we also cannot account for the sharp differentiation between ethics and aesthetics.

Professor Joad asks the emotivists:

If to say 'Generosity is noble' or 'Honesty is a virtue and ought to be valued', is to ejaculate one's emotions of admiring approval for generosity and honesty, and to say 'Mozart's G minor quintet is a work of exceptional beauty and ought to be valued', is to ejaculate one's emotion of admiring approval for Mozart, how is it that ethics has come to be so sharply distinguished from aesthetics?... 10

Another difficult problem for the emotivists is that of deliberation. What am I trying to do when I consider whether I should betray my friend and thereby escape enemy or whether I should not betray him and suffer myself? Am I trying to envelop myself into a certain state of feeling toward the act of betraying my friend or am I trying to find out what is my obligation? Clearly, "When I try to decide what I ought to do in a given case, I am conscious of trying to find out something, not merely of feeling in a certain

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10 A Critique of Logical Positivism, p. 130.

way, or resolving, or wanting to do something, or trying to produce a certain state of mind in myself, and to try to find out is to try to discover what is true". 11

In fact we may speak of deliberation not only in these clear-cut cases, but also of all those moments of thinking before we pronounce a value judgment. Contrary to emotivists, a judgment, "Betraying my friend is evil", is not an involuntary cry; it is made only after a deliberation and with a conscious purpose to convey some truth which is independent of either the speaker's or the hearer's wishes. Besides, why should we make grammatically correct sentences as if we were talking, if there were no objective world of values, no genuine characteristics of moral actions, no qualities in objects of aesthetic delight? Have all people of all times been so naive as to make this grotesque mistake? It is a handful of emotivists, the only group so enlightened as to avoid this error and to proclaim that in the evaluational discourse we do not talk but only vent our emotions?

Asking for advice, again, is not asking to be injected with a certain type of emotional state or feeling about the proposed act. "When I am asking for ethical advice", observes Ewing, "I am asking, if I am genuine,

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11 A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 12.

whether a proposed act has any objective characteristic and not merely about its relation to my own emotions".<sup>12</sup> Feelings of the adviser are not in question; only the nature of the act interests us, and we ask a person for advice because we believe that he is more capable than we to correctly apprehend the situation. His feelings and my feelings which usually follow the apprehension are secondary and derivative, and the judgment we make is about actions or objects, not about anyone's feelings.

Carnap's interpretation of value judgments as commands fares no better than Ayer's ejaculation theory or Stevenson's approval and persuasion theory. For there is a generally recognized distinction between moral judgments and commands in general. A contemporary ethical analyst writes in this connection:

... an imperative may be uttered in isolation, and gain its persuasiveness entirely from the superior force of the person who utters it. A moral judgment, on the other hand, seems to involve a reference to something beyond the mere will of the judges. And similarly an ethical judgment tries to persuade the audience to feel in a certain way, by referring (implicitly or explicitly) to something beyond the feelings of the moment - the express feelings either of speaker or of hearer.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The Definition of Good, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Karl BRITTON, Communication: A Philosophical Study of Language, New York: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1939, p. 212.

Finally, why should a dogmatic acceptance of the positivist exhaustive classification of meaningful statements stand above everyday experience which shows such a classification to be too narrow and artificial? It seems to me that most of the emotivist inconsistencies with the evidence of experience flow from the preoccupation with purely verbal aspects of moral and aesthetic discourse. And once we refuse to consider the actual experiences, to take them for what they are rather than explain them away with some genetic account of how and why we come to have them, we are bound to remove ourselves from reality and lose ourselves in linguistic analysis. This is where the emotivists found themselves and why their theory appears so artificial as to ignore - for the sake of consistency with the starting point - the most fundamental facts of our concrete moral and aesthetic life.

## CHAPTER IX

### INTERPRETATION OF VALUE JUDGMENTS AS VALUE RESPONSES

The emotivist identification of value judgments with expressions of feeling has a foundation in two facts: in the particular Weltanschauung, openly or tacitly upheld by the proponents of emotive theories, and in their superficial examination of the states of feelings and emotions <sup>1</sup> which usually accompany value judgments.

The particular Weltanschauung, or the general outlook on the world, of all prominent emotivists is positivistic or scientifico-empirical. <sup>2</sup> They endorse the view that there is no genuine knowledge beyond that of senses and that of logic or mathematics; no genuine knowledge beyond that which satisfies the criterion of meaning which says: a statement is

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<sup>1</sup> By "feeling" we mean any sensation, usually short lived; by "emotion" we mean sometimes a strong, intensified feeling, but more often a prolonged state of feeling.

<sup>2</sup> M. Schlick was the founder of the Vienna Circle and R. Carnap one of his co-founders. A.J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic may be considered a bible of logical positivism; C.L. Stevenson, though usually not openly associated with logical positivism, upholds implicitly the belief that positive science is the sum of knowledge; H. Feigl, Hans Reichenbach, A. Pap and G. Bergmann, all of whom stated their views on ethics in emotivistic ways, are logical positivists.

meaningful if and only if it is empirically verifiable or is analytic. Further, they are fond of scientific explanations of every phenomenon, physical or psychic, taking the word "scientific" in the sense of capable of sense observations, quantitative measuring, and controlled experiments. They thus admit only of knowledge of phenomena which is expressed in more or less probable hypotheses, and a knowledge of logical and mathematical truths which are absolutely true but not telling us anything about the external world. They are from the very start withdrawing from realities of our religious, ethical and aesthetic experiences precisely because they scratch only the surface, the physical, the outward aspects of those experiences. The language which they are so eager to "clarify" is to be concerned - in their opinion - only with things which we can observe and measure. "The whole of philosophy", says Professor Wild in discussing logical positivism, "is exhausted in a discussion of linguistic and methodological technique. The knives are constantly sharpened and resharpened. But the roast is never cut".<sup>3</sup>

The majority of people must be saying nothing but nonsense most of the time if we take their criterion of

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<sup>3</sup> John WILD, "Husserl's Critique of Psychologism: Its Historic Roots and Contemporary Relevance", in Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl (S. Farber, ed.), Harvard University Press, 1940, p. 38.

meaningfulness seriously. A distinguished contemporary authority on the philosophy of language presents this radical limitation of meaning in the following lucid passage:

... if we consider how difficult it is to construct a meaningful language that shall meet neo-positivistic standards, it is quite incredible that people should ever say anything at all, or understand each other's propositions. At best, human thought is but a tiny, grammar-bound island, in the midst of a sea of feeling expressed by "Oh-oh" and sheer babble. The island has a periphery, perhaps, of mud-factual and hypothetical concepts broken down by the emotional tides into the "material mode", a mixture of meaning and nonsense. Most of us live the better part of our lives on this mud-flat; but in artistic moods we take to the deep, where we flounder about with symptomatic cries that sound like propositions about life and death, good and evil, substance, beauty, and other non-existent topics".<sup>4</sup>

That their examination of the feelings usually accompanying value judgments is superficial and fallacious is especially evident from their naive assertion that since feelings are present, those judgments must really be nothing but expressions of those feelings. And in so far as they do not make this straight-forward identification of value judgments with expressions of feelings, they do not give any other than genetic explanation of moral and aesthetic feelings. They throw out value judgments into the realm of nonsense on the ground that they defy their criterion of meaningful statements. Ethical and aesthetic (as well as many religious and

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<sup>4</sup> Susanne K. LANGER, Philosophy in a New Key, Harvard University Press, 1942, pp. 87 f.

metaphysical) statements contain terms such as "good", "beautiful", "wrong", "sublime", and so on, which point to certain non-sensible, experimentally undeterminable qualities or properties in objects and actions in the external world; consequently, they deny to statements which concern value all objectivity; in fact, they deny to them even the character of subjectivity, namely that they are about the feelings of the speaker. They pronounce such statements to be theoretically meaningless utterances which help to vent our feelings in a verbal form. Although grammatically correct, statements of value are excluded from the realm of meaningful discourse on syntactical grounds. <sup>5</sup>

The emotivists thus draw a false conclusion from a generally admitted fact. The fact is that we feel deeply on moral and artistic matters, that our affective life is often very strongly aroused in consideration of values. The false conclusion is that our judgments of value are nothing but a verbal exteriorization of our feelings.

We admit the great role played by our feelings in evaluations, and our value judgments might be said to express

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<sup>5</sup> Barrows Dunham notices many objections which have been brought against ethical and other value theories in history. But - he says - "not until the twentieth century... had it occurred to anyone to criticize ethical theory on the ground that value-judgments are syntactically confused". Man Against Myth, New York, Frederick Muller, 1948, p. 250.

feelings were it not for the fact that they also, and primarily, make an objective truth claim which puts them into the category of assertions. But we recognize further that moral and aesthetic feelings are feelings about something, that they point to an object which arouses us when we grasp it. Such feelings must be clearly distinguished from mere states.

Experiencing a bodily pleasure is a feeling completely within us, something internal and subjective in the sense of being experienced only by ourselves: no existence of bodily pleasure outside ourselves can be conceived. Bodily pain, fatigue, depression, irritation, anxiety, and other psychic states are feelings whose expression in a verbal or any other form would never be thought of as moral or aesthetic. Professor Joad observes that the occurrence of these feelings "is normally taken to be the effect of some prior psychological and/or physiological event which is their completely determining cause. We are not in a position to say that we propose either to feel or not to feel a certain emotion; it occurs in spite of us, nor are we responsible for its occurrence".<sup>6</sup>

Value feelings, on the other hand, are not a direct effect of certain bodily state. They refer to objects and presuppose a knowledge of those objects. An experience of

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<sup>6</sup> C.K.M. JOAD, A Critique of Logical Positivism,  
The University of Chicago Press, 1950.

certain moral value, for instance, forgiveness, or of an aesthetic value, such as the sublimity of a rainbow over a waterfall; produces in us feelings completely different from those which follow a good meal, or a sound sleep. In the sphere of morality and art we experience certain autonomy of the phenomena about which we feel deeply von Hildebrand dwells on this point at a great length and we may quote a few relevant lines from his Christian Ethics: "The moral goodness of another's act of charity in no way depends on its being witnessed by ourselves".<sup>7</sup> Our awareness of it can neither add to its reality nor subtract from it. And he says further:

In stating that forgiveness is morally good, revenge morally evil, we mean by morally good the character of an attitude, and not of any feeling which I experience in witnessing these attitudes in another person. When, on the contrary, someone says, 'I cannot stand angry people; they frighten me to death', he means a feeling which angry people cause in him. When someone says of a landscape that it is sublime, or that a human person has a higher value than an animal, he certainly does not mean by sublime or by value a feeling which he discovers in his soul. Sublimity, moral goodness, the value of a human person are either properties of a being or they are fictitious... They can never be feelings, because predications which are meaningful and correct when applied to feelings of psychical entities become senseless when applied to values.<sup>8</sup>

The feelings and emotions of which the emotivists speak in connection with value judgments are on the level of

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<sup>7</sup> Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, New York David McKay, 1953, p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

animal cries of pain and pleasure. That is to say, a judgment "Murder is wrong" is comparable to the spontaneous expression, "Ouch!", when I step barefooted on a sharp stone and cut the skin. In either case, they argue, we expressed a feeling of dislike. But it is not difficult to see that the two instances are not comparable. In the case of exclaiming "Ouch!" we need not know the cause of our pain; we exclaim spontaneously. The relationship between pain in the foot and my interjection is causal. In the case of our judgment "Murder is wrong", on the other hand, we have to know why we want to characterize the act of murder the way we do. Not only do we have to recognize the act which we call killing; we have to recognize it precisely as an object which calls for disapproval before we can meaningfully and genuinely pronounce a judgment on it. This difference between the causal relation and the intentional relation is brought out excellently by Professor von Hildebrand. Comparing the state of being tired and experiencing joy, he writes:

Whereas our feeling tired in no way presupposes a knowledge of the cause, any intentional experience (such as joy) essentially presupposes a knowledge of the cause of our experience; that is to say, of an object which motivates our experience. In the case of joy, this intentional character distinguishes it from a mere state of cheerfulness. Tiredness remains the same whether or not I know its cause.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 191.

The fact that moral and artistic feelings point beyond themselves, that they are always feelings of,<sup>10</sup> and that their existence would not be possible without our awareness of objects to which they point must not be lost of our sight. For it is precisely this intentionality that distinguishes them so radically from different bodily states which are caused physiologically or psychologically and which do not in any way depend for their being on our awareness of that cause.

The objects of which we speak are entities possessing a certain importance, certain opposition to neutrality: they are either values or disvalues. They arouse us when we grasp them and we cannot withhold our response if we are genuine. Our response is a certain feeling: joy, reverence, admiration; condemnation, hatred, and so on. This response need not be expressed in a verbal form, but it can be, and often is, expressed in judgments. Our response to an act of forgiveness (which we have witnessed or about which we read or about which we dreamt or which we imagine) may be

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<sup>10</sup> The intentional character of value-feeling is brought out excellently by von Hildebrand in the following paragraph: "There is no enthusiasm, no veneration, no esteem as such, just as there is no conviction as such. Every veneration is essentially veneration of someone; every enthusiasm an enthusiasm about something; every esteem, the esteem for a person; every conviction is necessarily a conviction of a fact. The feelings to which, according to this the emotivist theory, the value must be reduced, themselves presuppose an importance of the object".  
Christian Ethics, pp. 125 f.

expressed in a judgment, for instance, "Forgiveness is a good act". Have we by means of this judgment characterize the object in any way, or is this simply a venting of the feeling which we experience toward the act of forgiveness? The emotivists claim the latter. But we certainly cannot admit their view to be correct. For we see that the basis for our feeling is rooted in our perception of that act precisely as an act which calls for a feeling of approval; we realize that we should have such a feeling, and that the act would preserve the importance calling for a response of approval even though we in a certain instance would prefer that that act did not take place. Values have an autonomy which makes them immune from the actual feeling the people may have in different situation. Just as a diversity of opinions on the formation of the Solar System does not justify us in concluding that there is no objective state of affairs to be discovered - even if we have proved that all existing opinions are false, so a diversity of opinion on the moral quality of an act of injustice, or on the aesthetic quality of a painting does not justify us in concluding that there are no moral or aesthetic qualities and that we can simply voice our feelings toward certain objects which are completely neutral in themselves. Where would those feelings come from? There is no cause comparable to causes which are responsible for our bodily states such as feeling tired,

being wine-happy, or be pleased with good food, unless we admit a spiritual cause such as our grasp of an act of injustice or justice, charity, and so on. In any case, we may not confuse feelings with the cognitive content of our value judgments. "There are cases", writes A.C. Ewing, "where I clearly see that something is good or bad, right or wrong, and this insight has often been confused with the feeling which usually accompanies it".<sup>11</sup> Another ethical scholar remarks: "Moral language is frequently emotive simply because the situations in which it is typically used are situations about which we often feel deeply".<sup>12</sup>

Emotions accompanying our evaluations are only a symptom of such a use of language. And if people were perfectly brought up so as to achieve correct insights into the world of values and consequently respond to the call of that world without reservation, our feelings would suffice to mark the presence of evil or goodness or beauty and other values or disvalues. As Father D'Arcy points out,

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<sup>11</sup> A.C. EWING, The Definition of Good, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Richard M. HARE, Language and Morals, Oxford, 1952, p. 144. C.D. Broad recognizes the same fact: "It is just an ultimate fact about human nature that most people tend to feel a certain kind of emotion when they contemplate, e.g., an act of promise-breaking". And then he asks, "Is this explicable by general psychological principles and the particular influences to which most people are subjected in early childhood?" "Some of the Main Problems of Ethics", in Readings in Philosophical Analysis (H. Feigl and W. Sellars, edd.), New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, p. 562.

In normal circumstances the judgments of reason and the feelings go hand in hand. When one watches an act of cruelty one knows that it is unworthy of man and unfair to the victim, and a feeling of indignation is aroused at the sight. Hence as a short cut the feeling is often taken as a sufficient evidence of the presence of evil, and in an ideal society the feelings, being perfectly trained, would tell us the truth. <sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately our concrete situation is different. We often like to dictate rather than to obey: instead of condemning lie everywhere and at all times, we rationalize about it and call it by a more respected name; instead of abhorring abortion, we give all kinds of alibis for its justification; instead of condemning killing of the incurable we brand the act with the term euthanasia which suggest that the welfare of others is the only thing under our consideration; instead of condemning divorce, we get one because it is subjectively satisfying at the moment. Our power of moral and aesthetic insight, too, is clouded by passions, subtle preconceptions and prejudices, by preoccupation with lesser goods, and especially by our pride. We do not want to bow to reality; we want to dictate to it and preserve a feeling of superiority. Borrowes Dunham characterizes this tendency of modern mind in his brilliant work, Man Against Myth: "Are some things good and others evil? Yes, so far as they suit or contradict my feelings and desires. The things exist

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<sup>13</sup> Martin D'ARCY, S.J., Christian Morals, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1937, p. 92.

because I think them. The values exist because I think them. It is thinking that makes it so".<sup>14</sup> We construct or create or impose our own feelings upon things; we think we impart properties to objects by our judgments about them. Furthermore, our emotions are often aroused by some confused belief or by skillful propaganda, and the only solution is to check our feelings by reason. Just as reason tells us that we should conform our intellect to the nature of a being, so it tells us that we should conform to the importance in itself<sup>15</sup> to values. The basic task of our education of character is the formation of a willingness to conform to reality: to truth, to good, and to beauty, even though at times this conformity may not be subjectively satisfying.

We cannot stress enough the great abyss which separates value feelings from feelings in the ordinary sense of the word. Value feelings are not simple outbursts of instincts or direct effects of alcohol or drugs injected into our body. The emotion involved in perception of moral and aesthetic values is, as Maritain points out, "another kind of emotion - one with knowledge... Such an emotion transcends

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<sup>14</sup> Barrows DUNHAM, Man Against Myth, p. 150.

<sup>15</sup> The term "importance" is used here in a technical sense as "that property of a being which gives it the character of a bonum or a malum; in short... the antithesis to neutrality or indifference". Von Hildebrand, Christian Ethics, p. 24.

mere subjectivity, and draws the mind toward things known and toward knowing more".<sup>16</sup> And, treating of aesthetic experience, he speaks of a feeling of joy which is produced in us by the sight of the beautiful. "This joy", he says, "is doubtless a feeling... Nevertheless there is a question of a very special feeling, depending simply upon knowledge, and the happy fullness procured to the mind by a sensible intuition. Emotion in the ordinary meaning of the word, the development of passions and feelings other than this intellectual joy, is merely a result - an absolutely normal result - of that joy: it is as such posterior, if not in time, at all events in the nature of things, to the perception of the beautiful, and remains extrinsic to what formally constitutes the beautiful".<sup>17</sup>

Emotivists, when speaking of the feeling of value must be using the term "feeling analogically".<sup>18</sup> We properly speak of feeling a pleasure and of feeling a pain. Why speak of "feeling" moral values. Why not say that we perceive moral values? This would be a much clearer use of language,

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<sup>16</sup> Jacques MARITAIN, Art and Scholasticism, London, Sheed and Ward, 1939, pp. 165 f., n. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 165 f., n. 55.

<sup>18</sup> This point is brought out by Father Copleston: "If an exclamation like 'Oh!' uttered when I run a pin into myself, is an emotional utterance, a statement like 'I ought to be more kind to X' is an emotional utterance in an analogical sense, in so far, that is to say, as it is proper to call it an emotional utterance at all". Contemporary Philosophy, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1956, pp. 40 f.

a use which would recognize that feelings and emotions - in so far as they enter value judgments - are feelings and emotions with knowledge. It would recognize the fact that "feeling" moral values could not be achieved by animals who do not possess rational knowledge and who depend for their feelings purely on physical causes such as eating food, drinking water, falling on a sharp rock, and so on. And if they refuse to recognize that there are objects and acts which call for a specific feeling, why speak of values at all; why not speak only of objects (neutral, of course) and of what we think of them. And why speak of value feelings if there are no values? Furthermore, why use such a large number of predicates if there is only a question of personal likes and dislikes. What is the point of difference between tasting good food, approving of an act of charity and expressing likes for a picture? Any theory which rejects objectivity of values cannot account for this intuitively grasped distinction by common sense people.

Considering the intentional character of feelings involved in moral and artistic experience cannot possibly lead us to the emotivist conclusion that there are no values to be known and no values to call for a specific response which we may later express in the form of a written or spoken judgment. The fact that objects of morality and art are different from that of natural science does not allow the

emotivist conclusion that they are simply objects of our imagination, a result of "super-natural" thinking, and what not.

Father Coventry writes on this point:

If I see a man loose his temper and strike his wife across the mouth, the reason why I judge this to be brutal, cowardly and wrong is, surely, because it is brutal, cowardly and wrong. There can be no more reason for thinking that a moral judgment gives one unreal, or less real, information about the physical world, just because it gives one a different kind of information from that which a mathematical, a scientific or a historical judgment provides. It gives us an irreducible kind of information about the nature of human action. 19

The clue, then, to the autonomy of the world of values and to the irreducible character of our value experiences lies in the intentionality of moral and aesthetic feelings. We must distinguish, however, two basic types of intentional experiences, between the COGNITIVE ACTS and RESPONSES. 20

To the class of cognitive acts belongs, above all, perception. We do not mean here only the perception of colors, tones, and other so-called sense-perceptions, but also the perception of space, of relations, of material bodies, of other persons, as well as the intellectual intuition of essences themselves and values. Even imagination and memory are cognitive activities despite their great differences from perception.

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19 John COVENTRY, S.J., Morals and Independence, London, Burns Oates, 1949, pp. 54 f.

20 Cf. D. von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, Chapter 17.

On the other hand we have a large class of responses such as belief, conviction, doubt, hope, fear, joy, sorrow, enthusiasm, indignation, esteem and contempt, trust and mistrust, love and hatred.

Moral and aesthetic perception is, according to von Hildebrand, not essentially different from any other perception. We do perceive justice or beauty, just as we perceive colors, tones, persons, substances, numbers, and so on; for all the marks of genuine perception are present.<sup>21</sup> And we voice our responses to values or disvalues in the form of value judgments.

The theme of our value judgments, however, is not the existence and the knowledge of objects, and this is the fact which emotivists seem to have grasped. What they did not grasp is that this theme is already settled and that only because it is settled we can experience certain feelings and pronounce judgments of value. When one uses predicates such as "right", "wrong", "good", "bad", "beautiful", "ugly", he

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<sup>21</sup> "The three decisive marks of perception in general distinguishing it from all other cognitive acts such as inferring, remembering, and others are: first, the real presence of the object; secondly, the fecundating contact with the object in which the object discloses itself to my mind in its autonomous being; thirdly, the intuitive character of the contact. The object deploys its 'such being' before my mind, as opposed to all discursive contact through concepts".

Christian Ethics, pp. 229 f.

is not trying to discover objects as they stand in nature without adding or diminishing; he is trying to give his voice to the demands of those objects. In von Hildebrand's terms, value judgment "imparts to the object a word which is in a much more outspoken way a response. It is, like conviction, not only a repetition of what the object imparts to my mind, a repetition of the self-affirmation of the object on our part, but a completing word, a new word. There is thus not noetic, such as we find in knowledge itself, but affective". 22

Affective responses always presuppose the knowledge of a datum. Conversion of a friend causes in us joy, but only if we have correctly grasped the nature of the act of conversion; if it appears to us as neutral or indifferent, our response - joy, would be impossible and we could not honestly pronounce a judgment of value on the act. For our original contact with values is not a judgment; it is not the act whereby we affirm a property in an object; it is "the perception of something autonomous. The original experience is the perception of the importance of an object; only after this initial disclosure of the value may we by a judgment attribute to an object". 23

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22 D. von HILDEBRAND, op. cit., p. 202.

23 Ibid., p. 124.

Since value judgments involve perception of something autonomous, it is no wonder that they have been put by the common sense of every age on the level of scientific judgments. Goodness and truth have been put together as the province of the mind rather than senses. The presence of feelings and emotions in value judgments, however, seems to make them so very different from scientific statements, but this - as we already pointed out - is not a sufficient ground for concluding that they are simply expressions, exteriorizations, of those feelings.

Theoretical cognition is concerned with the ontological order of things, while moral and aesthetic order comprises the class of things to be achieved through natural tendencies by intelligent and free beings, that is, by following the call of known values, by giving an unconditional response to the demands of values. Scientific judgments affirm a correspondence between intellect and objects; moral and aesthetic judgments, on the other hand, contain over and above theoretical cognitions certain prescription, directive, command, what to do, what to omit, what to value and what to disvalue. This normative part of value judgment is precisely what we mean when we say that objects and acts of art and experience call for an appropriate response as soon as they are grasped.

Another distinction between purely scientific and normative judgments lies in the fact that objects of the former are comparatively detached and abstract while objects of the latter are concrete and pertinent to our life's meaning and destiny. Father D'Arcy writes in this connection: "What a man notices or does in conduct is not seen through a telescope; it is not a subject for cataloguing in a museum; it touches him to the quick, and it is greeted with approbation or disapprobation in varying degrees. Hence there is a whole range of moral emotions which we know of as attached to the common virtues and vices". His conclusion is that "moral judgments are a mixture of thought and emotion, or better that our realisation of right and wrong are accompanied and supported and heightened by feeling and emotion and sentiment".<sup>24</sup> This conclusion does not contradict our thesis that cognition of value and realization of right and wrong is presupposed in every genuine value judgment, even though we may not like Father D'Arcy's expression that "moral judgments are a mixture of thought and emotion" which suggests that these two elements are concomitant in origin - whereas we claim that feelings presuppose recognition of good and bad, right and wrong.

We may compare value responses to a theoretical response, for instance, to conviction. Just as conviction has

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<sup>24</sup> Martin D'ARCY, S.J., Christian Morals, p. 10.

to follow certain evidence presented by a statement of fact, so an affective response has to follow the evidence presented by a statement of value. <sup>25</sup> To quote Professor von Hildebrand,

Just as an evident fact not only necessarily motivates conviction if it has been grasped in its evidence but also calls for conviction since conviction is the due and adequate response to the value on the object side, there exists an axiological relation which we could express in saying, "To every good endowed with a value, as well as to every thing tainted by a disvalue, an adequate response is due". <sup>26</sup>

The same writer, still considering the response of conviction and the affective response given to a moral act, points out the absurdity of the emotivist identification of

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<sup>25</sup> Statements of fact are true or false, of course, and so are statements of value; we may be deluded by both types. But we can check the truth-value of statements either by asking an authority or by an original experience. We do not deny the subjective element and we recognize that mistakes are possible. We admit that certain things may be "true", or "good", secundum modum recipientis, but the theoretical response of conviction and the affective response to the good on part of the recipient remain genuine, provided he was unprejudiced toward reality. As von Hildebrand writes, "the content of the value response necessarily reflects the specific nature of the value insofar as it has disclosed itself to a person or in the measure in which the person has understood it, provided, of course, that it is a pure value response, that is to say, that in the motivation of our response there is not the slightest intrusion of another point of view".  
Christian Ethics, p. 240.

<sup>26</sup> C. von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 240.

values with expressions of feeling. He writes: "To believe that in stating the moral goodness of justice we only exteriorize our enthusiasm about justice is as absurd as to believe that the statement  $2 \times 2 = 4$  is nothing but an exteriorization of our conviction. The acts which in both these cases are said to exteriorize themselves in a statement cannot be separated from the object which they essentially presuppose".<sup>27</sup>

When we introspect on our state of mind when it formulates value judgments, do we really find that we do not mean anything at all by saying "Murder is evil"? Or does our introspection show perhaps that there are only strong feelings of disapproval towards the act which we call murder and that our only intention is to voice those feelings? No. Introspection shows that we, in pronouncing a value judgment, want to predicate of an object or act certain characteristics which are given to us in an original contact with that object or act. It also shows us that these characteristics of objects and acts arouse us emotionally, create certain feelings and attitudes, such as admiration, joy, sorrow, love, hatred, and so on. Further we recognize that by making a statement about those objects and acts we do not intend primarily to imply, and certainly not to say, how we feel;

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<sup>27</sup> D. von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 240.

that we, on the contrary, intend to characterize objects and acts themselves, to attribute to them qualities which were disclosed to us in our experience of them. If we wanted to say how we feel we would state, for instance, "I dislike murder", or "Murder creates in me a feeling of disapproval". All such statements could be true, but would be psychological in character, not moral. Genuine normative statement calls for a universal acceptance and purports to preserve its authority regardless of the actual feelings that people may have. It is true, however, that by the judgment, "Murder is evil", we imply that we disapprove of murder. But from this it does not follow that the statement "Murder is evil" means "I dislike murder" or "Murder!!!" - pronounced with a voice of disapproval. Ewing exposes this ambiguity of approval and disapproval in the following argument:

'I approve of A' is then identical with 'I judge A good', 'I disapprove of A' with 'I judge A bad'... All ethical judgements express approval or disapproval in this sense, as all judgements without exception express the thoughts of the person who makes them. But if I therefore went on to say that I meant by 'A is good' that I approve of A, I should be saying that I meant by 'A is good' that I judge that A is good. This as a definition is obviously circular. 28

Our introspection also shows that the recognition of objective characteristics of moral and artistic objects and

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28 Alfred C. EWING, The Definition of Good, p. 9.

acts is prior to feelings; it shows - as Ewing observes so well - that "a conviction that something is really objectively good or bad, right or wrong, is normally prior to the more practical and emotional side of the attitude or at least intimately linked up with it, and that without this conviction the attitude is not really ethical but simply a matter of taste or unethical preference".<sup>29</sup> Feelings, then, could not be the primary - and certainly not the whole - content of value judgments. Even if we speak in emotivist terms and say that our judgment, "Murder is evil", is an expression of the feeling of dislike, we have still expressed our feeling about something which we recognized as worthy of dislike. "Whatever be true of dislike", states Ross, "it is impossible to disapprove without thinking that what you disapprove is worthy of disapproval".<sup>30</sup>

When we deliberate on a moral matter, we are not trying to acquire certain feelings; we are trying to discover what is the true answer to our question. And in arguing, are we trying to prove that our feelings are such and such? To put the question in Ross' terms,

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<sup>29</sup> A.C. EWING, Ethics, London, English University Press Ltd., 1953, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup> W.D. ROSS, Foundations of Ethics, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1939, p. 34.

Is A arguing to prove that he likes the given act, and B to prove that he dislikes it? Clearly not. A does not doubt that B dislikes it, nor B that A likes it; and if they did doubt, they would adopt quite different means of convincing one another, e.g., A by consistently seeking to do similar acts and B by consistently avoiding them. What they are attempting to do by the process Mr. Ayer described is to convince each other that the liking, or the dislike, is justified, in other words that the act has a character that deserves to be liked or disliked, is good or bad. 31

In all arguments we assume that a true statement is worthy to be believed and that a false statement is not worthy to be believed. Any declarative sentence is a claim upon belief. As we said, in saying that murder is evil we imply that we disapprove of it and that we want the hearer to disapprove of it also. But are we doing merely this? No, we are saying that murder is really worthy of disapproval, that it calls for disapproval. And we use rational arguments to prove that it is such. We are not trying to persuade the hearer by way of rhetoric to feel the way we do; we are trying to show that he should feel the way we do by revealing to him the object in its authentic nature. If there were no value or disvalue in the objects and acts we could not argue that anyone should feel or act in one way rather than another: any statement of value would be as good as another and any argument of justification would be doomed to failure from the beginning.

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31 Foundations of Ethics, p. 41.

Every consideration of ethical as well as of other value judgments is seriously deficient unless human nature is taken into account. But human nature could not be treated in isolation: all the relationships in which man is essentially involved must be taken into consideration. Only then can we go to the depth of the question, What do our value judgments in general, and ethical judgments in particular, mean. For only then can we see the reason, the cause, why certain objects are valuable, why certain acts are right or wrong.

We cannot discuss here at any length the nature of man; we can only point to an obvious fact that he is a rational being essentially different from animals, from plants, and from inert matter, even though in him operations of animals and operations of plants are found as a substructure to his rational soul, and even though the material elements which compose his body are not different from those found anywhere else in nature, following the same universal laws of matter. We also maintain as a fact that he is not his own cause, but on the contrary that he is a being created by God, <sup>32</sup> abso-

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, many contemporary movements do not admit this. As J. Messner observes: "Dialectical materialism, biological evolutionism, analytical psychology, and logical positivism all arrive at the conclusion that apart from the reality open to the senses there is no other reality, and hence that there can be no morality in relation to such a reality". (Ethics and Facts, St. Louis and London, B. Herder Co., 1952, p. 313).

lutely dependent for his existence on the Creator, and that he - just as all other creatures - is directed toward an end. But while other beings attain their goal through the guidance of instincts and inherent physical laws, man, having an intellect and a free will, has a power to discern the laws<sup>33</sup> and then to follow or not to follow them.

What is a law? Saint Thomas defines it as "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated".<sup>34</sup> Since all creatures are subject to their Creator and to the Divine providence, they are ruled and measured by the law existing eternally in the Creator. All things participate in this law "in so far as, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends".<sup>35</sup> But man, being a rational creature, is a partaker of a share of Divine providence; he "has a natural inclination to its proper act and end; and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law".<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> We are concerned here only with the moral laws, that is, the laws which bear a relationship to man's last end and to which the actus humanus (as distinct from actus hominis) is directly subjected.

<sup>34</sup> Saint THOMAS, Summa Theologiae, I-II, g. 90, a.1.

<sup>35</sup> Saint THOMAS, op. cit., I-II, g. 91, a.2.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Each inclination or tendency is directed toward certain value, toward something which is lovable at least in the metaphorical sense. Such values we name ends. For man the first and the last value, and consequently the last end is God. To this end all others must be subordinated. In correlation to this supreme value all other values arrange themselves in an order in which man is to try to reach them and to love them.

In the ontological order the cognition of truths is characteristic. Truth is a correspondence between intellect and object.<sup>37</sup> Moral principles, on the other hand, contain more than an assertion of facts; they tell how things should be, how and what actions are to be performed. We say that

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<sup>37</sup> Again, not all moderns agree as to the nature of truth. "According to the coherence theory... truth is systematic coherence. This is more than logical consistency. A proposition is true insofar as it is a necessary constituent of a systematically coherent whole. According to some, this whole must be such that every element in it necessitates, indeed entails, every other element. Strictly, on this view, truth, in its fullness, is a characteristic of only the one systematic coherent whole, which is the absolute. It attaches to propositions as we know them only to a degree. A proposition has a degree of truth proportionate to the completeness of the systematic coherence of the systems of entities to which it belongs.

"According to the pragmatic theory of truth, a proposition is true insofar as it works or satisfies, working or satisfying being described variously by different exponents of the view. Some writers insist that truth characterizes only those propositions (ideas) whose satisfactory working has actually verified them; others state that only verifiability through such consequences is necessary. In either case, writers differ as to the precise nature of the verifying experiences required". Dictionary of Philosophy, (D. Runes, ed.) Ames, Iowa, Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1955.

they are normative in character.

The moral imperative originates in the absolute necessity of the last end and in the autonomy of values whose realization leads us to the last end.

The basic precept of natural law is known to all who have reflected at least a little on the question of right and wrong, good and evil. It may not be explicitly formulated, but everyone knows and asserts to himself that good is to be done and evil avoided. Even if one seeks to inflict death upon himself, he seeks to do this under the aspect of good. All other precepts are based upon this one.

Value, or good, is ultimately an end to which man aims. Now if we find in us any natural inclination toward certain things, then those things are discerned by reason as being good; otherwise nature would be self-frustrating. And so Saint Thomas says:-

Therefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, which nature has taught to all animals..., such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society... 38

The will of moral beings is moved necessarily toward the good; however, it can be moved only toward that which has been apprehended, <sup>39</sup> cognized, is known, as good; hence the dictum, nihil volitum nisi cogitatum. This position is a complete antithesis to the emotivist contention that the basis why we call anything a value is the fact that we approve of

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38 Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 94, a.2.

39 Every act of will may be considered as a response to a certain good. But all responses presuppose cognitive acts. To quote Professor von Hildebrand, "they are essentially based on cognitive acts. This fundamental truth has been expressed in the scholastic philosophy thus: Nihil volitum nisi cogitatum... Volitum is here the general term for all responses, cogitatio the general term for cognitive acts". Christian Ethics, p. 197.

it, or like it, or desire it, and that consequently we want to persuade others to approve of it or to like it. Our dictum, nil volitum nisi cogitatum, implies that intellect plays an essential part and that our volitions follow acts of intellect. But we at the same time admit that there are in us spontaneous, natural tendencies - as mentioned in the preceding quotation from Saint Thomas - and that our affections are aroused toward certain object and acts to the extent that they urge us to more knowledge, and to more perfect knowledge, of those objects.

It would be well to discuss in our present chapter the concept of affective connaturality<sup>40</sup> and the role of this metaphysical propriety in our moral and aesthetic life. Then we will better be able to determine the references of our value judgments and the subjective factors which seem to be involved in them.

Our intellect dealing with the abstract, with generalities, is really not satisfied with mere cognizance when

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<sup>40</sup> For the discussion of this topic I am greatly indebted to an essay, "Humani generis et L'Existentialisme", by Rev. Jacques CROTEAU, O.M.I., to whom I express my sincere gratitude for lending it to me.

The term "connaturality" need not always be associated with "affective", for we could speak of connaturality in general as of "that metaphysical propriety through which a faculty is proportioned to its object either in virtue of itself, or in virtue of an acquired disposition".

it comes to morality. The intentional being does not seem to put it to rest; and so we find in the cognitive subject a desire to possess the real being, that is to say, to possess objects and hold them as they are in themselves. Here, our appetites come to play, for it is they who aim at the possession of objects in their concrete states. As soon as we learn about those objects, a love is created to appropriate them, and this appropriation follows the rules of appetites. Thus we have a cycle of conscious life which begins with knowledge, is followed by love, and then by action. Here human and animal powers come together into a unity. As Father Brennan writes, "... by knowledge, love, and action, the cycle of conscious life is complete, and the powers of man and animal are brought into a perfect union".<sup>41</sup>

This union, caused by love, is - according to Saint Thomas, more complete than that caused by knowledge. The Angelic Doctor writes: "Knowledge is perfected by the thing known being united, through its likeness, to the knower. But the effect of love is that the thing itself which is loved, is, in a way, united to the lover. Consequently, the union caused by love is closer than the union caused by knowledge".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Robert E. BRENNAN, o.p., Thomistic Psychology, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1950, pp. 147 f.

<sup>42</sup> Saint Thomas AQUINAS, Summa Theologiae, p. I-II, q. 28, a.1, and reply to obj. 2.

Love and hatred, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, and other affective phenomena are all proper responses to their objects. The good creates in the concupiscible appetite a certain inclination, connaturalness, in respect of itself; the evil, on the contrary, evokes a power of repulsion in the subject. And so, Father Brennan, again following the path of St. Thomas, writes:

Such an inclination generated by good things pertains to the passion of love to which hatred is opposed in respect of the evil. Again, if the good which is loved is not yet possessed, it arouses in the appetite an impulse to acquire it. This pertains to the possession of desire to which aversion is opposed in respect of the evil. Finally, when the good is possessed, it causes the appetite to rest, as it were, in the satisfaction of attainment. This pertains to the passion of joy to which sorrow is opposed in respect of the evil.<sup>43</sup>

But what connection is there between this union of love and the union of intellect with the intentional being? How can we say that affections play a role in our moral and artistic cognition? An examination of S. Thomas' statement, "Dicitur amor discernere in quantum movet rationem and discernendum",<sup>44</sup> will help us to answer this question.

It is a common experience that a will-act is always required for an act of intellect. Our search for any kind of

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<sup>43</sup> Op. cit., pp. 156 f.

<sup>44</sup> Saint Thomas AQUINAS, Summa Theologiae, II-II, q. 47, a.1.

knowledge is commanded by the love of an end.<sup>45</sup> However, this is not yet the effective connaturality, for then we should speak that our affections are indispensable in knowledge of stars or of chemical elements. The affective connaturality begins where the subject is not neutral toward the object of his search.<sup>46</sup> The subject must have a certain affinity or aversion toward the object because of certain conformities or disconformities with his own effective tendencies which he discovers in the object. Thus a person may evoke in us an intense love, and we want to know that person better in order to discover more lovable things, more valuable things, and thus to intensify our love. The affection becomes then an active principle in search for conformities

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45 The object must possess a certain "importance", a property which gives it the character of a bonum or malum, an antithesis to neutrality or indifference. Cf. note (10) of the present chapter.

46 This means that one may be able to love even though he does not yet grasp an object fully. Love aims at piercing the mystery. And so St. Thomas states: "Ob hoc contigit quod aliquid plus amatur quam cognoscatur: quia potest perfecte amari etiam si non perfecte cognoscatur..." But some knowledge or awareness of the object and its value is always presupposed. Unconscious love is impossible, unless we want to extend the meaning of the term "love" to an unjustifiable degree.

(or disconformities) of the object with the dispositions, tendencies of the subject. We are directed intensely toward disclosing every aspect of the object which creates that conformity, and it very often happens that we reject every trait not in such conformity. Thus a lesser or greater distortion of the object of our affection is not uncommon. This deformation - under the pressure of intense affections - is one of the reasons why our value judgments in regard to the same object differ so often;<sup>47</sup> this is the subjectivity of value judgments which we admit. But the sweeping conclusion that values are relative to the person, or to a group of persons, does not follow. "Just as the meaning of objective truth is not touched by the fact that two persons hold opposite positions to be true, so too the notion of moral good and evil, of something objectively valid which calls for obedience and appeals to our conscience, is always untouched, even if one man says that polygamy is evil and another that polygamy is morally permissible".<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> This, of course, is not the only reason why our value judgments contradict each other or differ to a degree. Saint Thomas recognizes that, while general principles of ethics are known to all and are true for all, the applications of them are so complicated that the truth of our conclusions may be relative to the situation. "In matters of action", he says, "the truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail but only as to the general principles: and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all... It may fail... as to knowledge, since in some the reason is perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature". Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 94, a.4.

<sup>48</sup> Dietrich von HILDEBRAND, Christian Ethics, p. 109.

One may ask, in regard to objectivity of our love-acts, what is the medium quo, comparable to the medium quo of our purely cognitive connaturality - namely the clarity of the object itself which imposes itself upon our intellect or sense. It should be clear from our discussion of the impetus of the affections in considering morally important, un-neutral objects that in the case of affective connaturality the medium quo could not be simply the lucidity of the object. Here, the conformity is one of the object seized as fitting in a certain way to the affective state of the subject. Our affective state is essential in morality and art, for it is love which is urging us to enter more fully into an object in order to love it more and more because of its aspects of fitness to our dispositions. It drives us toward the unknown and it intensifies our experience of knowledge of things when we have taken cognizance of them.

We must point out, however, that love by itself does not give us knowledge. As Father Croteau stresses, "Les puissances affectives n'ont pas de vertu intuitive, mais la seule puissance d'aider la raison". Love aids the intellect by moving it to know more, but it itself follows knowledge attained by senses and the intellect; it presupposes knowledge. The more we know an object the more we are capable of loving it. There is no love as such but love of; and generally, there is no affection, as such, but always affect-ion of.

Summarizing our discussion we may say that knowledge by affective connaturality is a result of a peculiar tendency of our affections driving us to discover, in the sphere of morality and art, more and more in order to love more perfectly. Even though we love something because it conforms to our own natural tendencies and dispositions, our love is not purely subjective because it presupposes at least some knowledge of the objects loved. Our basic thesis, then, that affections and aversions in morality and art are responses to the lovable, valuable objects, is not contradicted by the statement of St. Thomas, "Dicitur amor discernere in quantum movet rationem ad discernendum"; on the contrary, it is supplemented by it by being shown the reason why our affections drive us to more perfect knowledge, namely, that our response to the known objects may be more intense and perfect. St. Thomas' doctrine of affective connaturality explains in addition the great role of subjectivity in our moral and artistic experience and consequently, in our moral and aesthetic judgments.

## EPILOGUE

The emotivist interpretation of the meaning of value statements flatly contradicts experience. As we saw, it is not even based on an independent analysis of the moral and aesthetic phenomena of our lives but depends on the positivist criterion of meaning. Their analysis of a value judgment, e.g., "killing is evil", is in fact this: (1) Is this statement verifiable by a sense experience? Does evil stand for a sense property? No. (2) Is this statement analytical, that is, true solely on the analysis of terms? No. (3) Our criterion of meaning does not admit of any other kind of meaningful statements and certainly not of synthetic a priori statements (which is the status usually claimed for value statements). Therefore we cannot assign "Killing is evil" to a class of meaningful statements. What is more, we cannot even grant it the status of a genuine statement because it contains a word, "evil", which is not a symbol, representing something real, but only a conventional way of verbally expressing one's disapproval of an act. <sup>1</sup>

Now if we are correctly apprehending their analysis of a value statement, then it follows that their position stands or falls with their criterion of meaning. We should prefer to discuss with the emotivists a more basic epistemo-

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<sup>1</sup> The indebtedness of the emotivist position to Hume may be made apparent if we read the famous passage from his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding quoted in the third chapter of our thesis.

logical question: Are all meaningful statements either those which can be verified by sense experience or are analytic, or do we have access to knowledge which - though arrived at through senses - is not sense knowledge? In other words, we should argue whether there is a criterion of meaning broader than theirs, and perhaps such that would admit statements of value as an important realm of knowledge. This matter has admittedly not been settled and the positivists themselves are puzzled by the fact that their criterion of meaning cannot pass its own standard.

The criterion, as we often pointed out, is stated thus: A proposition has sense if and only if it is verifiable in sense experience or is analytic. Let us subject this statement to the test which it itself prescribes to see if it is meaningful. Let us ask: (1) Is this statement verifiable in a sense experience? No. And if it were, then it would be only probable (the next sense experience could prove it to be false) and should not be presented so categorically as an absolutely true proposition applicable to all instances.

Let us ask further: (2) Is this statement analytic? If it is such, then it is absolutely and universally true, but it does not say anything new; all its meaning can be derived from the definition of the constituent terms and the syntactical rules of language. And we could devise all kinds of such analytical statements and propose them as principles of meaning, making them more or less inclusive as to what will

pass for sense and what will be ruled out as nonsense. But this would not be a study of reality; it would simply be a logical game of little value as an exercise in formal reasoning and sterile as an epistemological study.

Now if the above statement is neither empirical nor analytical, then it is itself nonsensical. And what is more, since it is itself asserting that only empirical or analytical statements are meaningful, then it is paradoxical: it is true if it is false and it is false if it is true. We usually call such paradoxical statements self-contradictory and treat them as such.

Most of the contemporary positivists, having noted the paradox, accept this criterion mainly as a guide in pursuing knowledge; consequently they remain within the clear-cut limits of natural sciences (including many common sense observation and prediction statements) and of mathematics (including formal logic and the linguistic analysis which is to make statements of science and of mathematics precise). Let them do so if they want to, but then they should not ask us to exclude as meaningless most of the traditional philosophy as well as most of the common-sense philosophical opinions and even the basic philosophical questions themselves. One could make many such criteria, excluding or including as knowledge anything he wanted. K. Popper observes:

All you need ... is to determine the conception of "sense" or of "meaning" in a suitably narrow way, and you can say of all uncomfortable questions that you cannot find any "sense" or "meaning" in them. By recognizing the problems of natural science alone as "meaningful", every debate about the concept of sense or of meaning must become nonsensical. Once enthroned, the dogma of meaning is for ever raised above the possibility of attack. It is "unassailable and definitive".<sup>2</sup>

Yet, emotivists are holding explicitly or implicitly, to the positivist criterion in spite of the fact that the whole philosophic tradition and the common sense point to a broader criterion, and they construct on its basis a system of doctrines which excludes theology, metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics from the sphere of knowledge. It seems that all seriousness has been abandoned in contemporary logico-positivistic philosophy. The notion of moral judgments has fallen back to the view of the Greek Sophists despite the seriousness of events in the history of the present century.

Mr. Dunham meditates on this point:

It is at once absurd and fitting that at just that moment of history when the most exquisite torments have been inflicted and the greatest agonies endured there should exist a philosophy which holds moral judgments to be capable of no proof. One might think that philosophers of such mind would recoil from the consequences of their theory and re-examine the postulates which had generated such folly. For the consequences are that one cannot rationaly choose (i.e., choose on the basis of argument) between death camp and liberation; one can only "evince" approval or disapproval. One cannot demonstrate that fascist practices are an evil; one can only express dislike of them..."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Open Society and its Enemies, Princeton University Press, 1950, p. 283, n. 51 (1).

<sup>3</sup> Man Against Myth, Frederick Muller, 1948, pp. 253 f.

Modern men has a tendency to dictate how reality should look like rather than to follow its structure; he admits only those "values" which he himself creates; he admits of "right" and "wrong" only in so far as it is subjectively satisfying to him. And only such a man can go so far as to propose to the world an emotivist account of judgments of value, defending it within the system of logico-positivistic doctrines. We can fully agree with a lucid passage of the great man of letters, T.S. Eliot, who writes:

Logical positivism is not a nourishing diet for more than the small minority which has been conditioned to it. When the time of its exhaustion arrives, it will appear, in retrospect, to have been for our age the counterpart of surrealism: for as surrealism seemed to provide a method of producing works of art without imagination so logical positivism seems to provide a method of philosophising without insight and wisdom. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Introduction" to Joseph Pieper's Leisure - the Basis of Culture, New York, Pantheon Books, 1952, (pp. 11-17), p. 12.

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## RESUME

The emotive theory of value judgments is not another normative system; it is an analytical study which tries to determine what value judgments can or do mean. Its object is not a realm of values but the valuational discourse.

Emotivists deny that statements of value express propositions; that is, that they express anything which could be said to be true or false. But they deny this only in regard to normative value statements, not to the many statements of fact which are usually found in treatments of value, nor to the analytical statements which are true or false by definition. But the typical statements of value, statements about the ends, are on their view expressions of our feelings.

Emotive interpretation of value judgments is only one possible interpretation and is comparatively new. We have had in the history several types of objectivistic and several types of ordinary subjectivistic interpretations, all of which share in common the view that statements of value are genuine and say something either about the object out there or about one's own psychological condition. The emotive theory as well as other types of noncognitivism (e.g. informalism) deny to such statements any cognitive character.

The distinction between the cognitive and the expressive or emotive function of language has its roots in Ogden and Richards' Meaning of Meaning in which the basis for emotive character of value judgments is laid on linguistic ground. Value predicates are proclaimed to refer to no property in the object nor to any feeling of the speaker: they are not symbolic but expressive, verbal medium to vent our emotions.

The systematic application of Ogden and Richards' distinction between the cognitive and the expressive functions of language to statements of value

was made by the members of the Viennese Circle. These thinkers searched for a criterion of meaning on the basis of which they could determine what we know and what is merely expression of feelings. The long empirical tradition at the University of Vienna and the great impact of Wittgenstein's doctrines at the time suggest why they chose a positivist criterion which states that a proposition is meaningful if and only if it is verifiable by sense experience or is analytic. Statements of value cannot pass this requirement, consequently they assigned them to the expressive realm. Statement such as "Killing is evil" is equivalent to "Killing!!" pronounced with a voice of disapproval. It may be conceived as an exclamation or as an imperative (Don't kill!) or as an optative (I wish you wouldn't kill!) or as a persuasion (I disapprove of killing--you should disapprove as well!).

To answer the question how is it possible that people of every age entertain such strong beliefs about right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, and so on, the emotivists invoke genetic explanations. These, however, do not in any way affect the content of those beliefs, but only show (correctly or incorrectly) how people came to these beliefs. The emotivist analysis suffers also from the extreme sensist prejudices of its proponents: any statement that cannot be verified by experience or is not true on definition is to be excluded from the realm of knowledge; and experience is equivalent to sensory experience. Introspection of our state of mind in making value judgment, which leads one to an objective interpretation of such judgments, is rejected by them since they endorse generally only behavioristic approach in psychology. The everyday experience of common sense people that statements of value assert an opinion and that that opinion is not merely one's own psychological state is rejected as a mistake caused by the grammatical similarity of statements of fact and statements of value. The belief that we can genuinely disagree as to values is proclaimed

to be a result of the same confusion. Thus the emotivists prefer to reject everyday experience in order to preserve a formal consistency with their positivistic starting point.

In spite of their conception of philosophy as a logical clarification of language, the basic terms of their analysis of value judgments are left utterly ambiguous. Such terms are for instance "expression," "feeling," "attitude," "right," "command," and the "cognitive," and "emotive language."

Perhaps the most important flaw in the emotivist theory is its failure to account for the generally accepted view that we can justify at least some of the value statements. If--as the emotivists contend--statements of value do not assert anything, but are simply expressions comparable to "Ouch!", "Hurrah!", and even animal cries, what could be said in their support? No one disputes the genuine character of such expressions. But are some of the expressions better, or more justifiable, than others? Does "better" mean "more truly felt"?

Nothing could be said against such expressions; we can only voice our difference of feeling and try to create in the other feelings similar to our own. Since there is no question of knowledge involved, we could not argue about the rationality of our opponent's or our own value utterances. Similarly, our deliberation on a matter of value, or our seeking of an ethical advice, makes no sense on the emotivistic view: it would seem that I merely want to acquire certain feeling toward an object or action--which is decidedly not what we think we want to achieve in deliberation or in asking for advice. We could also not really disagree by pronouncing two apparently contradictory statements of value.

The emotivist translations of value judgments seem to me unfaithful to experience, and no claim that they do take into account the evidence of our concrete moral and aesthetic life warrants the emotivist view that such judgments

are nothing but expressions of the feeling of like or dislike. The theory is decidedly against experience and stands or falls with the positivistic pre-suppositions - specifically the criterion of meaning - on which it is based.

What one should do is not to relate our value judgments to an arbitrary accepted criterion of meaning but to determine whether the claim of such judgments to say something about objects and actions has any foundation in reality. This, however, will be impossible unless we consider objects and actions evaluated as they reveal to us in the concrete experience.

Such consideration of ethical and aesthetic data as revealed in our concrete experiences point clearly to another interpretation of value judgments; they show that a recognition of value is presupposed in every evaluation, that every value judgment is a response to the value and those feelings which accompany the recognition of value are a logical consequence of that recognition rather than the whole content of our value judgments.

Our concrete situation necessitates also that we consider moral acts, and judgments about moral acts, in relationship to human nature. Such consideration shows that the judgments we make about moral goodness or badness certainly do characterize acts themselves rather than our attitude toward them; and it certainly shows that such judgments are not simply verbal exteriorization of our emotional states.