The aim in this thesis is to investigate the logical status of meta-ethical theories which attempt to analyse ethical sentences in terms of other types of sentences or other types of human activity. That is, an investigation of the logic of statements like "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion", "Value judgements are (disguised) commands", "Ethical statements are (peculiar) descriptions" is presented.

To do this, one such theory, the Emotive Theory, is considered in some detail. This theory was chosen above the others for more detailed treatment as it has proved the most influential in the development of contemporary philosophy since the 1930s when it was first presented. It is here shown that in its historically important presentation, the Emotive Theory is literally false, although it can be made true by suitable re-definition. It can then be seen that the process of making the theory true by re-definition removes it from the type of theory which it is the aim of this thesis to investigate for the theory then ceases to analyse ethical sentences in terms of other types of sentences or other types of human activity. Thus there is no lengthy investigation of the theory when it involves new definition for this falls outside the scope of the thesis.

Having presented a detailed refutation of the Emotive Theory as an attempt to analyse ethical sentences in terms of
other types of sentences or other types of human activity, a general refutation of all such attempts is developed. It is shown that such statements as "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion", "Value judgements are (disguised) commands", "Ethical statements are (peculiar) descriptions" are all literally false however much they may point up important facts. This is followed by a short discussion of the implications of the thesis in respect to philosophical investigations of the logic of ethical statements.
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Department of Philosophy

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

My first task in this thesis is to discuss the Emotive Theory of Ethics on its merits and in a conventional way. I consider three possible interpretations of the theory and endeavour to show that the first two, which contain what might be called the usual interpretation of the Emotive Theory, are false but that the third, under certain conditions, is true.

Having done this, I reconsider the Emotive Theory and give a general refutation of the first two interpretations. This refutation, I attempt to show, is entirely general for the analysis of value judgements or ethical statements in terms of other types of statements. I go on to show that under certain conditions this applies to all attempts to analyse one type of sentence in terms of other types of sentences, i.e. that "every type of statement has its own type of logic". I next discuss briefly the consequences of what I have said for ethical theory generally.

I give notice that the points here discussed are presented, with very few exceptions, in as compact a form as possible. This is with reason as well as through personal preference. It is deliberate because though it makes initial reading harder, it presents my thesis in a more manageable form so that the essential structure is never hidden. That is, I have tried to avoid as far as possible the fault of which Lord Russell accused William James - he said that reading James' work was
like sitting in a bath with the water getting hotter and never knowing when to scream. If I have succeeded in what I set out to do, there will be no difficulty knowing when to scream in what follows.
The emotive theory of ethics

I

The emotive theory of ethics

1. Professor Ayer's statement of the Emotive Theory of Ethics is as follows. In *Language, Truth and Logic* he writes: "In so far as statements of value are significant, they are ordinary 'scientific' statements; and that in so far as they are not scientific, they are not in the literal sense significant, but are simply expressions of emotion which can be neither true nor false."¹ It is this position which I wish to attack.

There are other contemporary writers who have put forward theories which have also been called 'Emotive Theories' of ethics - in particular, Ogden and Richards² and Dr. Stevenson.³

¹ Ayer, A. J., *Language, Truth and Logic* (1935), New York, Dover, 1946, Ch IV, p. 102. All the following quotations from this work refer to this chapter unless noted otherwise.


I do not wish to enter here into the discussion of whether these men do hold the same theory as that held by Ayer and all future references to the Emotive Analysis in what follows must be taken to refer to Ayer's theory as put forward in *Language, Truth and Logic* unless otherwise noted.

2. When Ayer writes "Statements of value are simply expressions of emotion", this is open to three interpretations:

(a) He could mean that "statement of value" and "expression of emotion" are simply different names for the same thing. Thus anything which could correctly be called an expression of emotion could also be called a statement of value with complete propriety and similarly, anything which could be correctly called an expression of emotion could also be called a statement of value.

(b) He could mean that the class of statements of value is included within the class of expressions of emotion. This would imply that everything which could be correctly called a statement of value could also be called an expression of emotion with complete propriety but that there could be some expressions of emotion which would not be statements of value.

(c) He could be intending to introduce a new technical term "expression of emotion" under which could be subsumed what we would ordinarily call expressions of emotion and what we would ordinarily call statements of value. This would be somewhat similar to the way in which scientists have introduced a
5.

technical term "mammal" to cover a wide range of living organisms. Such a position would not involve that what we ordinarily call statements of value would ever be what we ordinarily call expressions of emotion nor vice versa but only that both what we ordinarily call expressions of emotion and what we ordinarily call statements of value would always be "expressions of emotion" as newly defined.

It must be our task now to investigate Ayer's arguments for the Emotive Theory along with the three possible interpretations of the theory.

3.

It is perhaps not unfruitful here to discuss which of these three interpretations Ayer wishes to support and whether he is supporting one interpretation only in what he has written on ethics.

3.1

In Language, Truth and Logic, Ayer writes:

The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus if I say to someone 'You acted wrongly in stealing that money', I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money!'.....It is as if I had said, 'You stole that money', in a peculiar tone of horror or written it with the addition of some special exclamation marks. The tone, or the exclamation marks, adds nothing to the literal meaning of the sentence.

The second sentence in this quotation is highly ambiguous for he never defines 'statement' and it is therefore very difficult

---

4 I can find no definition or obviously technical use of 'statement' in Language, Truth and Logic. He does define the word quite closely in the new preface added in 1946 but this is so he can put it to new use. There is no suggestion that this was the definition he had in mind while writing the original work ten years before but forgot to include.
to know what he means by "not stating anything more". However, considering all Ayer has had to say of the subject of verification, it would seem likely that what he means by "not stating anything more" is that if we take the two separate sentences which would together imply "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" i.e. the sentences "You stole that money" and "That action was wrong", then "That action was wrong" is unverifiable. There is good reason to suppose that this is what he means. For, as we see from the quotation above, as well as using the difficult phrase "Not stating anything more" he also says it "adds nothing to the literal meaning of the sentence". Elsewhere in Language, Truth and Logic he says that if someone said something which was "not intended to express either a tautology or a proposition which was capable, at least in principle, of being verified, then it follows that he has made an utterance which has no literal significance".

To return, then, if he thinks, as he certainly does, that statements of value are unverifiable, then his statement, if true, could support either interpretation (a) or (b) above for an expression of emotion, as these words are usually understood, is certainly unverifiable. And if "expressions of emotion" was redefined so that the redefined expressions of emotion were unverifiable, then it would support interpretation (c) above at the same time.

However, this is not all Ayer has to say. He also

claims that if someone says: "Stealing money is wrong" it is as if he had said "Stealing money!" in a special tone or written it with special exclamation marks. We are caught again here by Ayer's dislike of saying precisely what he means. If we say "John hit the boy" it is as if we had said "The boy was hit by John". The same fact has been unmistakably described. But if we say "You pinched that can of soup" is it then as if we had said "You stole that can of soup"? The same fact has been unmistakably described. The "it" in "It is as if" presumably refers to the situation in question. "It is as if" means that the situation remains the same whether we say "p" or say "q". Just as the hostess who wishes to be rude to a guest behaves as if he was not there. This implies, surely, that she behaves as she would have behaved had he not been there, her reactions to "Mr. X is present" are identical with her reactions to "Mr. X is not present". Ayer wants us to believe that though there are obvious verbal differences between "Stealing money is wrong" and "You stole that money" plus a special tone, the situation would in both cases remain unchanged. But with matters as emotionally charged as moral pronouncements, this is surely a dangerous empirical generalization. It cannot be what he is after, his thesis is a logical one. He must mean then that there is no logical difference between saying "Stealing money is wrong" and "You stole that money" plus a special tone - just as it is the same to an adding machine if we punch "2 + 3" or "3 + 2" however much the sounds would be different if someone
read out what he were doing. Ayer is thus asserting the logical equivalence of "Stealing money is wrong" and "Stealing money" plus a special tone.

However, there is a further difficulty. Ayer leaves us in some doubt as to whether he thinks there is a special tone now in existence which would make the two collections of words logically equivalent or whether this is yet to be invented. If he would claim that in ordinary discourse it is logically equivalent to say "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" and "Stealing that money" plus a special tone, then he would seem to be supporting at least interpretation (b) above, if not interpretation (a). That is, if he intends that "Stealing that money!" (which he presumably thinks of as an uncomplicated expression of emotion) should be equivalent to "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" and, further, that this is the typical behaviour of statements of value and expressions of emotion, then statements of value would be included within the class of expressions of emotion.

If, however, Ayer means that we could, by inventing a special tone, turn "You acted wrongly etc....." into "Stealing etc....", he would seem to be implying "We can see that statements of value are simply what we conventionally call expressions of emotion for we see that we can convert them into what are obviously expressions of emotion by inventing this new tone. And if statements of value can be so converted without altering their meaning, then it follows that they were expressions of
emotion to begin with, however much they appear in a coat of a different colour". If Ayer wishes to claim this, then it is again interpretation (b) above which he is supporting for if a statement of value is simply an atypical expression of emotion then it must be an expression of emotion.

We may note that the position discussed above is, I think, the position which a supporter of the Emotive Theory is usually considered to support. It is also the position I am most interested in discrediting.

3.2

We will now consider briefly what Ayer has had to say on ethics since the first publication of Language, Truth and Logic. In the new Introduction to Language, Truth and Logic he says: "The theory [the Emotive Theory] is here presented in a very summary way". But he does not back down from the position he has advanced, he merely apologises for the refinements and arguments he has left out. Thus our analysis of what position he is putting forward in this work stands. This new Introduction was published in 1946. In 1949 he published 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements' in Horizon. In this article he states his own position by saying "I still wish to hold that what are called ethical statements are not really statements at all, that they are not descriptive of anything, that they cannot be either true or false". To this he adds the more positive statement: "What may be described as moral attitudes consist in certain patterns

of behaviour, and that the expression of a moral judgement is an element in that pattern". This is a very different position from those discussed in the preceding paragraphs (interpretations (a) and (b)) as it merely suggests certain properties which the logic of statements of value have without bringing in expressions of emotion at all. However, it could be considered as supporting interpretation (c) above, for the very properties of statements of value he names (with perhaps, more added.) could well be considered to be the defining characteristics of the newly defined "expression of emotion". Further, in this article, he does not argue for a position other than (c) i.e. he does not argue for or mention the possibility of his theory being interpretation (a) or (b) above although, as we have seen, he is giving his support to at least (b) in Language, Truth and Logic. He also admits that his position in Language, Truth and Logic leaves something to be desired. He says; "To say, as I once did, that these moral judgements are merely expressive of certain types of feelings, feelings of approval or disapproval, is an over-simplification". In what follows, I shall go further than saying his previous position was an over-simplification, but the important point to notice is that although he still claims to support the Emotive Theory, he supports a different and less radical theory than what he previously called the Emotive Theory. The position he supports 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements', I shall call it the New Emotive Theory, will be discussed below. My point here is that
the New Emotive Theory is in important respects different from the original Emotive Theory.

4. We have seen that the position which Ayer would appear to support in *Language, Truth and Logic* is at least interpretation (b) above and he does not say anything to rule out interpretation (a), however unlikely it may seem. Also, I think it is true to say that most philosophers consider the Emotive Theory to involve at least interpretation (b) and this being the case, it must be our business to consider it here.

It will be noticed immediately that if (a) is true, (b) must be true and that if (b) is false, (a) must be false, i.e. (a) involves that all expressions of emotion shall be statements of value and all statements of value shall be expressions of emotion while (b) only involves that all statements of value shall be expressions of emotion. For this reason it is my intention here to show that (b) is false from which it immediately follows that (a) is false also.

5. We must first inspect the arguments which Ayer brings in support of this interpretation, i.e. (b).

The only 'argument' Ayer brings is contained in the passage quoted earlier which claims that "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" and "You stole that money" plus an added special tone are logically equivalent. We saw also that there are two possible interpretations which can be placed on this
passage: (i) that there is presently in currency a tone of voice in which "You stole that money" could be given which would make these two collections of words equivalent and (ii) that the two collections of words would be equivalent were we to invent a suitable special tone or a suitable and unique punctuation mark. We will consider these two alternatives separately.

5.1 If Ayer intends (i) above, it is not sufficient that he should be able to find one example where it is plausible to maintain that a certain statement of value is equivalent to another group of words which, he would have us believe, is an expression of emotion for this one example could be an odd case, atypical and therefore not suitable material on which to draw a general conclusion. I do not intend here to offer comments on the equivalence in the example Ayer offers for, as we shall see, he chooses a very confusing example. However, for interpretation (i) to hold water every statement of value must be equivalent to some presently possible expression of emotion, i.e. an expression of emotion not delivered in some yet-to-be-invented special tones. In order to dispose of this position we need only show that the example Ayer gives is in some way atypical and find a contrary case, i.e. a statement of value which certainly cannot be translated into an expression of emotion in the way Ayer suggests it can. This I shall endeavour to do.
The example Ayer takes is itself highly confusing. In the passage previously quoted, Ayer writes: "The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content". Thus, he implies that in the sentence "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" the 'ethical symbol' is 'wrongly', for he refers to the exclamation "You stole that money!" as containing no ethical symbol. But, if 'good', 'bad', 'wrong' etc. and their derivatives are only ethical symbols, then within our society 'stealing', 'lying', 'deceiving' etc. and their derivatives have very important similarities of function with ethical symbols. They themselves express ethical evaluations. In any case, sufficient doubt can be thrown on the purely descriptive nature of such terms to consider Ayer's example atypical.

We can clear some of the confusion by taking a different and less muddling example than Ayer's. Suppose someone says: "You acted wrongly in borrowing that tin of soup" ('wrongly' used here as a normative symbol). Then it is impossible to convey the same thing by saying "Borrowing that tin of soup!" whatever the emphasis or tone with which it is said, i.e. no presently current tone or exclamation mark could make "Borrowing that tin of soup" equivalent to "You acted wrongly in borrowing that tin of soup" whatever might be done with specially invented tones. The most accomplished actor in the world, though he might be able to express moral disapprobation in saying "Borrowing that tin of soup!" (just as he could in saying "Ugh!"), could not unambiguously communicate moral disapprobation as he could
by saying, "You acted wrongly in borrowing that tin of soup". That is, it is not unambiguously \textit{as if} (to use Ayer's phrase) he had said "You acted wrongly in borrowing that tin of soup" for how are we to tell that he is not, say, expressing acute astonishment at finding you had run out of soup, or surprise at finding that you are borrowing and not buying it. Nor can I imagine any other type of expression of emotion which would be equivalent to "You acted wrongly in borrowing that tin of soup". Supposing my imagination is not at fault here, this is the desired contrary case.

5.2 If Ayer intends (ii) above, then his statement, even if it is true, does not go to show the point he would wish it to show. Under interpretation (b) above, Ayer must be maintaining that a statement of value is an expression of emotion in an unfamiliar dress. If now he invents a tone of voice so that "You stole that money" said in that tone of voice is equivalent to "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" he has presented us with a statement of value in an unfamiliar dress. This unfamiliar dress might make it look as if it were an expression of emotion to cursory inspection but the practice of philosophy has made us very chary of expressions which look alike to cursory inspection. We all know that "I saw nobody on the road" and "I saw Jones on the road", though alike to cursory inspection, have fundamental differences. Thus, to prove his point, Ayer must not only show that a statement of value can, by a suitable convention, be dressed as an expression of emotion but
also that this mode of dress brings out the real nature of statements of value and that it does not just obscure it. If Ayer invents a special tone of voice which would make "You stole that money" equivalent to "You acted wrongly in stealing that money", then the two collections of words, with the special tone added to the first, are equivalent by definition. The synthetic proposition: "You stole that money* plus the special tone, is an expression of emotion" has had no arguments whatever brought in its support.

If Ayer wishes to argue that "You stole that money" plus his special tone is an expression of emotion in support of interpretation (b) above he would have to show that "You stole that money" plus the special tone is an expression of emotion. And surely it will be easier just to show that an ordinary statement of value is an expression of emotion without ever dealing with a 'special tone' which has all the disadvantages of an artificial language. However, whether or not inventing a special tone is going to make Ayer's task harder and not easier, as I have suggested, the onus is undoubtedly on Ayer to show either that "You stole that money" plus his special tone or "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" is an expression of emotion if he wishes to substantiate interpretation (b) above. In as much as he has not done this, he has not, anyway by this argument under this interpretation, shown that interpretation (b) above of his central position is correct.
5.3 Ayer brings one other consideration to bear which we would do well to mention here. He writes in *Language, Truth and Logic*: "We hold that one never really does dispute about questions of value" and goes on to support this statement. I do not here propose to go into this question. It is perfectly true that if interpretation (b) is correct then dispute about questions of value would be impossible and thus he must claim that dispute about questions of value is impossible. But it is plain that though (b) could not be correct if we could dispute about questions of value in, anyway, ways in which we cannot dispute about expressions of emotion, yet it is logically possible that we should not be able to dispute about statements of value in the way in which we can not dispute about expressions of emotion and also that (b) above is false. His arguments for our inability to dispute about questions of value are thus not to the point in proving (b). And as we are only interested in arguments in support of (b) at the present time, we need not consider it here.

We may thus conclude that Ayer brings no valid arguments to support interpretation (b) above. Thus we are free to go on to consider interpretation (b) of the Emotive Theory on its own merits. This we shall now do.

6.

We must note that Ayer's position in *Language, Truth and Logic* is a very slippery one. There would seem to be two ways to approach it in order to refute it. In the first place
we could take an expression of emotion which is supposed to be a value judgement and show that it is not a value judgement. But this course is not open to us because any expression of emotion we take may in fact not be a disguised value judgement for under interpretation (b) it is only all value judgements which are expressions of emotion and not vice versa. Thus of any expression of emotion we might take Ayer could always say, "But this is an expression of emotion which is not a disguised value judgement". As he tells us of no distinguishing features which expressions of emotion which are disguised value judgements have, this answer is always available to him.

In the second place we could take a value judgement and show that it cannot be translated into an expression of emotion, i.e. that for any given value judgement "V" there is no expression of emotion "E" which can be substituted for it so that when we say "V" it is as if we had said "E" in an appropriate situation. However, this door is also closed to us. Ayer distinguishes between normative and descriptive ethical symbols. At least, what he really does is tell us that there is a distinction to be drawn between them without ever telling us how in any particular case we may decide. He writes:

It is advisable here to make it plain that it is only normative ethical symbols, and not descriptive ethical symbols, that are held by us to be indefinable [i.e. expressions of emotion]. There is a danger of confusing these two types of symbols, because they are commonly constituted by signs of the same sensible form. Thus a complex sign of the form "x is wrong" may constitute a sentence which expresses a moral judgement concerning a certain type of conduct, or it may constitute a sentence which states that a certain type of conduct is repugnant to the moral sense of a particular society.
"There is a danger of confusing these two types of symbols". There is indeed. There is more here than a danger, there is a fire escape. For having stated his belief in such a distinction and said that he is only referring to normative ethical symbols in his own analysis, Ayer can now say of any particular value judgement which, it is claimed, is not an expression of emotion nor translatable into one, that in fact it was not a value judgement at all, i.e. the ethical symbol it contains is not normative but descriptive. Therefore unless Ayer presents us with a sentence which is certainly a normative value judgement or tells us the distinguishing marks by which we ourselves can find one, this answer is always open to him whatever case allegedly contrary to his analysis we attempt to bring.

We might almost conclude our examination of Ayer's version of the Emotive Theory here for the phrase "normative ethical symbol" with the proviso that such must appear in a value judgement for it to be a value judgement is such a well lubricated weasel that we might claim that further inspection of the Emotive Theory was pointless. For Ayer has boldly asserted that all value judgements are simply expressions of emotion but he has not even attempted to show that there are any value judgements at all once we force his conditions of what a value judgement must be to be a value judgement onto ordinary discourse. The sharp line he attempts to draw between "descriptive ethical symbols" and "normative ethical symbols" is certainly sufficiently unobvious to require some expansion and discussion. The OUD says "normative" means "Establishing
a norm or standard". Thus Ayer's non-descriptive normative symbol comes perilously close to a contradiction in terms using the conventional meaning of "normative" for it is hard to see how a standard is to be set without description. Thus the simplest procedure would be to challenge Ayer to produce a true value judgement (i.e. one containing a normative ethical symbol). We would then be in a position to know whether his propositions about the logic of value judgements are in fact concerned with what we would ordinarily call ethical pronouncements and, if they are, to assess their validity.

However, I do not propose to leave the examination of interpretation (b) of the Emotive Theory here partly because it has proved far too powerful a theory to convict on a technicality and partly because it seems likely that a good part of the support it has received stems from the similarity which undoubtedly exists between emotional outpourings and value judgements - a similarity which the temper of this century has been happy to emphasize. It is therefore my intention to analyse some aspects of expressions of emotion and value judgements to show that they do have most important differences.

6.01
We have seen that there is no easy refutation of interpretation (b) of the Emotive Theory. We have seen this is the case because the obvious way to refute it would be to produce a sentence which under the interpretation should not be contradictory and is or produce a sentence which should be contradictory and is
not. We cannot do this because whatever sentence we produce as a statement of value Ayer can claim that it is in fact not a statement of value at all, that the ethical symbol is not normative but descriptive. As Ayer does not give us the criteria to distinguish between what is a normative symbol and what is not, we have no come-back to this assertion. Nor, as we have seen, does the dictionary give us any help here (nor, incidentally, does Ayer's use of the word 'normative' elsewhere for he is vastly sparing with it). And though if Ayer were forced to this expedient often enough we might begin to suspect his position is vacuous, this procedure is not open to us and we must therefore adopt another approach.

6.1

My aim now will be to show that the logic of expressions of emotion and the logic of statements of value are different. In particular, I wish to show that there is a certain consistency in our use of value judgements which the logic of those statements require and which the logic of expressions of emotion does not require. As it stands, this is too vague a thesis for detailed discussion. I will therefore say I wish to develop this thesis: That a value judgement carries with it implications for the future that an expression of emotion does not carry. That is, if Mr. A. in his right mind, not drunk, not in love, not starving, etc. says "x is good" this carries with it implications as to his future conduct which his saying "Damn!" or "Ugh!" does not carry. To this end, I shall bring several different considerations. We have already seen that there
is no easy, cut and dried refutation of (b) and my aim now
must therefore be to demonstrate my point by a number of con­
siderations rather than one decisive argument.

6.11

The first point I wish to make is one which Ayer
himself makes in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements'. He
writes: "What is approved of or disapproved of is something
repeatable. In saying that Brutus or Raskolnikov acted rightly,
I am giving myself and others leave to imitate them should
similar circumstances arise. I show myself to be favourably
disposed towards actions of that type". This is, I suspect,
intended to be at variance with what he wrote earlier in
Language, Truth and Logic though it is hard to say so definitely
because his analysis is conducted in different terms. However,
whether or not he is knowingly offering an alternative analysis
to that in Language, Truth and Logic and in particular inter­
pretation (b), he is offering support for my contention that
the logic of value utterances requires a certain consistency
in the use of such utterances. His statement is sufficiently
interesting to merit further discussion.

It is undoubtedly correct that we often judge actions
as being of a certain type when we judge morally. The reason
we try to persuade others that their moral evaluations are
incorrect is not, most of the time, so that we can have the
pleasure of hearing them retract but so that in the future
they will judge morally, and act, differently. But we do not
argue about the future. We argue about their past, about Brutus or about Raskolnikov. It is not that there is any practical considerations at stake as regards these situations, for they can never now be affected by our argument. The practical considerations are that our opponents present moral convictions may lead him in the future to assassinate, say, the President of the United States for similar reasons to those which influenced Brutus or might lead him to murder an old woman as he has the greater right to live or might lead him to injure us in some way. We go through this frequently heated argument about unchangeable past situations just because we recognise that from a man's past moral judgements we can infer his future moral judgements and perhaps his future actions. If it was not that our future moral judgements are in part anyway a function of our moral judgements about situations past, present or imaginary, the whole fabric of moral argumentation would be a ludicrous game having no possible end but the present enjoyment we get from the argument. To hold that it is such a game is to me plainly ridiculous. Or, if you like, it is the game of life played in total desperation except for the hope that the future will have some of the fear of the unknown wrested from it by a present guarantee of future happenings, a game with high stakes and the players vainly asking for a hint of what cards another holds in his hand. Our moral arguments are no more a game and just as much a game as a man's defence at a murder trial is a game. We live and die, sometimes, owing to others' moral
judgements and our moral arguments before this situation arises are our life insurance, the hedges we place on the gamble of life.

6.12 I wish now to inspect the sort of considerations we bring to bear in a discussion on moral matters. Let us say that Mr. A. and Mr. B. disagree morally about an actual act 'x' of A's, i.e. A says "x was right" and B. says "x was wrong". I am not here concerned with whether or not they are formally contradicting one another. They disagree in the way in which many of us disagree every day. A. is maintaining that his act was right, B. that it was not. To justify himself, A. says, "I think all acts of type X are right. My action x was of type X and I therefore regard it as right. If I had the opportunity to do another act of type X and all else was equal, I would do it". Now A. is claiming in his defence just that property of moral judgements we have been discussing. He is saying that he has not been inconsistent, (i.e. he has been consistent with his own past value judgements) with perhaps the added challenge that this is the only ground we could take against him. The fact that A., and all of us, do sometimes make this type of defence, shows that we recognise this property of moral language in our use of it. If B. agrees that actions of type X are right, then he will either try to show that the action x was not of type X or he will agree that A. was right in doing x. If he disagrees, says that all actions of type X are wrong, it is very difficult for A. to go on arguing except by referring to yet more inclusive types of action. Faced with the situation in which our opponent
has a completely self-consistent moral system with which we disagree we have no answer. The sort of consideration we usually bring is to say "You agree y is bad, z is bad, etc, how can you still say x is good for they are all actions of the same type". The sort of answer we bring to this is not to say: "I don't care if y and x are actions of the same type, I still say y is bad and x good" but to try to show that x and y are actions of different types, usually by bringing forward the particular circumstances which make x different from y and z.

This is the way we argue. The only point of the other devices we sometimes use in an endeavour to sway others morally, i.e. the quoting of the moral opinions of others, the stories we tell about shepherds with their flocks, the man who fell among thieves or Albion and the Furnaces of Los, is our hope that seeing the rights and wrongs of the matter in this simplified form our opponent will be able to apply the general principle to the matter now under discussion. If our opponent is unwilling to be persuaded, his standard reply, as we all know, is "Ah, but this is different". He is saying that his own opinion is not inconsistent with the principle exemplified in the general moral command "Thou shouldst love thy neighbour as thyself" or the story of the good Samaritan. To construct even an imaginary argument which is not preliminary discussion leading to agreement as to belief about the facts without using the certain consistency demanded by the logic of our use of moral language, is impossible.

I wish now to inspect the sort of considerations which
lead us to say that a man "does not really mean it" when he makes a moral judgement. We frequently do do this. Of the drunk we say "He knows perfectly well he ought not to drink too much, that it is disgusting" in spite of the drunk's protestations that "Drinking is the finest thing, everyone ought to be drunk at least once a week". Of the lover we say "He doesn't really think that free-love is good - he's not himself now". Or of the starving man we say "He knows stealing is wrong whatever he says now, hungry and broke".

We do not say "He does not really mean it" of a man who, drunk or sober, year in and year out, and in good faith declares drinking too much is the highest aim in life. We may regard his moral views as reprehensible, we may argue with him, but in good faith we do not say "He does not really mean it". But we do say it of the book-keeper of exemplary character who lives just down the street and now, at an office party, has for the first time imbibed too freely or made a faltering attempt to hold one of the typist's hands. We say "He does not really mean it, pay no attention" because he is now "not himself", because it is inconsistent with his past value judgements. We say this because we know that in the past his statements that excessive drinking is disgusting, wrong are not remarks intended to convey only his present, spontaneous reactions but one exemplification of the general moral principles which run, probably, through his whole life.

To quote from the same article by Ayer again: "An
action or a situation is morally evaluated as an action or a situation of a certain type". This point is logically bound up with the question of consistency in moral judgements. For once we admit that we do at least sometimes morally evaluate situations of a certain kind, we must also admit that there is a logical requirement for consistency in our moral evaluation. For if we deny this consistency, there would be no point in evaluating situations of a certain kind. There would be no point because it would serve no useful function to do so. If our moral evaluation of a situation was merely the emotion we express faced directly or indirectly by that situation, there would be no use in language for statements like "To kill is evil". In as much as there are many such sentences in the language and they are frequently used, they have a use.

6.2

We have been investigating one aspect of the logic of value judgements. But we will not have completed the case against interpretation (b) until we have shown that expressions of emotion do not exhibit the same logic. This we shall now attempt to do.

Consider the sort of things which are pretty undoubtedly expressions of emotion. A scream, a blush, the spontaneous curses when we hit our thumb with a hammer, the "Ugh!" as we drink sour beer, the flood of tears which so surprises both the onlooker and, often, the person crying. One feature appears immediately, the spontaneous nature of these expressions. When
someone Ohs and Ahs in front of a picture we feel sure he does not appreciate we say, "It is just an act, it is not spontaneous, he doesn't really feel that way". We mean that what has been said is not a function of that person's feelings about the picture but of something else. A spontaneous reaction is not necessarily one which arises unbidden to the lips but one which is purely a response to what is presented. This is in direct contradistinction to the previous case of the book-keeper. We do not doubt that after twenty years of abstention his sudden declaration for the primacy of booze is purely a response to the present situation. It is precisely because his reaction is spontaneous that we say "He doesn't really mean it". If it had not been spontaneous, if, say, the book-keeper had in fact been thinking deeply about the moral aspects of drinking and come to the conclusion that he should be less sober and this was the first sign of his inner thought, we would have to say "Here is a moral conversion". So long as we think this is not the case, we say "He doesn't really mean it".

Nor should we be confused by the fact that for some things we undoubtedly continue to express the same emotion time after time. A man who has consistently expressed horror of spiders in the past will probably continue to do so. But this is for psychological reasons rather than a requirement of the logic of expressions of emotion. A man who is consistent in his emotional response to spiders may not be in his response to beer or caviar - for today he reacts favourably and tomorrow he
throws it unobtrusively into the garbage can. We are surprised when a man does not stick to what seems to be a usual emotional reaction to a certain situation but there are equally other situations where we are not the slightest degree surprised if the reaction changes from day to day. But with value judgments we do not expect them to change from day to day.

We have seen that some sort of arguing on moral matters is possible past the stage of agreement as to belief about the facts. There are considerations which can be brought and which we hope will lead our opponent to change his mind, say "x is not good but bad". We saw also that the very basis of the possibility of this arguing was the consistency demanded by the logic of moral language in anyone's use of it. But it makes no sense whatever to argue with a blush or an exasperated "Damn!". It makes no sense because the basis for argument on moral matters i.e. the 'certain consistency' of moral language, is lacking. A past expression of emotion is gone and done with, leaving behind it, perhaps, a nasty taste in the mouth but no logical implications for the future.

With this we complete our discussion of interpretation (b), and of (a) also. We saw that for (a) or (b) to be true every statement of value had to be an expression of emotion. We have shown above that statements of value carry with them certain logical implications for the future which expressions of emotion do not carry and it is therefore impossible that any given value judgement should be an atypical expression of emotion, i.e.
impossible that if we say "E" it is as if we had said "V". We therefore conclude that both interpretations (a) and (b) are false.

7. We have now rejected interpretations (a) and (b) of the Emotive Theory as false. There remains interpretation (c) which is yet to be investigated.

Before we go on to consider (c) in any detail it is important to realize the nature of such a position. Interpretation (c) states that there is some way in which "expression of emotion" can be redefined so that both value judgements and expressions of emotion are covered by the definition. It is important to note that because "expression of emotion" can be redefined, this does not involve any particular correspondence between expressions of emotion and value judgements. Interpretation (c) could be true and yet completely vacuous and uninteresting.

Suppose we were to redefine "expression of emotion" to mean every exclamation we would ordinarily call an expression of emotion and every pronouncement we would ordinarily call a value judgement. To say then that statements of value are simply "expressions of emotion" as newly defined is true, vacuous and uninteresting. If, to be true, interpretation (c) has to be of this nature then, though it would be incorrect to say it is false, it deserves only to be ignored.

However, there are certainly more interesting ways in which "expression of emotion" can be redefined. But in all
our consideration of this interpretation we must bear in mind that it is not in the slightest degree surprising that a new definition of "expression of emotion" can be found which makes (c) true. Once we have found a suitable definition we must test it at the bar, not of truth or falsity for if we have done our work well it will certainly make interpretation (c) true, but of whether or not it is misleading, of whether or not we should use the words "expression of emotion" and not a more neutral and artificial form of terminology such as "value equation" or "value indication" or "evaluative response" or something similar.

7.1

I do not propose here to look for just any definition of "expression of emotion" which would make interpretation (c) true for such a search lies outside the scope of this thesis. However, we do have a definition ready to hand from Ayer's 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements'. In the passage previously mentioned, he writes: "What are called ethical statements are not statements at all, ... they are not descriptive of anything,... they cannot be either true or false." We might then define an expression of emotion as: A sound uttered by a human being or a gesture made by one or a combination of these which are not statements, not descriptive of anything, not susceptible of being either true or false.

I think it is plausible to maintain that interpretation
(c) with "expression of emotion" defined as above is a sort of minimum position Ayer wishes to maintain in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements'. By this I mean that though he probably wishes to maintain more about moral judgements than that they are "expressions of emotion" as defined above - for there are traces of an "attitude" and "avowal" theories in the Horizon article - he would certainly not wish to maintain less. He would probably repudiate it precisely because it is only a "minimum position" but it at least provides us with a definition to discuss.

7.2

Although we might be prepared to admit that statements of value as ordinarily conceived are "expressions of emotion" according to the new definition as it stands, there are important respects in which this is not good enough. Our new definition itself requires some discussion before we can discuss its suitability and its potentialities or lack of them to mislead us or others.

The key to the new definition is that a statement of value is unverifiable - it is round this point that Ayer's discussion of it turns. He would not in the slightest mind admitting, presumably, that statements of value described something if we knew what it was they described. For once we knew what was being predicated of the subject, we could go on to investigate whether or not the subject did, in fact, have this property. And because he can find nothing verifiable which is
being predicated of the subject, he says *nothing* is being predicated of the subject, i.e. the subject is not being described at all. What he is really saying in answer to Moore's statement that ethical properties are non-natural properties is that a property to be a property must be a property which we can, anyway in theory, check on. Similarly, he would say a statement was not a statement if it is not susceptible of being either true or false, i.e. verified, and thus that statements of value are not statements at all. He fully realises that in saying this he is using "description" and "statement" differently from the way we would ordinarily use them in conversation, but used in his sense what he says is correct. My point here is that his use of "description" and "statement" in the definition we are considering has its foundations on the question of whether or not an utterance is verifiable and thus his central characterization of statements of value is that they are unverifiable. From which follows the three properties he attributes to statements of value, the three properties we have taken as the defining characteristic of our newly defined "expression of emotion".

Let us for the moment grant Ayer his use of words by which a statement of value does become an "expression of emotion" as newly defined, a use of words which he justifies at the bar of clarity and, I think, justifies cogently. Let us allow that expressions of emotion as ordinarily conceived are also included within the sense of "expressions of emotion" according to the new definition. This last is an important point for if conventional
expressions of emotion did not fall under our newly defined "expression of emotion" the new definition would already have lost all contact with the conventional use of the words, which would militate against the new use being anything but misleading.

We are now in a position to assess the value of this new definition as misleading or enlightened and revealing.

7.3

Consider the following sentence from the outside of a tin to be bought in most grocery stores: "To 5 gallons of boiling water add 2½ lbs. OGL HOP FLAVOURED MALT EXTRACT, 2½ lbs. Demerara Sugar, 1 oz. Gelatine and stir ... etc". This sentence states nothing, i.e. in Ayer's sense of the word it is not a statement, it describes nothing unless we use the word "describe" far more loosely than Ayer would allow in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements' and it is unverifiable, i.e. it can no more be true or false than can "Damn!". Thus it is an "expression of emotion" in the new sense. So, also, are all questions.

Or consider the sentence "The stars are lamps to light us home" or "Every woman is a foreign land". Anyone who, doubting the truth of these statements, was to consult books on Astronomy or the Kinsey Report would have undoubtedly misunderstood the logic of the original sentences. Only in the loosest sense, disallowed by Ayer, could these sentences be said to describe anything, nor do they state anything in Ayer's use of words, nor can they be true or false. They also, then, are expressions of emotion.
Or consider the sentence "Not the earth but the sun is the hub of the solar system, the point about which the planets turn." Too much has been written on this question for me to go into it in any detail for I am only using it as an illustration. But one upshot of what has been written is that the sentence is the expression of a certain way of looking at the solar system, often a highly profitable way, but not one which describes anything, states anything or is capable of being true or false in Ayer's use of these words. It also, then, must be an expression of emotion.

7.4 There is nothing logically the matter with all these statements and ones like them being "expressions of emotion" in the new sense. As Ayer says in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements' while discussing uses of the word "fact", "The only relevant consideration is one of clarity". Very well, will this redefinition make matters, previously obscure, as clear as may be? I think here we can step out of the philosophers usual habit of discussing every aspect of a question before stating a conclusion to say simply that to redefine "expression of emotion" to include all the sorts of sentences discussed in para. 7.3 is highly misleading, to muddy the water of philosophic discussion hugely and unnecessarily. It might have been useful to group value statements with questions, commands and exclamations like "Damn!" etc. once, useful

when an antidote was needed to talk of non-natural properties, but no longer useful, now only confusing. Further, doubly confusing to call questions, commands, instructions for making beer, the Copernican Hypothesis, etc. \textit{expressions of emotion}. Undoubtedly value judgements do have some properties in common with these types of sentence, have important similarities to questions, commands, sentences like "The stars are lamps to light us home" etc. which it is certainly worth while to point out in \textit{some} way, but to call them all expressions of emotion, though true as the term is redefined, is almost like suddenly to call all bonds "money" and all wives "untaxed luxuries" by a suitable emendation of definitions.

We have been considering interpretation (c) of the Emotive Theory. We have seen that there are ways in which "expression of emotion" could be redefined to make the sentence "Statements of value are simply expressions of emotion" true. We also took a redefinition of "expression of emotion" and saw that using this redefinition interpretation (c) is true. But we also tried to show that it would be considerably misleading as the definition would include many types of sentences which would be ill-grouped with statements of value and conventional expressions of emotion. It is, of course, open to anyone to disagree with the statement that the redefinition is highly misleading (or to invent a new definition) but so long as he appreciates the reasons I bring to show it is misleading and I appreciate the points he would bring to show it is not misleading, then our final difference is unimportant. For to call
the redefinition "misleading" or "enlightened" is, in Ayer's words, "not to say any more about [what is the case]; it does not add a further detail to the story".

8. At this point I propose to leave interpretation (c). Logically speaking there are an infinity of ways in which "expression of emotion" could be redefined and even practically the number of possible and potentially suitable definitions is very large. It must be realized that all the value in this interpretation rests on the redefinition. For to claim that interpretation (c) is correct without giving the definition gets us no where at all for, as we have seen, "expression of emotion" can be so defined as to make (c) vacuous and uninteresting, if true. Further, once we have invented a definition which leaves (c) true and meaningful, our choice between this definition and alternative definitions, the criteria by which we judge, are not logical criteria but criteria of suitability, being misleading etc. And for the present I wish to stick as closely as possible to problems where our final conclusion is reached as far as possible on logical grounds only. But there are other grounds which will shortly come to light for saying, as I did earlier, that I do not think hunting for a suitable definition of "expression of emotion" is a profitable task. Further, it could well be argued that the task of finding a suitable definition for "expression of emotion" belongs to sympathizers with the theory - which I am not. It is hardly the
job of one who feels that the whole Emotivist approach to ethics is misguided to search for the definition to make the theory true. And I do disagree with this approach if for no other reason than the use of the word "emotive" in the theory, a use of terms which, however much the theory might be made true by suitable definition, emphasizes the emotive part of our ethical usage as opposed to the intellectual part - in particular, the "certain consistency" in our use of moral language.

However, it is important to notice here that though we have rejected interpretations (a) and (b) of the Emotive Theory as false and shown that interpretation (c) as yet lacks suitable definition of "expression of emotion", this is no reason for concluding that the theory served no useful purpose. It would not be necessary to emphasize this point were it not the case that some philosophers talk as if a rejected philosophical theory wastes everyone's time.

8.1

It is perhaps worthwhile to look a little more closely at the effects of the Emotive Analysis on the philosophic community. It is my belief that very few philosophers ever took interpretations (a) and (b) very seriously for although it can be very difficult to prove that they are false, it seems to me fairly obvious that something is wrong somewhere. The process of introspection, however much it may be of no official interest to philosophers, must convince us that there is an important
difference in kind between our attitude towards honesty or truth telling and our reactions to a loud bang or a body in the library. However, I do not think that philosophers who took the theory seriously were anyway consciously taking it as interpretation (c) for, if they did so, we would surely have had more published attempts at a definition of "expression of emotion". Rather, I suspect, philosophers gave credence to the statement "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" in much the same way as some people give credence to the statement of Colette's that "Bach is an inspired sewing machine". Whether or not my suppositions as to the way philosophers took this theory are correct, it is perhaps interesting to discuss just how it makes a great deal of sense to take the statement "value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" in this way.

We must note immediately that the statement "Bach is an inspired sewing machine", though false (for Bach was a man not a sewing machine) is not nonsense. In fact, once we free ourselves from the tyranny of too definite a copula, we might even be willing to say it was true in a metaphoric way. Supposing we substitute "is like" for "is", which is no more than transforming a metaphor into the more prosaic simile, so that the statement reads, "Bach is like an inspired sewing machine". But this has radically altered the literal character of the statement, for now we see it has similarities with statements like "She looks like a clown" and "She looks like a princess". Both these statements could be made about one other person where
neither speaker was stating a deliberate falsehood. In fact, in Ayer's use of the term, we would say that neither statement was a "statement", that both express an attitude in the speaker. They have made these statements, not to tell us anything new, not to inform us of a fact, but to draw to our attention facts which we already know. And not only to draw certain facts to our attention but also to suggest an evaluation of these facts.

But surely we can decide where justice lies. If A. says "She looks like a clown" and B. says "She looks like a princess" surely one must be right and the other wrong, for clowns and princesses are much unlike. A scientific study of clowns, princesses and the girl in question should reveal that one was wrong and the other right. But we can see that this is not the point at issue for it is entirely possible that even after the closest scientific scrutiny, A. and B. would continue to disagree. Nor could we say that one of them at least was using language oddly in the way we would if A. and B. disagreed over whether a certain fruit was an apple or an orange and scientific enquiry showed it to be an apple. We could never show conclusively that A. or B. was mistaken about the way the girl in question looks. We could only say that we ourselves disagree.

Certainly the statement "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" could be taken in this way. It is extremely unlikely that Ayer intended it to be taken in this way when he wrote it but I do not think I am wrong in supposing
that many philosophers have taken it in this way, perhaps not aware of what they were doing. And taken in this way, the statement has had a beneficial effect on the body philosophic.

At first sight this may seem an odd assertion, for why should philosophers be interested in or enlightened by Ayer's attitude towards statements of value. But as well as expressing an attitude towards something, such statements bring to our attention other facts which may have escaped us previously. The statement "She looks like a clown" brings to our attention the brightly coloured dress where before we had concentrated on the imperiousness in the eye. And this is a function of such statements that it is very hard to overrate as to importance. Almost all philosophical controversy within the last half century consisted in bringing to others' attention facts of language which have been over-looked or ignored. There is, I think, a bias in favour of doing this explicitly but who is to say that other methods are not as good.

This way of taking the statement "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" is a variation of interpretation (c). For under interpretation (c) "expression of emotion" is redefined so that the statement is true. That is, "expression of emotion" is defined in terms of characteristics which expressions of emotion and value judgements have in common and this redefinition therefore draws attention to those characteristics which they have in common. Similarly, the way of taking "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" which I
have discussed above has the effect of drawing attention to the characteristics which value judgements and expressions of emotion have in common, for these are the previously ignored facts which the statement emphasizes.

8.2

To sum up, the value of the Emotive Theory is the value in interpretation (c) as I have shown interpretation (a) and (b) to be false. And the value of interpretation (c) is that it turned our attention away from the seeking of a non-natural property of 'goodness' and demanded, instead, that we recognize that there is a greater similarity than we had previously recognized between saying "x is good" and a scream of delight. It may also bring to our notice another fact, that the sort of situation in which value judgements are usually delivered as a part of everyday living is far more frequently the sort of situation where we and others might have given vent to an expression of emotion than it is the sort of situation where we and others might have given vent to a statement about pure qualities or even, on many occasions, a command. The Emotive Analysis (c) thus directed our attention towards certain features of moral language which had previously been ignored or over-looked. In as much as it also expressed an attitude it suggested an evaluation of the importance of these frequently over-looked features in our discussions about ethical language as it implied that the only important features of a value judgement were the emotive response features.
Looked at in this way, the Emotive Theory and discussion round it has been an excellent philosophic therapeutic—however much the concept of 'importance' may seem foreign in a philosophical enquiry. It was a therapeutic as it provided a counter balance to the theories of the past. But like many forms of therapeutic administered haphazard—or anyway without realising that it is a therapeutic which is being administered—it was over-administered. Not understanding the logic of a therapeutic theory, we take it literally and seriously, as I have taken it in the earlier part of this paper whereas it should be taken in an entirely different way. In the next section I shall discuss the characteristics and the value of therapeutic theories.
My next task will be to discuss directly the status of most linguistic meta-ethical\textsuperscript{1} theories, i.e. theories like: 'value judgements are simply expressions of emotion', 'value judgements are descriptions', 'value judgements are simply (disguised) commands', in an effort to see the correct method of dealing with such theories and of identifying this type of theory.

I propose now to go back to the beginning again with the Emotive Theory to bring somewhat different considerations to bear. These considerations were not brought earlier for, before I had completed the above discussion I was afraid of

\textsuperscript{1} I take the word "meta-ethical" from Ayer in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements'. He says, "All moral theories, intuitionist, naturalistic, objectivist, emotive and the rest ... belong to the field of meta-ethics, not ethics proper". He says also that he is speaking technically there. But so am I here.
being misunderstood and as a result myself being accused of
the crassest stupidity, the grossest misunderstanding of the
Emotive Theory. For my stand here is that the proposition
"Statements of value are simply expressions of emotion" is
obviously false. That is, obviously false unless we posit a
new definition for "expression of emotion" or "value judgement"
of which this proposition gives not the slightest hint. For
the present we will ignore this possibility, I wish only to
say that interpretations (a) and (b) are obviously false, for
these are the only type of interpretations I shall be interested
in during what follows.

10.1

The Emotive Theory was put forward as a logical thesis
and we therefore have the right to assume that it does not
embody a suggestion but that, if correct, it explicitly states
something which is true. What it states is that value judgements
and expressions of emotion are simply one and the same for the
whole class of value judgements, i.e. the class of value judgements
is contained within the class of expression of emotion. But if
they are one and the same, surely we would have been enjoying
some considerable verbal confusion in the past, not illusive
philosophic confusion, but the sort of everyday confusion which
would arise if Mr. X., who regularly uses the alias 'Mr. Y.', is
being talked about by two sets of people one of which know him
as Mr. X. and the other as Mr. Y. This would be the same sort
of confusion as would arise if one group of people uses the term
'mammal' for all mammals where another called them by their particular names, not knowing the meaning of 'mammal'. Then confusion would arise if someone from the first group said "A mammal entered the room" and someone from the second group said "A cat entered the room". They might think they were contradicting each other until someone else explained "A cat is a mammal". But as regards expressions of emotion and value judgements there has been no such confusion, we do not use the terms to apply to the same things not realising that they are the same in both cases. We did not experience the muddle which would have resulted and remained through recorded history until Ayer put pen to paper. My point is: If a company of non-philosophers hear a scream they are in no doubt that it is an expression of emotion; if the same company hears "The degree of civilized cultivation achieved by the aristocracy of Ancient Greece has never been exceeded", they are in no doubt that they have heard a value judgement. If people well conversant with the language can distinguish between the two without doubt, then there must be some difference, i.e. value judgements are not the same as expressions of emotion. There is no need even, except perhaps for the intrinsic interest in the task, to find what the difference is - we have positive evidence to show that there is a very definite difference.

I do not think any supporter of the Emotive Theory would deny this. But as this is a fact which any supporter of the theory knows as well as we do, his belief in the Emotive Theory
is obviously not touched by it. But it is at this point that we realise that his use of "the same" is not as clear as it might be or, when he says that value judgements are simply expressions of emotion, his use of the copula is not to show simple identity. The copulative term designates some connection, some relationship between value judgements and expressions of emotion, but not one of simple identity.

10.2

Earlier we talked as though the difficulties in discussing the Emotive Theory were bound up exclusively in the definitions and properties of "expression of emotion" and "value judgement". But both these words are, at any rate in part or as having a precise denotation, artificial, philosophical terms which can be defined more or less as we wish. Thus they can be defined to make the proposition true or false as we wish and the chief consideration then is whether the words as defined cover all the expressions which, from the standpoint of ordinary speech, it is plausible to maintain are expressions of emotion or value judgements and few of the expressions which it is not plausible to maintain are expressions of emotion or value judgements.

10.21

It is at this point that our inquiries become so badly entangled. On the one hand we have the artificial, philosophic terms "expression of emotion" and "value judgement" and on the other screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!" etc. and statements like "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind" etc.
If we let "expression of emotion" mean just and only screams, gurgles, blushes and exclamations like "Damn!", and "value judgements" mean just and only statements like "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind", etc. we would have gained nothing but a form of shorthand. Further, a misleading shorthand for it is so difficult to keep in mind all these terms must cover. We gain nothing for if screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!", etc. are not the same as sentences like "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind", etc. (as, in the case of the Emotive Theory, they are not, as we have seen in para. 10.1), then equally it makes no difference what gyrations we perform, our shorthand terms cannot logically be the same, i.e. the proposition "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" cannot be true so long as these definitions stand.

10.22 On the other hand, we may define our philosophic terms so that they refer to abstractions from the screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!", etc. and from "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind", etc. That is, if (say) screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!", etc. all have the properties a, b, c, d, e and f, we might define "expression of emotion" as anything having the properties a, b, c, and d. And similarly for "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind", etc. Then our newly defined abstractions "value judgement" and "expression of emotion" might be identical. But from this it
would not follow that "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind" etc. were the same as or equivalent to screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!" etc., i.e. the proposition "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" would, in isolation, still not be true - it would only be true if it read "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion when 'value judgements' are defined thus and 'expressions of emotion' defined thus". Thus we bare left with the situation which naive (i.e. unphilosophic) inspection should have given us in the first place: that the proposition "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion" is false unless "value judgement" and "expression of emotion" are so defined as to make it true - which is the case with any false proposition whatever, i.e. true of the proposition "Men are simply fish with legs" or the proposition "Atoms are simply very small golf balls".

10.3

Thus we are left with this dichotomy. Either it is true to say that value judgements are simply expressions of emotion with the proviso that "value judgement" and "expression of emotion" are defined in such a way that these terms denote something like, or denote an abstraction having properties in common with, sentences like "x is good", "y is the highest of its kind", etc. and screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!", etc. respectively. Or it is not true to say that value judgements are simply expressions of emotion where these terms stand for sentences like "x is good", "y is the highest of its
kind", etc. and screams, gurgles, blushes and exclamations like "Damn!" respectively, but it is true to say that value judgements are something like expressions of emotion or value judgements have properties in common with expressions of emotion. (But we must remember that a Coral snake is something like a twig and that a whale has properties in common with a cat). Nor is there any way out of this dichotomy.

11. I am in considerable fear at this point that what I have said with its inevitable complexity and repetition will be misunderstood. In this paragraph I shall put the same point in jargon. This, I hope, will have the effect of making what I mean quite clear even if more difficult to follow.

11.1 I shall use the symbol \( \subseteq \) to denote inclusion, i.e. if \( a \subseteq b \) is true, then every \( a \) is a \( b \), though every \( b \) need not necessarily be an \( a \) i.e. 'cat \( \subseteq \) mammal' is true. I shall use \( \equiv \) to mean "is something like" or "has properties in common with". I shall use \( \leftrightarrow \) to denote equivalence i.e. if \( a \leftrightarrow b \) is true, then every \( a \) is a \( b \) and every \( b \) is an \( a \). I shall use the symbol \( \forall \) to denote sentences of the form "\( x \) is good", "\( y \) is the highest of its kind", etc. and \( \forall d \) to denote everything covered by the definition of the term "value judgement" however it might be defined. Similarly, I shall use \( \exists \) to denote screams, gurgles, blushes, exclamations like "Damn!" etc. and \( \exists d \) to denote everything covered by the definition of the term "expression of emotion" however it might be defined.
Then, from para. 10.1, we can see

\[ V \subseteq E \] is false \hspace{1cm} (i)

but that \[ V \supseteq E \] is true \hspace{1cm} (ii)

Then, if \[ E \supseteq Ed \] \hspace{1cm} (iii)

\[ V \supseteq Vd \] \hspace{1cm} (iv)

and \[ Vd \subseteq Ed \] \hspace{1cm} (v)

there is no valid conclusion which can be drawn other than to restate the premisses. We can continue to assert

\[ V \supseteq E \] \hspace{1cm} (ii)

but we can do no more.

Alternatively, if by a process of definition we make

\[ E \leftrightarrow Ed \] \hspace{1cm} (vi)

and \[ V \leftrightarrow Vd \] true \hspace{1cm} (vii)

we know it is useless to even try to show that

\[ Vd \subseteq Ed \] is true \hspace{1cm} (viii)

as we already know that

\[ V \subseteq E \] is false \hspace{1cm} (i)

from which, and (vi) and (vii), it follows that

\[ Vd \subseteq Ed \] is false \hspace{1cm} (ix)
There are more variations than those given here (i.e. in the first example, (iv) could have read

\[ V \leftrightarrow Vd \]

without altering the conclusion), but the ones given are, I think, the most important.

11.2

The preceding paragraphs are, then, a symbolic demonstration that interpretations (a) and (b) of the Emotive Theory can never be true so long as we admit, as we must admit, that the logic of value judgements and the logic of expressions of emotion are not the same, however small the discrepancies may be (cf 10.1). Similarly, our positive statement (i.e. \[ V \equiv E \]) is true for it is quite certain that value judgements and expressions of emotion do have something in common, however rudimentary this may be. Thus the only thing in a precise, logical sense which the Emotive Theory could contribute to our knowledge of the nature of value judgements is a statement of what the relationship '\( \equiv \)' actually is i.e. the definition of "expression of emotion" under interpretation (c), i.e. the designation of those properties which value judgements have in common with expressions of emotion. And, as we shall see in paragraph 12.2, even this is not sufficient if we are to understand the logic of value judgements.

12.

I wish now to return to what was said in paragraph 11.1. The results achieved there are completely general so
long as the original postulates are fulfilled. The present
is not the time to go into the discussion of these postulates
in general terms to express a general abstract proposition. It
would in any case be my contention that to do so would serve
only very limited purposes and none whatever which would be
pertinent to my limited aim in this thesis. But we are now in
a position to test any position by what has been said there
merely by seeing if the position under consideration fulfills
the original conditions.

Before we do apply it, however, there are some remarks
which may be made about the symbol $\equiv$. Which is to remark,
as a general empirical observation, that few if any philosophic
propositions which make any stir are propositions of this type —
for such a proposition is usually obvious if it concerns matters
of language with which we are at all familiar. And philosophers
usually reserve their pronouncements about current language for
propositions that do not seem to be obvious at first sight. If
we are completely familiar with the character and activities of
Mr. X. who goes by the alias "Mr. Y.", we are in no doubt that
"Mr. X." and "Mr. Y." denote the same man. The only point of
using an alias is when many people are not familiar with all or
most of our activities which is never the case as regards language
in everyday use. The whole point of our discussions about
everyday language is that we are all excellently versed in it.
As Wisdom says in 'Philosophy, Anxiety and Novelty', "Every
philosophical question is really a request for a description of
a class of animals - of a very familiar class of animals. That is my point, that the classes of animals are very familiar to us all. Consequently philosophical answers are descriptions of very familiar classes of animals."²

12.1

In the light of the above considerations, it is clear that our analysis in paragraph 11 applies to all propositions like "Value judgements are (disguised) commands", and "Value judgements are descriptions" (i.e. "goodness" is a pure, unanalysable quality like yellow), "Value judgements are simply expressions of emotion", "Value judgements are scientific statements of fact", etc. and, of course, other types of proposition than meta-ethical propositions, though the ethical propositions are all we are interested in here. If the symbol for descriptive sentences is 'D', for commands is 'C', for scientific statements of fact is 'S', then it is clear that:

\[ V \subseteq D \]  \hspace{1cm} (x)

\[ V \subseteq C \]  \hspace{1cm} (xi)

and \[ V \subseteq S \]  \hspace{1cm} (xii)

are all false. Equally

\[ V \nsubseteq D \]  \hspace{1cm} (xiii)

\[ V \nsubseteq C \]  \hspace{1cm} (xiv)

\[ V \nsubseteq S \]  \hspace{1cm} (xv)

are all true - just as we saw that though

\[ V \equiv E \quad \text{is false,} \quad (i) \]

\[ V \nRightarrow E \quad \text{is true} \quad (ii) \]

for 'V', 'D', 'C', 'S' have something in common, however elementary it may be.

Further, as an empirical observation, it seems most unlikely, especially in view of the other empirical observations discussed in paragraph 12, that any proposition of the form

\[ V \equiv P \quad (xvi) \]

where 'P' is a type of sentence (i.e. a description, command, question, etc.) is ever likely to be true as we would surely have noticed it by now if this were the case. Or, to look at it in another way, we would hardly have bothered to name them as different types of sentences if they were in fact the same type of sentence, it seems most unlikely that we would have done so.

12.2

From which I conclude: "Every type of statement has its own type of logic". That is; every type of sentence is unique and unanalysable in terms of other types of sentences, although very suggestive similarities can be pointed out to the general profit of the philosophic community. To its general profit because, though in most cases philosophers will not believe the propositions in which the analysis is suggested, they will
take account of what has been said in defence of such propositions, as we saw in the case of the Emotive Theory in paragraph 8.1. This process of 'taking account of' is a very useful philosophic therapeutic and if we understand the logical status of the theories we are discussing we ourselves can guard against too much therapy.

Thus although much of what has been said along the lines of value judgements being commands, expressions of emotion, descriptions, etc. may have been utter nonsense on logical grounds (only 'may have been' for it would not be nonsense if the proponent of the theories realised the logical nature of the theory and took account of this in his statement of it - as Ayer seems to be doing, anyway in part, in 'On the Analysis of Moral Judgements'), these theories were most revealing nonsense. It aided in what I suppose is anyway part of the philosophers' task of seeing the logic of our language rightly.

13.

We must grant, I think, that positions like: value judgements are commands, expressions of emotion, descriptions, etc. have been revealing because they have pointed up similarities and properties which we had not before noticed. But this is not the last word, not by any means.

At the end of an analysis of one of these positions we are left with a proposition of the form

\[ V \Rightarrow P \]  

(xvii)

which is true. But this is entirely insufficient as a final
philosophic position for the symbol ' \( \equiv \)' is so very vague. Granted that the arguments brought in support of

\[ V \equiv P \quad \text{(xvi)} \]

though they do not succeed in proving it, give us far more precise insight into the logic of value judgements, but even this is probably insufficient. Probably insufficient because a few crucial arguments or statements are often considered sufficient to prove the point desired (cf Ayer's original argument in *Language, Truth and Logic* for the Emotive Theory) where to discover the exact similarities a far longer, more exhaustive approach is required. One way in which to do this is to give all the properties the logic of the two types of statement in question hold in common a special name (e.g. interpretation (c) of our original analysis of the Emotive Theory) when the process of defining the special name will list at least some of the logical properties of value judgements. This would provide a partial answer to the demand for an analysis of value judgements. But it would not be a full answer for it would not preclude the possibility of finding (other) logical properties which value judgements hold in common with other types of statement and giving them a special name. These two positions, were they put forward, would be non-contradictory if the philosophers making this analysis knew their business and made no logical slips. If we set down the properties which value judgements held in common with every other
type of sentence, we would have a fairly complete analysis. But not a complete one. For it is possible, I would say likely, that value judgements have some properties which they hold in common with no other types of statement and under this type of analysis these properties would remain forever hidden.

However, there is another approach, psychologically speaking a very difficult approach for the philosopher concerned. Once we have reached the stage of naming the properties which value judgements hold in common with other types of statement, the whole business of finding those properties which value judgements have in common with other types of statements becomes a useless trapping. As a psychologically necessary "starter" or a "logical pump primer" it may be desirable, but it holds no necessary place in a discussion of the logic of value judgements. In other words, in so far as we wish to set down the logic of value judgements, we should set out a process of description, describing and detailing the properties which value judgements possess. After this process is complete we might wish, as an educational aid, to put the matter more graphically by pointing out that value judgements hold these properties in common with commands, these with expressions of emotion, these with descriptions and so on; and perhaps that, say, commands, value judgements and expressions of emotion all have this and that property in common.

I do not think that for philosophers to perform such a task would be entirely desirable. I am personally not at all
sure that philosophers are not better off doing what they are doing now in their ethical investigations. But I think it is sure that by such a process as I have suggested immediately above we might eventually turn ethical philosophy of this type into an investigation of the logical geography of our language and thus justify the philosophers who have been saying for so long that this is just and only what it is.
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