

Moral Attitudes and Moral Judgments

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In this paper I want to consider the thesis that:

- (1) One can explain what a moral judgment is (what distinguishes moral judgments from other utterances) only by bringing in the notion of expressing a moral attitude.

A more formal presentation of the thesis would be:

- (2) Any adequate analysis of 'x made a moral judgment about O' will be of the form: 'x expressed a moral attitude toward O, [and x asserted (implied, presupposed, committed himself to its being the case that) P]', where it is understood that the second conjunct (in brackets) may or may not be present.

It will aid us in the ensuing discussion to lay out (2) in a more analytically dissected fashion. Let us take the form for an analysis specified in (2) and give it a separate number for ease of future reference.

- (3) 'x made a moral judgment about O' =_{df.} 'x expressed a moral attitude toward O, [and x asserted (implied, presupposed, committed himself to its being the case that) P]'.

We can now explicitly distinguish the *two* claims made by (2) as follows:

- (4) A. 'x made a moral judgment' can be adequately analyzed by an analysis of the form (3); and
B. 'x made a moral judgment about O' cannot be ade-

quately analyzed by any analysis that is not of the form (3).

I shall argue that fatal difficulties in (4) emerge as soon as we seriously address ourselves to the task of analyzing the concept of *moral attitude*. In particular I shall argue that even if we accept

- (5) 'x expressed a moral attitude toward O' is a necessary condition of 'x made a moral judgment about O',

(4) is unacceptable, because

- (6) In order to analyze *moral attitude*, we must either:
- A. Bring *moral judgment* into the analysis of *moral attitude*, in which case any analysis of form (3) becomes viciously circular, and (4A) has to be given up, or
 - B. Analyze *moral attitude* in such a way that:
 - 1) (3) loses some of the non-cognitive character that has made it attractive.
 - 2) An alternative analysis of *moral judgment* is possible that does not employ the concept *moral attitude*, which means that (4B) has to be given up.

Most of the paper will be devoted to arguing for this dilemmatic principle (6). In embarking on this task I am, of course, interested in the negative task of bringing out deficiencies in (4), but I am even more interested in using the attack on (4) as a way of getting started on the positive job of bringing out the distinctive contours of the concept of a moral attitude and, more generally, of the concept of an attitude.

I

Before turning to the elaboration and defense of (6), it may be useful to consider the lines of thought that make (4) look plausible, and to relate our formulations to theses of an "emotivist" or "non-cognitivist" sort actually put forward in meta-ethics. Needless to say, I have no time here either for a review of the literature or for a systematic presentation and critique of the possible forms of non-cognitivism in meta-ethics.

Let's start with the relatively unspecific hunch that a "value judgment" or "normative judgment" differs from a statement of

fact, by virtue of expressing¹ some psychological state that is not (just) a factual belief and that somehow involves being "positively" or "negatively" disposed toward the object—some feeling, emotion, attitude. . . . Thus, e.g., the crucial difference between asserting that Jones was not at work today, and making the normative judgment that Jones neglected his duty, is that in the second case but not the first one's utterance expresses an attitude of disapproval of what Jones did. And the crucial difference between asserting that this lawnmower is heavy and judging that this is a good lawnmower is that in the second case, but not the first, one's utterance expresses a preference for this lawnmower over some others, or a tendency to pick this lawnmower over others, or The reasons why this general sort of line has seemed attractive and promising to many are well known and need no rehearsal here.

Now suppose that we are interested in analyzing the more specific concept *moral judgment* along these lines. This will take the form: 'x made a moral judgment about O'=_{df.} 'x expressed _____ toward O, [and],' the blank being filled in by the specification of some non-cognitive psychological state that is pro or con O. For example, to say that x's utterance, "Jones was guilty of neglect of duty in not showing up for work," is a moral judgment is to say that in uttering that sentence, x was expressing _____ toward Jones' not showing up for work, and x was asserting (implying) that Jones did not show up for work. But now what filler for the blank will make this analysis adequate, or at least maximize its chances for adequacy? 'Some emotion or feeling' will not do the job; it is clear that I could be expressing annoyance at or enthusiasm for Jones' action without making a moral judgment about it. Even if we take a specifically appropriate emotional state or feeling, like indignation, it is clear that I could be making a

¹ Of course emotivists have used a variety of other terms in the slot occupied in this formulation by 'express'. These include 'evinced', 'evoke', 'tend to evoke', and 'have the capacity to evoke'. But, for reasons which I cannot go into here, none of these other than 'express' seem to me to have any chance of working, and so I shall restrict my discussion to 'express'. However, as will be made explicit in due course, the argument for (6) is in no way affected by what term is put in this slot; hence the express-evoke issue is not crucial for this paper. For an indication of the considerations that lead me to prefer 'express' see my "Linguistic Acts," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, I (1964), and "Expressing", in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black, (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1965), though these discussions are not specifically concerned with meta-ethics.

moral judgment without that emotional state or feeling being present, so long as we are conceiving emotional states and feelings as occurrent rather than dispositional. I could be making the moral judgment in a cold dispassionate frame of mind. Again, if we fill the blank with 'attitude' in the very wide, technical sense in which it is used by C. L. Stevenson, and in which it includes likes and dislikes, desires and aversions, preferences, etc., as well as attitudes in the ordinary sense of the term, we will again have something too unspecific. It is clear that I can express my liking for Jones without making a moral judgment about him, and that I can express my desire that he would stay away from work, without morally judging his staying away from work. It seems, then, that no insert will make the analysis even superficially plausible except 'moral attitude.' Thus I take (3) to be the most plausible attempt at an analysis of *moral judgment* along "emotivist" lines.

One may wonder why, in this case, it is so difficult to find just this formulation in the writings of emotivists. I think there are several reasons for this. First, these writers have not generally posed their problem in quite this way. They have not realized that the essential task is the elucidation of certain illocutionary act categories—*value judgment*, *moral judgment*, etc. They have more usually conceived the problem in other terms: to specify the kind of meaning "ethical words" or "ethical sentences" have; to give a pattern of analysis for ethical sentences; etc. Second, Stevenson's advocacy of an analysis of meaning, including emotive meaning, in terms of the causal potentialities of words to produce effects on hearers, has led many to concentrate on 'evoke' rather than 'express' in formulations like ours. Third, emotivists, although they have generally not been very explicit about the range of utterances that a given formulation is designed to cover, have usually been working, so it would seem, with such wider categories as *value judgment* or *normative judgment*, and have rarely made a serious effort to bring out the specific features of moral judgments.

The sort of analysis specified in (3) is approximated in the following:

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." In adding that this action is wrong I am not making any further statement about it. I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it. . . .

If now I generalize my previous statement and say, "Stealing money is wrong," I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning—that is, expresses no proposition which can be either true or false. It is as if I had written "Stealing money!!"—where the shape and thickness of the exclamation marks show, by a suitable convention, that a special sort of moral disapproval is the feeling which is being expressed.²

Here we see that in the analysis of some moral judgments Ayer would include a second conjunct, as is allowed for in our schema, and that for others he would not. We can also arrive at our schema by starting from the following recent formulation of Stevenson that reflects a shift of emphasis in his thought from evocation to expression.

. . . evaluative sentences may be distinguished from factual sentences in that they (in part, at least) tend to express attitudes, rather than merely to express beliefs.³

This formulation is designed, of course, to deal with a wider category than that of moral judgments. But put this together with the suggestion made in *Ethics and Language* (hereinafter EL)⁴ that moral judgments (or "moral senses of the ethical terms") are to be separated off from other ethical judgments by the fact that it is *moral* attitudes rather than some other kind of attitudes that are involved,⁵ and we are well on the way to an analysis of form (3). There is still the difference between a focus on sentences and a focus on judgments, and the difference between 'express' and 'tend to express,' but these do not affect the fundamental import of the doctrine. It is also true that for many moral judgments Stevenson would want to include factual assertions in the second conjunct of our analysans that are not suggested by the examples quoted from Ayer above, but of course that will still fall within the limits laid down by (3).

Since our criticism of (4), summarized in (6), hangs solely on the presence of 'moral attitude' in the analysandum and not on any other details of the analysis, the argument will have just the

² A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (2nd ed.), (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1948) p. 101.

³ *Facts and Values* (hereinafter FV), (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963) p. 208.

⁴ New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944.

⁵ P. 90.

same force against any other analysis of *moral judgment* that makes use of the concept of a moral attitude. This will include such analyses as:

- (7) 'x made a moral judgment about O' =_{df.} 'x asserted (pre-supposed . . .) that he had a certain moral attitude toward O,'
- (8) 'x made a moral judgment about O' =_{df.} 'x made an utterance that was designed to evoke (strengthen, influence . . .) a moral attitude toward O.'
- (9) 'x made a moral judgment about O' =_{df.} 'x asserted (implied . . .) that a certain moral attitude would be taken toward O by an impartial, reflective person who is in possession of all the relevant facts.'

Thus it would be more exact to direct our argument against the very general claim:

- (10) A. An adequate analysis of 'x made a moral judgment about O' can be given that includes the concept of a moral attitude; and
 B. No adequate analysis of 'x made a moral judgment about O' can be given that does not include the concept of a moral attitude.

However in the interest of keeping the discussion as concrete as possible I shall direct the argument against (4), as embodying the most plausible of the analyses that include the concept of a moral attitude, remembering that, if valid, it is equally destructive of the more general thesis (10).

I have already indicated that in contesting (4) I shall not contest (5). I shall seek to show that (4) must be rejected even if (5) is accepted. That is, the discussion will be carried on within a framework defined by the acceptance of (5). (5) is, of course, a controversial principle, and it is no part of my task here to argue for it. It will, however, help to bring out how I understand the principle if I respond to one objection that may seem to show that (5) as stated is clearly mistaken. If we undersand 'express' in such a way that one can't express a mental state that he does not possess, and if, as I am doing, we take a moral judgment to be a kind of linguistic act, then (5) is mistaken. For one may say that x did the wrong thing in certain situation (thereby making a moral judgment) without actually having the appropriate attitude of

disapproval.⁶ However I shall not be understanding 'express' in this way. One can express an attitude that he does not have, because to express an attitude, belief, feeling, or intention, where this is a linguistic act (the only sort of expression that is in question here), is to exploit the rules of language to represent oneself as having the attitude. It is to utter a certain sentence in circumstances such that the utterance of that sentence in circumstances of that kind is subject to a rule requiring the utterer to have a certain attitude. I have developed this view of expressing elsewhere.⁷

II

The first step in supporting (6) is, of course, to consider how *moral attitude* can be analyzed, i.e., how moral attitudes are conceptually distinguished from other psychological states. Let's begin with Stevenson's category of "attitudes," which we have already noted to be much wider than the category of moral attitudes. There are serious difficulties involved in getting clear about this general category of "attitudes"; the pressure of my main concerns forbids my lingering over them, but since my scrutiny of the concept of a moral attitude takes its start here, something will have to be said. The chief passages in which Stevenson explains this notion are the following:

. . . it designates any psychological disposition of being *for* or *against* something.⁸

. . . a complicated conjunction of dispositional properties . . . marked by stimuli and responses which relate to hindering or assisting whatever it is that is called the "object" of the attitude.⁹

Thus far it seems possible that the concept being explicated is some ordinary concept of an attitude. But that possibility is dissipated by the lists that are given of specific kinds of attitudes. They include "purposes, aspirations, wants, preferences, desires" (*EL*, 3), and "love and hate, approval and disapproval" (*FV*, 1-2). In

⁶ Presumably this kind of consideration is what is behind Stevenson's use to 'tend to express' rather than 'express' in the passage quoted on page 5.

⁷ "Expressing," in *Philosophy in America*, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965.)

⁸ *FV*, p. 1.

⁹ *EL*, pp. 60.

discussions of particular cases, examples of “attitudes” include: preference for a certain restaurant, a desire to cultivate the 400, not wanting one’s son to play football, being for or against higher wages for workers in a certain factory. Now desires, likes, and preferences are not kinds of attitude in any ordinary sense of the term. I haven’t told you my attitude toward anything when I tell you that I prefer the Rubaiyat Restaurant to Webers, that I want to go to the concert tonight or that I want to be liked by people. “What is your attitude toward extramarital sexual intercourse?” If one said “I really enjoy (like) it,” or “I have a strong desire for it,” that would not be an answer to the question. This means that we cannot rely on an implicit prior understanding of the term ‘attitude’ in trying to interpret the term as it is employed here; we must spell out criteria for its application before we can know how to proceed. More specifically this means that we have to consider whether we can give an interpretation to the notions of “for and against” and/or “hinder and assist” which is such that they cover the variety of things this technical term ‘attitude’ is designed to cover.

Let’s concentrate initially on action dispositions without yet worrying about what else might be involved. Without some realignment of terms it cannot be claimed that desires, preferences, and likes involve any dispositions to do anything for or against their objects, to hinder or assist them. If I prefer Münster cheese to Camembert, or like figs, it does not follow that I am prepared to act for Münster cheese or against Camembert, or that I am prepared to assist, rather than hinder figs. Or rather it is not clear just what this would mean. These terms (‘for’ and ‘against’, etc.) are specially suited to attitudes properly so-called, where I am dealing with, e.g., a policy, an institution, or a person, with respect to which it makes sense to speak of acting for or against. Similar problems pop up for desires. Perhaps I want to be liked by people; but what would I mean to say that I am disposed to hinder or assist being liked by people, or am disposed to act for or against this. Clearly we need to construct a technical sense of ‘for-against’, or some such pair, to be used in a suitable explication of our technical term, ‘attitude’. As a first approximation, we may try the following. ‘P acts for O,’ is to be explained as meaning: ‘P does something designed to bring O into existence, keep O in existence, result in O’s prospering, being healthy, strong, or being benefited

in some way, or. . . .’ ‘P acts against O’ means ‘P does something designed to prevent O from existing, keep O from continuing to exist, result in O’s being weakened, unhealthy, or harmed in some other way, or. . . .’ We will then have to devise standard ways of specifying objects of desires, likes, preferences, etc., so that dispositions to such actions can plausibly be attributed to people insofar as they have certain likes, desires, etc. Thus the object of what would ordinarily be called my liking for figs will have to be specified as a kind of state of affairs—my eating figs, and the “pro-dispositions” involved will be (chiefly) a disposition to bring into existence examples of that kind of state of affairs. It may be possible to construct along these lines an intelligible concept of pro-or-con action dispositions such that it is true of all the types of psychological states that typically appear in lists of “attitudes” given by Stevenson, that any psychological state of any of these types involves one or more pro-or-con action dispositions toward a certain object. We can then take the presence of one or more pro-or-con action dispositions as a necessary condition for something’s being an “attitude.”

It remains a question whether it is also a sufficient condition. It seems that pro-con action dispositions correlate highly with distinctive types of dispositions to affective reactions. If I am disposed to do what I can to bring it about *that I am liked by people*, then I can also be expected to feel pleased if people show liking for me and to feel disappointed if they do not. If I am disposed to do what I can to hinder our involvement in Viet-Nam, I can also be expected to feel distressed if our involvement is increased and to feel relieved if negotiations begin. Stevenson, in company with many other theorists, seems to take the presence of typical associated affective dispositions to be another necessary condition for an “attitude,” so that a sufficient condition would be a conjunction of these two necessary conditions. Let us go along with that and suppose that this technical sense of ‘attitude’ can be explained as a cluster of pro-or-con action dispositions together with associated affective dispositions.

It seems that moral attitudes belong to the class of “attitudes,” i.e., that moral attitudes always involve pro-or-con action dispositions and associated affective dispositions. It seems that whenever I morally disapprove of something I or someone else did, I have some tendency to do what I can to prevent such actions

from occurring henceforth and to feel shock or dismay when such actions occur.¹⁰ Again it seems that whenever I admire someone for his moral character I have a disposition to do what I can to contribute to myself and other people becoming like him in these respects, and to derive satisfaction from contemplating someone's possession of such a character. Finally it seems that whenever I feel obliged to do A, I thereby have some tendency to do A and to feel guilty if I fail to do A. However I take it to be perfectly clear and uncontroversial that the class of moral attitudes is narrower than the class of "attitudes." My preference for Münster cheese and my desire to be liked by people are clearly not moral attitudes (though of course it is conceivable that I may also morally approve of eating Münster cheese and that I may take it to be my duty to act so as to be liked by people). Having pro-or-con dispositions toward an object is not sufficient for having a moral attitude toward that object. What else is required?

The simplest answer would be to say that the extra element is a disposition to make a certain kind of moral judgment about the object, if an occasion for doing so arose and if the person were being candid. On this view what distinguishes A's moral admiration of B from A's liking B is that in attributing the former, but not the latter, to A we are implying that if A were asked what he thought of B, and if he were disposed to be candid and complete in his answer, that answer would include some favorable moral judgments about B, e.g., that B has integrity, is scrupulous, brave, or concerned about the rights of others. Again what distinguishes *morally disapproving* of something B did from just being annoyed by it or regarding it as foolish, is that in attributing the first, but not in attributing the others, to A, we are implying that if A were asked what he thought of B's action, and if he were disposed to be candid and complete in his answer, that answer would include some unfavorable moral judgment about that action, e.g., that B had failed to do his duty, or that B had acted in wanton disregard for the welfare of others. On this approach our analysis of *moral attitude* will be:

¹⁰ We must remember that to attribute to P a disposition to do or feel A, in circumstances C, is not to flatly predict that he will do or feel A when in C. For he can have such a disposition, and it still may be the case that whenever he is in C he has stronger dispositions to do or feel things incompatible with A. The disposition attribution only implies that when in C he will have a tendency to do or feel A, that this will be one of the forces competing in his psychological field.

- (11) 'x has a moral attitude toward O' =_{df.} (a) x is disposed to act for or against O, (b) x has affective dispositions that naturally go with (a), (c) x is prepared to make a moral judgment about O.

If we make the discrimination in this way, we are on the first horn of the dilemma (6). There will be a vicious circularity in (3). We can hardly be supposed to have adequately brought out, even in part, what it is to make a moral judgment by saying that moral judgments are expressions of moral attitudes, if at the very next remove we have to employ the concept of a moral judgment in order to explain what distinguishes moral attitudes from other psychological states. This would be a small circle indeed.

Now it seems clear that this is *an* adequate way of distinguishing moral attitudes from other "attitudes." I can see no reason to think that it is not sufficient to do the job. Creatures like small children and dogs, that do not have the ability to make moral judgments, are correspondingly not credited with moral attitudes. And considering a creature, A, that does have this ability, insofar as I consider A not to be prepared to make any moral judgments about an action, I thereby do not consider him to have a moral attitude toward that action. To recur to one of the examples given above, suppose that the claim that A morally disapproves of B's action is supported by pointing out that A had (sincerely) judged B's action to have been done in disregard of the welfare of others, and suppose that I do not recognize that judgment to be a moral judgment. Then, unless I suppose that A was prepared to make some other judgment about B's action that I do regard as a moral judgment, I would thereby be committed to denying that A had any moral attitude toward B's action. The only question that seems to me worth discussing is whether this is the *only* adequate way of distinguishing moral attitudes from other "attitudes." If it is possible to bring out what there is to a moral attitude other than pro-or-con action and affective dispositions, without bringing in the notion of a moral judgment, overtly or covertly, then (3) can escape the charge of circularity. Let us examine some attempts to do this.

III

It has been suggested that we can separate out moral attitudes in terms of the kinds of feelings, emotions, or affective states, dispositions to which are involved in the attitude. Thus Stevenson:

The peculiarly moral attitudes, associated with the moral senses of the ethical terms, are not easily described, but can roughly be marked off in this fashion: It will be recalled that an attitude is a disposition to act in certain ways and to experience certain feelings, rather than itself a simple action or feeling. If we wish to distinguish one sort of attitude from another, then, we can proceed by specifying the different sorts of response that attend typical stimuli. Let us apply this to the present case. Suppose that a man morally disapproves of a certain kind of conduct. If he observes this conduct in others, he may then feel indignant, mortified, or shocked; and if he finds himself given to it, he may feel guilty or conscience-stricken. But suppose that he dislikes this conduct, as distinct from morally disapproving of it. He may then be simply displeased when he observes it in others, and simply annoyed with himself when he finds that he is given to it. Similarly, if he morally approves of something, he may feel a particularly heightened sense of security when it prospers; whereas if he merely likes it, he may feel only an ordinary sort of pleasure.¹¹

Richard Brandt employs similar principles of discrimination.

I propose that we say that a person has an *unfavorable ethical attitude* toward something (for example, racial discrimination) if and only if he has some inclination to refrain, and a decided disposition to feel obligated to refrain from performing acts of discrimination himself, a disposition to feel guilt or remorse about any act of his in the past which condoned such behavior, to feel indignant with those who perform or condone such acts . . . and so on. In short we might say that an ethical attitude is a disposition for certain *affective events* to occur in a person when he considers courses of action for the future or reflects upon such courses of action in the past.¹²

Now so long as we restrict ourselves to giving *examples* of emotions, dispositions to which are involved in moral attitudes, we may succeed in "roughly marking off" moral attitudes, as Stevenson says; but this will not constitute an analysis of the term, a

¹¹ *EL*, p. 90.

¹² "Some Puzzles for Attitude Theories of Value," *The Language of Value*, ed. R. Lepley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957): 164-165.

general account of what distinguishes moral attitudes from other psychological states. If we are to do that along these lines, we will have to make explicit what distinguishes the emotions involved in moral attitudes from others. But what general account can be given? What is it that marks off indignation, remorse, feeling guilty, being shocked, *moral* contempt, and *moral* admiration, as moral emotions, in contrast to non-moral emotions like anger, fear, annoyance, enjoyment, boredom, depression, and embarrassment? It seems wildly implausible to suppose that there is some phenomenal quality that is common and peculiar to moral emotions. Remorse, indignation, moral admiration, and moral self-satisfaction feel enormously different. In this case, the search for a distinctive phenomenal quality does not have even the initial plausibility it has for such concepts as *desire* and *belief*. To make a long story short, with a possible qualification to be mentioned below, I am unable to think of any promising principle of distinction except one in terms of moral judgments, i.e., except for saying that one has a moral emotion toward an object when one's state of feeling is in some suitable relation to one's preparedness to make a moral judgment about that object. Thus to feel moral indignation at B's action, rather than just annoyed, is to feel as one does because one is prepared to judge B's action to be morally wrong, or at least it is to be disposed to *regard* one's state of feeling as stemming from such a judgment. Again what distinguishes moral remorse from a close non-moral relative like embarrassment is that one would not attribute remorse over having done x to A, unless one supposed that A was prepared to judge that it was morally wrong for him to do x. But if this is the way we distinguish *moral* affective states from others, then this way of distinguishing moral attitudes from others (in terms of the affective dispositions involved) will not save (3) from circularity. At best we will have pushed the reappearance of *moral judgment* off from the first to the second remove.

This point is not generally appreciated; largely, I think, because of misconceptions as to the nature of emotion. If one thinks of an emotional state as the qualification of consciousness by some ultimate felt quality or other, plus perhaps some bodily sensations produced by the autonomic physiological processes involved, then he never even considers the possibility that a judgment of any kind could be a part of an emotion, or, to speak less metaphorically, that there could be a logical connection between being in a

certain kind of emotional state and making, or being disposed to make, a certain kind of judgment. Viewed in this Humean fashion emotion is sharply distinguished from thought and from cognition of any kind, so that any relation between emotion and thought will be contingent. Of late a reaction has set in, both in philosophy and psychology, and it has become increasingly recognized that one cannot make any of the important distinctions we draw between emotions except by reference to cognitive constituents of emotional states.¹³ We cannot bring out the difference between grief and disappointment except by pointing out that the latter state, but not the former, essentially involves the supposition that something one was expecting to occur, and expecting to be good, did not occur. Again, how can we distinguish between being anxious about something and just being agitated, except by reference to the fact that when one is anxious one is alive to the possibility that something harmful may happen? Our thesis concerning the moral emotions is an application of this general point. Once we free ourselves from the picture of an emotion as an unanalyzable quality of consciousness and/or an internally sensed physiological turbulence, and view an emotional state as a complex of cognitions, sensations, and action dispositions, we will be able, with good conscience, to make explicit the various ways in which distinguishable emotional states differ from each other, a job at which we remain stymied so long as we cling to the more simple-minded picture. From this standpoint it seems obvious that what distinguishes moral emotions from others is that the former include moral judgments or dispositions thereto.

One other general point about emotions is of particular relevance to the present topic. A careful scrutiny of emotion-terms will reveal that many terms commonly so classified are primarily used to denote long-term dispositional states that go without any strain under the rubric of "attitudes", rather than momentary states of turbulence. Thus the sentences, "I feel sorry for her", "I admire him a great deal", and "I am very grateful to him for what he has done for me", are normally used to report, not occurrent agitated

¹³ See, e.g., Errol Bedford, "Emotions," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, LVII (1956-57); George Pitcher, "Emotion," *Mind*, LXXIV (1956); Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London, 1963); W. P. Alston, "Emotion and Feeling," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, New York, 1967); Magda Arnold, *Emotion and Personality* (New York, 1960); S. Schachter and J. E. Singer, "Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State," *Psychological Review*, (1962).

states a person is in at a particular time, but complex dispositions to get into such emotional states vis-à-vis the person in question, as well as other sorts of dispositions—to act toward the person in certain beneficial or harmful ways, and to make moral or other evaluative judgments of certain kinds about the person. Moreover even those emotion terms that are more naturally used to denote occurrent states—fear, anger, annoyance, indignation, embarrassment, etc., can also be used for correlated attitudes. Thus one can say, “I have been afraid of snakes all my life”, as well as “I suddenly became afraid when he began to approach me”; one can say “I’ve been disgusted with him for a long time,” as well as “A feeling of disgust came over me when I saw what he was doing”. (And of course the “emotional attitude” terms can also be used for occurrent states, as in “A wave of pity passed over me”, or “I was overcome with admiration for him”.) Thus if pity, gratitude, hate, love, and admiration are to count as emotions, the relation between emotions and attitudes will be closer than that involved in the fact that an attitude is, *inter alia*, a disposition to certain kinds of affective states under certain conditions. For some “emotions” will *be* attitudes.

IV

There is at least one other possibility that deserves consideration. One might try to distinguish moral attitudes from other “attitudes” in terms of the kind of justification of which they are susceptible, or, more generally, in terms of the kinds of considerations that would be relevant for their assessment, that would constitute genuine reasons for or against them.¹⁴ If these considerations are of a moral kind, then the “attitude” is a moral one; if not, not. A more explicit formulation is this. A certain “attitude”, M, is a moral attitude *if* only moral considerations are relevant to its assessment. Thus my preference for Münster cheese is not a moral attitude because I have non-moral reasons for holding it, e.g., that Münster cheese tastes good to me. Whereas my disapproval of President Johnson’s act of resuming the bombing of North Viet Nam is a moral attitude because only moral considerations are relevant to the question of whether my opposition is justified.

¹⁴ I take it that to justify an attitude toward O is to justify being for or against O, and that in turn is to justify performing the sorts of pro-or-con actions, dispositions to which are constitutive of the attitude. This is what I shall be understanding by the phrase ‘justify an attitude.’

The effect of this move is, of course, to shift the locus of identification of the distinctively moral from judgments to reasons. Our next question is: "What makes a reason a distinctively moral one?" A natural answer would be that a reason is a moral reason if it contains one or more moral judgments (figuring in a certain way). If that is our answer, then this approach to the analysis of *moral attitude* does not constitute a way of avoiding the circularity. It merely once more postpones, for one step, bringing *moral judgment* into the analysis.

Can we find a not implausible analysis of *moral reason* that would enable us to avoid the circularity, and not just to displace it slightly? One possibility worth considering is that we can bring out what makes a reason a moral reason by reference to the kinds of facts adduced. An account along those lines would take the form:

- (12) 'x gave a moral reason for A' =_{df.} 'x attempted to justify A by citing facts about ____.'

There are different ways in which the blank may be filled in. Here are two:

- (A) the interests (needs, desires) of other people;
- (B) the will of God.

A philosopher who accepts (12) is committed to a "material" rather than a "formal" concept of morality.¹⁵ He supposes that it is inherent in the concept of morality that certain kinds of facts and not others are relevant to moral issues. I do not know whether any analysis of form (12) can be justified. I am rather inclined to doubt that it can. It seems to me that when one proposes any such restriction on what will count as a moral reason, he is in effect presenting a certain moral position (on, e.g., what makes an action morally right or wrong) rather than elucidating the meta-ethical concept *moral*, a concept that applies to every substantive moral position. However, since I am not prepared to show that every analysis of form (12) is mistaken, my task here is to consider what happens to (4) if *moral reason* can be analyzed along the lines of (12). In order to keep the discussion reasonably concrete I will focus on what I take to be the most plausible form of this analysis, (12A), i.e., what (12) becomes when we insert (A)

¹⁵ For this distinction see W. Frankena, "Recent Conceptions of Morality," in *Morality and the Language Conduct*, eds. H.-N. Castañeda and G. Nakhnikian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963).

into the blank. The analysis of moral attitude at which we will then arrive is:

- (13) 'x has a moral attitude toward' =_{df.} '(a) is disposed to act for or against O, (b) x has affective dispositions that naturally go with (a), (c) only considerations concerning the interests of others are relevant to the assessment of (a) and (b).'

Clearly if (13) is an adequate analysis of *moral attitude*, then (3) does not suffer from a vicious circularity by reason of containing the term 'moral attitude'. The first horn of the dilemma (6) is avoided. But now the advocate of (3) is thrown on the second horn. He has avoided circularity only at the cost of robbing (3) of at least some of the "non-cognitive" character that has made it seem attractive. This can be seen as follows.

Analyses like (3) are commonly taken, by both friend and foe, to exhibit moral judgments as "non-cognitive" in one or more of several distinguishable respects. These include:

- A. Moral judgments express tendencies to act and feel toward the object in certain ways rather than others. They are not just detached recognitions of certain facts, where this recognition is "purely cognitive" in that it could be present regardless of how the person is disposed to act and feel.
- B. In making moral judgments we use terms that have "emotive meaning."
- C. Moral judgments are not true nor false, at least in the way factual judgments are.
- D. There are no objective criteria of relevance for reasons given for or against moral judgments.

I am specifically concerned with D. I am not concerned to argue that conjoining (13) with (3) robs (3) of any of the first three non-cognitive features. Of course the items in the above list are not completely independent, and insofar as some of them depend on D, they will go down along with it. B and C may be so dependent, though this will be a function of how we pin down such wobbly terms as 'emotive meaning' and 'in the same way factual judgments are.' It seems clear, on the other hand, that A is independent of D. If one conjoins (3) and (13), it is clear that one is construing moral judgments as expressing tendencies to act and

feel in certain ways, and the fact that (13) embodies (12A) does nothing to shake that.

What I want to show, then, is that if (3) is conjoined with (13), it does not give any support to

- (14) There are no objective criteria for the relevance of reasons given for or against moral judgments

and in fact implies the denial of (14). Before embarking on this, however, a word may be in order concerning the import of (14) and its involvement in emotivist meta-ethics.

Philosophers of the Ayer-Stevenson persuasion are convinced that one of the important respects in which moral (and more generally, normative) judgments differ from factual judgments is that (14) holds for the latter but no analogous principle holds for the former. Take the factual judgment that *x* was driving at 80 miles an hour at t_1 . Here there are objective constraints on what counts as positive or negative evidence. These constraints are objective in the sense that they are what they are just because of the content of the judgment, together with the laws of nature. More particularly, they do not vary with the attitude, feelings, or beliefs, of the parties to a discussion of the matter. Thus, the fact that the car *x* was driving has an engine with a certain horsepower is relevant evidence, and the fact that Caesar crossed the Rubicon is not. This discrimination can be made regardless of what the parties discussing the matter believe or feel; *their* psychological characteristics have no bearing on the matter. With respect to the moral judgment that *x* did the wrong thing in driving 80 miles per hour at t_1 , however, the situation is radically different. Of course there are the objective constraints already alluded to on the factual judgment (that *x* was driving at 80 m.p.h. at t_1) embedded in the moral judgment; but the question now concerns the additional claim being made by the moral judgment. It has seemed to emotivists that there are no such objective constraints on what counts for or against that. Anything might be relevant or irrelevant to a given discussant, depending on his other attitudes. If a given discussant, D_1 , has a favorable attitude toward obeying the law, then for him, the fact that *x* was breaking the law will support the judgment; but if he doesn't care about legality, then, for him, that consideration is irrelevant. For most discussants, the fact that *x* realized that by so driving he might run over a child, would be taken to support the judgment.

But this is just because in fact most people have an unfavorable attitude toward running over children. If D_2 thinks this a fine thing to do, then for him this fact would weaken rather than support the judgment. There is no way of getting outside this relativity. We have no basis, as we do with factual judgments, for branding a given person unreasonable (in a "logical" sense) if, like D_2 , he makes heterodox judgments of relevance. Thus at bottom the only question to raise about reasons for moral judgments is whether they are *effective*, either generally or in a particular case. There is no question of "logical" or "objective" relevance that is distinct from this.

Emotivists take it to be one of the chief merits of their view that it accounts for this "fact" (14). On an analysis like (3) what gives a judgment its distinctive character as a moral judgment is its expressing (evoking, . . .) an attitude (feeling . . .). But then a reason for or against a moral judgment (insofar as it goes beyond any factual judgments that might be involved) is just a reason for or against having the attitude expressed. To seek to support or attack what one is saying in expressing an attitude is just to seek to support or attack the attitude. And emotivists have supposed that attitudes, unlike factual beliefs, give no more basis for objective criteria for relevance of reasons than do food preferences. Attitudes, like other psychological states, have causal conditions, and I can try to produce or reinforce conditions favorable to the production or reinforcement of a favorable attitude toward x 's action in one or more persons, including myself. But that is, at bottom, the only thing that can be involved in supporting or justifying an attitude. Of course, relative to other attitudes, e.g., a general disapproval of disregard for the lives of others, we can say that the fact that x realized he was endangering the lives of children is a good reason for disapproving of his action, whereas the fact that he was humming a tune while driving is not. But that is only because we are presupposing that the parties to the discussion do share the more general attitude in question. There are no principles of relevance that hold regardless of the psychological dispositions of the discussants.

But now it is clear that if he accepts (13) the emotivist has given up the view about attitudes just expounded, at least as far as moral attitudes are concerned. He has built into the very concept of a moral attitude a specification of what sort of considera-

tions will be relevant to their assessment. Thus he has given up the view about the epistemological status of moral attitudes that enabled him to derive (14) from (3).

In fact it is worse than that, for now the denial of (14) follows from (3) plus (13). It is a consequence of (13) that if someone supports a moral disapproval of *x* by citing ways in which driving in that way (and hence doing anything to support driving in that way) tends to injure others, then his support is relevant, regardless of whether any given person's other attitudes are such that he is likely to be influenced by that consideration. Again, if someone supports a disapproval of *x* by citing the fact that what he did is against the law, and is unable to show how disobeying this law would adversely affect the interests of others, then he has not provided any appropriate support for a *moral* disapproval of *x*'s action, even if what he says in fact has the effect of producing or strengthening unfavorable attitudes in some of his audience. Thus in accepting (13), one is committed to the existence of objective standards for the assessment of moral attitudes.

Now we have already seen that to justify what one says when he expresses an attitude is to justify the attitude. From this it follows that any restriction on what counts as a justification for the attitude is *ipso facto* a restriction on what counts as a justification for an expression of the attitude. Hence in accepting (13) together with (3), the emotivist is committed to the conclusion that considerations are relevant to the assessment of a moral judgment (insofar as it goes beyond certain factual judgments) if and only if they have to do with the interests of others, and that this principle of relevance holds regardless of the attitudes people actually have on these matters. And this is incompatible with (14).

There is another way of bringing out the consequences of combining (3) and (13). We have seen that, given (3), a restriction on reasons for a moral attitude carries with it an analogous restriction on reasons for a moral judgment. This being the case, one who accepts (3) and (13) could give what is essentially the same account of *moral judgment* by introducing the criterion of "having to do with the interests of others" as a restriction on what will count as a reason for a moral judgment rather than as a restriction on what will count as a reason for a moral attitude. This alternative analysis would break up the components of the analysis of *moral attitude* given in (13). It would construe a moral judgment as expressing the pro-con dispositional components (what

moral attitudes share with other "attitudes"), while elevating the reason-restriction component to a separate constituent of the analysis of *moral judgment*. More specifically:

- (15) 'x made a moral judgment about O' =_{df.} '(a) x expressed pro-or-con action and affective dispositions toward O, [(b) x asserted (implied . . .) that P], (c) what x said, insofar as it goes beyond (b), can be justified only by considerations that have to do with the interests of others.'

One who accepts (3), along with (13), is committed to recognizing (15) to be an adequate analysis of *moral judgment*. Of course this is because (15) is just another way of combining the materials out of which (3) and (13) are constructed. Nevertheless the existence of this alternative is not without significance. It shows that if the emotivist saves (3) by embracing (13) he is committed to the possibility of an alternative analysis of *moral judgment* which does not make use of the full-blown concept of *moral attitude*, and which can then in turn be used to give an analysis of *moral attitude*. In other words, he must recognize that the order in which we first analyze *moral judgment* by (15), and then analyze *moral attitude* by (11) is just as legitimate as the other order in which we first analyze *moral attitude* by (13), and then analyze *moral judgment* by (3). That is, he will have to give up the idea that the concept *moral judgment* is uniquely derivative from the concept of *moral attitude*.

To sum up this section, there are two reasons why the second horn of the dilemma (6B) is unpalatable to the emotivist. First, it robs his analysis of *moral judgment* of an important part of its "non-cognitive" character. Second, it forces him to recognize the possibility of an alternative analysis of *moral judgment* in which *moral judgment* becomes conceptually prior to *moral attitude*, rather than vice versa.

We are now in a position to make the qualification, promised above, to the claim that one can distinguish moral emotions or feelings from others only in terms of constituent dispositions to make moral judgments. It now appears that something along the lines of (12) might work for *moral emotion*. That is, it might be possible to distinguish moral emotions from others by the fact that one is prepared to recognize only a certain kind of reason as relevant to the assessment of his state of feeling, or perhaps the ac-

tions, dispositions to which are part of the emotion. If this were done, and if moral attitudes were then separated out by reference to dispositions to moral emotions, we would be thrown onto the second horn of the dilemma, and the points made in this section would be made about the analysis of *moral attitude* in terms of *moral emotion*.

V

This concludes our argument for (6) and against (4). Though our conclusions should seem discouraging to those who seek to elucidate the concept of a moral judgment in terms of the expression of attitudes, it should seem correspondingly encouraging to those who are interested in the concept of an attitude. This is a concept that has been largely neglected in the recent burst of activity in the philosophy of mind. We have already noted that the term 'attitude' as used by such philosophers as Stevenson, Nowell-Smith, and Davidson, includes much more than any established use of the term, either in ordinary discourse or in the social sciences, and philosophers have done little or nothing to explore the more restricted concept. It seems to me that the considerations of this paper suggest the following approach. An attitude can be conceived as (1) a complex of pro-or-con action dispositions vis-à-vis some object, together with (2) associated affective dispositions, and (3) a preparedness to make one or more pro-or-con value judgments about that object. Thus being opposed to censorship (having an unfavorable attitude toward censorship) would be distinguished from merely disliking censorship in that, whereas they share constituents of the first and second type, they differ in that in attributing the attitude to someone we are implying that he is prepared to evaluate censorship negatively in some way or other, whereas in attributing a dislike of censorship to him we do not imply that, although of course we leave open the possibility that he is so prepared. Again being against the new freeway is distinguished from just wanting the officials to abandon plans for the new freeway by the fact the former, but not the latter, necessarily involves thinking the freeway a bad thing in some way or other. (This position is compatible with the thesis that for adult human likes and desires, especially where the objects are relatively abstract, it would be very unusual for a like or a desire not to be accompanied by evaluations of its object.) A moral attitude is

then distinguished from other attitudes by the fact that the value judgments involved (or some of them) are moral judgments. One advantage of this approach, in which we bring the concept of a value judgment bodily (as an unanalyzed unit) into the analysis of *attitude* is that it permits us to distinguish attitudes from other psychological states without having to commit ourselves as to exactly what makes a judgment a value judgment; and in view of the controversial state of value theory, this is no small boon to the philosophy of mind. Needless to say, the elaboration and defense of this approach to the general concept of *attitude* would make a very long story.