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The Ethical Emotivism of A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson: A Tendentious Explanatory Matrix for Human Homosexual Behaviour

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The Ethical Emotivism of A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson: A Tendentious Explanatory Matrix for Human Homosexual Behaviour

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I. Introduction

To A very large extent, homosexuality presents a paradox for evolutionists who explore the adaptedness of human behavior. If adaptedness is measured by reproductive success, and if homosexual behavior is non-reproductive, then what is its origin? There is little evidence that lineages gain reproductive advantage through offspring care, provided by homosexual members. Therefore, there is little support for the hypothesis that homosexuality is a product of kin selection. [1] Since parents, at times, control children's reproductive decisions and at times encourage children in homosexual behavior, there is some support for the hypothesis of parental manipulation. Support is strongest, however, the in favour of the hypothesis that homosexual behavior comes from individual selection for reciprocal altruism. This is a form of altruism that occurs between unrelated individuals where there will be repayment (or at least the promise of repayment) of the altruistic act in the future.[2]An altruistic behavior can be defined as a behavior that benefits another organism, not closely related, while being apparently detrimental to the organism performing the behavior, the benefit and detriment being defined in terms of contribution to inclusive fitness. In evolutionary biology, reciprocal altruism is a behaviour whereby an organism acts in a manner that temporarily reduces its fitness while increasing another organism's fitness, with the expectation that the other organism will act in a similar manner at a later time.[3] Non-human primates, including the apes, use homosexual behavior in same-sex alliances, but such alliances have not been proven to be relevant in the expanded distribution of human ancestors. [4] Adaptationist explanations do not fully explain sexual behavior in humans, however; social and historical factors also play strong roles.[5]We live in a world where many people judge morality by what they feel; claiming that moral statements are merely expressions of feelings.[6] This is true of the emotivists, who hold that moral statements merely express positive or negative feelings, and are based on personal opinions and values, which are largely arbitrary.[7]

a) *The Emotivism of A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson: Antecedent and Contextual Discourses*

Emotivism as a meta-ethical view, claims that ethical sentences do not express propositions, but

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[1] Jack Mulder (2014) "A Response to Law and McBrayer on Homosexual Activity," *Think* 13 (38):39-42.

[2] Robert L. Trivers, (1971) "The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism," *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, Vol. 46, No. 1:35-37.

[3] John Finnis (2001) "Reason, Faith and Homosexual Acts," *Catholic Social Science Review* 6:61-63.

[4] John J. Anderson (2013) "The Rhetoric of Homosexual Practice," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41 (4):601-603.

[5] Timothy F. Murphy (2005) "Gay Science: Assisted Reproductive Technologies and the Sexual Orientation of Children," *Reproductive Biomedicine Online* 10 (Sup. 1):102-103.

[6] Stephen J. Pope (1997) "Scientific and Natural Law Analyses of Homosexuality: A Methodological Study," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 25 (1):89-91.

[7] John Lemos (2000) "The Problems with Emotivism: Reflections on Some MacIntyrean Arguments," *Journal of Philosophical Research* 25:285-287.

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emotional attitudes. Emotivism is form of non-cognitivism or expressivism. It stands in opposition to other forms of non-cognitivism (such as quasi-realism and universal prescriptivism), as well as to all forms of cognitivism (including both moral realism and ethical subjectivism). [8] Admittedly, the emotive theory did not begin with Alfred Julius Ayer, but it was in Ayer and Charles Leslie Stevenson that the theory gained its popularity. Charles Kay Ogden and 1vor Armstrong Richards were the first to propose the theory in their work *The Meaning of Meaning.* [9] They gave the term "good" a purely emotive meaning, since they felt that when one makes an utterance that a thing is good, one is merely evoking a semblance of the same feeling in other people. This concept, it is said, is the subject-matter of ethics although Ogden and Richards claimed that in the purely emotive use of 'good' in ethics, the speaker expresses an attitude and evokes a similar attitude in the listener. A Swedish philosopher, Axel Hagerstrom has been credited as the first to formulate the theory of emotvism in 1911. In one of his lectures: "*On the Truth of Moral propositions,*" he formulated, in outline, the emotive theory with particular reference to the concept of duty. [10] It was in early 20th century that A.J. Ayer proposed his own theory of emotivism. In chapter 6 of his *Language, Truth and Logic*, one finds Ayer's earliest attempts to develop, in some detail, what came to be known as the emotive theory of ethics. Ayer claims that one cannot subject an ethical statement to empirical testing, since ethical statements are mere expressions of our personal preferences: 'For in saying that a certain type of action is right or wrong, is not making factual statement, but merely an expression of certain moral sentiments.' [11] A. J. Ayer's emotivism, originated from the school of *Logical Positivism*, whose proponents wanted to ground knowledge in what could be known through experience, or what was *logically* the case. They believed that anything which could not be verified by logical analysis or through sense-experience was deemed unverifiable. As such, to speak about unverifiable things was simply pointless (or *meaningless).* [12] The cornerstone of their beliefs was the principle of verification. This principle claims that statements about right and wrong are meaningless. They are neither true nor false, because they do not actually state anything.

Like other positivists, Ayer was disturbed by the confusion caused by the improper use of language. In his work: *Language, Truth, and Logic*, he examined and analyzed ethical statements in order to find out their true nature, most especially to know whether they are scientific. In chapter 6 of *Language, Truth and Logic,* entitled: "Critique of Ethics and Theology" Ayer began by saying that judgments of value were "expressions of emotion," when he discussed ethics in particular (as opposed to aesthetics), he abandoned the term 'emotion' and instead used the terms 'sentiment', 'feeling' or 'attitude'. The reason is that some terms, such as 'sentiment', 'feeling', and 'attitude' as subject to moral and ethical qualifications. He argued that ethical judgments express and evoke ethical emotions that are different in kind from non-ethical emotions. [13] Chiefly, Ayer's fundamental claim was that statements could only be meaningful or valuable only if they had factual content. He thought it was possible to differentiate between meaningless and meaningful statements as the latter are either true by definition or, in principle, falsifiable (they could be shown to be true or false). All other statements are disregarded as having no value. Ayer scrutinized ethical statements in order to know whether they were verifiable or factual, and held that the fundamental ethical concepts cannot be analyzed insofar as there is no established criterion for testing their validity. [14] In this chapter, Ayer divides "the ordinary system of ethics" into four classes namely:

1. "Propositions that express definitions of ethical terms, or judgments about the legitimacy or possibility of certain definitions"
2. "Propositions describing the phenomena of moral experience, and their causes"
3. "Exhortations to moral virtue,"
4. "Actual ethical judgments." [15]

Ayer gives particular attention to propositions of the first class, moral judgments, saying that those of the second class belong to science, while those of the third are mere commands, and those of the fourth (which are considered in normative ethics as opposed to meta-ethics) are too concrete for ethical philosophy. Thus, in saying that 'Telling lies is (morally) wrong', the speaker is not asserting any proposition, but only expressing a feeling or attitude of disapproval towards the action of telling lies. Consequently, the presence of an ethical symbol adds nothing to its factual content. The exception to this is C. L. Stevenson, who in his *Facts and Values: Studies in Ethical Analysis* (1963) argues

[8] Kyle Swan (2002) "Emotivism and Deflationary Truth," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 83 (3): 270–272.
[9] Charles Kay Ogden and Ivor Armstrong Richards, (1923) *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) p. 125.
[10]
[11] Alfred Julius Ayer, "Critique of Ethics and Theology" in Ayer writings in *Philosophy, Language, Truth and Logic*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) p. 110.
[12] Alexander Miller (1998) "Emotivism and the Verification Principle," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 98 (2):103–105.
[13] Alfred Julius Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gollanz 1936) p. 103.
[14] Andreas Vrahimis (2020) "Language, Truth, and Logic and the Anglophone Reception of the Vienna Circle," In Adam Tamas Tuboly (ed.), *The Historical and Philosophical Significance of Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic*, (Hampshire: Palgrave) pp. 41-42.
[15] Alfred Julius Ayer, (1952) "Critique of Ethics and Theology," *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications), p. 77.

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that ethical judgments are truth-apt. In expatiating Ayer's theory of emotivism, Stevenson agreed that ethical statements express the speaker's feelings, but that there exists an element of prescriptivism when uttering moral sentences: 'Your ethical judgment has a quasi-imperative force which, operating through suggestion, and intensified by your tone of voice, readily permits you to begin to influence, to modify someone else's interests.' [16] Statements of fact are either logically necessary (true by definition) or observable. But, moral statements are neither analytically nor synthetically verifiable, so there are no moral facts.In summary, Stevenson's claim is that when one says that an ethical judgment is true, what he is really doing is reaffirming that ethical judgment. His example is as follows: "When Mr. A says "Jones ought not to have done it," and Mr. B replies: "that is true," what is the force of B's reply? Rather obviously he too has said, in abbreviated form, the equivalent of "Jones ought not to have done it." His "that is true" permits him as it were to repeat A's remark, thus expressing an attitude (apart from hypocrisy) that is in agreement with A's."[17]

Stevenson argues that this sense of truth, as reaffirming what others have said, is not an unusual sense of truth, insofar as it is also typical for factual contexts. However, the important point here is that even if Stevenson's considerations are correct and ethical judgments are truth-apt in this sense of truth, it does not make ethical judgments truth-apt in the ordinary (and interesting) sense of truth. [18] The claim that moral language only expresses attitudes seems to imply that there is no contradiction involved in moral disagreement. That is, if one person says: 'Telling lies is (morally) wrong' and another person say: 'Telling lies is not (morally) wrong,' they are not contradicting each other in any way; but only expressing different personal preferences. However, if the emotivist wishes to deny that the two parties have moral disputes, he or she needs to explain why it looks like they do; since they are clearly trying to argue for something, not just expressing their personal preferences. [19] In this regard, Ayer is in agreement with subjectivists in saying that ethical statements are necessarily *related* to individual attitudes, but he says they lack truth-value because they cannot be properly understood as *propositions* about those attitudes. He takes subjectivism to be the thesis that actions are right or good if a person or group of persons approves of it. [20] The subjectivist thinks, according to Ayer, that one can translate statement of value into statements of empirical fact. But, he also thinks that ethical sentences are *expressions,* not *assertions* of approval, because while an assertion of approval may always be accompanied by an expression of approval, expressions can be made without assertions.[21] He used "boredom" as an illustration. For Ayer, "boredom" can be expressed through the stated assertion "1 am bored" or through non-assertions like tone of voice or any other way of communicating various other verbal statements. He holds that such statement like "Homosexuality is wrong" would be a non-propositional sentence that is an expression of disapproval, and thus not equivalent to the proposition: "I disapprove of Homosexuality."[22] Ayer went further to say that ethical discussions are about the facts. Thus, when arguing over homosexuality, contending parties are constantly bringing facts to each other's attention. One person points out how much homosexuals suffer in searching for identity, and another person points out how much more sophisticated it is to legalize gay marriages, and so on. If they both agree on the facts, but still disagree morally, there would be nothing left to discuss.[23]

b) Homosexuality and Moral Standards

Ethics is the practical normative science of the rightness or wrongness of human conduct, as known by natural reason. The subject matter of ethics is human conduct, those actions which are performed consciously and wilfully, and for which one can be held accountable. [24] Ethics also has been defined as that branch of philosophy, moral philosophy, which addresses moral problems and offers the criteria for judgments. It equips us with the tools for critical ethical judgments. [25] Ethics deals with the principle of human behavior, analyzing those elements responsible for our behaviour. It scrutinizes moral questions and offers rational and objective answers to them. Ethics therefore reminds us of the negative consequences of bad action and offers us the approbation that follows good deeds. There is no consensus in ethical opinions regarding how we come to know right and wrong actions. While some thinkers opine that conscience should be used as a moral standard, others claim that it is the consequences

[16] Charles L. Stevenson, *(1907)* "The emotive meaning of ethical terms, "from Darwall S. Mora, Discourseand Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches, *(Oxford: Oxford University Press),* p. 74.
[17] Charles L. Stevenson, (1963) *Facts and Values: Studies in Ethical Analysis,* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 217-218.
[18] Nathan Nobis (2004) "Ayer and Stevenson's Epistemological Emotivisms," *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 4 (1):59-61.
[19] Giulio Pietroiusti (2022) "Having a Disagreement: Expression, Persuasion and Demand," *Synthese* 200 (1):1-3.
[20] Kyle Swan (2002) "Emotivism and Deflationary Truth," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 83 (3):270–272.
[21] Gunnar Björnsson (2002) "How Emotivism Survives Immoralists, Irrationality, and Depression," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40 (3):327-329.
[22] Gunnar Björnsson (2001) "Why Emotivists Love Inconsistency," *Philosophical Studies* 104 (1):81 - 83.
[23] William S. Wilkerson (2009) "Is It a Choice? Sexual Orientation as Interpretation," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 40 (1):97-99.
[24] Austin Fagothiey, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice,* (California: The C.V. Mosby Company, 1953) p. 18. -
[25] Brian F. Chellas (1971) "The Language of Morals," *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 36 (1):180-181.

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of the action, and some others hold unto the dictates of human practical reason (synderesis). The intuitionist school of thought, for example, takes intuition as the moral standard. Intuitionism is an ethical theory which maintains that we know right and wrong actions by intuition. But there is a fundamental problem with these views, they only provide us with opinions which are not necessarily immune from error.[26]

If one person claims that he knows 'by intuition' that homosexuality is morally wrong, another man may also claim to know 'by intuition' that the same action is morally right," thus, leaving us with conflicting intuitions. So, although there is no exclusive or absolute moral standard, a moral standard still remains the foundation for making moral decisions.[27] Despite the fact that homosexual practices have occurred in the ancient world centuries before their appearance in Athens; the substantial body of evidence of ancient homosexuality that is available, in written forms and archaeological findings, comes from the ancient Greek civilization. That the ancient Greeks practiced homosexuality is a pertinent fact to note,[28] especially when one considers the pivotal role that the Greek civilization has played in shaping the western world, which is today on many fronts the pace-setter of the world. The Christian tradition has generally proscribed any and all non-coital genital activities, whether engaged in by couples or individuals, regardless of whether they were of the same or different sex.[29] The Catholic Church's position specifically on homosexuality, developed from the teachings of the Church Fathers, which was in stark contrast to Greek and Roman attitudes towards same-sex relations including the "(usually erotic) homosexual relationship between an adult male and a pubescent or adolescent male," is called pederasty. The modern arguments in favor of homosexuality, have been insufficient to overcome the evidence that homosexual behavior is against divine and natural law, as the Bible and the Church, as well as the wider circle of Jewish and Christian (as well as Muslim) writers, have always held.[30] People have a basic, ethical intuition that certain behaviors are wrong because they are unnatural. We perceive intuitively that the natural sex partner of a human is another human, not an animal. The same reasoning applies to the case of homosexual behavior. The natural sex partner for a man is a woman, and the natural sex partner for a woman is a man. Thus, people have the corresponding intuition concerning homosexuality that they do about bestiality, that it is wrong because it is unnatural.[31] Natural law reasoning is the basis for almost all standard moral intuitions. For example, it is the dignity and value that each human being naturally possesses that makes the needless destruction of human life or infliction of physical and emotional pain immoral. This gives rise to a host of specific moral principles, such as the unacceptability of murder, kidnapping, mutilation, physical and emotional abuse, and so forth.[32] Many homosexuals argue that they have not chosen their condition, but that they were born that way, making homosexual behavior natural for them. But because something was not chosen does not mean it was inborn. Some desires are acquired or strengthened by habituation and conditioning instead of by conscious choice. For example, no one chooses to be an alcoholic, but one can become habituated to alcohol. Just as one can acquire alcoholic desires (by repeatedly becoming intoxicated) without consciously choosing them, so one may acquire homosexual desires (by engaging in homosexual fantasies or behavior) without consciously choosing them.[33]

Since sexual desire is subject to a high degree of cognitive conditioning in humans (there is no biological reason why we find certain scents, forms of dress, or forms of underwear sexually stimulating), it would be most unusual if homosexual desires were not subject to a similar degree of cognitive conditioning. The morality of homosexuality is not a philosophical issue *per se*, but one can use objectivist principles to evaluate the morality of homosexuality in any given situation.[34] The Catholic Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behaviour or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behaviour, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity.[35] The Church cannot fail to

[26] Paul Welsh & Mary Warnock (1962) "Ethics since 1900," *Philosophical Review* 71 (3):390.
[27] Philippa Foot (1967) "Theories of Ethics," *Revue Philosophique de la France Et de l'Etranger* 163:220-221.
[28] Nancy Demand & Kenneth James Dover , (1980) "Greek Homosexuality," *American Journal of Philology* 101 (1):121-23
[29] David Newheiser (2015) "Sexuality and Christian Tradition," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 43 (1):122-124.
[30] Michael Benoit (2005) "Conflict between Religious Commitment and Same-Sex Attraction: Possibilities for a Virtuous Response," *Ethics and Behavior* 15 (4):309-311.
[31] John Skalko (2020) "Would Aquinas Support Homosexual Activity If He Were Alive Today?" *Heythrop Journal* 61 (2):275-277.
[32] John D. Kronen & Eric H. Reitan (1999) "Homosexuality, Misogyny, and God's Plan," *Faith and Philosophy*, 16 (2): 213-215.
[33] Raja Halwani, Gary Jaeger, James S. Stramel, Richard Nunan, William S. Wilkerson & Timothy F. Murphy (2008) "What is Gay and Lesbian Philosophy?" *Metaphilosophy* 39 (4-5):433-435.
[34] Howard H. Chiang (2010) "Liberating Sex, Knowing Desire: Scientia Sexualis and Epistemic Turning Points in the History of Sexuality," *History of the Human Sciences* 23 (5):42-44.
[35] Tabea Cornel (2020) "An Even-Handed Debate? The Sexed/Gendered Controversy over Laterality Genes in British Psychology, 1970s–1990s," *History of the Human Sciences* 33 (5):138-140.

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defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself. While sexual orientations may not be chosen, in many cases, what behaviors people exhibit in response to their orientations are chosen, and such behaviors can be evaluated morally. A person who by nature, rather than by choice, is more attracted to members of the same sex than the opposite sex, still has the choice to recognize and act in accordance with this fact or to repress or act against it.[36] If a person wishes to achieve happiness and promote his or her life, then he or she must, in a realm as morally important as sex, act in accordance with his or her nature. While many conservatives believe that homosexuality should be outlawed and many liberals believe that homosexuals should be given special rights, objectivism holds that as long as no force is involved, people have the right to do as they please in sexual matters,[37] whether or not their behavior is considered by others to be or is in fact moral. And since individual rights are grounded in the nature of human beings as human beings, homosexuals do not deserve any more or less rights than heterosexuals.[38]

II. Homosexuality: Possible Causes

There is a common belief among liberals that people are born either gay or straight. Conservatives tend to believe that sexual orientation is actually sexual preference, which is chosen by the individual.[39] Until a few years ago, 'sexual orientation' was previously called 'sexual preference.' Most scientists today agree that sexual orientation (including homosexuality and bisexuality) is the result of a combination of environmental, emotional, hormonal, and biological factors. In other words, there are many factors that contribute to a person's sexual orientation.[40] There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation. Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that homosexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or set of factors.[41]

a) Genetics and Homosexuality

This notion stem from the belief that the public will become more accepting of homosexuality if they are convinced that it is inborn and immutable. However, a genetic[42] basis to homosexual desire does not prevent homosexuals from choosing not to participate in homosexual activities. Furthermore, when asked if homosexuality was rooted solely in biology, gay gene researcher, Dean Hamer, asserts: "Absolutely not. From twin studies, we already know that half or more of the variability in sexual orientation is not inherited. Our studies try to pinpoint the genetic factors, but not negate the psychosocial factors."[43] Research into the issue of the origins of homosexuality suggests that adoptive brothers are more likely to both be homosexuals than the biological brothers, who share half their genes which suggest that homosexuality is not genetically caused. This suggests that there is no genetic component, but rather an environmental component shared in families[44] Similarly, Dr. Neil Whitehead a research scientist and biochemist from New Zealand and is his wife Briar Whitehead in their book entitled: *My Genes Made Me Do It: A Scientific Look at Sexual Orientation,* argues that there is no genetic determinism with regard to homosexuality:

If homosexuality were significantly influenced by genes, it would appear in every culture, but in twenty-nine of seventy-nine cultures surveyed by Ford and Beach in 1952, homosexuality was rare or absent. It was very rare in the Siriono, even though there were no prohibitions on homosexual relationships in that culture. The researcher observed only one man displaying slight homosexual traits but apparently not sexually involved with another man. Homosexuality appears to be rare among Orthodox Jews, so much so that learned rabbis, the interpreters of Jewish law, usually allowed men to sleep in the same bed, because likelihood of sexual contact was considered negligible. Kinsey also found very low homosexual incidence among Orthodox Jews...This evidence comes from missionaries who commonly spend 25 years of their lives living in one culture, far more than almost any anthropologist....Overall they can be considered as reliable witnesses. For example, in contrast to groups like the Sambia in the New Guinea highlands, where homosexuality was compulsory, only about 2-3 percent of Western Dani (also in the New Guinea highlands) practiced it. However, in another group of Dani who

[36] James McTavish (2014) "Chastity and Homosexuality," *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 14 (4):637-639.
[37] John J. Anderson (2013) "The Rhetoric of Homosexual Practice," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41 (4):601-602.
[38] Stephen J. Pope (1997) "Scientific and Natural Law Analyses of Homosexuality: A Methodological Study," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 25 (1):89-91.
[39] Noretta Koertge (ed.) (1981) *The Nature and Causes of Homosexuality: A Philosophic and Scientific Inquiry* (New York: Haworth Press), p. 86.
[40] John Perry (2012) "Vocation and Creation: Beyond the Gentile-Homosexual Analogy," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40 (2): 388-390.
[41] Yi Jiang, Patricia Costello, Fang Fang, Miner Huang & Sheng He (2006) "A Gender- and Sexual Orientation-Dependent Spatial Attentional Effect of Invisible Images," *Pnas* 103 (45):17048 -17050
[42] MacCulloch M. Irving (1980) "Biological Aspects of Homosexuality," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 6 (3):133-135.
[43] Dean H. Hamer, Stella Hu, Victoria L. Magnuson, Nan Hu, and Angela M. L. Pattatucci (1993) "A Linkage between DNA Markers on the X Chromosome and Male Sexual Orientation," *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, 261(5119), 321–324.
[44] Timothy Hsiao (2021) "If Homosexuality Is Wrong, So Is Contraception," *Philosophia Christi* 23 (2):341-342.

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were genetically related, homosexuality was totally unknown. Missionaries report that when they were translating the Bible into Dani for this group, their tribal assistants, who knew their own culture intimately, were nonplused by references to homosexuality in Romans 1; they did not understand the concept. Another missionary, with the same group for 25 years, overheard many jests and sexually ribald exchanges among the men, but never a single mention of homosexuality in all that time. When Dani went to help with missionary work among the Sambia, they were astounded at some of the homosexual practices they saw for the first time. Although it is always difficult for a foreigner to be completely sure whether a rare and stigmatized behavior exists, it is certainly true that if three such different experiences of homosexuality can occur in groups of people so closely related genetically, genetically enforced homosexuality is an impossibility."[45]

Science has not yet discovered any genetically dictated behavior in humans. So far, genetically dictated behaviors of the "one-gene-one-trait" variety have been found only in very simple organisms. From an understanding of gene structure and function there are no plausible means by which genes could inescapably force homosexual behaviors on a person. [46] No genetically determined human behavior has yet been found. The most closely genetically related behavior yet discovered (mono-amine oxidase deficiency leading to aggression) has shown itself remarkably responsive to counselling. If homosexual behaviours were genetically inherited, it would have bred itself out of the population in only several generations, and would not be around today.[47] This means that gays with no children would not be able to reproduce their genes.In general, geneticists settle for some genetic influence of rather undefined degree, most agreeing that many genes contribute to any particular human behavior. Geneticists, anthropologists, developmental psychologists, sociologists, endocrinologists, neuroanatomists, medical researchers into gender, and twin study researchers are in broad agreement about an infinitesimal(insignificant) role of genetics in homosexuality.[48].However, genes do not make anyone engage in homosexual behavior. There is no genetic determinism, and genetic influence at most is minor.[49] Is this consensus likely to change? Might some major biological link be discovered which could change everything? After all, science is about discovery. For most of these scientific disciplines, the findings have been clearly established from facts that will not change (e.g. the diversity of homosexual practices between and within cultures; the clearly established stages of human development; the over-riding role of upbringing in the ultimate gender choice of people with ambiguous genitalia).[50] But what of future studies of brain micro-structure, or detailed analysis of genes and function? Will they reveal links between brain structure and human behaviours, or behaviours and genetic sequences? Of course that is a huge possibility. New research findings will continue to be published. But, one can safely conclude that even authors wanting to find such links will almost always include the standard scientific caveats that the influence is minor, and that the environment is pivotal.[51] Thus, what can reasonably be said about future researches is that it will enter new fields and come up with new links, but none of them will be definitive.[52] Based on the alleged, though unproven, genetic links to homosexuality, most homosexuals claim that their homosexuality is so much a part of their identity, that they can do nothing about it. In his report, "Homosexuality in America: Exposing the Myths," Richard Howe suggests two major reasons why homosexual activists promote this myth:

1. They would be admitting that there are those in the homosexual community who, after careful thought, have concluded that it is wrong to be homosexual and that it does not lead to personal happiness and fulfillment. Focusing on those homosexuals who want to change continues to emphasize the immorality and personal destructiveness of homosexuality.
2. They would be denying that homosexuality is physically caused. The more the homosexual community can convince the general public that their homosexuality is beyond their control, the more tolerance or even preferential treatment they can gain in public policy."[53]

Quite sim Contrary to the myth stated above, in truth there is no gay gene! Even openly homosexual researchers have come to that conclusion. In 1996, a

[45] Neil and Briar Whitehead, (1999) *My Genes Made Me Do It! - A Scientific Look at Sexual Orientation*, (Los Angeles: Huntington House Publishers), pp. 87-88.
[46] Miranda Lambert (2004) "A Sourcebook for Homosexuality [REVIEW]" *The Classical Review* 54 (2):439-441.
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research team of five led by Dean Hamer at the National Cancer Institute released a study that attempted to link homosexuality with a specific region of the X chromosome. Dean Hamer made the statement "…environmental factors play a role. There is not a single master gene that makes people gay."[54] He went on to say, "I don't think we will ever be able to predict who will be gay." A well-known brain study of 1991 by Simon Levay tried to find the differences in the hypothalamuses (a very small portion of the brain) of both homosexual and heterosexual men. Levay, who was one of the researchers and himself a gay activist, offered criticism of his own work: "It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center of the brain." Clinical professor of psychiatry at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine and past president of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, Dr. Charles Socarides, argues that since psychologists and ministers have treated homosexuality with success, the genetic cause theory must be suspect.[55]

b) Environment, Nurture and Homosexuality

Environments and nature have been over the years seen by many as the causes of homosexual orientation. In his 1980 work *Overcoming Homo sexuality,* Robert Kronemeyer writes: "With rare exceptions, homosexuality is neither inherited nor the result of some glandular disturbance or the scrambling of genes or chromosomes. Homosexuals are made, not born 'that way.' I firmly believe that homosexuality is a learned response to early painful experiences and that it can be unlearned. For those homosexuals who are unhappy with their life and find effective therapy, it is 'curable."[56] Similarly, in a 1989 *USA Today* article, a San Francisco State University professor of psychology, John DeCecco and the former editor of the 25-volume, *Journal of Homosexuality*, stated, "The idea that people are born into one type of sexual behavior is entirely foolish." Homosexuality is "a behavior, not a condition," and something that some people can and do change, just like they sometimes change other tastes and personality traits."[57]

c) Psychosocial factors and Homosexuality

Psychosocial factors have long been neglected, as causative or determinant regarding homosexual behaviours, but a number of recent studies point to their manifest importance. In particular, childhood and adolescent experiences seem to be determinative of future orientation.[58] Particularly significant are the high proportion of homosexuals who report a distant father-son relation and a feeling of being 'exotic' and separate from their same-sex peers. In addition, as some have suggested, psychosocial factors may turn out to be at the root of the difference between gay and lesbian orientations.[59] In our society, gender non-conforming boys are far more often singled out from the crowd than girls. This singling-out may have the effect of reinforcing their feelings of difference and thus entrenching their orientation. For girls there is not the same degree of singling-out, so orientation is likely to be much more fluid and even superficial.[60] However, science is yet to reach a consensus about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation. From various researches conducted in the field of science, many have come to the conclusion that genetic, hormonal, developmental, social and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that homosexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors.[61]

III. Arguments in Favour of Homosexuality

a) Homosexuals are born Gay

When advocates of pro-gay theology and philosophy assert that people are born gay, they actually go beyond the generally accepted view that genetics and environmental factors *influence* a person's behaviour. They suggest that homosexuality is largely *caused* by a person's genes.[62] This belief which is itself based on the deterministic philosophy of behaviourism, is designed to suggest that what is inborn is (a) natural or normal, (b) unchangeable, (c) allowed or created by God, as with a congenital defect or one's eye colour, and that it is (d) morally legitimate. The logic and implications of this view are as follows: If a person is homosexual because of an inbred homosexual

[54] Peter Copeland and Dean Hamer, *The Science of Desire*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 76

[55] Matt T. Reed (2001) "Historicizing Inversion: Or, How to Make a Homosexual," *History of the Human Sciences* 14 (4):21-23.

[56] Robert Kronemeyer, *Overcoming Homosexuality,* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 7-9.

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[62] Sonja J. Ellis (2002) "Moral Reasoning and Homosexuality: The Acceptability of Arguments about Lesbian and Gay Issues," *Journal of Moral Education* 31 (4):455-457.

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condition, there is no hope or possibility of change.[63] And because the homosexual cannot change, all aspects of society must change, including education, religion, and law, in favour of the homosexual.[64] Basically, the advocacy is to the effect that not only must homosexuality be accepted as socially legal for homosexuals, it must also be promoted as a normal lifestyle option and, if necessary, the church must be pressured to abandon its alleged moral discrimination against homosexuals seeking church membership.[65]

b) Homosexuality is not a Sin

Over the years some pro-gay advocates have maintained that homosexuals have no choice in the matter of their sexual predisposition towards persons of the same gender. The homosexual condition or orientation, it is argued, is an evidence of the brokenness and "fallenness" of our present world.[66] The condition may be classified with disease (such as alcoholism, or allergies), with handicap (such as congenital blindness), and eccentricity (such as left-handedness). It may even be evil (like sickness or death), but not necessarily sinful (like pride, blasphemy, or murder).[67] Because homosexuals did not choose to be born gay. So, one should not hold any person responsible for her or his sexual *orientation* any more than we hold a person responsible for skin colour (nature).[68] Being a homosexual is not sin, but lustful and inappropriate homosexual activity is sin and therefore, must be avoided. Since it is believed that homosexuals did not chose to be gay, but were born that way, God deserves the credit (or blame) for who or what they are. And since homosexuality is presumably not a sin, but a sinful condition, homosexuals need compassion and acceptance from the church, and other faith communities.[69]

c) Homosexuals are normal and Healthy People

Based on the assumption that homosexuality is inborn, i.e. of genetic origin, advocates argue that homosexuality should be accepted as a natural or normal human condition.[70] They opine that homosexuality is a normal variant of adult sexuality; gay men and lesbians possess the same potential and desire for sustained loving and lasting relationships as heterosexuals, including loving and parenting children.[71] The variation of this argument is that there are homosexuals in every species on the planet. It is a frequent, natural, and regular occurrence; it is both common and highly essential in the lives of a number of species. This covers everything from mammals to crabs and worms.[72] According to them, overwhelming evidence shows that homosexuality is a natural occurrence across nearly all species on the planet. This is not a choice, it is a fact of life. When the facts show us that people are who they are, we should allow them to live full lives as they are.[73]

IV. Objections to Homosexuality

a) Homosexuality is against the natural Law Theory

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the natural law is "nothing else than the rational creature's participation in the eternal law" (1a-11ae. Q. 94). The eternal law is God's wisdom, inasmuch as it is the directive norm of all movement and action. When God willed to give existence to creatures, He willed to ordain and direct them to an end.[74] Aquinas argues that on the animal level of man's being, man shares certain biological and natural inclinations with other animals. These inclinations for Aquinas include inclinations towards sexual activities and the tendency to take tender care of offspring; because everything naturally loves itself, the result being that everything naturally keeps itself in being, and resists corruption as far as it can.[75] From these inclinations God gave man the injunction to multiply and fill the earth, thereby promoting procreation and tendering of offspring. This means that all other forms of sexual activity or the use of the sexual faculties which exclude the possibility of procreation are morally and naturally wrong, since they go against the natural law. Consequently, homosexuality is contrary to the inclination of nature, and morally wrong.[76]

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b) Homosexuality is immoral, whether inborn or acquired

Regarding the assumption that since homosexuality may be natural or inborn (an unproven assertion) it is by that token, morally neutral or legitimate, one might ask? If it can be demonstrated conclusively that adultery, incest, paedophilia, violence, lying are inherited, would anyone be justified in considering them legitimate or neutral? Should the standard for morality be determined by what is inborn?[77] Contrary to this view, homosexuality is still immoral, whether inborn or acquired. An immoral behaviour cannot be legitimized by a quick baptism in the gene pool.[78] Morality is not determined by what is inborn. Those wishing to discover God's moral standards must look to the Bible; the Ten Commandments and God's pre-fall order, rather than the latest discoveries of science regarding the post-fall sinful condition, in order to discover the moral guidelines on whether homosexuality is moral and immoral.[79] From available indications, the leap from *what is* (alleged facts of the homosexual condition) to *what ought to be* (the morality of homosexuality) is too large to make.[80]

c) Marriage serves the common good

Marriage between one man and one woman is recognized as a public institution, with its attendant benefits and responsibilities, precisely because it serves the common good. Marriage offers the State its most *necessary common good,*[81]by bringing children into the world and raising them in a family that includes the love of their mother and father. The State needs people (citizens) in order to flourish. No people, no State. Under the principle of subsidiarity, the common good is better served when mothers and fathers raise their children, not the State.[82]

d) Homosexuality obfuscates the character and purpose of marriage

Extending marriage to same-sex partners will redefine marriage in such a way that marriage will no longer be understood to have a direct relationship to the procreation and education of children, such that bringing children into the world and raising them, will be seen as *extrinsic* rather than *intrinsic* to marriage.[83] Openness to procreation will no longer belong to the very substance and definition of marriage. It will be reduced merely to an option for those couples who happen to want children. Some might argue that if there is an insistence that openness to procreation belongs to the very essence and definition of marriage, then it would also amount to excluding not only same-sex partners from marriage, but infertile heterosexual couples as well.[84] Upon careful examination, this objection is neither valid nor compelling. The sexual activity of an infertile heterosexual couple is intrinsically open to procreation, even though their sexual union cannot result in procreation.[85] The sexual act of an infertile couple is the *kind of act that is open to procreation*; the fact that it cannot lead to procreation is accidental to the act itself. Under normal circumstances (of fecundity), their act would lead to procreation. On the other hand, the sexual act of a same-sex couple is the *kind of act that is never open to procreation.* The non-openness to procreation (regrettably so) *constitutes the substance and definition of the homosexual act.*[86]Thus, one can rationally hold that openness to life is intrinsic to marriage, without excluding infertile couples from marriage. Infertile heterosexual couples engage in the kind of act that leads to procreation, but homosexual couples do not. Hence, redefining marriage to include same-sex partners will consequently remove the essential public purpose of marriage from its definition: that is, the procreation and education of children,[87] thereby destroying the goal of marriage, as a social institution meant for the common good. The argument that the legalization of same-sex marriages will have no harmful impact on heterosexual marriage is, therefore, adjudged to be entirely false.[88] Such a redefinition of marriage will have the necessary effect of reducing all marriages to the status of private relationships with no relation to the common good. This, in turn, renders the public recognition of marriage as an institution utterly superfluous. To render a public institution superfluous is, of course, to undermine and call into question why the state should recognize and support that institution at all.[89]

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V. Homosexuality and the Ethical Emotivism of Ayer and Stevenson: an Appraisal

Ayer's emotivism states that moral judgments do not function as statements of fact, but rather as expressions of one's emotions, feelings attitude towards an action. He claims that ethical sentences do not express propositions but emotional attitudes. For him, moral language is meaningless because it is non-verifiable, for Stevenson moral language has no factual nor cognitive content, but only an emotive meaning. For him, moral propositions are neither true nor false; they arenot meaningless, but merely allow us to express our emotions. Following this view, it means that moral judgments and ethical concepts such as good and bad have nothing else but emotive meanings or significations. This is tantamount to relativism and subjectivism.[90] Consequently, the reduction of an ethical issue like Homosexuality to relativistic factors, makes morality a free enterprise (where moral agents are free to institute their individual their personal moral norms or standards of behaviour). Hence, ethically speaking, emotivism is quite untenable. When a person says that an action is bad, he or she is not simply expressing his own personal feelings about that action as Ayer and Stevenson seem to claim. Rather, the person is claiming that there is something in that action which renders it intrinsically bad, morally evil or wrong. One is not just trying to manipulate other people's emotions to endorse such action; rather one is making a factual statement which can be either true or false. In line with this reasoning process, when one says that 'homosexuality is good,' such a claim is factually false because it superlatively negates the objectivity of the moral wrongness of homosexuality. Moral statements therefore are not just expressions of personal feelings, but objective statements of facts about human actions.[91]

The ordinary system of ethics, as elaborated in the works of ethical philosophers, is very far from being a homogeneous whole. Not only is it apt to contain pieces of metaphysics, and analyses of non-ethical concepts: its actual ethical contents are themselves of very different kinds. They may be divided into four main classes.[92] There are, first of all, propositions which express definitions of ethical terms, or judgments about the legitimacy or possibility of certain definitions. Secondly, there are propositions describing the phenomena of moral experience, and their causes. Thirdly, there are exhortations to moral virtue. And lastly, there are actual ethical judgments. It is unfortunately the case that the distinction between these four classes, plain as it seems, is commonly ignored by ethical philosophers, with the result that it is often very difficult to tell from the works of ethicists what it is that they are seeking to discover or prove.[93]The distinction between the expression of feeling and the assertion of feeling is complicated by the fact that the assertion that one has a certain feeling, often accompanies the expression of that feeling, and is indeed a factor in the expression of that feeling. The main objection to the ordinary subjectivist theory is that the validity of ethical judgments is not determined by the nature of their author's feelings.[94] Emotivism claims that moral utterances are neither true nor false but are expressions of emotions or attitudes. It leads to the conclusion that people can disagree only in attitude, not in beliefs. So, people cannot disagree over the moral facts, because there are no moral facts. It *also implies that presenting reasons in support of a moral utterance is a matter of offering non-moral facts that can influence someone's attitude*. It seems that any non-moral facts will do, as long as they affect attitudes. Perhaps the most far-reaching implication of emotivism is that nothing is actually good or bad.[95] There simply are no properties of goodness and badness. There is only the expression of favorable or unfavorable emotions or attitudes toward something. Neither ethical subjectivism nor emotivism provide support for any particular moral standards. They are not systems designed to define or support a particular moral or ideological viewpoint, nor do they provide a foundation for justifying moral standards. The reason for this is that they are not moral systems, they are meta-ethical theories. They are theories about the true nature and origin of morality, not justifications for any particular set of moral standards.[96] Despite early popularity, ethical emotivism is not a popular position today and it is widely considered to be an unduly and unhelpfully simplistic form of Non-Cognitivism. At the psychological level, ethical emotivism is unlikely to feel correct. If one suggests that a certain action is right or wrong, it implies a claim that is true and reflects how one takes the world to be (reflecting a moral belief in one's mind). For instance, one cannot simply boo an action in a rather academic and indirect way. Moral statements are supposed to be truth-apt and descriptive moral judgments.[97] The most telling and obvious objection to

[90] Carl Wellman (1968) "Emotivism and Ethical Objectivity," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 5 (2):90 - 92.
[91] Gunnar Björnsson & Tristram McPherson (2014) "Moral Attitudes for Non-Cognitivists: Solving the Specification Problem," *Mind* 123 (489): 22-25.
[92] Mark van Roojen (2013) "Moral Cognitivism versus Non-Cognitivism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 2013 (1): 21-23.
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[94] Uriah Kriegel (2021) "Moral Judgment and the Content-Attitude Distinction," *Philosophical Studies* 179 (4):1135-1137.
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[96] Jeremy Fischer (2020) "Why Are You Proud of That? Cognitivism About "Possessive" Emotions," *Southwest Philosophy Review* 36 (2):87-89.
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ethical emotivism, for many people, is that it simply does not describe what we do when we are making up our mind on moral issues. According to this objection, deciding what we ought to do in a particular situation is different from asking ourselves what we want to do, sorting out our attitudes or engaging in self-persuasion.[98] There are some very serious problems with the theory of ethical emotivism that has essentially impugned on its integrity, in the eyes of contemporary ethical theorists. One of the main problems with ethical emotivism is that it does not seem to be able to give an account of the difference between everyday disapprovals and moral disapprovals.[99] Surely moral judgements mean more to us than just an expression of emotion, and most ethicists suggests that moral judgements are (or absolutely have to be) more than just an expression of our emotion to a particular act.[100] Also, ethical emotivism is entrapped in the 'Frege-Geach problem.' This is a criticism that takes the form of a standard *modus ponens* argument:

1. Torture is wrong.
2. If torture is wrong, then torturing your little brother is wrong.
3. Therefore, torturing your little brother is wrong.[101]

Prima facie, this argument appears to be valid in the sense that the conclusion does follow the premise. However, for emotivism, the argument is 'fallacious.' The emotivist would say that this argument commits the fallacy of equivocation because the expression 'torture is wrong' has a different meaning in the second premise than it does in the first premise. It seems that the statement 'torture is wrong' is asserted and therefore is used to express the disapproval of torture. However in the second premise it follows something completely different altogether, it also seems that if one were to analyze the second premise, one would not state any attitude at all. Thus, each occurrence or torture has a different meaning, and the argument does commit the fallacy of equivocation. But it seems bizarre to draw such a conclusion Why is the argument fallacious? It seems that the fallacy can actually be ascribed to emotivism, because in premise 1 it seems to express an attitude, but in premise 2 it does not. In this regard, it must be pointed out that it cannot express such an attitude even in premise 1. In terms of recommendations, the ethical emotivist needs to replace the evaluative and non-evaluative dichotomywith the evaluative/mixed/empirical trichotomy.[102] Also, the problem of explaining apparent entailment relations involving sentences that do not express beliefs and cannot be either true or false, needs to be adequately addressed.[103] Of course, the emotivists' performative fallacy (has to be addressed) regarding why it is impossible to give the meanings of evaluative words, by specifying the linguistic acts (commanding, recommending, praising, blaming) that utterances of simple evaluative sentences are standardly used to perform.[104]One appealing feature of ethical emotivism is that it may promote a tolerant and accepting attitude towards moral diversity. Hence, according to emotivism, as moral judgments are nothing more than 'pure expressions of feeling,' no one has the right to say their morality is true and another's is false.[105] However, an unappealing feature of ethical emotivism is that it arbitrarily reduces morality to emotions. But, morality cannot be reduced to emotions since our emotions and moral judgments may not always be in agreement with each other.[106] It is a common feature of moral debate that we do not evaluate a moral judgment by its emotional force, but by the reasons that can be given in its support. Homosexuality in humans has been the center of broad discussions and has been widely accepted by many societies in recent times, as a valid alternative to heterosexuality. There are different theories regarding the homosexual behaviour in humans. These theories incorporate chemical, social and personal reasons behind the same sex attractions.[107]There are two main theories as to what causes homosexual attractions. The first theory is that a homosexual orientation is essentially dictated by genetic and/or biological factors. Put simply, some people are "born gay." The second theory is that homosexual attractions develop primarily as a result of psychological and environmental influences and early experiences. Unfortunately, in the public square, the latter theory has appeared to be in decline and the former gaining favor in recent decades.[108]

Beyond the Sentimentalist Turn," *Philosophical Psychology* 33 (4): 569-571.

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VI. Conclusion

Emotivism states that moral judgments do not concern matters of facts, insofar as they do not describe or represent the world in any way, but are simply emotional responses to it, which is why defenders of emotivism usually claim that moral judgments cannot be true or false. Without prejudice to the exercise of human freewill, a quality that humans have as rational beings, the reduction of moral judgments simply to expressions of one's emotions, and feelings is a travesty of human freedom. [109] Hence, if feelings become the rule of morality, then the morality and ethicality of homosexuality become justified on very spurious, selfish and deflationary grounds. Following the hierarchy of human values, human moral consciousness and rationality, homosexuality is morally reprehensible, since it is evidently contrary to the natural order (against the natural law) apart from the fact that it substantially frustrates the procreative finality of the coital union between married couples. [110]

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