AN ANALYSIS OF THE ETHICAL LANGUAGE OF WILLIAM JAMES

by

Barbara J. Hughen

A THESIS

Approved:

Committee

Approved:

Dean of the Graduate School

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ETHICAL LANGUAGE OF WILLIAM JAMES

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

Sam Houston State College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

---

by

Barbara J. Hughen

Huntsville, Texas

August, 1967

ABSTRACT

Hughen, Barbara J., An Analysis of the Ethical Language of William James. Master of Arts, August, 1967, Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. 76 pp.

Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to show the effect of language on philosophy and that the language of ethics can simultaneously have more than one of the four functions of evaluative, emotive, prescriptive, and descriptive language.

Methods

The methods used to fulfill the purpose involved an analysis of the language of moral judgements used by William James in three of his most representative essays on ethics: "Is Life Worth Living?" "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings."

Findings

From the evidence presented in this study the following recommendations appear to be in order:

1. It should be recognized that the language of ethics can have more than one function simultaneously, which is a recognition at variance with some linguists of philosophy.

2. It should be recognized that the meaning of philosophical writings, in this case ethical contexts, can

be made clearer through the analysis of the language used.

Approved:

_____

Supervising Professor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem	1
	Purpose of the Study	2
	Definition of Terms	3
	Methods of Investigation	4
II.	BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION OF WILLIAM JAMES . . .	6
	Earliest Influence: Swedenborgian Metaphysics	6
	Stimulation of the James' Home Life	8
	Art and Science at School	9
	Biggest Influence: Renouvier's Free Will . .	10
	Influence of Darwinism: Free Will and Science	12
	Charles Sanders Pierce and Pragmatism	13
	Ethical Writings After 1880	15
III.	EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS	18
	Evaluative Language in Ethical Contexts . . .	18
	Evaluative Terms Used in Grading for Choice	18
	Evaluating Distinguished from Other Uses of Language	18
	Evaluative Terms Showing Order of Merit . .	19

CHAPTER PAGE

Agreement for the Criteria Necessary 19

Evaluative Language in James' Essays 21

"Is Life Worth Living?" 21

"The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" 23

"On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" . . 26

IV. EMOTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS . . 32

An Expression or Arousal of Attitudes 32

Emotive Language in James' Essays 34

Evaluative and Prescriptive Language Having Emotive Element 34

Emotive Language in "Is Life Worth Living?" 34

Emotive Language in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" 37

Emotive Language in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" 38

V. PRESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS 42

Prescriptive Language in Ethical Contexts . . 42

Telling One What to Do 42

Evaluative and Emotive Language Combined with Prescriptive 44

CHAPTER PAGE

Instances of Prescriptive Language in James' Essays 45
"Is Life Worth Living?" 45
"The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" 46
"On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" . . 50

VI. DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS 55
Descriptive Statements of Factual Information 55
Descriptive Language in James' Essays 57
"Is Life Worth Living?" 57
"The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" 61
"On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" . . 65

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 72
Summary 72
Conclusions 72

BIBLIOGRAPHY 74
VITA 76

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The influence of language on philosophy has, I believe, been profound and almost unrecognized." This quotation is from Bertrand Russell's article "Logical Positivism;" it could be brought up to date by rewording it as "'the influence of language on philosophy is profound and almost universally recognized.'"[1] For now the analysis of language and philosophy are considered identical, or as Wittgenstein stated in Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, "'all philosophy is 'critique of language'.'" The study of language is no longer just a precaution to avoid vagueness and ambiguity in man's philosophizing.[2] Since philosophy is determined by language, that changing system of speech sounds which men associate with meanings, one can see the effect of language on philosophy by analyzing the language philosophers use.

Statement of the Problem

This thesis is an analysis of the language used by the American philosopher William James in three essays concerning ethics: "Is Life Worth Living?" "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." Words, phrases, and clauses he used in these ethical contexts are categorized as to function: evaluative,

emotive, prescriptive, and descriptive. Among related studies are Master of Arts theses written at the University of Houston. "The Words for the Seven Deadly Sins," by Mary S. Hetherington, traces the etymology of the English words for the seven sins of the Middle Ages: lust, sloth, pride, gluttony, envy, avarice, and anger. "An Experiment in Linguistic Analysis of the Prose Style of William Faulkner," by Maryanne Flanagan Lord, uses Noam Chomsky's theory that transformational grammar provides a model of human behavior. She compares structures among the types of speech used by a character in Intruder in the Dust to reveal portions of meaning, significant to the total conception of human experience as embodied in Faulkner's prose style. Jim Prewett, in "A Linguistic Analysis of Ernest Hemingway's Prose Style in A Farewell to Arms," reveals stylistic differences between two authors through transformational-generative grammar.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose in analyzing the language of moral judgements used by William James is to show the effect of language on philosophy. It will be seen that ethical language, considered to have the particular meanings peculiar to philosophical contexts, can have one or all of the four purposes which are respective to evaluative, emotive, prescriptive, and descriptive meanings: (1) to choose and

advise others to choose by commendation and similar implication, (2) to express and arouse feeling in order to stimulate action, (3) to tell us what to do, and (4) to state a decision of principle, a factual statement. This study should serve to clarify James' meaning through language analysis.

Definition of Terms

The terms evaluative, emotive, prescriptive, and descriptive are used in this thesis with specialized meanings in ethics. The evaluative meaning of a word is its grade or merit. In choosing, preferring, approving, or commending, a subject is labeled as having a certain evaluation, as "good," "indifferent," or "bad." The emotive meaning of a word is the emotional attitude it expresses or evokes. There is an implication that there are reasons for the attitude, and it is used to persuade us to do what we ought to do. Prescriptive language in morals is universal commands, using such words as right, wrong, and ought. Again, there is an implication that there are reasons for the advice to be taken. Descriptive language informs of facts and states decision of principle. When the judgement is in descriptive language, the criteria is either completely understood or stated in descriptive sentences so that it can be empirically verified.

Methods of Investigation

The procedure of the analysis includes the presentation of pertinent information concerning the background and family of William James, and at the first of chapters three through six, an explanation of the type of ethical language, evaluative, emotive, prescriptive, then descriptive, is presented. Then each of the three essays, "Is Life Worth Living?" "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," is examined for instances of each of the kinds of ethical language in those four chapters. It is pointed out throughout the chapters that many of James' moral judgements have simultaneously more than one or all four meanings.

Footnotes for Chapter I

[1]Max Black, Language and Philosophy, 111.

[2]Ibid., 141.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION OF WILLIAM JAMES

The earliest influence to mold William's thought was his father's religion. He absorbed his father's pious attitude, but not the ideas and doctrine.[1] His father's religion, which was very real and true to him, gave William the interest in justifying it. Though he considered religion valid, William did not think of religion as that absolute one of his father which was irreconcilable to moralism. He felt it a necessity to add to religion a place for scientific facts and the moral will.[2] Henry James, Senior, rejected the genteel Calvinistic atmosphere in America. When he was thirteen years old, his leg had to be amputated twice in two years because of a serious burn gotten while heroically putting out a fire. This traumatic experience probably helped cause him to reject the established tradition and wander restlessly primarily in Europe. While at Princeton Theological Seminary in preparation to be a Presbyterian minister, Henry developed a bitter distaste for association with any church, which lasted the rest of his life. In fact, he was a rebel against any traditional authority. Another reason for his rejection of conventionalism was the failure of his personal philosophy or system. Then in 1844 Henry was introduced by a friend to Immanuel Swedenborg's works, which provided the permanent intellectual atmosphere

for the home life of his son William, then age two. This new consolation of satisfaction found in Swedenborg's system helped Henry overcome his bodily misfortune and gave him serene confidence in salvation. Henry's new consistent philosophy resulted in William's exceptionally sympathetic and tolerant, yet critical, manner of dealing with views of others. Henry's attempts to spread his discoveries were not publically accepted, but his influence on William ultimately gave them significance.[3] Henry James, Sr., evaluated Swedenborg as having the ability to understand the basic or original aspect of things with intelligent insight.[4] The works of Swedenborg concerning the relation of the human soul to the body and such profound subjects are: Economy of the Animal Kingdom, The Animal Kingdom, and The Worship and Love of God. His speculations were profound and based on an extraordinarily wide knowledge of natural science.[5] In Economy of the Animal Kingdom, he suggested the discovery of the soul as a means of unifying and interpreting scientific knowledge. In The Animal Kingdom he explained his belief that by physically and philosophically examining the human body, he would finally discover the soul.[6] In The Worship and Love of God, he classified geometric forms and explained his doctrine of correspondences. Swedenborg taught that all life is spiritual, a common word in the James household, and that the only real substance is God, the originator.[7] He had always combined physiological and psychological

endeavors in philosophical reasoning, but in these works, he saw the soul by spiritual sight and experience.[8] Henry expressed his version of Swedenborg's philosophy in his writings after being freed from the nervous collapse he had at about age thirty-three. William later severely criticized this concept of the immanent God as indefensible. Yet the ultimate basis of all William James' writing is an expression of the need to believe in God.[9]

The home environment was one of freedom of thought and speech, and the James family discussed morality with enthusiasm.[10] The freedom extended to churchgoing, too; they were sent to all the churches one at a time in order to judge for themselves. This was a little bewildering at times.[11] The migratory education Henry Senior imposed on the James children resulted in William's flexibility and resilience. William's exposure to his father's effective use of the language gave him the drive to excel in the use of words. The family's conversations were always significant in that they showed the children how to use language to get at the truth. In order to stimulate discussion, Henry Senior used words with particular connotations in mind instead of the general denotative meanings. His choice of words was always, though it may have required slight hesitation, spontaneous and often literarily startling.[12] Henry's philosophy of the spirit as a creative process in nature did not receive its deserved recognition because of

his insistence on using words unconventionally with his peculiar connotations.[13] At first William, the quickest orator of the family, enjoyed speaking grandiloquently; however, he finally developed his own simple and direct style.[14] He delighted in using irony for humor, and the liveliest examples are in his letters to his sister Alice; the following is an excerpt from one of his letters to her while he was in Germany in 1867:

> . . . For some time past I have thought with longing of the brightness and freshness of my home in New England--of the extraordinary, and in ordinary moments little appreciated, but sometimes-coming-across-to-you-and-striking-you-with-an-unexpected-sense-of-rich-privilege blessings of a mother's love (excuse my somewhat German style)--of the advantage of having a youthful-hearted though bald-headed father who looks at the Kosmos as if it had some life in it-- . . .[15]

His rather fantastic invention of his letters filled with pleasant paradoxes was reminiscent of his father's style, yet less formal and serious. But William's published works were more sober, for he prepared for the writing of Principles of Psychology by reading scientific journals and reports. His goal in expression was to simply state the meaning as directly and accurately as possible. Even if looseness of style might occur, his meaning always was expressed with accurate adjectives, with energy, and with clarity.[16]

William James had a disciplineless, irregular schooling from New York to Boulogne, France, to Geneva,

Switzerland, and back to New York. His only exposure to philosophy was his father's ideas;[17] he was interested in science and art. After a year of studying art at age eighteen, he gave art up to study science for the next eight years at the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard. Then for reasons of finance and prestige, he entered Harvard Medical School. Two years later he temporarily abandoned the study of medicine when he joined Louis Agassig, one of the science teachers, on a collecting expedition to the Amazon. But he soon returned to medical school, since natural history interested him less than medicine. Then in 1867 he went to Germany to continue study and to recuperate from neurasthenia, which he had had since adolescence. But Germany did not help; in fact, the neurosis grew to the point that he considered suicide. He was in his early twenties, and it was then that he began reading psychology and philosophy.[18]

Semi-invalided so that he could not begin medical practice, William in 1870 read Charles Bernard Renouvier's views on free will; this was a focal point in his personal and intellectual history. It cleared his mind in that he realized that metaphysical and scientific existences, including his physical disorder, were not determined by antecedent causes. He abandoned the idea that physical disorder is the basis of mental disorder. The mind is separate from the body and is what we make it, and he rejected the

guaranteed success of predestination of the genteel tradition for freedom and risk.[19] William extended his outlook of freedom of will against the idealists and their "block universe" and the materialists and their determinisms, a problem with which he struggled for many years. His problem was solved though when he decided to accept all the world's experiences simply as they appear to be, including the unexplicable discontinuities. Existence is as we see it and experience it, but the individual wills his own life, and it is his effort for and faith in a good life that makes it significant.[20] Thus goodness is consequential or eventuated; things are made good by us, and progress is then possible. The construction to make good is aboriginal to America not just coincidentally, but because of James.[21] Renouvier influenced James more than anyone else, for Renouvier's explanation of the freedom of the will, that the only way we know whether the will is free is to assert its liberty by free choice, answered a question for James; it gave him a philosophy to live by and a reason to live in this vigorous will. Thus James could make a moral judgement or decision without logical evidence; a belief in free will allowed him to believe in something good which is desirable or beneficial for life, since it is the will or heart, not science, that decides moral beliefs. Proof of the good or truth of a moral attitude comes about at its existence and consequence, showing the importance of the choice.[22] James

also concluded that religious experience evidences a mystical, incomprehensible realm which forms one's moral attitudes and which is good, true, or verified since the results, the religious experience itself, are real and true.[23] For example, the moral attitude that one will work for what he considers goodness is true or verified the instant the attitude is decided upon and not only when the results are seen, for we determine our own lives.

When William was seventeen, Darwin's Origin of Species appeared, seeming to disprove the supernatural origin of man, and the principle of the conservation of energy, disproving man's capacity for thought, will, and spirit, also appeared about the same time. This gave science authority over religion, giving rise to dogmatic philosophies such as naturalism and materialism over Kant's idealism.[24] James might have chosen to lean toward the Kantian idealism in philosophy if it had not been for his biological interest and training. But because he understood the limitations of science, he chose English empiricism. For he could not reject the idea that man has a will and sensation above the intellect.[25] William's scientific training, during the era of Darwin and Spencer, forced him to cope with the scientific or physical before entering the metaphysical.[26] In his struggle to find a mediator between science and theology, neither of which he could accept, he tried to justify traditional religion in science by applying such Darwinian

postulates as spontaneous variation to the lives of great men, states of mind, and thinking processes. His freedom was absorbed into his science; the value of science became as a method of knowing, belief, and experiment. To James, freedom was the looseness in the conjunction of things, corresponding to Darwin's spontaneous variations.[27] During this time, about 1867, psychology and philosophy were closely related to biology, so William rejected the metaphysical realm of his father for empiricism. He was greatly influenced by Darwin and Spencer during this time of evolutionary science, but differed with the idea that one merely becomes aware of existences; instead his mind and action can make things true by declaring them so. This was part of the germ of his pragmatic method of philosophizing.[28] In 1872, at age thirty, James applied Darwin's idea of accidental variation in the form of his a priori in human knowledge, and the idea that life is a hazardous experiment in which the individual differences are proven by the environment was taken from Darwin. The language of science, with which James was of course familiar, was easy for him to use in philosophizing.[29]

During the 1860's William read, but did not fully understand, the articles and lectures of Charles Sanders Pierce, whom he had first met in a chemistry course at the Harvard science school where Pierce soon was graduated summa cum laude.[30] Pierce, an exact scientist, lacked James'

sensitivity and insight, which were elements of his background of literature, psychology, and metaphysics.[31] They were friends for nearly fifty years, and though Pierce did not appreciate James' distaste for mathematical thought and logic, he admired James' love of truth and his perception of others. Pierce influenced James against Herbert Spencer's views; James absorbed Pierce's bold disregard of reverenced philosophies and his originality. Pierce also destroyed James' belief in totally relying on experience as the only teacher; James afterwards always considered the element of invention and transcendence over knowledge in empiricism because of Pierce's influence. And finally, Pierce helped James lessen the boundary between psychology and philosophy. Pierce's concept of belief as predetermined by fact and social agreement was accepted by James, who added an allowance for emotional preference, saying that a believer is one who accepts his higher appetites instead of ignoring them.[32] James debated in the Metaphysical Club with Pierce in the early 1870's when Pierce first used the word pragmatism as a philosophy related to science. But James' concept of pragmatism, which he developed later, was less related to the abstractions of logic and math as was Pierce's than to psychology and individualism. Pierce's principles allowed James to round out his idea of science as a method and to maintain his artistic sense of perceptual reality against the words and abstractions which make up thinking.[33]

After around age thirty-three his health and career were both stable.[34] He was becoming an original thinker, and he was helping philosophical teaching prevail over dogmatic edification.[35] At age thirty-six he married Alice H. Gibbens, who encouraged and stimulated him to finish The Principles of Psychology, which he began that year. In that work he defended, without embracing, free will.[36] He was interested now in philosophy; he began teaching ethics and religion in the late 1880's.[37] Between 1893 and 1903 he set forth his philosophical views in his essays: The Will to Believe and Other Essays published in 1897, Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine in 1898, Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals in 1899, and The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature in 1902, which were the Gifford lectures he gave at the University of Edinburgh on natural religion.[38] In 1899 too much work and exposure resulted in disability involving his heart, from which he eventually died in 1910.[39] James applied pragmatism, which he formulated in 1898, to everything; his later works which exemplify this include Essays in Radical Empiricism, published posthumously in 1912; A Pluralistic Universe, 1909; Some Problems in Philosophy, posthumously in 1911; and The Meaning of Truth, 1909.[40]

Footnotes for Chapter II

[1]R. B. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, 467.

[2]Ibid., 165-166.

[3]Horace M. Kallen, The Philosophy of William James, 11-17.

[4]George Trobridge, Swedenborg, Life and Teaching, 289.

[5]Ibid., 40-41.

[6]Ibid., 46.

[7]Ibid., 77-78.

[8]Ibid., 82.

[9]William H. Marnell, Man-Made Morals, Four Philosophies that Shaped America, 270.

[10]F. O. Matthiessen, The James Family, 71.

[11]Ibid., 82.

[12]Ibid., 100-101.

[13]Frederic Harold Young, The Philosophy of Henry James, Sr., 64.

[14]Matthiessen, The James Family, 102.

[15]Ibid., 103-104.

[16]Ibid., 105-107.

[17]Kallen, Philosophy of James, 17-18.

[18]Ibid., 20-23.

[19]Ibid., 28-30.

[20]Ibid., 35-36.

[21]Ibid., 47.

[22]Etienne Gilson, Thomas Langan, and Armand A. Maurer, Recent Philosophy, Hegel to the Present, 644-645.

[23]Ibid., 647.

[24]Perry, Thought and Character of James, 463.

[25]Ibid., 465.

[26]Matthiessen, The James Family, 114.

[27]Kallen, Philosophy of James, 36.

[28]Matthiessen, The James Family, 211.

[29]Perry, Thought and Character of James, 469-470.

[30]Ibid., 533-534.

[31]Ibid., 538.

[32]Ibid., 540-542.

[33]Gilson, Langan, and Maurer, Recent Philosophy, 634-635.

[34]Perry, Thought and Character of James, 360.

[35]Ibid., 373.

[36]Ibid., 375.

[37]Ibid., 392.

[38]Ibid., xxxviii.

[39]Ibid., 429.

[40]Ibid., xxxviii.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS

Good and bad and such evaluative labels are used in indicating choice, preference, approval, commendation, and grade.[1] According to some thinkers, the purpose in condemning or commending is solely to choose and advise others to choose, and the only reason there is choice is that there are standards for particular purposes.[2] The evaluative meaning of a value-judgement advises choice based on a certain set of criteria by commending.[3]

Evaluating, describing, expressing emotion, and prescribing are each distinct. Though there is a close connection between the grading label and the criteria, the descriptive characteristics, their meaning is not identical. They have differing logical character: evaluation and description.[4] Some words may be used evaluatively and descriptively at the same time, such as valuable, nonsensical, and normal. Of course, words typically used as grading labels may be used exclusively descriptively too, as in "We traveled a good sixty miles," indicating severity. Sometimes descriptive criteria is given with the purpose of evaluating, and vice versa.[5] Indicative sentences are not limited to descriptive use; they can be used evaluatively and performatorily for example.[6] The evaluative meaning of good is primary before the descriptive meaning, which

informs that the good object conforms to the criteria, for two reasons: the commendation attached to the word is always constant for every use, whereas the standards it can signify vary for every class of object described; and the evaluative meaning can remain constant while descriptive standards may be shifted for any one class of objects.[7] Though the evaluative meaning is primary, the descriptive meaning is always present to some extent. Good is more descriptive when the criteria are relatively acknowledged, but not necessarily any less commendatory.[8] Evaluations are universal in that they apply to similar cases which have the same standards. But evaluation or guiding choice is not prescribing, though there is the implication that there are reasons or criteria for the evaluation.[9]

Grading labels may be objective or, as more professional grading labels, emotionally charged, but they all show order of merit.[10] For example, brave can be a grading label, as opposed to rash or cowardly; they are evaluations restricted to human behavior in a crucial situation. They are not just descriptive words, but specialized grading labels. Specialized evaluations indicate absolute position and order more than general labels as good, bad, or indifferent,[11] and they usually have clearer criteria or standards for their use.[12]

For ensured communication, there must be a general agreement for the criteria or standards used,[13] and the

criteria for good include criteria for good as a means as well as good as an end.[14] Grading statements can be verified and are more meaningful than simple statements of likes and dislikes.[15] One way criteria for good are established is that a stable majority prefer or choose a thing for certain characteristics; then those characteristics become the generally agreed upon criteria of good in that use. Another way of choosing a set of criteria for good is based on the idea that that which lives up to the criteria best serves their purpose. Still another is that the label good is applied to that criteria which contribute to society's well-being. There are other ways,[16] but in many cases the criteria for grading are not generally agreed upon.[17] If the criteria are accepted, the grading labels can be used effectively for communication; if the criteria are not accepted, the only constructive way out of the disagreement is to decide on the criteria to use before the grading label can be used.[18] Moral grading is not different from grading in ordinary contexts; the criteria, however various in different contexts, must be agreed upon. Even though moral grading is more important, there is no logical difference.[19] Though one set of criteria for moral grading may be judged right and one wrong, in which case the criteria for distinguishing the right from the wrong criteria would have to be agreed upon,[20] right and wrong and cognate words are not grading labels; they have a different function.[21]

Those uses of language in ethical contexts used by James which are evaluative include, first in the essay "Is Life Worth Living?" the adjectives listed below. Foul and fair are evaluative in "If he might meet them piecemeal, with no suspicion of any whole expressing itself in them, shunning the bitter parts and husbanding the sweet ones, and as the day was foul or fair, ..."[22] This statement refers to Carlyle's character Teufelsdröckh of "Sartor Resartus," who could not accept life's chaotic experiences with no frustration since he did feel a religious need for an encompassing spirit. Evil in "This evil which we feel so deeply is something that we can also help to overthrow; . . ."[23] refers to the hateful and combative instincts in us, so the sentence can be reworded with the identical meaning as "These evil hating and fighting impulses which we feel so deeply are something that we can also help to overthrow; . . . ." James is saying that curiosity and these impulses can make life worth living. Worthy is an evaluation in "Life is worth living, no matter what it bring, if only such combats may be carried to successful terminations and one's heel set on the tyrant's throat."[24] The combat referred to is that cited by James concerning the attempted extermination of the people of Piedmont by Pope Innocent VIII in 1485. Again worthy is used as an evaluation in "Thus, then, we see that mere instinctive curiosity, pugnacity, and honor may make life on a purely naturalistic

basis seem worth living [worthy of being lived] from day to day to men who have cast away all metaphysics . . . ." Poor and best in the following sentence are used as evaluations: "A poor half-way stage, . . . but at least you must grant it to be an honest stage; and no man should dare to speak meanly of these instincts which are our nature's best equipment, ..."[25] Worthy is an evaluation of life again in the next five examples: ". . . that we have a right to supplement it [the physical order] by an unseen spiritual order which we assume on trust, if only thereby life may seem to us better worth living [better worthy of being lived] again,"[26] "The bare assurance that this natural order is not ultimate . . . is to such men enough to make life seem worth living [worthy of being lived] in spite of every contrary presumption suggested by its circumstances on the natural plane,"[27] "Probably to almost every one of us here the most adverse life would seem well worth living [well worthy of being lived], if we only could be certain that our bravery and patience with it were terminating . . . ,"[28] "Have you not now made life worth living [worthy of being lived] on these terms?"[29] and "This life is worth living [worthy of being lived], we can say, since it is what we make it, from the moral point of view; . . . ." Good is used evaluatively in ". . . our faith in an invisible order is what inspires those efforts and that patience which make this visible order good for moral men."[30] Finally, worthy is used once

more in "Believe that life is worth living [worthy of being lived], and your belief will help create the fact."[31] These words, foul, fair, evil, worthy, best, poor, and good, all have an emotive element in that in commending or condemning, they express the attitude of approval and praise or disapproval and criticism. They also have an emotive function of persuading us to desire or reject these objects. Evaluative language can also be considered to be prescriptive, as explained in chapter five. There are twenty-two words in the essay which have both an evaluative and a descriptive use, for included with the ranking of merit entailed in the meaning are definite criteria which are descriptive: "complete," "joyous"[32] stage, "uncanny," "sinister," "nightmare," "poisonousness"[33] [poisonous] life, "gain," [advantageous] "loss" [detrimental] fact, "healthy"[34] relations, "burden" [burdensome] responsibility, "blasphemous," "monstrous"[35] act, "cowering" religions, "normal"[36] instincts, "glorious" leaps, "admirable" virtues, "barbaric" notions, "crude" mistake,[37] "ridiculous" command, "folly"[38] [foolish] duty, and "wisdom" [wise], "courage" [courageous] belief.[39]

"The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" contains thirty instances of ethical language used evaluatively. Again, in commending or condemning, they all have an emotive element and are all prescriptive, and the essay contains twelve judgements which have both an evaluative and a descriptive meaning. The first evaluation is the word nobler

in "The nobler thing tastes better, and that is all we can say,"[40] meaning that the preferred ideal is noble. Higher in "All the higher, more penetrating ideals are revolutionary"[41] is evaluative, and good and bad in the next three quotations are evaluative: "In its mere material capacity, a thing can no more be good or bad than it can be pleasant or painful,"[42] "So far as he feels anything to be good, he makes it good. It is good, for him; and being good for him, is absolutely good, for he is the sole creator of values . . . ,"[43] and "The same object is good or bad there, according as you measure it by the view which this one or that one of the thinkers takes."[44] Good, superior, and inferior are evaluative labels in ". . . nothing can be good or right except so far as some consciousness feels it to be good or thinks it to be right, . . . the real superiority and authority which are postulated by the philosopher to reside in some of the opinions [the really superior and authoritative character which is postulated by the philosopher to reside in some of the opinions], and the really inferior character which he supposes must belong to others, ..."[45] In "If one ideal judgment be objectively better than another, that betterness must be made flesh . . . ,"[46] better evaluates judgements, and in "But while they lived, there would be real good things and real bad things in the universe; . . . ,"[47] good and bad are grading labels. In ". . . the best simply imaginary world would be one in which every

demand was gratified as soon as made,"[48] best is an evaluation, as it is again in "The very best of men must not only be insensible, but be ludicrously and peculiarly insensible, to many goods."[49] Poor and best are evaluative in ". . . must not the guiding principle for ethical philosophy (since all demands conjointly cannot be satisfied in this poor world) be simply to satisfy at all times as many demands as we can? That act must be the best act, accordingly, which makes for the best whole, ..."[50] The quotation ". . . the casuistic scale is made for the philosopher already far better than he can ever make it for himself"[51] uses better evaluatively, as does "He [an original thinker] may replace old 'laws of nature' by better ones; . . . ."[52] Highest is the grade for an ethical life in ". . . and the highest ethical life . . . consists at all times in the breaking of rules which have grown too narrow for the actual case." Best is the grading label in "The philosopher, then, quâ philosopher, is no better able to determine the best universe in the concrete emergency than other men."[53] In "Life, to be sure, is even in such a world [one without God] a genuinely ethical symphony; but it is played in the compass of a couple of poor octaves, and the infinite scale of values fails to open up,"[54] poor is the evaluation of the few values open to a naturalistic ethical view. And last, best is used evaluatively in "The ethical philosopher, therefore, whenever he ventures to say which course of

action is the best, is on no essentially different level from the common man."[55] The thirteen instances of evaluation and description combinations include: "wicked," "mean," "vulgar"[56] things, "highest"[57] consciousness, conventionally "highest"[58] ideal, "best"[59] kind of statesman, "greater"[60] ideal, "good"[61] creatures, and "lesser," "greater"[62] claims.

The evaluative language in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" includes six words: three uses of worthless and three of worthy. Worthless is used in the first three instances: "Surely, a worthless hour of life, when measured by the usual standards of commercial value,"[63] ". . . it seems almost as if it were necessary to become worthless as a practical being, if one is to hope to attain to any breadth of insight into the impersonal world of worths . . . ," and "For this [looking at all as equal] he [Walt Whitman] becomes a sort of ideal tramp, . . . and, considered either practically or academically, a worthless, unproductive being." The label worthy is used in this statement again about Whitman, "He felt the human crowd . . . as an overpoweringly significant presence, simply to absorb one's mind in which should be business sufficient and worthy to fill the days of a serious man."[64] Again in reference to Whitman, a statement is made using worthy evaluatively, "And, if you wish to see what this hoary loafer considered the most worthy way of profiting by life's heaven-sent

opportunities, read the delicious volume . . . ."[65] In "Life is always worth living [worthy of being lived], if one have such responsive sensibilities,"[66] living life is evaluated as worthy. These evaluations again all contain both an emotive and prescriptive function, and there are fifteen occurrences of labels used evaluatively and descriptively simultaneously. They include: "significant"[67] life, "importance"[68] [important] eagerness, limitlessly "significance"[69] [significant] natural things, "insignificant," "foolish"[70] personage, "significance"[71] [significant] inner life, "significance"[72] [significant] feelings, "ideal" tramp, "significant"[73] presence, "futile"[74] way, "significance" [significant], "importance"[75] [important] hours, "significant"[76] portions, and "meaninglessness"[77] [meaningless] forms of existence.

Footnotes for Chapter III

[1]William Lillie, An Introduction to Ethics, 315.

[2]R. M. Hare, The Language of Morals, 127.

[3]Ibid., 135-136.

[4]J. O. Urmson, "On Grading," Language and Logic (Second Series), 170-171.

[5]Ibid., 165.

[6]Ibid., 171.

[7]Hare, Language of Morals, 118-119.

[8]Ibid., 121-122.

[9]Ibid., 129-130.

[10]Urmson, "On Grading," 162-163.

[11]Ibid., 164-165.

[12]Ibid., 166.

[13]Ibid., 175.

[14]Ibid., 177.

[15]Ibid., 178.

[16]Ibid., 180.

[17]Ibid., 181.

[18]Ibid., 182-183.

[19]Ibid., 183-184.

[20]Ibid., 184-185.

[21]Ibid., 186.

[22]William James, "Is Life Worth Living?" Essays on Faith and Morals, 12.

[23]Ibid., 16.

[24]Ibid., 18-19.

[25]Ibid., 20.

[26]Ibid., 21.

[27]Ibid., 25-26.

[28]Ibid., 26.

[29]Ibid., 29.

[30]Ibid., 30.

[31]Ibid., 31.

[32]Ibid., 9.

[33]Ibid., 11.

[34]Ibid., 13.

[35]Ibid., 15.

[36]Ibid., 19.

[37]Ibid., 22.

[38]Ibid., 24.

[39]Ibid., 28.

[40]William James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," Essays on Faith and Morals, 187.

[41]Ibid., 188-189.

[42]Ibid., 190.

[43]Ibid., 190-191.

[44]Ibid., 192.

[45]Ibid., 192-193.

[46]Ibid., 193.

[47]Ibid., 197.

[48]Ibid., 202.

[49]Ibid., 203-204.

[50]Ibid., 205.

[51]Ibid., 206.

[52]Ibid., 208.

[53]Ibid., 209.

[54]Ibid., 212.

[55]Ibid., 214.

[56]Ibid., 187-188.

[57]Ibid., 198.

[58]Ibid., 203.

[59]Ibid., 210.

[60]Ibid., 211.

[61]Ibid., 212.

[62]Ibid., 213.

[63]William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," Essays on Faith and Morals, 271-272.

[64]Ibid., 272.

[65]Ibid., 274.

[66]Ibid., 279.

[67]Ibid., 262.

[68]Ibid., 263.

[69]Ibid., 269.

[70]Ibid., 270.

[71]Ibid., 271.

[72]Ibid., 271-272.

[73]Ibid., 272.

[74]Ibid., 275.

[75]Ibid., 277.

[76]Ibid., 283.

77*Ibid.*, 283-284.

CHAPTER IV

EMOTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS

Many philosophers of language consider the function of ethical language to be to express feelings or attitudes. C. L. Stevenson defines the emotive meaning of a word as "a tendency of a word, arising through the history of its usage, to produce (result from) affective responses in people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word." For example, the emotive meaning of old maid produces a feeling of contempt, whereas elderly spinster has no such meaning.[1] In characterizing emotion, Mr. Stevenson uses attitude instead of feeling, with the inclusive meaning of such words as desire, wish, and disapproval.[2] Ethical judgements create influences, change or intensify our interests, and recommend interest in an object, rather than describe information. They are instruments used to persuade.[3] Ethical terms in a sentence do not add any factual information, so they are not verifiable as true or false; e. g., "You acted wrongly in stealing that money" is the same as saying, in a horrified tone to show feelings of disapproval, "You stole that money!!!" Further, in "Stealing money is wrong" or "Stealing money!!!" there is no proposition of fact to be correct or incorrect; they are just expressions of sentiment. Ethical symbols which are normative rather than descriptive function emotively, whether in sentences

giving factual information with the expression of sentiment also or in sentences that just express ethical feeling. The expression may be also to arouse feeling, and therefore stimulate action, having the effect of commands.[4] The implied presence of reasons for the attitude being accepted in ethical language distinguishes it from ordinary emotive language.[5] According to Stevenson, "X is good" means roughly "We like X."[6] Good has a pleasing emotive meaning, so "X is good" is "about the favorable interest" of us and is a suggestion.[7] For he also says that "X is good" can be roughly synonymous with "I approve of X; do so as well."[8] This is acceptable if there is no descriptive meaning of good intended by the speaker, and the "laudatory emotive meaning" of good would suggest that he approved, but it would not say that he approved in descriptive words.[9] Expressing the feeling is not the same as saying in descriptive words that one has the feeling, even though the two are often done together,[10] as in "Phew! I am disgusted." A sign can have both an emotive and a descriptive meaning simultaneously, affecting attitudes and cognition. A word has a pleasing emotive meaning if its referent pleases the users of the word. But a word's emotive meaning can remain constant while its descriptive meaning changes, or vice versa.[11] Emotive and descriptive meaning are very close in origin and operation.[12] Stevenson presents a supplemental pattern which is synonymous to "This is good": "'This has qualities

or relations X, Y, Z . . . ,' except that 'good' has as well a laudatory emotive meaning which permits it to express the speaker's approval, and tends to evoke the approval of the hearer."[13]

Thus, the examples of evaluative labels in chapter three, foul, fair, evil, worthy, poor, best, good, and the others which also contained a descriptive element, are emotive in that they also commend or condemn and praise or blame, and they fit the patterns: X is good or worthy or one of the other words used; we like X, do so as well, or X has the qualities of such and such and evokes approval. The instances of ethical language used prescriptively to be presented in chapter five are also emotive in the sense that they suggest we ought to do what is commendable or approved of. Only the instances of ethical language used exclusively emotively in James' three essays are presented here. They include ten instances in "Is Life Worth Living?" nine instances from "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," and three from "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings."

First, in "Is Life Worth Living?" James says "Too much questioning and too little active responsibility lead, almost as often as too much sensualism does, to the edge of the slope, at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare or suicidal view of life."[14] This statement may be largely replaced by the sentence, "An overstudious career often leads to pessimism and suicide--what a shame!" which

gives factual information in descriptive terms and expresses sentiment. It is the same case in ". . . and there gradually steals over us, instead of the old warm notion of a man-loving Deity, that of an awful power that neither hates nor loves, but rolls all things together meaninglessly to a common doom,"[15] which can be reworded as ". . . and we think of an indifferent power instead of a man-loving Deity--how terrible!" "It is the sick shudder of the frustrated religious demand, and not the mere necessary outcome of animal experience"[16] can be reworded as "It is the melancholy of a frustrated religious demand that brutes are incapable of--how pitiful!" In the sentences, "The mood of levity, of 'I don't care,' is for this world's ills a sovereign and practical anæsthetic. But, no! something deep down in Teufelsdröckh and in the rest of us tells us that there <u>is</u> a Spirit in things . . . ,"[17] is synonymous with "The mood of levity is for this world's ills a sovereign and practical anesthetic, but we with Teufelsdröckh will not accept it--gladly we won't! or impossible that we should!"

> There were times when Leibnitzes with their heads buried in monstrous wigs could compose Theodicies, and when stall-fed officials of an established church could prove by the valves in the heart and the round ligament of the hip-joint the existence of a 'Moral and Intelligent Contriver of the World'.[18]

The above sentence is the same as saying "There were times when philosophers and church officials could defend the goodness and omnipotence of a 'Moral and Intelligent

Contriver of the World'--how ridiculous!" After a description of the sufferings of the people of Piedmont during Pope Innocent VIII's attempt to exterminate them in 1485, James says "Und dergleichen mehr!"[19] for which "And more of the same--how horrible!" can substitute. Then James says,

> Is it credible that such a mushroom knowledge, such a growth overnight as this, can represent more than the minutest glimpse of what the universe will really prove to be when adequately understood? No! our science is a drop, our ignorance a sea.[20]

which can be reworded as "The growth of science thus far is only a minute glimpse of what the universe will prove to be when adequately understood--how crude and barbaric to think otherwise!" When James says, "But, unfortunately, neutrality is not only inwardly difficult, it is also outwardly unrealizable, where our relations to an alternative are practical and vital,"[21] he could have said, "But neutrality is both inwardly difficult and outwardly unrealizable where our relations to an alternative are practical and vital--that's too bad! or how unfortunate!" The statements, "In other cases divinations based on inner interests have proved prophetic enough. Take science itself!"[22] could be reworded as "Science is one of the cases in which divinations based on inner interests have proved prophetic enough--unbelievable as it is! or how ironic!" "Is the word [trusting] to carry with it license to define in detail an invisible world, and to anathematize and excommunicate those whose trust is

different--how narrow to think so!"[23]

The first instance of emotive language in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" is ". . . how hideous a thing would be its enjoyment when deliberately accepted as the fruit of such a bargain?"[24] which is an expression of the sentiment of disgust or contempt. When James says, "No! Purely inward forces are certainly at work here,"[25] he is also saying, "How ridiculous to think these reactions could be resultant from association with pleasure or pain!" "No! if the philosopher is to keep his judicial position, he must never become one of the parties to the fray"[26] is the same as saying, "If the philosopher is to keep his judicial position, he must never become one of the parties to the fray--worse than chaos!" The following four sentences,

> See the abuses which the institution of private property covers, so that even to-day it is shamelessly asserted among us that one of the prime functions of the national government is to help the adroiter citizens to grow rich. See the unnamed and unnamable sorrows which the tyranny, on the whole so beneficent, of the marriage-institution brings to so many, both of the married and the unwed. See the wholesale loss of opportunity under our régime of so-called equality and industrialism, with the drummer and the counter-jumper in the saddle, for so many faculties and graces which could flourish in the feudal world. See our kindliness for the humble and the outcast, how it wars with that stern weeding-out which until now has been the condition of every perfection in the breed.[27]

can be reworded to more clearly show their emotive meanings as "The institution of private property causes some to assert that the prime function of the national government is

to help adroiter citizens profit--how unfair that would be!" "The marriage institution does not benefit all--what a shame!" "Some of the opportunities of the feudal world are lost under the régime of equality and industrialism--what a shame!" and "Kindliness for the humble is sometimes omitted in favor of that stern weeding-out which has been the condition of every perfection in the breed--what a shame!"

> They [the intuitional moralists] do much to spoil this merit [of keeping clearly to the psychological facts] on the whole, however, by mixing with it that dogmatic temper which, by absolute distinctions and unconditional 'thou shalt nots,' changes a growing, elastic, and continuous life into a superstitious system of relics and dead bones.

The preceding is the same as saying "With the merit of keeping to the psychological facts, they mix that temper which changes life into a superstitious system--what a shame!" The last instance of emotive language in this essay is "It [the strenuous mood] saith among the trumpets, ha, ha! it smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting."[28] This is the same as saying, "The strenuous mood is challenged when we believe that a God is there--how splendid!"

There are three instances of emotive language in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." The first one is in this sentence, ". . . and yet, outside of that tie of friendly fondness, how insensible, each of us, to all that makes life significant for the other! . . . ."[29] "To sit there

like a senseless statue, when you might be taking him to walk and throwing sticks for him to catch!"[30] is the same as saying, "Your fox-terrier cannot comprehend why you sit motionlessly reading instead of playing with him--how odd! or how unexplainable!" and last, "Talk about going back to nature! . . . Talk of a country life for one's old age and for one's children!"[31] can be reworded as "This is an example of going back to nature, a country life for one's old age and for his children--how horrible!"

Footnotes for Chapter IV

[1]Charles L. Stevenson, "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms," Logical Positivism, 273.

[2]Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language, 60.

[3]Stevenson, "Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms," 269-270.

[4]Alfred Jules Ayer, "Language, Truth and Logic," Value and Obligation, 362-363.

[5]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 320.

[6]Stevenson, "Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms," 274.

[7]Ibid., 276.

[8]Stevenson, Ethics and Language, 81.

[9]Ibid., 95-96.

[10]Ayer, "Language, Truth and Logic," 364.

[11]Stevenson, Ethics and Language, 71-72.

[12]Ibid., 76.

[13]Ibid., 207.

[14]James, "Is Life Worth Living?" 8.

[15]Ibid., 11.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., 12.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., 18.

[20]Ibid., 23.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., 24.

[23]Ibid., 25.

[24]James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," 188.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., 204.

[27]Ibid., 206-207.

[28]Ibid., 213.

[29]James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," 260.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 261-262.

CHAPTER V

PRESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS

The language of morals is prescriptive in that it tells one what to do;[1] the answer to the question "What shall I do?" is in the form of commands, advice, guidance, or encouraging commendation.[2] Wilfred Sellars distinguishes between giving advice and telling someone to do something by pointing out that advice answers the question "What shall I do?" and is concerned with the questioner's intentions, whereas telling someone to do something answers the question "What do you want me to do?" and is concerned with the intentions of the one who uses the imperative. He says advice is information, not command.[3] Telling one what to do in prescriptive language is not the process of getting him to do it, which may be in the form of emotive persuasion or descriptive reasoning.[4] The distinction between command and statement of fact is illustrated thus by R. M. Hare:

> "Shut the door" = "Your shutting the door in the immediate future, please" (command)
> "You are going to shut the door" = "Your shutting the door in the immediate future, yes" (statement of fact)[5]

In deciding what to do, two factors are involved: the general moral principle upon which the decision is based and the decision itself. These are analogous to the major premise and the conclusion of the syllogism

> "Never say what is false"
> "X is false"
> "I won't say X."[6]

Right, wrong, and ought are among the ethical words used prescriptively[7] to give advice and instruction.[8] In using ought, we are thinking of the principle we decided to act by,[9] for ought-sentences are verified only by referring to a principle or standard which we have accepted as our own.[10] Ought-statements cannot be reduced to universal commands, but when someone is told he ought to do X,

> . . . the fact that you told him to do it (as contrasted with the possibility that he might merely have overheard you 'intend out loud' that he do it, or even that you might have told him of your intention that he do it) is relevant in a special way to his deliberations on his rights and duties, particularly vis-à-vis you, and on whether he has reasons for doing what he proposes to do.[11]

Even though moral judgements guide actions and therefore entail imperatives,[12] there is a difference between saying that one feels he ought to do something (a statement of psychological fact) and saying that he ought to do it (a value judgement).[13] To believe that one ought to do X is to intend that one shall do X, and shall expresses the intentions of the speaker;[14] so ought is an expression of intention and is used with the meaning "We shall do X."[15] Sellars adds that though ought-statements are not universal commands, they are universal wishes; e. g., "Everybody ought to do X" is equal to "Would that everybody universally did X!"[16]

Moral judgements in prescriptive language differ from ordinary commands in five ways: (1) moral judgements are universal; they apply to not only the second person pronoun, but all three, and they include all tenses, not just present and future tenses. They are "properly" universal if they have a general moral principle as a basis;[17] e. g., "You ought not to smoke in this compartment" is a moral judgement, while "No Smoking" is an ordinary command.[18] (2) The emotive element in moral judgements makes them more persuasive than ordinary commands. (3) The purpose of moral judgements is not limited to telling somebody to do something as is the purpose of ordinary commands. (4) Moral judgements are made to help one decide on a choice, and there are reasons implied for the advice to be taken. (5) The universality of moral judgements entails its application to the speaker also since it would be abnormal for them not to be given sincerely.[19] "I ought to do X" is a value judgement if the speaker recognizes that if he assents to the judgement "I ought to do X," he also assents to the command to do X.[20] However, the assent to or obedience to the command is not the same as the commanding itself,[21] for the assent is determined by the decision of whether to act on a moral principle.[22]

Since Hare says that to commend is to guide choices, and to say "That is a good X" is to suggest the hearer choose that X and any X's which are exactly like it in the

relevant, particular ways for which X was commended,[23] then the evaluative labels in chapter three which commended or condemned were also prescriptive in this sense. Also the prescriptive language of moral judgements carries with it an emotive element according to Sellars' model: "X is good; would that everybody universally did X!"

In his three essays concerning ethics, James uses eighty-two instances of prescriptive language. First in "Is Life Worth Living?" the sentence "The plainest intellectual integrity,--nay, more, the simplest manliness and honor, forbid us to forget their case"[24] can be reworded as an ought-statement as "We ought not forget their case because of the plainest intellectual integrity,--nay, more, the simplest manliness and honor." The words shall and ought indicate prescription in ". . . in our clinging, on the one hand, to the demand that there shall be a living spirit on the whole; . . . . It is in the contradiction between the supposed being of a spirit that encompasses and owns us, and with which we ought to have some communion, ..."[25] When James says, "Are we not bound to take some suffering upon ourselves, . . . ,"[26] he could have said, "Ought we not take some suffering upon ourselves, ..." The next four uses of the word must indicate prescription:

> We must always wait for sensible evidence for our beliefs; and where such evidence is inaccessible we must frame no hypotheses whatever.[27]

> And so if I must not believe that the world is divine, I can only express that refusal by declining ever to act distinctively as if it were so, ... There are, you see, inevitable occasions in life when inaction is a kind of action, and must count as action, . . .[28]

Shalt is the indicator of prescription in ". . . and the agnostic 'thou shalt not believe without coercive sensible evidence' is simply an expression . . . ."[29] Must in ". . . and yet, of the whole performance, this function is the one portion that must remain absolutely beyond his ken"[30] and shall in "Refuse to believe, and you shall indeed be right [meaning accurate], for you shall irretrievably perish. But believe, and again you shall be right, for you shall save yourself"[31] indicate prescriptive use of language. In the final example, James makes two commands which are moral judgements when he says "Be not afraid" and "Believe," and the word right is prescriptive: "These, then, are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, ... The 'scientific proof' that you are right may not be clear before the day of judgment . . . ."[32]

Most of the instances of prescriptive language occurred in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life." Again, shall indicates prescription in ". . . the hypotheses which we now make while waiting, and the acts to which they prompt us, are among the indispensable conditions which determine what that 'say' shall be,"[33] and "At the outset of his inquiry he ought to have no other ideals"[34] is an

ought-statement. Must, right, and wrong are the keys to this prescriptive statement: "When your ordinary doctor of divinity has proved to his own satisfaction that an altogether unique faculty called 'conscience' must be postulated to tell us what is right and what is wrong; . . . ."[35] "Goodness, badness, and obligation must be realized somewhere in order really to exist; . . ."[36] is a prescriptive statement because of the word must, and "Into whatever equilibrium he may settle, though, and however he may straighten out his system, it will be a right system; . . ."[37] is also because of the word right. This is another ought-statement: ". . . and to these the others ought to yield, so that system and subordination may reign."[38] Right is used in the following prescriptive statement: ". . . nothing can be good or right except so far as some consciousness feels it to be good or thinks it to be right, ..."[39]

> The philosopher, therefore, who seeks to know which ideal ought to have supreme weight and which one ought to be subordinated, must trace the ought itself . . . . This consciousness must make the one ideal right by feeling it to be right, the other wrong by feeling it to be wrong.[40]

In the preceding sentences, the first two uses of ought, the two of must, right, and wrong are the indicators that these statements are prescriptive. In the following first two statements, should is the indicator, and in the third statement, right and should are the indicators:

> The divine thought would be the model, to which the others should conform.[41]

> It is because one disputant is backed by this overarching abstract order that we think the other should submit. Even so, when it is a question no longer of two finite thinkers, but of God and ourselves,--we follow our usual habit, and imagine a sort of de jure relation, which antedates and overarches the mere facts, and would make it right that we should conform our thoughts to God's thoughts, . . .[42]

Ought indicates the prescriptive function of the next two sentences: "Ought it not, for its own sole sake, to be satisfied? . . . . The only possible reason there can be why any phenomenon ought to exist is that such a phenomenon actually is desired . . . ."[43] Right, used three times, ought, and wrong are the prescriptive words in

> But it is even then not abstractly right that we should respect them. It is only concretely right,--or right after the fact, and by virtue of the fact, that they are actually made . . . . That ought not to be, we say; that is wrong.[44]

"No; for if we are true philosophers we must throw our own spontaneous ideals, even the dearest, impartially in . . ."[45] is prescribing because of the presence of must, and the following ought-statement, "The entire undertaking of the philosopher obliges him to seek an impartial test,"[46] can be reworded to show better its prescription as "The philosopher ought to seek an impartial test because of the nature of the entire undertaking." Should, right, and must in the next three statements respectively make them prescriptive:

> . . . and if a philosopher could create universes a priori, and provide all the mechanical conditions, that is the sort of universe which he should unhesitatingly create.[47]
>
> So that the ethical philosopher's demand for the right scale of subordination in ideals is the fruit of an altogether practical need. Some part of the ideal must be butchered, . . .[48]

Rightly is used in "He is confident, and rightly confident, that the simple taking counsel of his own intuitive preferences would be certain to end in a mutilation of the fulness of the truth."[49] Must is used eleven times in the following sentences to indicate prescription:

> The very best of men must not only be insensible, . . .[50]
>
> . . . as schoolmasters deciding what all must think,-- . . . ? . . . No! if the philosopher is to keep his judicial position, he must never become one of the parties to the fray.[51]
>
> In the casuistic scale, therefore, those ideals must be written highest which . . . . Since victory and defeat there must be, . . .[52]
>
> The presumption in cases of conflict must always be in favor of the conventionally recognized good. The philosopher must be a conservative, and in the construction of his casuistic scale must put the things . . . . And yet if he be a true philosopher he must see . . . . . yet the philosopher must allow that it is at all times open . . .[53]

Must, again, right, and must appear prescriptively in the sentences which follow: ". . . ethical science . . . must simply bide its time, . . . ," ". . . and the right casuistic order that which public opinion believes in; . . . ," and "Everywhere the ethical philosopher must wait on facts."[54]

In "There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, . . . ,"[55] should is the prescriptive word, and must is used three more times in "He knows that he must vote always for the richer universe, for the good which seems most organizable, . . . ," "His books upon ethics, therefore, . . . , must more and more ally . . . ," and ". . . and they must more and more abandon the old-fashioned, ..."[56] Shall is the prescriptive indicator in "Nothing shall avail when weighed in the balance against them,"[57] and must is the indicator in ". . . we, as would-be philosophers, must postulate a divine thinker, ..."[58] Finally, James commands his readers to "'. . . choose life that thou and thy seed may live,' . . . ."[59]

There are only nine instances of prescriptive use of language in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." The first word indicating prescription is bound in two statements which can be reworded as ought-statements: "Each is bound to feel intensely the importance of his own duties . . ."[60] or "Each of us ought to feel intensely . . ." and ". . . we are bound to believe that . . ."[61] or "we ought to believe . . . ." The third instance, "No modern person ought to be willing to live a day in such a state of . . . ,"[62] is an ought-statement. Must and shall in the next two statements are the prescribing words: ". . . then a new centre and a new perspective must be found"[63] and "Yet of the kind of fibre of which such inanities consist is the

material woven of all the excitements, joys, and meanings that ever were, or ever shall be, in this world."[64] Should is the clue in "The holidays of life are its most vitally significant portions, because they are, or at least should be, ..." "It absolutely forbids us to be forward in pronouncing on the meaninglessness . . ."[65] can be reworded as an ought-statement thus: "We absolutely ought not be forward in . . . ." "James is prescribing when he says, "Hands off: neither the whole of truth nor the whole of good is revealed to any single observer, . . . ,"[66] and he uses should, the last instance of prescriptive language, in this statement: "It is enough to ask of each of us that he should be faithful to his own opportunities . . . ."[67]

Footnotes for Chapter V

[1]Hare, Language of Morals, 1.

[2]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 321.

[3]Wilfred Sellars, "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'Ought'," Morality and the Language of Conduct, 178-179.

[4]Hare, Language of Morals, 13.

[5]Ibid., 17.

[6]Ibid., 56.

[7]Ibid., 152-153.

[8]Ibid., 155.

[9]Ibid., 158.

[10]Ibid., 196.

[11]Sellars, "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'Ought'," 166.

[12]Hare, Language of Morals, 172.

[13]Ibid., 166.

[14]Sellars, "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'Ought'," 196.

[15]Ibid., 204.

[16]Ibid., 180-181.

[17]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 322-323.

[18]Hare, Language of Morals, 178-179.

[19]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics.

[20]Hare, Language of Morals, 168-169.

[21]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics.

[22]Ibid., 324.

[23]Hare, Language of Morals, 129-130.

[24]James, "Is Life Worth Living?" 6.

[25]Ibid., 11.

[26]Ibid., 20.

[27]Ibid., 23.

[28]Ibid., 24.

[29]Ibid., 25.

[30]Ibid., 27.

[31]Ibid., 28.

[32]Ibid., 31.

[33]James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," 184.

[34]Ibid., 185.

[35]Ibid., 185-186.

[36]Ibid., 190.

[37]Ibid., 191.

[38]Ibid., 192.

[39]Ibid., 192-193.

[40]Ibid., 193.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., 194.

[43]Ibid., 195.

[44]Ibid., 196.

[45]Ibid., 199.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., 202.

[48]Ibid., 203.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., 203-204.

[51]Ibid., 204.

[52]Ibid., 205.

[53]Ibid., 206.

[54]Ibid., 208.

[55]Ibid., 209.

[56]Ibid., 210.

[57]Ibid., 211.

[58]Ibid., 214.

[59]Ibid.

[60]James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," 259.

[61]Ibid., 260-261.

[62]Ibid., 262.

[63]Ibid., 267.

[64]Ibid., 276.

[65]Ibid., 283.

[66]Ibid., 284.

[67]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE IN JAMES' ESSAYS ON ETHICS

Decision of principle may be the essence of morals, and when the decision is expressed in words, it is in the indicative mood and often descriptive of the action or principle which was decided on.[1] C. L. Stevenson defines the descriptive meaning of a word as

> . . . its disposition to produce cognitive mental processes, where "cognitive" is to be taken as a general term designating such specific kinds of mental activity as believing, thinking, supposing, presuming, and so on.[2]

Descriptive statements inform the listener of what to believe and tell him that the speaker believes it too.[3] Descriptive statements must always be true statements since they contain factual information, according to Peter Herbst's definition of a factual statement. He says that facts are the standard for determining whether factual utterances or expressions, which refer to facts, are true or false.[4] "That which entitles us to say that a factual statement is true and that which entitles us to say that a factual statement states a fact, are one and the same."[5] If a statement is a fact, it is a true statement; thus, if the statement is false, it is not factual, but a contention or report.[6] P. F. Strawson adds that truth and falsity ". . . are functions of the use of the sentence or expression."[7] Though

the criteria for moral judgements are expressed in descriptive statements which are not logically entailed in the judgements,[8] expressions such as "a good driver" can be entirely descriptive. For certain words have to have the function of their referents explained in order to be fully understood; these are "functional words." Thus, in defining "a good driver" or "a good auger," the function is given, and it is a relation of entirely descriptive criteria.[9] There is another way that ethical words such as good are sometimes used as descriptively as red; they may convey purely factual information if the hearer knows what the accepted standard for a good X is. If a consistent standard for goodness in X's, a class of objects, is observed, a person can learn the criteria for and the meaning of good pertaining to that particular class of objects.[10] The fact that the criteria for both words such as good, usually used in ethical contexts, and words such as red can vary in vagueness or exactitude shows that value-words are not necessarily more loose or vague descriptively than ordinary descriptive words.[11] "This is good" can be an empirically verifiable descriptive statement, for goodness is not a supervenient quality, but a quality that is an integral part of the other qualities. Though verification of this quality of an action is difficult, it can be done by observing the kind of actions which a stable majority considers good.[12] The function of good which gives information is descriptive,

not evaluative;[13] of course, when the word has the function of commending, it is evaluative, to which the descriptive meaning is secondary,[14] as explained in chapter three. However, the standards to which a word applies may become so conventionally accepted that the formerly primary evaluative meaning may become secondary to the descriptive meaning.[15] Though the amount of descriptive meaning and evaluative meaning a word contains does not vary exactly in inverse proportion, the word good will probably have more descriptive meaning if it has very little evaluative meaning, and vice versa.[16] Something which has a descriptive quality can simultaneously have an emotive quality;[17] for example, C. L. Stevenson says good has a descriptive meaning and also an emotive element, which is more likely than it having just an emotive, prescriptive, or evaluative meaning.[18]

The instances of ethical language used by James in his essays which were descriptive as well as evaluative, emotive, and prescriptive were given in chapter three. Only the uses of ethical language which are exclusively descriptive are presented here. First, in "Is Life Worth Living?" there are seventy-six uses of descriptive language. In the following use, the adjective so means true: ". . . for the fact that it absolutely is so would vouch for itself, ..." Evil here is descriptive rather than evaluative: ". . . and behold him in his latter evil days a prey to melancholy . . . ."[19] The adverb truthfully is the descriptive

word in ". . . these verses flow truthfully from the melancholy Thomson's pen, . . . ,"[20] and the adjectives blasphemous, richer, and positive, in ". . . and it is a blasphemous act . . . . But can we find nothing richer or more positive than this, ..."[21] Overstudious and real are the descriptive adjectives in the next two instances, which are "This is, indeed, one of the regular fruits of the overstudious career"[22] and ". . . in making such a notion seem real to themselves at all." Essentially religious, an adverb and adjective, and meaninglessly, an adverb, are the descriptive words in these two quotations: "That is why I call pessimism an essentially religious disease"[23] and ". . . rolls all things together meaninglessly to a common doom."[24] In ". . . shunning the bitter parts and husbanding the sweet ones, . . ." bitter and sweet are the descriptive words, and in ". . . a sovereign and practical anaesthetic" sovereign and practical are the descriptive words, as are real and genuine in ". . . this real and genuine discord . . . ."[25] Plasticity and indifference, nouns, are used descriptively in "Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference, ..."[26] Ultimate and blasphemous are the descriptive adjectives in ". . . cannot possibly be its ultimate word to man" and ". . . in spite of its sounding blasphemous at first to certain ears . . . ."[27] In this sentence, "Some of them have found humaner gods to worship, . . . that impossible idol . . . ," humaner and impossible

are the descriptive adjectives, and in "It looms up no longer so spectrally, it loses all its haunting and perplexing significance, . . . ," spectrally, an adverb, and haunting and perplexing, adjectives, are the descriptive words. "There are in most men instinctive springs of vitality that respond healthily . . ."[28] contains the descriptive adverb healthily. In "The thought of suicide is now no longer a guilty challenge and obsession," guilty challenge and obsession are descriptive, and in the following sentence, loving, admiring, hating, and fighting are the descriptive adjectives: ". . . for where the loving and admiring impulses are dead, the hating and fighting impulses will still respond . . . ." In the next three quotations, the descriptive words are the four adjectives sovereign, pessimistic, optimistic, and idealistic: "The sovereign source . . . ," ". . . pessimistic utterances . . . ," and ". . . optimistic and idealistic literature . . . ."[29] Obstinately, an adverb, in ". . . so obstinately waged . . ."[30] and multifarious and immoral in ". . . in his supposed world of multifarious and immoral nature, . . ." are the descriptive words, and penetrating is the descriptive adjective in ". . . honor is a very penetrating thing."[31] Normally, positive, honest, and true are the descriptive words in the following quotations: ". . . normally constituted heart," ". . . its more positive gifts," ". . . an honest stage . . . ," and ". . . the true significance . . . ."[32] In ". . . vestibule of a truer, more eternal world, . . . ," truer and more eternal are

descriptive, as are absolutely and ultimately in ". . . absolutely and ultimately the divinely aimed-at and established thing . . . ," better in ". . . better worth living again," and sadly mystical and execrably unscientific in "But as such a trust will seem to some of you sadly mystical and execrably unscientific, ..."[33] Real is descriptive in "But the slightest reflection on the real conditions . . . ,"[34] and in the following quotations, credible, certain, highest, safe, difficult, unrealizable, practical and vital are descriptive rather than evaluative: "Is it credible . . . ," ". . . this at least is certain, . . . ," ". . . highest interests," ". . . safe enough position . . . ," and ". . . neutrality is not only inwardly difficult, it is also outwardly unrealizable, where our relations to an alternative are practical and vital."[35] In these phrases, ". . . in an irreligious way," ". . . an unattainable thing," ". . . no real connection . . . ," ". . . prophetic enough," and ". . . imperious inner demand on our part for ideal logical and mathematical harmonies, . . . ,"[36] irreligious, unattainable, real, prophetic, and ideal are the descriptive adjectives. Strong, authoritative, and real are the descriptive words in "But the inner need of believing . . . is just as strong and authoritative . . ." and ". . . which they suggest were real."[37] Absolute, productive, and originative are descriptive here: ". . . probably not absolute, . . ."[38] and ". . . and is productive or

originative at all, ..." In the next four sentences, true is used twice as is right, here meaning correct or true: ". . . that makes the result come true," and ". . . you shall indeed be right, ... But believe, and again you shall be right, ... You make one or the other of two possible universes true . . . ."[39] In the last three instances of descriptive language in "Is Life Worth Living?" true, goodness, and real are the words used: "Pessimism, completed by your act, is true . . . ,"[40] "Our faith in the seen world's goodness (goodness now meaning fitness for successful moral and religious life) . . . ," and "If this life be not a real fight, ..."[41]

There are ninty-two instances of descriptive language in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life." The first three descriptive words are genuine, positive, and true found in these contexts: ". . . a genuine universe . . . ," ". . . a positive contribution . . . ," and ". . . so that the philosopher may settle the true order of human obligations."[42] Impossible is the descriptive adjective in "But it is surely impossible . . . ,"[43] and there are nine descriptive words in the next five quotations: ". . . some of them are prophetic of future utilities, . . . ," prophetic, ". . . our moral perceptions also are certainly of this secondary and brain-born kind," secondary and brain-born, ". . . schemes and positions which to the eye of commonsense are fantastic and overstrained," fantastic and

overstrained, ". . . is as excentric a variation, . . . ," excentric, and "The feeling of the inward dignity of certain spiritual attitudes, . . . the essential vulgarity of others, . . . are quite inexplicable except by an innate preference of the more ideal attitude . . . ,"[44] dignity, vulgarity, and ideal. "To what, once more, but subtile brain-born feelings of discord . . ."[45] contains the descriptive words subtile and brain-born. "All the higher, more penetrating ideals are revolutionary"[46] includes the descriptives more penetrating and revolutionary. In ". . . a thing can no more be good or bad than it can be pleasant or painful,"[47] pleasant and painful are descriptive. True is the descriptive adjective in ". . . whether the solitary thinker's judgments of good and ill are true or not," and pungent, appealing, profounder, more penetrating, and obstinate are the descriptives in this sentence: "Some of these will no doubt be more pungent and appealing than the rest, their goodness will have a profounder, more penetrating taste; they will return to haunt him with more obstinate regrets if violated." In ". . . or else remain inwardly discordant and unhappy,"[48] discordant and unhappy are the descriptives, and in ". . . one thinker's opinion is more correct than the other's, or that either has the truer moral sense,"[49] more correct and truer are the descriptive adjectives. Real and true are the descriptive words in ". . . must be realized in order to be real"[50] and ". . . true 'in

themselves,' . . . ."[51] Valid in ". . . it makes itself valid by the fact that it exists at all"[52] is descriptive, and so are acceptable and intelligible in "But in what way is this fact of wrongness made more acceptable or intelligible . . . ." Complete in ". . . which no thought of an 'ideal' backing can render more complete; . . . ,"[53] is the descriptive. Ineffective, used twice, impotent, tragic, and real, used twice, are the descriptives in "An ineffective à priori order is as impotent a thing as an ineffective God; . . . ," "It would be a tragic constitution, . . . ," and ". . . real good things and real bad things . . . ."[54] Genuine and real are the descriptives in ". . . ethics have as genuine and real a foothold . . . ,"[55] true is in ". . . if we are true philosophers . . . ,"[56] and cruel is in ". . . for the best course is often cruel; . . . ."[57] In ". . . anything like a scientifically accurate and genuinely useful casuistic scale,"[58] scientifically accurate and genuinely useful are descriptive, and in ". . . are primâ facie respectable . . ." and ". . . the casuistic question here is most tragically practical,"[59] respectable and most tragically practical are the descriptives. Tragic and speculative constitute the descriptive language in "It is a tragic situation, and no mere speculative conundrum, with which he has to deal,"[60] as do the words insensible, ludicrously, and peculiarly insensible in "The very best of men must not only be insensible, but be ludicrously and peculiarly insensible,

to many goods."[61] In this clause, ". . . what more grotesque topic could a satirist wish for . . . ,"[62] grotesque is the descriptive, and in "The philosopher must be a conservative . . . ," conservative is the descriptive. "And yet if he be a true philosopher . . ."[63] contains the descriptive true. "See the unnamed and unnamable sorrows which the tyranny . . ."[64] contains unnamed and unnamable, while ". . . the line of least resistance will always be towards the richer and the more inclusive arrangement . . ." contains richer and more inclusive. In ". . . the vulgarly accepted opinions are true . . . ,"[65] vulgarly accepted and true make up descriptive language, in ". . . by mixing with it that dogmatic temper . . . changes a growing, elastic, and continuous life into a superstitious system of relics and dead bones," dogmatic, growing, elastic, continuous, and superstitious are descriptive, and in ". . . as our intuitions are more piercing, and our vocation is the stronger for the moral life,"[66] more piercing and stronger are descriptives. In the following sentence, "He knows that he must vote always for the richer universe, for the good which seems most organizable, most fit to enter into complex combinations, most apt to be a member of a more inclusive whole," richer, most organizable, most fit, most apt, and more inclusive are descriptives, as are bad, truly, tentative, suggestive, and dogmatic in these quotations: ". . . if he makes a bad mistake . . . ," ". . . so far as they

truly touch the moral life . . . ," and ". . . a literature which is confessedly tentative and suggestive rather than dogmatic . . . ."[67] Deepest, wilder, higher and deeply penetrating are descriptive adjectives in "The deepest difference, practically, in the moral life of man . . ." and "It needs the wilder passions to arouse it, the big fears, loves, and indignations; or else the deeply penetrating appeal of some one of the higher fidelities . . . ."[68] Genuinely ethical is a descriptive phrase in "Life, to be sure, is even in such a world a genuinely ethical symphony . . . ,"[69] and penetrating, shattering, and tragically challenging are the descriptives in ". . . and to utter the penetrating, shattering, tragically challenging note of appeal."[70] Keenest is the descriptive in ". . . getting out of the game of existence its keenest possibilities of zest,"[71] and finally valid, most appealing, and most inclusive realizable are descriptives in ". . . would be the finally valid casuistic scale; his claims would be the most appealing; his ideal universe would be the most inclusive realizable whole."[72] Finally, in "The solving word, for the learned and the unlearned man alike . . . ,"[73] solving is the descriptive.

"On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" contains forty-six instances of descriptive language. The first instance is precious in "Where we judge a thing to be precious . . . ." Next, stupidity and injustice are descriptives in "Hence the stupidity and injustice of our opinions . . . ,"[74]

and so are intimate, more, and less in ". . . connected as we are by a tie more intimate than most ties . . ." and "The subject judged . . . knows more while the spectator knows less . . . ."[75] In ". . . the truer side is the side that feels the more, and not the side that feels the less," truer, more, and less are descriptive, as are hideous and ugly in ". . . what had 'improved' it out of existence was hideous . . . . Ugly, indeed, seemed the life of the squatter . . . ."[76] Sacred, honest, persistent, and final are descriptive adjectives in "The beauties and commodities gained by the centuries are sacred" and ". . . spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil and final reward."[77] In ". . . there is 'importance' in the only real and positive sense . . . ,"[78] real and positive are descriptive, and in "Yet we are but finite . . . ," finite is also descriptive. Pitiful in "Only in some pitiful dreamer . . . ,"[79] austere and moral in "In Wordsworth it was a somewhat austere and moral significance . . . ,"[80] and precious in ". . . made precious by any standard . . ."[81] are descriptives. In ". . . a futile way of passing the time . . . . And yet, from the deepest point of view, . . . ,"[82] futile and deepest are the descriptives. Real, ideal, dead, and common are descriptive in ". . . the real and the ideal in one. But to the jaded and unquickened eye it is all dead and common . . . ."[83] "The place is horrible"[84] contains the descriptive horrible, while ". . . the real scale of life's values"[85] contains

real. Nothing, choice, rare, exquisite, common, higher, simpler, elementary, general, profound, and primitive are the descriptives in these quotations: "The occasion and the experience, then, are nothing," "We are trained to seek the choice, the rare, the exquisite exclusively, and to overlook the common," ". . . and in the culture of these higher functions the peculiar sources of joy connected with our simpler functions . . . to life's more elementary and general goods and joys," and ". . . to descend to a more profound and primitive level."[86] The savages and children of nature, to whom we deem ourselves so much superior . . ."[87] contains the descriptive superior, and "They are meaningless and vacant tracts of time" contains meaningless and vacant. Finally, magically irresponsible and unintelligible are found in ". . . covered with just this kind of magically irresponsible spell"[88] and ". . . however unintelligible these may be to us."[89]

Footnotes for Chapter VI

[1]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 324.

[2]Stevenson, Ethics and Language, 62.

[3]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 310.

[4]Peter Herbst, "The Nature of Facts," Essays in Conceptual Analysis, 145.

[5]Ibid., 151.

[6]Ibid., 154.

[7]P. F. Strawson, "On Referring," Essays in Conceptual Analysis, 30.

[8]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 326-327.

[9]Hare, Language of Morals, 100.

[10]Ibid., 112-113.

[11]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 325.

[12]Hare, Language of Morals, 115.

[13]Ibid., 116.

[14]Ibid., 118.

[15]Ibid., 121.

[16]Ibid., 122-124.

[17]Lillie, Introduction to Ethics, 326.

[18]Ibid., 327.

[19]James, "Is Life Worth Living?" 3.

[20]Ibid., 6.

[21]Ibid., 7.

[22]Ibid., 8.

[23]Ibid., 9.

[24]Ibid., 11.

[25]Ibid., 12.

[26]Ibid., 12-13.

[27]Ibid., 13.

[28]Ibid., 15.

[29]Ibid., 16.

[30]Ibid., 18.

[31]Ibid., 19.

[32]Ibid., 20.

[33]Ibid., 21.

[34]Ibid., 22.

[35]Ibid., 23.

[36]Ibid., 24.

[37]Ibid., 25.

[38]Ibid., 26.

[39]Ibid., 28.

[40]Ibid., 29.

[41]Ibid., 30.

[42]James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," 185.

[43]Ibid., 186.

[44]Ibid., 187.

[45]Ibid., 188.

[46]Ibid., 188-189.

[47]Ibid., 190.

[48]Ibid., 191.

[49]Ibid., 192.

[50]Ibid., 193.

[51]Ibid., 194.

[52]Ibid., 195.

[53]Ibid., 196.

[54]Ibid., 197.

[55]Ibid., 198.

[56]Ibid., 199.

[57]Ibid., 200.

[58]Ibid., 201.

[59]Ibid., 202.

[60]Ibid., 203.

[61]Ibid., 203-204.

[62]Ibid., 204.

[63]Ibid., 206.

[64]Ibid., 207.

[65]Ibid., 208.

[66]Ibid., 209.

[67]Ibid., 210.

[68]Ibid., 211.

[69]Ibid., 212.

[70]Ibid., 212-213.

[71]Ibid., 213.

[72]Ibid., 214.

[73]Ibid., 215.

[74]James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," 259.

[75]Ibid., 260.

[76]Ibid., 261.

[77]Ibid., 262.

[78]Ibid., 263.

[79]Ibid., 267.

[80]Ibid., 269.

[81]Ibid., 271-272.

[82]Ibid., 275.

[83]Ibid., 276.

[84]Ibid., 277.

[85]Ibid., 278.

[86]Ibid., 279.

[87]Ibid., 280.

[88]Ibid., 283.

[89]Ibid., 284.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

It was the purpose of this study to show the effect of language on philosophy. This task was attempted through analyzing the language of moral judgements of William James in three of his most representative essays on ethics: "Is Life Worth Living?" "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings."

The work presents pertinent information concerning the influences that the family and background of William James had on his language. It then categorizes the language used in each of the three essays as having one or more of the following meanings: evaluative, which has the purpose of choosing and advising others to choose by commendation and similar implications; emotive, which expresses and arouses feeling in order to stimulate action; prescriptive, which tells us what to do; and descriptive, which states a decision of principle.

Conclusions

The evidence presented in this study indicates that the following conclusions, stated as recommendations, appear to be in order:

1. It should be recognized that the language of ethics can have more than one function simultaneously, which is a recognition at variance with some linguists of philosophy.

2. It should be recognized that the meaning of philosophical writings, in this case ethical contexts, can be made clearer through the analysis of the language used.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ayer, Alfred Jules. "Language, Truth and Logic," Value and Obligation. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961. 359-368.

Black, Max. Language and Philosophy. Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949.

Gilson, Etienne, Thomas Langan, Armand A. Maurer. Recent Philosophy, Hegel to the Present. New York: Random House, Inc., 1966.

Hare, R. M. The Language of Morals. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Herbst, Peter. "The Nature of Facts," Essays in Conceptual Analysis. New York: St Martin's Press Inc, 1956. 134-156.

James, William. "Is Life Worth Living?" Essays on Faith and Morals. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947. 1-31.

_____. "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," Essays on Faith and Morals. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947. 259-284.

_____. "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," Essays on Faith and Morals. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947. 184-215.

Kallen, Horace M. The Philosophy of William James. New York: Random House, 1953.

Lillie, William. An Introduction to Ethics. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961.

Marnell, William H. Man-Made Morals, Four Philosophies that Shaped America. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966.

Matthiessen, F. O. The James Family. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.

Perry, Ralph Barton (ed.). Inheritance and Vocation. Vol. I of The Thought and Character of William James. 2 vols. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935.

Sellars, Wilfred. "Imperatives, Intentions, and the Logic of 'Ought'," Morality and the Language of Conduct. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963. 159-218.

Stevenson, Charles L. Ethics and Language. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944.

_____. "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms," Logical Positivism. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959. 264-281.

Strawson, P. F. "On Referring," Essays in Conceptual Analysis. New York: St Martin's Press Inc, 1956. 21-52.

Trobridge, George. Swedenborg, Life and Teaching. New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Incorporated, 1944.

Urmson, J. O. "On Grading," Logic and Language (Second Series). New York: Philosophical Library, 1953. 159-186.

Young, Frederic Harold. The Philosophy of Henry James, Sr. New York: Bookman Associates, 1951.

Vita was removed during scanning