

Situating ethics and memory.

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Ethics and memory are better regarded as partially conjoint, rather than disjoint, as Gilbert Ryle suggests. Ryle's position, based on the absurdity of the idea of forgetting the distinction between right and wrong, makes ethical knowledge too isolated from other kinds of knowledge. Considerations such as the role played by reminding in inculcating ethics, the use of practice in learning virtuous behaviors, and the possibility of reversals such as no longer caring demonstrate the conjoint relationship between ethics and memory.

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How are the domains of ethics and memory situated with respect to one another? One might claim, with Gilbert Ryle, that the phenomenal and experiential content of ethics, of that realm of knowledge that involves knowing "the difference between right and wrong,"⁽¹⁾ is so deeply interconnected with noncognitive aspects of experience - with caring and with doing - that the notions, of forgetting and recollection simply do not apply. Ryle maintains that after a certain maturational point has been reached in our ethical development - namely that point after which we can be said to know the difference between right and wrong - these notions are irrelevant or inapplicable. Ryle's position, which I will refer to as the "disjoint" position, holds that memory and ethics are disjoint sets, such that the notions of forgetting and reminding do not allow the difference between right and wrong as a proper object. However, even if one acknowledges Ryle's basic contention that the ultimate subject matter of ethics comprises such an interconnectivity of knowing with caring (admiring and despising, approving and disapproving) and doing (pursuing and avoiding), one need not hold that mnemonic factors are completely irrelevant; memory and ethics can be partially conjoint sets.

In this paper I contend that "disjoining" memory and ethics may render ethical understanding too insular and static, severing the connectedness of the individual to the external environment and ongoing experience, and increasing the vulnerability of ethical "knowledge" by diminishing opportunities for development and recalibration of ethically imbued categorizations and evaluative response. Concepts and principles that are central to memory may be applied not only to propositional or purely cognitive mental "contents" but to any learned patterns of evaluation, judging, and behaving, including those of an ethical form. There is both a place and a need for the ideas of reminding, and of lost and regained access to information, in our ethical thinking. Both that place and need are more extensive and multi-faceted than allowed for in Ryle's conception.

The "Disjoint Position

In his paper, "On Forgetting the Difference Between Right

and Wrong," Ryle asks the following question: Why would it be ridiculous (or absurd) for a person to say that they had once learned the difference between right and wrong but had forgotten it? Ryle assumes that to say this would truly be ridiculous and not merely "hard to credit" (p. 148). His question - why do the notions of "forgetting" and "reminding" not allow "the difference between right and wrong" as a proper object - both concerns and presupposes the incompatibility of these ideas.

There are two possible misconstruals of this question that Ryle dispenses with directly. First, the question is not intended to deny the possibility that one could lose one's memory for a particular kind of declarative knowledge, specifically conceptual definitions or analyses concerning ethical matters, such as one might read in works of philosophy. Second, it is not intended to ascribe a form of indelibility to our knowledge of right and wrong. Rather, the question (why is it absurd for a person to say they have forgotten the difference between right and wrong?) asks why the notions of forgetting and of recollection seem equally inappropriate in this context.

Ryle's answer to this question might be approached at two levels, and we may be willing to accept the approach at the first level without accepting the second. First, Ryle wants to maintain that whatever the sort of teaching, learning, studying, and knowing that is at work in the development of virtues, it is not of an anemically academic or merely mechanical sort. It is an ampler kind of learning, involving an ampler, more integrated existence, where knowing informs willing, and willing is infused with feeling. There is, in the virtues, a conjunction of knowing with caring and doing - of knowing what is right and wrong with admiring and despising, approving and disapproving, pursuing and avoiding. More importantly, this conjunction, Ryle affirms, is more than a happy coincidence. What we are pointing to when we say, "We needs must love the highest when we see it," (p. 152) is a conceptual necessity, not merely an observation of a common fact. When we say that someone has learned the difference between right and wrong, what we mean by this is just this conjunction of knowing with caring and doing: doing (e.g., making reparations, reproaching, praising, etc.) and caring (feeling contrite, being shocked or disgusted, admiring, etc.) are "marks, though different sorts of marks, of his

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knowing the difference between right and wrong" (p. 155).

Now it is because knowing the difference between right and wrong involves this conjunction of knowledge with caring - Ryle speaks of it as "inculcated caring, a habit of taking certain sorts of things seriously" (p. 156) - that Ryle sees it as ridiculous to say that someone has "forgotten" the difference between right and wrong. Although, he says, someone who once cared might, indeed, cease to care, or cease to care as much:

ceasing to care is not forgetting, any more than

ceasing to believe something or to mistrust

someone is forgetting. "Forget" is reserved,

apparently, mainly for the nonretention of information

and the loss of skills through desuetude,

though it is also used for ceasing to

notice things, e.g., for the oblivion brought by

sleep or distractions. (p. 156)

This is the first - and more significant - level of Ryle's explanation for why it would be absurd for someone to say they had once known the difference between right and wrong but had forgotten it. The absurdity derives from a mismatch between the ampler kind of knowing that is involved in knowing the difference between right and wrong, and the narrower range of application of the notion of "forgetting." It is incongruous or ridiculous to attempt to "cover" the loss of the former with the latter. Disagreement about the degree of absurdity inherent in the notion that one might "forget the difference between right and wrong" could then derive either from discrepancies in one's interpretation of the extent of "knowing" entailed by "knowing the difference between right and wrong," or from discrepancies in one's interpretation of the notion of forgetting. If the uses that Ryle claims for the former are deemed too broad, or if those that he reserves for the latter are deemed too narrow or restricted, then his claim for absurdity will seem overstated or mistaken.

The second level of Ryle's explanation of the absurdity of the claim that one could have known but then forgotten the difference between right and wrong lies in his assimilation (but not identification) of knowing the difference between right and wrong with educated tastes and cultivated preferences. Searching for an analogy between the kind of knowledge acquisition that is involved in learning the difference between right and wrong and some other kind of

learning, Ryle rejects the possibility that this knowledge is like knowing particular matters of fact, the "mere possession of information" (p. 149). Similarly rejected is the possibility that this knowing is like knowing how to do things, a mastery of a technique or skill, such as knowing Latin or how to play tennis or chess. Rather, Ryle likens the virtues to tastes and preferences, particularly those of an educated form. Just as the music or poetry lover had once to learn to appreciate music or poetry, "so the honest man had to be taught or trained to dislike deception, and the charitable man had to be taught or trained to want to relieve distress" (p. 151).

In support of this assimilation of the possession of virtue with cultivated tastes and preferences, Ryle observes that, just as we do not speak of individuals as having "forgotten" the difference between right and wrong so, although we may speak of individuals as losing their taste for some pursuit we are unlikely to speak of them as having forgotten their taste for that pursuit. The incongruity we might feel in the suggestion that someone might "recognize" the superior nature of some idea, activity, or object (e.g., good poetry) without also approving of it, desiring it, forwarding it, and so on, parallels the incongruity we feel in the idea that someone might know (really know) what is "wrong" without disapproving of it or avoiding it. In both cases, Ryle argues, it is simply incorrect to assume that there are really two "components" present, the first involving coming to know certain things and the second (a consequence of the former) involving coming to like or admire certain things. Such alterations in our feelings (the emergence of liking, admiration, love) are not an "effect" of a change in our knowledge but examples or illustrations or exercises of that knowledge.

There is much here that is not only correct, but fundamental; there is a solidity and connectedness to experience in this insistence upon the weddedness of knowing ethical "truth" with caring and with doing. Ryle's rejection of more external or contingent forms of connectedness between ethical knowing, caring, and doing - that of cause and effect, or (elsewhere) that of changes in one's (cognitive) equipment versus changes in one's self - is both well-founded and essential.

And yet: acknowledgment of the weddedness of these components, even of their composition in our very selves, does not imply their dissolution nor, equally important, does it necessarily imply that the principles or empirical generalizations that apply to the components in isolation have become irrelevant or inapplicable. Ryle wants to argue that, in the virtues, the boundaries between cognition, conation, and feeling are down. Yet cognition is still present (albeit not alone), subject to the same laws and factors as elsewhere. Failure to acknowledge this may

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result in an unwarranted and artificial isolation of ethical knowing from more general (systematic and empirical) knowledge concerning cognition, as if there were a discontinuity in how we know things of an ethical sort from how we know other things.

In the following pages, I will specifically attempt to mitigate against such isolation, illustrating the partially conjoint nature of memory and ethics by consideration of three interrelated questions: (1) the role of reminders and reminding in knowing the difference between right and wrong, (2) the place of practice in forming (and informing) virtue, and (3) the problem posed by the possible reversibility of states that Ryle would characterize as "ceasing to care" or ceasing to care as much, and the feasibility of thinking of these states as forms of dissociation.

Reminders and Reminding

Might it be absurd to say that we had "forgotten" the difference between right and wrong because we are continuously confronted with reminders of our responsibilities, obligations, and duties? Ryle rejects this reading both because it is a causal hypothesis (one could imagine circumstances where an individual is never reminded of his or her obligations, or one could imagine an unusually forgetful individual who, despite such reminders, would nonetheless forget) and because it does not actually address the question. As already noted above, Ryle's formulation of his question presupposes that there is no such thing as forgetting the difference between right and wrong; it does not solicit or request an enumeration of the possible empirical factors explaining why it might be exceedingly rare to do so.

Yet what is the role of reminding and reminders in bringing us to goodness? Or, perhaps less portentously, in helping us remain in the right general vicinity? Could such reminders as we choose for ourselves, and give to ourselves, be seen as ways to develop and alter our ethical nature? Concerning the initial acquisition or development of a child's ethical self, Ryle, in *The Concept of Mind*, spoke of "refresher-lessons" that a child might give himself, repeating to himself the instructions of "the voice of Reason" or "of Conscience" which he (via his parents and schoolmasters) has learned well enough to thus recite, but not yet well enough to (consistently, or with a like degree of facility) enact.⁽²⁾ Here, external prompts, promises, threats, and so on appear to assume a somewhat ambiguous or transitional status. Although still located externally, in the sense that the child is thinking of her parents, or teacher, or older brother's injunctions, it is the child herself that is reminding herself of the external source of prompting. Such divisions or ambiguities of

control may, in some ways, parallel ones that recur throughout life, where our present self is not the self we most want to be, and where we externally "prompt" the self we now are to edge closer to our ideal selves. This form of reminding appears to be of a more externally invoked sort than the "inculcated caring" that is central to Ryle's reading (wherein one simply recognizes and prefers the superior over the inferior), yet the existence of such developmental and maturational processes that draw upon (if not depend upon) reminders to bolster will and to guide behavior suggests that, perhaps, under certain conditions, the notion that one could forget the difference between right and wrong would not be absurd.

An observation made, in a different context, by Hilary Putnam, extends and supports this latter point. Putnam notes that "most puzzles about the very 'possibility' of normative knowledge spring from a too narrowly empiricistic picture of how knowledge is gained and how actions are justified."⁽³⁾ The importance of "normative reflection on our practice"⁽⁴⁾ seems to some extent to get lost (or go unremarked) in Ryle's approach. More specifically, in considering the possible role that reminders may have in our ethical lives, we may initially think only of either external or internal prompts towards following already determined or articulated ethical norms. Yet "reminders" may often come in the form of reflections upon our own and others prior behavior, choices, or thoughts; that is, reminders may themselves depend upon or derive from reflection.

An illustration may be useful here. In *The Education of Henry Adams*, Adams relates a story of how, one morning while staying as a child at his grandparents' house, he was engaged in a muffled but fierce struggle with his mother at the foot of the stairs, refusing to go to school.⁽⁵⁾ Adams tells how his grandfather (the former President) quietly emerged from his study, took the young Adams by the hand, and proceeded to walk with him, not simply out the door, nor only on the way to school but, unrelentingly, with a never slackening grip but also with never a word of reproof or chastisement, into the very classroom itself. Here, the exemplary nature of his grandfather's behavior did not emerge immediately for the young Adams; indeed, during the entire walk the subject of his reflections was how he might, with the quickness of youth, at any moment dart away and quite escape. It emerged only later, in reflection, then becoming an evocative summation wherein we (and Henry Adams) can see his grandfather's actions as such as to effectively preclude concluding in favor of either what Schiller termed "the egotism of our senses" or the egotism of our reason."⁽⁶⁾ In that walk to school, we see that his grandfather's silence is respectful of the child's present passionate yearning for freedom; his unyielding grip is respectful of the child's future reason, guarding the

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conditions that may allow its growth; in the recollection of the silence and the unyielding grip is Henry Adams' recognition that the beginnings of character are wrought by a passionate discipline that emerges as much from within as is imposed from without.

There is another way in which explicit reminders to ourselves might be important. There are often situations where it is necessary to arrive at a sound or just ethical "fathoming" of a situation or person not just once but repeatedly, time and time again. Confronted, on a daily basis, with "minor" evils, small wrongs, little injustices - or great ones - there is a real danger that we will become habituated to their presence and that our standards (and therefore our further soundings) will themselves change.

The emergence of such habituation and its tenuous existence for and within consciousness, is portrayed in several remarkable passages in Gertrude Stein's novel *Mrs. Reynolds*. Our deeper, more private or individual classifications of behavior may be thus affected, as is Mr. Reynolds' younger brother's characterization of the situation during World War II:

Mr. Reynolds' younger brother was always saying it is greed, greed, nothing but greed. His best friend was the widow of a tea-king, and she liked to wander in the rain in wooden shoes and carry an umbrella. She felt she was a Chinese heroine. Little by little the younger brother of Mr. Reynolds said it is greed greed nothing but greed. He often forgot in between, he was angry when he forgot and when he came to, he said to himself, it is greed greed nothing but greed, he never said this to any one else, he only said it to himself.(7)

This submergence and re-emergence of ethical awareness occurs entirely within an interior world of evaluative discourse and existence; the younger brother of Mr. Reynolds to himself was always saying, it is greed, greed, nothing but greed. Always saying, but often forgetting. Yet

this same phenomenon may occur with events that are very much within public consciousness, and it is all too easy to underestimate the role that the present environment may have in making certain categories of thought and evaluation possible:

Oh dear said Mrs. Reynolds there is no use forgetting that Angel Harper [i.e., Adolf Hitler?! is still only fifty-two only fifty-two said Mrs. Reynolds and when she said fifty-two she said that she had been noticing that although anybody would know if you asked them all the same in a kind of way everybody was beginning to forget. It is funny said Mrs. Reynolds very funny that what is not forgotten there is still some time in which to forget.(8)

Effective ethical vigilance, like perceptual vigilance, demands resources from our whole being. If the boundaries between cognition, conation, and feeling are down, we need to draw on any known methods to maintain vigilance. This would seem to be especially significant in that the notion that we attain a mature state where we can be said to "know the difference between right and wrong" is only an approximate truth; our "possession" of that difference is of a more tentative, halting, and melioristic sort than this so definite definite clause ("the difference" brooks no difference) suggests. There may, indeed, even be a form of hubris in a too-confident and too-complete rejection of the notion that mere "external" reminders may continue to play a role in our ethical development, even after we reach a stage of "inculcated caring." One thinks here of Iris Murdoch's characterization of the central arena of morality as the - daily, hourly, even moment by moment - attempt to purify consciousness. Yet she insists also that "the nature of the world must be thought of as essentially 'in' this place too" and that there is also a necessity for "the idea of duty as something alien, the outer not the inner, the command whose authority may be recognised as running against the stream of the inner life."(9) If all is already internal - inculcated caring - what correctives are there for (otherwise unnoticed, unremarked) drifts in our ethical existence, the cumulative effects of the wayward tugs and attractions of our internal and external worlds (the fantasies and self-deceptions, habits and customs)? What will we nudge - or strike up against - in order to recognize

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(re-cognize) our waywardness? The dangers of indifference, of blindness, of contrary or merely too sluggish a passion for goodness (for justice, for mercy) are such that blithely belittling such aids to goodness seems foolhardy, inviting rebuke. Indeed, in Genesis, even God is portrayed as benefiting from reminders, "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember."(10)

Practice Makes Virtue?

In addition to these more reflectively derived reminders, and the deliberate reminders we may give ourselves as we seek to change, our "knowledge of goodness" may also benefit from behavioral reminders, with virtuous behavior reinforcing virtuous behavior. In contrast to Ryle, Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, appears to have presented precisely this position, offering two interconnected reasons (causes) we do not forget virtuous activities: the frequency with which they are exercised, and the ease or readiness with which such exercise occurs. Observing the comparative permanence of virtuous activities (such activities, he notes are thought to exceed even knowledge of the sciences in durability), Aristotle suggests that, even amongst such activities, "the most valuable are more durable because those who are blessed spend their life most readily and most continuously in these; for this seems to be the reason why we do not forget them."(11) Whereas Ryle argues that virtues are not proficiencies, so that the notion of "being out of practice" is inappropriate, Aristotle does not reject this possibility.

Ryle does not deny that we may impose moral exercises upon ourselves or that (possibly without such exertions) moral deterioration may occur; rather he claims that the object of such "moral drills" is "not to save us from forgetting the difference between right and wrong, but to stiffen us against doing what we know to be wrong" (p. 150). This emphasis upon moral drills as providing us with "ethical backbone" and motivational and conative resources that we could draw upon in times of need is reminiscent of William James's advice to gratuitously exert our will in small matters each day, to be "systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points,"(12) so as not to be found wanting when exigencies demand it of us. Yet, could we not, in some or perhaps in many cases, see behavioral slips as a first (slippery) step into ethical oblivion? Does it not seem that this distinction between "stiffening" and "forgetting" imposes a greater divide between cognition and behavior than we (or Ryle) ultimately want to have? For example, might we not draw favorable, and unfavorable, inferences about the state of our "souls" from our behavior, and will such inferences have no effect on our understanding and judgment of what is good and bad, noble and base, superior and inferior? If I

cannot now be completely free of envy, if I can act more nearly so, might that not keep me nearer to that largeness of soul I long to possess than if I had given envy freer reign in my behavior? And will my knowledge of "the difference between right and wrong" never improve this way? Am I strengthening only my will thereby?

Although engaging in "moral exercises" may be a means of buttressing our will against (later) temptations to do wrong, there is something more than this: practice looms larger and more significantly in our moral world than this suggests. Our practice may impinge upon our sense of a possible future - of a possible future self, and, too, of our past self. How I act today (this moment) is something I may remember tomorrow (in a later moment). This memory may be shown directly, such that I later explicitly recall this particular incident, or indirectly, as may be the case with many habits, where we show the effects of prior experiences without necessarily consciously recollecting those experiences.

Directly recalling or remembering my earlier behavior may, for example, contribute to my sense of what it is I could be (how closely I can approximate my ideals) and my sense of whether particular ideals are worthy of my continued allegiance and continued efforts to meet them. Judith Shklar's observation that "misanthropy may . . . afflict us if we think too much about ordinary vices and take them too much to heart"(13) may apply to reflections on our own past behavior as well as that of others, and, if our past ethical practice is ridden with too many failings and shortcomings, our entire ethical existence (not only our will) may be affected.

Indirect forms of remembering, that is, instances where my behavior is positively or adversely affected by a particular prior experience even though I do not become consciously aware of that experience or of its effects on my behavior, may also be important.(14) Because "knowing the difference between right and wrong" points us only towards relatively broad or abstract goals and values, rather than minutely specifying the actual, concrete, and particular behaviors whereby these are to be realized, the (actual, concrete, particular) attempts that I make today to realize ethical goals or values may be a potent source for specifying how, on a future occasion, I attempt to realize those same or similar goals or values. Consider: I know that, with regard to a particular crisis my friend is having, I must be as empathic and supportive as possible. Yet I also believe that I must be honest and frank about what I see as the best possible response to the crisis, even though my judgment and perception of the situation conflict with my friend's deepest hopes and desires. How shall I act in this situation; precisely what shall I say, and how and when? I cannot - in advance - know exactly how to

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simultaneously demonstrate all of these qualities. However, any occasions in the past when I attempted to meet similar sometimes conflicting goals will inform how (in what particular, concrete way) I handle the present situation. I may be consciously aware of some of those influences, but it is unlikely that I will be fully cognizant of all of them. In either case, my past behavior will be influencing much more than simply my will. Further, the more often in the past that I have acted with similar goals in mind, the richer the "data base" on which I can draw in responding to the present requirements.

Forgetting and Ceasing to Care

If knowing the difference between right and wrong involves, as Ryle proposes, a form of "inculcated caring, a habit of taking certain sorts of things seriously" (p. 156), then how are we to think about cases where this kind of caring seems to have been lost or to have dwindled to something small and uncertain, evidenced only rarely or in only lukewarm fashion? Ryle does not deny that either loss or diminution of caring may occur, that, for example, a person may become less conscientious or less honest or less charitable. What he does deny is that such changes can be properly designated as forgetting. Whereas, he maintains, the term "forget" might well be used to indicate the loss of information or technical abilities, it is not appropriate to the sorts of changes that are of concern here. Further, this difference may coincide with another difference. Although changes of the former sort might be construed as changes in what one possesses or in what one has, alterations in one's caring seem to involve rather a change in who one is, in one's "person:"

If I have ceased to enjoy bridge, or come to admire Picasso, then I have changed. But, if I have forgotten a date or become rusty in my Latin, I do not think of this as a change in me, but rather as a diminution of my equipment. In the same way, a person who becomes less or more conscientious is a somewhat changed person, not a person with an enlarged or diminished stock of anything. In a testimonial both personal qualities and equipment need to be mentioned, but the equipment is not mentioned

among the personal qualities (p. 156).

Setting aside difficulties in applying this distinction between portions of experience or learning that are merely part of one's belongings or accoutrement and portions that are more integrated and central to our person-hood (how many aspects of our experience are - or can remain - as extrinsic to our selves as this distinction implies?), I will point to two sources of difficulty for this view.

First, Ryle observes that "forgetting" may be used to refer to instances of ceasing to notice things, as in the oblivion produced by distractions. Yet does not ceasing to notice things often merge imperceptibly with ceasing to care? Although they clearly are not identical, ceasing to notice things may be both a precursor and symptom of having ceased to care (or to care as much), and caring is, on Ryle's view, part of "knowing the difference between right and wrong." Distractions, severe stress, danger, fatigue: all may induce dissociations of affect and cognition, or of affect, cognition, and will and - in some sense at least - we do want to speak here of the difference between right and wrong as having been "forgotten."

Both ceasing to notice and ceasing to care can befall us for a multitude of reasons, some apparently quite ordinary and mundane. For example, it may have been primarily an inappropriate extension of habits of interpretation, of comparison, of noting relations - habits and skills that are (usually) appropriate and valuable in approaching literary texts - that allowed visitors to ask Samuel Beckett, when his eyesight was failing him, why blindness "was an affliction suffered by major Irish writers?": "Had not Joyce suffered horribly for years, and O'Casey as well? Was Beckett to be the third of a great triumvirate of Irishmen to be stricken with blindness?" Here a mode and manner of thinking that is often apposite and beneficial in one domain, in spreading beyond that domain has encroached upon the most basic of sensitivities, leaving the questioners cold. Yet Beckett's response is a reminder that can penetrate through that chill intellectualism, leaving the questioners (and us) simultaneously chagrined and strangely braced and uplifted: "I am simply a man who is going blind. Any comparison with others is meaningless, ridiculous, absurd."(15)

Other sources of apathy, indifference, oblivion, may derive from situations that are beyond all normal constraints or conditions, beyond the reach of what most of us will ever have to endure. Basic capacities for response (emotional, attentional, memorial) may be severely blunted or lost, seared by physical pain, fatigue, hunger, by unimaginable cruelties and depths of indifference of man towards man. The radically and irremediably contingent character of human memory - and with, in, and through memory the

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radically contingent character of human ethical existence - is one of the profound messages of Varlam Shalamov's accounts of life in the Soviet forced-labor camps of Siberia.(16) Again and again, through what we otherwise would consider insignificant details (two cans of condensed milk, a game of dominoes with accompanying amenities of tea and cigarettes played in a small far room of a hospital), Shalamov tears from us the realization that our most basic ethical responses are neither invulnerable nor inevitable - tears from us - and offers to us as the most tender and hopeful and fearful of gifts. For Shalamov also gives cause for hope: there is a possibility of return, of rejuvenation of caring that has been dulled or deadened by the combined forces of external circumstance and inner character, a possibility of recovery of the responses themselves, and, too, of painful shame at the recognition of what had been lost.

This is the second, and more important, difficulty with Ryle's attempt to deal with the possibility that individuals might no longer care, or might no longer care as deeply about certain matters, by saying that then they would no longer be the same person. If an individual in one of Shalamov's accounts of the Kolyma camps could regain awareness of and sympathy for his neighbor's fate, in what sense was he no longer the "same person" when he was unable to access such beliefs and feelings? Although we do not want to equate changes in caring with changes in knowing, they share many close associations, not just paralleling one another but, in symbiotic fashion, each providing sustenance for the other. Our understanding of truthfulness is fed by our ability to feel what truthfulness is, by our anxiety to find it and follow it; contrariwise, our anxieties and sensitivities on its behalf are fed by our intellectual understanding. Severing connectedness to caring will indeed change who we seem to be, including who we seem to be as ethical beings. It may be that becoming dis-associated, losing access to significant aspects of cognition, conation, or feeling does involve a change in our self, and the regaining of that which was inaccessible may seem more like finding our self again than like "remembering" something. However, this process does depend on a form of remembrance, that is, on regained access to knowledge and/or learned patterns of affect and motivation. Allowing room for concepts associated with remembrance (reminding, forgetting, recollecting) may provide a more hopeful way of conceiving the state of an individual who has ceased to care, allowing room for the possibility that she may regain not just ethical "knowledge" but that form of ethical knowing that is infused with ethical caring and ethical doing - she may return to her self.

Thus once again we see that an exclusion of concepts drawn from the realm of memory may render our

conception of ethical understanding too insular and static, making our attitudes towards ethical existence at once too optimistic and too despairing. We need such notions as that of reminders (whether externally imposed, reflectively derived or originating in our own behavior) and of retrieval environments - the recognition of the influence of present circumstances on what we now can call to mind - to prevent our conception of ethical understanding from being cut off from internal and external sources of change and growth. However useful it may sometimes be to talk of individuals as having or not having reached that point where they "know the difference between right and wrong," and however intricately this form of knowledge is assumed to be tied with caring and with doing, still a too extreme rejection of the notions of recollection, reminding, and forgetting renders ethical change and development too difficult to account for, too difficult to hope for, and too difficult to fear for. Indeed we need the ampler kind of conception of ethics that Ryle is proposing, but inclusion of affective and behavioral components need not occur with exclusion of cognitive components, and we need to recognize principles and concepts derived from the domain of memory to accommodate notions of change (drifting towards indifference, momentary forms of ethical oblivion, ceasing to care and coming to care once more) in the domain of ethics. Because concepts and principles that are fundamental to memory may be applied not only to propositional or purely cognitive mental contents but to any learned patterns of evaluation, judging, and behaving, including those of an ethical form, there are multiple points at which memory and ethics may "in-form" each other. Situating ethics and memory in this way as "conjoint" rather than "disjoint" only points in the direction of such interpenetration; following, or failing to follow, the detailed tracings of that interpenetration is a daily (hourly, moment by moment) task.(17)

NOTES

- (1.) Gilbert Ryle, "On Forgetting the Difference Between Right and Wrong," in *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, A. I. Melden, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958), pp.147-59. Hereafter referred to in the text by page number.
- (2.) Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), p.315.
- (3.) Hilary Putnam, "Pragmatism and Moral Objectivity," in *Words and Life*, James Conant, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p.169.
- (4.) Putnam, "Moral Objectivity," p.168.
- (5.) Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, Ernest Samuels, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), pp.12-13.
- (6.) Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, ed. and trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.89,91, n3.
- (7.) Gertrude Stein, Mrs. Reynolds and Five Earlier Novelettes (New Haven: Yale

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University Press, 1952), pp.19-20. (8.) Stein, Mrs. Reynolds, p. 218. (9.) Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1993), pp. 293-94, emphasis added. (10.) Genesis 9:16 AV. William James explicitly develops the idea that forgetting may not be confined to the merely human realm. See my "Lowly Notions: Forgetting in William James's Moral Universe," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, vol. 29 (1993), pp.609-35. (11.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*, Jonathan Barnes, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), vol.2, p.1739, 1100 15-17. (12.) *The Works of William James: The Principles of Psychology*, Frederick Burkhardt and Fredson Bowers, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), Vol. 1, p.130. (13.) Judith Shklar, *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 2. (14.) The need to distinguish between the many different ways we can have, or show, memory for prior experiences - with or without conscious awareness of that experience, and with or without a voluntary intention to "remember" - has received considerable attention in recent years in cognitive and behavioral neuroscience. See, for example, *Memory Systems 1994*, Daniel L. Schacter and Endel Tulving, ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994). However, the possibility that unconscious and often unintentional forms of memory might influence ethical behavior and judgment remains largely unexplored. (15.) Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 598. (16.) Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*, John Glad, trans. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980); *Graphite*, John Glad, trans. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981). (17.) I am grateful to Jonathan Binks and an anonymous reader for their (initially) "external promptings" in the preparation of this paper.