

BRIEF SUMMARY

Koutstaal, W. (1995). Situating ethics and memory. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 32, 253–262.

[from the paper] 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” 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. [...] In this paper I contend that “disjoining” memory and ethics in this way may render ethical understanding too insular and static, severing the connectedness of the individual to the external environment and ongoing experience [...] 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 that need are more extensive and multi-faceted than allowed for in Ryle’s conception.
