

In so short a review as this I cannot discuss the numerous other questions and issues addressed by Wiggins. Not only does he treat virtually every aspect of the contemporary debate on identity, object, and person, he has interesting things to say on such diverse subjects as works of art, the nature of possibility, and ethical naturalism. Readers will undoubtedly learn much from a careful study of Wiggins's book. However, they should be warned that Wiggins's style is unusually demanding. I think that in many places the prose could have been much simplified without any loss of content. *Sameness and Substance* is a valuable work, but in my opinion its greatest value may be as a source of clarification of the ideas already found in Wiggins's earlier work.

ANIL GUPTA

BERNARD WILLIAMS, *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980*, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 173 pp.

This book consists of thirteen previously published and loosely connected analytical essays, most of which deal with problems of rational justification in moral philosophy. The last two essays on "Wittgenstein and idealism" and "Another time, another place, another person" deal with abstruse issues in Wittgensteinian metaphysics and epistemology. I shall ignore them and concentrate on the earlier essays on themes in moral philosophy. As Williams himself admits, even these earlier essays have little or no systematic connection with one another, except for being loosely related to the theme of "moral luck" which we shall shortly examine. Furthermore, the essays neither individually nor collectively issue in any momentous philosophical conclusions or revelations. After reading the book, it is indeed virtually impossible to dispute Williams' own assessment of his achievements given in his preface: "It is also obvious, when the papers are brought together, that they raise some pressing questions which they do not do much to answer. The ideas which occur here certainly need some rather more systematic framework, and I hope to be able to publish work in that direction in the course of the next few years" (ix). If one likes incisive analysis for its own sake which never seems to add up to anything, one will like this book. Traveling the largely disconnected roads paved by this work will not be justified by the view at the end of the journey; one must simply try to appreciate the scenery along the way.

Indeed, there are some rather interesting scenes along the way, beginning with the handsome dust jacket which reproduces Paul Gauguin's painting "*D'ou Venons Nous . . . Que Sommes Nous . . . Ou Allons Nous?*" The relevance of Gauguin is explained in the central essay entitled "Moral Luck" which appears as the second essay in the book. Gauguin is Williams' paradigm of the seemingly amoral person who abandons morality, including his moral commitments to his wife and five children, and gambles all on becoming a creative artist, one who "turns away from definite and pressing human claims on him in order to live a life in which, as he supposes, he can pursue his art" (22). The problem is that either there is an amoral axiological stance which on occasion might justly override the "moral point of view," in which case morality could not have the unconditional or overriding significance attributed to it by many moral philosophers, or else there is some moral philosophy which can provide a moral justification for this seemingly amoral choice, in which case Gauguin's conflict with morality would be only apparent and not real. Any justification which can be given for Gauguin's decision will have to be on the one hand purely retrospective, which means that it will not be available at all at the time that the decision is made. At that moment of choice, Gauguin did not *know* that he was going to be a great creative artist; being then convinced of it might have been sheer "obstancy and fatuous self-delusion"; and there was no way (such as consulting professors of art!) to obtain a reasonable conviction that he would ever become a famous creative artist (24). On the other hand, the justification, if it ever comes, will be in part a matter of luck, i.e., of circumstances over which he has no voluntary control. It will involve the extrinsic luck of getting to Tahiti and eventually succeeding, and the more important intrinsic luck of being a genuinely gifted painter. Furthermore, even success might not remove all of the future Gauguin's

regrets that he has made just that decision. (Though Williams does not note the fact, Gaugin attempted suicide near the end of his life.) Nor might success have removed all the justified grievances which others had against him (36). Meanwhile, the moral sages who remain glued to the moral stance are not themselves immune to moral luck, again as so many Stoic and Kantian philosophers have assumed, because it is still a matter of "constitutive luck that one was a (moral) sage, or capable of becoming one" (20). Williams concludes that:

Scepticism about the freedom of morality from luck cannot leave the concept of morality where it was, any more than it can remain undisturbed by scepticism about the very closely related image we have of their being a moral order, within which our actions have a significance which may not be accorded to them by mere social recognition. These forms of scepticism will leave us with a concept of morality, but one less important, certainly, than ours is usually taken to be; and that will not be ours, since one thing that is particularly important about ours is how important it is taken to be (39).

Most of the remaining essays in Williams' book may be loosely construed as fleshing out in some way the aforementioned forms of scepticism about the absoluteness and rational justifiability of morality. Williams argues in some detail in a number of his essays that neither Utilitarian nor deontological (Kantian and Rawlsian) moral philosophies have come anywhere close to achieving such grandiose objectives. The projected though still undeveloped outcome of Williams' brand of skepticism would presumably not abandon moral values and moral philosophy altogether; it would merely require that we take a more modest view of them. Central to the development of this theme is the essay entitled "Ought and moral obligation" in which Williams addresses the position that all rational agents are somehow bound by moral obligations and asks what we should say about the amoral person who is outside such systems of moral beliefs. Williams responds that:

The statement of obligation certainly *refers* to him, but that obvious truth does not capture the thought. Moreover, if he does not care about these considerations, then the commentators will feel that he ought to care about them. That distinguishes the obligations from some other *oughts* (though not from all others), but it does not ultimately provide any more "hold" over the agent, since whatever question arises about the first *ought* must also rise about this one. Beyond those facts, however, there are no more—except the rage, frustration, sorrow, and fear of someone who sees someone else convincingly or blandly doing what the first person morally thinks they ought not to be doing. In some sense, this critic deeply wants this *ought* to stick to the agent; but the only glue there is for this purpose is social and psychological (22).

Williams obviously does not think that there is a *rational* response to the amoralist like Gaugin, and he may be right about that. Social glue is also very thin, since the amoralist may simply pick himself up and move to another society, like Tahiti. How strong is human nature itself, i.e., the psychological glue of what Williams occasionally calls the "moral sentiments" (52, n. 8) and whatever else he wishes to include under this heading? Ah, here is where Williams' constructive moral philosophy might begin and what we might hope his future "more systematic framework" will provide.

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C.J.F. WILLIAMS, *What is Existence?*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1981, 360 pp.

Although Williams finds little in Quine that he agrees with, he does agree with him on the need for semantic ascent, that is for talking about words instead of about things. Williams says of *What is Existence?* that "those who pick it up expecting metaphysics will, no doubt, soon put it down, having found only logic and philosophy of language" (ix). Philosophers have felt the need