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BOOK REVIEWS

Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers, 1956-1972. BERNARD WILLIAMS. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973. 267 p. Cloth \$16.95, paper \$6.95.

This welcome volume contains fifteen papers by Bernard Williams, an especially stimulating and insightful philosopher. Two are new, the rest reprinted with some changes. To two of the latter, Williams has added Additional Notes. The papers, with original dates of publication for those reprinted, are as follows: "Personal Identity and Individuation" (1957), "Bodily Continuity and Personal Identity" (1960), "Imagination and the Self" (1966), "The Self and the Future" (1970), "Are Persons Bodies?" (1970), "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality," "Strawson on Individuals" (1961), "Knowledge and Meaning in the Philosophy of Mind (1968), "Deciding to Believe" (1970), "Imperative Inference" (1963; "Additional Note" for this volume), "Ethical Consistency" (1965), "Consistency and Realism" (1966; "Additional Note" for this volume), "Morality and the Emotions" (1971), "The Idea of Equality" (1962), and "Egoism and Altruism."

Williams's papers usually are admirably clear, and always reward careful and sustained study. In the first eight he deals with various problems concerning the nature of persons. In the remaining essays he is concerned, for the most part, with ethical and meta-ethical problems. These essays connect in various ways with the first eight and with each other. But the book is not unified around a single argument, theme, or problem. I concentrate here on Williams's treatment of personal identity, a problem with which he deals in most of the first eight essays, and to the understanding of which he has made a major contribution.

Williams thinks that persons are material objects. The "most forceful" objection he finds to this is that the identity of persons is not the same as the identity of bodies (76). When not based on an explicitly Cartesian conception of persons, the motivation for denying that personal identity is just human-body identity usually derives from cases of putative body transfer. Locke's cobbler with the prince's memories, and Sydney Shoemaker's Brownson with Brown's brain and memories and Robinson's body,¹ are perhaps the most famous of such cases. If the same person could at one

¹ *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1963), pp. 23-25, 245-247; "Persons and Their Pasts," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, VII, 4 (October 1970): 269-285, p. 282.

is not sufficient for identity. But this is just the relation the sole Survivor had to the Memory Donor in the basic case. So it cannot be sufficient for identity there, either. Williams advanced the reduplication argument in an early paper, "Personal Identity and Individuation." He explores it further in "Personal Identity and Bodily Identity," a reply to some criticisms of the first paper by Robert Coburn, and in "Are Persons Bodies?" I shall defer consideration of it until after examination of the later, more complex argument.

The Nonduplication Argument. Williams advances this argument in a strikingly elegant and forceful essay, "The Self and the Future." He begins by introducing an example whose structure is that of two basic cases superimposed:

(Original Case)	A^{t+n} (remembers B^t)	B^{t+n} (remembers A^t)
	A^t	B^t

Williams then poses a problem for A^t and B^t . Each is asked to choose one of the bodies to be tortured at $t+n$, the other to receive \$100,000. This choice is to be made on selfish grounds. Williams assays the results of various possible combinations of choices, and seems to find in them a strong argument for describing the case as one of body transfer. For example, if A^t chose that B^{t+n} be rewarded, and this is done, then B^{t+n} will be happy about a choice he will seem to remember making. It is natural to report this as "Someone got what he wanted," and this someone must be someone who had body A and then had body B . Indeed, Williams's discussion from page 46 to page 51 puts the case for the possibility of body transfer about as effectively as it has been put.

But then he pulls the rug out from under us. "Let us now consider something apparently different. . . . Someone tells me that I am going to be tortured tomorrow . . . when the moment of torture comes I shall not remember any of the things I am now in a position to remember . . . but will have a different set of impressions of my past" (51/2). To be tortured is a frightful prospect, and the additional bits of information about loss of memory and acquisition of false belief just make things worse. But this is just a variation on the original case. Instead of adding a character, as in the reduplication argument, character(s) are subtracted. We simply leave off half of the last diagram:

(Second Variation)	A^{t+n} (memories of B^t)
	A^t

(Of course, now the seemingly remembered events may not correspond to anything that happened to anyone.) As Williams says, "For what we have just been through is of course merely one side, differently represented, of the transaction which was considered before; and it represents it as a perfectly hateful prospect, while the previous considerations represented it as something one could rationally, perhaps even cheerfully, choose out of the options there presented" (52/3).

Williams tells us that these, and other considerations, leave him "not in the least clear which option it would be wise to take if one were presented with them before the experiment" (62). But his cautious advice is that "if we were the person *A* then, if we were to decide selfishly, we should pass the pain to the *B*-body person" (63).

For the nonduplication argument to work, there must be a certain relation that obtains between A^t and A^{t+n} both in the original case and in the variation that is supposed to be just half of it. The relation will have to be clearly sufficient, in the variation, for the identity of A^t and A^{t+n} . Then the argument will be that the addition of body *B* to make the original case should make no difference (just as adding '*B*' and ' B^{t+n} ' to the last diagram would leave ' A^t ' and ' A^{t+n} ' unaffected). A^{t+n} must still be A^t and not have suddenly become B^t instead.

The plausibility of this argument turns on leaving the details of the original case hazy. I shall argue that filling them in one way leaves the argument with no force, while filling them in the other way leaves the point of the argument obscure, and reduces it to a fancy version of the reduplication argument.

It will help to imagine, for a moment, that Williams is dealing with a Shoemaker type of case, so that A^{t+n} has the actual brain B^t had, and B^{t+n} has the actual brain A^t had. Then the relation between A^{t+n} and A^t , both in the original case and in the variation in which *B* is left out, is "having the same body, but not the same brain." But then consider what we should tell A^t were we to fully represent to him one side of the transaction: "Tomorrow your brain will be removed from your body. Another man's brain will be put in its place. Then your body will be tortured." This certainly represents a frightening prospect. But it is not at all clear that pain of torture is to be feared, rather than death and defilement. We could, of course, give some surface description that would both be true and inspire fear of pain: "Your body is going to be whipped, and it won't be a corpse when it happens." But the terror inspired might just be a consequence of omission of such details as removal

of the brain. The principle, to which Williams appeals in considering this case, is that "one's fears can extend to future pain, whatever psychological changes precede it" (63). It's a little hard to get a grip on how this principle is supposed to work, since it seems that fear can extend to any future pain whatsoever, no matter whose it is, depending on the beliefs of the fearful person. But at any rate the principle would seem only dubiously applicable to the Shoemaker case. Is loss of the brain a "psychological change"? If so, what of loss of the head? I do not mean to suggest that things are simple and straightforward here. (If my body is to be kept "alive" and subjected to electric shock, after removal of my head, should I fear the pain? What if it is just a leg that is to be treated this way after its amputation?) But Williams's argument, that addition of another body to the drama cannot effect the identity of A^{t+n} with A^t , shows nothing unless the alleged identity is clear. In one side of a Shoemaker-style original case, it would not be clear at all.

This is perhaps all quite irrelevant, since Williams does not choose to work with the Shoemaker type of case. But I think the same problem arises with the case he does choose.

In setting up his case, Williams emphasizes that "if utterances coming from a given body are to be taken as expressive of memories . . . there should be some suitable causal link between the appropriate state of that body and the original happening" (47). But one need not imagine, in order to secure this link, so radical a step as the transposition of a brain. "[S]uppose it were possible to extract information from a man's brain and store it in a device while his brain was repaired, or even renewed, the information then being replaced: it would seem exaggerated to insist that the resultant man could not possibly have the memories he had before the operation. . . . Hence we can imagine the case we are concerned with in terms of information extracted into such devices from A 's and B 's brain and being replaced into the other brain" (47).

So A^t and A^{t+n} have the same body, and the same brain. But information concerning A^t 's life has been extracted from the brain, and other "information" programmed into it.

Consider the variation, in which B is left out. What is the relation between A^t and A^{t+n} ? Psychological change, through which A^t 's fears could appropriately extend? death of A^t ? or something else? For the nonduplication argument to work, it must be the first. A^t would react to the description of what is to happen with fear, because he regards what is to happen to his body as something like

his forgetting, and assimilates how *he* will be to a "complete amnesiac state" (52).

But 'amnesia' is a slippery word. It means one thing to a physician, another to a television writer, and perhaps something still different to Williams. In ordinary fiction amnesia is consistent with, and indeed implies, survival of memory traces. The picture is of a person whose memories are inaccessible, but, in some sense, still there. The disposition to remember is present, but not triggered by the ordinary conditions. Photographs, diaries, and the sight of loved ones will not do the trick; perhaps a fortuitous blow on the head, or electric shock therapy will.

Contrast with this what I shall call a "brain zap." The information in the brain is destroyed. The brain is "wiped clean," to be a suitable receptacle for a completely different set of memory dispositions. Efforts to trigger the disposition to remember would be silly, because the dispositions are not there. This seems to be what Williams means by "amnesia" in this discussion.

If the relation between A^t and A^{t+n} is that the latter has the very brain the former had, but it has been zapped, then the case seems unimportantly different from a case in which they share no brain at all. A surface description of the case might evoke fear of pain, but, when the details are known, fear of death seems more appropriate. If one were tempted to draw a line between the case in which A^t and A^{t+n} do not share a brain and one in which they share a zapped brain, we could appeal to a point of Williams's. He argues that, if the sort of information-parking operation he envisages were possible, "a person could be counted the same if this were done to him, and in the process he were given a new brain (the repairs, let us say, actually required a new part)" (80). Apparently, so long as no transfer of bodies is at issue, it is the retention of information, and not of the brain, that is crucial for survival. Why shouldn't the same be true for nonsurvival? Again, I do not mean to argue that all is clear-cut and unproblematic. But, since the relationship between A^t and A^{t+n} is unclear, it doesn't prove much to point out that the addition of B^t and B^{t+n} to the picture shouldn't change it.

I argue that, if we understand that a brain zap is involved, Williams's nonduplication argument fails. Since it's not clear that A^{t+n} is just the same person as A^t in the variation, it's not clear that he isn't just the same person as B^t in the original case.

Williams suggests that his opponent might claim that, in terrifying Body Donor A^t with his one-sided description of what is to

happen, it is the omission of mention of Survivor B^{t+n} that clouds the issue: "This is to leave out exactly the feature which, as the first presentation of the case showed, makes all the difference: for it is to leave out the person who, as the first presentation showed, will be you" (55). This is not the complaint I have been making. I have been considering just the history of body A in the original case and in the variation that omits body B . My complaint has been not that Williams keeps what happens to body B secret when he presents Body Donor A^t with the tale of future torture, but that he has either changed the details of what happens to body A from the original case, or misdescribed them, or misinterpreted them.

I believe this complaint helps to show the reasonableness of the complaint Williams credits to his opponent, however. Again, it will help to think the case through with the Shoemaker example, and then ask whether the Williams model is importantly different. First Body Donor A^t is told that his body will be tortured tomorrow, while alive. He is fearful of the torture. Here my complaint is relevant: his fear would have a different object were he told the details of what is to happen to his body, namely, that the brain is to be removed. Then he would perhaps fear death, not torture. Perhaps he would not know what to think. This fear might still be based on lack of information about body B , namely, that Body Donor A 's brain will survive in it. Here the kind of complaint Williams credits to his opponent would be relevant, and perfectly reasonable.

I cannot see that the situation is importantly changed when we deal with a brain zap rather than a brain transposition. When it's not clear that A^t 's brain will be zapped, he fears torture. When that is clear, but he is left to assume the worst about the survival of the information in his brain, he fears death, or perhaps doesn't know what to fear. When he is told that this information will be appropriately programmed into another brain, itself previously zapped, that might change the focus of his fear considerably.

Williams challenges the objector to draw a line somewhere in the following series. At which point should A 's fear of torture give way to anticipation of \$100,000?

- (i) A is subjected to an operation which produces total amnesia;
- (ii) amnesia is produced in A , and other interference leads to certain changes in his character;
- (iii) changes in his character are produced, and at the same time certain illusory "memory" beliefs are induced in him: these are of a quite fictitious kind . . . ;

- (iv) the same as (iii), except that both the character traits and the "memory" impressions are designed to be appropriate to another actual person, *B*;
- (v) the same as (iv), except that the result is produced by putting the information into *A* from the brain of *B*, by a method which leaves *B* the same as he was before;
- (vi) the same happens to *A* as in (v), but *B* is not left the same, since a similar operation is conducted in the reverse direction (55/6).

The body-transfer advocate can simply point out, however, that, if a brain zap is involved, 'amnesia' in (i)–(v) is simply a euphemism for 'death' or at least 'ceasing to exist as a person'. The use of the pronoun 'him' simply begs the questions at issue. In case (vi) the trauma of gaining a new body should probably be feared.

Williams's example need not be interpreted as a brain zap, however. Perhaps he intends a sort of programming of new memory dispositions over the old, in such a way as to leave the old dispositions untriggerable. In introducing the procedure whose consequences he wishes to discuss, he says "Suppose it were possible to extract information . . ." This is ambiguous. Compare xeroxing a book to ripping its pages out. In either case, one has extracted information from the book. A possible interpretation of Williams is this. The information is extracted, in a way that leaves the brain with all its memory dispositions intact.

But this interpretation would make the point of Williams's whole discussion rather obscure. Let us review the logic of the situation. The interest in cases of putative body transfer is as counterexamples to the necessity of bodily identity as a condition of personal identity. If a case is presented as a counterexample, it's no good to pick another case something like it, but different in essential respects, and point out that this new case is not such a clear-cut counterexample. So I think we have a right to assume that Williams's example is intended to be more or less the same sort of example that advocates of body transfer have offered. Moreover, the fact that he develops his example as a sort of moderate alternative to Shoemaker's (where there is no question of superimposition of one set of memory dispositions over another) and the fact that he speaks of *replacing* the information extracted from each brain with information extracted from the other, suggest that a brain zap is what is involved.

Nevertheless, it's interesting to think of Williams's case interpreted in this new way, as a sort of overlay of new information, for it leads to a complex version of the reduplication argument.

A plausible analysis of personal identity in terms of memory will have to be flexible enough to allow for amnesia, even amnesia together with delusions of an alternative past. The memory theorist will then see identity between A^t and A^{t+n} in all six cases. But a problem will emerge at step (v). At this point, we regain all the personnel necessary for a basic case. A^t and A^{t+n} are related, in all relevant respects, just as they are in (iv). But now A^{t+n} is related also, in a way the memory theorist is assumed to find adequate for personal identity, to B^t . That is, if the causal connection that underlies memory is sufficient for personal identity, there are two persons with whom A^{t+n} has the burden of being identical—one by virtue of the accessible memories programmed into his brain, the other by virtue of the inaccessible memories below.

This is simply the variation at the heart of the reduplication argument, stood on its head. Instead of two later persons competing for the identity of an earlier one, we have one later person for whose identity two earlier persons compete. It is the case we would have if Charles remembered being both Guy Fawkes and Guy Fawkes's brother (now, since one of the Memory Donors is also a Body Donor, there is one less body involved than in the original reduplication argument). Moreover, when we move to step (vi), B^{t+n} will have the memory relation to both B^t and A^t . So we will have two sort of upside-down cases of identity competition. Viewed another way, we also have two right-side-up cases. For both B^{t+n} and A^{t+n} have the memory relation to the two Memory Donors, A^t and B^t .

So, interpreted as involving a brain zap, Williams's argument is without much force. Interpreted as involving an overlay of new memories over old, it appears to be a new version of the reduplication argument, to which I now turn.

The Reduplication Argument. The logic of this argument seems to be this. A description of some basic case is given, neutral on questions of personal identity. From this description, we can see that some relation obtains between the Memory Donor and the Survivor. Is this relation sufficient for identity? If it is, changing the example in ways that do not effect it should not effect the question of identity. But certain changes give us a variation in which the relation is clearly not sufficient for identity, namely adding another Survivor with the same relation to the Memory Donor. In "Personal Identity and Individuation" Charles claims to be Guy Fawkes, and supports this claim with detailed memory-like reports of Fawkes's life. "Appears to remember events from Fawkes's

life in great detail," is a duplicable relation, which Charles's brother might also have had to Fawkes.

But the relation "appears to remember Fawkes's life in great detail" would surely not be supposed, even by those most sanguine about transfer of bodies, to be sufficient for personal identity. Any inclination to suppose that Charles is Fawkes must be based on the assumption that this relation is good evidence for some other relation, itself sufficient for identity. The real question is the duplicability of this evidenced relationship.

To revert to the Shoemaker example, suppose Charles's behavior leads us to believe he actually has Fawkes's brain, which has somehow survived, unzapped, through the years. The possibility of a competitor with similarly accurate memory impressions is no problem, so long as we believe that only in Charles's case would the memory behavior be linked by this appropriate causal chain to the events in Fawkes's life.

Williams regards it as an advantage of the Shoemaker example that it does not seem to admit of the reduplication problem. But, as he points out, a natural extension of the example does: "if we consider, not the physical transfer of brains, but the transfer of information between brains" (79). That is, if we consider the sort of case involved in the nonduplication argument, we will certainly have on our hands the reduplication problem.

The relevance of this to the Shoemaker example, and to the project of rebutting an argument that personal identity is not bodily identity, is not perfectly clear. The following line of argument is open to Williams. Whatever considerations there are in favor of counting brain transfer as body transfer are also reasons to regard information transfer as body transfer. But the reduplication argument shows we cannot regard information transfer as body transfer, so these reasons must not be good enough. At any rate, as Williams points out, the reduplication argument is certainly an embarrassment to any memory theorist who doesn't want possession of a particular brain to be a condition of personal identity, and the motivations behind memory theories are perhaps such that most would not.

But what sort of embarrassment is it? Williams says the principle of the argument is that "identity is a one-one relation, and that no principle can be a criterion of identity for things of type *T* if it relies only on what is logically a one-many relation between things of type *T*" (21). What the first variation shows (with the details suitably filled in to be relevant to a particular account of personal

identity in terms of memory) is that the memory relation proposed as the criterion of identity is not logically one-one.

Does it follow from the fact that identity is logically one-one, that any criterion for identity must be logically one-one? It is not even clear that it follows that it must be, as matter of fact, one-one. For example, "has the same fingerprints" is probably as a matter of fact, but surely not as a matter of logical necessity, a one-one relation, yet this is certainly, in the ordinary sense, a criterion of personal identity. Presumably then some special philosophical notion of "criterion" is at work here. Even if we require some "conceptual" or "logical" connection between the criterion and what it is a criterion for, the inference in question may not hold. Using, for example, Shoemaker's explanation of the term in *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (*op. cit.*, p. 4), a criterion for personal identity would be roughly a relation that could not possibly not be good evidence for personal identity. Such a relation wouldn't even have to be one-one as a matter of fact; at most it would have to be one-one *with very few exceptions* in each possible world.

Perhaps a "criterion of identity" is to be some relation between persons which the memory theorist produces as giving an analysis of "the very meaning" of 'is the same person as'. Williams's remark, that his point could be made more rigorously in terms of "sense and reference of uniquely referring expressions," suggests this (21). Such analyses generally give a relation that obtains among things other than persons, such as perceptions (Hume), total temporary states (Grice), or soul-phases (Quinton). Persons are then taken as being or corresponding to equivalence classes of these entities, generated by the relation given as the "criterion of identity." Williams's demand for a logically one-one relation seems to translate into such a format as a demand that the relation be not just as a matter of fact but logically or necessarily an equivalence relation. It's not clear why it should be. A relation would seem to introduce a set of entities nicely enough so long as it is an equivalence relation in the actual world. That identity of the introduced entities is itself necessarily an equivalence relation, seems to guarantee only that there would not, as a matter of fact, be such entities if the introducing relation were not, as a matter of fact, an equivalence relation. And if the memory theorist is willing to fiddle a little with the mechanics of reference, he can get by with something that falls somewhat short of being a perfect equivalence relation, even as a matter of fact.

Williams, however, probably thinks of a criterion of identity as a relation between persons that is logically sufficient for identity.

Such a relation would have to be logically one-one. A memory theorist could manufacture such a relation by adding, to a relation that seemed to pass the other tests for a criterion of identity, the condition that there be no competitors. Thus, in the basic case, but not in the first variation, Charles has the relation "being the *sole* putative rememberer of Fawkes's experiences." In "Personal Identity and Individuation" Williams argues that, in adopting this sort of criterion, we would be making our talk of identity quite vacuous. The reduplication problem forces us to think of ways short of identity of describing Charles's relation to Fawkes; what is added by employing identity, rather than these more cautious alternatives, when there is no competitor? This once seemed to me a telling point: we shouldn't make whether a person did something yesterday or just began to exist today dependent upon whether someone else exists. Terence Leichti, in a work cited below, has shaken my confidence in this argument, by showing that with other kinds of objects we do follow just this sort of procedure.

If we do rule out, as criteria, relations with such noncompetitor clauses, we may find that there are no nontrivial logically sufficient conditions for personal identity in terms of memory. This could be a special embarrassment for the memory theorist only if other candidates for the criterion of personal identity had no problems with the requirement of being logically one-one. But it may seem clear that at least the other main contender, bodily continuity, has a similar problem with the possibility of reduplication.

As Williams observes, one could claim that "even a criterion of identity in terms of spatio-temporal continuity is itself not immune to this possibility. It is possible to imagine a man splitting, amoeba-like, into two simulacra of himself" (23). His discussion of this problem is perplexing: "There's a vital difference between this sort of reduplication . . . and the other sorts of case." The difference is that the procedure of tracing the continuous path between two occurrences of what is taken to be a single person will inevitably reveal the reduplication, if "ideally carried out." But the thorough application of the other criteria would not. "Thus, in this case, but not in the others, the logical possibility of reduplication fails to impugn the status of the criterion of identity" (24). This is puzzling for several reasons. Even if we grant that the spatiotemporal-continuity criterion has the advantage described, having that advantage does not make it "logically one-one." How can such a difference between the spatiotemporal-continuity criterion and others exempt it from what are alleged to be *logical* requirements of a criterion of identity? Perhaps the force of the "logical requirement" simply

reduces to the advantage in question. But why should we think, after all, that this advantage is not shared by the memory criterion? Among other things, we should have to know what it is to "ideally carry out" the application of that criterion. Williams asserts that memory is a causal notion (47). As Shoemaker has observed, this seems to suggest that application of the memory criterion, ideally carried out, would disclose the existence of competitors, since the causal chain involved would presumably involve a spatiotemporally continuous chain of events.

I am inclined to think, then, that the reduplication argument is not the compelling refutation of one particular account of personal identity that Williams intended it to be. Nevertheless, Williams has posed an embarrassment for any account that uses as a criterion of identity a conceivably duplicable relation. The problem is not, as he may have thought, that we cannot consistently describe reduplication cases while clinging to our theories of personal identity. A number of ways of doing so have been put forward.² But the existence of a number of different ways of describing these cases, internally consistent, mutually incompatible, and individually problematic, is itself an embarrassment. We might seek solace in authority, and agree with Quine that the problem in such cases is that we seek logical force in our words "beyond what our past deeds have invested them with."³ Reduplication cases are just conceptually indeterminate.

In the final parts of "The Self and the Future," Williams mounts a line of argument that makes this way out considerably less inviting than it might initially seem by focusing on how one is to mirror, in one's own expectations, a future in which it is indeterminate for conceptual reasons whether one survives. Here as elsewhere Williams's reflections are intended to present problems for one type of analysis of the concept of a person. Failing this, they achieve something more. They identify and illuminate problems with the concept itself, with which any account must come to grips.

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² Cf. David Wiggins, *Identity and Spatio-temporal Continuity* (New York: Oxford, 1967); *op. cit.*; Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity," *Philosophical Review*, LXXX, 1 (January 1971): 3-27; my "Can the Self-Divide?," this JOURNAL, LXIX, 16 (Sept. 7, 1972): 463-488; David Lewis, "Survival and Identity," in Amelie Rorty, ed., *The Identities of Persons* (forthcoming, University of California Press); Terrence Leitch, *Fission and Identity*, doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1975.

³ Review of M. Munitz, ed., *Identity and Individuation*, this JOURNAL, LXIX, 16 (Sept. 7, 1972): 488-497, p. 490.