On Sunstein's CBA criteria, society should ignore such murders and instead spend monies only to reduce risks causing more deaths. And because toxins allegedly kill only 60,000 people a year (mostly vulnerable people like children), Sunstein argues these deaths should receive less societal attention/funding than 300,000 deaths per year allegedly arising from poor lifestyle choices, like lack of exercise. The National Cancer Institute says cancer is the leading cause of death of children ages 2–15. Children are the "canaries" in societal coal mines. Yet Sunstein's cost-benefit state would place its biggest burdens on children and those in developing nations. Without warning labels, one-third of all U.S.-made pesticides are banned in this country but shipped to developed nations. According to the World Health Organization, they kill 40,000 people each year. Yet on Sunstein's CBA criteria, such deaths are below concern because they result from free-market environmentalism (pp. 132, 278, 287) and because more Americans allegedly die from lifestyle choices. Sunstein compares apples and oranges and then calls those who reject such comparisons "irrational."

How would Sunstein respond to such charges? He admits that, in his cost-benefit state, regulators "are permitted to take distribution into account" (p. 74), and government is "entitled to consider who is helped and who is hurt" (p. ix). But ethics arguably requires, not merely permits, one to take account of distribution and harm. What would have happened to blacks, on Sunstein's ethics, if government were merely "entitled to consider who is helped and who is hurt" because of slavery and segregation policies?

Claiming that, because people are ignorant and make poor risk judgments, the government should ignore "uninformed" opinions (p. 121), Sunstein also owes his readers an explanation as to how his views support democracy. Claiming that willingness to pay is the centerpiece of his cost-benefit state, he likewise owes his readers some account of how he intends to protect vulnerable/poor people. In offering no such explanations or citations, Sunstein arguably provides more ideology than ethics.

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Williams, Bernard. *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002. Pp. 336. $27.95 (cloth).

John Rawls may have made the most important systematic contribution to moral and political philosophy in the past half century, but there is a good argument to be made that Bernard Williams, who died in June 2003, was moral philosophy's most original thinker. Williams has drawn less scholarly attention than Rawls and attracted far fewer disciples but that is, in good part, a consequence of the nature of his thought: he proceeded by suggestive and astute forays into many different areas rather than by laying out a general vision, and he was known for offering highly compressed arguments, rather than the carefully elaborated arguments of Rawls. It is indeed not easy to say exactly what "the philosophy of Bernard Williams," as a whole, amounts to. On the other hand, for ingenuity, provocativeness, breadth of knowledge, and sharp, elegant, highly memorable

writing, there is no one to touch Williams. Williams is best known for short pieces that raise a question or offer an argument that no one has quite put that way before. In that capacity, he is responsible for some of the most important writings we have on personal identity, moral realism, and the failings of both utilitarianism and Kantianism. He did not generally sustain his views on any one of these themes over the course of an entire book, however. Rather, he inclined toward collections of essays like *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) or *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Even his *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985) read more like a collection of pieces on various aspects of moral philosophy than a single, sustained argument.

Now we have *Truth and Truthfulness*, which sets out to be a single book-length argument, offering a roughly Nietzschean "genealogy" of the "two basic virtues of truth," which Williams calls "Accuracy" and "Sincerity" (p. 11), in order to assess the claims made by the "deniers" of the importance of truth in today's academy. As I will argue shortly, it is not at all clear that the book succeeds in these terms; once again, it is best read instead as a collection of separate forays into different aspects of truth and truthfulness, filled as always with brilliant nuggets of insight, but not adding up to a clear overall vision of what function truth-telling plays in our discourse. More precisely, we might say that the book does very well with "Sincerity" but less well with "Accuracy." It gives us one of the wisest and most plausible accounts of truth-telling, as opposed to lying, to be found anywhere in recent philosophical literature. But lying is not what the deniers praise, and the book is disappointing in its treatment of truth as opposed to myth, or perhaps interpretation.

Truth and Truthfulness falls essentially into three parts. The first four chapters examine what "genealogy" means and how it need not undermine what it explains; show how some notion of truth will be useful for basic survival purposes in any human community; and delineate the logical and epistemic relationships among truth, belief, and assertion. The next two chapters begin with the important observation that nothing much follows from the pragmatic and logical functions of truth for the rightness or wrongness of lying or being careless in one's search for truth (pp. 84–85). Williams therefore takes up the ethical issues surrounding Sincerity and Accuracy as a separate matter, laying out in two brilliant chapters a superb account of the degree to which truth-telling, conceived now as a part of the maintenance of human relationships, admits of exceptions, and the way in which the search for truth requires a resistance to wishful thinking. Williams's primary concern here is with how, on strictly naturalistic grounds, one can move from the instrumental value that truth-telling has in the State of Nature to a view of Sincerity and Accuracy as having an intrinsic value.

Finally, in the last four chapters of the book, Williams conducts investigations into the invention or discovery of historical time, the notion of "authenticity," the role of truth in politics, and the distinction between historical narratives and the mere chronicling of facts. Williams's gift for close reading of texts informs these chapters, and they contain, among other insights, a set of judicious cautions against supposing that the liberal "marketplace of ideas" will necessarily be good for the spread of true belief (pp. 214–18) and an excellent attempt to make precise sense of the project, associated with Critical Theory, of

showing when a person should be said to believe something because those in power have manipulated her into doing so (pp. 219–31). But, like the discussions of Sincerity and Accuracy, the concluding chapters do not have much to do with the explication of the role of truth in the first four chapters, nor do they connect very closely to one another.

This matters because Williams initially promises to give us something considerably more than a collection of loosely related essays on truth. In the beginning of the book, he describes his project as an attempt to grapple with the great controversy that has raged in recent years between those who "are disposed to dismiss the idea of truth" and those who maintain, in the name of common sense, that such dismissals are ridiculous (pp. 5–7). His account of both sides of this debate, moreover, is remarkably evenhanded. We need have no doubt that, in the end, he will side with those who think there is such a thing as truth, and that it is important, but he points out, rightly, that "the commonsense party's attitude to the deniers is based on a misunderstanding," notes that "there are . . . interesting ideas to consider among the denier's materials," and indicates that the importance of truthfulness requires that one take the deniers' claims far more seriously than "the commonsense party" has done (pp. 6, 12). So we are led to anticipate a thorough attempt to address the serious claims made by the deniers—in terms that they themselves might accept.

This is an exciting prospect. Williams was superbly situated to take up such a subject. A philosopher steeped in the so-called analytic tradition who can yet cite Nietzsche and Barthes and Foucault approvingly, a philosopher with a vast knowledge of art and literature, and brilliant interpretive skills in addition to his analytic rigor—who better to have enough sympathy for figures like Derrida to explain them clearly without being so sympathetic as to agree with them? We might reasonably expect from Williams a deep theory or critique of truth that would offer us, for the first time, a path over the seemingly unbridgeable chasms in the contemporary academy.

But anyone who does expect this will be disappointed. One way of expressing that disappointment is to note that, for all the favorable invocations of Nietzsche, Williams devotes surprisingly little attention to the major figures in the camp of those he calls the deniers. Derrida is not mentioned nor is Stanley Fish or Mark Taylor, and Paul de Man and Bruno Latour appear but in passing. There is not even a discussion of any academic field other than history in which the deniers' claims are taken seriously—although they are at least as important in literature, religion, and anthropology departments as they are in history—nor of the political movements that have associated themselves with these claims. The main representative of the deniers in Williams's book is Richard Rorty, and he is not taken very seriously by most devout postmodernists and deconstructionists, except as a weapon to use against their analytic critics.

Of course, Williams could have responded thoughtfully to the deniers without mentioning them by name. The deep problem with *Truth and Truthfulness* is that it does not offer us a notion of truth that comes anywhere close to engaging with the deniers' concerns.

Williams proposes to answer pragmatists like Rorty on their own ground by explicating the pragmatic function of the notion of truth in a human community. With this end in mind, he offers us a "state of nature" story (pp. 41–45) in which

human beings employ a notion of truth as part of "a division of epistemic labor" by which everyone gains more information about the world than he or she could possibly garner on her own. The information here is primarily, if not exclusively, empirical information, gained by "observation," by "looking and seeing" (p. 43). Williams says that people have "positional advantages" over one another in gathering such information and that "a basic function of language" is the communication of such information, so that we can each gain from the positional advantages of the others and compensate for our own positional disadvantages. He is surely right about all this, as he is to say that an insistence on the virtue of telling what one believes to be true, and of attempting to form that belief in responsible ways, is essential for this system to work. And if the point here is simply to show, contra some of the more extreme of the deniers, that there is *some* point to using the term "truth," and some truths to tell, then Williams has won his case.

But this is not really what is on the mind of most deniers, as Williams himself acknowledges when he dismisses the "commonsense" response to their complaints. And one has only to take the state of nature story a small step further than he does to see its severe limitations. Certainly, *one* basic function of language is to help us pool empirical information, but that is hardly its *only* function. Before language arose, human beings could pool information only to a very limited degree, and it is plausible to suppose that at first language did little more than improve our ability to accomplish this task. The arrival of language itself quickly makes it possible, however, to start expressing thoughts like these: "I love you," "Marrying two sisters is wrong," "We must sacrifice to the gods," and "Everything we sense is illusory; reality cannot be sensed." None of these are reports of observations; some of them cannot, in principle, be reduced to such reports; the others are unlikely to be so reduced without losing something essential to their meaning. Yet it is precisely over sentences like these that most fights about truth break out, both among philosophers and in ordinary life. Language makes it possible to form thoughts and to try to achieve knowledge of objects that are *not* open to observation and to which positional advantage is irrelevant. But it is the thoughts so formed, and the sentences that express them, that lead to the seemingly irremediable conflicts that impress the deniers.

A way of expanding this objection is to consider the unsatisfactory argument Williams offers for his defense of secular, historical time in chapter 7. Williams admits that nothing about his State of Nature story should lead us to think that the people in this imagined state need have "the same 'objective' conception of the past as we have" (p. 56), that they will share the conception "we" (in the enlightened West, presumably) have of historical time. Still, it turns out that such an objective conception of time is supposed to graft naturally onto the notion of truth we get from the State of Nature, and Williams uses this claim to challenge those who would offer a relativistic approach to the writing of history. Chapter 7 provides a brilliant analysis of the differences between the way Herodotus and Thucydides described the largely legendary figure Minos of Crete, arguing that Herodotus did not yet have the notion of historical time as "a rigid and determinate structure for the past" (p. 162), in which past events must be treated just like present ones, that is clearly present in Thucydides. It is not, therefore, that Herodotus had a *different* conception of historical time,

or, correspondingly, of legend and myth: instead, he lacked *any* clear conception of either one. He had not yet asked "the kind of question that is appropriate to the everyday" about legendary stories. But once that kind of question does get asked, as it does by Thucydides, there is no way that legendary stories can be regarded as true anymore nor will it be possible to treat legendary beings as real: "Once the structure of historical time is in place, the gods will eventually bow out" (p. 168). Once the Thucydidean question is put to these stories, we recognize that the very use of general terms requires that we see past events as like present ones: "If we say that there was in past time a battle, or a king giving orders, or a fleet, then what we believe to have happened to people then must resemble in relevant and intelligible respects the way things are now" (p. 167). Hence we should not say that Herodotus's quasi-mythical style of history was "true for" the Greeks of his own time, while the secular style of history is "true for" later peoples. Rather, we should say that Herodotus had not yet developed the conceptual repertoire by which properly to assess mythical stories as true or false and that once someone like Thucydides introduced such a repertoire, it was clear both *how* to assess such stories for truth (just as we assess stories about the here and now) and *what* truth value they had (they are false). There is no route back from scientific history; once introduced, it will no longer be rational to treat legendary stories as true or the entities they contain as real.

But is there really no route back from scientific history? Williams implies that *in fact* legendary beings faded from history once the objective conception of time was introduced, but that is just false. Secular history did not replace the retelling of legends after Thucydides, even among people who preserved and studied Thucydides's work. Saint Augustine, a historian of no mean critical skill (see, e.g., *City of God* xv:10–13), took for granted that there had been earlier ages—an age of the first people, an age of the prophets, and so forth—in which things were radically different from the way they are now. Augustine was, of course, simply following the presentation of the Hebrew Bible in this, and rabbinic thought in his time similarly maintained that an earlier "age of prophecy" had been replaced by the current "age of wisdom," in which God no longer spoke directly to people or manifested himself, generally, in miraculous ways. These views draw precisely the kind of distinction in types of time that Williams says was ruled out after Thucydides, with precisely the consequence that one divine being, at least, did not "bow out" of history. And mainstream Christians and Jews continued to write history in just such a way until almost two thousand years after Thucydides, when Hobbes, Spinoza, and Hume made anything but Thucydidean history intellectually disreputable in Europe.

So it is hard to make sense of Williams's account of the notion of historical time as a description of a historical fact. It makes better sense if it has a normative point: after Thucydides, Williams may want to say, nobody *should* have written histories according to which God or the gods interacted with humans. This is a reasonable claim, of course, but it is hard to see how the arguments Williams has given us do much to support it. As he himself admits, the State of Nature story alone does not require that we have a homogeneous conception of historical time. And the claim that the use of general terms entails homogeneous historical time is weak. It is true that there needs to be a great deal of similarity between a battle now and a battle in the past for us to use the word "battle" to

describe both events, but surely claiming that Athena helped the Greeks, or God helped the Israelites, in an ancient battle is not such a great difference that we cannot so much as understand the ancient event, so described, as a "battle." Ancient and modern battles will in any case differ greatly; why should the purported intervention of a divine being be a difference that makes the word lose its application altogether? There may be good reasons, including theological ones, not to suppose that either Athena or God would participate in battles, but the applicability of general terms is not among them.

The inadequacy of Williams's attempt to reject premodern ways of writing history is but one instance of the general problem that he says almost nothing about how the truth of explanations relates to the truth of fact reporting, and nothing, in particular, to defend the naturalism that he seems to regard as essential to any truthful explanation. This is a great failing, because the quarrel between the deniers and their critics turns, in many cases, precisely on the role of naturalism in rational explanation. But perhaps it was too much to expect that Williams could resolve that fierce and knotty quarrel. His failure to do so does make *Truth and Truthfulness* something of a disappointment, given the goal it initially sets for itself. Yet it seems a bit churlish to criticize him for not achieving this very ambitious goal when he has given us so much wisdom and insight, throughout his career and as much as ever in this last, fascinating book on a topic—as always, with Williams—of vast and enduring importance.

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Woodruff, Paul. *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue.*
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"A man's got to know his limitations," Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry Callahan once remarked (*Magnum Force*, 1973). A sense of limitations is perhaps especially important, but especially underappreciated, in contemporary American life, where competitive market behavior and a kind of Promethean optimism of character predominate. In philosophy, the importance of limitations is a thought that it is hard to formulate and defend within the frameworks of maximization-oriented utilitarian policy studies, economic rational preference theory, or the kind of Kantianism that stresses purity of intention alone.

Paul Woodruff's central aim, in this decent, humane, and generous book, is to remind us of the importance of the acceptance of limitations in moral and, especially, political life. "Reverence," he tells us, "begins in deep understanding of human limitations" (p. 5). This deep understanding is centrally embodied in feelings. "Reverence is the well-developed capacity to have the feelings of awe, respect, and shame when these are the right feelings to have" (p. 8). It is "to be defined as a capacity for certain feelings" (p. 53), not as a matter of belief. Without these feelings, ceremonies become empty of significance; human life becomes more wholly animal (e.g., meals become feeding times and homes become kennels [p. 19]); common enterprise collapses into egoist grasping; and