THOMAS REID

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HUMAN MIND

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMON SENSE

A Critical Edition

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind* has long been recognised as a classic philosophical text. Since its first public appearance in 1764 there have followed no fewer than forty editions, five of which were issued in the second half of the twentieth century. The proliferation of secondary literature further indicates that Reid's work is flourishing as never before. Yet, surprisingly, neither a complete nor critical representation of the *Inquiry* has been available to present-day readers.

Most university libraries will house *The Works of Thomas Reid*, edited by the Scottish philosopher Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856). Hamilton based his text on the last edition of the *Inquiry* published in Reid's lifetime, noting 'variations of importance'[1] with the first. However, the edition is severely marred, not only by Hamilton's obtrusive footnotes, but also by frequent textual inaccuracies. Hamilton plainly took it upon himself to 'correct' Reid's entire work in matters of typography, punctuation and spelling. Duggan's edition (1970) claims to be based on a text chosen for 'its authenticity',[2] and to have reproduced the *Inquiry* 'in its entirety'.[3] Yet the text is based on an 1813 American edition, and Reid's 'Dedication' is entirely absent. The edition by Lehrer and Beanblossom (1983) is an abridged reproduction of Hamilton's eighth edition, and omits large portions of the *Inquiry*. The recent photo-facsimile of the 1785 edition (1990), introduced by Wood and published by Thoemmes, is therefore the only current edition available that faithfully represents one of the original editions.

There remains, however, an urgent need for a critical edition of Reid's work.[4] Reid scholars, for instance, have been acutely aware of proceeding without the full textual evidence. There exist thousands of unpublished manuscript pages in Reid's hand, many of which relate directly to the composition of the *Inquiry*. Furthermore, no account has been taken of the successive alterations made to the four editions published in Reid's lifetime – alterations which require not only a meticulous record, but a principled editing of the final, definitive text. The present edition therefore aims to present a complete, critically

edited text of the *Inquiry*, accompanied by a judicious selection of manuscript evidence relating to its composition.

1. *The Works of Thomas Reid . . .*, ed. W. Hamilton, 8th ed. (Edinburgh, J. Thin, 1895, reprint with introduction by H. M. Bracken, Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1985): p. 94.
2. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind*, ed. T. Duggan (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970): p. vii.
3. *ibid*, fly-leaf.
4. The literature is replete with invitations: 'There is, as yet, no standard edition of Reid's works worthy of the name.' R. D. Gallie, *Thomas Reid and 'The Way of Ideas'* (Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, P.S.S. 45, 1989): p. 266; 'Reid's other works must be quoted from the old Hamilton edition, which is neither critical nor complete, and whose replacement by a new critical edition is a major desideratum.' B. Smith and K. Schuhmann, 'Elements of Speech Act Theory in the Work of Thomas Reid', *History of Philosophy Quarterly 7* (1990): p. 62, n.9.

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1996

ABBREVIATIONS

Libraries

AUL	Aberdeen University Library
NLS	National Library of Scotland

Works by Thomas Reid

HM	*An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (present edition).
IP	*Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Edinburgh, Printed for J. Bell, Parliament Square, and G. G. J. & J. Robinson, London, 1785). Hamilton editions include the 1785 pagination.
Orations	*The Philosophical Orations of Thomas Reid delivered at Graduation Ceremonies in King's College Aberdeen*, 1753, 1756, 1759, 1762, ed. D. D. Todd, trans. S. M. L. Darcus, *Philosophical Research Archives* 3 (1977): pp. 916–990.

Manuscript References

Manuscripts referred to in the editor's *Introduction* are identified by the MS location (e.g. AUL) and the catalogue number (e.g. 2131/4/I/27) followed by the page or folio number (e.g. AUL MS 2131/4/I/27, 2r). See the *Editorial Principles* for further detail.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Philosophical Problem

Most of us take it that we know something of the external world. We believe that there are external objects, such as roses, trees and candles; and we even think we know a good deal about what they are like. The question is, do we have any good evidence to support these beliefs?

We might take it that our beliefs about the world are justified in view of our sense experience. Our sensations, we might think, appear to be a rich and articulate source of information about external objects. Our beliefs regarding the colour, size, shape and texture of a rose, for instance, are, in some way, 'grounded upon' our visual and tactile sensations. Indeed, we would ordinarily take our sensations to be some kind of *evidence* for our beliefs about the rose. If someone asked how it is that we knew that a certain rose was red, we would explain to them that we had experienced visual sensations in its presence, and these had seemed to us to be such as to indicate the colour of the rose.

Now this kind of answer might suggest that our sensations somehow represent the external world to the mind. Indeed, we might think that our sensations are a kind of mental image or picture of the rose, thus resembling it in certain respects. And if so, then it might be that our beliefs are justified by means of an inference from like effect to like cause. The problem is, when we reflect upon the nature of our sensations, we find that they are not in the least like a rose. The rose has a certain colour, size, shape and texture; whereas our sensations have nothing like these attributes.

One response might be that this is merely a crude stab at a very difficult problem; and that, given sufficient time and philosophical ingenuity, we should be able to come up with an adequate account of how the external world is represented to the mind. But suppose that we are so constituted that *the* solution is beyond our intellectual capacity; or, less extravagantly, suppose that no adequate solution is currently available. What ought to be our epistemic position in the meantime? Given that we do not, at present, appear to have sufficient reason to think that our mind represents the world in a reliable manner, should we not then adopt a sceptical stance? One problem with this approach, is that it would have most unpalatable implications. For example, it would entail that the achievements and discoveries of the empirical sciences

are nothing but an 'enchanted illusion'. Again, it would be likely to lead to a deeply pessimistic and even contemptuous view of the human condition.

There is, however, a more serious reason why this kind of scepticism is untenable. The operation of mind by which we form beliefs is largely involuntary and irresistible, much like breathing or swallowing. Hence, it would not be psychologically possible to maintain a stance of disbelief, at least not for any extended period. It follows that any professed sceptic would only be diagnosed as either profoundly insincere or the victim of some cognitive dysfunction.

2. Historical Origins

This line of reasoning sets up the problem with which Thomas Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* is largely concerned. The question Reid took himself to be confronting was 'whether there was any such thing as truth within the reach of the human faculties'.[1] But he also perceived that the doubts about this epistemological question drew their strength, in part, from the enigma of how it is that 'a thing that is external, or a thing that is past, & has now no existence, or a thing which never had or never will have existence, can be represented to the mind'.[2]

The philosophical problem is ancient. But the naturalistic manner in which Reid addresses it in the *Inquiry* is strikingly contemporary. Many philosophers have accordingly reaped important and stimulating dividends from taking the text at face-value. But there is a world behind the text. The argument of the *Inquiry* did not spring into existence *ex nihilo*. Its roots lie in the cluster of ideas introduced in Reid's education at Aberdeen's Marischal College (1723–31). During his twenty year ministry in the Church of Scotland (1731–51) it was nurtured by a small philosophical club, fuelled by his close reading of philosophers such as Berkeley, Locke, and Butler, and ignited by his encounter with Hume's *Treatise*. It was then systematically developed and presented to students and peers during his regency at King's College, Aberdeen (1751–64);[3] and, in its final phase, prior to publication, was submitted to the private review of several prominent philosophers – including its primary target, David Hume.

There is, then, a fascinating story to be told about the historical origins of the *Inquiry*.[4] There are also good philosophical reasons for doing so.

For such an account may explain how and why Reid formed the central argument of his *Inquiry*.

3. Providential Naturalism and the Ideal System

The basic contours of Reid's mature thought were carved out in his early years at Marischal College. It was under the regency of George Turnbull (1723–26), that the adolescent Reid was immersed in a world-view that we may call Providential Naturalism.[5] This view consisted of four interconnected tenets: first, Newton's *regulæ philosophandi* were taken to provide the criteria for theoretical or explanatory success in both the natural sciences and the philosophy of mind;[6] second, the laws of nature could be given no further explanation than the providential purposes of God; third, determining the laws of nature would serve to establish a naturalistic means of discovering the end or purpose for which a thing had been created;[7] and fourth, the end or purpose of our cognitive processes was, among other things, to furnish us with true beliefs.

It was during this early phase that Reid also inherited an account of human cognition that had been promulgated, in various forms, by almost every major philosopher, namely, the theory of ideas or, using Reid's terminology, the 'ideal system'. The mind was, on this account, taken to obtain information about the world by means of images that were conveyed to it by the senses.

Reid was thus lulled into the apparent security of taking Providential Naturalism to be wedded happily to the ideal system.[8] The first told him that the mind could obtain epistemic access to itself and to the external world by means of cognitive processes designed for that purpose by God. The second explained just how this process was supposed to work. But the honeymoon was short-lived. In 1739 Hume published his *Treatise on Human Nature*, with the explicit intention of putting the two asunder.

4. Hume's Sceptical Argument

On the ideal system, any so-called truth about the world, was not, Hume argued, within the reach of our faculties. Our knowledge of the external world must be either direct or indirect. For it to be direct, external things must be immediately present to the mind. On the ideal system,

the only things with which the mind could be in immediate contact were sensations or, in Hume's terminology, 'impressions'. It followed that no external object could be immediately present to the mind; consequently, our knowledge of the external world could not be direct. Could it then be indirect? Do our sensations constitute reason or evidence for an external world? Hume's answer was negative; and Reid was entirely in agreement.

First, by Newton's second rule of philosophising, like causes may be inferred from like effects. But the conception we have of external objects is such that they appear to be nothing like our sensations. Indeed, such is the disparity between the two that all our sensations might have been exactly as they are, 'though no body, nor quality of body, had ever existed'.[9] Hence we can make no causal inference from sensations to external objects.

Second, any enumerative induction would invariably suffer from a kind of circularity. Reid held the mind to be constituted by natural or innate faculties, individuated by their function in the cognitive economy. Consciousness, memory, perception, imagination, and reasoning, for instance, constitute individual faculties. In the case of sense perception, enumerative evidence may well confirm the reliability of that faculty; perception is, indeed, eminently successful in respect of predictability, consistency and the like. But these considerations will only support the faculty's trustworthiness from within; for the evidence upon which they are based can only be gathered by using perception itself. For instance, a person may gather the inductive evidence required for believing that something hard exists only if she already has good reason to believe that, normally, when she has the sensation of hardness, something hard exists – which clearly begs the epistemic question at hand.[10]

Third, suppose, following Descartes, we attempted to show that our faculties were trustworthy by producing an argument to the effect that there is a perfectly good Creator. The problem with this approach, as Reid pointed out, is that, to arrive at this conclusion, we must use the faculty of reasoning. But if we can rely upon the deliverances of at least one faculty without first showing it to be reliable, what prevents us from treating our other faculties likewise? It would be no more than rationalistic imperialism to give the faculty of reasoning this privileged status.[11] On the other hand, if we refuse to trust the deliverances of any faculty until such time as it can be shown to be reliable, we

can hardly rely upon any reasoning that purports to demonstrate the existence of God.

5. The Evolution of Reid's Response to Hume

Reid was thus faced with a dilemma: either he must accept Hume's sceptical conclusion or deny the ideal system. Reid of course resisted the former; but not from an aversion to scepticism *per se*. Prior to Hume's *Treatise*, Reid had accepted Bishop Berkeley's system in its entirety,[12] along with what he took to be its denial of a material world. The difference, Reid held, was that Berkeley, in his concern to retain his religious and moral beliefs, reduced everything in nature to spirits and ideas; whereas Hume accepted only 'ideas and impressions'.[13] Reid's philosophical crisis, then, was stimulated primarily by his view that Hume's system threatened the very possibility of rational religion and morality.[14]

We might therefore expect to see Reid turning his immediate attention to the project of refuting the ideal system. But the evidence is not forthcoming. Reid's refusal to accept Hume's sceptical conclusion was, for almost two decades, supported entirely by an appeal to common sense; and not by any direct refutation of the ideal system. For example, in one of Reid's earliest dated manuscripts (1748), he argues for a common sense view of the self, against what he took to be Hume's theory of the self – apparently without having yet rejected the ideal system (see *Manuscripts* § 3.1). Again, in Reid's second Oration, delivered as late as 1756, the target is, among other things, Hume's scepticism; yet the ideal system is not once mentioned. Instead, Reid argues that to wage war on common sense, as Hume does, is indicative of either insincerity or insanity. Finally, in his discourse to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, dated 14 June 1758, Reid argues that there are two 'General prejudices' against Hume's system of mind: the first being that Hume claimed to have given an 'entire system' of the mind; and second, that Hume's system 'waged war' on common sense. Reid does not suggest that he has located any intrinsic fallacy in Hume's system. On the contrary, he argues that, 'Such philosophy is justly ridiculous even to those who cannot show the fallacy of it'[15] (see *Manuscripts* § 2.1).

This is not to say that Reid continued to accept the ideal system. Rather, he seems, at some stage, to have taken Hume's sceptical argument as a *reductio* of the ideal system. His next strategy was to determine precisely where the system had gone wrong.[16] Thus, in July 1758, Reid delivered

a paper to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society; a paper of which there are more draft versions than any other from this period. The paper was entitled: 'Are the objects of the human mind properly divided into impressions & ideas? & must every idea be a copy of a preceding impression?' (see *Manuscripts*, § 2.2). Its purpose was to present a detailed refutation of the ideal system. This paper, then, appears to mark the first breakthrough in Reid's second strategy. The most compelling evidence for this is found in Reid's third Oration, delivered in April 1759. The Oration, being a development of the arguments found in the July 1758 paper, opens with the remark: 'formerly I suspected, but now I know for certain', that the ideal system is merely an hypothesis rather than 'an accurate analysis of the operations of the intellect'.[17] This would appear to confirm the thesis that, prior to 1758, Reid believed that he had not directly refuted the ideal system.

The aftermath of this discovery was a burst of intellectual energy, in which Reid sought to develop his own account of human cognition; one that would fully accord with the four tenets of Providential Naturalism. The first substantial paper to emerge from this period is dated December 1, 1758. This is Reid's first substantive treatment of the operations of mind, in particular that of perception, and the natural principles of belief (see *Manuscripts*, § 3.2).

6. The Argument of the *Inquiry*

Reid's response to Hume was thus a three-stage process that stretched over four decades: first, his commitment to Providential Naturalism led him to take Hume's sceptical argument as a *reductio* of the ideal system; his primary task was then to expose the errors within the theory; once this had been accomplished, he was able to construct a new system of the mind. This evolutionary story effectively explains the structure of the *Inquiry*'s central argument:

> *the ideal system* . . . hath some original defect; that this scepticism is inlaid in it, and reared along with it; and, therefore, that we must lay it open to the foundation, and examine the materials, before we can expect to raise any solid and useful fabric of knowledge on this subject.[18]

There is an important anomaly in this account, however. Reid's second major paper, entitled 'The Analysis of the Sensations of smell & Taste', was delivered on 14 March 1759, again to the Aberdeen Philosophical

Society.[19] Of particular interest is a large section containing an examination of the ideal system. The composition of this section was not a trivial undertaking for Reid. There are at least two extant draft copies (see *Manuscripts*, § 2.2), and much of it makes its way into Reid's Orations III and IV (April 1759, 1762). The mystery, however, is that, while most of the 1759 paper made its way into the *Inquiry*, Reid dropped the entire section containing his criticisms of the ideal system. In its place, Reid tells us that the system will be examined further on in the text, and gives a *précis* of the key objections he intends to raise.[20] Yet this intention is never fulfilled. Instead, we find, at the end of the *Inquiry*, the confession: 'I have thought it proper to drop this part of my design'.[21]

How do we explain this change of mind? Why would Reid omit from the *Inquiry* the crucial second stage of his response to Hume? There are several possibilities. After reading an early draft of the *Inquiry*, Hume complained that Reid frequently digressed: 'For Instance, under the Article of Smelling, he gives you a Glimpse of all the Depths of his Philosophy'.[22] Reid defended himself by arguing that he would consider something a digression only if it did not tend 'either to give any new light to the Operations of the human Mind, or to correct any of the received opinions concerning it'.[23] Nevertheless, the 'Article' on smell is the very portion of the *Inquiry* from which Reid withdrew his section against the ideal system; and within that section itself, Reid describes his examination as a 'long digression'.[24] Perhaps Hume's complaint proved, in the end, to be compelling. Reid himself seems to suggest this as the reason for its removal: 'we shall not now examine . . . the doctrine of the ideal philosophy', he writes, so that 'we may not interrupt the thread of the present investigation'.[25]

There is, however, a more interesting explanation. Hume had also complained of Reid's having falsely charged him with providing no argument to support his principle that all our ideas are copied from impressions.[26] In fact, Hume writes, he had proffered two arguments:

> The first is desiring any one to make a particular Detail of all his Ideas, where he woud always find that every Idea had a correspondent & preceeding Impression. If no Exception can ever be found, the Principle must remain incontestible. The second is, that if you exclude any particular Impression, as Colours to the blind, Sound to the Deaf, you also exclude the Ideas.[27]

The section Reid removed from the *Inquiry* contained a battery of

objections to the system of ideas. What he retained was a single *experimentum crucis*:

> If what we call Extension, Figure, Motion, Hardness or Softness, Roughness or Smoothness have any Resemblance to the Sensations that correspond to them, then I must Subscribe to Mr Humes Creed and cannot avoid it. But if there is no such resemblance then his System falls to pieces as well as all the other Systems I have named, and we are to seek for a new one.[28]

Hume's complaint may therefore explain this simplification in Reid's strategy. For, on Hume's own account, Reid needed only to show that some of his conceptions did not resemble any preceding impression.

The problem with this explanation is that there are passages in the *Inquiry* that suggest Reid took Hume's principle to be 'incontestible', and perhaps for good reason. In his comments on the draft of the *Inquiry*, Hume suggested that Reid's doctrine 'leads us back to innate Ideas'.[29] In his published work, Hume defined an innate idea as that which is 'original and copied from no precedent perception'.[30] He must therefore have taken Reid to be claiming that certain meaningful or existent ideas were not derived from our impressions.

Hume appears, in his comments, to concede that this return to innate ideas was no objection to Reid's doctrine: 'For nothing', he writes, 'ought ever to be supposd finally decided in Philosophy, so as not to admit of a new Scrutiny'.[31] But this response seems more sardonic than conciliatory, given Hume's published views. In the *Treatise*, for instance, we find the following argument: Any meaningful or existent idea is either innate or derived from our impressions. The doctrine of innate ideas 'has been already refuted, and is now almost universally rejected in the learned world'. Hence, any putative idea that cannot be shown to derive from our impressions is 'impossible and imaginary'.[32] If so, it must follow that Hume's principle is, after all, 'incontestible'. For suppose some putative idea were found not to be derived from any impression. Instead of showing that his principle was false, Hume would simply conclude that no such idea could exist or be meaningful.[33] As Reid colourfully puts it:

> there is a tribunal of inquisition erected by certain modern philosophers, before which every thing in nature must answer. The articles of inquisition are few indeed, but very dreadful in their consequences. They are only these: Is the prisoner an impression, or an idea? If an

> idea, from what impression copied? Now, if it appears that the prisoner is neither an impression, nor an idea copied from some impression, immediately, without being allowed to offer any thing in arrest of judgment, he is sentenced to pass out of existence, and to be, in all time to come, an empty unmeaning sound, or the ghost of a departed entity.[34]

If Reid was aware of this, why does he accept Hume's *experimentum crucis*? Following Locke, Reid held that we are not capable of creating anything *ex nihilo*, we can only combine or disjoin: simple things are made complex, and complex, simple. Our simple conceptions cannot therefore be, ultimately, the product of our own reason, error or prejudice. They must instead be 'the work of nature, and the result of our constitution'.[35] Hence, if it is discovered that we have simple conceptions of the external world that cannot be explained by reference to sensations, then this would constitute a phenomenon of nature not to be denied, but to be explained. Hume's system, however, would not be able to explain such phenomena. Hence, to discover these conceptions, would be to show that Hume's system failed to satisfy Newton's rules of philosophising.

> That we have clear and distinct conceptions of extension, figure, motion, and other attributes of body, which are neither sensations, nor like any sensation, is a fact of which we may be as certain, as that we have sensations.... These facts are phænomena of human nature, from which we may justly argue against any hypothesis, however generally received. But to argue from a hypothesis against facts, is contrary to the rules of true philosophy.[36]

This, I suggest, accounts for Reid's removal of the section against the ideal system. It also serves to explain Reid's claim that it was his investigation into Hume's principle that led him 'gradually' into his 'present way of thinking with regard to the human Mind'.[37] For Reid was aware that it would not be enough to refute Hume's system. The problem of accounting for our perceptual knowledge remained. An alternative would therefore need to be formulated.

7. Reid's System of Mind

Reid's account of the human mind is driven by the four tenets of Providential Naturalism. Following Newton, he held that the phenomenon of two things being 'constantly and invariably connected in the course of Nature' could only be accounted for by showing this connection to be

a necessary consequence of some known law of nature. If there were no such law, then the connection must be considered either a law of nature itself, or else a consequence of some law of nature yet to be discovered; and if the latter, it would be taken to have the same authority as a law of nature.[38] The account Reid presents in the *Inquiry* is an application of this method to certain operations of the mind. For example, he argues that it is a phenomenon of nature that certain sensations are invariably connected with the conception and belief of certain external objects; this connection is not a necessary consequence of any known law of nature; hence, it must be considered 'to be itself a Law of the human Mind, untill we find some more general Law of which it is the consequence'.[39]

Second, Reid held that the laws of nature themselves can be given no account other than that they are a consequence of the will of the Author of nature. Thus, the lawful operation of mind that connects our sensations with our conception of and belief in an external world can be accounted for only by reference to the intentional agency of its Creator.

> Who taught all the muscles that are concerned in sucking, in swallowing our food, in breathing, and in the several natural expulsions, to act their part in such regular order and exact measure? It was not custom surely. It was that same powerful and wise Being who made the fabric of the human body, and fixed the laws by which the mind operates upon every part of it, so that they may answer the purposes intended by them.[40]

Third, Reid held that it is in determining the laws by which the human mind operates, that we can discover their particular end or purpose. It would appear that our operations of mind are, among other things, designed to furnish us with true beliefs: 'our Senses are given us by nature not to deceive but to give us true information of things within their Reach'.[41] Hence truth, on this account, appears to be within the reach of the human faculties. Of course, we may be entirely wrong about this: our perceptual faculties may well be entirely deceptive. But if so, then, Reid states, 'we are deceived by Him that made us, and there is no remedy'.[42]

8. Providentialist Epistemology

Reid has often been read as moving, in Cartesian fashion, from premises asserting the existence and nature of God, to a conclusion about the reliability of our faculties of mind. This view contains a deep misunderstanding of Reid's epistemology. Our day-to-day faith in the reliability of

our faculties is, he held, shared by theist and non-theist. The reason for this common ground is that the intellectual operations are, for the most part, involuntary and irresistible. We cannot help but form a conception of and belief in external objects upon having certain kinds of sensations. Furthermore, whenever we choose to act, we give expression to our belief that these deliverances are, for the most part, reliable. Reid's point, however, is that the *rationality* of this belief is best sustained within the context of Providential Naturalism. For on this account, there is no reason to believe that scepticism about the external world is a live possibility. Providential Naturalism is a philosophical system, a set of beliefs of which no member either affirms or leads to the denial of the reliability of our faculties – a feature, Reid argued, that could not be claimed of a system such as David Hume's.[43]

One crucial member of this set is, of course, the belief in God. But theism does not serve a Cartesian function in Reid's epistemology. Reid held that any appeal to an argument for the existence of God would, in this context, result in a glaring *petitio principii*: 'if our faculties be fallacious, why may they not deceive us in this reasoning as well as in others?'[44] For Reid, the process by which a person forms the belief in God is, like every other belief, a natural phenomenon. As such, its epistemic status is taken to arise from within the explanatory resources of his system.

Reid held it to be a law of nature that there is an immediate, non-inferential connection between the perception of certain kinds of objects or events and the belief that these are effects brought about by the design and intelligence of an agent. One application of this law is the process by which we form beliefs about human agency upon perceiving human behaviour; another is 'design and wisdom in the works of Nature'.[45] Like our belief in other minds, then, the non-inferential connection between the belief in God and certain kinds of perceptual beliefs is a law of nature for which there can be no further explanation than the providential purposes of God. Our belief in other minds and the belief in God, Reid held, are therefore in the same epistemic category:[46]

> if a Man has the same Rational Evidence for the Existence of a Deity as he has for the Existence of his Father his Brother or his Friend, this I apprehend, is sufficient to satisfy every man that has common Sense.[47]

A second crucial belief for Reid is that the 'Author of our nature' does not intend to deceive us. But why should we believe this? Again, Reid's answer is naturalistic. Our belief in the trustworthiness of our senses is

an immediate deliverance of a lawful operation of mind: in this case, analogous to the operation by which we form our belief in the trustworthiness of human persons. In infancy, a person tends to believe, by a kind of natural instinct, the guidance and testimony of her parents and teachers. With hindsight, she might reflect that they had, on the whole, been fair, honest and beneficent. Of course, this natural credulity meant that, at times, she was 'imposed upon by deceivers'. However, it seems clear to her that, had she refrained from believing her elders until she had evidence of their reliability, she would either have perished or arrived at adulthood 'little better than a changeling'. Thus she concludes that, subject to overriding evidence, it appears more reasonable than not to continue to place her confidence and trust in those of whose 'integrity and veracity' she has experience.[48] Likewise, Reid argues,

> I gave implicit belief to the informations of Nature by my senses, for a considerable part of my life, before I had learned so much logic as to be able to start a doubt concerning them. And now, when I reflect upon what is past, I do not find that I have been imposed upon by this belief. I find, that without it I must have perished by a thousand accidents. I find, that without it I should have been no wiser now than when I was born. I should not even have been able to acquire that logic which suggests these sceptical doubts with regard to my senses. Therefore, I consider this instinctive belief as one of the best gifts of Nature. I thank the Author of my being who bestowed it upon me, before the eyes of my reason were opened, and still bestows it upon me to be my guide, where reason leaves me in the dark. And now I yield to the direction of my senses, not from instinct only, but from confidence and trust in a faithful and beneficent Monitor, grounded upon the experience of his paternal care and goodness.[49]

NOTES

1. AUL MS 2131/2/III/1, 1.
2. AUL MS 3107/1/3, 67; cf. 2131/1/I/3, 7.
3. For an account of Reid's academic environs, see Paul B. Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment: The Arts Curriculum in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1993).
4. For a discussion of the events leading up to the publication of the *Inquiry* and its immediate reception, see Paul B. Wood's Introduction in the Thoemmes reprint of the 1785 edition of the *Inquiry*.
5. This term was first used by David Fate Norton, 'From Moral Sense to Common Sense: An Essay on the Development of Scottish Common

Sense Philosophy, 1700–1765' (University of California, San Diego, Ph.D. Dissertation, Philosophy, 1966): Ch. VI.

6. See *Explanatory Notes*, 12/9.
7. Cf. 'Now it is only by strictly examining the structure and fabrick of the mind, the frame and connexion of all its powers and affections, and the manner of their operation that we can ascertain the end and purpose of our being. . . .' George Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral (and Christian) Philosophy: An Enquiry into the Wise and Good Government of the Moral World*. . . . Fascimile reprint of the 1740–41 London edition. Anglistica & Americana 167. (Olms, Hildesheim, 1976): Vol. I, p. v.
8. Some acknowledgement of this unquestioning phase is hinted at in Reid's cautionary tale about the enduring influence of education, even in one such as Isaac Newton: 'Is it not possible, that this great philosopher, as well as many of a lower form, having been led into this opinion at first by education, may have continued in it, because he never thought of calling it in question? I confess this was my own case for a considerable part of my life.' HM, p. 165/39–166/4.
9. HM, p. 57/33–4; cf. HM, p. 26/33–5.
10. IP, p. 307. Cf. William P. Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1993).
11. Cf. HM, p. 169/4–9; IP, p. 592.
12. IP, p. 162.
13. HM, p. 20/9. Several recent authors have argued that Reid misrepresented the views of those whom he criticised. D. Raynor, for example, argues that Reid, among others, misread Hume as a Berkeleyan immaterialist. 'Hume and Berkeley's Three Dialogues', in *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. M. A. Stewart (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990): pp. 247–50. Again, J. W. Yolton argues that 'Reid found skepticism in the way of ideas because he thought (wrongly) that the only concept of ideas, or the dominant concept was [that of 'ideas as entities']. *Perceptual Acquaintance: From Descartes to Reid* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1984): p. 208.
14. HM, p. 5/7–12; cf. *Manuscripts* § 3.1.
15. AUL MS 3107/1/1, 18; cf. HM, p. 21/24–5.
16. Reid seems to suggest that Hume thought of his argument as serving the same objective: 'I conceive the sceptical writers to be a set of men, whose business it is, to pick holes in the fabric of knowledge wherever it is weak and faulty; and when these places are properly repaired, the whole building becomes more firm and solid than it was formerly.' HM, p. 4/20–3. Perhaps Hume agreed. In a letter to Reid, he writes: ' I shall only say, that if you have been able to clear up these abstruse & important Subjects, instead of being mortifyd, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the Praise, and shall think, that my Errors, by having at least some Coherence, had led you to make a more strict Review of my Principles which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility.' AUL MS 2814/I/42, 1r–v. Reid replied: 'I agree with you therefore that if this System shall ever be demolished, you have a just claim to a great share of the Praise, both because you have made it a distinct and determinate mark to be aimed at, and have furnished proper artillery for the purpose.' NLS MS 23157, Letter 3, 1v. See *Manuscripts* § 1.3, 1.4.

17. *Orations*, p. 956.
18. HM, p. 23/20–5.
19. AUL MS 3107/1/3, 58–72.
20. HM, p. 28/24–32; see also HM, p. 91/28.
21. HM, p. 217/33–4.
22. AUL MS 2814/1/39, 2.
23. AUL MS 2/III/1, 7.
24. AUL MS 3107/1/3, 71; see *Manuscripts* § 2.2.
25. HM p. 28/22.
26. Reid seems to have retained the charge against Hume: 'It is a fundamental principle of the ideal system, That every object of thought must be an impression, or an idea, that is, a faint copy of some preceding impression. This is a principle so commonly received, that the author above mentioned, although his whole system is built upon it, never offers the least proof of it.' HM, p. 33/22–7.
27. AUL MS 2814/1/39, 1v; cf. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 2nd ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1978): pp. 4–5; David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975): pp. 19–20.
28. AUL MS 2/III/1, 4; HM, p. 70/16–27.
29. AUL MS 2814/1/39, 1v.
30. Hume, *Enquiries*, p. 22, n. 1.
31. AUL MS 2814/1/39, 1v.
32. Hume, *Treatise*, p. 158.
33. See Hume, *Enquiries*, p. 22.
34. HM, p. 98/14–22.
35. HM, p. 70/10.
36. HM, p. 76/3–13.
37. AUL MS 2/III/1, 3.
38. HM, pp. 132/19–133/8.
39. AUL MS 2/III/1, 4.
40. HM, p. 113/28–33.
41. AUL MS 8/II/22, 2–3.
42. HM, p. 72/15–6.
43. Cf. Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993): pp. 236–7.
44. IP, p. 592. In his Glasgow lectures, Reid presented a variety of arguments for the existence of God. These lectures survive in two student transcriptions: MS AUL 160, and The Mitchell Library, Glasgow MS A104929. For a transcription of the latter, see E. H. Duncan, *Thomas Reid's Lectures on Natural Theology* (1780) (Washington, DC., University Press of America, 1981).
45. IP, p. 629.
46. Cf. Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds* (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1990).
47. AUL MS 8/II/20a, 8. Cf. IP, p. 632.
48. HM, pp. 170/31–171/4.
49. HM, p. 170/16–30.