

A STUDY OF REID'S ACTIVE POWERS (1788)

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OF
REID'S ESSAYS ON THE ACTIVE POWERS OF MAN (1788)

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ABSTRACT

The publication of Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man in 1788 fully completed his project, begun in 1785 with his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, to present to the public the substance of his lectures and reflections during his tenure as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. The Active Powers comprises five essays on the metaphysics of causation and the foundation of morals—four essays dealing with causation, motivation, and human liberty, and a fifth containing the main lines of his theory of morals and critique of Hume's moral theory.

Unlike the Intellectual Powers, and unlike his first book, An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense (1764), the Active Powers has kept the attention of few philosophers and scholars. Even those who have turned its pages are unclear about the central doctrines contained therein, and are accordingly undecided as to their implications and philosophical merits. Through a critical reconstruction of the Active Powers, this thesis remedies a long-standing neglect.

After an extensive developmental exploration of Reid's epistemological designs and the naturalistic stamp of his theory of knowledge, I turn to his Active Powers and argue that the unifying doctrine of the essays is man's moral liberty, a doctrine that he supports with two strategic theses—first, that the only legitimate kind of cause, an efficient cause, is always an intelligent agent and, second, that men are efficient causes which act on rational motives. The first thesis has

genuine religious implications, especially for his epistemology, but he cannot hold it, I argue, without also proving the second.

Initially unable to do this, as a comparison with Hume demonstrates, Reid must then outline the nature of efficient causation by reason alone, and must prove that humans are efficient causes by rendering consistent our commitment to the durable causal principle, Every event must have an efficient cause that produced it, and what is necessarily demanded by our natural system of morals.

Although the balance between animal motivation and the practical ends provided by reason is uneven, only the latter enable men to have moral liberty and make it possible for us both to accept the causal principle and to have the freedom required by our system of morals. Unfortunately, I argue, Reid's need for the motivation of reasons, or "rational principles of action," entails an untoward paradox: Either no efficient cause acts on reasons or liberty is simply irrelevant to our acting morally.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study of Thomas Reid was undertaken without benefit of a roadmap. None existed. Although several pioneers left much on Reid's views on perception and epistemology, there have been not even solid clues through the rough terrain of his theories of causation and morals, and his theological beliefs. I have thought, and still think, that Reid's Active Powers must be one of the most often-closed books in history. Reading it for the first time is very much like venturing into a forest: We are familiar with the trees, and can move easily through it, but very quickly we become lost—having no guideposts, no pathways, no clear end in sight—and feel safer outside than within.

In preparing this dissertation, a kind of geography of Reid's last published work, I have benefited enormously from the talents of three gentlemen. Douglas Odegard taught me John Locke, and has illuminated my every step into 18th-century British philosophy; he has saved me from technical blunders and helped me recast many an incorrect statement. John Bristol, who never shouted at me when I erred, taught me George Berkeley and the complications of immaterialism and occasionalism. In particular, they have aided me in my construction of guideposts through Reid's philosophy and in my paths through the Active Powers.

James Noxon, however, first introduced me to Thomas Reid and to the very complex position that philosopher holds in the history of Scottish thought. Dr. Noxon has been a friend, a confidant, a teacher who is generous with his knowledge, and someone who can test character better

than a drill sergeant. Although he probably regrets to this day ever having used Reid's name in my presence, he taught me what I know of David Hume and has also shared with me the best of his experience in 18th-century studies. Among the many things I have learned from him, I have learned that good scholarship is the result of labor, a love for the craft and its purpose, applied logic, insight—perhaps a ruse or two—and a concerted weaving of words that communicate facts, satisfy a reader's expectations, and inspire (even for those insensitive to the scholarly arts) a feeling for the enduring limitations of the intellect and what great things can be achieved when one approaches or exceeds those limitations.

While I thank these gentlemen for their selfless, heroic assistance in my preparation of this dissertation and for their long-standing patience with me, I do so without implicating them in my errors, for these are my own and I cannot share them.

Finally, I wish also to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the University Library of King's College, University of Aberdeen, for permission to quote from and to reproduce the full text of Reid's unpublished 1792 essay "Of Power."

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INTRODUCTION

1. A Bibliographical Note

Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man was first published in 1788. By design the book concluded the plan he conceived and put into effect before retiring from his post as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1780, when Archibald Arthur, who would subsequently occupy the chair for 15 years, was employed as his assistant and successor. Retirement freed Reid from his teaching responsibilities and enabled him to apply himself to collecting together his many notes and lectures on topics that occupied his time and philosophical interest before and after the publication of his Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense in 1764.¹

By 1783 he had composed what was probably the bulk of his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1785).² By 1784 he was readying these essays on the "Intellectual Powers of the Mind" for the press, and was preparing for a later publication what would eventually appear as his Essays on the Active Powers of Man.³ Then seventy-four years old, he feared that he would die before his last book could be published.⁴ At the end of the same year, because of a delay in publishing the Intellectual Powers, Reid expected that a publication delay to 1786 might enable him to include the Active Powers in the same collection of essays.⁵ As it turned out, though, there was no such delay, but the main elements of that final group of essays may well have been completed in 1786.⁶

The merits of Reid's two volumes of essays were not recognized immediately. They went through one further edition in Reid's lifetime, in 1790, when they were published together in three volumes entitled Essays

on the Powers of the Human Mind. In 1803 this edition was reissued with Dugald Stewart's Life of Reid. This was reprinted in 1808, and again in 1812 with Reid's early "Essay on Quantity" (Transactions of the Royal Society, 1748) and his "Analysis of Aristotle's Logic," first published as "A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, with Remarks" in Lord Kames's Sketches of the History of Man (1774). The 1812 edition was subsequently reprinted in 1819, 1820, 1822, and 1827.⁷ The final appearance of these essays in the 19th century was in the American edition of The Works of Thomas Reid, published in four volumes (1813-1815) by Samuel Etheridge, Jr., in Charlestown, Massachusetts; in Thomas Jouffroy's six-volume Paris edition, Oeuvres Completes de Thomas Reid (1828-1836); in G.N. Wright's two-volume London edition of Reid's works (1843); and in Hamilton's well-known editions of Reid's collected writings (1846-1895). It is important to note that Reid's Active Powers was never reissued as a separate volume.⁸ The Intellectual Powers, which became his best-known work, was published separately in 1827 (London), in 1853 (Edinburgh), in 1865 (London), and from 1850 to 1871 in a full ten editions of James Walker's abridged American version.

2. The Place of the "Active Powers" in Reid's Published Corpus

Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man is a volume comprised of five essays: "Of Active Power in General," "Of the Will," "Of the Principles of Action," "Of the Liberty of Moral Agents," and "Of Morals." What makes Reid's five essays difficult to assess as a collected whole is the book's unacknowledged theme. If we assume, as we should, that Reid collected these papers together for some reason beyond their divergency

from the epistemological themes of the Intellectual Powers, then by hypothesis he assembled these essays with a central doctrine in mind, thereby giving to the collection an organic unity and a rationale. What, then, is this central theme?

Reid's own admission is that the natural separation of his Intellectual Powers and Active Powers rests, by virtue of their subject matter, on the "ancient" and "very generally adopted" "division of the faculties of the human mind into Understanding and Will" (511a/AP1; 242a/IP65), the first term comprehending our "speculative" powers (511a/AP1) and "contemplative" powers (242a/IP65) and the second comprehending our "active powers" (511a/AP1; 242a/IP65). Thus this "general division," which "may be of use in order to our proceeding more methodically in our subject" (242a/IP65), enables us to infer that the Intellectual Powers will be concerned with the human understanding and that the Active Powers will be concerned with human conduct. In general, this is indeed the division we find when we look closely at the two large groups of essays.

In particular, the theme of the Active Powers is man's moral liberty, a theme supported by Reid's views concerning human action, the nature of real causation, and the relation between causation and human action.⁹ Reid's first four essays are devoted to a piecemeal effort to bring this topic forward. Indeed, it is the very piecemeal character of the collection that encumbers any effort to explicate Reid's position. Each essay was meant for a separate exposure but is joined designedly by a common theme, thus requiring a duplication of discussions and requiring that Reid's readers draw from those discussions a single expository theme.

One of the chief aims of this study is to bring this expository theme into view. Our second chief aim is to evaluate Reid's philosophical thesis. Except for two brief introductions to modern editions of the Active Powers,¹⁰ an introductory piece that lacks certain enlightening commentary,¹¹ and a fresh expository paper,¹² there is not now, nor has there ever been, any sustained study of Reid's Essays on the Active Powers of Man.

All modern commentators who have had any dealings with the Active Powers have certainly touched on the many topics available to them, beginning in our century with Olin McKendree Jones's Empiricism and Intuitionism in Reid's Common Sense Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927), which discusses very briefly Reid's book as a treatise on ethics that fails because it attempts feebly to reinstate intuitionism into moral philosophy but ends with a type of dogmatic rationalism (see pp. 66-69); and including S.A Graves's important book on The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), which focuses its attention on personal identity and free will in Reid's works, touching only marginally on the central theme of the Active Powers, and then without great depth of discussion. Indeed, the majority of those works dealing directly with Reid's last book specifically can be counted on one hand, all of these appearing in print within a five-year period of time.¹³

However, there is much to be discussed before the distinctive features of the Active Powers can be stated with confidence and without deception. In order to do this, our study will begin with a discussion of Reid's epistemological plan, which was begun in his Inquiry into the Human

Mind and was continued in his Intellectual Powers, because this will reveal why the Active Powers and the Intellectual Powers are in fact concerned with separate issues and, moreover, why the Active Powers depends for the support of its doctrines on Reid's prior opinions and arguments.

Such opinions and arguments begin in full in Reid's Inquiry. Central among them is Reid's position on "first principles." What precisely Reid understands by a "first principle" has never been sufficiently explored nor interpreted precisely, and yet it is at the forefront of every Reidean thesis. In the Inquiry, we find, Reid does not have a precise and technical use of the term 'first principle'. None the less, he seems aware that what he calls "principles of common sense" fulfills the role played by "first principles" in the technical sense in which he employs the brave term in his later Intellectual Powers and Active Powers. What this suggests is that Reid's development between the appearance of the former work and the latter volumes was one of clarification rather than replacement, and we are going to take this suggestion as a hypothesis in our treatment and exposition of those works.

The main point of such an exposition is to clarify the groundwork of Reid's Active Powers and the main tenets of his position in his last published work. A subsidiary aim is to show that Reid's position in the Active Powers is contained in a seminal form in the Inquiry and, by way of development, in the Intellectual Powers. Of the works in Reid's small corpus, only in the Active Powers do we find the sustained discussions of what, really, are enduring themes in his writings. Not unusually, the Active Powers is the work in which we will find his mature, developed

stand on causation and human liberty and their bearing on the epistemological issues raised by his early Inquiry and his later Intellectual Powers. If we find ourselves, in studying the Active Powers, looking frequently to Reid's earlier writings, that is because the Active Powers is a part, if a large part, of a greater philosophical structure whose several elements have been presented in writing before the appearance of Reid's last book.

The Inquiry was Reid's well-known response to the epistemological skepticism he found in Hume's Treatise of Human Nature. While the aims of the Inquiry suggest that Reid's central purpose was to reconstruct the role of perception and sensation in a new scientific rendering of the human understanding, there are certainly other issues raised in the Inquiry that bear directly on our comprehension of his Active Powers. What is at the core of Reid's Inquiry, beyond a novel approach to perceptual experience, is his thesis that there exist what he calls "principles of common sense." These are held to be ineradicable features of our intellectual makeup; they are principles that we can neither reason for, by way of evidential support, nor reason against, if they are genuine principles of common sense, because they are in fact judgments we make by virtue of our nature; they are judgments Reid considers necessary for the experiences we do have, and are such that they assist in making our experiences precisely those we must have, given that our human constitution is the way it is. Reid neither attempted to explain his use of the term 'principles of common sense' nor did he try to supply a list of them. He also failed to make clear the bearing of their presence on an epistemological skepticism. Whether the fault lay in his message or in

his expression of it, even Reid's contemporaries misunderstood his philosophical position, resulting in at least one glaring case of misrepresentation that Reid himself did nothing to correct.¹⁴

Not until the Intellectual Powers are we given a fuller discussion of these "principles." In that work we are given a list of such principles, we are given an exposition of their nature as "judgments of the understanding," and we learn that what is essentially a psychology in the Inquiry has given way to an epistemology in which the principles of common sense play the leading role in the theater of knowledge and belief. None of this is initially obvious, of course; we have still to investigate those works for such an interpretation. The import of the completed discussion, however, is an important one for our reading of the Active Powers, for the argument of the essays requires that there be such principles and we cannot therefore fully comprehend that argument without an understanding of those principles.

In the Intellectual Powers the principles of common sense are discussed in an important essay entitled "Of Judgment," where it is argued that an intellectual power of the human mind—judgment—assists in the manufacture of knowledge by providing certain natural judgments that serve as the foundations of human knowledge. By implication these judgments set limitations upon the scope of our knowledge, and yet also limit the philosophical negotiation of certain items of human belief and contention. The presence of these principles is also held to constrain and limit skeptical discussions, thereby enabling us to set normative standards within a theory of knowledge. Among those principles cited by Reid as belonging to the class of "principles of common sense" are those

pertaining to causation, to the regularities of nature, to human agency, and to human liberty—all of which reappear in his discussions and arguments in the Active Powers.

While the Intellectual Powers discusses the principles of common sense in much detail, the Active Powers has a three-fold value over the prior work. First, whereas the Intellectual Powers endeavors to set forth the principles that stand as the foundation of our system of knowledge, which was Reid's early goal in the Inquiry, nothing is said about the consistency of these principles and nothing is discussed regarding their conflict, whether that conflict be real or apparent. This is so despite Reid's reasonable admission that such principles must be jointly consistent if our system of knowledge is indeed to be considered a rational system. In the Active Powers he presents as natural, native, and foundational of science and morals our beliefs about the necessity and prevalence of the causal maxim, "Every event must have a cause," about our being the causes—or agents—of our own conduct, about the uniformity of events in nature, and about our personal liberty with regard to our actions. Having done so, Reid is forced to work through their apparent and historical conflict in order to uphold his philosophical position that they are not in conflict, as well as that these principles sustain a coherent view to which we ought intelligently to assent and which we do in fact tacitly accept.

Second, we learn clearly, as we could learn only obscurely in the Intellectual Powers and Inquiry, the limitations of Reid's "naturalistic" philosophy of common sense and the sense in which Reid is a philosophical naturalist. We are able to see in the Active Powers that Reid's

philosophy is curiously convoluted. The natural judgments of common sense, those principles of human knowledge that arise naturally and natively in all men, are "natural" precisely because they arise, Reid thinks, by virtue of our constitution, which has the large share in the creation of our belief and knowledge systems. We are thus led through Reid's discussion of causation in the Active Powers back to the very causal source of the principles of common sense upon which Reid bases his arguments in the work we will be studying.

Third, we are able to uncover the foundations of Reid's professed theism and its relation to his naturalism. Reid was a religious man and a Presbyterian minister. When he speaks of God, as he does in most of his works, Reid speaks of God as a cause in precisely the sense in which he considers a human being to be a cause—as an intelligent agent who is free with regard to his actions. Thus, by following this convolution of Reid's philosophy, we are able to discover not only the way in which the naturalistic origin of our system of knowledge results in the system that we cannot fail to have, but also why our possession of this system fulfills a divine purpose.

Reid was also an empiricist and a serious follower of the Newtonian science. What Reid inherited from his empirical tradition, however, was the very epistemological scheme from which he endeavored to disentangle himself in the Inquiry, the work that first put his own epistemological position on a new foundation. This scheme is identified in the Inquiry as "the ideal system" (103b/INQ19) and is eventually renamed "the Cartesian system" (204b/INQ258) because Descartes is singled out as the progenitor

of the theoretical system that rendered "ideas" the only possible objects of perception and thought.

It is curious that it was Hume who made Reid a rebel against the prevailing British empirical tradition, because Hume too shared that philosophical estate. Hume was also a student of the new science and one who was acutely sensitive to its methodological fruits when he prepared A Treatise of Human Nature, the book that urged Reid away from his former opinions. Hume's treatment of causation in the Treatise was one of his largest philosophical contributions; indeed, he considered his "Chief Argument" of the first book of the Treatise to be that experience and custom make possible and inevitably sustain our beliefs concerning the causal relation.¹⁵ Hume's thesis regarding the manner of our acquiring knowledge of causes and effects did rest heavily on his view of perceptual experience. That view is openly stated in the first few pages of his Treatise and is then recast in Section II of his first Enquiry. This was one of Reid's targets in his Inquiry.

Hume's general empiricist thesis does not rest on his theory of perceptual experience, though, and neither do his several arguments against the rationalist's view of the origins of causal belief and knowledge. We will find that Reid, who shares Hume's general empiricist thesis but disagrees with Hume on the manner by which we come to the experiences we have, has a position on causation that seems oddly rationalistic, and so appears as a target of at least a segment of Hume's arguments against such a view in both the Treatise and the first Enquiry. But we will also find Reid claiming that the concept of causation is an empirical concept and thus one that has its origin within human

experience. We should therefore not consider it unusual that Reid's consistent defense of his position will have to avoid or overcome a specific range of Hume's arguments against rationalism with regard to the concept of causation and, at the same time, must preserve the empirical origins of our causal beliefs and knowledge.

In its "strict and proper" meaning, according to the theory of causation Reid develops in the Active Powers, the term 'cause' always designates an active, intelligent agent who is free with regard to his actions or "effects." Upon this tenet rests the unifying theme of the Active Powers—that man possesses "moral liberty," or the ability to act without being caused to act. This tenet is also required by his arguments for the philosophically interesting thesis that man is capable of "self-government" because he is able to act on "rational principles," principles "without which man would not be a moral agent" (586b/AP223). On the other hand, the causal relation is also applied in a loose and popular sense to natural events, and in this sense, according to Reid, the term 'cause' must always signify either a "law of nature" or an antecedent within a law-like formula. In combating this equivocal use of the word 'cause', Hume argues against any identification of the causal relation with the relation between an agent and his actions.¹⁶ Indeed, the success of Hume's arguments would render void Reid's bold theological thesis that "The physical laws of nature are the rules according to which the Deity commonly acts in his natural government of the world; and whatever is done according to them, is not done by man, but by God, either immediately or by instruments under his direction" (628a/AP336-337). Reid is fully aware of Hume's threat to the ethical and theological consequences of his view,

and yet he cannot ultimately accept the entailments of Hume's position. How Reid presents and defends his doctrines is the main subject of our study of his Active Powers.

3. A Procedural Syllabus

The following study will proceed in three stages. In Chapter I, the complex epistemological background of the Active Powers and the early characteristics of topics developed fully in Reid's last book are explored. The epistemological background of Reid's later philosophy involves not only his historically important anti-skepticism, but also his views on "first principles," their early formulation in the Inquiry in terms of "principles of common sense," the epistemological status given to them in the Intellectual Powers, as well as competing interpretations of that status. My working hypothesis is that Reid is fundamentally a descriptive epistemologist who is first concerned in the Inquiry with a Newtonian science of mind and who then, in the Intellectual Powers, moves beyond a mere psychology to reach a concern with knowledge and its natural elements. I argue that his anti-skeptical campaign does not rest solely on a normative program. This will become important when we consider Reid's arguments for human liberty because it saves Reid from circularity on at least one interpretation of his stand on first principles.

In this stage I do not conclude with a final word on Reid's attempt to locate an epistemological justification for the principles of common sense. Rather, I suggest that such a justification itself rests on a peculiar religious tenet that does not emerge until his theory of causation is fully exposed and discussed in terms of his naturalism.

In Chapter II, Reid's equivocal use of the term 'cause' is discussed and his reason for identifying the causal relation with intelligent action is explored. His theory of causation is outlined and further treated in terms of his epistemological stand on first principles. In bringing out the a priori character of his doctrine of causation, though, we shall also be faced with Reid's conviction that the causal relation is discovered, after all, by empirical means. Ample evidence is presented to show that Reid's position, though naturalistic, is a type of rationalism and that his theory of causation is developed solely through philosophical analysis. On the other hand, equally ample evidence, including Reid's 1792 unpublished paper "Of Power," supports the view that Reid is an empiricist with regard to the origin of causal concepts. After discussing Reid on necessity and contingency, and by comparing Hume and Reid on causation to focus on what precisely is at issue, I argue that Reid's expressed empiricism is inconsistent with the developing lines of his theory of causation and that his naturalism, though genuinely sophisticated, plays a small role in his efforts to prove that causes must be intelligent agents. One consequence of our discussion is that Reid's naturalism becomes decidedly religious.

In Chapter III the final stage of the study uncovers Reid's need to appeal to the phenomenon of morality in proving that men are both causes and free agents, that is, that men are the undetermined causes of their conduct. Here, I contend, his stand on human liberty is not the logical outcome of his naturalism and is, in fact, quite independent of our early, common-sense conviction of ourselves as the causes of our actions. Reid's thesis that we are causes and free agents, I argue, is really the joint

outcome of his deductive use of the causal maxim and the formal principles of morality, which are brought forward through three general arguments he offers in support of human freedom.

After discussing the strong sense in which Reid must interpret human freedom, I move to his theory of motivation, which is cast in terms of principles appropriate to ourselves as animal organisms, as physical objects, and as beings capable of reason. I then attempt to tie together the various issues within an assessment of Reid's final philosophical position.

Reid argues that rational motives are required for our being moral agents and bestow upon us the power of self-government by giving us reason's alternatives to animal motives. However, the strong sense in which he understands human freedom creates a powerful tension with the most conspicuous feature of his philosophy of common sense: the nature of the human constitution. Resolving this tension has untoward consequences for his theories of causation and human freedom, and therefore for his religious naturalism.

The reader, however, should be twice forewarned about the methodology of this study. First, Reid is occasionally but adequately taken from his historical context and considered as a contemporary philosopher. Second, by treating Reid in this way, I present a critical (i.e. rational) reconstruction of his Essays on the Active Powers of Man, and do not pretend that this study is a historical exposition of his thought. Here, therefore, the terms 'historical' and 'contemporary' shall mark for us a distinction between what a wise man proclaims and what this same wise man must, as a philosopher, rationally commit himself to.

NOTES

1. See Letter to Lord Kames, January 25, 1781, The Works of Thomas Reid, ed. Sir William Hamilton, 8th edition (Edinburgh: Maclachlan and Stewart, 1895), vol. I, p. 60b. All subsequent references will be to this edition, unless otherwise noted. Hamilton's collection also includes the two essays, "A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic" and "An Essay on Quantity," as well as Dugald Stewart's "Account of the Life and Writings of Thomas Reid" and some of Reid's correspondence dating from 1769 to 1770, from 1772 to 1782, and from 1783 to 1793, including the often-mentioned March 18, 1763, letter to David Hume. References to the Works will be by volume and page number, the suffixes 'a' and 'b' indicating the left and right sides of the page respectively; where important, the work cited will be indicated in the text. Because the pagination in the two volumes is consecutive, I do not include references to volume number.

Other references include the following modern editions of Reid's individual works: An Inquiry into the Human Mind, ed. Timothy Duggan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), abbreviated in the text as 'INQ'; Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, ed. Baruch Brody (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969), abbreviated in the text as 'IP'; and Essays on the Active Powers of [Man], ed. Baruch Brody (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1969), abbreviated in the text as 'AP'.

2. See Letter to Dr. James Gregory, June 8, 1783, 62b.
3. See Letter to Dr. James Gregory, March 14, 1784, 63a.
4. See Letter to Dr. James Gregory, December 31, 1784, 64b.
5. Ibid.
6. See Letter to Dr. James Gregory, March 1786, 67b-68a.
7. It was to the Edinburgh editions (1803-1812) that Schopenhauer referred when he wrote: "The best and most logical explanation concerning the essence and nature of concepts which I have been able to find is in Thomas Reid's Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind, Vol. II, Essay 5, ch.6." See The World As Will and Representation, Vol. II, tr. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 67. Schopenhauer was referring to Essay 5 of the Intellectual Powers.
8. This is true even though a separate edition was published in 1969 by M.I.T. Press, with an introduction by Baruch Brody. That edition merely reprinted the appropriate portions of Samuel Etheridge's 19th-century edition.

9. It is not enough to say, as Baruch Brody says, that Reid's "second major work" is "primarily concerned with three topics in the theory of action: the nature of human action, the freedom of the will, and the nature of our obligation to act in certain ways." Nor is it sufficient to add that "The first three essays are devoted to the first topic, the fourth to the second topic, and the fifth to the third topic." We shall find that the developing lines of Reid's peculiar study of causation render Brody's commentary irregular and, in fact, inaccurate. See page x of Brody's introduction to his edition of Reid's Active Powers.
10. Keith Lehrer and Ronald E. Beanblossom, eds., Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1975), pp. xxx-xxxix; and Baruch Brody, ed., Essays on the Active Powers of [Man], pp. vii-xxiv. Brody's edition is a mere reproduction of the American edition of The Works of Thomas Reid by Samuel Etheridge, Jr., and therefore reproduces the several errors of that edition.
11. See, e.g., Harry M. Bracken's introduction to the German reproduction of Hamilton's edition of Reid's collected works, The Philosophical Works of Thomas Reid (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), pp. xvii-xxix.
12. Edward H. Madden, "Common Sense and Agency Theory," Review of Metaphysics, 36 (1982), 319-342.
13. In the Monist of 1978, volume 61, no. 2, an issue devoted to the philosophy of Thomas Reid, there appeared Henning Jensen's "Common Sense and Common Language in Thomas Reid's Ethical Theory," pp. 299-310, and Michael S. Pritchard's "Reason and Passion: Reid's Reply to Hume," pp. 283-298. In Stephen F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp, eds., Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations (Philadelphia: Philosophical Monographs, 3, 1976), there appeared Baruch Brody's "Hume, Reid, and Kant on Causality," pp. 8-13; Timothy Duggan's "Active Power and the Liberty of Moral Agents," pp. 103-112; and the late Jerome Weinstock's "Reid's Definition of Freedom," pp. 95-102. Late, in 1980, was Edward Madden's "Common Sense and Agency Theory" in Review of Metaphysics, 36 (1982), 319-342. Not one of these works clearly acknowledges or seems to recognize that Reid's last published work is in fact a small treatise on causation and on the essential relationship between causation and morals.

Jerome Weinstock's "Reid's Definition of Freedom" first appeared in the Journal of the History of Philosophy, 13 (1975), 335-345. An attempt to deal with a problem Weinstock found in Reid's definition of freedom is in W. Dean Hazelton, "On an Alleged Inconsistency in Reid's Theory of Moral Liberty," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 16 (1978), 453-455. Of peripheral interest to the study of Reid's Active Powers are G.P. Brooks, "The Faculty Psychology of Thomas Reid," Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, 12 (1976), 65-77; and Nicholas Capaldi, "Reid's Critique of Hume's Moral Theory," Philosophical Journal, 5 (1968), 43-46. See also Howard

Davis Spoerl, "Faculties versus Traits: Gall's Solution," Character and Personality, 4 (1935-36), 216-231; and Keith Lehrer, "Can We Know That We Have Free Will by Introspection?" Journal of Philosophy, 57 (1960), 145-157.

14. See Joseph Priestley, An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense on Behalf of Religion (London, 1774). Cf. the book's review in the London Review, January 1775, pp. 1-13. Dugald Stewart attempted to respond to Priestley's bitter attack on Reid's doctrine of common sense in his Life of Reid (included in the Hamilton edition of Reid's collected works) and in his Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind (London: William Tegg & Co., 1856), pp. 316-329. George Campbell also attempted to do the same in The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), pp. 60-62, fn. See Jean H. Fautot, "Reid's Reply to Joseph Priestley," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 39 (1978), 285-292, for a suggestive response found among Reid's unpublished papers.

15. See An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature (1740), eds. J.M. Keynes and P. Sraffa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938). Hume's Abstract has been reprinted most recently in A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge; 2nd ed. rev. by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 641-662.

16. See Treatise, Book I, xiv, and Section viii of the first Enquiry.

REID'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL DESIGNS

1. Reid's "Inquiry"

"When we consider man as a rational creature," Reid tells us in a rarely discussed essay in his Active Powers, "it may seem right that he should have no belief but what is grounded upon evidence, probable or demonstrative; and it is, I think, commonly taken for granted, that it is always evidence, real or apparent, that determines our belief" (548b/AP110). The consequence of this supposition is that there can be no belief "till we find evidence, or, at least, what to our judgment appears to be evidence" (548b/AP110). Reid does not accept this supposition, because he does not accept its consequence, but suspects instead that "before we grow up to the full use of our rational faculties, we do believe, and must believe, many things without any evidence at all" (548b/AP110). He further insinuates that instinct, "a natural and blind impulse," often determines what we believe, determining especially those beliefs that enable us to conduct our affairs, both theoretical and practical, from infancy to childhood.

Whether or not we are, as he says, "irrational animals for a considerable time before we can properly be called rational" (548b/AP110), Reid's position is that there are beliefs men must accept by virtue of human nature. According to this doctrine, which Reid held throughout his philosophical career, a man is so constituted that he will and must accept certain beliefs in infancy, and, as a matter of fact, does not—and cannot—discard these beliefs when he reaches adulthood. As an adult, a

man will continue to use these beliefs as foundations of reason and as initial premisses of his knowledge, not just because they have a hereditary hold upon his psychical structure, but also because the natural practice of reasoning is found to presuppose them. These rudimentary beliefs he calls "principles of common sense," a term he uses to signify beliefs or judgments that arise in all men because they themselves have in common a nature or constitution that brings these beliefs forth and necessitates men's acceptance of them. Native or natural beliefs benefit brute animals as much as they do infant humans, but the difference between adult humans and brute animals (and similarly infant humans) consists at least in this: Men can and do reason practically and theoretically with these native beliefs, and so, by a natural practice, render them the foundations of human knowledge.

Amid this doctrine, and at its forefront, is Reid's thesis concerning the origin and justification of human belief and knowledge. As a naturalist, Reid maintains a theory of knowledge according to which a specific range of beliefs and concepts arise in experience according to certain laws of human nature. Only by this connection between experience and human nature can the material content of our beliefs be fully realized in any natural judgment. Moreover, only by attending to this connection can we locate a justification for any belief we accept.

Reid's first attempt to bring this doctrine forward, which was the aim of his Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, was both a success and a failure. On the one hand, it succeeded in showing that the so-called "theory of ideas," which implied a skepticism with respect to innumerable items requiring perceptual support, was not

the inexorable result of one's phenomenological inspection and was not the inescapable consequence of the common man's undeveloped appreciation of the fallibility of sense perception. On the other hand, it failed by not giving to the principles of common sense the epistemic credentials Reid seemed to claim for them.

Reid's Inquiry is certainly concerned with at least two historically and philosophically predominant issues. Not only do we find in it a critique of the prevailing 18th-century theory of perception, by means of which Reid hoped to display the groundlessness of the skepticism that theory is held to imply, but also a theory of perception that Reid unfolds by following the procedure of an inductive science of mind. This new science is itself adapted from what Reid takes to be the most general techniques followed by Newtonian natural philosophers and from the procedural rules listed by Newton as his Regulae Philosophandi. Reid labels Newton's regulae "maxims of common sense" because "By our constitution, we have a strong propensity to trace particular facts and observations to general rules, and to apply such general rules to account for other effects, or to direct us in the production of them" (97b/INQ4), and because men quite commonly do follow such rules:

The man who first discovered that cold freezes water, and that heat turns it into vapour, proceeded on the same general principles, and in the same method, by which Newton discovered the laws of gravitation, and the properties of light. His regulae philosophandi are maxims of common sense, and are practiced every day in common life; and he who philosophizes by other rules, either concerning the material system, or concerning the mind, mistakes his aim. (97b/INQ4)

The proper aim he introduces as "an anatomy of the mind" (98a/INQ5) or "analysis of the human faculties" (99b/INQ8), and is said to begin by means of one of the two ways in which one may study the human mind. One

may do so very easily by analogy, since there is nothing in nature that does not bear some resemblance or analogy to something with which we are familiar, but this is initially unnecessary when another means—"the way of reflection"—is open to us:

When the operations of the mind are exerted, we are conscious of them; and it is in our power to attend to them, and to reflect upon them, until they become familiar objects of thought. This is the only way in which we can form just and accurate notions of those operations.
(201b/INQ252)

Just as the natural philosopher will begin his inquiry by observing perceptually circumscribed phenomena, so the philosopher of mind will begin by reflecting upon his own mental activities. For each the end of these inquiries is reached when the laws governing the phenomena under investigation are uncovered:

There are laws of nature by which the operations of the mind are regulated; there are also laws of nature that govern the material system; and, as the latter are the ultimate conclusions which the human faculties can reach in the philosophy of bodies, so the former are the ultimate conclusions we can reach in the philosophy of minds.
(157b/INQ147)

The aim of the philosopher of mind is to "unravel the operations of the human understanding, and to reduce them to first principles" (104a-b/INQ21). These first principles, as Reid so uses the term in the Inquiry, are in fact what he expresses variously as "an original principle of human nature" (122b/INQ68), "laws of our constitution" (99b/INQ8), and "laws of the human mind."¹ Such laws are arrived at by a "copious, patient, and cautious induction" (159b/INQ151) from the reflective observations of one's mental operations, and it is only by following such a procedure that the philosopher can achieve "a just system of the mind—that is, an enumeration of the original powers and laws of our

constitution, and an explication from them of the various phenomena of human nature" (99b/INQ8).

Purporting to confine himself in the Inquiry to an investigation of perception with respect to the five senses, Reid discloses his discovery of several such laws, or "principles," each being expressed in terms of natural signification or, alternatively, "suggestion." What Reid understands by his technical use of the term 'suggestion' he illustrates with the following introductory example:

We all know, that a certain kind of sound suggests immediately to the mind, a coach passing in the street; and not only produces the imagination, but the belief, that a coach is passing. Yet there is here no comparing of ideas, no perception of agreements or disagreements, to produce this belief: nor is there the least similitude between the sound we hear and the coach we imagine and believe to be passing. (111a/INQ38)

What Reid intends to convey by the term 'suggestion' is a relation obtaining between three objects of thought: In this case, a "certain kind of sound" is followed by a conception of a passing coach and a belief that a coach is passing. This is not an example of what he calls a "natural and original suggestion" (see 111b/INQ38), but the scheme appropriate to the relation of suggestion is also appropriate to three classes of "natural signs" Reid distinguishes in the Inquiry.² He assures us in his Abstract that "suggestion" and natural signification are for him equivalent relations (A129b). Natural signs are natural because, unlike artificial or conventional signs, the connection between the items that function as natural signs and those that are naturally signified by them (or are suggested by them) is "established by nature" and not as a result of any human activity.

Reid's first class of natural signs is said to be at the foundation of "the whole of genuine philosophy" (121b/INQ66). In this class we discover by observation the connection between the items that serve us as signs and those that are signified by them. It is by observing regularities in nature and by reducing them to general rules, or laws, that we are able to create and to use successfully such diverse sciences as gardening, agriculture, mechanics, astronomy, optics, chemistry, and medicine (121b-122a/INQ66). We have a disposition to seek regularities in nature, as well as a disposition to believe in their continuance, and thus unreflectively use natural events semiotically:

It is undeniable, and indeed is acknowledged by all, that when we have found two things to have been constantly conjoined in the course of nature, the appearance of one of them is immediately followed by the conception and belief of the other. The former becomes a natural sign of the latter; and the knowledge of their constant conjunction in time past, whether got by experience or otherwise, is sufficient to make us rely with assurance upon the continuance of that conjunction. (197b/INQ242)

It is for this reason that Reid would prefer that ordinary causal reasoning, which falls under his first class of natural signs, be expressed in terms of natural signification:

What we commonly call natural causes, might, with more propriety, be called natural signs, and what we call effects, the things signified. The causes have no proper efficiency or causality, as far as we know; and all we can certainly affirm is, that nature hath established a constant conjunction between them and the things called their effects; and hath given to mankind a disposition to observe those connections, to confide in their continuance, and to make use of them for the improvement of our knowledge, and increase of our power. (122a/INQ66)

The second class of natural signs comprehends "the natural language of mankind." In this class the connection between the signs and what they signify is discovered not by observation, as with the first class of natural signs, but rather by a "natural principle." "Abolish the use of

articulate sounds and writing among mankind for a century," Reid claims, "and every man would be a painter, an actor, and an orator" (118b-119a/INQ57). Without the use of an artificial language, in other words, men would use a natural language whose signs and interpretations are made possible by natural principles, here understanding by 'language' "all those signs which mankind use in order to communicate to others their thoughts and intentions, their purposes and desires" (117b/INQ54). The language with which men are most familiar is an artificial language composed of signs whose sense is determined by "compact or agreement" (117b/INQ55). Since any compact among men requires the use of signs or language, he takes it to be demonstrable that "there must be a natural language before any artificial language can be invented" (118a/INQ55). The signs in this natural language are facial features, bodily gestures, and modulations of voice (118a/INQ56; 195a/INQ235). What such signs signify are thoughts and dispositions of mind:

Nature hath established a real connection between these signs, and the thoughts and dispositions of the mind which are signified by them; and Nature hath taught us the interpretations of these signs; so that, previous to experience, the signs suggest the things signified and create the belief of it. (195a/INQ235)

Our "innate" skill in interpreting the signs in this natural language enables us to see a man's dispositions "by their natural signs in his countenance and behaviour, in the same manner as we perceive the figure and other qualities of bodies by the sensations which nature hath connected with them" (195a/INQ235).

Reid's main concern in the Inquiry is ostensibly with the third class of natural signs. This class comprises the signs by means of which a man comes to natural beliefs about himself and a material world, and is

not only central to the perceptual process but is also required by the previous two classes of natural signs. In this class, too, natural signs both "suggest" certain intellectual objects and also "create" our belief in them. This third class of natural signs "comprehends those which, though we never before had any notion or conception of the thing signified, do suggest it, or conjure it up, as it were, by a natural kind of magic, and at once give us a conception and create a belief of it" (122a/INQ67). This dark saying is Reid's succinct statement of the psychological laws governing both our knowledge of ourselves as sentient beings and of "original perception," in which sensations naturally suggest—or are natural signs of—qualities of physical objects. It is because "the mind passes immediately from the sensation to that conception and belief of the object which we have in perception" that Reid elects to call sensations "signs of external objects"; finding no word more to express the function which Nature hath assigned them in perception, and the relation which they bear to their corresponding objects" (188a/INQ218).

"When I grasp a ball in my hand," Reid says, speaking of the sense of touch, "I perceive it at once hard, figured, and extended." Although the feeling or sensation does not resemble any quality of body, "Yet it suggests to us three primary qualities perfectly distinct from one another, as well as from the sensation which indicates them" (123b/INQ70). Here Reid describes a sensation as both suggesting and signifying a perceptual object of touch. Of one quality under consideration—viz., hardness—Reid says that "by an original principle of our constitution, a certain sensation of touch both suggests to the mind the conception of

hardness, and creates the belief of it: or, in other words, that this sensation is a natural sign of hardness" (121a-b/INQ65). He subsequently denies that we can acquire these concepts by any available 18th-century theory of learning or by any process of deduction, and denies that our belief in the hardness of bodies is got by tradition, education, reasoning, or intuition (121a/INQ64), considering this to hold true for all primary qualities.³ By virtue of the relation between a sensation and the conception and belief of a perceptual object, when one touches a ball, what one "originally perceives" is a hard, figured, and extended object; what one conceives are the hardness, figure, and extension of the object, and what one believes is that there is something that is hard, figured, and extended. Indeed, sensations also suggest naturally such truly intellectual objects as "the notion of present existence, and the belief that what we perceive or feel does now exist" and "the notion of a mind, and the belief of its existence, and of its relation to our thoughts" (111b/INQ38-39). By our constitution we are naturally guaranteed, except in well-defined circumstances, to have certain concepts and beliefs, as we could not if skepticism were true. By extension, and with the use of Reid's two other classes of natural signs, all of the items within the rich texture of human knowledge may be generated.

This generation of man's intellectual material is aided by the three ways in which "the mind passes from the appearance of a natural sign to the conception and belief of the thing signified"—by "original principles of our constitution," which yield our "original perceptions"; by "custom," which gives us all of our "acquired perceptions"; and by

reasoning, by means of which we discover "all that reason discovers of the course of Nature" (188a/INQ218-219).

Our "original perceptions" give us our most rudimentary concepts. Reason augments our intellectual materials through the powers of inference, analysis, supposition, decision, abstraction, and the thoughtful manipulation of ideas. Our "acquired perceptions" are given to us through "custom," a natural activity that utilizes what we have experienced to present to us in perception something of nature's processes.

Reid's distinction between "original" and "acquired" perception rests on a single issue—whether a previous acquaintance with the object is required for one to perceive it. The issue is quickly decided with respect to the sense of touch because "a certain sensation of touch both suggests to the mind the conception of hardness, and creates the belief of it," and "if we had never felt anything hard or soft, rough or smooth, figured or moved, we should never have had a conception of extension" (123b/INQ70). In original perception the suggestive power of sensations enables us to perceive without our having a prior acquaintance with the objects thus perceived. Acquired perception, however, does require a previous acquaintance with a perceptual object:

In acquired perception, the signs are either sensations, or things which we perceive by means of sensations. The connection between the sign and the thing signified, is established by nature; and we discover this connection by experience; but not without the aid of our original perceptions, or of those which we have already acquired. After this connection is discovered, the sign, in like manner as in original perception, always suggests the things signified, and creates the belief of it. (195a/INQ236)

Acquired perception is necessary for our knowledge of all secondary qualities. Accepting Locke's division between primary and secondary qualities,⁴ Reid gives to secondary qualities a double signification—they may sometimes "signify certain sensations of the mind," but "more frequently they signify a quality in bodies, which, by the laws of nature, occasions the sensations of [e.g.] heat and cold in us" (119a/INQ59–60). In this instance, the sensations of heat and cold, as sensations, are "perfectly known," but "the qualities in body which we call heat and cold, are unknown," being in fact only "unknown causes or occasions of the sensations to which we give the same names" (119b/INQ60). It will "easily be allowed," Reid says, that heat and cold are "secondary qualities, of the same order with smell, taste, and sound" (119a/INQ59).

On the one hand, the smell of a rose is something in us, when we smell it, and this Reid calls a sensation of smell. On the other hand, though, the smell of a rose is something that is not within us, and this is what is suggested or signified by the appropriate sensation. When one smells a rose, one has a sensation of smell that suggests, or is followed by, a conception of a rose and a belief that the conceived rose is causally responsible for the odor of which the percipient is aware. In this case we may say, following Reid's terminology, that the sensation of smell is a natural sign of the rose. But this is acquired perception, and thus some previous perceptual acquaintance with a rose is required for one to smell a rose in the basic perceptual meaning of the word 'smell'. What is needed is the experience of a common causal connection. Without this perceptual acquaintance, the percipient can be aware only of an odorous sensation that suggests, or is followed by, his belief that this sensation

is caused in him by something.⁵ Because one condition for original perception is here absent--viz., a conception of the perceptual object--one cannot, by means of the sense of smell, "originally perceive" anything at all. This holds true for the senses of taste and hearing, whose principal objects of perception are secondary qualities, as well as for the senses of touch and vision, when their perceptual objects are also secondary qualities.⁶ In smelling, tasting, and hearing one is given an acquired perception of an object by means of at least two of our five senses and through "custom," that is, through a repeated acquaintance with a perceptual object.⁷

It is by means of custom that one can perceive that a smell is the smell of a rose, that a certain sound is the sound of a passing coach, or that a certain taste is the taste of brandy. This is also true, concerning secondary qualities, of the senses of touch and vision. In this way we acquire not a direct conception of secondary qualities but rather a "relative conception" of them:

The sensation of heat, and the sensation we have by pressing a hard body, are equally feelings; nor can we, by reasoning, draw any conclusion from the one but what may be drawn from the other: but, by our constitution, we conclude from the first an obscure or occult quality, of which we have only this relative conception, that it is something adapted to raise in us the sensation of heat; from the second, we conclude a quality of which we have a clear and distinct conception--to wit, the hardness of the body. (125a-b/INQ73)

A person who has an acquired perception of some secondary quality has thus learned by experience, and by the use of at least two of his sense organs, a rudimentary law of nature with regard to the perception of a secondary quality:

The smell of a rose is a certain affection or feeling of the mind; and, as it is not constant, but comes and goes, we want to know when and

where we may expect it; and are uneasy till we find something which, being present, brings this feeling along with it, and, being removed, removes it. This, when found, we call the cause of it; not in a strict and philosophical sense, as if the feeling were really effected or produced by that cause, but in a popular sense; for the mind is satisfied if there is a constant conjunction between them; and such causes are in reality nothing else but laws of nature.
(112b-113a/INQ41-42)

The statement 'Roses are odorous' is to be explicated in terms of the conditions under which a percipient, in relation to a rose, is perceptually aware of the smell (or odor) of a rose. When the stated conditions include the percipient's conception of a rose and a belief that the smell of which he is aware is a consequence of his contact with a rose (in the required circumstances), the percipient is then said to perceive a rose by the sense of smell, in a sense that requires that the laws governing this process be psycho-physical laws, and not merely the psychological laws in terms of which Reid discusses natural signs and the suggestions of sensations. To have a "relative conception" of a secondary quality in an attributive sense is to have the conception of an object as standing in a law-like relation to the percipient's sensation, as a secondary quality in a non-attributive sense.⁸

According to Reid, then, perception, natural signification, and the relation between a percipient and the physical world are all to be explained by reference to laws of nature, or general facts, laws of nature being "the most general facts we can discover in the operations of nature" (163b/INQ160). A "cause" in a popular sense "signifies no more, but that one thing, which we call in popular language the cause, is constantly and invariably followed by another, which we call the effect; and that we know not how they are connected' (157a/INQ146). It is to such connections that "we give the name of laws of nature" (157a/INQ146). These laws he also

calls "principles," that is, principles governing the behavior of objects in nature, or "rules" in accordance with which such objects in nature behave. These laws, principles, or rules are general descriptions of the regular and invariant behavior of the items falling under them.

Reid discusses three kinds of law. The first is the psychological law, which is uncovered by the "way of reflection." This primarily concerns the relation between sensations and the conception and belief of objects of perception. Such are those he calls "laws of our constitution" or "laws of the human mind." The second kind of law is the law of nature, which comprises those physical laws discovered by means of perceptual observation, whether or not they are expressed in terms of mathematical formulae. The third is what we have called the psycho-physical law, in terms of which Reid casts the process involved in perceiving such items as smells, tastes, sounds, and visible appearances. Our perception of objects is "the result of a train of operations; some of which affect the body only, others affect the mind" (186b/INQ214). While we may know very little of the nature of these operations, "by the laws of constitution, we perceive objects in this, and in no other way" (186b/INQ214). This is possible only if the laws Reid uncovers are psycho-physical laws.

With these distinctions marked we see clearly Reid's two vantage points. The first aims at producing a psychological law, and in so doing Reid follows the "way of reflection" to reach the varieties of sensations and what they suggest or naturally signify. The second vantage point draws upon known physical laws, eventually including, e.g., the laws of physiology and optics, to formulate statements of the psycho-physical laws governing "the train of operations" involved in perception.

This has obvious consequences for the sense in which Reid uses the term 'perception' in the Inquiry. His first vantage point requires that a percipient be placed in perceptual situations in which the perceptual objects exist uncontroversially. Only in this way can one begin to attend to the sensations given by touching a figured body, smelling a rose, hearing a sound, tasting a bitter lemon, or seeing a tree. Although Reid uses 'perception' in such a way that physical laws need not be used in formulating psychological laws, this fact does not render unnecessary the methodological requirement that the perceptual objects exist in order to formulate the laws of perception disclosed by the way of reflection.⁹ Reid's second vantage point also requires the existence of both percipient beings and physical objects, for Reid uses 'perception' in a way that requires that a psycho-physical law hold true for the senses under consideration. Neither the psychological law nor the physical law can be accepted without also granting the existence and description of the items falling under those laws.

These observations have two consequences for our understanding of Reid's methodology in the Inquiry. The first is that Reid takes for granted a physical world and percipient beings, and so it is not his aim in the Inquiry to establish the existence of either. The second is that his aim in the Inquiry is both descriptive and explanatory. His task is to describe the phenomena of perception and the perceptual experiences derived by placing ourselves in real or imagined perceptual situations. The laws thereby uncovered, these "most general facts," are general descriptions of "constantly and invariably" connected items. By following the specific connections, and by generalizing these, Reid may formulate

principles (or laws) that explain the specific connections, because such laws (or principles) imply those connections.

If this were all that Reid advances against skepticism, however, his Inquiry would be an easy book to study, a scholar's dream come true, and one that permits his students to approach the subtlety of his later works with a foothold in a plainer philosophy of mind. Reid's anti-skepticism, however, is really approached on two sides. On the first, he attempts to explain how it is that man has the basic concepts he has. On the second, he attempts to demonstrate why his study of the five senses should convince one that the skepticism he finds prevalent in the 18th century cannot be true, and why the very "principles of common sense" inevitably support his anti-skeptical position.

Reid, of course, expected his Inquiry, his "anatomy of the mind," to lay bare the "original principles of human nature," or the "laws of our constitution," with respect to perception. In the second chapter of his Inquiry he claims the following of the term 'common sense':

If there are certain principles, as I think there are, which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them—these are what we call the principles of common sense; and what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd. (108b/INQ32)

In his conclusion to that work, though, we find that the term 'common sense' is not coextensive with all beliefs derived in accordance with the laws of perception. For Reid, "every operation of the senses, in its very nature, implies judgment or belief, as well as simple apprehension" (209a/INQ268). But for Reid, too, the larger part of our perceptual beliefs is acquired by experience, by custom, and by reasoning. Such

perceptual beliefs are often discovered to be false, either because the experiences are insufficient, and the beliefs based upon them are hastily formed, or because the reasoning involved is deficient. We are often able to give reasons for such beliefs. Reid thereby reserves the term 'common sense' for the class of beliefs or judgments that are "original and natural":

Such original and natural judgments are, therefore, a part of that furniture which Nature hath given to the human understanding. They are the inspirations of the Almighty, no less than our notions or simple apprehensions. They serve to direct us in the common affairs of life, where our reasoning faculty would leave us in the dark. They are a part of our constitution; and all the discoveries of our reason are grounded upon them. They make up what is called the common sense of mankind; and, what is manifestly contrary to any of those first principles, is what we call absurd. (209b/INQ268)

In the Inquiry, when Reid uses the term 'principles of common sense', he means one of two things: First, he may mean those laws of our constitution that give rise to the beliefs or judgments of common sense; in this sense, his third discovered class of natural signs provides us with beliefs or judgments of common sense and is thus labeled "the foundation of common sense" (122b/INQ68). Second, he may mean those beliefs or judgments that not only are natural and original but are also foundational of human knowledge. It is this last sense he uses to cast "the common sense of mankind" and to which he attaches the label 'first principles'. These principles of common sense are wider in significance than those yielded by his third class of natural signs, and so are not exhausted by a list of natural and original beliefs. Indeed, Reid says: "A clear explication and enumeration of the principles of common sense, is one of the chief desiderata in logic," noting that he has "only considered

such of them as occurred in the examination of the five senses" (209b/INQ269).¹⁰

Reid does not list these "first principles" (which, like those laws according to which we hold our perceptual beliefs and like the original and natural beliefs so acquired, fall under the term 'principles of common sense'), but he does cite as first principles "the evidence of sense, the evidence of memory, and the evidence of the necessary relations of things," all of which are "distinct and original kinds of evidence, equally grounded on our constitution" (108a/INQ30). It is "absurd" to reason against these and "absurd" to reason for them: "They are first principles; and such fall not within the province of reason, but of common sense" (108a/INQ30).

The principles of common sense are those original and natural beliefs that come to us according to the correctly uncovered laws of our constitution. They are thus judgments that cannot be negotiated, for nothing save a contrary law can alter our acceptance of them. We are under a necessity to grant them. Because we hold them on nonrational grounds, we can offer no reasons for accepting them and no reasons against accepting them, if by 'reasons' we understand statements that, when seriously considered, might alter our acceptance of these beliefs. These principles are "first principles" by virtue of the use to which they are naturally put within the system of human knowledge. Because "All our knowledge of nature beyond our original perceptions, is got by experience, and consists in the interpretation of natural signs" (199a/INQ245), we must rely by a natural necessity upon perceptual beliefs, memories, and the principles of reasoning in reaching conclusions concerning items not

given by our original and natural perceptions. These further beliefs require, or presuppose, our acceptance of the beliefs of perception, memory, and the necessary relations of things, which, because they are presupposed, are thus "first principles" and foundational of human knowledge. These foundations are both psychological in origin and nonrational because unsupported by, and not accepted on the basis of, any other belief. These principles of common sense are those discovered beliefs that the constitution of our nature leads us to accept and those that we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them (108b/INQ32). They "fall not within the province of reason, but of common sense," Reid says, and this is so because they are wholly nonrational and are sustained by nothing but instinct.

2. Reid's First Principles - I

One thing that is not solved by going beyond Reid's Inquiry to any one of his later publications is the status "first principles of common sense" have within his early theory of knowledge. Indeed, the main exegetical problem of the Inquiry itself lies in determining both his methodological goal in uncovering "principles of common sense" and the strength of these against skepticism.

The chief lines of Reid's discussion are clear enough. Man is so constituted that he will believe certain things when certain circumstances concur. A description of these circumstances will yield the laws of the belief's formation in varying degrees of generality, depending upon the circumstances so circumscribed. Knowledge requires belief and, because

belief originates in accordance with laws, knowledge requires principles of common sense, in both senses employed by Reid—as laws that explain the beliefs' formation and as the beliefs "originally and naturally" formed in this way. These beliefs are not accepted on the basis of any evidence whatsoever, but are given to us in accordance with the laws of our constitution. We do accept many beliefs on the basis of other beliefs, and so accept many beliefs by inference. Such inferred beliefs require some common-sense beliefs for their justification and defense. Since the justification of an inferred belief requires a belief of common sense, which is not inferred; the belief of common sense so needed is the foundation of any inferred beliefs that depend upon it as their "first principle." In this way the beliefs of common sense are the foundations of human knowledge. These foundations are both psychological in origin and nonrational because unsupported by, and not accepted on the basis of, any other belief.

The chief purpose of the Inquiry was to combat skepticism. Reid's refutation of the "theory of ideas" (or the "ideal system") does not, however, rely on any special status granted to the fundamental beliefs of common sense, and his anti-skeptical polemic in the Inquiry does not force him to characterize them as something other than psychological. The problem of knowledge per se is not a concern of the Inquiry. His attack upon the reigning 18th-century theory of knowledge accordingly does not rest on any epistemological defense of the beliefs of common sense, but turns instead on his two-part dismissal of the theory's central tenets.

The theory in question Reid finds sponsored by philosophers as ancient as the early Greeks, but its new form, the modern version that

concerns him, is the doctrine that what we perceive or think is never a physical object but is always some intellectual surrogate. From this he concludes that a physical world, according to this "ideal system," is never perceptually present to a percipient, and that the theory thus implies a skepticism about any perceptual object beyond one's ideas and thoughts.

He discovered Hume to have drawn this conclusion, and it was precisely this that motivated Reid to reflect on those issues that yielded his Inquiry.¹¹ The "modern scepticism" is the natural issue of the "new system," and it was Hume, despite "a peculiar strain of humour in this author" (102a/INQ14), who brought forth "this monster" with the publication of his Treatise of Human Nature in 1739 (206a/INQ261). The "new system" was Cartesian, but Reid found its principles being followed by Locke, by Berkeley, and finally by Hume, whose honest skepticism urged Reid to question its origins. Berkeley's arguments for immaterialism "are founded upon the principles which were formerly laid down by Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Locke, and which have been very generally received" (101b/INQ14). Hume, Reid says, "proceeds upon the same principles, but carries them to their full length" and so "leaves nothing in nature but ideas and impressions, without any subject on which they may be impressed" (102a/INQ14).

There are two chief pillars of the ideal system, just as there are two parts to Reid's refutation. In Reid's interpretation the first of these pillars concerns what may be an acceptable object of one's knowledge. The theory of ideas asserts that these are either sensations

—for the material world "must be the express image of our sensations"

(127b/INQ78)—or ideas disclosed by reflection:

That the natural issue of this system is scepticism with regard to everything except the existence of our ideas, and of their necessary relations, which appear upon comparing them, is evident; for ideas, being the only objects of thought, and having no existence but when we are conscious of them, it necessarily follows that there is no object of our thought which can have a continued and permanent existence. Body and spirit, cause and effect, time and space, to which we are wont to ascribe an existence independent of our thought, are all turned out of existence by this short dilemma. Either these things are ideas of sensation or reflection, or they are not: if they are ideas of sensation or reflection, they can have no existence but when we are conscious of them; if they are not ideas of sensation or reflection, they are words without any meaning. (207a-b/INQ264)

Borrowing from his discoveries in the Inquiry, Reid is able to turn this thesis into a false tenet, for "The very existence of our conceptions of extension, figure, and motion, since they are neither ideas of sensation nor reflection, overturns the whole ideal system, by which the material world hath been tried and condemned...." (128a/INQ79). He proposes this as an experimentum crucis (128a/INQ80), but he takes his work in the Inquiry to have decided the issue.¹²

The second pillar of this system is also a Cartesian legacy. Descartes's Cogito required him to admit the indubitability of consciousness, for it is by consciousness that the truth of the Cogito is presented to him. With the Cogito as his first truth, every other truth, "and particularly the existence of the objects of sense, was to be deduced by a train of strict argumentation from what he knew by consciousness" (205a/INQ259). Because not indubitable, the existence of body, or any of its qualities, according to Reid's reading of the Cartesian teaching, is "not to be taken as a first principle," but rather "we ought to admit nothing concerning it, but what, by just reasoning, can be deduced from

our sensations" (205b/INQ260). The Aristotelians, on the other hand, accepted as a "first principle" that bodies and their qualities really exist, but also accepted that sensations, by which we know bodies, are impressed upon us and resemble the bodies as an impressed wax resembles its seal.

Reid proposes this ironical compromise:

The way to avoid both these extremes, is to admit the existence of what we see and feel as a first principle, as well as the existence of things whereof we are conscious; and take our notions of the qualities of body, from the testimony of our senses, with the Peripatetics; and our notions of our sensations, from the testimony of consciousness, with the Cartesians. (206a/INQ261)

The compromise is ironical because it is the very doctrine of common sense he has advanced and the one that is forced upon us by the constitution of our nature. Devotees of the ideal system seek to avoid this position, though, by accepting that the testimony of consciousness alone is a first principle, in exclusion of all others forced upon us by nature:

The new system admits only one of the principles of common sense as a first principle; and pretends, by strict argumentation, to deduce all the rest from it. That our thoughts, our sensations, and every thing of which we are conscious, hath a real existence, is admitted in this system as a first principle; but every thing else must be made evident by the light of reason. Reason must rear the whole fabric of knowledge upon this single principle of consciousness. (206b/INQ262)

In this complex declaration we find Reid using the term 'first principle', in a second sense of the technical phrase, to mean something accepted without proof or evidence. The beliefs of common sense may also be first principles in two senses—(1) as beliefs accepted simply without evidence, for all are accepted in accordance with the laws of our constitution and not on the basis of evidence or other beliefs; and (2) as beliefs or judgments required for the justification of inferred beliefs.

Finally, though, we find Reid's response to this tenet of the "new system" to be actually a response ad hominem. The Cartesians' error was to accept without proof the testimony of consciousness as a first principle and to demand of the other beliefs of common sense, so disclosed by Reid's investigation, that they be proved. Since all other beliefs of common sense are to be proved and not accepted without proof, they are, according to the Cartesians, inferred beliefs and cannot, therefore, be first principles. According to Reid, the first principle adopted by the Cartesians is on the same level as the beliefs of common sense, and, if Reid is correct, all men, including the Cartesians, do in fact accept these beliefs as first principles. Reid's response, then, is that adherents of the Cartesian tenet ought not to accept skepticism with regard to a physical world because their de facto acceptance of the principles of common sense no longer renders this skepticism a natural issuance of their position.

Beyond our constitutional compulsion to accept the beliefs of common sense, and to accept them as true, what is it about them that makes them relevant to a theory of knowledge and not merely relevant to a psychology? Reid's principles of common sense are such that we must accept them without benefit of evidence, and they are in fact presupposed by our more complex inferred beliefs. But what assurance do we have that these beliefs are true ones? Failing this, why are we theoretically entitled to accept them as true without proof? Inevitably these questions require different answers than those made available in the Inquiry, for Reid's book simply does not direct itself to this more general issue. The principles of common sense are those discovered beliefs that the

constitution of our nature leads us to accept and those that we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them (108b/INQ32).

Although Reid does claim that "what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd," this is neither a normative response to the issue nor the desired assurance that we are correct in accepting the beliefs of common sense as true. Nor has Reid's doctrine escaped skepticism. Reid can turn his ad hominem response into a successful refutation of such skepticism as held by the Cartesians, but only if our foundational beliefs, the first principles of common sense, are held not to be inconsistent with each other. Unfortunately, there is absolutely nothing within the doctrines of the Inquiry to support one's acceptance of that assumption. Reid's principles "fall not within the province of reason, but of common sense" because they are wholly nonrational and are sustained by nothing but instinct.

3. Reid's First Principles - II

By the time Reid published his Intellectual Powers in 1780, he had been led to differing views on the nature of common sense beliefs. In 1774 he published "A Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic with Remarks" as an appendix to Lord Kames's History of Man, and published nothing further between the appearance of the Inquiry and the Intellectual Powers. In his "Account," later published under the title "An Analysis of Aristotle's Logic," he flirted with self-evidence as a mark and certification of first principles:

It is of great consequence to accurate reasoning to distinguish first principles which are to be taken for granted, from propositions which require proof. All the real knowledge of mankind may be divided into two parts: The first consisting of self-evident propositions; the second, of those which are deduced by just reasoning from self-evident propositions. (712b)

First principles, he adds, "do not admit of direct proof," although "there must be certain marks and characters by which those that are truly such may be distinguished from counterfeits" (713a).

When he returned to the subject in the Intellectual Powers, in Essay VI, "Of Judgment," he is less concerned with the laws of belief than with the formal character of knowledge and its ingredients: belief or judgment, conception or simple apprehension, and the various grounds of belief in general. As laws of our constitution, the principles of common sense no longer appear within the framework of human knowledge, but now belong developmentally to the class of animal instincts:

It is, no doubt, the perfection of a rational being to have no belief but what is grounded on intuitive evidence, or on just reasoning: but man, I apprehend, is not such a being, in every period of his existence. We come into the world without the exercise of reason; we are merely animal before we are rational creatures; and it is necessary for our preservation, that we should believe many things before we can reason. How then is our belief to be regulated before we have reason to regulate it? ... It is regulated by certain principles, which are parts of our constitution; whether they ought to be called animal principles, or instinctive principles, or what name we give to them, is of small moment; but they are certainly different from the faculty of reason: they do the office of reason while it is in its infancy ... and they are leading-springs to it in its gradual progress.
(333a/IP304-305)

At some point after the appearance of the Inquiry, Reid's concern with developing a science of mind faltered on his discovery of laws of conception and belief that could not be extended to cover the genesis of concepts and beliefs without incorporating into that science a theoretical apparatus that included more than his "way of reflection" would permit.

As a result, suggestion as a mechanism of concept formation is entirely absent from the Intellectual Powers. Although what we can conceive is limited by our acquaintance with the elements of our conceptions, the origin of concepts is entirely unaccountable. Our first acts of conceiving and believing are "hid," says Reid, "like the sources of the Nile, in an unknown region" (417b/IP545; cf. 529a/AP52).

Having lost the power of suggestibility, sensations now attend perception and signify their objects without suggesting them, there being no temporal interval needed for signification to take place. Thus, "from the sign, the mind passes immediately to the conception and belief of the thing signified" (331b/IP301).¹³

In the Intellectual Powers belief is clearly an essential ingredient in consciousness, in perception, and in memory.¹⁴ But Reid uses 'belief' in two senses. As "judgment," a belief is always expressed by "a proposition, wherein something is affirmed or denied" (327b/IP289) and, in this sense, without belief there could be neither affirmation nor denial. On the other hand, as what we may call one's acceptance of a proposition, belief is to be distinguished from judgment. Judgment is "an act of the mind, whereby one thing is affirmed or denied of another" in a complete proposition (413a/IP532; cf. 428a/IP575), or is rather "every determination of the mind concerning what is true or what is false" (415b/IP539). In Reid's second sense, then, belief always accompanies judgment in sensation, perception, memory, and consciousness:

Whether judgment ought to be called a necessary concomitant of these operations, or rather a part or ingredient of them, I do not dispute; but it is certain that all of them are accompanied with a determination that something is true or false, and a consequent belief. If this determination be not judgment, it is an operation that has got no name;

for it is not simple apprehension, neither is it reasoning; it is a mental affirmation or negation; it may be expressed by a proposition affirmative or negative, and it is accompanied with the firmest belief. (414b/IP536)

Men's judgments belong to two classes. There are judgments that are immutably true and are thus eternal or necessary truths (430a/IP580), and there are judgments "concerning the real existence of things," which Reid calls "contingent truths" (430a/IP580). For Reid, therefore, judgments are "either necessary and immutable truths, whose contrary is impossible; or they are contingent and mutable, depending upon some effect of will and power, which had a beginning, and may have an end" (441b/IP614-615). These judgments may be located in two more general classes of judgment—those that are "intuitive" and those "grounded on argument" (434a/IP593). Of the former Reid says:

...there are other propositions which are no sooner understood than they are believed. The judgment follows the apprehension of them necessarily, and both are equally the work of nature, and the result of our original powers. There is no searching for evidence, no weighing of arguments; the proposition is not deduced or inferred from another; it has the light of truth in itself, and has no occasion to borrow it from another. (434a/IP593)

Such judgments are "called first principles, principles of common sense, common notions, self-evident truths" (434b/IP593), and these judgments have this status whether they are contingent or necessary.

Reid no longer approaches his subject as a psychologist in search of Newtonian laws of mind, but rather as a logician whose province is the foundation of human knowledge.¹⁵ Since the bulk of our knowledge is achieved through inference, and because, for Reid, "all knowledge got by reasoning must be built upon first principles" (435a/IP596; cf. 422b/IP559), there must therefore be judgments (or beliefs, in Reid's

variant sense) that are held without inference or reasoning. Which of our judgments are "first principles" or "principles of common sense" is to be discovered by inspecting the inferences and judgments we make to locate those judgments without which we could not arrive at the inferences and reasoned judgments we do in fact accept. Such judgments are formally required for synthetical proofs, "where we begin with the premises, and pursue a train of consequences, until we come to the last conclusion or thing to be proved" (435b/IP596). These judgments are also facts that we can discover by analysis, that is, by examining our reasons for holding certain propositions until we arrive at judgments accepted without inference and thus not on the basis of any other judgment (435a-b/IP596). These foundational judgments or "beliefs" are no longer at variance with reason, as they were in the Inquiry, for in the Intellectual Powers "reason" is no longer the province solely of inference and argumentation, but has two "distinct offices":

The first is to judge of things self-evident; the second is to draw conclusions that are not self-evident from those that are. The first of these is the province, and the sole province, of common sense; and, therefore, it coincides with reason in its whole extent, and is only another name for one branch or one degree of reason. (425b/IP567)

For Reid, this "branch of reason" is judgment, and the term 'common sense', he claims, is better expressed by the term 'common judgment' because its common referent is a capacity for making judgments that all men make. That there are such judgments is both a logical matter, which concerns the logical or evidential requirements of a proposition's acceptance, and a serious social concern:

When men differ about things that are taken to be first principles or self-evident truths, reasoning seems to be at an end. Each party appeals to common sense. When one man's common sense gives one

determination, another man's a contrary determination, there seems to be no remedy but to leave every man to enjoy his own opinion.
(437b/IP603)

The alternative is to locate principles that all men accept and the criteria by which they are to be identified as just such principles.

Among these criteria Reid proposes four: (1) Universality of opinion; (2) the personal primitivity of a belief, since those opinions that "appear so early in the minds of men that they cannot be the effect of education or of false reasoning, have a good claim to be considered as first principles" (441a/IP613); (3) the evidential requirement of a belief's acceptance; and (4) the practical necessity of the belief, for "when an opinion is so necessary in the conduct of life, that, without the belief of it, a man must be led into a thousand absurdities in practice, such an opinion, when we can give no other reason for it, may safely be taken for a first principle" (441a/IP613).¹⁶

By examining the structure of languages and their common features, we will find a "uniformity of opinion in those things upon which that structure is grounded" (440b/IP612). When these, among others, are found not to be derived either by reasoning, by perceptual discovery, or by education, we have found Reid's universal opinions, whose source is explainable only by their being necessitated by the human constitution. Our discovery that these universally primitive beliefs are either logically or evidentially required for a given set of universally accepted propositions is the discovery of the first principles of common sense.

These principles, because they are not derivative from others, cannot be proved true directly, but can be proved only indirectly. The first method of indirect proof is by reductio ad absurdum. Here the

contradictory of the principle is supposed true, its consequences are drawn, and, if these consequences are found to be inconsistent with any other propositions we hold to be true, we conclude that our original supposition is false and its contradictory (the principle in question) is true (439b/IP608). By the second method, the principle may be forced upon a reasoner by ad hominem reasoning. "It is a good argument ad hominem," says Reid, "if it can be shewn that a first principle which a man rejects, stands upon the same footing with others which he admits: for, when this is the case, he must be guilty of an inconsistency who holds the one and rejects the other" (439a/IP608). Thus, says Reid of the skeptic:

... the faculties of consciousness, of memory, of external sense, and of reason, are all equally the gifts of nature. No good reason can be assigned for receiving the testimony of one of them, which is not of equal force with regard to the others. The greatest sceptics admit the testimony of consciousness, and allow that what it testifies is to be held as a first principle. If, therefore, they reject the immediate testimony of sense or of memory, they are guilty of an inconsistency. (439b/IP608)

Reid's ad hominem "proof" is really a special case of his reductio. The successful reductio requires that an inconsistency arise from the logical conflict between the consequences of the first principle's contradictory and either another first principle or its consequences. The ad hominem requires that an inconsistency similarly arise from the acceptance of one first principle and the rejection of another, and that, because both principles are of the same logical type, their joint acceptance (but not joint rejection) is implied by this inconsistency. This should be noted because what is at issue here is the mutual consistency of first principles and the need for this consistency in Reid's epistemological procedure.

Now Reid composed the Intellectual Powers fully aware that the reasonableness of human knowledge is inconsistent with its irrationality. Unfortunately, though Reid came to realize it, the Inquiry embraced just this inconsistency. The Inquiry evidently treated the principles of common sense as nonrational beliefs. They were available as the foundations of inferred beliefs—by means of which there is, and can be, a "fabric" of knowledge—but they were also available for any conflict with inferred beliefs, and with each other. If the rational man is one who accepts his beliefs on the basis of evidence for them, as Reid believes, and if, therefore, the nonrational man is one who accepts his beliefs without benefit of evidence, then one may make the transition from the nonrational to the rational, as Reid takes most men to do, whether or not the foundational beliefs of human knowledge are evidentially secure. But men may also make the transition to irrationality by accepting a belief that they have good reason for rejecting. That is, one may make the psychological move from the nonrational to the rational simply by undertaking to base one's beliefs upon reasons. However, one cannot make any transition from the psychological to the epistemological until the process of reasoning is reconstructed in such a way that the components of this process are rendered epistemically relevant to the achievement of knowledge and not simply the factual components of a purely psychological process. There are thus two related matters under consideration—the consistency of first principles and their consequences, and the means by which one erects an epistemology upon a psychology of the reasoning process.

Considering the matter abstractly, let us say that a descriptive epistemology supplies both a theory of knowledge and a logic of the knowing process, and that it does so in such a way that the knowing process successfully results in knowledge. A logic of the knowing process is not a statistical record of correct and incorrect inferences, but is rather a record of the general rules of inference that yield knowledge claims, i.e., a record of the conditions under which the elements of a psychological process yield propositions that, following canons of justification, are known propositions. If this view is acceptable, then a theory of knowledge is in effect a theory of justification, supplying the canons by means of which the knowing process does yield known propositions. These joint inquiries require that the terms 'knowing' and 'knowledge' be significant terms, which is only to say, of course, that an epistemology must have a subject matter.

Additionally, that there are first principles is not a matter of psychology but of logic. A psychology need not adhere to any requirement regarding the consistency of statements within its subject matter because a record of its inquiry may (and assuredly will) feature inconsistencies and yet still remain a psychology all the same. The concern of the Inquiry was both with the psychological processes involved in perception and with the principles of those inferences by means of which men arrive at empirical knowledge. The weakness of Reid's early published entry into epistemology was not that it lay bare the nonrational status of first principles, but rather that Reid failed in stepping beyond a logic of the knowing process without having a theory of knowledge. Thus Reid's purported ad hominem response to the Cartesians, while effectively

committing such skeptics to the principles of common sense, made clear the possibility that human knowledge is at its roots either inconsistent or irrational—inconsistent because the skeptic could deny what, by his nature, he could not, and irrational because the non-skeptic could accept what, by skeptical reasoning, he ought not. Being committed by nature to the principles of common sense is no deciding factor in a theoretical choice between them. In the Intellectual Powers Reid has resolved this problem by accepting a theory of knowledge in which first principles must be jointly consistent because the deductive and inductive inferences employed in reaching knowledge claims are found to presuppose them, and because the bulk of what men know is achieved by inference, which presupposes such consistency, and not by a mere train of thought. By proposing a reductio ad absurdum proof of first principles, Reid commits himself to this general epistemological tenet.

Reid's theory of propositions admits two types: the necessary and the contingent. According to Reid, necessary first principles are the axioms of the various sciences, including grammar, logic, mathematics (452a/IP644), the fine arts (453a-b/IP646-649), morals (453b-454a/IP649-650), and metaphysics.¹⁷ In each system the principles are dictated by the formal relations among the elements within the system and the internal consequences of its steps. A science is an organized system of knowledge with a pre-existent subject matter. Thus, unless one creates both a science and a subject matter, the practice or subject matter always antedates the discovery of its formal features.

Before Aristotle, men were able to reason, and to reason well, without benefit of the syllogism, and surely without knowing any rule of

inference. This is no less true for mathematics, and for speakers and writers who know nothing of transformational grammar. But one hoping to formulate a system of logic, for example, is wise to begin precisely where other pioneers have begun—by examining the inferences men make, by classifying them, by isolating the valid from the invalid and the permissible from the impermissible, and by placing these within an organized system dependent upon first principles, i.e., upon principles not derivative within the system itself.

Reid was notably impressed by prior successes in mathematics, logic, and natural philosophy. In mathematics its laborers have "from the days of Euclid, very wisely laid down the axioms or first principles on which they reason." "And the effect which this appears to have had upon the stability and happy progress of this science, gives no small encouragement to attempt to lay the foundations of other sciences in a similar manner, as far as we are able" (452a/IP644-645). Aristotle's syllogistic and Francis Bacon's method of induction together brought logic to two "grand eras" in the progress of human knowledge. Building upon Bacon's discoveries in particular, says Reid, Newton perfected natural philosophy by uncovering its first principles:

Lord Bacon first delineated the only solid foundation on which natural philosophy can be built; and Sir Isaac Newton reduced the principles laid down by Bacon into three or four axioms, which he calls regulae philosophandi. From these, together with the phenomena observed by the senses, which he likewise lays down as first principles, he deduces, by strict reasoning, the propositions contained in the third book of his "Principia," and in his "Optics"; and by this means has raised a fabric in those two branches of natural philosophy, which is not liable to be shaken by doubtful disputation, but stands immovable upon the basis of self-evident principles. (436b/IP600)

It was Reid's desire to see a similar unanimity on first principles in all other sciences in general and in human belief in particular. Men who follow a specific practice can proceed with that practice unencumbered by disputation and dissension when they are agreed on the principles of their discipline. Reid's principles of common sense are designed to codify the principles upon which human knowledge is built. The position they occupy within the practices of knowing and inquiring is the clue to our discovery of their epistemological status.

Reid cites twelve first principles of contingent truths.¹⁸ Each occupies a double position within the general system of human knowledge. Each one is a particular, intuitive judgment, and each incorporates an evidential rule for some other belief or beliefs. Because Reid does not present a developed analytical (i.e., fully general and formalized) theory of knowledge, his set of first principles of contingent truths therefore does not supply all of the canons of justification for human factual knowledge. What these principles yield is that we are justified in accepting certain existential propositions on the basis of: what is disclosed by consciousness, memory, perception, and the testimony of others; our judgment that future occurrences will likely be similar to occurrences in similar circumstances in the past; our belief in our personal identity and ourselves as thinking, sentient beings; our belief that we are able to act; our beliefs in the intelligence of others, the probable regularity of their conduct, and that their character and aims may be inferred from their conduct; and, finally, on the basis of our conviction that our intellectual faculties, upon which we must rely in judging and reasoning about matters of fact, are not fallacious.

These postulates of human knowledge share this general characteristic with the axioms of the various sciences: not only must they be taken for granted in all the inferences that are based upon them, but they are necessary for specific inferences within a systematic rendering of human knowledge. They ought never, therefore, to appear among conclusions of the inferences within this system (and so are not provable within the system itself). They are foundations of a system and form its presuppositions. There is thus a logical relation obtaining between a first principle and its inferences, and this holds true regardless of the type of proposition that stands as a first principle. Following Reid's general criteria, first principles are universal among men, logically and evidentially secure, evidentially required for justification, and practically necessary for certain human practices. We should add, too, that first principles are not rendered true by virtue of the internal relations they bear to inferences based upon them, much like boot-straps.

First principles of necessary truths are true solely by virtue of their analyticity.¹⁹ First principles of contingent truths are not true by virtue of their logical form. All inferences are similarly divided by means of Reid's theory of propositions. Necessary truth is the "field of demonstration" and contingent truth is the "field of probable reasoning" (481b/IP729). Human factual knowledge, whose propositions are contingent, is the province of probable reasoning whose strength "for the most part, depends not upon any one argument, but upon many, which unite their force, and lead to the same conclusion" (482a/IP730). Both types of reasoning require first principles "whose truth is known intuitively, without reasoning, either probable or demonstrative" (482a/IP730).

Our assent to a proposition is "judgment, whether the proposition be self-evident, or derive its evidence by reasoning from other propositions" (475a/IP710). Because reasoning, unlike simple judgment, "is the process by which we pass from one judgment to another which is the consequence of it" (475a/IP710), our judgments are either "intuitive," because "not grounded on any preceding judgment," or discursive, "which are deduced from some preceding judgment by reasoning" (475a/IP710). It is for this reason that all reasoning must rest upon some first principle or another. If all judgments were based upon reasoning, i.e., if every judgment were derived from another, there would be an infinity of judgments needed in reaching any sound conclusion. There must therefore be some judgments that are made (some propositions assented to) without reasoning (without passing from one judgment to another). Consequently, some judgments must be intuitive. A general characteristic of all judgment is that the judgment "is carried along necessarily by the evidence, real or seeming, which appears to us at the time" (434a/IP593). A special class of judgments have as members those that are "no sooner understood than they are believed" and in which the judgment "follows the apprehension of them necessarily" (434a/IP593). Such are Reid's first principles.

The intuitive judgments we make are, according to Reid, psychologically forced upon us. Judging is purely natural, like walking or swallowing our food (434b/IP594). Our "belief of first principles is an act of pure judgment without reasoning" (489b/IP751), and it is the human constitution that necessitates our acceptance of first principles:

The constitution of our understanding determines us to hold the truth of a mathematical axiom as a first principle, from which other truths may be deduced, but it is deduced from none; and the constitution of our power of perception determines us to hold the existence of what we distinctly perceive as a first principle, from which other truths may be deduced, but it is deduced from none. (260a/IP116-117)

In the case of a necessary statement we may locate the reason for the judgment's evidential hold on us in the statement's analyticity, or by means of a formal proof. But we cannot do the same for contingent first principles. All contingent judgments, if true, are true at the time and in the circumstances of the judgment, and Reid denies that any judgment is rendered true because it is necessitated by the human constitution:²⁰

There ... are judgments, as well as feelings, that are excited by the particular structure and fabric of the mind. But there is this remarkable difference between them, That every judgment is, in its own nature, true or false; and, though it depends upon the fabric of a mind, whether it have such a judgment or not, it depends not upon that fabric whether the judgment be true or not. A true judgment will be true, whatever be the fabric of the mind; but a particular fabric is necessary, in order to our perceiving that truth. (676b/AP474)

In what way precisely we are justified in accepting the first principles of contingent truths has long troubled Reid's commentators.

It has seemed to some scholars (most notably James McCosh in the 19th century and S.A. Grave in this century) that a justification for first principles of contingent truths is to be found in Reid's claim that first principles are "self-evident." We are thus faced with two competing interpretations of Reid's purported appeal to self-evidence in his attempt to locate a justification for our accepting the higher principles of knowledge. The first interprets Reid as maintaining that first principles are "self-certified" or "self-guaranteed," as propositions whose truth and justification rest on nothing but a feature possessed by the propositions

themselves. This general interpretation has found great favor among Reid's modern commentators.²¹

Reid certainly seems quite naturally to accept this view: First principles are not believed on the basis of other propositions; they are self-evident, unprovable, and propositions in terms of which belief in other propositions must be justified. In the absence of anything else Reid could say about the status of first principles, on what else can contingent first principles rest if not on their self-evidence or obvious truth? The second interpretation is championed by Paul Vernier, who adopts his interpretative hypothesis only after rejecting three others—(1) that Reid naively asserts the superiority of common sense over the fruits of philosophical reflection; (2) that Reid bases the warrant of common sense on God's nondeceptiveness; and (3) that Reid secures the warrant of common sense on certain empirical facts about the beliefs of common sense, including their irresistibility, universality, and self-evidence.²² Vernier takes self-evidence to be a test of a belief's status as a first principle and not the main element of the principle's justification. He favors the thesis that "Reid's alternative is to adopt a theory of justification which, in effect, holds that our self-evident beliefs are warranted because there are no reasonable grounds for doubting them. In light of their irresistibility, and the destructive consequences of their denial, absence of good reasons for doubt is adequate ground for denying the skeptic's challenge to their warrant."²³ Again the interpretation appears to be a natural one. Vernier's position results from the issue arising in the conflict between a skeptic's denial of a first principle and the principle itself—either the skeptic faces an ad

hominem argument or he has erred in his reasoning, discoverable by an inspection of his inferences. If contingent first principles are not justified by self-evidence and their indubitability, then on what else could this justification rest?

Before attempting an answer to this question, we ought first to express disagreement with S.A. Grave's charge that Reid's "philosophy of common sense" is "burdened" with self-evidence.²⁴ Grave bases this on two features possessed by the judgments of common sense, i.e., the first principles of common sense. The first is that their sense is metaphysical and the second is that they are self-evidently true.²⁵ For Grave, a proposition is "metaphysical" if it is not empirically true or testable—i.e., known to be true or false—by an empirical procedure.²⁶ Thus, if true, it can be true only by virtue of its self-evidence, because it cannot rest on either the form or content of the judgment and because the first principles of contingent truths are neither analytic nor derived by empirical observation. Says Grave of Reid's doctrine:²⁷

Let the beliefs of common sense be refused the possibility of metaphysical content, and their truth can be withdrawn from philosophical dispute. Reid and his school will not accept this eirenicon. These beliefs cannot be freed from their metaphysical commitments and remain the beliefs of common sense. And their truth, they maintain, is not jeopardized by the weight they carry; no unloading is needed to make them safe. They are true as they are, and are known to be so, if not by all men, then by most men, and those who deny them act on them. Reid has no answer to the question 'How do you know that they are true?' except that it is a question that cannot always be asked if it is ever to be answered; all evidence must terminate in self-evidence, and these beliefs are self-evident.

Unfortunately, Grave has been misled, and further trapped, by Reid's use of self-evidence.

Reid's own answer to the question is curious. On the one hand, he sought to make clear that the logic of justification in human factual knowledge not only demanded a terminus to the justificatory process but required that beliefs held by reasoning be justified in terms of others that are held non-discursively, i.e., in terms of intuitive judgments. On the other hand, these intuitive judgments had to be themselves justified in order for the process of justification to be successful. The judgments he located are psychologically obvious, and intuitive because not grounded on any preceding reasoning; thus, "when the understanding is ripe, and when we distinctly apprehend such truths, we immediately assent to them" (466a/IP683). They "do not derive their evidence from any antecedent principles, but may be said to be intuitively discerned" (479b/IP723). Finding contingent first principles to be obvious, psychologically irresistible, and insusceptible to sustained doubt, and finding that the immediacy of their evidential hold on us is identical to that commanded by "necessary and self-evident axioms" (330a/IP296), Reid did indeed, it seems, seek a justification for them in the metaphor of light and illumination.²⁸

By the time he had prepared the Active Powers, Reid had returned decidedly to the naturalism that stamped his Inquiry, if, indeed, he had ever repudiated it. In the Active Powers we are developmentally "irrational animals for a considerable time before we can properly be called rational" (548b/AP110). Children "have everything to learn" and "believe a thousand things before they ever spend a thought on evidence" (549a/AP111). The operations of reason, aided by nurture within "the society of reasonable creatures" (549a/AP111), spring up "by imperceptible

degrees" (548b/AP110), being impelled and guarded by instinct. Such is the case with Reid's twelfth first principle of contingent truths, "That, in the phaenomena of nature, what is to be, will probably be like to what has been in similar circumstances" (451a/IP641). This belief in the child is "not grounded on evidence, real or apparent" (549b/AP113); the child's belief "is the result of his constitution" (549b/AP113). For children "Nature supplies the want of evidence, and gives them an instinctive kind of faith without evidence" (549a/AP111-112). "Thus," says Reid, "the merciful Author of our nature hath adapted our instincts to the defects and to the weakness of our understanding" (547b/AP108).

First principles have the same status they hold in the Intellectual Powers, but that they are self-evident and, to use Reid's bothersome metaphor, have the "light of truth" within them no longer does any epistemological work for him. Only after our intellectual powers are developed sufficiently are we able to rationalize our beliefs, to base them on reasons or evidence, and to use our native intuitive judgments in justifying derived judgments. Only then are we able to recognize first principles as judgments that are justified without reasoning and held on the basis of no prior judgment, and as judgments in terms of which others are defended. Then, being in a position to use our experience in founding beliefs upon evidence, we discover that first principles command our assent without reasoning because we find, when considering them, that there is nothing more evident to which they are opposed.

As a naturalist, Reid says that first principles are "really the dictates of common sense" (439a/IP607). They are psychologically obvious, they are accepted automatically, and they are such that we cannot sustain

doubts concerning them. As a descriptive epistemologist, Reid says that contingent derived beliefs are justified on the basis of contingent, intuitive first principles, which are not derived by reasoning from any other judgments and are not held on the basis of any separate evidence in our possession. Self-evidence, the obviousness that a judgment has for us, is a mark, a criterion, of a judgment's status as a first principle. Self-evidence cannot entail the material truth of a contingent judgment because the truth of a contingent judgment is dependent upon conditions other than those that afford a "just ground of belief" (328a/IP291). For Reid, first principles of contingent truths cannot be self-certified.

Such first principles are postulates, or assumptions, because not grounded on any precedent reasoning, and self-evident because psychologically irresistible and obvious. They have these features, though, because they are presupposed by the practice of inference and justification within human factual knowledge and are taken for granted in a practice that men take up by instinct, like swallowing and walking, continue to follow naturally, and improve by culture and education. Contra Grave, self-evidence cannot be a burden to Reid, not only because, in the end, it has no weight in Reid's epistemology, but also because Reid does not carry the weight as Grave and others believe. To be a self-evident contingent judgment is to be such that there is no proposition from which our assent is derived and with which, by assent, we can replace it. That is a fact, in Reid's view, to which we are committed by our nature.

If we must disagree with Grave, we ought also to disagree with those who, like Vernier, claim that Reid's theory of knowledge terminates

in the doctrine that contingent first principles are justified for us because "absence of good reasons for doubt is adequate ground for denying the skeptic's challenge to their warrant."²⁹ It is not that the union of Reid's ad hominem response to skepticism with his hypothesis regarding the joint consistency of first principles effectively establishes no more than that the skeptic is inconsistent in denying a first principle that, by virtue of his nature and the canonical features of knowledge, is on the same epistemological level as those he accepts. It is rather that the answer given by Vernier renders Reid's view disingenuous. The question is not whether a proposition is to be considered a first principle, but whether, having decided upon a first principle, we are justified in our assent to it. Reid's first principles are, we may say, immovable. If there are reasonable grounds for doubting them, then either they are not the principles we take them to be or they are such that we are irrational in accepting them on the (skeptical) evidence presented against them. But we must accept them. Hence, we are either irrational or there is some defect in the skeptic's position. If the latter is the case, then, upon Reid's general scheme, the defect is due either to (1) the skeptic's selective use of our first principles, and he is thus susceptible to an ad hominem response, or to (2) the reasoning upon which his position is based. Alternative (2), however, makes the exercise trivial, and the interpretation certainly asserts more than that skepticism is always the result of defective reasoning. Alternative (1), on the other hand, returns us right back to the beginning of the exercise.

Reid's first principles, if indeed first principles, are not negotiable. If they are such that we can be reasoned away from them, then

we should be able to find some principles with which, by assent, we can replace them or those from which a new assent is to be derived. In this case, our first principles are not first principles after all. A genuine first principle cannot be given up on the basis of any reasoning whatsoever. Although our first principles are discoverable by inquiry, our use and acceptance of them are determined by human nature and the natural practices in which they are found. It is in this way, then, that an interpretation such as Vernier's makes Reid's doctrine authoritarian, dogmatic, and plainly dishonest. This, of course, is not the interpretation that was intended, for it is entirely foreign to Reid's philosophy of common sense.

If we cannot return to self-evidence as the principle by means of which first principles are inevitably justified, or to some select feature of the principles themselves, then we should be prepared to admit that there is nothing within our experience, and nothing about our native judgments of common sense, that alone serves to secure our theoretical warrant for accepting first principles of contingent truths.

Reid never conspicuously pursues this metaepistemological issue further. He prefers instead to situate the discussion solely within the context and language of a naturalism, I think, because he came to realize that we can be justified in accepting first principles without at the same time having any judgment or special experience over and above those given within human knowledge. Our first principles can thus be defended and our assent to them can be given a reasonableness, but we do so by taking them as objects of our inquiry and by seeking the principle of their justification within metaphysics. What that principle is, and what

relation it bears to the designs of God, the Author of our nature, is a topic imbedded in the doctrines of the Active Powers.

NOTES

1. David Fate Norton, "Reid's Abstract of the Inquiry into the Human Mind," in Stephen F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp, eds., Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations (Philadelphia: Philosophical Monographs, 3, 1976), 125-132. Cited in the text as 'Abstract'. Page references will be preceded by 'A'.
2. This scheme, of course, was not Reid's invention. Berkeley before him had developed a theory of perception in which both suggestion and signification are developed into a semiotics of perceptual experience. For Berkeley, just as a word brings to mind an intellectual object by a mental association, typically between two ideas that have been conjoined in thought in the past, so certain presented ideas suggest or signify other ideas. It is in his New Theory of Vision that Berkeley uses the concept of suggestion in explaining how we come to know tangible objects by means of vision. For both Reid and Berkeley, the terms 'suggest' and 'signify' are interchangeable, but what separates Reid from Berkeley on suggestion or natural signification is Reid's use of innate suggestions. Berkeley's associationist theory of suggestion rendered suggestion a learned association, the result of a "connexion taught us by experience." For Reid, some suggestions are known "previously to experience" and perform their natural task by a "natural kind of magic" to create their objects. See A.A. Luce, ed., Works of George Berkeley (London: Thomas Nelson, 1964), I, 264, and II, sec. 43.
3. See Norman Daniels, Thomas Reid's Inquiry (New York: Burt Franklin & Co., 1974), 104-108, for a good discussion of this point.
4. See Inquiry, sec. iv, 123a-b/INQ68-70, and 131a-b/INQ84. Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, figure, extension, and motion are the primary qualities Reid cites. Although Locke himself includes only solidity, extension, figure, and mobility among the class of primary qualities, he does say that the "primary ideas we have peculiar to body" include "the cohesion of solid, and consequently separable parts," which is the sense Reid attaches to the term 'hardness'. See 123a/INQ69, and 314a/IP314a. See John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. John W. Yolton (New York: Everyman's Library, 1974), I, II.8.9, 104, and II.23.17, 254. Reid's choice of 'hardness' over 'solidity' was probably motivated by the need for a polar opposite such as 'softness', a term more likely to be used in tactual situations than the term 'fluidity'.
5. Cf. 114a-b/INQ45.
6. See Inquiry, 185a/INQ210: "In all our senses, the acquired perceptions are many more than the original, especially in sight. By this sense we perceive originally the visible figure and colour of bodies only, and their visible place: but we learn to perceive by the

eye, almost everything which we can perceive by touch." The exception, in this case, is "visible appearances" in vision, for a "visible or perspective appearance" (135a/INQ94) is an "original and proper" object of sight; it has "length and breadth, but no thickness nor distance from the eye," and is seen "naturally and originally" (182a/INQ205). It is by a "kind of legerdemain" that custom "withdraws these original and proper objects of sight, and substitutes in their place objects of touch, which have length, breadth, and thickness, and a determinate distance from the eye" (182a/INQ205).

Nevertheless, the secondary qualities given in vision also have a double signification. In visual perception, "When a coloured body is presented, there is a certain apparition to the eye, or to the mind," which Reid calls "the appearance of colour" (137b/INQ100). As a sensation (145a/INQ117), the appearance of color "suggests the conception and belief of some unknown quality in the body which occasions the idea; and it is to this quality, and not to the idea, that we give the name of colour" (137b-138a/INQ100). A color is not itself a sensation, but rather "a secondary quality of bodies"; it is "a certain power or virtue in bodies, that in fair daylight exhibits to the eye an appearance" (138a/INQ101), and "as the cause is unknown, we can form no distinct conception of it but by its relation to the known effect" (138a/INQ101).

In general, though, Reid does not wish to say that one cannot be aware of tastes and smells, among other acquired perceptions, upon their first presentation. My first taste of brandy is not for me a "taste of brandy" unless I am able to attribute to the brandy the causal origin of the taste I am aware of. It seems also not to be necessary that we have a repeated acquaintance with an object in order to have an acquired perception of it. Reid's perceptual scheme assumes some form of unconscious inductive procedure, which need not be a good procedure in order for the psychological laws to hold for acquired perception. At least one experience is, while necessary, sufficient for acquired perception to occur.

7. 117a/INQ53: "It seems to be by custom that we learn to distinguish both the place of things, and their nature, by means of their sound It is probable, that, previous to all experience, we should as little know whether a sound came from the right or left, from above or below, from a great or a small distance, as we should know whether it was the sound of a drum, or a bell, or a cart."
8. See Letter to Lord Kames, Feb. 14, 1763, in Ian Ross, ed., "Unpublished Letters of Thomas Reid to Lord Kames, 1762-1782," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 7 (1965), 30:

"Your manner of explaining secondary Qualities I subscribe to, with this small alteration viz. You say that secondary Qualities have a Relation to a Percipient. I would say rather that our Notion or Conception of them hath a relation to a percipient. The whiteness of this paper, is that Quality in it, which causes a certain sensation

in me when I look upon it. Not knowing what this quality is in itself, I form a relative Notion of it viz That it is that, which causes such a Sensation in the percipient."

9. This corresponds to what Timothy Duggan has identified as the "phenomenological sense" of the word 'perceive'. See his introduction to his edition of Reid's Inquiry, xxiv-xxxii; see also xxxii-li, where Duggan discusses the "objective sense" of 'perceive'. Reid's phenomenological use of 'perception', which is stated in such a way that the causal antecedents of perception are irrelevant to our perceiving in this sense of the term, is nevertheless parasitical upon our common view of an external world. This is not to say that this sense of 'perception' is incompatible with phenomenism, immaterialism, etc., but only that Reid must assume an objective sense of the term 'perception', and hence an external world, in order to construct perception in terms of psychological laws.
10. Cf. Reid's Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic, 711b-713b.
11. See 95a-b. Duggan's edition of the Inquiry does not include Reid's original prefatory "Dedication to the Right Honourable James, Earl of Findlater and Seafield, Chancellor of the University of Old Aberdeen," where this motivation is expressed.
12. In his Thomas Reid's Inquiry Norman Daniels argues explicitly for the view that Reid's anti-skepticism is constituted solely by his nativism, that is, by virtue of "our constitution" and its laws we are consequently immune from the threat of idealism and other forms of skepticism. In dealing with certain fundamental concepts, says Daniels, "Reid builds those conceptions and beliefs into us natively, and ... into our perceptual experience" (116). As a result, according to Daniels, Reid is left to defend his nativism from the possibility that our constitution might systematically lead us to false beliefs with only his conviction that "God would not deceive us" (117). This limiting interpretation of Reid's epistemological designs is clearly brought out in Daniels's concluding chapter, most pertinently on pp. 97-119.
13. See 311a/IP244-245, 315a-b/IP256-258, and 331b/IP300-301. See also Bernard E. Rollin, "Thomas Reid and the Semiotics of Perception," Monist, 61 (1978), 257-270, for a good discussion of this feature in Reid's perceptual scheme.

Because sensations occupy different roles in the Inquiry and the Intellectual Powers, some would have Reid adopting a different theory of perception in the two works. See, e.g., John Immerwahr, "The Development of Reid's Realism," Monist, 61 (1978): 245-256. Reid is very much a direct realist with regard to the senses of touch, taste, hearing, and smelling, but is decidedly an indirect realist with regard to vision. This does not change from the Inquiry to the Intellectual Powers. He does champion, in the Inquiry, what may be called a theory of indirect consciousness and a theory of direct

- consciousness in the Intellectual Powers. In the Inquiry sensations are intermediaries between perceptual objects and our consciousness of them; here his position is clearly causal: sensations cause our perceptions. In the Intellectual Powers sensations are neither conscious intermediaries nor causal contributors of the perceptual act in touch, but are both in all other senses and in all acquired perceptions. Any classification of Reid's theory of perception ought always to take into consideration that his theory is heterogeneous and not homogeneous with respect to all senses.
14. 327b/IP290: "A man cannot be conscious of his own thoughts, without believing that he thinks. He cannot perceive an object of sense, without believing that it exists. He cannot distinctly remember a past event, without believing that it did exist."
 15. See Jean H. Faurot, "Thomas Reid, on Intelligible Objects," Monist, 61 (1978), 229-244, and his "The Development of Reid's Theory of Knowledge," University of Toronto Quarterly, 21 (1952), 182-189, for a different emphasis on elements in the changes from the Inquiry to the Intellectual Powers.
 16. The first two criteria are found in: 442b-443a/IP618, 443b-444a/IP621-622, 444b/IP622, 445b/IP625, 447a/IP630, 448a/IP632, 448b/IP634, and 450b-451a/IP640. His third criterion is stated in 443a/IP619 and 451a/IP641. The fourth criterion is located in 444a/IP621, 447a/IP629, 448a-b/IP632-633, 449a-450b/IP636-639, and 450b-451a/IP640.
 17. There are three metaphysical first principles: (1) "That the qualities which we perceive by our senses must have a subject, which we call body, and that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind" (454a/IP650); (2) "That whatever begins to exist, must have a cause which produced it" (455a/IP652); (3) "That design and intelligence in the cause may be inferred with certainty, from marks or signs of it in the effect" (457b/IP660).
 18. (1) "the existence of everything of which I am conscious" (442b/IP617); (2) "That the thoughts of which I am conscious, are the thoughts of a being which I call MYSELF, my MIND, my PERSON" (443b/IP620); (3) "That those things did really happen which I distinctly remember" (444b/IP622); (4) "Another first principle is, Our own personal identity and continued existence, as far back as we remember any thing distinctly" (445b/IP625); (5) "That those things do really exist which we perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be" (445b/IP625); (6) "That we have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our will" (446b/IP628); (7) "That the natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious" (447a/IP630); (8) "That there is life and intelligence in our fellow-men with whom we converse" (448b/IP633); (9) "That certain features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body, indicate certain thoughts and

dispositions of mind" (449a/IP635); (10) "That there is a certain regard due to human testimony in matters of fact, and even to human authority in matters of opinion" (450b/IP640); (11) "There are many events depending upon the will of man, in which there is a self-evident probability, greater or less, according to circumstances" (451a/IP641); (12) "That, in the phaenomena of nature, what is to be, will probably be like to what has been in similar circumstances" (451a/IP641).

19. See, e.g., 330a/IP296: "When I see a proposition to be self-evident and necessary, and that the subject is plainly included in the predicate, there seems to be nothing more that I can desire in order to understand why I believe it." For Reid, the formal denial of a necessary proposition always yields one that is formally impossible. On the other hand, a contingent proposition is such that the proposition and its denial are both formally possible. Expressing the distinction in other terms, Reid says that necessary truths are "immutable" and contingent truths are "mutable" (441b/IP614-615). This characterization is meant also to hold true for all propositions, including all first principles. Distinctive of Reid's theory is that, for any genuine first principle, it is really "by virtue of our constitution" that we must accept the impossibility of a first principle's denial, thereby enabling him to speak of "metaphysical first principles" as necessary truths, even though they seem obviously not to be true solely by virtue of the relationship between subject and predicate.
20. See Jean H. Faurot, "Reid's Reply to Joseph Priestley," Journal of the History of Philosophy, 39 (1978), 285-292, for a discussion of just this subject.
21. See, e.g., S.A. Grave, The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), and Keith Lehrer, Knowledge (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).
22. "Thomas Reid on the Foundations of Knowledge and His Answer to Skepticism," in Stephen F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp, eds., Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations, 16-17.
23. Ibid., 20. Cf. Timothy Duggan, "Ayer and Reid: Responses to the Skeptic," Monist, 61 (1978), 205-219; and Richard Taylor, "Review of S.A. Grave's The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense," Philosophical Review, 70 (1961), 413-416.
24. The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense, 150.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 101.
27. Ibid., 108.

28. Reid seems to have been serious in his flirtation with self-evidence, going so far as to explain why first principles have the "light of truth" in them: "Perhaps evidence, as in many respects it resembles light, so in this also—that, as light, which is the discoverer of all visible objects, discovers itself at the same time, so evidence, which is the voucher for all truth, vouches for itself at the same time" (448a/IP632).

Something similar appears in an often quoted paragraph from an undated fragment of Reid's unpublished paper "Of Constitution." There Reid entertains the question 'Why do I believe first principles?':

"One philosopher says, Because I am so constituted that I must believe them. This, say some, is the only possible reason that can be given for the belief of first principles How shall we judge of this controversy? Answer, This question admits of two meanings. 1. For what reason do you believe first principles? 2. To what cause is your belief of first principles to be ascribed?"

Reid answers only the first part of the question by saying: "To first, evidence is the sole and ultimate ground of belief, and self-evidence is the strongest possible ground of belief, and he who desires a reason for believing what is self-evident knows not what he means." See James McCosh, Scottish Philosophy (London: Macmillan and Company, 1875), 475. Cf. Frederick Copleston's complaint that "Reid asserts the existence of a considerable number of first principles of different types without providing an unambiguous explanation of the precise sense or senses in which they are said to be self-evident, first principles, and a part of the constitution of our nature." See A History of Philosophy, Vol. 5: Modern Philosophy: The British Philosophers (New York: Image Books, 1964), II, 175.

29. Paul Vernier, "Thomas Reid on the Foundations of Knowledge and His Answer to Skepticism," loc. cit., 20.

II

REID'S CAUSALISM

1. Reid's Two Senses of 'Cause'

Causalism, or causal determinism, is the doctrine that causation holds universally in nature.¹ That Reid accepts this doctrine unfolds no more easily than does the import of its acceptance. This is so in part because Reid is inclined to give a subtle, difficult presentation, seldom taking the direct course, and in part because he does not accept a simple version of the doctrine.

In the Inquiry (Chapter II, Section ix) Reid held that there is a law of human nature from which the concept of all "NATURAL VIRTUES OR CAUSES" is derived:

In order to illustrate further how we come to conceive a quality or virtue in the rose which we call smell, and what this smell is, it is proper to observe, that the mind begins very early to thirst after principles which may direct it in the exertion of its powers. The smell of a rose is a certain affection or feeling of the mind; and, as it is not constant, but comes and goes, we want to know when and where we may expect it; and are uneasy till we find something which, being present, brings this feeling along with it, and, being removed, removes it. This, when found, we call the cause of it; not in a strict and philosophical sense, as if the feeling were really effected or produced by that cause, but in a popular sense; for the mind is satisfied if there is a constant conjunction between them; and such causes are in reality nothing else but laws of nature. (113a/INQ41-42)

For Reid natural causes are "natural" precisely because they are empirically discovered. These "causes" are always perceptually discovered to be in relation to a change in nature. Such are the laws of nature, expressed in statement-form as general conditionals whose antecedents name a class of causes and whose consequents name a class of effects. These are empirical because it is "experience only that discovers these connections between natural causes and their effects" (113a-b/INQ43), but

"without inquiring further," Reid says, "we attribute to the cause some vague and indistinct notion of power or virtue to produce the effect" (113b/INQ43).

In the Intellectual Powers Reid goes on to mark a distinction among the available sensible qualities of bodies, dividing them into manifest and occult qualities:

The manifest qualities are those which Mr Locke calls primary; such as Extension, Figure, Divisibility, Motion, Hardness, Softness, Fluidity. The nature of these is manifest even to sense; and the business of the philosopher with regard to them, is not to find out their nature, which is well known, but to discover the effects produced by their various combinations; and, with regard to those of them which are not essential to matter, to discover their causes as far as he is able.
(322a/IP274-275)

The second class of qualities—occult qualities—includes secondary qualities, the "disorders we feel in our own bodies," and "all the qualities which we call powers of bodies, whether mechanical, chemical, medical, animal, or vegetable" (322a/IP275). Such things are "all obscure and relative notions, being a conception of some unknown cause of a known effect" (321b/IP274). To call them occult qualities, says Reid, is "rather modestly to confess ignorance, than to cloak it" (321b/IP274).

All natural powers or virtues are dispositional properties of perceptual objects, and, because they are dispositional, inevitably disappear as "powers or virtues" under Reid's analysis. To say that an object possesses a power or virtue is only to say very generally what can or will result when the object is situated in certain circumstances. In ascribing a power or virtue to an object we thus adopt a formula of the following general form:

For any object *x* and for any qualities *q*, if *x* has *q*, then, under conditions *t*, some event *e* will occur.

For Reid, ascriptions of secondary qualities instantiate such a formula. Having for us two significations, secondary qualities sometimes "signify certain sensations of the mind," but "more frequently they signify a quality in bodies, which, by the laws of nature, occasions the sensations ... in us" (119a/INQ59-60). In believing that a rose has a secondary quality of smell, we believe that the rose, considered as a cause of a sensation of smell in us, has some structural qualities that, by virtue of a law of nature, make possible our sensation of smell. To call secondary qualities "occult" is not to say that we cannot strip them of their mystery, make them known to us, and speak of them in, e.g., the careful language of chemistry or molecular science. Natural powers or virtues are occult only in proportion to our ignorance of nature's makeup and laws. When we have a wider knowledge of certain objects and the circumstances of their behavior, we can replace talk of their latent, occult, or hidden virtues with verbal representatives of nature's laws. For to understand a natural power or virtue is to understand a law of nature, and to understand a law of nature, with respect to a given change in nature, is to understand the general empirical conditions under which such happenings take place. This is a feature of all causal reasoning (337a/IP317-318) and the foundation of natural philosophy. In the Intellectual Powers it is still at the root of ordinary causal reasoning that physical things possess dispositional properties (421a/IP554).

Appearing throughout all of Reid's works, however, is an important distinction between a "popular" and a "philosophical" sense of the term 'cause', but the grounds for the distinction are not uncovered until the Active Powers. For Reid the popular sense of 'cause' encompasses a

commitment to an empirically discovered relationship among changes in nature and to our natural propensity to attribute to some things a power to produce certain changes in other things. While Reid accepts that one's discovery of a law of nature is a pinnacle of success in the empirical sciences, he also accepts that this is the highest achievement in the search for the causes of change in nature from perception's point of view. The causes that appear in the empirical sciences are causes only in a popular sense because nothing in the manifest nature of such causes gives us grounds (beyond, of course, theories) to attribute a power to originate change. If it is our primary judgment that every change in nature has a cause, and if we face skepticism when attempting to locate causes in nature, that is because our concept of a cause, in a strict and philosophical sense of 'cause', prohibits some antecedents within a law-statement from being the causes of their consequents and not merely their lawful precedents. Such items lack the power to produce—or, that is, to effect—changes in nature. So, too, for laws of nature themselves.

That certain "causes" are not what we take them to be is the first theme of the Active Powers, and by his attachment to it Reid strips most commonly held causes of their eminent status. Reid's position is that we have by way of natural judgment a concept of a cause as a thing possessing the power to produce an effect:

When we attend to any change that happens in Nature, judgment informs us that there must be a cause of this change, which had power to produce it; and thus we get the notions of cause and effect, and of the relation between them. (421a/IP554)

This, however, does not give us Reid's account of the origin of our concept of a cause. Any attribution of causation to what takes place in

nature is possible only because we possess a prior awareness of causal activity, a conception not derived by perceptual means alone, but rather, according to Reid, by consciousness of ourselves as living and intelligent beings. A cause considered as a thing possessing the power to produce or originate change is what Reid labels a cause in the "strict and philosophical sense" of 'cause'.

Reid's skepticism with respect to natural causation both uncovers the real nature of causes and discloses that there exist causes in the strict and philosophical sense. Because the search for causes is a natural human activity, all men will find themselves engaging in it. Indeed, says Reid, "The first step into natural philosophy, and what hath commonly been considered as its ultimate end, is the investigation of the causes of the phaenomena of nature; that is, the causes of those appearances in nature which are not the effects of human power" (606a-b/AP277). Natural philosophy, or the empirical sciences, discover only causes in the "loose and popular sense," and so could inevitably dispense with the words 'cause' and 'effect' altogether, replacing them with the antecedents and consequents comprising statements of natural law:²

Natural philosophers, who think accurately, have a precise meaning to the terms they use in the science; and, when they pretend to shew the cause of any phaenomenon of nature, they mean by the cause, a law of nature of which that phaenomenon is a necessary consequence. (527a/AP46)

In Reid's view, this was Newton's position and "all that the great philosopher attempted, and all that he thought attainable" (527a/AP46). Where one might say, for example, that "heat" causes water to boil, one ought to say instead that all water boils if heated to 100 degrees

centigrade at sea level, thereby attributing the boiling of water not to any special power possessed by heat, nor to heat as a real cause, but rather to a law of nature.³ Moreover, supposing that natural philosophy were brought to its utmost perfection, Reid claims, we should find that "it does not discover the efficient cause of any one phaenomenon in nature" (527a/AP46). While empirical scientists have successfully explained natural events by reference to laws, "they have never discovered the efficient cause of any one phaenomenon; nor do those who have distinct notions of the principles of the science make any such pretense" (527a/AP47).

From Reid's standpoint, we have a natural, non-discursive conviction that every event has a cause that produced it, that is to say, we have a belief in the necessity of a cause for every change in nature. This was a canonical thesis of the Intellectual Powers—that the necessity of causes is a first principle. There, as in the Active Powers, the principle is a necessary statement and is thus incapable either of demonstration or of empirical proof. As Reid often proposes it, however, the causal principle is fundamentally a native judgment. Because we are constructed in the way we are, we have this conviction and make this judgment whenever confronted with changes in nature. It is necessary for us because we will admit no exceptions to it. What we do not know, merely by using it, is what causes will satisfy the consequent of our judgment that an event has a cause. Reid does not think that by perceptual means alone we can discover any genuine causes at all. The most that we can discover by attending to nature's processes are causes in a loose and popular sense of 'cause', which all turn out to be either general laws of

nature or antecedents within law-like formulae. Natural causes cannot be causes in a strict and philosophical sense of 'cause' because we find, after all, that they lack what Reid calls "active power."

Generally, then, causes are either those that possess active power or those that do not. Reid labels the former "efficient causes" and commonly speaks of the latter as causes in a loose and popular sense of 'cause'. Because, in what follows, we shall be faced again and again with Reid's double use of the word 'cause', it will be useful to mark the distinction with symbolic representatives. For this purpose we shall use 'E' to indicate an efficient cause and 'C' to indicate non-efficient causes, i.e., causes in a common or loose and popular sense. Thus, where appropriate, the term 'E-cause' will always indicate an efficient cause and 'C-cause' will always indicate a cause that is not an efficient cause. When 'cause' is used without a hyphenated prefix, however, it should be understood that the word is being used non-technically, i.e., without an analyzed sense, unless otherwise indicated. With this distinction in mind we should understand now that the first theme of the Active Powers is the thesis that all causes, when strictly understood, are E-causes, all other "causes" being merely C-causes.

According to Reid, that something is a cause in the strict and philosophical sense—i.e., that something is an E-cause—is not discovered by empirical inspection, nor by any phenomenological means, but rather by complex inference. What we are required to infer is that the cause, in order for it to be an E-cause, has the "power" to produce its effects. Although we also reach C-causes by way of inference, the proper inference in the case of popular causes is that what we consider to be a "cause" is

really a C-cause because it does not have the requisite power to produce its effects.

In his introductory essay in the Active Powers Reid offers us five observations on the subject of power:

(1) "Power is not an object of any of our external senses, nor even of consciousness" (512b/AP5); that is to say, we can neither perceive power nor be conscious of it within ourselves. What we know of power we know solely by inference (512b-513a/AP6).

(2) The conception all men have of power is a "relative conception" (513a-b/AP7). Among such relative conceptions Reid lists "accidental relations," such as library classifications; notions taken from "qualities or attributes essential to the thing" (513b/AP7), such as our notions of mind and body, because these are known only relatively to their observable properties; and all secondary qualities (513b/AP8). Among those of which we have a direct conception Reid lists only primary qualities and those operations of mind of which we are conscious (513b-514a/AP8).

(3) Active power is "a quality, and cannot exist without a subject to which it belongs" (514b/AP10), and (4) such a subject either has this power or it has not, "weakness" and "impotence" being "defects or privations of power" but not the contraries of this power (514b/AP10).

(5) Reid's fifth observation is purely semantical:

The exertion of active power we call action; and, as every action produces some change, so every change must be caused by some exertion, or by the cessation of some exertion of power. That which produces a change by the exertion of its power we call the cause of that change; and the change produced, the effect of that cause. (515a/AP11)

When a cause produces a change in another thing, "the last is said to be passive, or to be acted upon" (515a/AP11-12).

Reid's genetic thesis concerning the origin of our concepts of cause and effect is that the distinction between action and passion "enters into the original contexture of all languages" (515b/AP13), and is therefore a universal belief of all language users.⁴ So great is the influence of this early belief that all men are prone to a very peculiar prejudice: "when we perceive anything to be changed, and do not perceive any other thing which we can believe to be the cause of that change," we "impute it to the thing itself, and conceive it to be active and animated, so far as to have the power of producing that change in itself" (516b/AP16). It is experience, and experience alone, that discovers the error of this prejudice, by disclosing the inactivity and inanimation of things previously thought to be invested with causal powers, even though that discovery may not inevitably correct the language we use (517a/AP17). Guardedly, Reid says that "The origin of this prejudice probably is, that we judge of other things by ourselves, and therefore are disposed to ascribe to them that life and activity which we know to be in ourselves" (516b/AP17).

If a man cannot come to the original concept of an E-cause by means of perception, then he must come to it by means of reflection, if it is, as Reid thinks, a derived conception. After all, what we perceive in nature are merely various lawful factors. "When I observe a plant growing from its seed to maturity," Reid says, "I know that there must be a cause that has power to produce this effect. But I see neither the cause nor the manner of its operation" (523b/AP36). On the other hand, "in certain motions of my body and directions of my thought, I know not only that there must be a cause that has power to produce these effects, but that I

am that cause; and I am conscious of what I do in order to the production of them" (523b/AP36).⁵

Reid therefore suggests that it is from the "consciousness of our own activity" that "not only the clearest, but the only conception we can form of activity, or the exertion of active power" is derived (523b/AP36). Thus, he maintains:

If it be so that the conception of an efficient cause enters into the mind, only from the early conviction we have that we are the efficient of our own voluntary actions, (which I think is most probable,) the notion of efficiency will be reduced to this, That it is a relation between the cause and the effect, similar to that which is between us and our voluntary actions. This is surely the most distinct notion, and, I think, the only notion we can form of real efficiency.
(524b-525a/AP40)

According to Reid, though, we have the concept of a cause that is necessary to the production of any change in nature, whether or not we have made clear to ourselves the nature of the cause or the sense of the concept. This is made possible by our possession of the causal principle, which Reid expresses as: "Everything that begins to exist, must have a cause of its existence, which had power to give it existence. And everything that undergoes any change, must have some cause of that change" (603a/AP267; see also 625b/AP329). "From this principle," Reid concludes, "it follows, That everything which undergoes any change, must either be the efficient cause of that change in itself, or it must be changed by some other being" (603a/AP268). What the causal principle implies is that the E-cause of any change lies either within the changing thing itself or without it.

One reward of this implication is that we now possess the opaque concept of a cause as a thing responsible for its own changes, i.e., as a

thing possessing what Reid calls "active power." Either of Reid's two alternatives will generate that conclusion, though. Suppose that we choose the second alternative, that the cause of any change in nature lies outside of the changing thing. Here we then face either an infinite regress of external causes or the admission, which ends the regress, that some cause is responsible for its own changes. On the other hand, let us take the first alternative, as Reid does. This alternative implies (1) that the thing in question has the power to bring about, or to produce, its changes, that it is an E-cause, and (2) that the thing is not determined to produce its changes by the activity of another E-cause, for then the E-cause of the change would lie outside of the thing and not with the thing itself. But (1) and (2) jointly imply that whether the thing changes or not rests solely within the thing itself and in no other thing. If so, then, according to Reid, the thing must also possess a will—viz., a power within itself to determine what events will follow from the exertion of its power.⁶ This, however, is possible only if we take Reid's deduction from the causal principle to be a telescoped argument for the thesis that an E-cause must have "active power" and not merely the power to produce changes.

When the issue turns on the meaning of words, Reid says that active power is "a quality in the cause, which enables it to produce the effect" (603b/AP268). But he also distinguishes between "power" and its "exertion." Says Reid: "In order to the production of any effect, there must be in the cause, not only power, but the exertion of that power; for power that is not exerted produces no effect" (603b/AP268). Moreover, a "power which cannot be exerted is no power, and is a contradiction in

terms" (603b/AP268). Such are "necessary consequences from the principle first mentioned--That every change which happens in nature must have an efficient cause which had power to produce it" (603b/AP269).

Completing his deduction is the derivative proposition that "Power to produce any effect, implies power not to produce it" (523a/AP35). What this tangled utterance means is: If anything x produces some event O , then x has the power to produce O if and only if there is no thing t such that O results from the exertion of a power in t to produce O . What this means, in effect, is that nothing can be an E-cause that is itself E-caused to produce some effect. To have what Reid calls "active power" is therefore to be an E-cause that can exert its power in circumstances that do not render such an exertion an inevitability. The alternative, forced upon us by Reid's version of the causal principle, is that it produces its effects by the active power of some other E-cause, which is to say that it is not the E-cause of those changes after all.

Taking the concept of an E-cause to be a derived concept, but one not derived a priori, Reid holds that reflection (or consciousness) is the source of our basic understanding of E-causation. If it is by consciousness that we discover our concept of an E-cause, what we then discover is that to be an E-cause is to be a being like ourselves. This is itself sufficient to generate a skepticism about natural causation among those objects of perception that we discover to be inanimate and unintelligent, quite unlike ourselves.

We may seek the nature of causation in reflection because, Reid says, we are led by nature to believe that we are E-causes.⁷ What we discover by reflection, given that we must believe ourselves to be the

E-causes of our "voluntary" thoughts and bodily motions, is that we have some degree of active power, or the power to produce changes in nature without at the same time being determined to do so by the activity of another E-cause. More specifically, what we find by reflection is a complex, relative conception of active power. The changes we impute to ourselves (and to other entities that resemble us) are to be taken as the results of "exertions of active power."

Holding not merely that active power is possible only in those beings with a will but also that the possession of a will presupposes intelligence, itself a capacity for conception and reason, Reid consequently maintains that the concept of an E-cause is really the concept of an agent, a being like ourselves. Let us say, then, that the second theme of the Active Powers is that every E-cause is an intelligent agent.

By reflection and inference we learn very early that we have active power, that we are E-causes, and yet also take up the childish prejudice that inanimate things in nature are E-causes, or are creatures like ourselves. By scientific investigation (i.e., experimental reasoning) we ought to discover that no physical, inanimate thing is an E-cause, because we forfeit any grounds for locating active powers in them when we find that their changes are always the result of events to which they are connected by a lawful regularity. From the causal principle we know that some E-cause produced these events, but we are unable to attribute a productive power to the things themselves or to the events to which they are connected, and must therefore correct our prejudice that these things are E-causes or agents. For the sake of linguistic convenience we call

them causes, thereby signifying, of course, merely C-causes. It is not that we simply lack enough information about the things or events to pronounce them E-causes; rather, in Reid's view, finding that they are appropriately interconnected by laws of nature, we must hold that they cannot be E-causes, because to be within the force of a law of nature is to be entirely subject to necessity.

2. Contingency and Necessary Connection

Among the "necessary consequences" of the principle that "every change which happens in nature must have an efficient cause which had power to produce it" is this:

All that is necessary to the production of any effect, is power in an efficient cause to produce the effect, and the exertion of that power; for it is a contradiction to say, that the cause has the power to produce the effect, and exerts that power, and yet the effect is not produced. (603b/AP268)

Elsewhere Reid claims:

The production of an effect requires active power, and active power, being a quality, must be in a being endowed with that power. Power without will produces no effect; but, where these are conjoined, the effect must be produced. (627b/AP335)

Again, this is supposed to follow from the causal principle. To have the power to produce an effect is also to have a power that, when exerted, must bring about its effect. From the causal principle we are to derive the proposition that a changing thing possesses the power in itself to produce that change. Let us assume that, when exercising or realizing this power, the change is not thereby produced. This implies that the thing lacks the power to produce the change, and this, by reductio, implies that, necessarily, the exercise of a thing's active power produces its effect. Let us now denominate this relation between a cause and what

it effects a "necessary connection," meaning by the term that a certain event must be brought about when the active power of an E-cause is exerted. Let us also say, then, that an event's occurrence is "necessitated" when this relation, i.e., this necessary connection, obtains. This is Reid's sense of the term 'necessary connection' with respect to E-causation and its efficacy.

There are two noteworthy consequences of the causal principle. The first is that an E-cause is always an intelligent agent. The second is that E-causation, the causal relation specified by the causal principle, is a necessary connection between an E-cause and what it effects. This pair of contentions comprises the core of Reid's causalism, drawn itself from a deductive handling of the causal principle. This, however, does not end the matter, for what follows from his causalism is that every event is contingent, in two complete senses--(1) as dependent for its occurrence solely upon an E-cause, and (2) as something whose occurrence or non-occurrence is logically possible, i.e., its occurrence is logically possible and its non-occurrence is also logically possible. To accept this sense of 'contingent', though, is also to accept that all E-causes are themselves "contingent causes," to use the term first coined by John Duns Scotus in the 13th century to signify a cause that brings about its effects without at the same time being itself necessitated to bring about its effects. To be a cause in this sense--to be a contingent cause--is to be such that an opposite effect could have been brought about at the very same time that its effect was.⁸ All of this, Reid believes, follows from the causal principle when we consider it a priori.

Two issues must surely have troubled Reid when he first reflected upon causation. The first is whether God is the sole cause in the universe. The second is the rather extraordinary nature of the causes we have labelled E-causes. Still a third issue was on Reid's mind late in his life, and, indeed, it is an issue that appears often during one's reading of the Active Powers: Given that we have a natural need to seek the causes of events found experimentally in nature, when, then, are we successful in discovering the real causes of events and when are we not? Since he accepts that the issue is not purely an empirical matter, he is therefore correct that we can be enlightened through conceptual considerations. But in accepting this concession, Reid must steer a path between empiricism, which leads to a Humean analysis of causation, and a rationalism that would give to a specific range of causes the baffling ability to effect changes under any circumstances whatever. Reid's E-causes are undeniably anthropomorphic. They have this feature, though, precisely because he draws his study of causation from both the empirical and the a priori.

Our concern with being in a position to recognize genuine causes is a matter bound up with Reid's own concern over the number of possible causes we are entitled to encounter. Considered empirically, causation among experienced items must first be decided upon conceptual grounds, for any quest for a cause is the quest for something that satisfies the definition of a cause. Considered a priori, though, there need only be a single cause for any event we might encounter, the existence of all other causes being something that is to be decided by observation and scientific inference.

Reid is not deeply troubled that there might be only one E-cause in the universe, but he is worried by the possibility that nothing in nature is contingent. His doctrine of contingency—whether we focus on the contingency of events or on the contingency of their causes—is possible only if there is at least one cause to which we can attribute the dependency of events. Moreover, if there is only one cause, that cause must be a contingent E-cause.

Reid has on hand what he considers to be a strong argument for the liberty of a single cause. Curiously, the argument is taken from Samuel Clarke, the 17th-century English rationalist. Reid takes it seriously enough not only to recommend it but also to rest his case for libertarian morality upon the argument (623b-624a/AP325). Our attention to Samuel Clarke's reasoning will not take us too far afield from our study of Reid's Active Powers, for by discussing Clarke's arguments we will see how sharply defined Reid's understanding of the word 'contingent' must be.

Clarke's argument appears in two works—in his first Boyle lecture, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God (1704), a polemical work directed in the main against his continental neighbor, Spinoza, and in his remarks upon Anthony Collins's Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty. Although two separate arguments are involved, Reid correctly notes the close similarity in reasoning between the two: Both are designed to prove that a cause is always an agent that acts without being acted upon.⁹

Clarke's first argument, which purports to prove the existence of God, is wider in scope than the second. In it he attempts to establish that man is a free agent and that, even if he is not free, the denial of

human freedom would forthwith commit us to accepting God's free agency. Clarke's second argument, in A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, presupposes the existence of God, but seeks to demonstrate that God must be an agent that acts without being acted upon. Reid openly recommends the arguments, we will find, because, they rest for their support on theses that Reid himself finds inescapable.

In A Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty Anthony Collins presents six arguments for a doctrine of necessity with regard to human actions.¹⁰ Clarke, in turn, after taking the author to task on each of the six arguments, considers the contention between them to turn on a single issue. Clarke then summarizes his central objection by considering a single argument against Collins's position. Quite simply, Clarke says: "Man either has within himself a Principle of Action, properly speaking; that is, a Self-moving Faculty, a Principle or Power of beginning Motion: or he has not."¹¹ If man has such a principle or power, then he is free and is not a "Necessary Agent," Clarke's reasoning being thus:

For every Necessary Agent is moved necessarily by something else; and then That which moves it, not the thing itself which is moved, is the True and Only Cause of the Action. That any Other thing operating upon an Agent, should efficiently and necessarily produce Self-motion in That Agent; is a direct Contradiction in Terms. (42)

On the other hand, Clarke maintains:

If Man has not within himself a Principle or Power of Self-motion; then every Motion and Action of Man, is strictly and properly produced by the efficiency of some extrinsic Cause: Which Cause, must be either what we usually call the Motive or Reason, upon which a Man acts; or else it must be some insensible Subtle Matter, or some other Being or Substance making an Impression upon him. (43)

The lengthy argument that follows can be summarized in this way:

(1) Reasons, or motives, are not efficient causes. If they were, then abstract notions may be real and not abstract or ideal.

(2) If some being is the cause of an agent's actions, then this being is moved by some other being, ad infinitum, or we should arrive at the causal efficacy of a free agent.

(3) If we go on to accept the regress, and therefore do not accept the need of a free agent, then we ought to accept that "there is either in infinitum a Progression of Motions without any Mover, of Effects without any Cause, of things acted without any Agent; Which is a manifest Contradiction: Or else Motion exists necessarily of itself." (43-44)

(4) "If Motion exists necessarily of itself; it must be either with Determination every way [which is not motion], or one certain way.... If with a Determination one certain way, then That Determination is either necessary, and consequently all other Determinations impossible; which is contrary to experience; Or else there must be a particular Reason of That determination, and so backwards in infinitum...." (44)

Against the claim that motion "exists necessarily of itself" Clarke argues that (i) this motion entails the non-contingency of events (since all other motions are impossible), or, if not necessary, (ii) this motion is purposive, whether or not we are able to admit the agency of some free cause. But (ii) implies the contrary of the supposition that motion exists necessarily of itself, and (i) is "contrary to experience." Thus, says Clarke, if we take it that man is not a free agent, then we must accept the free agency of a first cause (i.e., God). Should we choose to do this, then "Liberty is a possible thing: And then Man possibly may have Liberty: And if he may possibly have it, then Experience will prove that he probably, nay, that he certainly has it" (43).

Clearly the success of Clarke's argument rests on the truth of these two premisses: "Every change in nature has a cause that produced it" and "Some changes in nature are contingent." Without the causal principle Clarke could not counter the claim that motion may exist without a mover, and he could not go on to construct an infinite regress of causes. That some events are contingent, moreover, is required to establish that it is

"contrary to experience" that events are necessary. Clarke does not give any developed support to either premiss.

What is curious about Clarke's argument, and what helps to bring Reid's position into focus, is his tacit reliance upon a peculiar understanding of 'contingency'. This can be clarified if we initially identify four senses of the word 'contingent'.

The first, common in ordinary language, is contingency as essentially dependence. In this sense something is contingent when its existence or nature is dependent upon some other thing or circumstance. The second is logical contingency, which can be understood in this way: Where 'A' stands for any statement whatever and '-A' stands for its negation, 'A is possible and -A is possible' then expresses a contingent statement. Another way of expressing this would be to say: whenever we have a statement that is conjointly possible with its negation, we therefore have a logically contingent statement. The third sense, which we may identify as causal contingency, expresses the very denial of a natural necessity. In this sense of 'contingent' some physical occurrence or event is causally contingent when it and its non-occurrence are both possible; that is, there is nothing that renders either its occurrence or its non-occurrence necessary in nature. Still a fourth sense is epistemic contingency: Where something, say 'A', is a possible object of knowledge, the statement 'A is not known and -A is not known' expresses an epistemically contingent state of affairs.

Our fourth sense of 'contingency'—epistemic contingency—does not imply that of causal contingency, since it is entirely possible that an event is causally necessary while at the same time it is not known that A

and it is not known that $\neg A$. In fact, given the possibility that both A is possible and $\neg A$ is possible, and also that either A is known or $\neg A$ is known, we find that the two senses are logically independent. Clarke's argument, if it is to be successful, cannot then rest on epistemic contingency. Epistemic contingency is simply the thesis that, with respect to a given event, it is not known whether it occurred, will occur, or will not occur, implying nothing whatever as to the causal contingency of the event. On the other hand, being wedded to the doctrine of causal connections and to the causal principle, Clarke cannot embrace the causal-contingency thesis in support of his argument because that doctrine entails that some events may not have causes at all, understanding by 'cause' something that necessitates its effects.

What Clarke requires is a sense of 'contingent' that captures the possibility of an event's non-occurrence but does so without construing it as a logical possibility—since that is useless to his case—and still not that of causal contingency, because causal contingency would undercut his commitment to the causal principle. By embracing Clarke's argument, Reid has this need as well. What both Clarke and Reid need, then, is a sense of 'contingent' according to which an event, though caused or produced, is such that it could have not occurred, regardless of the circumstances of its production.

Let us therefore go on to identify two further senses of 'contingent'. The first of these we may call "relative contingency," meaning by the term the following:

For any event E , $\neg E$ could occur, in place of E , at the very same time that E occurs, if the circumstances of E 's production were different.

This sense of the contingent, I take it, is the very one required by those who assert that some things are preventable; that is to say, for anything that happens, something else could have taken place if the circumstances had been different.

We shall denominate the second sense "physical contingency," understanding by it the following:

For any event E , $\neg E$ can occur, in place of E , at the very same time that E occurs, in the same set of circumstances and by means of the same cause or causes.

Now it is entirely consistent with the most rigid physical necessity that any event, though necessitated by the appropriate causal conditions, could not have occurred if the conditions governing the event's happening had been other than they were—i.e., if the event had been prevented. The preventability of an event is perfectly consistent with its being necessitated to occur. Therefore, if Clarke's argument is to succeed, he must accept the contingent as physically contingent and not merely as relatively contingent. Without this technical move, Clarke cannot overcome the claim that events in nature are necessary (on the hypothesis that there are no free causes in nature), and that motion does not exist of itself. Unfortunately, the physical contingency of an event is not simply a "matter of experience."

The physical contingency of an event derives its special feature from the circumstances of its production alone, for to be physically contingent is to be produced in circumstances that could at the same time have engendered a contrary occurrence.¹² Thus, in order to know that an event is physically contingent, one must know first whether the event depended for its existence upon circumstances in which the event might

also not have occurred. Hence, one cannot know that an event is physically contingent unless one knows not only the circumstances of its production but also that these productive circumstances constitute "contingent causation," i.e., that these productive circumstances could have engendered a contrary event. In this sense of 'contingent', then, contingency cannot be a mere "matter of experience." But this burdens experience with the very issue Clarke considers not to be one that is decided by experience, viz., the existence of free causes whose products are physically contingent. In short, as a proof of God's free agency, Clarke's argument is either circular (since he must assume the very thesis he argues for) or a non sequitur.

What non-theoretical support is there for the doctrine that some openly observable events are physically contingent because they are the products of contingent causes, which are not open to observation?

Clarke's second argument, which assumes the existence of God, moves in the direction of this need. This argument purports to demonstrate that God is an intelligent agent and that, because of this, God cannot be an agent at all unless he acts without being acted upon.

The argument, available in full in Clarke's Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, can be summarized in the following manner:¹³

(1) (Proposition VIII): God, the "Self-existent and Original Cause of all things," must be an intelligent agent. (543; see 543-548)

(2) Proposition IX):

(i) Unless intelligent beings were free agents, i.e., beings "indued with Liberty and Choice, which alone is the Power of Acting," they would be merely conscious and passive. (549)

(ii) If thoughts merely occur to such beings, they do not think such thoughts, but are merely conscious of them. If they are caused to

think any thoughts, they are therefore not the causes of their thinking those thoughts, for they do not originate the thoughts, and the causes either lie within or lie outside of them. (548-549)

(iii) If the causes lie within these beings, then they are acted upon by something within them (as of their nature), and so too if the causes that lie outside of them. In either case, they are acted upon by something, and are thus passive with respect to those thoughts. Agency requires the power to act without being caused to act. Liberty is this power: "Without Liberty, nothing can ... be said to be an Agent or Cause of anything. For to act necessarily, is really and properly not to Act at all, but only to be Acted upon." (551-552)

(iv) If God were a necessary agent, supposing this to be possible, then nothing in the world would be contingent.

(v) If God were not a free cause, then there must be an infinity of causes without a beginning.

The conclusion of Clarke's argument, that God must be a free agent, requires these two hidden premisses:

(A) Every event has a cause.

(B) To be a cause is to be an entity that produces effects without being caused to produce those effects.

Here, then, is the unspoken reductio form of Clarke's argument: By (A) and (B) we derive the claim that every event is a "physically contingent" event. Assume now that God is a necessary agent. This assumption implies that nothing is physically contingent. But, by virtue of (B) and (A), every event is physically contingent. By reductio, therefore, God cannot be a necessary agent and must, accordingly, be a free agent.

The success of Clarke's second argument rests squarely on two claims, the unexpressed but demanded causal principle and the expressed thesis that to be a cause is to be a thing that produces its effects without itself being caused to effect those productions. From this, though, two doctrines are entailed: (I) If God is any agent at all, God must be a free agent—a "contingent cause"—that produces its effects

without being caused to do so; and (II) every event is a physically contingent event, because these events are the products of a cause that must be, therefore, a contingent cause. What Clarke fails to address himself to is the implication that every event in the world must be necessitated by God, the freedom of man notwithstanding.¹⁴

Having considered Clarke's argument, we see one purpose, at least, for Reid's recommendation—to discover Reid's own doctrine employed in another context, a context that uses explicitly his own position for a doctrine he accepts, has reason to accept and support, but does not himself argue for. A second reward of this excursus into Clarke's rationalism is that we have uncovered the hidden sense of 'contingent' involved in both philosophers' positions, as well as the very theses that imply it: viz., the causal principle and the analytical proposition that a cause must be something that produces its effects without being necessitated to do so, the latter being a proposition that Reid derives from the causal principle alone.

Indeed, it is precisely because the contingent is, for Reid, the physically contingent that he can say:

Whatever is the effect of active power, must be something that is contingent. Contingent existence is that which depended upon the power and will of its cause. Opposed to this, is necessary existence, which we ascribe to the Supreme Being, because his existence is not owing to the power of any being. The same distinction there is between contingent and necessary truth. (523a/AP35)

3. Reid's Sense of Agency

According to Reid, it is a basic conviction of ours that we act freely. In both the Intellectual Powers and the Active Powers he says

that this belief is presupposed by us when we embark upon any action, when we deliberate about some course of action, and when we institute promises and contracts with others (see 446b-447a/IP628-630 and AP Essay I, Ch. 2). Even though we are not always acting, we still believe that it is within our power to do so, just as we believe that it is within our power to forbear acting. What Reid espouses is the view that all men consider themselves to be agents and, in some sense, E-causes. In other words, we believe ourselves to possess the power to act, in a way quite unlike inanimate things, even when we do not act on specific occasions, and we demonstrate our commitment to this by our conduct, by our practical planning, and by our social contracts. As Reid stated the matter quite directly in the Intellectual Powers:

The actions and discourses of men are effects, of which the actors and speakers are the causes. The effects are perceived by our senses; but the causes are behind the scene. We only conclude their existence and their degrees from our observation of their effects. (458a/IP661)

Whether or not we concede, with Reid, that our being free agents and causes is evident for us, what is not evident is the conclusion he derives from the view he espouses. He concludes that agency or causal efficacy is possible only for those beings that possess both will and understanding, and that, in the strictest sense of 'cause', a cause is always an intelligent agent.¹⁵ From this it would follow, of course, that the only real causes in nature are beings like ourselves.

If we accept his support for this doctrine, we ought further to accept, as Reid certainly does, what this in effect commits us to. First, the causal principle, that every event in nature has a cause that produced it, must now express the principle that every event in nature is produced

by an intelligent and purposive agent. Second, no E-cause can bring about an effect if that cause is itself E-caused or necessitated to produce its effects¹⁶ Third, there cannot be such things as contributory (or partial) causes, i.e., any conditions or events that, while alone not capable of producing an effect, contribute to its production. Fourth, the causes cited by the natural philosopher (qua scientist) and sometimes by the common man are not causes at all, and any such use of the term 'cause', while easily sanctioned by ordinary language, is always equivocal, if not, as Reid sometimes says, improper. Those causes that are not E-causes can only be C-causes, i.e., causes in a loose and popular meaning of 'cause'.

In the Active Powers Reid opens his defense of the distinction and his rationalization of causation as the activity of intelligent beings with a discussion of 'power' and 'active power', and ends with this interim position:

To say that man is a free agent, is no more than to say that, in some instances, he is truly an agent and a cause, and is not merely acted upon as a passive instrument. On the contrary, to say that he acts from necessity, is to say that he does not act at all, that he is no agent, and that, for anything we know, there is only one agent in the universe, who does everything that is done, whether it be good or ill. (607b/AP280)

He arrives at this by the following generalized argument: Something is a cause only if it has the power to produce change in those things within the scope of its power. We have the notion of a power to produce change, such that the thing having this power both may and may not produce changes by exerting that power. We can "conceive no way in which power may be determined to one of these rather than the other, in a being that has no will" (523a/AP35). In order for an act of will (a volition) to occur,

some state of affairs must be conceived and understood and some degree of judgment must be exercised. Therefore, if anything is a cause, it is so because, and only because, it is a being that possesses active power, will, understanding, and judgment. We believe ourselves to be such beings, and we therefore believe ourselves to be E-causes that act without being at the same time necessitated to act. But this is simply a more sophisticated statement of our sixth first principle of contingent truths. Hence, we ought to accept that there are E-causes, that we are such causes, and that anything in nature that does not have the characteristics of an intelligent agent can only be a cause in a conveniently expanded sense of the word 'cause'.

Marking his distinction between causes in a loose and popular sense and those within a strict and philosophical understanding of them, Reid labels as "physical causes" precisely what we have called C-causes.¹⁷ As a consequence of the distinction, he also commits himself to the methodological autonomy of natural philosophy and metaphysics (or natural theology):¹⁸

Physicks, in all its branches, is conversant about the phenomena of nature, and their physical causes; and I think it may be admitted as a maxim that every phenomenon of nature has a physical cause. But the actions of men, or of other rational beings, are not phenomena of nature, nor do they come within the sphere of physicks. (84b)

According to Reid, to be a power simpliciter is to be something commonly attributed to bodies. Among the manifest and occult qualities of bodies, as we have seen, no manifest quality is a power. All occult qualities include secondary qualities, the "disorders we feel in our own bodies," and "all the qualities which we call powers of bodies, whether mechanical, chemical, medical, animal, or vegetable" (322a/IP275). These

qualities and powers are "all obscure and relative notions, being a conception of some unknown cause of a known effect" (321b/IP274); to call them "occult qualities" is therefore "rather modestly to confess ignorance, than to cloak it" (321b/IP274). Reid considers this confession of ignorance to be endemic to the scientific quest, for "occult" qualities, when not advanced as hypotheses concerning the behavior of material bodies, will always be occult. While primary qualities and their combinations are straightforwardly observable, the most that can be gleaned from the empirical venture is the further observable result of perceptible qualities in various combinations and the observable circumstances of their combination.¹⁹

In Reid's view, then, to attribute a power to some physical thing is to assert what results to expect from a physical thing having certain observable primary qualities in specific but generalized extrinsic circumstances. But it is also, therefore, to claim always that this scheme holds only by virtue of specific conditions of which we are ignorant. In other words, in attributing a power to an object we state the idealized circumstances that would yield certain observable physical motions or configurations, also implying that we are ignorant of the E-cause that produced or would produce this situation and of the causal processes involved in this E-cause's productions. While we may state the empirical and lawful conditions of certain physical behaviors, we are unable to complete the formulae in a way that settles our queries regarding the internal connections among the observable behavior of things and the things' manifest properties, i.e., in a way that explains the necessity for this formula rather than another. What must be added to the

formula—what Reid finds lacking in all such formulae—is our knowledge of a natural necessity, which would consequently guarantee that a physical configuration, however complex, would result in certain behavior (or further configurations) and that no other result is possible within the confines of these laws.

This is one side of the positivism Reid coins—empirical and physical laws lack genuine completeness. The other side is his position that natural philosophy, the discipline concerned with the discovery and ordering of such laws, does not need anything further to build a system of empirical laws, but only when the limitations of this science are so understood. Physical science is concerned solely with the successful reporting of physical movements and changes, their observable qualities, the circumstances of their configurations, and their generalized laws. The secret springs of natural events and their efficient causes are topics that lie entirely outside the natural philosopher's investigative aims and outside the scope of his methodology:

Efficient causes, properly so called, are not within the sphere of natural philosophy. Its business is, from particular facts in the material world, to collect, by just induction, the laws that are general, and from these the more general, as far as we can go. And when this is done, natural philosophy has no more to do. It exhibits to our view the grand machine of the material world, analysed, as it were, and taken to pieces, with the connexions and dependencies of its several parts, and the laws of its several movements. It belongs to another branch of philosophy to consider whether this machine is the work of chance or of design, and whether of good or of bad design; whether there is not an intelligent first Mover who contrived the whole, and gives motion to the whole, according to the laws which the natural philosopher has discovered, or, perhaps, according to laws still more general, of which we can only discover some branches; and whether he does these things by his own hand, so to speak, or employs subordinate efficient causes to execute his purposes. These are very noble and important inquiries, but they do not belong to natural philosophy; nor can we proceed in them in the way of experiment and

induction, the only instruments the natural philosopher uses in his researches. (58a)

The science whose concern is efficient causes is "Natural Theology or Metaphysics" (58a).

In an important sense, then, our broader knowledge of nature's laws does not effectively eliminate the occultness of the processes involved in the production of certain physical events, because we do not know the E-cause that made it necessary that this physical process took place rather than another. In order to take up such a question, however, we must become not a scientist but a theologian, for the answer, according to Reid, must be different for each. Whereas for the natural philosopher we can strip occult qualities of their mystery, make them known to us, and speak confidently of them in terms of natural laws, the theologian or metaphysician must speak of the same processes in terms of real causes, and must do so with a methodology that is not limited by the constraints of careful experiment, observation, and induction. For Reid, real causes are not within the methodological scheme of the natural philosopher. By the same token, the theologian's real causes make possible the subject matter of the natural philosopher, and the latter's explanations are incomplete without the knowledge of agency, or E-causation, within the world's natural processes.

Reid claims, of course, two sources for the concept of an efficient cause. The first of these is wholly conceptual, being an analysis of the causal principle as a natural judgment. The other source is phenomenological. Reid shares with Locke the view that the bulk of our ideas and conceptions are given to us either by perceptual means or by

reflection. Those that are not acquired by these two means are provided by reasoning and by the natural mechanisms of the mind, i.e., by our constitution. This we learned in our discussion of the Inquiry and the Intellectual Powers. After careful attention to the causal principle, which encodes our natural need to seek and ascribe responsibility for changes in nature, and to what he infers from the principle itself, Reid found that nothing perceptually disclosed could directly satisfy the a priori definition of a cause in its technical signification. The result of this, he claims, is that the many things the common man calls causes can only be causes in a popular sense of the word 'cause'. He reduces the class of C-causes to laws of nature, needing no mention of productive powers to complete their explicit formulae, or, more specifically, to relational formulae that specify the results of certain objects with known primary qualities in specific circumstances. If we cannot find E-causes by perceptual means, then we can do so only by reflection and by analyzing what is uncovered thereby.

Reid delivers this discussion, of course, in the Active Powers. He also returns to the subject in 1792 in his unpublished paper "Of Power," with remarks that suggest his inability to have decided the issue in his earlier works. In the Active Powers his search for the source of our concept of an efficient cause is ended by reflection and by attending to our personal behavior and actions. Because perception cannot give us the conception of an E-cause and its necessity, Reid holds, the concept of an E-cause must be given to us by our consciousness of ourselves as active beings, and this should be brought out by reflection when we act and behave. The main reason for this is instructive: Speaking of "the manner

in which a cause may exert its active power," Reid claims that "we can have no conception, but from consciousness of the manner in which our own active power is exerted" (523b/AP36). Because "I am unable to form a notion of any intellectual power different in kind from those I possess," he says, "the same holds with respect to active power" (523b/AP36). What he concludes is this:

But, in certain motions of my body and directions of my thought, I know not only that there must be a cause that has power to produce these effects, but that I am that cause; and I am conscious of what I do in order to the production of them.

From the consciousness of our own activity, seems to be derived, not only the clearest, but the only conception we can form of activity, or the exertion of active power. (523b/AP36)

Reid denies, however, that our belief in the causal principle can be derived by experience, because "We may learn from experience what is, or what was, but no experience can teach us what necessarily must be" (524b/AP39).

In the Active Powers, then, Reid's position is this: The concept of an E-cause may be, and probably is, derived phenomenologically, by the experience of our own activity. Because an E-cause is that upon which an event must depend for its existence, it is only the belief in the causal principle—the belief in the necessity of an E-cause for every event—that is not acquired by experience. That a cause must be efficient, and hence productive of its effects, is derived by rational means (through an analysis of the causal principle). Reid is hesitant to claim that everything we know of causation is acquired experientially, instead claiming that it is the manner of an E-cause's operation—the exertion of its active power—that is given to us in experience by the consciousness of ourselves when acting and behaving. Thus, says Reid:

If it be so that the conception of an efficient cause enters into the mind, only from the early conviction we have that we are the efficient causes of our own voluntary actions, (which I think is most probable,) the notion of efficiency will be reduced to this, That it is a relation between the cause and the effect, similar to that which is between us and our voluntary actions. This is surely the most distinct notion, and, I think, the only notion we can form of real efficiency.
(524b-525a/AP40)

This, in effect, relegates the conceptual origin of causation to instinct, since this is the origin of the causal principle as an intellectual first principle, and relegates the nature of such causes to reason. It is only by ratiocination that we discover that a cause must be an E-cause and must therefore have active power. To experience is relegated our knowledge of causation in operation and of the nature of active power in execution. That there are causes is never learned, either by experience or by reasoning. That events must have causes is also unlearned, for it is an instinctive propensity and a first principle. That causes must be E-causes and must have active power is something learned by reason, by our tracing the implications of an original judgment, and in no other way. It is only the causal relation—what obtains between a cause and its effect—that is given to us in experience.

Knowing the way in which a cause operates would permit one to know the conditions for applying the concept of a cause in the first place. Although one may know that a cause is an E-cause and that an E-cause is necessary to every event, one must nevertheless know whether something, say O, has active power in order to denominate O as an E-cause. That something has active power is a necessary condition for its being an E-cause. Without being able to know whether something has active power, one cannot know, or indeed have any grounds for believing, that something

is or is not an E-cause. Without this knowledge, then, one cannot discover, either by perception or by reflection, whether there are any E-causes besides that which is demanded by the causal principle, nor whether we know anything beyond what little is gained by following our natural propensity to seek causes in the world. In short, without this knowledge, one can know only C-causes, because nothing would then satisfy the conditions for attributing causal efficacy to anything. One could only know that every event must have an E-cause, without also being able to designate anything within our experience as the E-cause of known events.

If we cannot understand the operations of E-causes by using our perceptual powers, we ought to consult our reflective powers because "Every man is led by nature to attribute to himself the free determinations of his own will, and to believe those events to be in his power which depend upon his will" (524a/AP37). Alternatively, "it is self-evident, that nothing is in our power that is not subject to our will" (524a/AP37).

What emerges from Reid's handling of this position is a doctrine that is to serve two purposes. The first is to place the notion of an E-cause within the range of human experience, thereby enabling one to use the causal principle in at least a limited number of instances. The second is to disclose to the inquisitive man the real nature of agency.

One of the first things we learn of our own activity, says Reid, is that our bodies are instruments: "We can produce no motion in any body in the universe, but by moving first our own body as an instrument. Nor can we produce thought in any other person, but by thought and motion in

ourselves" (527b/AP49). This, he claims, is accomplished by willing the appropriate motion or thought:

Every man is conscious of a power to determine, in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination. To this power we give the name of Will; and, as it is usual, in the operations of the mind, to give the same name to the power and to the act of that power, the term will is often put to signify the act of determining, which more properly is called volition. (530a-b/AP57)

The term 'volition', then, "signifies the act of willing and determining; and Will is put indifferently to signify either the power of willing or the act" (530b-531a/AP57). A volition is "The determination of the mind to do, or not to do, something which we conceive to be in our power" (531a/AP58). The presence of a volition, or an act of will, also decides whether an occurrence is or is not a human action, for "In the strict philosophical sense, nothing can be called the action of a man, but what he previously conceived and willed or determined to do" (543a/AP94).

What kind of "power" one is conscious of when we reflect on our conduct follows upon Reid's account of willing, or of the volitional act. On two separate occasions he explains the mechanics of this activity, and both are troublesome for his account of causation. Of the will itself, Reid gives us four observations: (1) Every volition must have an object, i.e., "the person who wills must have some conception, more or less distinct, of what he wills" (531b/AP59). (2) The immediate object of the will must be some specimen of our own behavior (531b/AP60). (3) This behavior must be something we believe to be in our power and to depend upon our volition (532b/AP62), and (4) "there must be something in the preceding state of the mind that disposes us or inclines us to that

determination" (533a/AP63). In the volitional act itself, though, something of the following sort is supposed to take place:

Thus, I will to stretch out my arm. The effect immediately follows. But we know that the arm is stretched out by the contraction of certain muscles; and that the muscles are contracted by the influence of the nerves. I know nothing, I think nothing, either of nerves or muscles, when I stretch out my arm: yet this nervous influence, and this contraction of the muscles, uncalled by me, immediately produces the effect which I willed. This is as if a weight were to be raised, which can be raised only by a complication of levers, pulleys, and other mechanical powers, that are behind the curtain, and altogether unknown to me. I will to raise the weight; and no sooner is this volition exerted, than the machinery behind the curtain falls to work and raises the weight. (547a-b/AP106)

Similarly, says Reid in another context:

We know not even how those immediate effects of our power are produced by our willing them. We perceive not any necessary connection between the volition and exertion on our part, and the motion of our body that follows them.

Anatomists inform us, that every voluntary motion of the body is performed by the contraction of certain muscles, and that the muscles are contracted by some influence derived from the nerves. But, without thinking in the least, either of muscles or nerves, we will only the external effect, and the internal machinery, without our call, immediately produces that effect. (528a/AP50)

...That there is an established harmony between our willing certain motions of our bodies, and the operation of the nerves and muscles which produces those motions, is a fact known by experience. This volition is an act of the mind. But whether this act of the mind have any physical effect upon the nerves and muscles; or whether it be only an occasion of their being acted upon by some other efficient, according to the established laws of nature, is hid from us. So dark is our conception of our own power when we trace it to its origin. (528a-b/AP50)

As Reid must honestly admit: "It is possible, therefore, for any thing we know, that what we call the immediate effects of our power, may not be so in the strictest sense. Between the will to produce the effect, and the production of it, there may be agents or instruments of which we are ignorant" (528a/AP50). Hence his doubt "whether we be, in the

strictest sense, the efficient cause of the voluntary motions of our own body" (586b/AP51).

This doubt also extends to the "other branch of what is immediately in our power," the voluntary changes of our thoughts:

Were we to examine minutely into the connection between our volitions, and the direction of our thoughts which obeys these volitions—were we to consider how we are able to give attention to an object for a certain time, and turn our attention to another when we choose, we might perhaps find it difficult to determine whether the mind itself be the sole efficient cause of the voluntary changes in the direction of our thoughts, or whether it requires the aid of other efficient causes. (528b-529a/AP51-52)

Reid's admissions imply at least two things. First, by consulting our own activity, we seem not to learn anything more about causation, understanding 'causation' in its strict and philosophical meaning, than we would learn by consulting nature. Second, the form of the relation between a volition and what follows from the volition is the same as the relation between a physical cause—i.e., a C-cause—and what it effects. Even if the circumstances of the instruction are different, the causal relation is learned in the same way in each case, and this seems not to be altered one whit by our native inference that we have a power we can exert by volitions. From this, supposing it to be correct, we ought to infer that what E-causes there are is something that is not decided by the causal principle, and is not decided either by perception or by reflection. The causal principle and the supposition of power in E-causes demand that there be a necessary connection between an event and a cause that appears not to be given anywhere in experience. But we should also infer that whether E-causes are intelligent agents, and thus whether, necessarily, every event is the product of the willful activity of an

intelligent E-cause, is a complex question that is not obviously answered when we look to experience for that answer. In other words, as agents we seem not also to be E-causes.

4. The Genetic Difficulty - I

Reid's position, then, is this. Prior to an analytical treatment of the causal principle, whenever we are faced with an event, of whatever sort and whether perceived or merely considered in thought, we are led (because constitutionally predisposed) to attribute the production of the event to some cause. We thus do this even if we are unclear about precisely what a cause is and whether or not we can even provide a description of a cause. The notion of a cause is decidedly non-perceptual in origin. Says Reid: "A train of events following one another ever so regularly, could never lead us to the notion of a cause, if we had not, from our constitution, a conviction of the necessity of a cause to every event" (523b/AP36). Perception alone can therefore never yield the concept of a cause. By parity of reasoning, though, we ought also to say that consciousness of ourselves as active could never lead us to the notion of a cause, if we had not, from our constitution, a belief in the necessity of a cause to every event. The situations are exactly alike, for it is only by virtue of the causal principle that we are able to denominate anything as a cause.

In Chapter I, however, we interpreted Reid as maintaining that necessary truths are analytic, as following naturally from his claim that "Every proposition that is necessarily true stands opposed to a contradictory proposition that is impossible" (378b/IP433). This, though,

cannot obviously be said of his second metaphysical first principle, "That whatever begins to exist, must have a cause which produced it" (455a/IP652).

Reid certainly was aware of a formal difference among necessary statements, and makes this clear in an undated fragment of one of his unpublished papers:²⁰

Q. Is there not a difference between the evidence of some first principles and others? A. There are various differences perhaps. This seems to be one, that, in some first principles, the predicate of the proposition is evidently contained in the subject: it is in this, two and three are equal to five; a man has flesh and blood. In these and the like self-evident principles, the subject includes the predicate in the very notion of it. There are other first principles in which the predicate is not contained in the notion of the subject; as, where we affirm that a thing which begins to exist must have a cause. Here the beginning of existence and causation are really different notions, nor does the first include the last.... The truth of principles of the first kind is only perceiving some part of the definition of a thing to belong to it.

Because it is a necessary statement, the causal principle cannot be proved true or be fully evidentially supported by experience. The principle is incapable of proof by induction (455b/IP654) and is not liable to exceptions (455b-456a/IP655). While "We may learn from experience what is, or what was," we cannot learn from this source "what necessarily must be" (524b/AP39).²¹ Moreover, "In the far greatest part of the changes in nature that fall within our observation, the causes are unknown; and, therefore, from experience, we cannot know whether they have causes or not" (456a/IP655).²² Reid also never attempts to place the principle under the purview of the principle of contradiction, as one would expect him to do if he considered the principle to be analytic, and he heartily agrees with Hume that such analytical proofs as offered by Hobbes, Samuel

Clarke, and Locke all "take for granted the thing to be proved" (455b/IP653).²³ The same thing may be said of Reid's first metaphysical first principle, "That the qualities which we perceive by our senses must have a subject, which we call body, and that the thoughts we are conscious of must have a subject, which we call mind" (454a/IP650); and his third metaphysical first principle, "That design and intelligence in the cause may be inferred, with certainty, from marks or signs of it in the effect" (457b/IP660).

What these three principles have in common is that each is known a priori, if known at all, because they are not derivative from any experience whatsoever. They are necessarily true and their contradictories are impossible, but not obviously by virtue of their logical form. Finally, they enable us to infer the existence of something not given in experience from something within experience. If anything at all, they seem obviously to be perfect specimens of what are called synthetic a priori statements.

In the Inquiry Reid held that "our sensations and thoughts do also suggest the notion of a mind, and the belief of its existence, and of its relation to our thoughts," and "By a like natural principle it is, that a beginning of existence, or any change in nature, suggests to us the notion of a cause, and compels our belief of its existence" (111b/INQ39). In the Intellectual Powers the natural principles that engender and make possible these easy, native inferences are singled out as the first two of our metaphysical first principles—(1) that sensible qualities have bodies as their subjects and conscious thoughts have minds as their subjects, and, of course, (2) the causal principle. As a natural judgment, however, the

causal principle is indifferent to the items to which we are led to ascribe responsibility for any change in nature or in ourselves. As a first principle, the causal principle limits the range of inferred causes to E-causes. This still leaves us with only the Active Powers, along with pieces of his unpublished works and correspondence, to guide us in our quest for a rule to follow in using the causal principle—a rule, in effect, that would enable us to say that something to which (by a natural judgment) we ascribe responsibility for a change in nature is in fact the E-cause of that change.

The causal principle is a psychologically compelling general belief, the probable result of our constitution, and, as an intellectual principle, both an a priori and a necessary statement. What Reid wants to establish, though, is not that the causal principle springs from our constitution fully dressed and armed for practice, like Athena from the brow of Zeus. He wants to establish that our notion of the causal relation is something derived from experience, or is at least given in experience. Moreover, he wants to establish that by virtue of our nature we must believe in the necessity of an E-cause for every event we might encounter. What we can know and what we can imagine are strictly limited by our store of concepts, and are constrained as well by the principles governing their use. Thus, says Reid:

It is very probable that the very conception or idea of active power, and of efficient causes, is derived from our voluntary exertions in producing effects; and that, if we were not conscious of such exertion, we should have no conception at all of a cause, or of active power, and consequently no conviction of the necessity of a cause of every change which we observe in nature. (604a/AP270)

The difficulty is that from an analysis of the causal principle Reid concludes that (1) to be a cause is to be an E-cause that possesses a productive power, because power is "a quality in the cause, which enables it to produce the effect" (603b/AP268); (2) to be a cause is to be a thing that produces its effects by exertions of its power, for "All that is necessary to the production of any effect, is power in an efficient cause to produce the effect, and the exertion of that power" (603b/AP268); (3) to be a cause is to be a thing that enters into a necessary relation to what it effects, "for it is a contradiction to say, that the cause has power to produce the effect, and exerts that power, and yet the effect is not produced" (603b/AP268); and (4) to be a cause is to be a thing that produces its effects without being necessitated by any other cause, i.e., a genuine cause has an active power. What causes there are, in fact, is a matter entirely separate from the causal principle and what can be deduced from it. What items might satisfy the description provided is still an empirical matter.

Reid is convinced that the provided description is satisfied by phenomenological means, by reflection upon ourselves as active beings, and he is likewise convinced that perception alone always fails to yield E-causes in nature. What entitles us to succeed in inferring the existence of E-causes from the existence of some events is the joint use of the causal principle and our inferred notion of active power. An inference is necessary because active power, which a cause must possess in order to be an E-cause, is neither an object of perception nor an object of reflection. Active power must always be inferred from some event, some set of events, or some feature of the thing to which causal responsibility

is attributed. It would appear, then, that we can firmly decide what things are E-causes and what things are not if we can satisfy ourselves as to what things possess active power. On the other hand, any failure to find a necessary connection between the exertion of a thing's active power and its results should force us to accept that the thing is not, after all, an E-cause. Reid therefore has a choice between two undesirables: Either we acquiesce in the view that we are not E-causes, which defeats his larger implication that an E-cause is always an intelligent agent, or we admit that the relation between an E-cause's exertion of power and its results is not a necessary connection.

It would certainly seem that Hume's reasoning on the subject had already decided the issue. As set forth in Book I of the Treatise and in his first Enquiry, as is well known, Hume's general empiricist thesis is that all of the materials of human thought and belief are "perceptions." These are of two kinds, ideas (or thoughts) and impressions, the latter comprising "all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will."²⁴ The relation between impressions and ideas is such that "all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones" (E19). From this Hume derives his chief analytical tool for discovering the empirical sense of terms:

When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or ideas (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, from what impression is that supposed idea derived? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion. (E22)

All objects of human reason, on the other hand, are either "relations of ideas" or "matters of fact." That is, there are two classes

of propositions. Propositions expressing a relation of ideas are those that are "either intuitively or demonstrably certain." Because this class of propositions is governed by the law of contradiction, any denial of a proposition expressing a relation of ideas always yields a formal contradiction. A matter of fact proposition is a statement whose denial never yields a formal contradiction and whose contrary, therefore, is always logically possible. It is a large matter, surely, but nevertheless a small effort, to show that the causal principle is not a proposition that displays any relation of ideas, since its denial is not formally contradictory. It must thus be a statement expressing, at least, some matter of fact. Indeed, what we know concerning causes and effects and the relationship between them is "not attained by reasonings a priori; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other" (E27). "When we reason a priori," says Hume, "and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it could never suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect; much less, show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them" (E31).

In his mature performance on causation, in the first Enquiry, when he turns to consider the "secret connexion" (E66) of causes—the special "necessary connexion" between causes and effects—Hume first endeavors "to examine its impression." But "in order to find the impression with greater certainty," he says, "let us search for it in all the sources, from which it may possibly be derived" (E63). By means of perception, Hume finds:

When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. (E63)

Not discovering among the objects of perception any necessary connection or "any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion" (E63), he then tries to locate the connective by reflection. Here he repeats an account that is amazingly similar to Reid's own:

It may be said, that we are every moment conscious of internal power; while we feel, that, by the simple command of our will, we can move the organs of our body, or direct the faculties of the mind. An act of volition produces motion in our limbs, or raises a new idea in our imagination. This influence of the will we know by consciousness. Hence we acquire the idea of power or energy; and are certain, that we ourselves and all other intelligent beings are possessed of power. This idea, then, is an idea of reflection, since it arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and on the command which is exercised by will, both over the organs of the body and faculties of the soul. (E64)

Reflection will never result in the idea of a necessary connection, though, because (1) in order to know this connection, we would have to know the "secret union of soul and body" (E65); (2) if we knew it, we would know why the will has "an influence over the tongue and fingers, not over the heart or liver" (E65); (3), as a corollary of (1), if we knew what things were in our power and what items were related by a necessary connection with the exercise of that power, then we would know certainly what effects would result from the exercise of our power:

We learn from anatomy, that the immediate object of power in voluntary motion, is not the member itself which is moved, but certain muscles, and nerves, and animal spirits, and, perhaps, something still more minute and more unknown, through which the motion is successively propagated, ere it reach the member itself whose motion is the immediate object of volition.... Here the mind wills a certain event:

Immediately another event, unknown to ourselves, and totally different from the one intended, is produced: This event produces another, equally unknown: Till at last, through a long succession, the desired event is produced. But if the original power were felt, it must be known: Were it known, its effect also must be known; since all power is relative to its effect. And vice versa, if the effect be not known, the power cannot be known nor felt. (E66)

Hume thus concludes that "our idea of power is not copied from any sentiment or consciousness of power within ourselves, when we give rise to animal motion, or apply our limbs to their proper use and office" (E67). While it is an observational fact that bodily motions follow upon "the command of the will," nevertheless "the power or energy by which this is effected, like that in other natural events, is unknown and inconceivable" (E67).

Hume also denies that reflection upon our voluntary activities in thinking will yield the needed conception. In this case: (1) Here "We only feel the event, namely, the existence of an idea, consequent to a command of the will: But the manner, in which this operation is performed, the power by which it is produced, is entirely beyond our comprehension" (E68). (2) The limits of the mind's command over itself are known "only by experience and observation, as in all other natural events and in the operation of external objects," and we do not know the "ultimate reason" for the narrow boundaries of the mind's self-command (E68). (3) It is similarly by experience and observation alone that we know why health and sickness give us different instances of self-command over our thoughts, and not by consciousness of the will's "power or energy" (E68-69).

Having thus "sought in vain for an idea of power or necessary connexion in all the sources from which we could suppose it to be derived" (E73), Hume concludes "that, upon the whole, there appears not, throughout

all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us" (E74). The "necessary conclusion," he says, "seems to be that we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasoning or common life" (E74). This, however, is a case in which a term does not have the empirical sense it ought to have, for there is no discoverable referent where there should be one. This is also a case in which, rather than consider the terms to be without any meaning whatsoever, we ought to say that they are like those that "do here lose their true meaning by being wrong apply'd" (T162).

Hume suggests the following account of the genesis of our idea of "necessary connection":

But when one particular species of event has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other, and of employing that reasoning, which can alone assure us of any matter of fact or existence. We then call the one object, Cause; the other, Effect. We suppose that there is some connexion between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity. (E74-75)

A "necessary connection" is thus "that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant" (T165); it is something that (by a law of our constitution) the imagination superadds to our conception of the customary relation between occurrences within experience. "This connexion, therefore, which we feel in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant," Hume says, "is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion" (E75).

Admittedly Hume's empiricism demands a theory of concept acquisition that is far more austere than Reid's. Reid maintains that "There are notions or ideas that ought to be referred to the faculty of judgment as their source; because, if we had not that faculty, they could not enter into our minds; and to those that have that faculty, and are capable of reflecting upon its operations, they are obvious and familiar" (414a/IP535). Among our rudimentary judgments, of course, is the causal principle, a natural judgment without which we could not denominate anything a cause or an effect. But our use of the principle as a natural judgment does not enable us to specify which of the things we might observe are E-causes. It is only by having a conception of power in ourselves that we are consequently able to apply our fuller conception of power in deciding whether an event is the result of the productive capability of an E-cause or is merely the lawful consequent of a C-cause.

For Reid, though, the power of an E-cause is such that its exercise must result in a specific effect, i.e., in an event to which it is necessarily connected. How we acquire the conception of a necessary connection between a cause and an effect is clearly relevant here. Hume denies that we have the idea or conception of a power that, when exerted, must result in a certain effect. On the supposition of power in ourselves, according to Hume, what results from a power's exertion is nevertheless known entirely by experience and observation. The manner of the power's command over what results from the power's exertion is entirely unknown to us because there are intervening processes of which we are unaware; moreover, we have no knowledge or awareness of the connection between volitions and their results beyond what is narrowly supplied by

experience. If nothing else, power consists solely in "the possibility or probability of any action, as discover'd by experience and the practice of the world" (T313). The only known difference between two possible cases, where we say in one that someone cannot perform an action and in another that he can perform the action, is that "in the former case we conclude from past experience, that the person never will perform the action, and in the latter, that he possibly or probably will perform it" (T312). The explicit use of power-ascriptions is always reducible to a statement of the conditions that engender occurrences and sequences of events. This, in fact, is one of the corollaries Hume draws from his discussion of causation in the Treatise. If power is a subjective feature of our awareness of sequential events, it cannot legitimately be said to be present where the sequences giving rise to the idea of power do not occur. Therefore, says Hume, "The distinction, which we often make betwixt power and the exercise of it, is equally without foundation" (T171). Upon the supposition of a productive power that, when exerted, must result in a certain effect, we should be in a position to say what specifically results from the exertion of that power and what specifically does not; failing this, we should accordingly admit that there is no such power, as we had previously supposed.

The situation is not in the least salvaged by saying that our volitions and exertions of power are bound with, e.g., bodily movements by a necessary connection but that the intervening processes are none the less unknown to us, because this is to eliminate from consideration precisely what is relevant to our claim that there is such a necessary connection. If intervening processes are unknown to us, then we cannot

guarantee that the relation between willful exertions of power and the bodily movements is not more than a merely lawful (or law-like) relation, without a necessary connection. In the absence of a necessary connection the term 'power' under consideration is here "wrong apply'd": it cannot be said that we have the conception of a power that, when exerted, must result in what is thought to be the object of that power.

Hume's general argument demonstrates that our sincere commitment to a belief in a necessary connection between a cause and its effect entails far more than is accounted for by Reid's genetic examples. We may believe, as Reid says we do, that we have the power to move our limbs and change our thoughts, but this is clearly not a power that, when exerted, must result in the movement or the change. That is, we may believe that we have such a power and may believe, for example, that our limbs will move by exerting that power, but when we get down to cases it is always possible that our willful exertions result in nothing at all, that there is no necessary connection between willing our arms to rise and the rising of our arms, and therefore that we do not, as our belief so requires, have the requisite power. If we did have a power whose exertion is necessarily connected with an effect, we should be able to explain why no other result is possible upon the supposition of that power. Failing this, what we take to be our power is not what we originally took it to be—it cannot be a power that, when exerted, must result in an effect.

Reid's last public effort on the subject was expended in rationalizing his conviction that our concepts of E-causation and active power are nevertheless empirical in origin. In the Active Powers Reid is unable to show that our concept of causation, as a productive relation

between a cause and an effect that is dependent for its existence upon its cause, is learned by consulting either nature or our own activity. For a relation between a volition and an item of human behavior to be an E-causal relation, there must be a necessary connection between the willful exertion and what follows from it. But this is not the case, as Reid freely admits. Such is one lesson to be learned by looking at the a priori conditions of causation in general. We learn what is in our power by discovering the behavior (either mental or physical) that follows upon our volitions, and we learn this in the same way we learn what effects we may bring about by manipulating nature's objects and events. Both kinds of effect are learned in the same way, and both seem equally to be the effects of causes in the popular significance of 'cause'.

Now Reid does not, of course, infer that an event is "necessarily connected" with its cause because, necessarily, every event has a cause that produced it. That is, understanding 'necessary connection' to mean what we have stipulated it to mean, he does not infer a necessary connection between a cause and what it effects from the necessity of the causal principle. The connection between a cause and the events that depend upon it is opaque until we understand that a cause must have a specific sort of power, a quality that enables the cause to generate events or to bring events into existence. But the power to bring events into existence and the exertion of that power jointly entail that an effect is forthwith brought about. Let us assume that a cause possesses the requisite power, and that there are no impediments to the power's exercise. Assume also that it exerts that power and that what it should effect is not thereby brought about. The cause therefore does not have

the power to bring about the event. This, however, conflicts with our assumption that it has this power. Hence, the exertion of power must result in what it should effect. This follows analytically from the supposition of power in the cause, i.e., upon the supposition of a quality in a cause that enables it to bring about events. Such, I think, is Reid's reason—perhaps his sole reason—for asserting that there is what we have called a "necessary connection" between E-causes and what they effect.

Considering the matter a priori, then, we can select the following characteristics of an "E-cause":

- (1) An efficient cause must have a productive power, a quality that enables it to bring about events.
- (2) When exerted, an efficient cause's productive power must result in what it should effect; that is, there is a necessary connection between the cause and what it effects.
- (3) The power of an efficient cause A must be exerted by A and not by some other efficient cause, say, B.

Regarding (3), we find that the contrary circumstance results in B's having brought about the effects within the scope of A's power. A did not bring about certain effects, but rather B did, for B has that effect within its power and is necessarily connected with the effect and the exertion of A's power. From this we can thus generate:

- (4) An efficient cause must be able to bring about events, to exert its power, without at the same time being necessitated by any other cause. In other words, an efficient cause must have "active power."

To demand these conditions of the concept of an efficient cause is to say that the terms 'cause', 'efficient cause', and 'power' are significant terms. For Reid, the first term is given a use and a significance by our possession of the causal principle. The term 'power' is given a

significance through our natural judgments about events in nature and about our own actions. We naturally infer something in those things to which we ascribe responsibility, and attribute to them a power enabling them to be causes. The difference between the power of an E-cause and a physical virtue is that the former is an "active power" and the latter is not. What Reid wants to propose is precisely what he is required to propose. The first notion of a cause is given to us naturally via the causal principle as a natural judgment. That causes possess power is also given to us naturally, since we naturally attribute powers to things when we ascribe causal responsibility to them. But that the power of a cause must be an active power, and that the only real causes are therefore E-causes, is something derived analytically from the causal principle as a first principle. The "necessary connection" between an effect and the exertion of an E-cause's power is a feature deductively established from the supposition of active power in a cause.

In Reid's view, the reason for our failure to find E-causes among inanimate things in nature is that everything inanimate behaves as though it were necessitated by something else. On the other hand, we believe that we ourselves initiate events. Morality and the rules of conduct, Reid claims, require that we be genuine causes and that we have the requisite power. If we find things that behave like rational agents, this is because we have analogical information at our disposal for discerning the marks of intelligence and agency in effects presented to us by sense experience.

Now what Reid needs to set forth is the usefulness of the causal principle in pronouncing such judgments, and also the means by which the

concepts of "active power" and "necessary connection" are realized in nature when we attempt to use the causal principle. What is really at stake here is the empirical usefulness of the term 'efficient cause'. If he fails in this task, we ought then to say that the causal principle is necessary and a priori in a rationalistic sense, that what Reid deduces from the principle follows in fact from a statement whose conceptual components are given nowhere in our experience. In endeavoring to use the principle, however, we find that nothing in experience can satisfy the strict, philosophical definition of a cause: Whatever we take to be an E-cause turns out, in the end, to be nothing but a C-cause. Despite the consequent frustrations, the bitter entailment of this is that every event is connected by necessity to the causally productive power of a cause, an E-cause, that seems not to bear any resemblance to a human being.

5. The Genetic Difficulty - II: Reid's Unpublished Essay "Of Power"

In 1792, four years after the appearance of the Active Powers and two years after the book's republication with the Intellectual Powers in Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind, Reid returned to the genetic problem in his unpublished essay "Of Power." There Reid says:²⁵

Every voluntary exertion to produce an Event seems to imply a perswasion in the Agent that he has power to produce the Event. A deliberate Exertion to produce an Event, implies a conception of the Event, and some belief or hope that his Exertion will be followed by it. This I think cannot be denied. The consequence is that a conception of Power is antecedent to every deliberate Exertion of Will to produce an Event. We have reason to think that voluntary Exertions are as early as any other operation of the thinking Being, and if they be all deliberate, that is intended to produce an Event which we believe to be in our Power, we should be led to think a Conception of Power, & even a belief that such and such Events are in our power, are innate, at least antecedent to every Act of Volition. But I am rather

inclined to think that our first Exertions are instinctive, without any distinct conception of the Event that is to follow, consequently without will to produce that Event. And that finding by Experience that such exertions are followed by such Events, we learn to make the exertion voluntarily & deliberately, as often as we desire to produce the event; And when we know or believe that the Event depends upon our Exertion, we have the conception of power in our selves to produce that event.

This account, Reid says, makes our conception of power "the fruit of Experience and not innate" (folio 1), and it implies both that "exertion" is something different from "a deliberate will to produce the Event by that Exertion" and that there "may be Exertion without Will" (folio 1). Our "experience of the consequence of such exertions may at the same time give us the conception of Power & teach us that the Events known to be consequent upon such Exertions are in our Power" (folio 2). This, indeed, is how we acquire the conception of power:

That certain events are produced when we will to produce them is a matter of every day & every hour's experience. This may give us a conception of power in our selves, as early as we have occasion for it. And I see no other way we can possibly acquire it. (folio 2)

Again, we cannot acquire the concept of power or causation by observation of nature:

When we attend to objects without us we see innumerable changes or or [sic] Events, some constantly conjoined with a certain Effect which succeeds; but we see not ground to think that Heat will turn Ice into Water any more than that it will turn Water into Ice. Mr Humes reasoning on this Subject In Essay on Necessary Connexion would have convinced me if I had not been convinced before by S.I. Newton.... According to Newton, when Physics shall be carved to the utmost perfection, there would not be found in the whole Science such a Conception as that of a Cause; nothing but Laws of Nature, which are general Facts grounded on Experience & Phenomena which are particular Facts, included in the more general, & consequent upon them. Some indeed call the Laws of Nature, Causes. But surely no Man that thinks can believe that Laws of Nature can produce any Phenomenon unless there be some Agent that puts the Law in Execution.

Since therefore there is nothing external to us from which we can draw the conception of an efficient or productive cause, it must be deduced from something in our own Mind. (folios 3-4)

Again, it is by reflection that we learn the concepts:

We are conscious that we have power to produce certain events by our Will & exertion. The conviction of this power is implied in the very voluntary will & Exertion, for no Man makes an Exertion to do what he does not think to be in his Power. In our own voluntary actions, therefore we have a conviction & consequently a conception of efficient or productive power in ourselves. And this conception we had so early that it must be the work of Nature. (folio 4)

In Reid's account of the matter, an action, whether voluntary or not, requires at least an exertion and a subsequent item of mental or physical behavior. When we find that our exertions, at first instinctive and involuntary, are followed by certain pieces of behavior, we subsequently find that we can bring about the behavior by bringing about an exertion through an act of willing a certain event. Because we cannot act without believing that it is in our power to act—or because we cannot intentionally act without believing that our exertion will result in certain behavior—we must therefore have the conception of power in ourselves, and so come to believe that we are efficient causes.

The example Reid gives of one's learning that he has power is a curious one:

So we, knowing that certain effects depend on our will, impute to our selves the power of producing them, though there may be some latent process between the Volition & the production which we do not know. So a child may know that a bell is rung by pulling a certain peg, though he does not yet know how that operation is connected with the ringing of the bell, & when he can move that peg he has a perfect conviction that he has power to ring the bell. (folios 4-5)

The answer is curious because Reid clearly agrees that whether there is a known necessary connection between willful exertions and what they effect is no longer a relevant empirical issue for attributing causal power to ourselves. Consider, specifically, his answer to Hume:

To this account of the origin of our conception of productive power or Efficiency Mr Hume objects, that though we find a constant conjunction between our volitions and certain Events, we discover this only by Experience, &, see no necessary connexion between our will and the motion of our body which follows it, any more than we see between heat & the melting of ice, &, therefore as the last gives us no conception of productive power, but solely of constant conjunction, so neither can the first. To this I answer that if a Man believed that in Heat there was a will to melt ice, he would undoubtedly believe that there is in Heat a real efficient power to produce that effect, though he were ignorant how or by what latent process the effect is produced. (folio 4)

What Reid is claiming is that our conception of power is tied conceptually to volition. Within our conceptual framework, only those entities capable of willing events can be said to have power. The circumstances that generate our native idea of power are such that the idea is presented to us naturally only in circumstances where willful exertions result in certain behavior. Hence, where we are unable to attribute a will to something, we are also, by that fact, unable to infer that the thing has power or is, indeed, a cause. Thus, says Reid:

If the Account before given of the Origine of our Notion of Power be just, it seems to follow that Will is necessarily implied in the Notion of Power. Volition and what follows upon our Volitions is all that we conceive to be in our Power. What a Man never willed cannot be imputed to him as his Action. A Man's Power is measured by what he can do if he will. This is the measure of Power when we speak of Power in any intelligent or animated Being. In this Sense, which I take to be the only proper Sense of the Word, it is evident that a being which has no will can have no Power. And when we impute Power to dead matter it must be understood in some popular or analogical, & not in the Proper sense. (folio 7)

But Reid is also claiming that our conception of causes as willful agents is intellectually prior to our "improper," analogical use of the causal principle, even as a natural judgment. Ascriptions of power in circumstances of willful exertion are primary and prior to ascriptions of power to objects presented to us through sense perception.

Now, admittedly, Reid's account of the origin of the conception of power specifies something that does not follow directly from the psychological evidence he provides. Nor is he at all in a position to provide it: Our first conceptions and judgments cannot be recaptured, but can only be conjectured, since they are hidden, like the Nile's beginnings, in an "unknown region" (417b/IP545). But this species of guesswork does clear up the problem he brought upon himself in the Active Powers.

In the Active Powers, it is said, all perceptual objects enter into circumstances that enable us, by a natural urge, to record regularities and to attribute changes in some objects to other objects and the circumstances in which they might appear. The inductive principle, specifying that nature is uniform in these singular changes, renders such regularities general for us. What inevitably defeats our immature beliefs that there are natural E-causes, however, is our discovery that such "causes" are inactive and impotent: They are C-causes and have no active power. This discovery is found to rest upon our coordinate belief that events must always be dependent for their occurrence upon E-causes. This belief, a presupposition of the causal principle, does not merely state a native belief of ours but also brings to completion a statement of Reid's second metaphysical first principle. A further presupposition of the causal principle is that E-causes necessitate their effects. Hence, there are two senses of the term 'cause'—a sense found in ordinary language and used to refer to changes preceding, and held responsible for, other changes (or to the laws by which these changes take place); and a sense used technically to identify strictly a thing that, by exerting its active

power, necessitates a change either in itself or in some other thing. E-causes, which produce or necessitate their effects, we conceive to be productive only, Reid tells us, by willing their effects, thus making causation the activity of intelligent and purposive beings. This, he claims, is the result of the empirical or phenomenological background of our conception of E-causation.

If, as Reid says, our conception of E-causation is achieved through the experience of our own activity, itself the result of our native conviction that we are causally productive of our behavior, this would limit our belief and conception of E-causation to beings like ourselves. But, whereas we learn what is in our power by experience, we arrive at the conviction of ourselves as the agents of our behavior by a natural judgment, by imputing to ourselves the power to produce our behavior. The belief that our behavior depends for its occurrence upon our volitions is one we naturally accept, even though—as Reid admits—there may be no necessary connection obtaining between our volitions and our behavior.

In the Active Powers, then, as we have seen, causal ascriptions are made possible by the causal principle as a natural judgment, leaving us with the problem of locating a rationale for choosing intelligent agency over physical powers when tracing the origin of the concepts involved. In the Active Powers Reid tells us that we cannot get the concept of power by consulting nature, but the reason he gives is that the evidence of agency is lacking in inanimate things. This is tantamount to holding these alternatives: (i) we are not entitled to infer causal power in inanimate things, although we are naturally predisposed to do so by the causal principle, or (ii) we cannot attribute powers to inanimate things until we

have the concept of power through willful exertion. It is (ii), the thesis of his 1792 essay, that Reid needs to establish, but it is (i) that he adopts in the Active Powers. In answer to the charge that (ii) goes beyond the psychological evidence available to us, he must say that such an account is the only one that is consistent with the concepts (and with what we may deduce from the concepts) we possess. What we must now say, though, is that the causal principle is unusable, even as a natural judgment, until we have a conception of power in ourselves. Once we have this concept, we analogically extend the causal principle—and always do so wrongly—to inanimate things in nature, i.e., to things incapable of volition.

The wrongness of our analogical extension of the causal principle to inanimate beings is derived directly from the original circumstances of a power's legitimate ascription. Reid wants to establish that whatever possesses a will also, by the same token, possesses an active power. He wants to establish, too, that "from our own active Exertions, we very early get the conception of active power, & of an efficient Cause" (folio 5), an efficient cause in this case being that "which by its active Power produces the Effect" (folio 5). As Reid sees the problem, what is at issue between Hume and himself rests on the presence of active powers in the world. He concedes that there are "powers" that are indistinguishable from their exercise by their disappearance, like the causes possessing them, within a network of eventful regularities and the conjunction or concatenation of events. Here the powers attributed to inanimate things are always subject to analyses that discard their presence in favor of conditional statements indicating the circumstances under which certain

occurrences are obtained by certain objects in specific but generalized situations.

In "Of Power," as in the Active Powers, the difference between the two classes of "powers" rests on the presence of a "necessary connection":

Power in the proper Sense is under the command of him who has the power, and we cannot infer the Act from the Power because there is no necessary connection between them. It is otherwise with regard to the Powers we ascribe to inanimate Beings. Even when our volitions are compelled by an irresistible Motive, such as the fear of immediate Death, or the violence of Torture, the Action is not imputed to the Man or considered as an Exertion of his Power, but as a necessary Consequence of Fear or Torture, Necessity & Power being incompatible. (folio 7)

As an "active power," the power possessed by animate beings is such that there is always a distinction between its bare possession and its exercise. Something having an active power has that power whether it is actually used or not:

The Powers therefore which in a vague & popular sense we ascribe to inanimate things differ from Power taken in the proper sense in two things; the last implies Volition & cannot exist without it, but the first is not accompanied with any Volition but is in Beings which have neither Understanding nor Will. Another Difference between the Power that is properly so called & that which is not, is that the first implies no necessary connection with the Act.... For power properly so called is inconsistent with Necessity. On the contrary the powers which we ascribe to inanimate things are always conjoined with Necessity; and must, without a miracle, be exerted to their utmost whenever the circumstances concur which by the laws of Nature are necessary to their exertion. (folios 7-8)

Although Reid says that "When we ascribe Power to things inanimate things [sic], we mean nothing more than a constant conjunction by the Laws of Nature which experience discloses between the Event which we call the Effect & something which goes before it" (folio 8), he wants there to be a significance to the incompatibility between active power and "Necessity." He wants to give a real sense to the claim that "Power & Necessity are

contradictories" (folio 7). Laws of nature and the constant conjunction of events must record a necessity in nature, even if we are unable to single out the E-cause that produces the events or the "Agent that puts the Law in Execution" (folio 4). In other words, Reid's account requires what we have labelled a "necessary connection" between E-causes and what results from the use of their causal powers. Connecting the issue to the "intricate Question about Liberty & Necessity," Reid hopes to place "defenders of Necessity" in this position: "If they admit that we can conceive a Power which is really efficient, they must say that there neither is, nor can be any such Power in the Universe" (folio 8). In short, the power attributed properly to animate beings—beings with a will—has to be not just an active power but also an efficient or productive power. Our difficulty is not our need for the conception of a "necessary connection" between an E-cause and its effects, for we can achieve this analytically, as we have done, from the mere supposition of power in a cause. Our difficulty is to find in Reid's account the empirical significance of a necessary connection between the exertion of power and its results. Unfortunately, having taken the issue between Hume and himself to be that regarding the presence of active powers, Reid has entirely overlooked the seriousness of Hume's criticisms, and has accordingly misplaced their target.

The analytically derivative concept of a necessary connection between a cause and its effect is inconsistent with the possibility that an exertion of the cause's power fails to result in what that exertion is supposed to effect. Reid's genetic examples apparently fail to bring forth the conception of a power that, when exerted, must result in what it

should. Moreover, our use of the concept of a necessary connection between E-causes and their effects is not at all required by our application of the term 'power' to specimens of human action. Ascriptions of power to ourselves and the known relation between a willful exertion of power and the behavior following from it are entirely consistent with the lack of a necessary connection between volitions and behavior. If we are E-causes, and if we naturally judge ourselves to be E-causes in accordance with Reid's genetic examples, then we should accept that by volition we begin a causal relation that is neither "efficient" nor productive, and we should accept also that the power we naturally ascribe to ourselves is not one that, in Hume's words, "imitates the omnipotence of its Maker" (E69).

Reid now admits that a known necessary connection between volitions and behavior is irrelevant to personal ascriptions of power, and yet he maintains that volition is implied in all ascriptions of power. But his account also demands that there be a necessary connection between E-causes and what they effect and thus demands a power that, when exerted, must result in the purported effect. In order to render Reid's theses consistent with what his scheme requires, however, we must interpret Reid as saying not merely that "In our own voluntary actions, ... we have a conviction & consequently a conception of efficient or productive power in ourselves" (folio 4), but also that this "conviction" and "conception" yield the concept of a power that, when exerted by volition, must result in what is willed. Reid, in other words, must claim that the concept of such a power is one that is given to us naturally and perhaps unaccountably in instances of human action, and also that it is one that, upon an intellectual view, cannot in the end be correctly applied to human action,

since it is, after all, inconsistent with the possibility that our voluntary exertions are not connected by a necessary connection with our behavior. Nevertheless, he must say, we continue to use this concept of power when we employ the causal principle. Because ascriptions of power are tied conceptually to volition, the causal principle becomes for us the principle that "Every event is necessarily the product of an intelligent E-cause, which produced the event by volition." There is no necessary connection between our volitions and our voluntary behavior. The connection must draw its necessity not from a volition, nor from any power we possess, but rather from some law of nature governing the relation between volitions and human behavior. In Reid's words, this relation is itself a rule according to which an E-cause, by virtue of the causal principle, acts to achieve what we will. The causal principle is therefore empirically vacuous, and we use it in vain to find E-causes in the world, for the principle is unusable for anything except special metaphysical (viz., theological) derivations.

Regarding our doubts "whether we be, in the strictest sense, the efficient cause of the voluntary motions of our own body" (528b/AP51), Reid says in the Active Powers that our ignorance of the relation between volition and behavior "can produce no doubt with regard to the moral estimation of our actions" (528b/AP51):

The man who knows that such an event depends upon his will, and who deliberately wills to produce it, is, in the strictest moral sense, the cause of the event; and it is justly imputed to him, whatever physical causes may have concurred in its production. (528b/AP51)

As though totally unaware of the irony of what he says, Reid concludes that the issue lies outside the circle of serious discussion:

Philosophers may therefore dispute innocently, whether we be the proper efficient causes of the voluntary motions of our own body; or whether we be only, as Malebranche thinks, the occasional causes. The determination of this question, if it can be determined, can have no effect on human conduct. (528b/AP51)

Compounding the irony, Reid also sees no acceptable reason why this "endless" and finally "fruitless" dispute "may not be applied to the power of directing our thoughts, as well as to the power of moving our bodies" (529a/AP52).

Curiously, the final difficulty with his account, one of two this discussion has led us to, is that an active power in humans is not a conception originally derived by reflection, nor even by the consciousness of ourselves as agents, despite Reid's words to the contrary. Whether or not the "power" we attribute to ourselves, in order to construct our belief in ourselves as E-causes, is an active power turns out not to be something brought about by Reid's phenomenological procedure.

Because he must establish, contra Hume, that there is a real distinction between the possession of a power and its exercise, he must show that this power's use is under the command of its possessor, in such a way that the power's exertion by an act of will is not the result of what he calls "Necessity," or of the exertion of another E-cause's power. Otherwise the distinction is necessarily lost among conjunctions of events and amid laws of nature, the rules according to which the Deity acts in the world. In other words, even if the issue concerns only the moral estimation of human action, along with the plain occasionalism Reid's subtle strategy implies, he must eventually demonstrate that we are not merely agents but also free agents—agents whose volitions are necessitated by no other cause than our own selves. In order to decide

whether Reid succeeds in that demonstration, we must return to our study of his Active Powers.

NOTES

1. Cf. Mario Bunge, Causality (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1970), 3-30.
2. For a modern version of this contention see Bertrand Russell, "On the Notion of a Cause," in Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 133-151. Russell argues there that "the word 'cause' is so inextricably bound up with misleading associations as to make its complete extrusion from the philosophical vocabulary desirable" (133).
3. This is not to suggest that such a formula for a law of nature is in any sense fully complete. Because water boils at different degrees at different atmospheric levels, and because impurities in water may vary the formulae, the laws so generated must accommodate these variations in order to be complete. Where "water" is understood as a chemical substance elementally composed of 2 parts hydrogen and 1 part oxygen, one ought generally to say that a complete law of nature with regard to the boiling of water will provide an explanation of the boiling of this substance in any atmospheric level at the degree of heat necessary to evince the phenomenon we call "boiling."
4. "In all languages, the nominative to an active verb is the agent; the thing acted upon is put in an oblique case" (515b/AP13). "It cannot be denied to be a general rule, that verbs and participles have an active and passive voice; and, as this is a general rule, not in one language only, but in all the languages we are acquainted with, it shews evidently that men, in the earliest stages, and in all periods of society, have distinguished action from passion" (515b/AP14).
5. In this example, on the one hand, we do not know by what cause the growth of a plant is effected, although we still know that the causal principle stipulates that there is one; on the other hand, we are said to know that we are the causes of our behavior. In this case, Reid is contrasting two situations, one in which we do not know and one in which we are said to know, that there is a real cause of a specific kind of event. The difference, and hence the contrast, between the two here is that both the cause and the causal processes involved are said to be known in one, whereas in the other the real cause is not known and the specific process by which the cause produces its effects is also not known. While this would suggest that the distinction Reid hopes to convey is purely epistemological, what he hopes to clarify is a conceptual, and inevitably an ontological, distinction between a cause that does not have a power to necessitate its effects and a cause that in fact does. The overtly epistemological division in this example is

a prelude to a division that does not rest solely on epistemological concerns.

6. 523a/AP35: "Power to produce any effect, implies power not to produce it. We can conceive no way in which power may be determined to one of these rather than the other, in a being that has no will."
7. 524a/AP37: "Every man is led by nature to attribute to himself the free determinations of his own will, and to believe those events to be in his power which depend upon his will".
8. See John Duns Scotus, Philosophical Writings, ed. and trans. Alan Wolter (Liberal Arts Press, 1962), 59. Cf. Roy R. Effler, John Duns Scotus and the Principle "Omne Quod Movetur Ab Alio Movetur" (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1962), 164. For an interpretation of Scotus's position by his primary critic, William Ockham, see the latter's Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents, trans. M.M. Adams and N. Kretzmann (New York: Appleton, 1969), Q.III, p. 72; Q.III, p. 71-76; and Appendix I, 80-92.
9. See 623b-624a/AP325: "That the first motion, or the first effect, whatever it be, cannot be produced necessarily, and, consequently, that the First Cause must be a free agent, has been demonstrated so clearly and unanswerably by Dr Clarke, both in his 'Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God,' and in the end of his 'Remarks on Collins's Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty,' that I can add nothing to what he has said; nor have I found any objection made to his reasoning, by any of the defenders of necessity."
10. A Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty (London, 1715).
11. Remarks upon a Book, entituled, A Philosophical Enquiry concerning Human Liberty (London: James Knapton, 1717), 42. References to this work remain in the text.
12. It is precisely for this reason that Duns Scotus prefers to use 'caused contingently' in speaking of this kind of contingency. See his Philosophical Writings, 58-59.
13. Samuel Clarke, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God (London, 1704). See A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God, the Obligation of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, Vol. II: The Works of Samuel Clarke, D.D. (London: John and Paul Knapton, 1738).
14. We should note that this consequence is in fact the direct result of his failure to make the very distinction that Reid makes between what we have called C-causes and E-causes.

15. This is what J.S. Mill calls Reid's "original Fetichism" and one reason why he (quite correctly) names Reid a "religious metaphysician." See A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Vol. 7: Collected Works of John Stuart Mill (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 357:

"Now, it is the natural tendency of the mind to be always attempting to facilitate its conception of unfamiliar facts by assimilating them to others which are familiar. Accordingly, our voluntary acts, being the most familiar to us of all cases of causation, are, in the infancy and early youth of the human race, spontaneously taken as the type of causation in general, and all phenomena are supposed to be directly produced by the will of some sentient being. This original Fetichism I shall not characterize in the words of Hume, or of any follower of Hume, but in those of a religious metaphysician, Dr. Reid, in order more effectively to show the unanimity which exists on the subject among competent thinkers."

Mill's references are to Essay IV, Ch. iii, of the Active Powers.

16. Thus, for example, the scholastic's "secondary cause" cannot be a genuine cause at all, as Reid is interpreting causation.
17. Reid's several letters make this clear. See Letters of James Gregory: 14 June 1785, 65b-66; 23 September 1785, 67a; March 1786, 67b; 30 July 1789, 73a-74b; and also 76b-87a, esp. 77a, 77b-78b, 81b, and 84a-b. See Letters to Lord Kames: 16 December 1780, 57b-58a. See also Ian Ross, ed., "Unpublished Letters of Thomas Reid to Lord Kames," 32.
18. See 76a, and also 56a and 58a.
19. Reid is probably closer to the seventeenth century than to the eighteenth century in this view, if we may accept this general contention by P.M. Heimann and J.E. McGuire:

"Contextually, what eighteenth-century thinkers generally mean when they use the term 'power' is this: to ascribe a power to a material object is to assert what it can or cannot do in virtue of its intrinsic nature in relation to specifiable extrinsic circumstances, leaving open a complete characterization of the object's constitution in virtue of which it is held to be endowed with powers. This conception of matter involved the notion of activity in nature which contrasts with the general seventeenth-century emphasis on the passivity of material entities. This is borne out by the fact that thinkers like Descartes, Hobbes, and Boyle viewed powers as being noninherent in matter; that is, 'powers' are not ascribable to bodies in and of themselves."

See "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers: Concepts of Matter in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in Russell McCormack, ed., Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, 3 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 235. But see also p. 267, where Heimann and McGuire mistakenly claim that "Reid held that bodies could be conceived as sets of active powers."

20. Cited in James McCosh, The Scottish Philosophy (London, 1875), 475-476. McCosh's text is MS. 2131/2/III/14 of Reid's unpublished manuscripts, known as the Birkwood Collection, housed in the library of King's College, University of Aberdeen. S.A. Grave, in his Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense, p. 117, is no doubt correct that some of Reid's necessary first principles "have self-contradictory contradictories and some do not," meaning that we will find, if we follow Kant's formulation of what is analytic, that for some of Reid's necessary first principles the predicate is not contained in the subject in such a way that a denial of the statement results in a contradictio in adjecto. Grave, however, is surely incorrect that "As nearly as anyone can tell from Reid's vagueness, the necessary truths which he reckoned as principles of common sense were those not analytically necessary."
21. Cf. 455b/IP654: "Experience informs us only of what is or has been, not of what must be; and the conclusion must be of the same nature with the premises." See also 521b-522a/AP31.
22. See 522a/AP31: "Experience does not shew us a cause in one in a hundred of those changes which we observe, and therefore can never teach us that there must be a cause at all."
23. See Hume, Treatise, I, iii, 3, pp. 80-82.
24. Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge; 3rd ed. rev. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 18. See also Treatise, p. 1. References to these works remain in the text.
25. Folio 1, MS. 2131/2/II/2, The Birkwood Collection, Manuscripts & Archives Division, University Library, King's College, University of Aberdeen. References to this unpublished manuscript remain in the text with citations by folio number. See "Appendix" for the full text and a brief description of Reid's manuscript.

III

MORAL LIBERTY

1. The Argument of the "Active Powers"

Reid is convinced that we can answer a question regarding the production of a natural event when we are able to trace its genesis to the free activity of an efficient cause. He is likewise sure that the primary, if not the primordial, concept of a cause is linked tenaciously to a thing that possesses a power to produce events and exerts its power for that purpose. This conception of a real cause, an E-cause, is purportedly the natural outcome of one's original belief in "active power":

The very conception or idea of active power must be derived from something in our constitution. It is impossible to account for it otherwise. We see events, but we see not the power that produces them. We perceive one event to follow another, but we perceive not the chain that binds them together. The notion of power and causation, therefore, cannot be got from external objects.

Yet the notion of causes, and the belief that every event must have a cause which had power to produce it, is found in every human mind so firmly established, that it cannot be rooted out. (617a-b/AP305)

Reid cites the following five "observations" that should make it obvious that this "notion" and this "belief"—the very same that "cannot be got from external objects"—must be natural ones and must have their origin "from something in our constitution":

- (1) A man who knowingly and willingly exerts his power "with intention to produce some effect" must "have both the conception and the belief" of his power to do so. (617b/AP305)
- (2) "To deliberate about an end, we must be convinced that the means are in our power; and to deliberate about the means, we must be convinced that we have power to choose the most proper." (617b/AP305)

- (3) No one can form a resolution or a purpose without "any conviction of power to execute it." (617b/AP305)
- (4) In accepting a contract, and also in making promises, we must believe that we have the power to perform our actions as promised or contracted. (617b/AP306)
- (5) We cannot blame ourselves for what happens by necessity. (618a/AP306)

These observations comprise the initial stage of Reid's two-part strategy in establishing that man has "moral liberty."

Reid defines 'moral liberty' in this way:

By the Liberty of a Moral Agent, I understand, a power over the determinations of his own Will.

If, in any action, he had power to will what he did, or not to will it, in that action he is free. But if, in every voluntary action, the determination of his will be the necessary consequence of something involuntary in the state of his mind, or of something in his external circumstances, he is not free; he has not what I call the Liberty of a Moral Agent, but is subject to Necessity. (599a-b/AP259)

This freedom or "Liberty," says Reid, "supposes the agent to have Understanding and Will," since "the determinations of the will are the sole object about which this power is employed" and since "there can be no will, without such a degree of understanding, at least, as gives the conception of that which we will" (599b/AP259). Liberty requires that an agent have the ability to conceive what he wills and "some degree of practical judgment or reason" (599b/AP259). By 'necessity' in this context Reid understands "the want of that moral liberty which I have above defined" (600b/AP261).

This sense of 'liberty' has at least three contraries. Liberty may be opposed to imprisonment or confinement, and it may be opposed to obligation or lawful authority. Its third contrary is "necessity," and "in this sense it extends to the determinations of the will only, and not

to what is consequent to the will" (601b/AP264). Says Reid of "what has, by some, been called the philosophical notion of liberty and necessity":

In every voluntary action, the determination of the will is the first part of the action, upon which alone the moral estimation of it depends. It has been made a question among philosophers, Whether, in every instance, this determination be the necessary consequence of the constitution of the person, and the circumstances in which he is placed; or whether he had not power, in many cases, to determine this way or that?

...Whether this notion of moral liberty be conceivable or not, every man must judge for himself. To me there appears no difficulty in conceiving it. I consider the determination of the will as an effect. This effect must have a cause which had power to produce it; and the cause must be either the person himself, whose will it is, or some other being. The first is as easily conceived as the last. If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action, and it is justly imputed to him, whether it be good or bad. But, if another being was the cause of this determination, either by producing it immediately, or by means and instruments under his direction, then the determination is the act and deed of that being, and is solely imputable to him. (602a-b/AP264-265)

Reid's real task in the Active Powers is to explicate our natural belief that we are agents with a power to engender our own behavior. That this power must also be an active power is to follow from our having moral liberty, a liberty that gives us not merely a responsibility for our actions, as they concern their moral estimation, but also an autonomy with regard to their beginnings. This sense of 'autonomy' is supplied by the meaning of 'active power'. If, according to Reid, it is true that man has moral liberty, then it is also true that he possesses a power—an active power—that both may and, at the same time, may not be exercised, for it is a power that is exerted by its possessor alone.

Consider Reid's summary of his position:

We are conscious of making an exertion, sometimes with difficulty, in order to produce certain effects. An exertion made deliberately and voluntarily, in order to produce an effect, implies a conviction that the effect is in our power. No man can deliberately attempt what he does not believe to be in his power. The language of all mankind, and

their ordinary conduct in life, demonstrate that they have a conviction of some active power in themselves to produce certain motions in their own and in other bodies, and to regulate and direct their own thoughts. This conviction we have so early in life, that we have no remembrance when, or in what way, we acquired it. (603b-604a/AP269)

For Reid, we can knowingly will some occurrence only if we believe ourselves to have the power to bring it about by volition, i.e., only if we believe that the occurrence will follow upon our volition. We must also believe that this power is an active power, because we can knowingly will some occurrence only if we believe that the occurrence will follow upon our volition and it is true that there is nothing besides ourselves from which that volition, or act of will, is a necessary consequence. The argument of the Active Powers purports to establish that the belief in power we are natively disposed to accept is also belief in an active power because we possess a moral liberty that entails our responsibility for and autonomy with regard to our acts of will. That is, we ourselves bring about our volitions in circumstances that do not necessitate our doing so.

Reid, of course, is here concerning himself with the principle "That we are efficient causes in our deliberate and voluntary actions" (603b/AP269), a principle that was earlier identified as the sixth first principle of contingent truths: "That we have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our will" (446b/IP628). In the Intellectual Powers we are told that this principle is implied by our acts of will, by our deliberations, by our purposes and plans, and whenever "we impute to a man any action or omission, as a ground of approbation or of blame," believing therefore that "he had power to do otherwise" (447a/IP629-630). In the Active Powers this principle, and his supporting arguments for its status as a first principle, forms the nucleus of the

first stage of his two-part strategy in establishing that man has what he labels "moral liberty."

The first stage of his double strategy is comprised of three arguments for moral liberty. Reid's "FIRST ARGUMENT" purports to show that man "has a natural conviction or belief, that, in many cases, he acts freely" (616b/AP303), and the proof of his conclusion is supplied entirely by the five observations cited above. The nature of those observations is conceptual, purporting to demonstrate that our concepts of (1) action, (2) deliberation, (3) purpose, (4) promising, and (5) blame require the concept of and a belief in an agent's having the requisite capacity to act, and to act without being necessitated to act (or to have been able to do otherwise than what he did do).

His second argument for the thesis that man has moral liberty—its long-range goal being to show that, because man is "accountable," he has moral liberty (616b/AP303)—has this conclusion: "Active power ... is necessarily implied in the very notion of a moral accountable being" (622a/AP319). The conclusion is made to rest on two claims. The first is that a man must "understand the law to which he is bound, and his obligation to obey it" in order to execute his duty (620b/AP315). The second is "That no man can be under a moral obligation to do what it is impossible for him to do, or to forbear what it is impossible for him to forbear, is an axiom as self-evident as any in mathematics" (620a/AP316). That is, any morally obligatory action must be possible for the obligated agent, including those actions that ought not to be performed.

Reid's third argument, which needs special comment, is concerned with man as "able to prosecute an end by a long series of means adapted to

it" (616b/AP303). Here he also attempts to show that "man has power over his own actions and volitions" because "he is capable of carrying on, wisely and prudently, a system of conduct, which he has before conceived in his mind, and resolved to prosecute" (622b/AP321). Assume, says Reid, that there have been some men "who, after they came to years of understanding, deliberately laid down a plan of conduct, which they resolved to pursue through life; and that of these, some have steadily pursued the end they had in view, by the proper means" (622b/AP321). Such conduct, he says, "demonstrates a certain degree of wisdom and understanding" and "demonstrates, with equal force, a certain degree of power over his voluntary determinations" (622b/AP321). The reason for this is the following:

A regular plan of conduct, as it cannot be contrived without understanding, so it cannot be carried into execution without power; and, therefore, the execution, as an effect, demonstrates, with equal force, both power and understanding in the cause. (622b/AP321-322)

Similarly, "if we have any evidence that the wisdom which formed the plan is in the man, we have the very same evidence that the power which executed it is in him also" (622b/AP322). By virtue of this, says Reid, "we reason from the same principles as in demonstrating the being and perfections of the First Cause of all things" (622b/AP322). Applying this, then, to Reid's supposition "That a man, in a long course of conduct, has determined and acted prudently in the prosecution of a certain end," we are to find that "If the man had both wisdom to plan this course of conduct, and that power over his own actions that was necessary to carry it into execution, he is a free agent, and used his liberty, in this instance, with understanding" (623a/AP322). But, on the other hand,

if the requisite determinations were produced "by some cause acting necessarily upon him," Reid says, then "there is no evidence left that he contrived this plan, or that he ever spent a thought about it" (623a/AP322/323). What Reid concludes is "That, if the actions and speeches of other men give us sufficient evidence that they are reasonable beings, they give us the same evidence, and the same degree of evidence, that they are free agents" (623b/AP324).

In his Introduction to Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays,¹ Ronald Beanblossom expresses misgivings about this argument:

...Reid argues that the actions of other men give us reason to believe they are acting freely and, a fortiori, give us reason to believe there are free actions. The same actions, which justify our belief that we are dealing with intelligent beings rather than machines, also serve as reasons for believing that these men act freely. (xxxiv)

What bothers Beanblossom is that Reid offers the argument in the first place. "If the belief in moral liberty is a self-evident first principle," he asks, "why does Reid attempt to prove it is a reasonable belief?" (xxxv).

This, however, does not end the matter, for in the Intellectual Powers, Reid also attempts to prove our self-evident belief in finite intelligent beings. "In this respect," says Beanblossom, "he contradicts what he has said about first principles in general and the first principles of morals in particular" (xxxvi). In short, Beanblossom thinks that Reid's "third argument" for moral liberty amounts to a proof that our native conviction is reasonable and well-founded, which violates a criterion of its status as a first principle of contingent truths. Similarly, Reid's reasons for our accepting as reasonable our self-evident belief in living, intelligent beings amounts to a proof of our eighth

first principle of contingent truths, thereby contradicting his rule that first principles do not admit of proof.

Beanblossom's diagnosis, which correctly points out the religious aim of Reid's reasoning on the relation between intelligence and moral liberty, is that Reid wants to prove the existence of God, "an intelligent being," and that "God has the power or moral liberty to create those things that serve as signs of his intelligence" (xxxvi). Reid, however, "sees no way of offering proof for the existence of an intelligent God who has moral liberty without applying these proofs to finite beings" (xxxvi). That is, in order to prove the existence of God and God's free agency, Reid has to take it upon himself to prove moral liberty and the existence of intelligent, living beings, even if he has to contradict his statutory rulings on first principles and what may fall under that denomination. What troubles Beanblossom is that, solely for religious reasons, Reid appears to be turning first principles regarding moral liberty and finite intelligent beings into derived beliefs. The entailment is that they are not first principles at all, and therefore that there are other principles from which our natural assent is derived and with which, by assent, we can replace them.

The truth is that Reid does no such thing. It is not inconsistent with either his sixth or his eighth first principle of contingent truths that one is able to make a specific inference regarding moral liberty and living intelligence on the basis of certain behavioral criteria—just as there is equally no contradiction in the complex statement, "Yes, I agree that men have moral liberty, but is that man now acting freely?" The sole point of Reid's third argument for moral liberty is this: Where we are in

a position to say that such conduct is wise and prudent, we are also in a position to say that such conduct is the product of a free agent. Effects that exhibit signs of intelligence not only give us evidence for intelligence in the cause to which we attribute those effects, but also give us evidence that the cause is a free agent, i.e., a being with moral liberty. On the one hand, if our eighth first principle of contingent truths—our natural belief that there is life and intelligence in persons with whom we converse—is a reasonable belief, then so is our natural belief that men are free agents, a belief expressed as Reid's sixth first principle of contingent truths. On the other hand, if our natural belief that men are alive and intelligent is a first principle, then so is our natural belief that men are free agents. On either hand, according to Reid, we ought to accept that intelligence is coeval with moral liberty. The first offers a justification for specific conclusions inferred from equally specific evidence concerning intelligent conduct, whereas the second provides a justification for holding as a first principle a belief required by a certain class of inferences, viz., inferences requiring the belief that men are morally free. The aim of Reid's "third argument" is to show, quite simply, that our belief in moral liberty is no less a first principle than is our belief in finite intelligent beings.

Reid himself invites the problematic issue Beanblossom raises. In the Intellectual Powers he tells us two things about the eighth first principle of contingent truths: (1) it is a natural conviction not arrived at by any reasoning, and (2) we can arrive at instances of the belief by reasoning from his third metaphysical first principle, the principle that "design and intelligence in the cause may be inferred, with certainty,

from marks or signs of it in the effect" (457b/IP660). After telling us that our belief in finite intelligent beings is a natural, non-derivative belief, Reid then says:

Setting aside this natural conviction, I believe the best reason we can give to prove that other men are living and intelligent, is, that their words and actions indicate like powers of understanding as we are conscious of in ourselves. (448b-449a/IP634-635)

It is by "The very same argument applied to the works of nature," and by the very same metaphysical principle, that we are led "to conclude that there is an intelligent Author of nature, ... so that it may be doubted whether man, by the mere exercise of reasoning, might not as soon discover the existence of a Deity, as that other men have life and intelligence" (449a/IP635).

What is wrong here is not that Reid is attempting to rationalize a first principle of contingent truths by reference to the metaphysical first principle of necessary truths, the higher principle presupposed by anyone attempting to hold a belief in the existence of an intelligent being on the basis of reasoning, for here there is in fact no replacement of judgments involved. What Reid is saying is that anyone holding the natural belief that there is life and intelligence in persons with whom he converses may, as a mature reasoner, come to know that those beings to whom he attributes these qualities so resemble him that he is able to infer intelligence and life from the appropriate marks or signs in their behavior. In this way it resembles one's attention to the inductive principle, the twelfth first principle of contingent truths. Of this, says Reid, it is "one of those principles which, when we grow up and observe the course of nature, we can confirm by reasoning" (451b/IP642).

From a developmental point of view, the belief in life and intelligence in others, like all first principles, is not a derived belief. From the same viewpoint, it is a first principle before we may seek to rationalize instances of it. By adducing reasons for it we do not thereby prove it true, but rather intellectually reinforce it, confirm it, and also, where applicable, narrow its dominion over the wide range of things to which instinct forces us to apply it.

Children often find other minds in things that do not have them. As they mature, they are able to discriminate good instances of the belief from the bad. They learn, e.g., that mechanical toys and puppets, formerly treated as eccentric humans, so differ from persons in significant ways that they are not alive and intelligent, but are in fact dead and unknowing, and are moved by necessity only. By the same token, the child can learn that those beings he naturally takes to be alive and intelligent so resemble him that he can attribute these qualities to them on the basis of certain behavioral criteria. In other words, the maturing child can come to discriminate the living from the merely moving, the intelligent from the dumb, and he can offer reasons for his selection where instinct is insufficient for this epistemological purpose. By doing so, the maturing child not only learns to rationalize an instinctual belief, but also takes upon himself, as a presupposition of that rationalization, the third principle of necessary truths, a principle that further enables him to infer the existence of God from signs of design in the natural world.

What is in fact wrong with Reid's statements, then, is that he is applying a rule of inference, in this case the metaphysical first

principle, to what he says is not an inference at all. Clearly the belief in life and intelligence in others must be at least a possible inference in a mature reasoner, for only with this concession can Reid render his rationalization consistent with the belief's status as a first principle. But if we are clear that there is a difference between a first principle, a belief held by instinct alone, and rationalizing instances of it, and if we are similarly clear that Reid is expressing that difference here, then the problem Beanblossom discerns ought not to arise. When instinct gives us a first principle, we have it for life, and it remains a first principle even though we may offer reasons for and against applicable instances of it.

Unfortunately, what is still at issue with his three arguments is whether a "power over the determinations of his own Will" is really a requirement of one's concepts of purposive action, moral accountability, and deliberate conduct. Neither of Reid's three arguments fully decides the issue. Reid's first argument, intent upon showing that moral liberty in man is a natural belief, effectively establishes no more than that a man who uses the concepts of purposing, deliberating, and promising must also accept that he, or anyone to whom he applies these concepts, has a conception of power and a belief that acting purposively, deliberately, or contractually is something that he can bring about. Moreover, by blaming others, or himself, for a certain event, a man who uses those concepts must also believe that such events are brought about by the one who is blamed, and brought about in such a way that the event could have been otherwise, i.e., that it might not have occurred. Indeed, Reid said this in the Intellectual Powers. The status of Reid's sixth first principle of

contingent truths, "That we have some degree of power over our actions, and the determinations of our will," is supported by its being implied by every act of will (446b/IP629), by all deliberation (447a/IP629), by every resolution or purpose "formed in consequence of deliberation" (447a/IP629), and by our imputing to "a man any action or omission, as a ground of approbation or of blame" (447a/IP629). In the Intellectual Powers, moreover, this conviction is "so early, so general, and so interwoven with the whole of human conduct, that it must be the natural effect of our constitution" (447a/IP630). This is similarly his conclusion in the Active Powers.

In our first chapter we concluded that Reid offered four criteria of a belief's status as a first principle, regardless of its logical level: universality of opinion, the personal primitivity of the opinion, the evidential need of the opinion, and the practical need of its acceptance. Clearly, his first argument is meant to supply the second, third, and fourth of these criteria, and his second and third arguments are intended to provide the third and fourth of those criteria. Together, we may assume, they supply the first criterion.

Any concessions are empty, however, unless Reid's first principle of contingent truths attributes to common sense what any man of common sense would accept as true without also embracing the covert language of a theoretical interpretation of his meaning or sense.

Since it is still an open question whether the beliefs in moral liberty and active power are a necessary part of Reid's first principles of contingent truths, his three arguments are therefore insufficient for the conclusion he desires. The problem facing us is this: The causal

principle supplies the a priori conditions for causation in general. That these conditions are a priori is given by their deductive status, regardless of any empirical matters, with respect to the principle itself. On the other hand, since Reid holds that all intellectual concepts are bounded by the natural components of their constitutional origin, that we are efficient causes is considered to be a natural belief whose origin is to be found in the structure of the human constitution. That we are E-causes is for Reid a thesis derived from our having a natural conviction (and thus a conception) that certain events depend for their existence upon our will and exertion. But does the belief in ourselves as agents, or E-causes, also imply that nothing necessitates our acting as we do? It certainly does not answer this question to say that our being agents is required or presupposed by these concepts. Surely more is required to establish his thesis.

In our previous chapter we discovered that an event can come into existence only by the exertion of the power of an efficient cause, and that causal necessitation is the result only of the activity of an E-cause. Where we cannot trace the production of an event directly to a specific E-cause, but where we can explain the occurrence by reference to a law of nature, we must nevertheless presume (even if we must do so metaphysically) that an efficient cause is the required necessitating agent. Thus the necessitation of an event that can be successfully explained by a law of nature is genuine necessitation, the law of nature being in such a case the rule by which the E-cause acts to bring about the event.

We also learned in Chapter II that, for Reid, an E-cause always bears a possible transitive relation to what it can effect. That is, if something, A, efficiently causes an event, B, which in turn brings about C, then A not only brings about C but is also the efficient cause of C. In this schematic example, then, where we might take 'B' to stand for person S's act of will to bring about C, neither S nor his volition can be said to be the efficient cause of C, if C is connected by a transitive relation to the power of A. This is what lies behind Reid's assertion that "Power to produce any effect, implies power not to produce it" (523a/AP35), a statement we explicated as: If anything, T, produces some event, O, then T has the power to produce O if and only if there is no such thing, S, such that O resulted from the exertion of S's power to produce O.

Applying these small discoveries to the immediate issue, we find that it is not enough to have merely the presumption of ourselves as the agents of our actions: we must also be autonomous with regard to their genesis. We must possess an active power that may be exerted in circumstances that do not render that exertion an inevitability. Taken together, these discoveries imply that something is an E-cause only if it is autonomous with regard to what it brings about. No E-cause can be itself E-caused to produce an event and still be considered responsible for the occurrence of the event. In such a case, the cause is not autonomous with regard to the production of the event, being caused to bring it about. In brief, it does not possess an active power to bring about the event. Concerning the moral estimation of human action, what this means, then, is that someone is morally responsible for an event only

if that person willed an event, the event occurred, and the person's act of will was not E-caused to occur by the activity of any cause besides the person himself, understanding 'cause' here either as an E-cause or as a law of nature.

As agents, not only must we be able to act but we must be able to act in such a way, regarding the moral estimation of action, that our volitions are not the necessary result of any E-cause other than ourselves. As we know, connecting a volition with any law of nature is sufficient to place it within the power of some E-cause other than ourselves. Because it is a natural issuance of Reid's position, the following declaration is therefore an expected one:

If the person was the cause of that determination of his own will, he was free in that action, and it is justly imputed to him, whether it be good or bad. But, if another being was the cause of this determination, either by producing it immediately, or by means and instruments under his direction, then the determination is the act and deed of that being, and is solely imputable to him. (602a-b/AP265)

Now the issue is fairly straightforward. In order for Reid to prove the existence of active power in the world, he needs to show that persons, at least, possess this special power. Our possession of moral liberty will provide him with this, for it is a power over the determinations of a man's will that is not the result of necessitation by any cause other than the person himself, and it implies that men are sometimes genuine E-causes. But in order for Reid to prove that the range of our powers includes an active power, that we have what he calls moral liberty, he cannot rest merely with a review of his sixth first principle of contingent truths, for what is still in doubt is whether moral liberty is in fact a part of the principle. He must demonstrate that our being

autonomous with regard to our acts of will—that we bring about our volitions in circumstances that do not render them an inevitability—is required by our concept of human conduct. Obviously Reid has to rationalize the principle, showing that it presupposes the possession of moral liberty. In this way our rudimentary conviction of ourselves as agents becomes deeper in significance, entailing our ownership of a freedom we did not know we had, at least not by virtue of our natural belief that we have power to bring about behavior and events by acts of will.

One would have expected Reid's second argument to supply this want. In drawing the inference that "Understanding and Active Power" are "implied in the notion of a moral and accountable being" (620b/AP315), he tries to set up a classic conflict between a man's "power to do what he is accountable for" and "an axiom as self-evident as any in mathematics"—the axiom "That no man can be under a moral obligation to do what it is impossible for him to forbear" (621a/AP316). This "general axiom" instantiates the particular rule, also itself an axiom, that "invincible ignorance takes away all blame" (621b/AP318), which implies that one "must understand the law to which he is bound, and his obligation to obey it" (620b/AP315). Thus, says Reid: "No moral obligation can be consistent with impossibility in the performance" (622a/AP319). From these statements, though, he not only moves to the conclusion that understanding in an agent is a presupposition of his status as a "moral and accountable being" but also moves to the conclusion that "Active power, therefore, is necessarily implied in the very notion of a moral accountable being" (622a/AP319).

What enables Reid to make the latter move is his contention that, if necessity is true, then (1) we are not the agents of our morally estimable actions and (2) we cannot forbear acting. Now (1) follows from necessity—i.e., the want of a man's "power over the determinations of his own Will"—because necessity entails that a man's volitions are a fortiori within the transitively related power of an E-cause distinct from himself. Similarly, (2) follows from necessity because the lack of power over the determinations of the will entails our lack of control over what we might will and thus over the actions following from our acts of will. In other words, whether we act or forbear is wholly dependent upon causes of volitions other than ourselves. Moreover, (1) implies that we have no power to bring about behavior and events by volitions, and (2), conflicting with an axiom of morals, implies that we can be under no moral obligation to act at all, it being impossible to forbear performing any morally estimable action. We ought, therefore, to hold that necessity is false and that we must have, at least in some instances, a power over the determinations of our will. In this way, then, "Active power ... is necessarily implied in the very notion of a moral accountable being."

This rationalizes Reid's sixth first principle of contingent truths, thereby giving the necessary support to his three arguments for moral liberty, but it also has a morally interesting consequence. Because our early belief in ourselves as having a power to bring about our behavior by acts of will is not itself a belief in ourselves as autonomous moral agents, the belief alone cannot be handled analytically to make us know that the power we possess is also an active power. The belief in our being agents with active power cannot be said to be given to us by our

constitution unless it can also be shown that the presupposition of our belief in ourselves as morally accountable—the presupposition that we are autonomous agents and E-causes—is true. We now have good reason to suspect that Reid's attempt to attribute our early conviction of power in ourselves to the infant experience of our own behavioral activity is a bonafide red herring: We find instead that the existence of active powers in the world is not learned by reflection, nor by any empirical inquiry, but rather by deduction, as is the case with the discovery of ourselves as E-causes.²

That we are E-causes is the deductive consequence of our possessing moral liberty, which implies that we have active power and that our acts of will are sometimes the effects of our activity as E-causes. Expressing this in other terms, Reid says:

I consider the determination of the will as an effect. This effect must have a cause which had power to produce it; and the cause must be either the person himself, whose will it is, or some other being.
(602a/AP265)

Again:

Every effect must be in the power of its cause. The determination of the will is an effect, and, therefore, must be in the power of its cause, whether that cause be the agent himself, or some other being.
(602b/AP266)

Taking a volition as a psychological entity, using the causal principle to bring forth the possible E-causes of this event, and drawing the destructive consequences of necessity with regard to the determinations of the human will, Reid effectively engenders the conceptual requirement that we sometimes be the E-causes of our volitions. Thus our being E-causes and possessors of active power is not the result of a conscious experience, nor of any exercise in reflection, but the complicated result

of a deductive expedition into the causal origin of volitions. The product of that expedition is this: We must hold that our power to bring about our behavior by volitions presupposes a power to will, an active power to bring about acts of will in circumstances that do not necessitate our doing so, and we must hold that we are sometimes E-causes. If we cannot be the E-causes of our behavior, failing to produce such behavior through a necessary connection with our volitions, then we must, at least sometimes, be the E-causes of our volitions. In this way we become theoretical efficient causes and the free agents of our morally estimable actions.³

This, however, does not complete Reid's position. The second part of his double-sided strategy in establishing that man has moral liberty is taken up in defeating what "Necessitarians" propose in favor of necessity with regard to human action. Here his aim is to provide an indirect proof of his thesis by replacing his doctrine of moral liberty with contrary suppositions supplied by the doctrine of necessity. By destroying these, and on the assumption that there are no other contrary suppositions to consider, Reid creates a type of reductio in support of his thesis that man possesses moral liberty.⁴

Reid's case against necessity with regard to human action centers specifically on three groups of arguments for the doctrine. Having defined a man's "moral liberty" as "a power over the determinations of his own Will" (599a/AP259) and having defined "necessity" as "the want of that moral liberty which I have above defined" (600b/AP261), Reid thus takes the position that necessity with regard to human action implies that a man's volitions, or acts of will, are always necessitated to occur and

that no man, being subject to necessity, can do otherwise than what he does do. The three groups of arguments he considers take up Chapters IX and X of Essay IV and fall into these general divisions: (1) that liberty of determination is impossible; (2) that liberty would be hurtful; and (3) that, in fact, man has no such liberty (624a/AP326). Our procedure will be to consider his first and third arguments concerning necessity, and then move to a consideration of his second.

Argument Group I

Reid's rejection of the first class of arguments for necessity depends upon his dismissal of two specific arguments. The first of these is made possible by the Leibnizian Principle of Sufficient Reason, which Reid expresses as: "For every Existence, for every Event, for every Truth, there must be a SUFFICIENT REASON" (624a/AP326). After considering the various senses of the word 'reason' (625a/AP329), Reid supposes that a man has acted voluntarily and that "the question is put, Whether was there a sufficient reason for this action or not?" (625a/AP329). Understanding 'sufficient reason' to mean 'motive', he says: "Surely, in this sense, there is not a sufficient reason for every human action, because there are many that are foolish, unreasonable, and unjustifiable" (625a/AP329).⁵

Alternatively:

If the meaning of the question be—Was there a cause of the action? Undoubtedly there was. Of every event there must be a cause that had power sufficient to produce it, and that exerted that power for the purpose. In the present case, either the man was the cause of the action, and then it was a free action, and is justly imputed to him; or it must have had another cause, and cannot justly be imputed to the man. In this sense, therefore, it is granted that there was a suffi-

cient reason for the action; but the question about liberty is not in the least affected by this concession. (625b/AP329)

A second argument, whose premisses are not stated, is that human liberty is impossible because it implies "an effect without a cause." To this Reid's quick reply is that "a free action is an effect produced by a being who had power and will to produce it" and so is not an effect without a cause (626b/AP322):

To suppose any other cause necessary to the production of an effect than a being who had the power and the will to produce it, is a contradiction; for it is to suppose that being to have power to produce the effect, and not to have power to produce it. (626b/AP332)

Reid nevertheless considers a specific version of the argument.

The specific version purports to demonstrate that human liberty is impossible, implying an effect without a cause, because it is inconsistent with a corrected understanding of what a cause is.⁶ This argument accordingly begins with the claim that "'a cause cannot be defined to be any thing but such previous circumstances as are constantly followed by a certain effect; the constancy of the result making us conclude that there must be a sufficient reason, in the nature of things, why it should be produced in those circumstances'" (627a/AP333). Its conclusion is that "through all nature, the same events invariably result from the same circumstances," and thus that any event not preceded by circumstances determining it to be what it is would be an effect without a cause (627a/AP333).

Reid's objection to this and similar contentions is that such argumentation begs the question: "Every argument in a dispute, which is not grounded on principles granted by both parties, is that kind of sophism which logicians call petitio principii; and such, in my appre-

hension, are all the arguments offered to prove that liberty of action is impossible" (628b/AP337). In other words, the argumentative premisses advanced by those seeking to demonstrate that human liberty is impossible are logically irrelevant to the purpose of proving or establishing that conclusion. Whether or not a free cause is possible is precisely what is taken for granted by those proponents of necessity who put forth a definition of 'cause' that is inconsistent with the indeterminacy or contingency of an efficient cause, which is what is demanded by Reid's doctrine of human liberty. The most, Reid suggests, that he and his opponents can do, beyond justifying the relevant definitions of 'cause', is to restate the conditions for being a cause in the first place, since the liberty of agents and the power of an efficient cause not to produce its effects are no less coextensive than their denial.

We should note, however, that Reid takes himself to have the stronger vantage point in the dispute. The four consequences of the definition of 'cause' advanced by proponents of necessity with regard to human actions—(1) any occurrence always found preceding another is the latter event's cause; (2) anything may be the cause of another "since nothing is essential to a cause but its being constantly followed by the effect"; (3) the definition yields no reason to conclude that every event must have a cause; (4) we consequently have no reason to conclude that the world itself was caused (627a-b/AP334-335)—conflict with our necessary first principle that every event must have a cause that produced it. For this reason Reid does not offer any argument for the thesis.

Argument Group III

The third class of skeptical arguments, occupying the bulk of Essay IV, Chapter X, purports to prove that men are in fact not free agents because every event, being either foreseen or capable of being foreseen, is necessary and so is not the result of a cause that can be itself a "contingent cause." Reid first considers the argument from the "prescience of the Deity," an argument he casts in general terms as that the necessity of an event is the true consequence of (1) its being future, (2) its being foreseen, or (3) the impossibility of an event's being foreseen. The first of these fatalistic arguments is dismissed in this way:

But I know no rule of reasoning by which it can be inferred, that, because an event certainly shall be, therefore its production must be necessary. The manner of its production, whether free or necessary, cannot be concluded from the time of its production, whether it be past, present, or future. That it [certainly] shall be, no more implies that shall be necessarily than that it shall be freely produced; for neither present, past, nor future, have any more connection with necessity than they have with freedom. (629b/AP340)

Similarly, concerning (2), it does not follow from an event's being foreseen and thus known that it is also necessary (nor that it was contingent): "Its mode of existence, whether it be free or necessary, is not in the least affected by its being known to be future, any more than by its being known to be past or present" (629b/AP341). The third version is regarded as: "It is impossible that an event which is not necessary should be foreseen; therefore every event that is certainly foreseen must be necessary" (629b/AP341). That is, because an event is either necessary or not foreseen, any foreseen event must be necessary. Reid takes this to be equivalent to the claim that no free action can be foreseen. Thus, "If

this can be proved, it will follow, either that all actions are necessary, or that all actions cannot be foreseen" (629b/AP341).

Its consequence, which Reid will not accept, is "either that the Deity is not a free agent, or that he does not foresee his own actions; nor can we foresee that he will do what is right, and will fulfil his promises" (630a/AP342). In response, Reid considers a specific version of the argument, this one being advanced by Joseph Priestley:⁷

Nothing can be known to arise from what does exist, but what does arise from it. But a contingent event does not arise from what does exist. The conclusion, which is left to be drawn by the reader, must, according to the rules of reasoning, be—Therefore a contingent event cannot be known to arise from what does exist. (630a/AP342-343)

Since a contingent event can only arise from its cause freely and not necessarily—the only two ways in which an event may, according to Reid, occur (See 630a/AP342)—Priestley is left to argue either that a contingent event cannot be known to arise necessarily from what does exist, thus yielding an irrelevant conclusion, or that a contingent event cannot be known to arise from what does exist because an event can be known to arise from what does exist only if it arises necessarily from what does exist, which begs the question (630b/AP343).

Reid concludes his discussion of these fatalistic arguments with this observation:

All our knowledge of future events is drawn either from their necessary connection with the present course of nature, or from their connection with the character of the agent that produces them. Our knowledge, even of those future events that necessarily result from the established laws of nature, is hypothetical. It supposes the continuance of those laws with which they are connected. And how long those laws may be continued, we have no certain knowledge. God only knows when the present course of nature shall be changed, and therefore he only has certain knowledge even of events of this kind. (631a/AP344)

While Reid believes that prescience is not denied the Deity, he must also believe that God's foreknowledge and what is commonly considered the problem of future contingents (both being metalogical issues with regard to events in general and both strongly implying fatalism) are nevertheless entirely consistent with man's moral liberty. Fatalism entails that no event, including the behavior of a man, is preventable, just as God's foreknowledge entails this. According to Reid, if true, such a case in no way alters the manner of the event's occurrence, whether it was free (contingent) or not (necessary). For Reid, the necessity appropriate to human liberty concerns only the connection of elements in the world and the possibility of the contingency of human action with regard to those elements. Whether a man is free or not rests on whether the man was necessitated to act, and thus whether, not being caused to act, he had power to act at the time he did act, even though it may be true, and may always have been true, that he would act in the way he did act. This, of course, is to say that, as Reid understands the term 'moral liberty', God's foreknowledge and the problem of future contingents, although they place limits upon the meaning of human freedom, are not issues that decide the question of man's moral liberty.

Paradoxically, this means that men may indeed act freely even though, if fatalism is true, no man can do otherwise than what he freely does. For Reid, what men can and cannot do is always to be understood in terms of the possibility of a human action's occurrence in relation to the causally relevant circumstances of its production.

Argument Group II

Reid's treatment of the second group of arguments against human liberty concerns these connected elements. The general argument is intended to prove that liberty with regard to human action would be "hurtful to man," i.e., that men's actions would, if liberty were true, be capricious and uninfluenced by motives, taking away the effect of rewards and punishments and thereby rendering men "absolutely ungovernable" (629a/AP339). Reid's treatment of such an argument, whose resolution belies the complicated thesis of his doctrine of liberty, falls in Chapters IV and V of Essay IV.

In Chapter IV Reid cites eight observations that will enable us to "understand what influences we allow to motives" and will thus enable us to "understand distinctly in what sense we ascribe moral liberty to man" (608b/AP283). These observations are a response to an argument of his own construction:

"Every deliberate action," they say, "must have a motive. When there is no motive on the other side, this motive must determine the agent: When there are contrary motives, the strongest must prevail. We reason from men's motives to their actions, as we do from other causes to their effects. If man be a free agent, and be not governed by motives, all his actions must be mere caprice, rewards and punishments can have no effect, and such a being must be absolutely ungovernable." (608b/AP283)

What is to be overcome is the pair of theses that every action must have a motive that determines the agent to act as so motivated and that, if a man were free, i.e., unmotivated to act, he would be socially ungovernable.

Reid's first observation is that motives are not causes:

They are neither causes nor agents. They suppose an efficient cause, and can do nothing without it. We cannot, without absurdity, suppose a motive either to act, or to be acted upon; it is equally incapable of action and of passion; because it is not a thing that exists, but a

thing that is conceived; it is what the schoolmen called an ens ratio-
nis. Motives, therefore, may influence to action, but they do not act.
(608b/AP283)

While motives clearly cannot be E-causes, the onus is upon Reid's opponents to show that motives function as C-causes, and therefore that their influence upon men is naturally lawful, implying that motivated actions are always necessitated actions.

Second, Reid observes, the influence of motives is "perfectly consistent with liberty" (609b/AP285):

Rational beings, in proportion as they are wise and good, will act according to the best motives; and every rational being who does otherwise, abuses his liberty. The most perfect being, in every thing where there is a right and a wrong, a better and a worse, always infallibly acts according to the best motives. This, indeed, is little else than an identical proposition; for it is a contradiction to say, That a perfect being does what is wrong or unreasonable. But, to say that he does not act freely, because he always does what is best, is to say, That the proper use of liberty destroys liberty, and that liberty consists only in its abuse. (609a/AP384)

Third, not all actions have motives or are motivated, according to Reid, for "If a man could not act without a motive, he would have no power at all; for motives are not in our power; and he that has not power over a necessary mean, has not power over the end" (609b/AP286). He thus takes it that there are many deliberate actions performed without motives:

This must be appealed to every man's consciousness. I do many trifling actions every day, in which, upon the most careful reflection, I am conscious of no motive; and to say that I may be influenced by a motive of which I am not conscious, is, in the first place, an arbitrary supposition without any evidence, and then, it is to say, that I may be convinced by an argument which never entered into my thought.
(609b/AP285)

Fourth, Reid finds lacking any proof that "when there is a motive on one side only, that motive must determine the action" (610a/AP286).

Indeed, such a case is inconsistent with our common belief that there are such things as willfulness, caprice, and obstinacy (610a/AP286).⁸

Fifth, concerning the claim that "of contrary motives the strongest always prevails," he says: "Either we measure the strength of motives merely by their prevalence, or by some other standard distinct from their prevalence" (610b/AP287). If our test is prevalence, then it will be merely trivially true that the strongest motive is the motive that prevails (610b/AP287-288). Alternatively, if our test is the cause of the prevalence of certain motives—i.e., "that we measure the cause by the effect, and from the superiority of the effect conclude the superiority of the cause" (610b/AP288)—then this itself supposes that motives are the sole causes of actions (610b/AP288). Thus, without a standard by which to measure the strength of motives distinct from their prevalence, it cannot therefore be determined whether the strongest motive always prevails (611a/AP288).

Reid distinguishes two kinds of motivation—animal motivation and rational motivation. Delaying a fuller discussion of this distinction, we find here that the strength of animal motives (e.g., appetites) is "perceived, not by our judgment, but by our feeling; and that is the strongest of contrary motives, to which he can yield with ease, or which it requires an effort of self-command to resist; and this we may call the animal test of the strength of motives" (611b/AP289). In brute animals the strongest animal motive seems always to prevail (611b/AP289), but this is not true of men (611b/AP290). The influence of rational motives, on the other hand, is "upon the judgment, by convincing us that such an action ought to be done; that it is our duty, or conducive to our real

good, or to some end which we have determined to pursue" (611b/AP290). A rational motive is "the conviction of what we ought to do, in order to some end which we have judged fit to be pursued" (612a/AP290). Among competing rational motives the strongest "in the eye of reason, is that which it is most our duty and our real happiness to follow" (612a/AP290). This he calls the rational test of motives, even though "a motive which is the strongest, according to the animal test, may be, and very often is, the weakest according to the rational" (612a/AP291).

Concerning his sixth observation, "It is true," he admits, "that we reason from men's motives to their actions" (612a/AP291), but it does not follow from this that men are necessarily determined by motives (612a/AP291). It is from the presumption that they act on certain motives, not all of them always alike, that we reason from their motives to their actions, as when we reason from a man's thirst to his appetitive action to slake his thirst. Men act in the way they do because they possess liberty (612b/AP292). In other words, it is consistent with moral liberty that men act on motives in the way we do find them to act.

Seventh, it is not true that "if men are not necessarily determined by motives, all their actions must be capricious" (612b/AP292), unless 'capricious' is understood as one's acting without any motivation. Upon the supposition of liberty, men are still motivated to act, and therefore not all actions are capricious (612b/AP292).

Eighth, it is similarly unreasonable to conclude that "if men are not necessarily determined by motives, rewards and punishments would have no effect" (612b/AP292). Upon the supposition of liberty, rewards and

punishments will motivate the wise and good to obey the law, which Reid takes to be the real effects of rewards and punishments (see 613a/AP293).

In Chapter V of Essay IV Reid argues that liberty is consistent with government. He understands by 'government' either "mechanical government" or "moral government," the former being applied to beings without active power and the latter to intelligent and active beings (613a/AP294). As instances of mechanical government Reid cites the sailing of a ship that can obey the rudder and the sail, but obeys these only in a metaphorical sense,⁹ and a puppet show wherein "The puppets, in all their diverting gesticulations, do not move, but are moved by an impulse secretly conveyed, which they cannot resist" (613b/AP295). Moral government, however, is "the government of persons who have reason and active power, and have laws prescribed to them for their conduct by a legislator" (613b/AP295). This is "obedience in the proper sense" and it requires that those who are obedient to a law have a power to obey or to disobey the law (613b/AP296). Where obedience to a law is impossible, and thus where a transgression of the law is rendered necessary (for whatever reason), there can be no crime in a law's being disobeyed and so there can be no merit in complying with the law:

... it is self-evident that there can be no moral obligation to what is impossible, that there can be no crime in yielding to necessity, and that there can be no justice in punishing a person for what was not in his power to avoid. There are first principles in morals, and, to every unprejudiced mind, as self-evident as the axioms of mathematics. The whole science of morals must stand or fall with them. (614a/AP296)

necessity, says Reid, "agrees perfectly with mechanical government" (614a/AP296). Every mechanical action agrees with its governor, who remains the sole agent of the work done beneath him, and there can be no

moral government on the "supposition of necessity in the governed" (614a/AP297). The "government of brutes" is a "species of mechanical government, or something very like to it, and has no resemblance to moral government" (615a/AP299):

The natural world is a grand machine, contrived, made, and governed by the wisdom and power of the Almighty. And, if there be in this natural world, beings that have life, intelligence, and will, without any degree of active power, they can only be subject to the same kind of mechanical government. Their determinations, whether we call them good or ill, must be the actions of the Supreme Being, as much as the productions of the earth. For life, intelligence, and will, without active power, can do nothing, and therefore nothing can justly be imputed to it. (615a-b/AP300)

Moreover, says Reid:

Reason teaches us to ascribe to the Supreme Being a government of the inanimate and inactive part of his creation, analogous to that mechanical government which men exercise, but infinitely more perfect. This, I think, is what we call God's natural government of the universe. In this part of the divine government, whatever is done is God's doing. He is the sole cause, and the sole agent, whether he act immediately or by instruments subordinate to him; and his will is always done: For instruments are not causes, they are not agents, though we sometimes improperly call them so. (615a/AP299)

Since, according to the system of necessity, the whole universe is this natural world and God is the "sole agent" of everything done within it, "It must be purely mechanical, and there can be no moral government upon that hypothesis" (615b/AP300). In the system of necessity God is the only efficient cause possible, other causes being merely C-causes, or causes without active power. Upon the supposition of liberty, though, man "has a subordinate dominion or government" within the universe and has been bestowed with "some degree of active power, and of reason, to direct him to the right use of his power" (615b/AP301). Whereas we do not know the connection between reason and active power, these two "conjoined make moral liberty," for "as reason without active power can do nothing, so

active power without reason has no guide to direct it to any end" (615b/AP301).

Liberty is entirely consistent with morality and the government of men because the latter presupposes the former and because necessity, which is inconsistent with liberty, implies the denial of morality and government. These implications rest on Reid's positions with regard to the influence of motives, the sense he gives to the term 'necessity' when applied to human action, and whether, according to Reid's stand on human liberty, an indeterminism is indeed required by our system of morality or whether some other sense of 'liberty' is required instead.

2. A Note on Reid's Naturalism

Let us clarify Reid's position by considering first what he must take "necessity" to be a denial of, and by ceasing to use the word 'necessity' uncritically.

We may say that Reid countenances at least five senses of 'necessity'. There is (1) necessity with regard to human beliefs; this, labelled earlier as Reid's naturalism, is the thesis that beliefs are inevitable for humans because of their shared constitution, and here it is the inevitability of these beliefs that captures the sense of 'necessity' in his naturalism. There is, of course, (2) necessity with regard to logically necessary propositions, whose necessity is governed solely by virtue of the propositions' logical form, but there is also (3) necessity with regard to non-logically necessary propositions, such as contingent first principles, whose necessity rests not on their logical form but rather on their relation to lower-order judgments that require them. Reid

also uses 'necessity' to designate (4) the relation between events standing as causes and effects in a popular signification, viz., as what we have singled out as the C-causal relation. By a natural necessity certain objects and events result in other events or yield other objects in circumstances that never vary with regard to the elements in that relationship. Additionally, he labels the relation between efficient causes and what they produce as a necessary relation, a "necessary connection," and this yields our fifth sense of 'necessity' as (5) the relation between agents, or E-causes, and what they effect.

It is clear, if we canvass this brief list, that senses (4) and (5) should be our central concern when discussing Reid on liberty and necessity. But we should note an important relationship between the two: As we know, (4) can express a necessity only by virtue of (5), i.e., by virtue of the necessary connection between an E-cause and what it effects. For Reid, natural necessity is always expressible in terms of conditions within a C-causal relationship. C-causation is non-descriptive of a natural necessity where we are ignorant of those features of our description that enable us to say that some event must, in such circumstances, necessarily occur. Reid accepts the methodological autonomy of science and metaphysics because he holds that the necessity of natural events is a necessity only by virtue of the activity of an E-cause. The occultness of causes and the perpetual incompleteness of physical laws produce that general ignorance in the scientist who attempts a completed description of any natural event that would incorporate a natural necessity. His ignorance, in Reid's view, will disappear only when the scientist adds to his beliefs the metaphysical thesis that natural

necessity is a necessity only because an E-cause is at work to ensure that a certain event, and not some other, occurs. As the scientist loses his ignorance, he becomes a metaphysician, and ceases to be a scientist.

To put it simply, the connection between (4) and (5) is the result of Reid's causalism and of his commitment to the causal principle, "Every event must have an efficient cause that produced it." Also put simply, to stand apart from a causal connection, which is what indeterminism can only mean for Reid, is to remain outside of any E-causal relationship.

This has a significant entailment. In the Intellectual Powers Reid is careful to distinguish the properties of a body from what he calls the "operations" of a mind. A mind is by its very nature "a living and active being":

Everything we know of it implies life and active energy; and the reason why all its modes of thinking are called its operations, is, that in all, or in most of them, it is not merely passive, as body is, but is really and properly active. (221a/IP6)

Since every operation "supposes a power in the being that operates" (221a/IP6-7), our knowledge of the operations or acts of the mind can lead us to inferential knowledge of the mind's faculties, for "the word faculty is most properly applied to those powers of the mind which are original and natural, and which make a part of the constitution of the mind" (221b/AP7). He accepts what he says is a common division of man's faculties into understanding and will (242a/IP65; see 511a/AP1), the former comprising our speculative (511a/AP1; 519a/AP23) or contemplative (242a/IP65) powers and the latter comprising all of our active powers (511a/AP1; 519a/AP23; 242a/IP65). Of the speculative or contemplative powers he cites as their proper operations seeing, hearing, remembering,

distinguishing, reasoning, and judging (515a/AP11; 222a/IP8). On the other hand, an active power is "the power of executing any work of art or labour" (515a/AP11), or the power "to give certain motions to our bodies, or a certain direction to our thoughts" (523a/AP35). We may take it that it is the nature of a human faculty, as Reid understands it, to operate under specific circumstances and in such a way that the possessor of this faculty has no direct control over its functions. This is certainly true in the case of judgment, as we have seen, for "when we see evidence, it is impossible not to judge" (415a/IP537; cf. 434a-b/IP593-594), but it is also the case with every human faculty. The human will, cited in the Intellectual Powers as one of man's "active powers," cannot be a faculty, according to Reid, because its operations—its volitions—must at times be under the direct control of its possessor, for this is what is meant by a man's moral liberty.

Now it is no difficult task to reduce the necessity expressed by (1), the necessity in Reid's naturalism, to that of (5). Because it is his naturalistic thesis that there are first principles only because men are so constituted that they must have the beliefs and judgments (shared or otherwise) that they do have, and because all of our intellectual notions have their origin in our intellectual powers or faculties, we may therefore say that those concepts, beliefs, and judgments that arise from our constitution, or our nature, do so by reason of a natural necessity. But this is a natural necessity only by virtue of (5). It is expressible in terms of (4), viz., in terms of psychological and psycho-physical laws, and therefore in terms of (5), to which we are again committed by the causal principle.

Here, then, is the theological reason for Reid's many remarks concerning God and the intellectual nature of man. Here, moreover, is a metaphysical solution to our puzzle, created in the first chapter of this study, regarding a rationale for our holding first principles at all—God (the Deity) is the agent of our faculties, i.e., our intellectual powers, and their operations, and is thus the maker of our system of beliefs, including our first principles.

Without this, though, we must express extreme caution when faced with sentiments such as those expressed by Norman Daniels in Thomas Reid's Inquiry,¹⁰ where Daniels leaps hastily from certain interpretative facts about Reid's early naturalism to these two claims:

Reid's only defense against the skeptical outcome of his own nativism—namely, that our constitution might lead us to systematically false beliefs—is his belief that God would not deceive us. (117)

Rather than comment at this point on Reid's piety ..., I restrict myself to an important point that emerges even in his appeal to God. Reid maintains his realist stance; he tries not to slip into idealism, even if he does slip into dogmatism. God is guaranteeing our knowledge of the real world. It is not our constitution that makes the unrevisable propositions necessarily true. Rather, our constitution is designed by God to reveal the truth. (118)

We should be equally cautious in moving, as David Fate Norton does very elegantly in David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician,¹¹ from Reid's background, his years of study under George Turnbull, his association with Lord Kames, and his direct opposition to Hume to the position that Reid probably espouses a type of "teleological realism." This is what Norton defines as "the view that from the instinctive nature of our perceptions, and our instinctive belief in them, we can infer that the objects or qualities believed in are in fact real, and that we can make this inference because we are well designed by a benevolent Nature or

Deity" (171). Alternatively, he says, "Teleological Realism is a form of naturalism which claims that those things that our God-given faculties cause us necessarily to believe are by this very necessity guaranteed to exist" (171).

Caution is needed because those who make such declarations ought also to be in a position to show that Reid's statements regarding the extent of God's governance of the world of human beliefs are not mere prejudices, professions of faith, or remarks made by a religious man who turned to philosophy but nevertheless retained a nostalgia for religion that emerges now and again in pious utterances. It turns out, however, that Daniels and Norton, among others, are vindicated here. Their general interpretation (which is really an old one, differently expressed) has become a summary of a more specific doctrine. Indeed, Reid does accept that God is the agent of our faculties and intellectual powers, and is thus the maker of our system of beliefs, including our first principles.

What we do with this discovery separates Reid from Descartes. As Reid casts the issue in the Intellectual Powers, it is our seventh principle of contingent truths that "the natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious" (447a/IP630), and "If any truth can be said to be prior to all others in the order of nature, this seems to have the best claim; because in every instance of assent, whether upon intuitive, demonstrative, or probable evidence, the truth of our faculties is taken for granted, and is, as it were, one of the premises on which our assent is grounded" (447b/IP631-632). We cannot prove this principle without taking for granted the very thing in question (447b/IP630). Descartes, says Reid, made a "false step in this matter":

... for having suggested this doubt among others—that whatever evidence he might have from his consciousness, his senses, his memory, or his reason, yet possibly some malignant being had given him those faculties on purpose to impose upon him; and, therefore, that they are not to be trusted without a proper voucher. To remove this doubt, he endeavours to prove the being of a Deity who is no deceiver; whence he concludes, that the faculties he had given him are true and worthy to be trusted. (447b/IP631)

"It is strange," Reid says of Descartes, "that so acute a reasoner did not perceive that in this reasoning there is evidently a begging of the question" (447b/IP631), for Descartes had to assume the reliability, or non-fallaciousness, of his faculty of reasoning in order to complete his argument that his faculties are worthy of trust, and he intimates that Descartes satisfied himself with "so weak an argument" because "he never seriously doubted of it" (447b/IP631). Reid therefore does not accept that a proof of God, or a proof of God's integrity, adds anything to a rationale for our holding first principles.

Nevertheless it is the theological character of human faculties that deserves our attention. Because Reid is committed to the view that our natural faculties, as well as our system of beliefs, are the causal result of God's agency, he must accept that our faculties must operate as they are designed to operate. If, i.e., it is the function of our judging faculty to present to us true judgments and false judgments, then those judgments presented to us as true are indeed true and those judgments presented to us as false are indeed false, for this fulfills the function of this operating faculty.

We are necessitated by our nature to accept first principles and to reason from these in such a way that there is what Reid calls the fabric of human knowledge. His defense of the postulates of human knowledge, and

his answer to the question as to why we ought theoretically to accept as correct first principles and this fabric of human knowledge, is that our constitution is designed to yield such judgments. These judgments—which must be true for the sake of other judgments we make—are true because our constitution, and so our natural faculties, are designed to necessitate true judgments. When we approach the subject extrasystemically and theoretically (i.e., theologically) our first principles and, indeed, the fabric of human knowledge turn out to be correct because this serves the very purpose for which human nature and man's intellectual powers were made.

What this implies is that, for any belief that we accept, it would be inconsistent for us to hold that the faculties by means of which we come to that belief do not disclose what we take them to disclose, because we must accept that these faculties are designed for just such a purpose.¹² That our faculties fulfill a purpose is the result of our need to attribute to God's agency the design and construction of our intellectual powers, or faculties. We must accept the reliability of these faculties, says Reid, "until God give us new faculties to sit in judgment upon the old" (447b/IP631).

As the agent of all things in nature, God produces not merely the constitution of men but also its ruling principles, i.e., the laws governing its activities, and what is generated necessarily by those principles. Laws of nature, including laws of human nature, are the "rules" according to which God acts in his governance of the world. Included in these rules are our first principles. Where the first principle is a necessary statement, it is immutable and guaranteed of

truth by its very nature. Where a first principle is a contingent statement (e.g., concerning perception), since "contingent existence is that which depended upon the power and will of its cause" (523a/AP35), God works twice in fulfilling his design: once in giving us a perceptual belief and a first principle, and secondly in ensuring that the laws of nature with regard to perception hold in such cases. For our part, God's activities in the world guarantee the justification of first principles by rendering it inconsistent for one to deny that what he naturally and originally judges or believes is as he judges or believes it to be. This higher principle of rationality—if we may call it that—is precisely the religious element in Reid's naturalism, and the element that gives us his higher justification for our first principles.

3. Principles of Action

Although Reid denies that we know the connection between reason as an intellectual power and the will as an active power of man, it is the relation between the two that so clearly identifies his stand on human liberty. Unfolding the relation between the two also creates a tension between (4) and (5) of Reid's senses of 'necessity', i.e., between the E-causal relation and natural necessitation. Reid discusses the general connection between reason and will under his commentary on the principles of action, which cover parts I, II, and III of Essay III, "Of the Principles of Action."

By 'principles of action' Reid understands "everything that incites us to act" (543a/AP95), and remarks that there must be such principles of action:

If there were no incitements to action, active power would be given us in vain. Having no motive to direct our active exertions, the mind would, in all cases, be in a state of perfect indifference, to do this or that, or nothing at all. The active power would either not be exerted at all, or its exertions would be perfectly unmeaning and frivolous, neither wise nor foolish, neither good nor bad. To every action that is of the smallest importance, there must be some incitement, some motive, some reason. (543a/AP95)

It is "for distinction's sake" that Reid names three principles of action: the mechanical, the animal (because they seem common to both man and animals), and the rational ("being proper to man as a rational creature") (545a/AP99).

Mechanical principles of action are of two sorts or species—instincts and habits (545a/AP100). An instinct is "a natural blind impulse to certain actions, without having any end in view, without deliberation, and very often without any conception of what we do" (545a/AP100). Among the various instincts, Reid cites sucking and swallowing in children, breathing, certain muscle contractions, such behavior in animals as butting in rams and bulls, kicking in horses, biting in dogs, pawing in lions, stinging in bees and wasps, the serpent's use of his fangs, and the boar's use of his tusks, among many others.¹³

Instincts in man appear more frequently in his infancy. While some supply "the want of understanding in that early period" (547a/AP105), others, falling into three classes of instincts, continue to appear throughout a man's lifetime—instincts such as those needed for frequent and repetitive actions (e.g., breathing and blinking), instincts needed for sudden actions (e.g., reflexes), and those necessary for a man's preservation, such as swallowing, where a man "needs do no more than will to swallow. All the requisite motions of nerves and muscles immediately

take place in their proper order, without his knowing or willing anything about them" (547a/AP106). This last class, says Reid, "is the case, in some degree, in every voluntary motion of our body" (547a/AP106), for, whether by instinct or by volition, the behavior that follows upon our willing it is the result of a complicated array of nervous and muscular activity over which we have no direct control and of which we have no awareness. "Thus," he says, "the merciful Author of our nature, hath adapted our instincts to the defects and to the weakness of our understanding" (547a/AP108):

In infancy we are ignorant of everything; yet many things must be done by us for our preservation: These are done by instincts. When we grow up there are many motions of our limbs and bodies necessary, which can be performed only by a curious and complex internal machinery—a machinery of which the bulk of mankind are totally ignorant, and which the most skilful anatomist know but imperfectly. All this machinery is set a-going by instinct. We need only to will the external motion, and all the internal motions, previously necessary to the effect, take place of themselves, without our will or command. (547b-548a/AP108)

Among the other instincts Reid cites, there are "proneness to imitation" (548a/AP108) and the instinctive operations of our faculties. He cites our faculty of judgment as a prominent example of this early instinctive hold over an intellectual power of man, and provides a famous instance of an instinctive belief: "A child of half a year old, who has once burned his finger by putting it in the candle, will not put it there again" (549b/AP113). The instinctive belief is, of course, "That an event which they have observed in certain circumstances, will happen again in like circumstances," and it is a belief that children "show even in infancy" (549b/AP113). Says Reid:

A person who has lived so long in the world as to observe that nature is governed by fixed laws, may have some rational ground to expect similar events in similar circumstances; but this cannot be the case of

the child. His belief, therefore, is not grounded on evidence. It is the result of his constitution. (549b/AP113)

Habits, differing from instincts only in their provenance, are acquired (or learned) and are not natural, as are instincts, but they are nevertheless, as are instincts, "mechanical principles" of human action (550a/AP114). As a principle of action, habits are considered by Reid to be "a part of our constitution, that what we have been accustomed to do, we acquire, not only a facility, but a proneness to do on like occasions; so that it requires a particular will and effort to forbear it, but to do it, requires very often no will at all" (550b/AP115). While every art furnishes an example of habit in man, it is the pronunciation of one's language that Reid cites as an example of habit in man, remarking that habits, like instincts, "seem to be parts of our original constitution" (551a/AP117).

Animal principles of action are those "such as operate upon the will and intention, but do not suppose any exercise of judgment or reason; and are most of them to be found in some brute animals, as well as in man" (551b/AP118). The first type of animal principle is "appetite," which, as Reid uses the term, is comprised of an "uneasy sensation" appropriate to the appetite and a desire to remove it (551b/AP119). All appetites, such as hunger (an uneasy sensation and a desire to eat), are not constant but periodical (551b/AP119). In infants, Reid thinks, an uneasy sensation is probably the entire experience, and it is only after some encounter with the means of removing the uneasy sensation that a young human (or animal) may be said to have a appetite:

... when experience has connected, in their imagination, the uneasy sensation with the means of removing it, the desire of the last comes

to be so associated with the first, that they remain through life inseparable. (552a/AP119)

The two ends of appetite are the preservation of the individual and the continuance of the species, for without appetite both a man and his species would perish. Nor would reason be able to take the place of this saving need:

Though a man knew that his life must be supported by eating, reason could not direct him when to eat, or what; how much, or how often. In all these things, appetite is a much better guide than our reason. Were reason only to direct us in this matter, its calm voice would often be drowned in the hurry of business, or the charms of amusement. But the voice of appetite rises gradually, and, at last, becomes loud enough to call off our attention from any other employment. (552a/AP120)

While all appetites are natural to man, some of man's appetites can be made and acquired:

The frequent use of things which stimulate the nervous system, produces a languor when their effect is gone off, and a desire to repeat them. By this means, a desire of a certain object is created, accompanied by an uneasy sensation. Both are removed for a time by the object desired; but they return after a certain interval. This differs from natural appetite only in being acquired by custom. Such are the appetites which some men acquire for the use of tobacco, for opiates, and for intoxicating liquors. (553b/AP124)

Any behavior resulting from an appetite, and solely from an appetite, however, is morally neutral:

To act merely from appetite, is neither good nor ill in a moral view. It is neither an object of praise nor of blame. No man claims any praise because he eats when he is hungry, or rests when he is weary. On the other hand, he is no object of blame, if he obeys the call of appetite when there is no reason to hinder him. In this he acts agreeably to his nature. (552b/AP122)

But, says Reid, "When appetite is opposed by some principle drawing a contrary way, there must be a determination of the will, which shall prevail, and this determination may be, in a moral sense, right or wrong" (554a/AP125). This is in part what Reid means by "self-government"—the

control of our natural urges by principles of action that are subject to moral or social evaluation, for it is only by self-government that our natural tendencies can be regulated (554a-b/AP125-127).

Desires, another class of animal principles of action, differ from appetites by virtue of this, he says, "That there is not an uneasy sensation proper to each, and always accompanying it; and that they are not periodical, but constant, not being sated with their objects for a time, as appetites are" (554b/AP128). The three kinds of desires are a desire for power (a need to seek a high rank among the species), a desire for esteem (a need for approbation in animals and man), and a desire for knowledge (554b/AP128):

When we speak of the desire of knowledge as a principle of action in man, we must not confine it to the pursuits of the philosopher, or of the literary man. The desire of knowledge discovers itself, in one person, by an avidity to know the scandal of the village, and who makes love, and to whom; in another, to know the economy of the next family; in another, to know what the post brings; and, in another, to trace the path of a new comet. (555a-b/AP130)

Such principles of action, while not always beneficial to the society in which a man is placed, are nevertheless principles appropriate to a socialized man.¹⁴

In addition to appetites and desires, there are various other animal principles of action. These Reid calls affections, being "principles of action, which have persons for their immediate object, and imply, in their very nature, our being well or ill affected to some person, or, at least, to some animated being" (558b/AP139). As Reid uses the term, something is a "benevolent" affection only "where the good of the object is desired ultimately, and not as the means only, in order to something else" (559b/AP143), and all benevolent affections are

"agreeable," including "a desire of the good and happiness of the object" (559b/AP142-143). Reid lists seven "benevolent affections": The affections between parents and children (560b-561a/AP145-149), affections toward benefactors (562a-b/AP149-151), affections toward the distressed (562b-563a/AP151-152), our esteem of the wise and good (563a-b/AP152-153), friendship (563b/AP153-154), love between the sexes (563b-564a/AP154-155), and "Public Spirit," or an affection toward "any community to which we belong" (564a-b/AP155-157). On the other hand, "malevolent affections" are "emulation," or "a desire of superiority to our rivals in any pursuit, accompanied with an uneasiness at being surpassed" (566b/AP162), and "resentment," or a disposition to retaliate upon the author of an injury to ourselves (568a/AP167).

Reid mentions three remaining animal principles of action—passion, disposition, and opinion—all of which are "some things belonging to the mind, which have great influence upon human conduct, by exciting or allaying, inflaming or cooling the animal principles we have mentioned" (570b/AP175). Like all animal principles, passion implies the desire of some object and an aversion to its contrary (572b/AP179); it influences human conduct by making men liable to strong temptation (572b/AP180), but sometimes impels men to what is good and what reason approves (573b/AP182). Passion's "involuntary signs" (574b/AP185), i.e., its effects, are these: passion alters the voice, bodily gestures, and features (571a/AP175); passion agitates our thoughts (571a-b/AP176); and passion "gives a violent impulse to the will, and makes a man do what he knows he shall repent as long as he lives" (571b/AP176). A disposition, on the other hand, is "a state of mind which, while it lasts, gives a

tendency, or proneness, to be moved by certain animal principles, rather than by others" (575a/AP187). Among dispositions Reid cites humility (576a/AP190), good humor and bad humor (575b-576a/AP188-189), and elation and depression (576a/AP189). The final animal principle Reid mentions is opinion, an "essential ingredient" in all rational principles of human action (577a/AP193). Considered as an animal principle and as an influence upon human conduct, opinion is such that "There is no natural desire or aversion which may not be restrained by opinion" (a thirsty man, e.g., would forbear drinking if he held the opinion that his filled cup contained poison) (577a/AP193).

Reid summarizes his discussion of the animal principles of action by remarking that "The temper and the situation of men is commonly such that the animal principles alone, without self-government, would never produce any regular and consistent train of conduct" (578b/AP197). Self-government is needed for men to act as they do act:

Without self-government, that which is strongest at the time will prevail. And that which is weakest at one time may, from passion, from a change of disposition or of fortune, become strongest at another time. (578b/AP197)

Reid's discussion of "rational principles of action," his concern in Essay III, Part III, centers both on an enumeration of these rational principles and on his thesis that there are such rational principles of action in man. Rational principles "have that name," he says, "because they can have no existence in being not endowed with reason, and, in all their exertions, require not only intention and will, but judgment or reason" (579b/AP200-201). He is aware that while reason is "allowed to be the principle by which our belief and opinions ought to be regulated"

(579b/AP201), "reason has been no less universally conceived to be a principle by which our actions ought to be regulated" (579b/AP201). The issue is of course far more complex than Reid immediately seems to suggest by the comment that it might be settled merely by an inspection of linguistic usage:

To act reasonably, is a phrase no less common in all languages, than to judge reasonably. We immediately approve of a man's conduct, when it appears that he had good reason for what he did. And every action we disapprove, we think unreasonable, or contrary to reason. (579b/AP201)

Reid knows its importance and complexity. Taking it "for granted," he says, "that there can be no exercise of Reason without Judgment, nor, on the other hand, any judgment of things, abstract and general, without some degree of reason" (580a/AP201), the issue concerning rational principles of action is this:

If, therefore, there be any principles of action in the human constitution, which, in their nature, necessarily imply such judgment, they are the principles which we may call rational, to distinguish them from animal principles, which imply desire and will, but not judgment. (580a/AP202)

Since every action, executed deliberately, must be accomplished either as a means to some end or as an end without regard to some other end, the issue is whether, excluding the uncontroversial proposal that reason is needed for deciding upon the means for any action, it is therefore a "part of the office of reason to determine the ends we ought to pursue, or the preference due to one end above another" (580a/AP202).

Reid's opponent in this match is Hume, who thinks that a determination of ends is "not the office of reason, but of taste or feeling" (580a/AP202) and so "Accordingly, Mr Hume maintains, that reason is no principle of action; but that it is, and ought to be, the servant of the

passions" (580a/AP202).¹⁵ What Reid hopes to show is that there are these rational principles of action in man:

I shall endeavour to shew that, among the various ends of human actions, there are some, of which, without reason, we could not even form a conception; and that, as soon as they are conceived, a regard to them is, by our constitution, not only a principle of action, but a leading and governing principle, to which all our animal principles are subordinate, and to which they ought to be subject. (580a/AP202)

The two ends Reid will consider are "What is good for us upon the whole" and "What appears to be our duty" (580a/AP203).

What Reid understands by 'good upon the whole' is "That which, taken with all its discoverable connections and consequences, brings more good than ill" (518a/AP205). The ability to form our good upon the whole is not an ability shared with other animals. A man cannot have a conception of it "till reason is so far advanced that he can seriously reflect upon the past, and take a prospect of the future part of his existence" (581a/AP205). A regard to the good on the whole is "the offspring of reason, and can only be in beings endowed with reason":

We learn to observe the connexions of things, and the consequences of our actions; and, taking an extended view of our existence, past, present, and future, we correct our first notions of good and ill, and form the conception of what is good or ill upon the whole; which must be estimated, not from the present feeling, or from the present animal desire or aversion, but from a due consideration of its consequences, certain or probable, during the whole of our existence. (580b-581a/AP205)

What is under consideration, though, is Reid's position that "as soon as we have the conception of what is good or ill for us upon the whole, we are led, by our constitution, to seek the good and avoid the ill; and this becomes not only a principle of action, but a leading or governing principle, to which all our animal principles ought to be subordinate"

(581a/AP206). The issue is whether a regard to our good upon the whole is indeed a principle of action in man. What Reid says is this:

To prefer a greater good, though distant, to a less that is present; to choose a present evil, in order to avoid a greater evil, or to obtain a greater good, is, in the judgment of all men, wise and reasonable conduct; and, when a man acts the contrary part, all men will acknowledge that he acts foolishly and unreasonably. Nor will it be denied, that, in innumerable cases in common life, our animal principles draw us one way, while a regard to what is good on the whole, draws us the contrary way. Thus the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. That in every conflict of this kind the rational principles ought to prevail, and the animal to be subordinate, is too evident to need, or to admit of proof. (581b/AP207)

It seems again that Reid is supporting his thesis with another appeal to a common consideration of ordinary language, and does not address the issue by making clear why our following an end disclosed by reasoning differs from our following a passion, and why we have not one but two principles in view. The problem is not that the animal principles influence our conduct without requiring our use of reason, and that rational principles of action influence our conduct after reason has given us an end to pursue, but rather that we do not know the manner by which a rational principle influences human conduct. This is not in the least answered by any appeal to ordinary language, which seems to say no more than that there is such an influence.

Our answer comes only when Reid summarizes his discussion of our good upon the whole as an influence on our conduct. After noting that reason is a principle of action in men and has been "set in opposition to the animal principles which we call the passions," and after noting that the "ultimate object of this principle," viz., our good upon the whole, differs from the object of the animal principles in that the latter,

unlike the former, are "all directed to particular objects, without any comparison with others" (583b-584a/AP214), Reid then says:

What is good upon the whole cannot even be conceived without the exercise of reason, and therefore cannot be an object to beings that have not some degree of reason.

As soon as we have the conception of this object, we are led, by our constitution, to desire and pursue it. It justly claims a preference to all objects of pursuit that can come in competition with it. (584a/AP214)

This does not place the rational principles among the class of desires, which are animal principles of action, but it does mark the nature of the influence it has upon human conduct: Our good upon the whole moves us to act to obtain it because we forthwith desire it, in precisely the way we are led to obtain other objects of desire.

It is by reasoning, though, that we discover this end, as well as its many competitors, and it is this that separates our good upon the whole from animal desires. Reason is needed to discover this end and the means to it, and so is presupposed by this rational principle. But having discovered the end, we are moved to pursue it as though it were an object of rational desire. Only beings possessed of reason can have a regard to good upon the whole, and men act "reasonably" to the extent that they act upon those desires that their reasoning powers propose, in opposition to animal desires, which influences the conduct of men without a regard to their consequences or relations to other desires (i.e., they influence conduct "blindly").

Our good upon the whole, then, is a rational principle of action because (1) it is an end proposed by reason or reasoning, an intellectual power found only in rational beings, and (2) it influences human conduct (or the conduct of rational beings) by moving rational beings in the way

animal desires move and influence all animals. This is the groundwork of Reid's sense of the term 'self-government'. Those who can exercise self-government are those, and only those, who have learned to act on rational desires over the lure of their many animal desires, or their animal principles of action.

A regard to one's duty, or one's moral obligation, is another rational principle of action. Reid's summary of his own system of morals is contained in Essay VII, Chapter II, of the Intellectual Powers and in the last essay, Essay V, of the Active Powers. Our interest, which is far more limited in scope, lies in the influence upon human conduct of duty, or moral obligation, as a rational principle of action.

According to Reid, a being who is moved to act only by animal principles may certainly be led by discipline to follow a train of conduct, but such a being cannot be governed by social laws:

The subject of law must have the conception of a general rule of conduct, which, without some degree of reason, he cannot have. He must likewise have a sufficient inducement to obey the law, even when his strongest animal desires draw him the contrary way. (586b/AP222)

These inducements to act according to a general rule or law may be "a sense of interest, or a sense of duty, or both concurring" (586b/AP222). Again, these may be "justly called the rational principles of action, since they can have no place but in a being endowed with reason, and since it is by them only that man is capable either of political or of moral government" (586b/AP222). A regard to one's duty, "without which man would not be a moral agent" (586b/AP223), is a "nobler principle" than a regard to our interests, and is "that principle alone by which he is capable either of virtue or vice" (586b/AP223). A moral obligation to

perform certain actions, which is an acknowledged "principle of honour," is "only another name for what we call a regard to duty, to rectitude, to propriety of conduct" (587a-b/AP224), and "It is a moral obligation which obliges a man to do certain things because they are right, and not to do other things because they are wrong" (587b/AP224).

Considered abstractly, moral obligation, or duty, is a relational term for Reid; it is "neither any real quality of the action considered by itself, nor of the agent considered without respect to the action, but a certain relation between the one and the other" (589a/AP228).¹⁶ Thus:

When we say a man ought to do such a thing, the ought, which expresses the moral obligation, has a respect, on the one hand, to the person who ought; and, on the other, to the action which he ought to do. Those two correlates are essential to every moral obligation; take away either, and it has no existence. So that, if we seek the place of moral obligation among the categories, it belongs to the category of relation. (589a/AP228-229)

Moral obligation is sui generis, a "relation of its own kind"

(589a/AP229). No statement of duty or obligation is equivalent in sense or extension to any other statement, however complex, that lacks the normative employment of 'ought' or 'ought not', for these terms, when used in moral contexts, are not deducible from any statement or statements not also containing the term 'ought' or a semantically equivalent term. This must also hold true for the first principles of morals.¹⁷ Reid cannot, therefore, be considered a naturalist with regard to morals.

Although reasoning is required to discover the proper means to achieve our ends and obligations, we do not know by reasoning what our ultimate ends are and we do not know by demonstration what our duties are (see 479b-480b/IP723-724). Our duties, as well as what is right and wrong in human conduct, are discovered by a "moral faculty":

... by an original power of the mind, when we come to years of understanding and reflection, we not only have the notions of right and wrong in conduct, but perceive certain things to be right, and others to be wrong. (589b/AP231)

Following moralists Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Joseph Butler, Reid calls this "original power" or faculty the "moral sense," also calling it "conscience." Conscience, or the moral sense, so named by virtue of an analogy with our other senses, is the source of all judgments regarding good and bad conduct, and regarding both particular duties:

In its dignity it is, without doubt, far superior to every other power of the mind; but there is this analogy between it and the external senses, That, as by them we have not only the original conceptions of the various qualities of bodies, but the original judgment that this body has such a quality, that such another; so by our moral faculty, we have both the original conceptions of right and wrong in conduct, of merit and demerit, and the original judgments that this conduct is right, that is wrong; that this character has worth, that demerit. (590a-b/AP232-233)

Reid understands by 'moral reasoning' "all reasoning that is brought to prove that such conduct is right, and deserving of moral approbation; or that it is wrong; or that it is indifferent, and, in itself, neither morally good nor ill" (590b/AP233). He holds that all moral judgments are "reducible to one or other of these, as all human actions, considered in a moral view, are either good, or bad, or indifferent" (590b/AP233). Since we cannot reason to a normative claim on premisses that are not normative, what we know regarding duties and the merit/demerit of conduct is known either through moral reasoning, whose premisses are all normative, or immediately, without reasoning, by means of our moral sense. According to Reid's summary, his position is:

That, by an original power of the mind, which we call conscience, or the moral faculty, we have the conceptions of right and wrong in human conduct, of merit and demerit, of duty and moral obligation, and our other moral conceptions; and that, by the same faculty, we perceive

some things in human conduct to be right, and others to be wrong; that the first principles of morals are the dictates of this faculty; and that we have the same reason to rely upon those dictates, as upon the determination of our senses, or of our other natural faculties.
(592b/AP237)

There is a perfect analogy between the first principles of morals and all other first principles. Reid's position in the Intellectual Powers should make this evident. At first glance, though, it would appear that conscience is a rational principle that governs behavior because by means of it we discern moral first principles as self-evident, thus making it one of Reid's two "offices of reason" and implying that conscience, because active in one of reason's two offices, is itself one of reason's spokesmen. The more sophisticated version, discussed in full in the first chapter of this study, is that, as a rational principle, conscience, or the moral sense, is rational because only in beings capable of reasoning and capable of moral reasoning can first principles be found. The first principles of morals bear the same internal relation to particular moral judgments as the other first principles bear to particular judgments in other departments of a man's intellectual pursuits.

In other words, the first principles of morals are rational principles because required by moral reasoning and the justification of particular moral judgments, all such judgments being the dictates of our moral sense. As an active principle—i.e., as a rational principle of human conduct—conscience influences conduct (598a/AP255), it "may be opposed by any of our animal principles" (598a/AP255), and it "sometimes concurs with our other active principles, sometimes opposes them, and sometimes is the sole principle of action" (598a/AP255). It also has

"from its nature, an authority to direct and determine with regard to our conduct" (597b/AP254).

The influence of conscience, or the "authority of conscience over the other active principles of mind" (597b/AP254), which implies "That in all cases a man ought to do his duty" (598a/AP254), is no further discussed by Reid. Our only clue as to the nature of the influence of moral judgments upon conduct, or the influencing character of one's obligations, is Reid's claim that there is no opposition between our two leading principles of action, viz., a regard to our good upon the whole and a regard to our duty (598b/AP256). This implies that conscience and apparent obligations influence human conduct by moving men to act as "rational desires."¹⁸

4. A Remark on Reid's Definition of Freedom

In "Reid's Definition of Freedom"¹⁹ Jerome Weinstock argues that "Although Reid first tells us that power over one's will implies judgment and reason, very shortly afterwards he tells us that it is at least conceivable that this power may be possessed by a being who has no reasoning ability at all!" (339). He also claims that, according to Reid, "having control over one's will is sufficient ground for maintaining that determinism is false" (340). "That is," says Weinstock:

Reid is quite rightly convinced that there are cases where people have, and those cases where people lack, power over the determinations of their wills, and since he is convinced that the existence of free will is incompatible with determinism, draws the conclusion that determinism must be false. Having drawn this conclusion, Reid is apparently also willing (albeit hesitantly) to conclude that to have an undetermined will is sufficient for an agent to have power over his will. (339)

One's having an "undetermined will" is the reason for what Weinstock calls Reid's "startling inconsistency" (340), because "for advocates of the definition of freedom that Reid is opposing, rejection of the existence of power over one's will is seen as a consequence of determinism" (339) and because "acceptance of the existence of such power would, on their view, entail the rejection of determinism" (339). In other words, Reid defines liberty as the possession of a power over the determinations of one's will, which implies some degree of judgment or reason, and then he does two things: He inconsistently admits the possibility of a being with power over the determinations of his will, but with no such degree of judgment or reason, and he "equivocates" concerning the relationship between having power over one's will and having a sound faculty of judgment (340). Moreover, in defining freedom as he does, Reid takes his definition directly from the indeterminacy of the will.

In a response, "On an Alleged Inconsistency in Reid's Theory of Moral Liberty,"²⁰ W. Dean Hazelton has taken Weinstock to task on the first point. He argues that Reid embraces no inconsistency because he does not accept that power over the determinations of one's will implies judgment or reason. Weinstock, says Hazelton, has misread Reid's definition: "By the liberty of a Moral Agent, I understand a power over the determinations of his own Will," and "The liberty of a moral agent implies, not only a conception of what he wills, but some degree of practical judgment or reason." According to Hazelton, the possession of a sound faculty of judgment follows from our concept of a moral agent, but it does not follow from one's having power over the will. Thus "For Reid, an agent's being a moral agent implies, by itself, that the agent has

judgment or reason" (454). Therefore, "Since an agent's being a moral agent implies that he has judgment or reason, an agent's being a moral agent and having power over the determinations of his will imply that he has judgment or reason" (454).

On Hazelton's interpretation, then, if a nonrational agent has any liberty at all, "it could not have the liberty of a moral agent—that is, moral liberty" (455). In answer to Weinstock's puzzlement over the relationship between reason and power over one's will, Hazelton concludes that "having rational capacities is coextensive with having power over the will" (455). Yet he reaches it by a curious argument:

Just as having power over the will is in vain without reason to guide it, having reason without power is in vain because reason without power can do nothing. Since he held that nature gives no power in vain, Reid would deny that there are any rational beings without power over their wills. (455)

The argument is curious because it establishes that Reid would deny that there are any nonrational beings with a power over the determinations of their wills, and thus that a being possesses a power over the determinations of his will only if that being also possesses the capacity for reason—precisely the problem Weinstock raised and the one Hazelton hoped to settle.

On our reading of Reid's thesis, Hazelton is right that Reid draws the capacity for reason from man's moral stature, and Weinstock is wrong in discerning an inconsistency in Reid's view. But surely Hazelton is wrong that having rational capacities is merely coextensive with having power over the determinations of one's will. Reid argues that "If the mind were always in a state of perfect indifference, without any incitement, motive, or reason, to act, or not to act, to act one way

rather than another, our active power, having no end to pursue, no rule to direct its exertions, would be given in vain" (533a/AP63-64). For then "We should either be altogether inactive, and never will to do anything, or our volitions would be perfectly unmeaning and futile, being neither wise nor foolish, virtuous nor vicious" (533a/AP64). Principles of action are required for us to act at all. But we cannot have power over the determinations of our will unless we are able to act in opposition to animal principles of action. This is the point of Active Powers, Essay III, that there are in man rational principles of action, without which he would have no self-government and would be incapable of preferring reason's dictates to those of his animal desires. These are present only in beings having rational capacities, and it is only by having rational capacities—and therefore rational principles of action—that he can have power over the determinations of the will. Having power over one's will therefore implies the possession of reason and judgment; it is not that they are merely coextensive.

In fact, the issue is easily settled by a look at the text in question. What Reid says, in a passage that Hazelton should not have missed, is that "As nature gives no power in vain, I see no ground to ascribe a power over the determinations of the will to any being who has no judgment to apply it to the direction of his conduct, no discernment of what he ought or ought not to do" (600a/AP260). Reid thus denies that there are any beings with a power over their volitions who lack a capacity for reason and judgment, or rather asserts that one has a power over his volitions only if he also has rational capacities.

From the standpoint of morality man must be capable of conceiving an end and reasoning practically in order to reach it. From the standpoint of liberty a man must be not only morally accountable, as he would be in the moral view, but also able to act in ways other than those he did act, and so must be able to prefer willing one action over another, and be able to act on one preference over another. That "We may, perhaps, be able to conceive a being endowed with power over the determinations of his will, without any light in his mind to direct that power to some end" (600a/AP260), must inevitably give us a clear conception of an impossible being—a being with a power he cannot exercise, having no ability for judgment or reason in order to select among his alternatives. But a power that cannot be exercised, as Reid says, is no power at all.

Weinstock, however, is wrong that Reid concludes that men have power over their wills because their wills are undetermined. These two issues, as we have read Reid's doctrine, are established separately.

5. The Threat of Motivation

If there were no rational principles of action, which are required for man's self-government, men would be ungovernable by artificial laws, or the laws of morals and society. They may be governable by discipline and the effects of rewards and punishments, but they would nevertheless be ruled entirely by passion, or the motives that move a man's will without the intervention of his regard to goods discoverable by reason and without the intervention of apparent obligations. Men would thus act by necessity. That is, the only principles governing men's behavior would be natural laws, whose central elements are mechanical, animal motives, and

the human behavior (however complex) that results from their lawful connections. An obedience to moral and social laws requires an understanding of the laws under which men are obligated and requires the power to obey these laws. Men must be able to act on the alternatives to animal desires, and that is why "self-government" presupposes rational principles of action, present only in beings capable of reasoning, for these rational principles supply us with reason's alternatives to animal motives.²¹ With the power to choose his motives, which is required by morals and made possible by rational principles, the kind of person a man is can be disclosed to others by the type of motives he selects, the goods he seeks, and the laws he has elected to obey.

Reid takes it, then, that morality demands freedom of will—i.e., a man's self-government and some dominion over the determinations of his will—for otherwise the agent's will is determined by the strongest motive and not by his having done anything at all. This freedom demands that there be rational principles of action, as necessary for self-government and as necessary for our being the efficient causes, E-causes, that we must, by virtue of our constitution, take ourselves to be.

Reid, however, has overlooked a disturbing regularity. The constitution of a person must be relevant to his choice of motives, granted that the person has the power to select his motives, and it must be relevant to the kind of nonrational motives that move a man's will. There are two alternatives to this, but only these two:

1. The relation between a man's behavior and the motives that move a man to behave in such a way is a C-causal relation, implying that motivation in human conduct is really a relation of necessitation.

2. The relation between a man's behavior and its influencing motives is neither psychologically nor physically lawful. It is therefore inevitably unintelligible, since nothing then remains to explain the obvious regularity of men's conduct, a regularity that enables us to describe persons as polite, honest, sociable, wicked, generous, gullible, etc.

The first of these alternatives is precisely the one Reid hoped to avoid, for it is the doctrine of necessity, rendering the behavior of men the inexorable result of necessitating factors over which no man has any control. It does not even permit men to be "occasional causes" of their behavior, and gives to God a power as the sole efficient cause in the universe. The second alternative, which is also unacceptable to Reid, is a strong form of indeterminism. It does not imply that men are capricious, nor does it imply that men are ungovernable by rational persuasion. What it does imply is that human motivation is ultimately mysterious. More importantly, it conflicts with Reid's admission that rational motives—a regard to duty and to general interest—in fact influence or move men in the way desires do. On this alternative, men are not moved to act at all. They can only appropriate motives, act on them, and behave in a way whose regularity is uncanny, unexplainable, and never solvable by any hypothesis that might seek to link these motives with a man's natural constitution.

The possibility of caprice will no doubt always be a problem in interpreting Reid's definition of freedom, for he apparently admits that men may act capriciously, without motivation, and still possess a power

over the determinations of the will. In The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man, his student Dugald Stewart goes so far as to say:²²

Every action is performed with some view, or, in other words, is performed for some motive. Dr. Reid, indeed, denies this with zeal, but I am doubtful if he has strengthened his cause by doing so; for he confesses that the actions which are performed without motives are perfectly trifling and insignificant, and not such as lead to any general conclusion concerning the merit or demerit of moral agents.

More recently, Edward Madden, in "Common Sense and Agency Theory," finds that the possibility of a motiveless act reinforces the necessitarian charge that liberty consists essentially in uncaused, motiveless, and capricious acts.²³

The problem with Reid's apparent admission of free capriciousness is that it is inconsistent with his position that only rational beings, motivated by reasons, are capable of a power over the determinations of the will; it implies that reason is irrelevant to acting freely and therefore undercuts the very base of his moral libertarianism. The problem is large, but the textual specimen that gives rise to it is very small, being occasioned by his claim that deliberate actions are commonly performed without motives. Since "modern advocates for the doctrine of Necessity lay the stress of their cause upon the influence of motives" (608b/AP283), Reid attempts to answer the claim that "Every deliberate action must have a motive" by discriminating two types of deliberate acts:

Whether every deliberate action must have a motive, depends on the meaning we put upon the word deliberate. If, by a deliberate actions, we mean an action wherein motives are weighed, which seems to be the original meaning of the word, surely there must be motives, and contrary motives, otherwise they could not be weighed. But, if a deliberate action means only, as it commonly does, an action done by a cool and calm determination of the mind, with forethought and will, I believe there are innumerable such actions done without a motive. (609a-b/AP285)

The issue thus arises over his claim that a deliberate action, here meaning "an action done by a cool and calm determination of the mind, with forethought and will," is commonly one performed without a motive. But what Reid understands by a motive is the teleological end of an action arrived at by pursuing the means to it. A motive is what rationalizes, explains, and characterizes an action.²⁴ It is in this way that "Every deliberate human action must be done either as the means, or as an end; as the means to some end, to which it is subservient, or as an end, for its own sake, and without regard to anything beyond it" (580a/AP202). It is thus entirely consistent with moral liberty that one may perform deliberate actions that are "trifling" (609b/AP285), having no end beyond themselves. The trouble does not rest with the meaning of the term 'deliberate action', as Reid would have us believe, but rather with the meaning of 'motive', and what we would include under its denomination, when applied to deliberate action. He thinks that an action performed merely because it is wanted, having no end or purpose beyond itself, is an unmotivated action. On the other hand, it must be a motivated action if he is to preserve his scheme, and with it he still makes his point against this small sample of necessitarian doctrine.

A similar consideration applies to the other problematical statement in the textual specimen singled out by Reid's commentators: "If a man could not act without a motive, he would have no power at all; for motives are not in our power; and he that has not power over a necessary mean, has not power over the end" (609b/AP286). What this puzzling claim means is simply this: If, for any action a man considers, he must have a motive—some end to pursue—in order to do it, then he could not act at

all; since the ends we pursue are not in our power, we would be thoroughly inert if we could not perform trifling actions, or act capriciously, i.e., if we could not make actions having no purpose beyond themselves.²⁵

Although Reid claims that we do not know the connection between reason and the will, this is no longer an important issue in a critique of Reid's position, because the failure of that position does not rest on a full understanding of the nature of motivation, but rather on the threat of motivation that demands that the human constitution be itself a relevant link in the chain that connects motives with certain human behavior. No man can alter his constitution; he may alter his dispositions, but not his constitution. A man's constitution is simply not within the range of his power. Reid confesses an ignorance with respect to the connection between reason and will because what must stand between the two is the human constitution. If certain motives move a man to act, and if, in Reid's scheme, the strongest motive prevails until a rational principle is available, then what reason discovers, and what is present to a man's understanding, is, as Reid admits, the only means by which he may act in opposition to nonrational motives. This is precisely why moral liberty and power over the determinations of the will presuppose rational capacities. But what reason there is for a man's choice is intelligible only if it is the nature of the man, i.e., his constitution, that determines what he will select, among his competing alternatives, to do.²⁶

Says Reid:

Rational creatures, in proportion as they are wise and good, will act according to the best motives; and every rational being who does otherwise, abuses his liberty. The most perfect being, in everything

where there is a right and a wrong, a better and a worse, always infallibly acts according to the best motives. (609a/AP284)

Admittedly, and casting this in very general terms, we should consider a man good if and only if he does what is good. However, it is why he does what is good that is at issue here. That a rational being "will act according to the best motives" gives us no rationale for his having acted wisely and well, but instead addresses itself to our rationale for considering him wise and good. It is no answer to the question "Why is the wise man wise?" to say: "Because he acts wisely."

The constitution of man is an enduring theme in Reid's philosophical career. It appears early in his Philosophical Orations,²⁷ it is made a prominent feature of his Inquiry and Intellectual Powers, and it again stands at the root of Reid's work and proposals in the Active Powers. Reid has the constitution of man determine what he will conceive, what he will believe, and what he will think. The constitution that all men share stands at the base of all natural convictions, and so at the bottom of man's system of knowledge, and of his first principles of common sense, including, of course, the first principles of morals and the sciences. Indeed, the human constitution is the most easily generalized subject in Reid's published and unpublished corpus.

A man's intellectual powers, all his faculties, operate according to a natural necessity. From the standpoint of animal motivation, without the conscious intercession of our good upon the whole, or of our apparent duty, the human will behaves like a faculty. Only when we have alternatives presented to us by reason or reasoning, viz., by alternatives to animal motives, can we be said to have a power over the will's deter-

minations. Now, that a man will accept a rational motive because his constitution makes it and necessitates him to accept it is not a disputable point. But that a man must act on that motive is at issue here, and it is the question upon which rests Reid's doctrine of liberty.

Let us vary the question: Why are there regularities among human actions, and why are there, on the other hand, irregularities? Reid cannot answer this complex question by any appeal to the first motivational scheme, for his position demands that a man have a power over the determinations of his will, in opposition to the necessity of animal motivation. Nor can he answer it by an appeal to the second motivational scheme, for this would be to say that there can be no answer to the question. There simply is nothing left, among the items of Reid's catalogue of elements in human conduct, to account for the regularities and irregularities in human behavior except the human constitution, with certain qualities being shared by all men—a concession that lies at the root of his epistemology and explains the regularities in general human conduct—and with certain other qualities not being shared by all men, which must accordingly remain as an explanation of the irregularities in general human conduct.

The merits of this are transparent. Again presenting this in very general terms: Certain men are good because their constitution is such that they will and must act well, and certain other men are not good men because their constitution is such that they cannot act in any other way without altering their constitution. These men behave in the way they do because it is their nature to do so. More specifically, though, when a man acts on a rational motive in opposition to an animal motive, that is

because his constitution is such that he must act on the rational motive over and above the animal motive. This, of course, turns Reid's theory of human agency into a type of natural necessity that is not escaped without giving to God the causal responsibility for human conduct.

However, this salvages human agency, since men can still act and can forbear acting on nonrational motives, and it gives them an obvious autonomy, since they stand outside of any E-causal relation in acting rationally (rational motives being those they make themselves). But it does this at the expense of the very freedom Reid takes to be at the center of man's moral liberty. Men must act on certain motives because, by their particular constitution and by a natural and personal necessity, they cannot do otherwise. Rational principles of action give men the power of self-government by giving them reason's alternatives to animal motives, and they make moral liberty possible. But that men can act by virtue of rational principles is unfortunately, in the end, irrelevant to their acting freely.

NOTES

1. Keith Lehrer and Ronald E. Beanblossom, eds., Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1975), ix-lvii. Page numbers remain in the text.
2. Such is the reason why Keith Lehrer's otherwise interesting paper, "Can We Know that We Have Free Will by Introspection?" is a misguided adventure into Reid's theory of liberty. See Journal of Philosophy, 57 (1960), 145-157.
3. One ought to compare this with Richard Taylor's "Determinism and the Theory of Agency," in Sidney Hook, ed., Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science (New York: Collier Books, 1974), 224-230, in which Taylor argues for a position closely akin to Reid's own by following a similar methodology:

"I shall neither prove nor disprove determinism. Instead, I shall (1) give a precise statement of it, ... (2) show that it does ... entail that men have no moral responsibilities, (3) elicit the defects of the usual answers to this claim, (4) indicate how a simple indeterminism supplies no better basis for responsibility, and (5) sketch a theory of agency that I think anyone insisting on moral responsibility must be driven to." (224)

Taylor's paper is also a useful introduction to his several writings on the subject. The best of these is still his Action and Purpose (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

4. See 477b-478a/IP717: "Another kind of indirect demonstration proceeds by enumerating all the suppositions that can possibly be made concerning the proposition to be proved, and then demonstrating that all of them, excepting that which is to be proved, are false; whence it follows, that the excepted supposition is true."
5. See also Reid's Letter to Kames, 3 December 1772, 51b.
6. This is taken from Joseph Priestley's Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity. See Hamilton's notes in 624b, 626b, and 627a.
7. Priestley's argument from the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity is that "as certainly as nothing can be known to exist but what does exist; so certainly can nothing be known to arise from what does exist, but what does arise from it or depend upon it. But, according to the definition of the terms, a contingent event does not depend upon any previous known circumstances, since some other

event might have arisen in the same circumstances." See 630a/AP342.

8. Here Reid has in mind willfulness and obstinacy in opposition to contrary motives. The problem—or rather the possibility—of caprice is discussed later in this chapter.
9. 613b/AP294: "The ship never disobeys the laws of motion, even in the metaphorical sense: and they are the only laws she can be subject to."
10. Daniels, Thomas Reid's Inquiry. Page references remain in the text.
11. David Fate Norton, David Hume: Common-Sense Moralist, Sceptical Metaphysician (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982). Page references remain in the text.
12. See also INQ77 and INQ118. In Metaphysics (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 112-119, Richard Taylor argues in a similar vein with a non-traditional argument for the existence of God. Here Taylor argues that "it would be irrational for one to say both that his sensory and cognitive faculties had a natural, nonpurposeful origin and also that they reveal some truth with respect to something other than themselves, something that is not merely inferred from them" (118). Because we accept the latter, we must, in order to avoid irrationality, take it that our sensory and cognitive had a purposeful origin.
13. These include such complex animal behavior as nesting in birds and web-spinning in spiders; and complicated animal wares such as the combs of wasps, hornets, and bees, the nests of ants and mining animals, the dams and houses of beavers, and the ball of the silk worm. See 545a-b/AP100-101. See also Reid's interesting remarks on the curious honeycombs of the bee and the geometrical principles followed in their construction: 546a-547a/AP103-105.
14. See 557b/AP136-137.
15. This, of course, is Reid's well-known misquote of Hume's equally famous statement: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them," in his discussion "Of the influencing motives of the will" in Section iii, Part ii, of the second book of the Treatise (T415). Although Reid quotes Hume correctly in 674b/AP468, the misquote also occurs in 581b/AP208, and again in 571b/AP177, in Reid's discussion of passion as an animal principle of human action, and it has been taken by some to mean that Reid mistakenly proposes that Hume promotes a positive doctrine of irrationality in morals. The evidence for this cannot rest solely on his inexact quotations, which exclude the word 'only' from the restatements, because Reid—as does Hume—sometimes uses 'ought' in

place of 'must' to signify necessity in a non-social sense. See, for example, Reid's statement, in 579b/AP201, that "reason has been no less universally conceived to be a principle by which our actions ought to be regulated."

16. IP722: "The propositions which I think are properly called moral, are those that affirm some moral obligation to be, or not to be incumbent on one or more individual persons."
17. "All reasoning must be grounded on first principles. This holds in moral reasoning, as in all other kinds. There must, therefore, be in morals, as in all other sciences, first or self-evident principles, on which all moral reasoning is grounded, and on which it ultimately rests. From such self-evident principles, conclusions may be drawn synthetically with regard to the moral conduct of life; and particular duties or virtues may be traced back to such principles, analytically. But, without such principles, we can no more establish any conclusion in morals, than we can build a castle in the air, without any foundation" (590b/AP234)
18. Michael S. Pritchard boldly but correctly points out that "Reid never entertains the possibility that there could be a rational being that can conceive these ends but not desire them." See "Reason and Passion: Reid's Reply to Hume," Monist, 61 (1978), 293.
19. Journal of the History of Philosophy, 13 (1975), 335-345. Page references to Weinstock's paper remain in the text.
20. Journal of the History of Philosophy, 16 (1978), 453-455. Page references to Hazelton's paper remain in the text.
21. In "Common Sense and Agency Theory," Review of Metaphysics, 36 (1982), 319-342, Edward Madden mistakenly interprets Reid as holding that only rational motives are motives: "External causes and reasons, Reid averred, have significantly different relations to the ensuing act. The former necessitate the act, the latter guide the person in making his decision. Only reasons are properly motives, since external causes are common alike to the behavior of physical objects and habitual behavior" (323).
22. Dugald Stewart, The Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man, rev. by James Walker (Philadelphia: J.H. Butler & Co., 1878), 274.
23. Review of Metaphysics, 36 (1982), 338.
24. See 678a/AP478: "To account by reason for an end, therefore, is to shew another end, for the sake of which that end is desired and pursued. And that, in this sense, an ultimate end can never be accounted for by reason, is certain, because that cannot be an ultimate end which is pursued only for the sake of another end."

25. Timothy Duggan, completely capsized by this passage, thinks that we can only make sense of it by distinguishing between means and necessary and sufficient conditions. Duggan argues that we ought to discriminate between a necessary condition and a necessary means, and ought therefore to accept that motives are not means at all. Unfortunately this unnecessary contrivance turns Reid's statement into a first-rate triviality. See Duggan, "Active Power and the Liberty of Moral Agents," in Stephen F. Barker and Tom L. Beauchamp, eds., Thomas Reid: Critical Interpretations (Philadelphia: Philosophical Monographs, 3, 1976), 105. See also 106a-107a, where Duggan attempts to use the distinction in another context.
26. This is a different issue entirely from one S.A. Grave has raised. Grave believes—mistakenly, I think—that we can decide the question of indeterminism in Reid by uncovering whether moral utterances are prescriptive or not. If they are prescriptive, where the moral use of 'ought' is "confined to its imperative and expressive function in utterances in which we urge conduct of a certain kind upon ourselves or others," then the 'can' used in reference to human conduct need not be construed indeterministically, says Grave, because moral utterances would presuppose "the belief that the relevant physical and psychological capacities are present and duress of any kind sufficiently absent." On the other hand, he says, if moral imperatives are imperatives of an inimitable moral law, then "their presupposition does seem to be a free will incompatible with any kind of determinism." See The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense, 222-223.
27. As part of his duties as Regent, Reid delivered philosophical orations in Latin at graduation ceremonies in King's College, Aberdeen, in 1753, 1756, 1759, and 1762. These orations were edited by W.R. Humphries as Philosophical Orations (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1937).

IV

CONCLUSION

A constant conjunction or concomitant of the phaenomenon whose cause is sought, may answer the purpose of the inquirer, as well as if the real cause were known. Thus a sailor desires to know the cause of the tides, that he may know when to expect high water. He is told that it is high water when the moon is so many hours past the meridian: and now he thinks he knows the cause of the tides. What he takes for the cause answers his purpose, and his mistake does him no harm. (607a/AP279)

This, and similar answers to such commonplace inquiries, is the result of applying a scientific method that, no matter how sophisticated, can succeed only in uncovering the complex regularities among occurrences in nature. The quest for causes in nature is not always bound for frustration. On the other hand, we have not fully answered our questions regarding the production or genesis of an event by answering those queries with what is, in fact, a law of nature: A law of nature is merely a rule by which events occur in nature in known relation to other events. The sailor's mistake is harmless because the answer he accepts, though genuinely wrong, is nevertheless serviceable, for it satisfies his future expectations and the expectations of others who have learned the law of nature involved. The limitation of an empirical or observational scientific method of causal inquiry is that the method's application must always end in such answers. According to Reid, we ought to acquiesce in that limitation:

Those philosophers seem to have had the justest views of nature, as well as the weakness of human understanding, who, giving up the pretence of discovering the causes of the operations of nature, have applied themselves to discover, by observation and experiment, the rules or laws of nature, according to which the phaenomena of nature are produced. (607a/AP279)

Adopting this observational, experimental method as the only successful technique for discovery in the sciences of nature, Reid was moved to do the same with a science of mind. His Inquiry into the Human Mind was an attempt to inaugurate this science of mind with a study of the five human senses. The Inquiry first explored his epistemological thesis that the intellectual makeup of man includes certain basic, noninferred beliefs that form an ineradicable feature of the human system of belief and knowledge. As we reported in Chapter I, Reid purports to find several laws of mind—or "original principles of common sense"—that by a natural necessity govern the formation of concepts and beliefs in perception. Among the beliefs given to us by the principles of common sense, i.e., "by our constitution," are those concerning perception, memory, and the necessary relations of things, which, because required by the inferences we make on the basis of them, are named "first principles."

In the Intellectual Powers Reid provides us with a list of these first principles, using the term 'first principle' in a technical sense to mean a general judgment or belief that is presupposed by a certain class of reasoning, by a science, or by any practical or theoretical discipline. These principles are not axioms, although they are axiomatic, having self-evidence as a psychological feature of our attention to such judgments or beliefs. Unlike the Inquiry, which proclaimed for the beliefs of common sense only their nonrational and instinctual status, the Intellectual Powers situates these into a theory of knowledge by claiming for them an epistemological status as axiomatic in the modern sense—as being presupposed by a system of propositions or practices requiring their

acceptance. His adherence to this kind of support also commits Reid to the joint consistency of the principles of common sense.

By the time Reid prepared the Intellectual Powers he realized that a genetic account of conception and belief was inconsistent with a method that, casting aside hypotheses, attempted to frame its discoveries in terms of regularities known by the "way of reflection." Any regularities of belief and conception in the embryo or infant simply cannot be captured by a phenomenological method that only an adult can use. Instead he methodologically assumes that we are limited by our constitution to the store of concepts we have by a natural process, and thus assumes that certain beliefs arise in us by our constitution in relation to our experiences. The human mind is not a tabula rasa, but has various capacities and active principles for taking the raw data of experience and turning them into conceptions, perceptions, beliefs, and judgments. What we are able to discover by inquiry is a class of judgments that are required by the inferences we make and the practices and linguistic needs we have. These judgments, whether they be contingent or necessary, are those we must have in order to accept what in fact all men accept. These are our first principles of common sense, which Reid lists, without attempting a complete catalogue of them, in the Intellectual Powers.

It is still significant that the rudimentary beliefs and judgments men make are the result of a natural necessity. Reid's "naturalism" is such that by a necessity of the human constitution men cannot avoid having certain beliefs and they cannot avoid having first principles.

The constitution of man is not limited, of course, to generating a special class of beliefs. A variety of items trace their origin to this

natural cornucopia. By our nature, or constitution, we have a number of visual abilities—the ability to maintain a steady and parallel motion of the eyes when attending to visual objects, the ability to perceive the real, and not the retinal (or inverted) position of objects, and the ability to see single objects with two eyes. By our constitution we have clear and distinct concepts of the primary qualities of objects. By our constitution we are also able to take an intellectual object and consider it in thought without any judgment, i.e., it can be an object of simple apprehension. By our constitution we have, in addition to the ability to sense and perceive, the ability to recall in thought certain objects and occurrences that we have encountered in the past; the ability to construct in thought fictitious or fanciful objects from ingredients (thoughts, concepts) formerly given to us by perception and by reflection; and the ability to reason from a single instance to a generalized number of instances. Moreover, by our constitution we are able to move our bodies voluntarily when we learn that certain behavior follows upon our acts of will; we can see in an object a good organization of its parts; we can discern the rightness and wrongness in some human conduct; and we can sense our moral obligations. In short, we find that, for Reid, the human constitution is overfull with activities over some of which we seldom have any control and over others of which we cannot have any control. This is so because the fabric of man is necessitated by principles that make possible, regulate, and constrain the growth of mind, social interactions, moral and prudential conduct, and such theoretical disciplines as natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics (or natural theology).

In the Inquiry Reid hoped that skepticism could be averted through the discovery of beliefs and concepts that, by necessity, men cannot avoid having, thus putting them entirely outside of discussion and dissension. But he attempted to do this without realizing that rationality demands a consistency that cannot be attained by the bare necessity of belief and conceptual thinking. Reid's Intellectual Powers provided him with a framework for fitting first principles, which must be jointly consistent, into a theory of knowledge. In his move from the Inquiry to the Intellectual Powers Reid does not alter his position that the primary judgments that men make are the result, by a natural necessity, of the human constitution.

Among the primary judgments that men must make is the causal principle—Every event has a cause that produced it—and it is Reid's commitment to this necessary statement that, in Chapter II, we labelled his "causalism," the view that every event in nature is the product of an efficient cause. In moving from the Inquiry to the Intellectual Powers Reid also retains his view that laws, or the steady regularities in nature, are the only general facts available to the scientist. The reason for this, which we discover clearly in the Active Powers, is that in order for him to report more about nature the scientist must either frame a specific hypothesis about the mechanics of nature, which is forbidden by the kind of Newtonian method Reid accepts, or he must become not a scientist but a theologian. The scientist qua metaphysician must therefore deal theoretically with the machinery involved in nature's processes by incorporating into his theoretical framework a first

principle—the causal principle—that all men must accept and whose religious consequences men ought also to accept.

To be an event, for Reid, is to be something dependent upon an efficient cause. If we find by observation that the event occurred in relation to some other event, or set of events, we are then able to treat the event scientifically and to meet future instances of the event with a scheme for placing it within law-like formulae. To do this is to treat the event as the result of what, in Chapter II, we called C-causes, causes in a loose and popular sense of the word 'cause'. Such causes are those that answer the sailor's question, and are called "causes" only because it is convenient to call them so. From the standpoint of a natural science, though, these causes are such that the formulae in which the laws are expressed are always incomplete. Our observations and experiments can never verify the workings of particles and events beyond the scope of our sensory observations and the scope of any instruments we might use to enlarge the parts of nature in order to bring them within range of our experience, experiments, and observational techniques. Laws of nature, following Reid's view, must always be incomplete.

On the other hand, we are able to say that every event is not merely the result of a cause, but that every event is the product of an "efficient cause," or what we have called an E-cause, a cause that had power to produce the event and exerted its power for that purpose. Causal ascriptions are made possible by a natural judgment and our predisposition to seek responsibility for occurrences in nature. This natural judgment—the causal principle—enables us to say that causalism is true; that any

event that behaves lawfully is in fact an event that is dependent for its existence upon an efficient cause; and that the laws in which we place the event are the rules according to which its efficient cause acts to bring it about. As we discovered, this efficient cause is God, by which fact Reid's naturalism becomes decidedly religious and our self-evident, fundamental judgments become metaphysically guaranteed.

In Reid's hands several things follow deductively from the causal principle: (1) to be a real cause is to be an E-cause that possesses a productive power enabling it to produce its effects; (2) to be an E-cause is to be a thing that produces its effects without being itself the effect of any other E-cause, i.e., it has "active power"; and (3) to be an E-cause is to be a thing that enters into a necessary connection with what it effects. Yet Reid also says that we can understand the activity of an E-cause only if we take it to have intelligence and the capacity for willing the events it effects. This is the specific result of active power in an E-cause. As we found in Chapter II, any E-cause that is necessitated to produce an effect is not the cause of that event, for the event is then the product of another E-cause, to which the event is attached by a necessary connection. We discovered also the radical autonomy that Reid seems to require of an E-cause when we discussed his interest in the English rationalist Samuel Clarke. In order for something to be an E-cause it must be able to produce its effects and, at the same time, be able not to produce it; therefore, as found in Chapter II, an E-cause must have this double-sided power that Reid calls "active power." How an E-cause is able to act at all is, for Reid, explicable only if we take an E-cause to be a being like ourselves. By the same token, the

activity of E-causes is well known to us, for we are efficient causes and must believe that we are.

Reid's attempt to prove that our conception of E-causes is something given to us within our experience of ourselves as agents at first seems to be a straightforward exercise in reflection, for our acting and willing naturally give us the belief of a power in ourselves to effect our own behavior. In fact, says Reid, "Every man is led by nature to attribute to himself the free determinations of his own will, and to believe those events to be in his power which depend upon his will" (524a/AP37). Unfortunately, his efforts falter on the most important trait of an efficient cause—the necessary connection between an E-cause and what it effects. Reid is even prepared to admit that the relation between volitions and behavior is not a necessary connection and that we are to some extent merely occasional causes of our behavior. Our discussion of Hume's reasoning on "necessary connection" gave us good reason for accepting Reid's own admission of failure, a failure, we found, that was not overcome by his 1792 essay "Of Power."

The real reason for Reid's position emerges when he discusses moral liberty, the power a man must have over the determinations of his will, i.e., over his volitions. The issue turns entirely on our need to have active power and our need to be the efficient causes of our volitions. This itself arises directly from the conflict between causalism, our strong commitment to the causal principle, and both our sixth first principle of contingent truths and a small group of axiomatic propositions in morals. To put the classical issue succinctly: If we are subject to necessity, then we cannot be held accountable for our actions, our

volitions therefore being necessitated by an E-cause other than ourselves, and we cannot be either praised or blamed for any action because, in a moral view, those of our actions that are performed must be performed, and no alternatives are then possible. In order to avoid these implications, then, we ought to hold that, although causalism is true, we are responsible and accountable for our volitions; that we possess active power; that we ourselves necessitate our volitions; and that we are therefore genuine E-causes. That we are E-causes, or efficient causes, consequently becomes a theoretical fact arrived at by rationalizing our primary belief in personal freedom through an examination of its presuppositions.

Our possession of active power, the power to act without being acted upon, is therefore the consequence of Reid's solution to the conflict between the wide path of causalism and the narrow field of morality. Knowledge of our freedom is not guaranteed because by our constitution we attribute to ourselves a power to perform actions and to determine our volitions. We know this only by rationalizing the judgments we make about the causal principle and thus render them consistent with the demands of morality and moral discourse. The freedom we attribute to ourselves is not something caught in reflection, nor even in self-evidence, but is instead something logically required by our natural store of concepts and beliefs.

How we act to produce volitions is mysterious, and so must our activity as efficient causes be as mysterious. The only clue to the mechanics of ourselves as causes is provided by Reid's discussion of motivation. Mechanical principles of action operate to bring about our behavior without our will and intention. As such, we are subject to,

though not limited to, the physical laws of nature. Our constitution operates in this way, as do our faculties. Animal principles operate upon our will and intention, and move us to act in ways as varied as these appetitive motives may be. The only alternative to our acting in accordance with animal motivation, as we discovered in Chapter III, is to act with what Reid calls "self-government," the self-command a morally free person has to determine his volitions by acting—in opposition to animal motives—on rational motives, or the reasons dictated by our general interest (i.e., our good upon the whole), or our duties, known to us by conscience (or the moral sense). In this way our being agents is tantamount to our acting reasonably (579b/AP201), thereby enabling us to have a "subordinate dominion or government" within the universe (615b/AP301).

This is also a double-edged sword. It cuts us off from necessity, from animal motivation, but it also cuts us off from the sense of freedom Reid hopes to vouchsafe. As he admits, our regard to what is good upon the whole is such that "As soon as we have the conception of this object, we are led, by our constitution, to desire and pursue it" (584a/AP214), and so, too, we suggested, for our apparent duties. Depending upon our individual constitution, what our self-government gives us is a power over the determinations of the will, but only in opposition to passion; when we act in accordance with our reason we do so because, given that we are the way we are, we cannot do otherwise.

This entails that "what we call God's natural government of the universe," a government that "Reason teaches us to ascribe to the Supreme

Being" (615a/AP299), is wider in scope than Reid desires. Inasmuch as our faculties, including the faculty of judgment, operate according to a natural necessity, there we will find that God, too, is the agent of our actions, moving us sometimes by animal passion, sometimes by reasons, to make volitions that are again connected within God's natural province to our behavior. But our conception of God as an efficient cause must also be burdened by the constraint this places upon our conception and belief that an efficient cause has active power only because it is an intelligent being—acting, as we do, by a natural necessity he cannot escape. The only alternative Reid has is to interpret the noble part of man and God as something thoroughly demeaning:

If the mind were always in a state of perfect indifference, without any incitement, motive, or reason, to act, or not to act, to act one way rather than another, our active power, having no end to pursue, no rule to direct its exertions, would be given in vain. We should either be altogether inactive, and never will to do anything, or our volitions would be perfectly unmeaning and futile, being neither wise nor foolish, virtuous nor vicious. (533a/AP63-64)

The problem that remains is not whether men may act or not, for surely this still remains true. Nor is the problem whether men may act morally or not, for this also remains true. What our long treatment of a simple topic in Reid's philosophy has led us to is, indeed, a very unusual dilemma. In Reid's view, the practical ends provided by reason are supposed to enable men to have moral liberty and are also to make it possible for us both to accept the causal principle and to have the freedom required by our system of morals. While the motivation of reasons, or "rational principles of action," make possible what he calls moral liberty, Reid's strong interpretation of an intelligent agent as an E-cause and his forced commitment to what our constitution must contribute

to man's complex behavior imply this: Either no efficient cause acts on reasons, entailing the very doctrine of necessity that Reid hoped to overcome, or liberty is an issue entirely separate from a man's acting morally. That is to say, either man must act of necessity or he must act without the moral liberty that Reid's complicated reasoning was designed to evince. Since Reid will not accept the doctrine of necessity, which would place man squarely within the forces of animal motives and the laws of inanimate things, he ought therefore to accept that one's acting freely, or with liberty, is an issue entirely separate from one's acting morally.

APPENDIX

Reid's Unpublished Essay "Of Power" (1792)

Reid's unpublished essay "Of Power" is located in MS. 2131, Box 2, Envelope II, Item 2, of the manuscripts of Thomas Reid, also known as the Birkwood Collection, in the Aberdeen University Library. Three catalogues refer to this work. The first of these was compiled by A.T.W. Liddell in 1958. The second such catalogue, by Professor David Fate Norton, continued Liddell's work with an attempt to restore the lost coherence of the Birkwood Collection. The Aberdeen University Library presently uses a simplified version of the new location list provided by Norton in 1977 to relate the physical arrangement of the papers to what was described in Liddell's catalogue.

Reid's essay, now catalogued as MS. 2131/2/II/2, is one of over 800 groups of papers in the Birkwood Collection, an archival collection that has only recently been supplemented by smaller collections of Reid papers, some of which were gifted to the University of Aberdeen in 1980 and others of which were discovered in 1982 among archival material in the University's possession.

While the style and form of Reid's unpublished essay suggest a paper prepared for oral presentation, we do not know with any degree of certainty for whom specifically the paper might have been written. Reid's essay, however, is an unusual specimen of the Birkwood Collection. It is precisely dated, neatly and carefully written, extant in its entirety, and

one of the very oldest of his manuscript papers. It also demonstrates clearly, at a late date in Reid's life, his sustained interest in causation, in moral liberty, and in the issue of freedom and necessity.

Reid's "Of Power," written by hand on eight individual folio pages, is here reproduced in typescript with only the most elementary of editorial intrusions. The original pagination is indicated in brackets by folio number (e.g., '[folio 2]').

Of Power

March 13

1792

How Men get the Conception of Power is a question of some Difficulty. It is not an Object either of Sense or of Consciousness. Locke rashly determined that we get this Idea both these ways. Hume shewed that it can be got in neither of them & thence rashly concluded that there is no such conception in the human Mind.

Every voluntary exertion to produce an Event seems to imply a perswasion in the Agent that he has power to produce the Event. A deliberate Exertion to produce an Event, implies a conception of the Event, and some belief or hope that his Exertion will be followed by it. This I think cannot be denied. The consequence is that a conception of Power is antecedent to every deliberate Exertion of Will to produce an Event. We have reason to think that voluntary Exertions are as early as any other operation of the thinking Being, and if they be all deliberate, that is intended to produce an Event which we believe to be in our Power, we should be led to think a Conception of Power, & even a belief that such and such Events are in our power, are innate, at least antecedent to every Act of Volition. But I am rather inclined to think that our first Exertions are instinctive, without any distinct conception of the Event that is to follow, consequently without will to produce that Event. And that finding by Experience that such exertions are followed by such

Events, we learn to make the exertion voluntarily & deliberately, as often as we desire to produce the event; And when we know or believe that the Event depends upon our Exertion, we have the conception of power in our selves to produce that event.

This account of the origin of our conception of Power, makes it to be the fruit of Experience and not innate; though it must be as early as any deliberate voluntary exertion to produce a certain Event. This account likewise supposes that Exertion is something different from a deliberate will to produce the Event by that Exertion, & that there may be Exertion without Will. It must be acknowledged that these two are so conjoyned, when we have got some knowledge of the extent of our Power, that we find it very difficult to distinguish them. As this distinction is supposed in the account we have given of the origin of our conception of Power, it may be proper to give some other instances which confirm it.

When I will to rise & walk immediately, the Exertion seems inseparably conjoyned with the volition, & both appear as one & the same act of Mind: But I resolve to rise and walk an hour hence. This is a deliberate act of Will, as well as the will to do it immediately; but no exertion follows for an hour. Here the will is disjoyned from the Exertion therefore they are different. Again I will to walk for half an hour. The Exertion immediately succeeds. [folio 2] During my walk, my thought is wholly occupied on some other Subject than the walk, so that there is not a thought of it or will concerning it at present in my Mind; yet the exertion of walking continues. In this instance there is Exertion without Will, as in the last there was will without Exertion.

Volition, I think does not admit of degrees. It is complete in itself & incapable of more & less. Exertion on the other hand may be great or small or midling. Therefore Volition and Exertion are not the same. If so, there may be exertion without deliberate will; & experience of the consequence of such exertions may at the same time give use the conception of Power & teach us that the Events known to be consequent upon such Exertions are in our Power.

Supposing we were unable to give any account of how we at first got the Conception of Power, this would be no good reason for denying that we have it. One might as well prove that he has no Eyes in his head for this reason that neither he nor any other person could tell how they came there.

That certain events are produced when we will to produce them is a matter of every day & every hour's experience. This may give us a conception of power in our selves, as early as we have occasion for it. And I see no other way we can possibly acquire it.

It is easy and natural to think that other men have such power as we find in our selves. We judge of things unknown by what we know, and as we first know by consciousness that we think and act & feel pain & pleasure, we are by analogy rather than by reasoning led to think the same of other men; and indeed not onely of other Men but of other things. It is a discovery made by degrees, & by Observation of the Abbe Raynal that Savages, wherever they perceive Motion which they cannot account for, there they conceive a soul. And I think the structure of all Languages, in the Genders of Nouns, & the Voices of Verbs affords a strong proof of this. "There is says Mr Hume (Nat Hist. of Religion Sect 3) an universal

Tendency among Mankind to conceive all Beings like themselves, & to transfer to every object, those qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious.

I apprehend that most (if not all) ambiguous Words had at first one meaning, & in process of time have been used in other meanings, which were conceived to have some similitude, analogy, or some other relation to their first meaning. And it may happen that the original meaning from which the others were derived, may become less common than some of the others. Dr Johnson gives 13 meanings of the word Power and some of these he expresses by three or four different words [folio 3] which are not perfectly synonymous. And he certainly does not enumerate all the meanings in which it is used.

So far indeed is this Word extended, that we ascribe powers, not onely to thinking Beings who may produce some effect by Will and Exertion, but to Beings believed to be perfectly inanimate and passive, and not onely to Beings or Substances, but to Qualities, Relations, and even to Privations, such as Darkness, Ignorance, Want.

If the Observations of Raynal & Hume, mentioned above, be just, we may the more easily account for the ascribing of Power to things which are now believed to be inanimate, though perhaps in the first stages of society they were considered as animate beings.

Although it were granted that all the different meanings of the word Power have been derived from its original meaning before mentioned, (which indeed I take to be the case), it does not follow from this, that all those meanings are Species of one & the same Genus, and that there is one general Nature in them all joyned with some specifick difference. It is

perhaps impossible to give a reason why the word Power has been applied to what are called the Powers of Numbers, such as the Square, Cube, &c. Yet this singular meaning of Power is a Genus of which there are innumerable Species well known & distinctly conceived by Mathematicians.

The Origin I have above assigned to our first & most proper conception of Power, is, I think, admitted by Philosophers, if we except Mr Hume, who maintains that we have no Notion of Power at all & that it is a word without any meaning.

The word Cause is not onely as ambiguous as the word Power but has a very near relation to it. And perhaps, if we were to give a general Definition of it, we might say that a cause is that which has power to produce the Effect. If in this definition the word Power be taken in all its latitude, I apprehend the definition may apply to every thing that is called a Cause as well as the τὸ ἐξ ἑ, or the Principle of Change.

I think however that there is an original & most proper Conception of a Cause from which all its other meanings have been deduced, and that this is very nearly allied to the original & proper Conception of Power.

When we attend to objects without us we see innumerable changes or [folio 4] or Events, some constantly conjoyned with a certain Effect which succeeds; but we see not ground to think that Heat will turn Ice into Water any more than that it will turn Water into Ice. Mr Humes reasoning on this Subject In Essay on Necessary Connexion would have convinced me if I had not been convinced before by S.I. Newton. That author resolves the whole Science of Physicks into two Problems. The first, From the Phenomena of Nature to discover by Induction the Laws of Nature. The second From the Laws of Nature to explain or account for the Phenomena of

Nature. Newton indeed is the first author in whom I have found this Idea of the Science of Physicks. Former authors ancient and Modern not excepting L. Bacon, have conceived it to be the province of Physics to discover the Causes of the Phenomena of Nature. Physics according to L.B. is either Contemplative or Operative. The first is *Inquisitio Causarum*, which he also divides into two parts, the first inquires into the Efficient & Material Causes, the second into the Formal and Final. According to Newton, when Physics shall be carved to the utmost perfection, there would not be found in the whole Science such a Conception as that of a Cause; nothing but Laws of Nature, which are general Facts grounded on Experience & Phenomena which are particular Facts, included in the more general, & consequent upon them. Some indeed call the Laws of Nature, Causes. But surely no Man that thinks can believe that Laws of Nature can produce any Phenomenon unless there be some Agent that puts the Law in Execution.

Since therefore there is nothing external to us from which we can draw the conception of an efficient or productive cause, it must be deduced from something in our own Mind.

We are conscious that we have power to produce certain events by our Will & exertion. The conviction of this power is implied in the very voluntary will & Exertion, for no Man makes an Exertion to do what he does not think to be in his Power. In our own voluntary actions, therefore we have a conviction & consequently a conception of efficient or productive power in ourselves. And this conception we had so early that it must be the work of Nature.

To this account of the origin of our conception of productive power or Efficiency Mr Hume objects, that though we find a constant conjunction between our volitions and certain Events, we discover this onely by Experience, &, see no necessary connexion between our will and the motion of our body which follows it, any more than we see between heat & the melting of ice, &, therefore as the last gives us no conception of productive power, but solely of constant conjunction, so neither can the first. To this I answer that if a Man believed that in Heat there was a will to melt ice, he would undoubtedly believe that there is in Heat a real efficient power to produce that effect, though he were ignorant how or by what latent process the effect is produced. So we, knowing that certain effects [folio 5] depend on our will, impute to our selves the power of producing them, though there may be some latent process between the Volition & the production which we do not know. So a child may know that a bell is rung by pulling a certain peg, though he does not yet know how that operation is connected with the ringing of the bell, & when he can move that peg he has a perfect conviction that he has power to ring the bell.

I apprehend, that our belief that things which have always been found to be conjoyned in time past, will continue to be conjoyned in time to come, is not grounded on reasoning, but may rather be called instinctive, like our belief in Testimony. We believe in both these cases before we have the power of reasoning. And I can perceive no premises from which the conclusion believed can be logically inferred. Our instinctive belief of what is to happen would often, & does often lead us into mistakes, & when we learn to reason we regulate this belief by just rules of

Induction. But the rules of Induction, or of reasoning from Experience, do not produce the belief of what is to come. They serve onely to regulate & restrain it. In like manner our reasoning about Testimony serves onely to restrain & regulate the unlimited belief which we have in it by Nature.

Thus I think it appears that, from our own active Exertions, we very early get the conception of active power, & of an efficient Cause. But it is a very different question how we come to be perswaded that every Event & every thing that has a beginning must have an efficient Cause. This belief cannot be got from Experience, because we perceive no efficient Cause in one tenth part of the Events that fall under our view. Besides no necessary Truth can derive its evidence from Experience. This has been received as a necessary truth by all Men learned & unlearned from the beginning of the World, till Mr Hume called it in question, because he could not perceive a necessary agreement of the Ideas of the Proposition. I have said what occured to me to prove it to be a first principle Essays Vol I. Chap on the first Principles of Necessary Truth. But let it be observed that by a Cause, I mean onely an efficient Cause which by its active Power produces the Effect. It is still another question whether active or productive power can, or cannot be in an inanimate Subject. With regard to this Question there have been different Opinions among Philosophers.

It is not easy to determine what kind of Being it was which the Peripateticks called Nature, to whose operations they ascribed all that we call the Phenomena of Nature. It is certain that Cudworth, a very acute Metaphysician, thought that the Deity in the Government of the Material

World, employed certain immaterial Beings which he called Plastic Natures, who are endowed with active Power but without Wisdom or Intelligence who are the proper efficient Causes of Generation & other natural Phenomena. The Famous J. le Clerc defended this Notion of Cudworth [folio 6] and Bayle attacked it. And after many Replys and Duplys, neither was able to convince the other. To me Bayle seems to have much the advantage in the Argument. I conceive it to be a first principle, that a complex work which in all its parts is admirably adapted to a certain purpose, must have been contrived by an intelligent Being who had that purpose in view & know how adapt the Means to the end. Nor do I see how a regular well contrived work, may not be produced by a dance of atoms as well by a being who has active Power without Intelligence. And it seems to me very strange that Philosophers who thought the System of Epicurus too ridiculous to deserve Refutation, should yet ascribe the Phenomena of Nature to unintelligent Causes.

I believe, not the Peripateticks onely but the Vulgar in all ages have been prone to attribute real Efficiency or productive power to unintelligent & even to inanimate things, & that when they say that heat melts ice, & that cold freezes water they conceive the heat & the cold as really efficient causes, though inanimate. This belief of the vulgar seems to be as general, as that the Earth is at rest & that all the heavenly bodies go round it in twenty four hours.

Leibnitz taught that the whole Creation, bodies as well as minds, consist of Monads, or individual Substances, each of which was so made at first, by the Creator that, like a watch wound up, it has within itself the cause of all the changes it shall ever undergo. And though no one

Substance or Monad acts upon another yet all keep time to one another, by a preestablished harmony, so as to produce the phenomena of the Universe. In this System no cause whatsoever (excepting the Deity the first cause of all) produces any effect, but upon itself. Even the Deity has no occasion to interpose in the Government of the World after he once made it, except in the case of Miracles. He made it at first so perfect as to gone on of itself without needing his helping hand. No one part of it does in reality receive either benefit or hurt from any other part. Every man from the time of his creation to Eternity would have done & suffered all that he really does and suffers, although there had not been another being in the Universe. He would have enjoyed the vicissitude of day and night though there had been no Sun nor Moon. But the Sun and Moon rise and Set, by a preestablished harmony, in perfect correspondence, with that day & night which succeed each other in his Mind, from its own internal frame, without being influenced in the least by any thing external to him.

In this System, there may be Causes in the Sense of D. Hume. But proper & efficient Causes there are none in the Universe but one. [folio 7] I mean the Deity. Nor was there ever any Power exerted but in the Act of Creation, or in Miracles.

The Modern System of Necessity advanced by some of the Disciples of Dr Priestley, which makes every Action of the Deity to be Necessary, although I take it to be a very natural Consequence of denying all Liberty in human actions, excludes all Power out of the Universe. For Power & Necessity are contradictory. And according to this System Power is an attribute which cannot possibly exist in any Subject.

To return to the Question Whether active or productive Power can be in an inanimate Subject.

If the Account before given of the Origine of our Notion of Power be just, it seems to follow that Will is necessarily implied in the Notion of Power. Volition and what follows upon our Volitions is all that we conceive to be in our Power. What a Man never willed cannot be imputed to him as his Action. A Man's Power is measured by what he can do if he will. This is the measure of Power when we speak of Power in any intelligent or animated Being. In this Sense, which I take to be the onely proper Sense of the Word, it is evident that a being which has no will can have no Power. And when we impute Power to dead matter it must be understood in some popular or analogical, & not in the Proper sense. Power in the proper Sense is under the command of him who has the power, and we cannot infer the Act from the Power because there is no necessary connection between them. It is otherwise with regard to the Powers we ascribe to inanimate Beings. Even when our volitions are compelled by an irresistible Motive, such as the fear of immediate Death, or the violence of Torture, the Action is not imputed to the Man or considered as an Exertion of his Power, but as a necessary Consequence of Fear or Torture, Necessity & Power being incompatible.

The Powers therefore which in a vague & popular sense we ascribe to inanimate things differ from Power taken in the proper sense in two things; the last implies Volition & cannot exist without it, but the first is not accompanied with any Volition but is in Beings which have neither Understanding nor Will. Another Difference between the Power that is properly so called & that which is not, is that the first implies no

necessary connection with the Act. Because a Man has the power of walking it does not follow that he walks at this moment; on the contrary a power to walk implies a power not to walk. If a Man has the Distemper called St Vitis Dance we dont say that he has the power of moving, but that he moves necessarily, or that he has not the power to be at rest. For power properly so called is inconsistent with Necessity. On the contrary the powers which we [folio 8] ascribe to inanimate things are always conjoined with Necessity; and must, without a miracle, be exerted to their utmost whenever the circumstances concur which by the laws of Nature are necessary to their exertion.

Hence it appears that Power when ascribed to an intelligent being is a thing essentially different from the Powers ascribed to inanimated beings. And their Definition is as different as their Nature. When an Event depends upon the will of an intelligent being, we say it is in his power. And though he have no Will nor Inclination to produce the Event, though it should never be produced, it is not the less in his Power upon that account. His power is exerted onely according to his Will, and when he does not will to exert it, it is dormant and produces no Effect.

When we ascribe Power to things inanimate things, we mean nothing more than a constant conjunction by the Laws of Nature which experience discloses between the Event which we call the Effect & something which goes before it. Thus we say the Sun has power to retain the Planets in their Orbits, Heat has power to melt lead, & Cold to freeze Water. If the ignorant be led by the ambiguity of the word, to conceive any efficient Power in the Sun, the Heat, or the Cold to produce the Effects ascribed to them, this is a vulgar Error which Philosophy corrects. By what Agent

those Effects are really produced we know not, but we have good reason to believe that they cannot be produced by inanimate Matter.

This distinction of the proper, & the vague and popular meaning of the Word Power is important in the intricate Question about Liberty & Necessity. The defenders of Necessity must maintain either that there is no such Distinction, & that Power can have no meaning but that of a constant conjunction of that which we call the Cause with the Effect, which is David Humes Opinion; or if they admit that we can conceive a Power which is really efficient, they must say that there neither is, nor can be any such Power in the Universe.

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