

Thomas Reid: Context, Influence, Significance. Edited by Joseph Houston. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2004. Pp. ix + 192. \$45.00 cloth.

This book is a collection of seven essays (with an introduction) culled from the proceedings of a conference held at Glasgow University in 1996 to mark the bi-centenary of Reid's death. These essays address a wide array of topics, ranging from Reid's epistemology and philosophy of the human person to his philosophy of action. In what follows, I summarize the content of six of these essays, pausing for brief criticism. (I skip Nicholas Wolterstorff's "God and Darkness in Reid," which is an expanded version of the last chapter of his book *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001].)

Richard Stalley's essay, "Reid's Defence of Freedom," is an overview of the main moves that Reid makes in his defense of an agent causal, libertarian view of the will. Stalley's essay considers three main issues: first, Reid's polemic against compatibilism; second, the development of his own positive account of freedom; and, third, Reid's attempt to show that his view is compatible with our ordinary notion of causality. Stalley contends that Reid's view fares well with respect to the first issue, but not nearly so well with respect to the second and third. In particular, according to Stalley, Reid never establishes the link between the exercise of agent power and freedom and how it is that we can reconcile the influence of animal motives with human freedom. Of these two points, the latter seems to me important, but it is puzzling why the essay does not address in more detail Reid's argument for the claim that having a power implies having a power to do otherwise and, hence, libertarian freedom.

Joseph Houston's "Testimony Contrasted with Judgement and Opinion" is a far-ranging and fascinating piece on Reid's views regarding testimony. Houston's main concern is to assess C. A. J. Coady's treatment of Reid's perplexing claim that testimony fails to express judgments. The central thesis of the piece is that Reid works with a notion of judgment rather different from what Coady assumes. Judgment, for Reid, is not the expression of an antecedently held belief, but "the first determination of the mind in respect of truth of [sic] falsehood in a matter" (p. 71). Understood thus, Houston claims, testimony does not express judgment. And thus, contrary to what Coady argues, we can make sense of Reid's puzzling assertion that testimony fails to express judgment.

In "Reid and 'Reformed' Epistemology," Paul Helm argues that Reid neither offers a precedent for Reformed Epistemology nor is he a Reformed Epistemologist in any interesting sense of this term. This is for several reasons. First, contrary to Wolterstorff's claim, Reid is a robust foundationalist about justified belief. Second, Reid's polemic against skepticism requires that his principles of common sense be universal. But since belief in God is not universal, it is not among the principles of common sense. While I suspect that Reid was not a proto-Reformed Epistemologist, I found myself unpersuaded by what Helm says on the issue. In *Warrant and Proper Function*, for example, Alvin Plantinga clearly takes Reid to espouse foundationalism of a broad sort, according to which there is a wide range of types of basic warranted beliefs. Moreover, that Reid failed to include theistic propositions in the first principles and that he offered arguments for God's existence do not imply that, for Reid, religious belief could not be properly basic. (For a tantalizing suggestion that Reid's view has affinities with Reformed Epistemology, see the quotation from Reid in Stewart's essay, on p. 142.)

René van Woudenberg's contribution, "Reid and Kant against the Sceptic," lays out both Reid's and Kant's response to skepticism regarding the external world. Van Woudenberg argues for the claim that Kant's so-called transcendental idealist position is actually a version of empirical idealism, which is itself a species of the way of ideas. It follows from this, van Woudenberg argues, that Kant's view is not a response to skepticism but a species

thereof, for it implies that there is no external world of which we can be aware. Lastly, van Woudenberg contends that Reid's response to skepticism does not make a transcendental move and is superior to Kant's in some important respects. It seems to me, however, that we should raise questions about the first part of this last claim. For it is arguable that, according to Reid, the principles of common sense are constitutive of cognizing and thus are conditions for the possibility of thought itself.

Finally, in a pair of essays, "Reid and Personal Identity: A Study in Sources" and "Rational Religion and Common Sense," M. A. Stewart engages in the history of ideas by introducing the reader to work that Reid himself did not publish in his lifetime. The first essay traces the impact of Bishop Butler's and George Campbell's work on personal identity on Reid. Stewart's claim is that, although both these thinkers opposed Locke's own account of personal identity, they did so in sufficiently different ways that Reid's uncritical appropriation of their views renders his own position incoherent. The second essay highlights Reid's inheritance from Samuel Clarke's natural theology, his opposition to Hume's take on the design argument, and the ways in which Reid's own views on testimony and other minds are driven by his commitment to defend a broadly Lockean account of rational religion. Both essays reveal Stewart's impressive mastery of the history of modern philosophy, which he combines with brief forays into philosophical criticism. However, Stewart's critical jabs are so quick that I at least was sometimes left wondering what exactly was being argued. Moreover, I have questions about the accuracy of Stewart's polemic. For example, Stewart suggests that Reid inherited from Clarke "the spurious logic that if a person is a composite, the attributes of the whole must be shared by the parts" (p. 17). But in the material Stewart cites from Reid, I find Reid neither assuming nor claiming this. Moreover, Stewart has Reid arguing that, since the identity of the person does not consist in the identity of the body, the person is independent of the body (p. 28). Again, in the material quoted, I do not see Reid making this claim.

My assessment of this book is that there is something to learn from each of its essays. But the essays are not of a uniformly high quality. Some are very good, while others leave one desiring more.

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