**Thomas Reid**

**Introduction:** evidentialism vs. conservatism in epistemology, philosophical methodology.
Examples: other minds, material world, testimony

1. **Reid on the “Ideal System”** (3.5): The hypothesis: 2.2; and where it leads: 2.3-2.5, 3.6-3.8
   a. The Epistemological Argument: 15.9:
      1. If we cannot by reasoning infer the existence of matter from our sensations, then we
         [should not believe that / are not justified in believing that / do not know that]
         matter exists
      2. “We cannot by reasoning infer the existence of matter from our sensations”
         So, C. We [should not believe that / are not justified in believing that / do not know
         that] matter exists
   b. The Inconceivability Argument: 18.4:
      1. Matter is conceivable to us only as resembling the sensations and ideas in our minds
      2. Matter cannot resemble the sensations and ideas in our minds
         So, C. Matter is not conceivable to us.
   c. Reid’s Reaction: In each case, Reid accepts the second premise: 15.9, 18.4. To avoid the
      conclusion, then, he feels we must reject the first premise, which is underwritten by the role that
      the “ideal system” gives to sensations in perception. But Reid finds no argument for these
      commitments aspect of the ideal system (18.5, 2.2), and seeks an alternative account of
      perception and the role of sensations in it.

2. **The Psychology of Perception**
   a. The content of our belief in matter
      --Hume’s two arguments-Hume’s *Enquiry*, sect. 2, 6th par., pp. 11.7-12.6; and see the first
         passage from the letter on the back of this page
      --Reid’s “experimentum crucis”: 15.7; Result reported at 19.8
      --The Case of Hardness: 7.1-8.3
      --the Inconceivability Argument Defeated
      --Why We Don’t Believe in a “Double Existence”: passing over and “confounding”: 7.8-8.1,
         9.9-10.0, 21.9-22.1
   b. The Process by which we come to have the belief: Sensations as “signs”
      --Signs: 27.9-28.2
      --Artificial vs. Natural Signs: 28.3, 4.7
      --Three Kinds of Natural Signs: 9.2-9.8
      --The Case of Hardness, continued: 8.3-8.8, 10.3-10.4
      --Secondary Qualities, and our perception and conceptions of them: 6.3-6.9, esp. 6.6
      --The Epistemological Argument Defeated??

3. **The Epistemology of Perception**
   a. Innocent-Until-Proven-Guilty Epistemology & Reid’s Initial Reply to Skepticism: 23.2-23.3
   b. Reid’s Response to the “Thorough and Consistent Sceptic”: 16.4, 3.9-4.1, 23.6
   c. Reid’s Response to the “Semi-Sceptic” (16.4, 23.3, 23.6) and his “Addition to the Sceptical
      System” (16.2-16.3)
   d. Putting it together: 3 options on our initial stance
   e. Reid’s Influence on Late 20th Century Religious Epistemology
4. Response to Hume on Induction: 32.3-34.4
a. The “Inductive Principle” (33.9): How We Learn from Experience
b. Induction and Testimony
   --Account of Testimony (30.7-31.8), utilizing the Principles “of Veracity” and “of
      Credulity” (31.3); development (31.4)
   --Induction compared with learning by testimony at 34.4
c. Reid’s Treatment of Hume (33.1-34.1); Comparison of Reid with Hume

From Hume’s 4 July 1762 letter to Hugh Blair about Reid:

First, As far as I can judge, there seems to be some Defect in Method; at least, I do not find the
Subject open up gradually, and one part throwing light upon another. The Author digresses
frequently: For instance, under the Article of Smelling, he gives you a Glimpse of all the Depths
of his Philosophy. . . .

I think, the Author affirms I had been hasty, & not supported by any Colour of Argumen[t] when
I affirm, that all our Ideas are copy'd from Impressions. I have endeavourd to build that
Principle on two Arguments. The first is desiring any one to make a particular Detail of all his
Ideas, where he would always find that every Idea had a correspondent & preceding Impression.
If no Exception can ever be found, the Principle must remain incontestable The second is, that if
you exclude any particular Impression, as Colours to the blind, Sound to the Deaf, you also
exclude the Ideas.