

ELEMENTS OF SPEECH ACT THEORY IN THE WORK OF THOMAS REID

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The expression of a question, of a command, or of a promise, is as capable of being analyzed as a proposition is; but we do not find that this has been attempted.

Thomas Reid (1789)

I. INTRODUCTION

THE idea of a theory of speech acts, when taken in its strict sense,¹ has been employed of late to indicate a bundle of theories growing out of J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* of 1962. John Searle's book *Speech Acts*, published in 1969, is undoubtedly the most conspicuous contribution to this theory to date. With the lapse of time, however, our distance from these fundamental works has become great enough to allow some reflection on the criteria which must be met by a "theory of speech acts" properly so called, so that it has become possible also to consider in this light candidate theories of speech acts which had arisen in pre-Austinian times.

Historical research has recently made it clear that, prior to Austin and his followers, there was but one author who developed a full-fledged theory of the given sort: the phenomenologist Adolf Reinach (1884-1917).² In his *The A Priori Foundations of the Civil Law*, published in 1913,³ Reinach developed a theory of—as he termed them—"social acts" which is not only on a par with the later speech act theories but in fact surpasses them in some respects.⁴ In what follows, however, we want to consider a second instance of a speech act theory *avant la lettre*, which is to be found in the common sense philosophy of Thomas Reid (1710-1796). Reid's work, in contrast to that of Reinach, lacks both a unified approach and above all the detailed analyses of pertinent examples. But his writings leave no doubt that he is acutely aware of the very problems concerning language structure and use out of which contemporary speech act theory has evolved and that he goes a good way towards solving these problems in the spirit of the modern theory. This is why we claim that there are at least elements of

speech act theory to be found in his works, elements which justify his being considered a true forerunner of the modern theory. The enterprise of hunting down these elements will not only throw new light on Reid; it will also demonstrate how radical a move was involved in conceiving the idea of a "theory of speech acts," an idea which most of us now take simply for granted.

The astonishing modernity of a good deal of Reid's thought has in recent years been recognized on various sides. Reid insists that in our acts of perceiving, imagining, judging, and so on, we do not refer merely to certain ideas within us, but to the things themselves these acts are about—a clear anticipation of the Brentanian thesis of intentionality.⁵ Reid's affirmation that there are certain structures common to the grammar of all languages—structures which derive from the universal constitution of the human mind and from its basic habits and convictions—has been compared to the tenets of Chomsky and his allies.⁶ Reid's philosophy of common sense has been linked to the philosophy of Austin and his contemporaries in Oxford in the '40s and '50s,⁷ and it has been claimed that both thinkers share the conviction that a careful analysis of "vulgar" (Reid) or "ordinary" (Austin) language allows us to dismiss certain philosophical problems as caused by improper use of language. It has even been stated more specifically that Reid's discussion of what he sometimes calls "social acts"—the very term used, as we said, by Reinach 130 years later—constitutes an approach which "has been renewed in our day since Austin and his analysis of speech acts."⁸ It is the purpose of the present paper to clarify this suggestion and to draw out for the first time its detailed implications. Most works on Reid either consider him in the context of his polemic against Hume's scepticism, or as the founding father of the Scottish philosophy of common sense. Here, however, the object of our attention shall be Reid's theory of "social operations," a major but hitherto neglected topic of his philosophy of language which plays a special role also in his general philosophy of mind.

II. THE BACKGROUND OF REID'S PHILOSOPHY

Ever since Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), British philosophy has focused its attention on man, or more precisely on the human mind. This is of course true in particular of Berkeley and Hume. But Reid's three major works, too, fit neatly into this tendency, as already their titles indicate. In 1764 he published his *Inquiry into the Human Mind*. This was followed in 1785 by the voluminous *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* and in 1788 by the *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind*.⁹ All three are marked by an intense concern with language which, as Reid sees it, mirrors the processes of thought in a way which is, if not perfect, then still sufficiently adequate that the study of language can provide a reliable guide to the constitution of the mind.

According to Reid, the history of philosophy is dominated by two main

problems. On the one hand there is what one might call the ontological problem: what kind of substances (things) is the world made of, and how do they operate, and how are they related? On the other hand there is the epistemological problem: what is the proper object of cognition: ideas or things?

As to the first (the ontological) problem, ancient and medieval philosophy did not, according to Reid, manage to give a clear and correct solution. The worlds of matter and of mind were confounded, and philosophers reasoned about the operations of thought merely on the principle of "some conceived analogy between body and mind" (*Int.*, p. 63). Such analogical arguments are however misleading and untrustworthy (*Int.*, p. 51f.). The great revolution in this field was brought about by Descartes, who "must be allowed the honor of being the first who drew a distinct line between the material and intellectual worlds,"¹⁰ thus paving the way for an adequate investigation of the properties and laws governing the various operations peculiar to these two worlds. In the field of matter, the correct principles were finally laid down by Newton. In the field of mind, however, as Reid conceived things, no real progress had been made since Descartes. Reid, then, saw it as his own task to remedy this defect.

Descartes' failure is to be attributed to his false epistemology, and indeed from Reid's perspective one could say that no progress had been made in the epistemological field since antiquity. Already Plato had affirmed that ideas are the true objects of the understanding, and this doctrine was taken over by Aristotle (who, however, talked of "species" rather than "ideas"). It was then reaffirmed by Descartes, whose successors, too (above all Malebranche, Leibniz, Locke and Berkeley), persisted in the thesis that what we cognize are not objects in the world but rather ideas. In Hume, a "very ingenious author," the absurdity of this old "ideal philosophy" (as Reid called it) became manifest. Hume correctly concluded that if this thesis were correct, then it would follow that we could not only not cognize material things—a claim made already by Berkeley—but also not the mind itself. According to Hume's overall scepticism, "there is neither matter nor mind in the universe" (*Int.*, p. 199). There is "nothing in nature but ideas and impressions, without any substance on which they are impressed" (*Int.*, p. 64). All this however is nothing but a case of "philosophical delirium" which does nothing to elucidate our common everyday experience (*Int.*, p. 739).

So much, then, by way of a rough sketch of Reid's understanding of the philosophical situation in which he found himself.¹¹ For our present purposes it is enough to note that it was in light of this situation that Reid set himself the task of describing the ontological structures and operations of the human mind in a way that is not self-defeating (as it is in Hume, from Reid's perspective). The importance of this project becomes clear, according to Reid, if one considers not only that the philosophy of mind is, with natural philosophy, one of the "two great branches of philosophy," but also that "the faculties of our minds are the tools and

engines in every disquisition" (*Int.*, pp. xxxiv, xxxvii). The science of the human mind is therefore the root and mother of all other sciences.

Reid devotes a whole chapter of the first of his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers* to the discussion of the means to be applied in the study of the mind. He there distinguishes three methods, one direct and two indirect. "The chief and proper source of this branch of knowledge," he tells us, "is accurate reflection upon the operations of our own minds." Subserving to such reflection are two indirect methods of "attention to the course of human actions" and "attention to the structure of language" (*Int.*, pp. 54f.). The method of reflection has the advantage that we are able to grasp directly the machinery of the mind. This advantage, however, is countered by a number of difficulties surrounding its exercise, resting for example on the number and quick succession of the operations of the mind and the contrariness of reflection to our normal habits and practices of mind. These in part explain why philosophers of the past have run into the above-mentioned absurdities of the "ideal philosophy" (*Int.*, pp. 59-63). But they explain also why Reid himself usually gives preference to the indirect methods of observing action and language. These are easier to put into practice, because their objects lie directly before our eyes and are both familiar and accessible to all.

The principle on which the application of these indirect methods rests is easily discernible: it is what we might call a *principle of expression*. If certain structures and operations—ranging from feelings to discursive thought—constitute the natural make-up of the mind, then these structures will of necessity somehow leave their mark on all human behavior. For mind, in Reid's eyes, is not merely peculiar to man: it is something which cannot but express itself in those activities which set man apart from other beings.

The most important of the peculiarly human activities is the use of language. As we shall see, it is not clear how, under the conditions of Reid's system, we are to conceive the "expression" of the mind in language. But for the time being we shall not enter further into this question, in order not to feign more clarity on Reid's behalf than is in fact present in his work.

III. LANGUAGE AND MIND

What we have called the principle of expression is formulated by Reid himself in the following way: "Language is the express image and picture of human thought; and from the picture, we may draw very certain conclusions with regard to the original."¹² And just as it is not the changing flux of any given individual's thoughts which interests Reid, but rather the invariable and universal constitution of the human mind, so, too, he is interested not in the factual use of a given language in some concrete situation, but rather in those universal features of language which disclose the mind's essential structures. In contrast, for example, to the

views of Hobbes, Reid holds that not all elements of language can be artificial. Certainly it is a matter of artifice that the stone has been named in one language *stone* and in another *lapis*. But the institution of such arbitrarily chosen words could occur, Reid holds, only if people had agreed to name certain things in a certain way, and this presupposes that, prior to all artificial signs, they had had at their disposal certain natural means of expressing their agreement in choosing given artificial signs to stand for given objects. Not all of language can, therefore, be an affair of sheer (purposeful) invention. As signs in general have been divided since antiquity into the natural and the artificial, so, in regard to language in particular, we must distinguish between the artificial elements (which, even though in number outweighing the rest, could in principle be replaced entirely by others), and those few features which by necessity underlie this system of artificial elements and constitute man's "natural language" (*Works*, pp. 117-19). The latter is a system of natural signs reflecting in its turn certain innate and universal features of our cognitive apparatus. According to Reid,

the signs in this natural language, are looks, changes of the features, modulations of the voice, and gestures of the body. All men understand this language without instruction. (*Act.*, p. 440.)¹³

Thus, for example, "the first time one sees a stern and fierce look, a contracted brow, and a menacing posture, he concludes that the person is inflamed with anger" (*Int.*, p. 637). What we in fact see in all these cases is nothing but "figure and color variously modified," that is, certain changes in the material world; but our natural constitution makes us understand them as signs, that is, it makes us conclude from this to "a certain passion or sentiment in the mind of a person," a conclusion formed "with great assurance, without [our] knowing any premises from which it might be drawn by reasoning" (*Int.*, p. 638, *Act.*, p. 441).

Though Reid includes sounds of the voice as part of this system of natural signs, the notion seems principally to involve such phenomena as cries of pain or surprise and other interjections, not articulate sound as such. Language proper, consisting of articulate words and sentences is, on the fact of it, artificial through and through. But even in articulate language there exists a set of universal structural elements that must be called natural, or nearly so. Unlike the just-mentioned natural signs, which together form a sort of natural pantomime, the structural elements of articulate language do not express specific *contents* of the mind, but are rather of a strictly *formal* sort. Yet it is without doubt that they, too, reflect what is immediate and innate (or "*a priori*") in the furniture of the human mind.

The character and identifying marks of these formal or structural elements of language, inasmuch as these can be distilled from Reid's work, are as follows:

First, they precede in time the historical development of the purely

artificial parts of language (the concrete words, phrases, and so on).

Second, they are universal, in the sense that they manifest themselves in the structure of every given language: "there are general rules of grammar, the same in all languages." "Every distinction which we find in the structure of all languages, must have been familiar to those who framed the languages at first" (*Int.*, p. 26, *Act.*, p. 13). All languages are built upon this formal core.

Third, they determine certain principles which can be used as a partial criterion to distinguish meaningful from meaningless talk: only the former conforms to these basic principles of language. In its everyday and ordinary use, language generally functions in a sound way, that is, in conformity to its basic principles.¹⁴ In contrast to this, "most paradoxes will be found to be only an abuse of words" (*Int.*, p. 268).

In certain passages Reid applies similar ideas to philosophy. "I revere the authority of philosophers especially where they are so unanimous; but until I can comprehend what they mean . . . , I must think and speak with the vulgar."¹⁵ More specifically, if philosophical language contradicts the vulgar, this is generally "owing to an abuse of language on the part of the philosopher." The incorrectness of philosophical talk can therefore in many cases be shown by setting forth how the language involved is "inconsistent with the principles upon which all language is grounded" (*Int.*, pp. 258, 230). This should not, however, be taken as implying that Reid was a linguistic philosopher in the modern sense. On the contrary, the principles of language are, for Reid, merely secondary: they reflect principles of common sense on a deeper level. Thus we do not find examples of passages where Reid dismisses philosophical problems as *caused* by improper uses of language.

Reid does not give a comprehensive list of traits making up the universal formal structures of "all languages, ancient and modern, polished and barbarous" (*Int.*, p. 39). But there is one key passage to be found in the *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*¹⁴ which gives a fair idea of this "original contexture of all languages" (*Act.*, p. 13). They all, he tells us, share certain common "fundamentals," and he mentions in particular "nouns substantive and adjective,¹⁷ verbs active and passive,¹⁸ varied according to the tenses of past, present and future" as well as "adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions." Elsewhere he adds "the divisions and subdivisions of things into genera and species with general names." Moreover, "all languages have a plural number in many of their nouns"; but not in all, as Reid says, because "the distinction between general words and proper names is one more fundamental of all languages," and "proper names have no plural number."¹⁹

Next to these common distinctions in the field of morphology,²⁰ Reid affirms also that all languages share certain common rules of syntax. His analysis of a phrase like "I see the moon" suggests that among these rules are grammatical distinctions reflecting the ontological distinction

between the mind, the operations of the mind (its thinkings or perceivings), and the objects of these operations (not *ideas*, but *things themselves*).²¹ This is indeed Reid's often repeated version of the principle of the intentionality or object-directedness of the mental, translated into the context of a universal grammar.

IV. THE "SOCIAL OPERATIONS"

Reid's most important discovery in the field of language, however (and he knew full well that it *was* a discovery), lies in another part of what he calls "syntax" or "phraseology."²² It consists in his gradually evolving recognition that there are, in addition to judgments, also other types of sentences permitting of a logical analysis. As he wrote in a letter of 26 August 1787:

I believe the principles of the art of language are to be found in a just analysis of the various species of sentences. Aristotle and the logicians have analysed one species—to wit, the *proposition*. To enumerate and analyse the other species must, I think, be the foundation of a just theory of language. (*Works*, p. 72.)

The logic of Aristotle and his followers is in a certain respect one-sided. It was in becoming aware of this one-sidedness of his predecessors that Reid himself discovered the features peculiar to uses of language which involve sentences of a non-judgmental or non-propositional sort.

Reid's earliest known reference to these "other species" occurs in the framework of his discussion of the pertinent Aristotelian doctrines. In the chapter "On the Structure of Speech" in his *Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic*, a work first published in 1774, Reid remarks of Aristotle that he

observes justly that besides that kind of speech called a *proposition*, which is always either true or false, there are other kinds which are neither true nor false, such as a prayer or a wish; to which we may add, a question, a command, a promise, a contract, and many others. (*Works*, p. 692.)

Reid is referring here to the fourth chapter of *On Interpretation*, where Aristotle states that logic deals only with statements, while the treatment of prayers, and the like (which are neither true nor false) is to be relegated to rhetoric and poetics. Reid is right in affirming that this verdict had up to his day (and, we may add, for more than a century thereafter) barred the way to a proper (logical or scientific) analysis of what we now call speech acts.²³ And to this extent there belongs to Reid the merit of having noticed that—to use Austin's terminology—performatives are sentences with the same rights as constatives and with an equal theoretical importance.

Reid nowhere tries to give an exhaustive list of those species of sentences which are not propositions (and in this he differs from neither Reinach nor Austin). By taking together his various remarks, however, one may compile a taxonomy, somewhat along the following lines:

There is, first of all, the *question*, be it in the sense of asking for information or advice or of asking a favor. Closely related to the latter is the act of *acceptance*, whether of a favor or of something else, and therewith also the act of *refusing* something. The same duality of giving and receiving is present also in other cases, such as that of *testimony*: we can give testimony, that is, testify to a fact, and receive or accept the testimony of others. This structure holds also for *commands*, which can either be issued or received. A *promise*, too, can be made and it can be accepted or declined. It should be clear that accepting or refusing to accept are in all these cases acts capable of being expressed in special sentences in the same way as questions, testimonies, promises or commands. The same applies to acts like *contracting* (entering into a contract), *threatening*, *supplicating*, *bargaining*, *declaring*, and so on. One sort of act about which Reid is comparatively explicit is that of *plighting*. One may plight faith (in a promise or contract), veracity (by testimony), or fidelity (by engagement or promise).²⁴

What, then, are the characteristics of these somewhat heterogeneous varieties of language use, as opposed to the propositions upon which the attentions of the Aristotelians were concentrated? Let us note, to begin with, that the technical term Reid usually employs for all such utterances is "social operations." Sometimes he also calls them "social acts,"²⁵ thereby setting them in opposition to what he calls "solitary acts." The major representatives of this latter class, next to judgments (which for Reid, as in some sense also for Hume,²⁶ include acts of perception: seeing, hearing, and so on, and also acts of memory), are apprehending, understanding, reasoning and thinking in general, and also acts like willing, intending, deliberating, desiring, even joy and sorrow.²⁷ Such solitary acts are characterized by the fact that it is "not at all essential" to them that they be expressed.²⁸ This is because the performance of solitary acts does not presuppose intercourse with, nor even belief in the existence of, any "intelligent being in the universe" in addition to the person who performs the acts (*Int.*, p. 71, *Act.*, p. 437).

A first important conclusion Reid draws from this is that social operations form a class apart from the solitary operations and that they cannot be reduced to the latter. Both are, however, operations of the mind (or of the corresponding person—we shall see that Reid is not notably clear on this point). Any specific difference between social and solitary mental operations had been denied by philosophers before the time of Reid—in the same way that they had tried "to resolve all our social affections into the selfish" (*Act.*, p. 439).²⁹ The two sorts of acts are final and irreducible elements: social operations do not for example contain solitary acts as constituent parts. Social operations are neither accidental modifications of solitary acts nor combinations or compositions thereof—a fact that secures the legitimacy of treating the social operations as forming a separate field of investigation.

This characteristic of the social act—its irreducibility—can be unfolded

in two distinct ways: social acts are (1) such as to have a necessary communicative dimension (normally linguistic), and (2) such as to have a necessary directedness to persons other than the speaker.

Ad (1): Reid tells us that "in the social operations, the expression is essential. They cannot exist without being expressed by words or signs."³⁰ These may include what Reid calls the "natural signs"—the above-mentioned "features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body" (*Int.*, p. 635). Or they may be (and usually are) artificial signs like the words and phrases used in common speech. Expression must in any case consist of *sensible* signs, otherwise we could not discern the operation expressed. Because, now, the expression belongs to the very essence of the social operation, this expression cannot be understood simply as the casual and accidental expression of an accompanying solitary act. A command is not "a desire expressed by language."³¹ A purpose or intent, "even when it is declared to the person for whose benefit it is intended," is not yet a contract (*Act.*, p. 446). And a promise is not "some kind of will, consent, or intention, which may be expressed, or may not be expressed."³² Accidental expression applies only to solitary operations, which are "complete without being expressed." With the social act, however, things are different. "A tacit testimony is a contradiction: but there is no contradiction in a tacit judgment."³³

Ad (2): The second dimension of irreducibility of social acts consists in the fact that the expression of such an act has a necessary directedness towards some other person. Social operations, first of all, "suppose a conviction of other intelligent beings" (*Int.*, p. 72). Indeed the relevant linguistic expression *makes sense* only as addressed to beings of this sort. The natural locus of social operations is the "social intercourse of mankind" (*Act.*, p. 439). Men alone are capable of forming conceptions which can be communicated by one party to another in such a way that the latter understands what is communicated. In Reid's own words: social operations "may be called intellectual" (*Int.*, p. 71). Not only must the user of an expression be conscious of what he is to communicate (must understand what he is going to say), the same applies also to the individual to whom the social operation is addressed. He, too, must grasp the content which is brought to expression. Social operations must thus be "known to the other party" (*Act.*, p. 438). In a promise, for example, "the prestation promised must be understood by both parties An engagement to do, one does not know what, can neither be made nor accepted" (*Act.*, p. 446).³⁴

It is in this sense that social acts produce a special kind of structured whole embracing both the one who initiates them and the one to whom they are directed. The second person "acts a part in them" (*Act.*, p. 438), and this part is indispensable to the existence of the social operation as a whole. Something is contributed on the side of the addressee that is complementary to the performance of the speaker.

Essential to social operations, then, are both (1) their expression, and

(2) their being understood and willed.³⁵ A promise, for example, cannot be brought about "without knowledge and [the] will to engage" oneself.³⁶ But the relation of these elements to the social operations themselves is somewhat different. Expression constitutes their most important feature in the sense that, at one and the same time, it brings them into existence and provides their *differentia specifica*. Understanding and willing, on the other hand, are presuppositions of social operations. The latter cannot be performed except "knowingly and voluntarily."³⁷ Once these conditions of understanding what one is going to do and of willing to do it are fulfilled, and once an appropriate expression is given to the social operation, then this operation is complete: it has been performed. Social acts "cannot be expressed knowingly and willingly, but they must *be*" (*Act.*, p. 455, our emphasis).

Our description of the social operations as Reid conceives them is hereby complete. Social operations presuppose some awareness (for example, of the content of a question) and the readiness or proneness to translate this into action (for example to raise the question). They are performed in the very moment they are externalized (expressed in a public medium) and taken up and understood by the person to whom they are addressed.

One might add to this description only the remark that Reid is here explaining the structure of what one might call an unimpaired social act. Unlike Reinach, Austin and Searle, he pays no special attention to cases of possible "infelicity" or "deformity" of such operations. He does, though, offer one or two fragmentary remarks on the problem of insincerity. Lies, apparently, are possible only because man is able to communicate his thought by sensible signs, that is, because he possesses language. "A fox is said to use stratagems, but he cannot lie, because he cannot give his testimony."³⁸ It is precisely the fact that mental conception and linguistic expression need not coincide that explains the possibility of lying. One cannot lie to oneself, that is, lying does not occur in the domain of solitary operations. As Reid himself puts it: "A false testimony is a lie but a wrong judgment is not a lie" (*Int.*, p. 533).

As was already said, however, Reid does not enter into the details of this or other possible disfigurements of those special sorts of complex wholes which constitute the social operations. And it is only in passing that he mentions the problem that different acts—both social and solitary—can hide behind one and the same expression in different contexts. "In all languages," he says, "testimony and judgment are expressed by the same form of speech." What is intended in a given case may, however, be gathered "from the matter and circumstances" of what is spoken about (*Int.*, p. 533).

V. TOWARDS AN EVALUATION OF REID'S THEORY

Can Reid truly be said to have a *theory* of speech acts? It goes without saying that any answer to this question will have to take into account

not only Reid's achievements but also his failures. Let us begin with the former.

There is at least one major tenet in regard to which Reid agrees with Aristotle: "man is by his nature a social animal" (*Int.*, p. 55). But unlike Aristotle, Reid attaches to this statement certain consequences of a linguistic sort. In the first chapter of *On Interpretation*, Aristotle had assigned to language a reflective function. Its use involves, in the last analysis, nothing but a single, isolated individual: words are, according to him, "signs of the affections in the soul" of this individual (16 a 4). Reid follows Aristotle almost literally in this: words, he says, "are the signs of our thoughts."³⁹ But he significantly broadens the Aristotelian view. Language, he says, "is an instrument of thought, *as well as* of the communication of our thought" (*Int.*, p. 705, our italics). And even this does not yet seem to be the most adequate rendering of Reid's basic intuition. For the functioning of language in social intercourse seems in fact to be fundamental. The expression of social acts, Reid says, "is the primary and direct intention of language," and only "when language is once learned, [may it] be useful even in our solitary meditations" (*Int.*, p. 73). Though Reid himself does not draw any conclusions from this statement, it nevertheless seems to imply that language use is in the first place a matter of social operations (allied, of course, to the exercise of those universal cognitive capacities which make any language possible), and its use as an instrument of solitary thought something secondary and derivative. In pursuing this view a little further, it would follow that the division of acts into solitary and social does not distinguish two different species of act, but a domain of full-blooded acts on the one hand—uses of language as social operations—which may then, in special circumstances, be subjected to certain modifications (deformations or transformations), which are the solitary uses of language. It is in any case clear that for Reid the main purpose of language is communication.

Such communication has as its primary object "the common business of life." Language has been contrived to function in this context, and because factual use is "the arbiter of language,"⁴⁰ Reid sees no reason to privilege general statements, the statements peculiar to scientific thought, above other sorts of language. Here again we see his readiness to consider forms of speech which lie beyond the scope of logic as this had been conceived since Aristotle's time. Reid's most important insight in this field is that social operations are incomplete without a sensible expression (normally in linguistic form) addressed to other social beings and understood by them.

The shortcomings of Reid's theory, now, center around his conception of the mind. For while Reid was not as rigid a dualist as Descartes, he nevertheless follows him in conceiving mind and body as two mutually independent systems. And how could one such system express itself in the other, that is, in a medium essentially foreign to it?⁴¹ Moreover, expression is held to take place of itself, that is, in a natural, so to speak

instinctive way, preceding all deliberation and intention or purposiveness. But does this not presuppose an immediate and intimate connection and some kind of union between the mind's operations and the body's actions? The Cartesian problem of the unity of body and mind is not, however, raised at all by Reid. He relies, rather, on the sound intuitions of common sense, without confronting them with those aspects of his philosophy that he had inherited from Descartes. This attitude, as we shall see, thwarts any claims which might be made on his behalf to the effect that he had a full-blown theory of speech acts in the modern sense.

VI. THE SUBSTANTIALITY OF MIND

Although the mind is at the very heart of his investigations, Reid nevertheless in some sense leaves it forever in the dark. This is due to his Cartesianism, something always present in his work but which he never takes pains to discuss. "That every thing that exists must be either corporeal or incorporeal," he writes, "is evident"—and thus it needs no special consideration or argument (*Int.*, p. xxxiii). His theory of mind (an entity he of course assigns to the domain of the incorporeal) is as a result unclear.

Reid calls the mind an "internal principle," it is a "principle of thought" in man, a "thinking principle" (*Int.*, pp. 5, 35). Still more in line with the Cartesian conception of an incorporeal substance is the designation of the mind as "that indivisible thing which I call *myself*" (*Int.*, p. 341). When Reid at one point calls the mind "that being which thinks" (*Int.*, p. 37), he is in fact translating the Cartesian notion of the *res cogitans* into his own terminology. The extent to which this "thing which thinks" has become substantialized and has come to usurp the role of man himself is shown by Reid's remark to the effect that "In this sentence 'I see, or perceive the moon,' *I* is the person or *mind*, the active verb *see* denotes the operation of the mind" (*Int.*, p. 13). What *sees* is not man, but mind,⁴² and mind as a "substance" supporting certain acts. It is something complete in itself and independent of anything else.⁴³ It is not, in consequence, an intrinsic part of any larger whole, and therefore it becomes unclear in what sense it can still be said to be a "principle *in* man."

There is one single argument brought forward by Reid in favor of this substantiality of the mind, an argument that starts out from a linguistic observation. "In all languages, we find active verbs, which denote some action or operation; and it is a fundamental rule in the grammar of all language, that such a verb supposes a *person*" (*Int.*, p. 37). Verbs like thinking, reasoning, willing, and so on "from their nature require a person who thinks, reasons, wills" (*Int.*, p. 621). But "person," for Reid, means "mind." The grammatical form of the judgment is taken by Reid to prove the existence of a spiritual substance.⁴⁴

In the context of the theory of social operations, however, there is a necessary tension between a conception of mind as an incorporeal being com-

plete in itself and as a principle incorporate in man and dependent on him, and this tension, or oscillation, makes itself felt in Reid's incoherent affirmations to the effect that, on the one hand, social operations presuppose nothing but "intelligent beings," while on the other hand they must be expressed in a way consonant with human sensibility, "for the thoughts of other men can be discovered in no other way" (*Act.*, p. 439).

This oscillation influences Reid's conception of the social operations themselves. However unequivocal Reid may be about the indispensability of the linguistic expression in the performance of the act, its position and role within the act as a whole is not in fact spelled out. The agent underlying the social operation is said to be the mind. Solitary operations and social operations are indeed species "of the powers of the *mind*" (*Int.*, p. 71, our italics). Hence they must surely be regarded as something merely mental. But then the necessity (or even the possibility) of their sensible expression seems no longer to be intelligible. The crucial fact that uses of language are themselves specific types of (bodily) actions is therefore not fully recognized by Reid. Linguistic expressions he sees as being on the one hand the (passive) mirror of an incorporeal mind: space- and time-bound pictures of something non-linguistic. But on the other hand he sees them as being decisive ingredients in the performance of those operations or actions which are "a prerogative of man" (*Act.*, p. 442), and not just of an isolated "mind."

Such considerations are important, because they show that there is an intrinsic connection between the goal of providing a theory of speech acts and the classical Cartesian problem of body and mind (a connection recognized of late by Searle with his doctrine of "intentional causation"⁴⁵). But there is yet another imprecision in Reid's theory. The expression or utterance of a judgment, he says, "is called a proposition," and propositions have for centuries been analyzed by philosophers. But "the expression of a question, of a command, or of a promise" can be logically analyzed, too. These types of expression have, however, not even been given "a name different from the operations which they express" (*Int.*, p. 73). Is this statement really consonant with Reid's overall theory? A judgment need not be brought to expression: therefore the judgment is one thing, the "proposition," that is (for Reid) the sentence uttered, another. But a question is not "complete"—that is, it is not a question at all—unless it is expressed. Thus it seems to be futile to look for a different name designating the whole question and the question as yet unexpressed. Their relation is more like that which obtains between a complete operation and some incipient part, rather than like that between questioning act and the corresponding question-sentence. Reid here seems to have been the victim of an ambiguity in the meaning of his favorite operative concept of "expression" which he takes in the sense of a material image rendering publicly accessible something internal and mental—not as an active making contact with some other sentient being.

In all these respects, Reid's theory must be said to lack precision rather

than to have followed the wrong track, and there is in fact no doubt that Reid is to be deemed a true forerunner of speech act theory in the modern sense. Why, then, given the influence his philosophy exerted for more than a century, were his insights in this respect not taken up and worked out in more detail? First, as Reid himself stressed time and again, his discovery ran counter to all the tenets of Aristotelian logic, a logic which continued to exert its effects far into the 19th century.⁴⁶ Moreover, it should be noted that there is only one single chapter in his work—the final chapter of the first essay in the *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*—which explicitly treats of the social operations under this heading, and this in a rather programmatic way. The relevant chapter in the *Essays on the Active Powers*, which goes into more details, treats, according to its title, “of the nature and obligation of a contract”; it moreover is part of a longer argument against Hume’s moral doctrines. And above all, the focus of Reid’s interest is always centered not so much on language as on the human mind. In the framework of this (as it used to be called in the 18th century) “pneumatology,” the study of language could not yet shake off the role which language itself plays *vis-à-vis* the mind: that of a servant. And a servant it was to remain, although a servant which, as Reid himself recognized, is “so useful and so necessary, that we cannot avoid being sometimes led by it” (*Int.*, p. 706).

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NOTES

1. In a broader sense, the term had been used already by Karl Bühler in his “Die Axiomatik der Sprachwissenschaften,” *Kant-Studien*, vol. 38 (1933), p. 43, where the *Theorie der Sprechhandlungen* is conceived as the theory of concrete uses of language in the sense of Saussure’s *parole*, as opposed to the theory of the structures of language in the sense of Saussure’s *langue*. Interestingly, for both Bühler and Saussure, the unit of *parole* is the complete sentential act, where the unit of *langue* is the individual word. Cf. also Bühler’s use of “*Sprechhandlung*” in § 4 of his *Sprachtheorie* (Jena: Fischer, 1934), the table of contents of which even has the term “*Theorie der Sprechakte*.” Relevant also is Bühler’s discussion of the sentential act in his “Kritische Musterung der neuen Theorien des Satzes” (*Indogermanisches Jahrbuch*, vol. 6 (1920), pp. 1-20). This helped to inspire Alan H. Gardiner’s *The Theory of Speech and Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932, 2nd ed. 1951), ch. II of which is entitled “The Act of Speech.” Ch. V is entitled “The Sentence and Its Locutional Context” and deals successively with statements, questions, requests and exclamations, drawing on a distinction established by Gardiner in ch. IV between “locutional” and “elocutional” sentence-forms.

2. The writings of Jarrett Brock on the competing claims of Peirce in this respect, are interesting (see e.g., his “An Introduction to Peirce’s Theory of Speech Acts” in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, vol. 17 (1981), pp. 319-26). But they show only that

there are in Peirce’s writings isolated remarks on the ways in which uses of language may effect “a general mode of real happening.” The 160 pages of the monograph by Reinach mentioned in the text, in contrast, represent a sustained attempt at a general theory of such phenomena. See Barry Smith, “Towards a History of Speech Act Theory,” in A. Burkhardt (ed.), *Speech Acts, Metaphors and Intentions. Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter (forthcoming)) and “Ten Conditions on a Theory of Speech Acts,” *Theoretical Linguistics*, vol. 11 (1984), pp. 311-33.

3. Reinach’s “Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechtes” (abbreviated in what follows as *Rechtbuch*) first appeared in Husserl’s *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, vol. 1/2 (1913), pp. 685-847. In quoting Reinach in what follows we shall give the page numbers both of the first German edition and of the English translation by John F. Crosby in *Aletheia*, vol. 3 (1983), pp. 1-142. The German edition is reprinted in Reinach’s *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*, ed. by Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith (Munich: Philosophia (in press)), Vol. I, pp. 143-280.

4. This is above all by reason of its greater comprehensiveness, since the framework developed by Reinach enables one not merely to generate in a systematic way a taxonomy of the whole family of speech acts but also to read off from this taxonomy the range of different kinds of felicitous and infelicitous instances. Reinach’s approach has advantages also in that it is closely tied to a theory of legal phenomena, so that he is able to draw consequences from his general theory of speech acts as to the specific nature of, for example, the speech acts involved in legislation and in legal representation. See, on all of this, the relevant articles collected in Kevin Mulligan (ed.), *Speech Act and Sachverhalt: Reinach and the Foundations of Realist Phenomenology* (Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987). It should especially be underlined that it was Mulligan, in his own contribution to this volume, who was the first to note that Reid had preceded Reinach in sketching a theory of speech acts (“Promising and Other Social Acts,” *ibid.*, pp. 33f.), and the investigations set forth in the present paper are provoked by Mulligan’s intriguing remarks in this connection. In view of the interesting parallels between Reid’s and Reinach’s theories (to be pointed out in the course of what follows), it should be noted already here that there is no positive evidence that Reinach was aware of Reid, and this in spite of the fact that, unusually for a German philosopher, Reinach was well-versed in the history of English-language philosophy and especially in that of Reid’s counterpart David Hume. It should however not go unnoticed that the Russian Gustav Shpet, who for two years had moved in Reinach’s circle and may be presumed to have been aware of his doctrine of “social acts,” wrote a large and still unpublished work on hermeneutics in which he discussed Reid’s philosophy of language and of the social operations. (This information is drawn from a paper on “Gustav Shpet’s Account of Thomas Reid’s Theory of Language and Communication” by George L. Kline, read at the Thomas Reid Conference in Aberdeen, 2-4 September 1985.)

5. See Marian David, “Non-Existence and Reid’s Conception of Conceiving,” *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, vols. 25/26 (1985/86), p. 585 and Seppo Sajama and Matti Kampinen, *A Historical Introduction to Phenomenology* (London/New York/Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 79-83. Note, however, that the most extensive comparison of Reid and Brentano is due to Brentano himself. See his posthumous “Was an Reid zu loben,” *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, vol. 1 (1975), pp. 1-18, a rare example of a detailed treatment of Reid in the German philosophical literature.

6. Daniel Schulthess, *Philosophie et sens commun chez Thomas Reid (1710-1796)* (Thèse,

Université de Neuchâtel; Bern: Peter Lang, 1983), p. 100.

7. See e.g., Baruch A. Brody's "Introduction" to his edition of Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The M.I.T. Press, 1969, xxvi): "Reid's remarks about ordinary language are parallel to a remarkable degree in the writings of J. L. Austin." See also Hilary Putnam's "Foreword" to Normal Daniels, *Thomas Reid's Inquiry: The Geometry of Visibles and the Case for Realism* (New York: Burt Franklin Co., 1974), I, which is, however, rather critical of such comparisons.

8. See, again, Daniel Schulthess, *Philosophie et sens commun, op. cit.*, p. 304. Even an article so unenlightened as that of P. S. Ardal ("Hume and Reid on Promise, Intention and Obligation," in Vincent Hope (ed.), *Philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), p. 62) cannot avoid noting that Reid's social acts "are indeed speech acts."

9. The last two works, which contain most of Reid's discussion of social acts, will in what follows be quoted from the reprinted editions published by the M.I.T. Press in 1969 (both with an introduction by Baruch A. Brody). Reid's other works must be quoted from the old Hamilton edition, which is neither critical nor complete, and whose replacement by a new, critical edition is a major desideratum. The following abbreviations will be used:

Int., for: *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1969).

Act., for: *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1969).

Works, for: *The Works of Thomas Reid*, ed. by William Hamilton (Edinburgh: MacLachlan, Stewart and Co. and London: Brown, Green and Longmans, 1894 (2nd ed.) (republ. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967 and 1983)).

10. *Int.*, p. 141. It has often been affirmed that Reid, who served as minister at New Machar from 1737 to 1752, was like Berkeley in having reasons which were other than strictly philosophical for affirming the autonomy of the soul—just as his fight against Humean scepticism was in some sense inspired by his concern to safeguard some of the philosophical underpinnings of the Christian creed. Such extra-philosophical motives in no way influence the course of Reid's arguments, however, and when compared, e.g., with his German contemporaries, Reid's philosophy is marked by the absence of any discussion of topics such as the incorruptibility of the soul or of the ways in which God thinks and knows, so that Hume is no doubt right in judging him his most powerful *philosophical* opponent.

11. It seems hitherto to have gone unnoticed in the literature that Reid was not only intensely conscious of this situation but also in possession of a philosophy of the history of philosophy which served to define the philosophical tasks with which he concerned himself.

12. *Int.*, p. 39. Virtually the same remark recurs at *Int.*, p. 612.

13. On "natural language" see also Peter Kivy (ed.), *Thomas Reid's Lectures on the Fine Arts: Transcribed from the original manuscript with an introduction and notes* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 32-34.

14. We say "generally," as Reid points to at least one concrete exception to this rule. This is the Copernican doctrine of the earth's rotation around the sun, which contradicts the wisdom of both our senses and our common language, whose testimony on this point is therefore but a prejudice: "there are obvious reasons that lead mankind in the state of

ignorance to make the earth the fixed place The custom of doing this from infancy, and of using constantly a language which supposes the earth to be at rest, may perhaps be the cause of the general prejudice in favor of this opinion" (*Int.*, p. 315). This is but one illustration of Reid's general view that language, not having been framed by philosophers or grammarians, often drags along with it incorrect views dating from "the earlier periods of society" (*Int.*, p. 706). It should be noted that in later times the Brentanian Anton Marty—also someone who anticipated the modern idea of linguistic universals, and incidentally a philosopher whose work was well-known to Reid's successor Reinach—shared the same views.

15. *Int.*, p. 268. This attitude of course calls to mind Berkeley's famous dictum: "I side in all things with the Mob" (*Philosophical Commentaries*, 405).

16. It is repeated almost verbatim at three different places in this work (*Int.*, pp. 26, 39, 612).

17. On their relation Reid says that "every adjective in language must belong to some substantive." From this he concludes that, as adjectives often express sensible qualities, such qualities "must belong"—ontologically—"to a subject" (*Int.*, p. 277).

18. Reid has a whole chapter on the legitimacy of the distinction between "active and passive verbs and participles" (*Act.*, pp. 13-21) which, as he says elsewhere, "is found in all languages" (*Act.*, p. 274). As J. L. Gardies, in his *Sketch of a Rational Grammar* (Munich: Philosophy, 1985) shows, there is a rich source of parallel material from the French (Port-Royal) tradition of "rational grammar."

19. *Int.*, pp. 468, 55, 464, 530.

20. As Reid's examples show, the empirical material underlying his thesis is rather thin. The distinctions he marks out hold in fact for those Western languages with which he was more or less acquainted, ranging from Greek and Latin to French and German. Reid's claim that these features exist "in all languages that are to be found on the face of the earth" (*Int.*, p. 26) is in fact nothing but a "hypothesis" in Reid's own negative sense of a conjecture that is not borne out by fact. As Reid himself laments, "there is much proneness in men of genius to invent hypotheses" (*Int.*, p. 43).

21. *Int.*, pp. 13, 164, 197, 200 and 612.

22. Cf. *Int.*, p. 269.

23. To give an impression of the unquestioned authority which Aristotle enjoyed in this field, it suffices to quote Hobbes' supposedly anti-Aristotelian *De Corpore*, where Hobbes states that interrogations, prayers (Aristotle's own examples), promises, threats, wishes, commands, complaints, etc., do not belong to the domain of science. Science employs nothing but statements, i.e., sentences which affirm truth or falsity. Thus it is to no avail for the scientist to concern himself with those "kinds of speech" which "signify the desires and affections of men"; "in philosophy [i.e., in the sciences], there is but one kind of speech useful, . . . most men call it *proposition*, and is the speech of those that affirm or deny, and express truth or falsity" (Ch. 3, art. 1, "On Propositions").

24. The above list has been put together on the basis of materials furnished by Reid in *Int.*, pp. 54, 71, 73, 533, 633 and *Act.*, pp. 62, 437-39, 442-44, 455.

25. Reid's term "social act" (for what Austin called "speech acts") gives the impression of being a coinage of his own. Reinach's use of the term "*soziale Akte*" seems equally to have been an independent coinage. With regard to this notion Reinach states: "We have to introduce a fundamentally new concept." (*Rechtbuch*, p. 705; *Aletheia*, p. 17.) Other

occurrences of the term are to be found in Gardiner, who affirms that "the act of speech is a social act, seeing that it necessarily involves two persons" (*The Theory of Speech and Language*, p. 64). G. H. Mead, too, employs the term in a number of places, though with a somewhat different meaning. In his *The Philosophy of the Present* (London: The Open Court Company, 1932, p. 180), he tells us: "A social act may be defined as one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is. I wish, however, to restrict the social act to the class of acts which involve the cooperation of more than one individual, and whose object as defined by the act, in the sense of Bergson, is a social object." On the "pattern of such a social act" see also Mead's *The Philosophy of the Act* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 447.

26. *Treatise*, Bk. III, Pt. I, Sect. I (Selby-Bigge ed. p. 456).

27. This list is compiled from the same sources as mentioned in n. 24 above. The same texts will underlie also our discussion in the rest of the present section. This is to say that, leaving aside certain incidental remarks, Reid's treatment of social operations is confined to the chapters "Of Social Operations of the Mind" of *Int.*, pp. 71-74 and "Of the Nature and Obligation of a Contract" of *Act.*, pp. 435-56.

28. *Int.*, p. 533; cf. *Act.*, p. 438. Cf. what Reinach has to say about what he calls an "internal act": "I can express it, communicate it to others if I want. But this is not necessary to the act. It can unfold entirely within, it can rest in itself and not receive an expression in any sense." (*Rechtsbuch*, p. 706; *Aletheia*, p. 18.)

29. Cf. Adam Ferguson's remark to the effect that the "dispositions of men . . . are commonly divided into two principal classes, the selfish, and the social": *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1980), VIII, and compare the discussion in Norbert Waszek, *Man's Social Nature: A Topic of the Scottish Enlightenment in its Historical Setting* (Frankfurt/Bern/New York: Peter Lang, 1986).

30. *Act.*, p. 438. As Reinach puts it, the utterance "is not some optional thing which is added from without, but is in the service of the social act, and is necessary thereto" (*Rechtsbuch*, p. 708; *Aletheia*, p. 20).

31. *Act.*, p. 61. In Reinach's terms: "Commanding does not involve an experience which could be expressed but also not expressed" (*Rechtsbuch*, p. 707; *Aletheia*, p. 19).

32. *Act.*, p. 453. Correspondingly, as Reinach puts it: "The act of promising is naturally not the same thing as the will to obligate oneself" (*Rechtsbuch*, p. 728; *Aletheia*, p. 37). Interestingly, this statement occurs in both Reid and Reinach in the course of a criticism of Hume's doctrine of obligation.

33. *Int.*, p. 533, *Act.*, p. 438. As to the marks by which such a linguistic expression may be recognized, Reid says: "In all languages, the second person of verbs, the pronoun of the second person, and the vocative case in nouns, are appropriated to the expression of social operations of mind, and could never have a place in language but for this purpose" (*Int.*, p. 74)—clearly a statement grafted upon Greek and Latin, Reid's prototypes of "polished" language. While the correctness of this affirmation concerning the second person in pronouns and verbs may be subject to doubt, it does seem to be correct as concerns the vocative.

34. Cf. Husserl's remark in his *Logical Investigations* to the effect that act-quality is unthinkable "as cut free from all matter": "Or should we perhaps hold as possible an

experience which would be judgment-quality but not judgment of a determinate matter? The judgment would thereby after all lose the character of an intentional experience, which has been evidently ascribed as essential to it." (Vol. II, A391, Eng. p. 589.)

35. Reinach refers to this element in terms of the "spontaneity" of the social act. See *Rechtsbuch*, pp. 705ff.; *Aletheia*, pp. 18f.

36. *Act.*, p. 455. Cf. Reinach's statement: "Every promising to do this or that presupposes that one's will is directed to the action" (*Rechtsbuch*, p. 715; *Aletheia*, p. 26).

37. *Act.*, p. 455; cf. also *Int.*, p. 71.

38. *Act.*, p. 442. Cf. *Act.*, p. 252: "the most sagacious brutes never invented a language, nor learned the use of one before invented." This is why social acts can occur only between man and man, notwithstanding the fact that there exists a sort of social intercourse also between animals, or between animal and man (between a dog and his master, for example). Animals, however, lack a language by which to express themselves (cf. *Act.*, p. 442).

39. *Int.*, p. 706. Cf. *Int.*, p. 471. "Words are empty sounds, when they do not signify the thoughts of the speaker."

40. *Int.*, pp. 55, 25, cf. also *Int.*, p. 13.

41. This is one of the rare occasions where Reid, turning his embarrassment into a virtue, brings the Supreme Being onto the scene as a kind of *deus ex machina*: "No man can perceive any necessary connection between the signs of such operations"—i.e., words and gestures—"and the things signified by them. But we are so formed by the Author of our nature, that the operations themselves become visible, as it were, by their natural signs" (*Act.*, p. 441). The shakiness of this argument is indicated not only by Reid's "as it were" but also by the fact that the words "nature" and "natural" in this context clearly mean: artificially instituted by another mind (i.e., by the "Supreme Mind" as Reid at one point calls it—*Int.*, p. xxxv).

42. Compare the antagonism between Descartes' notion of *res cogitans* and Spinoza's *homo cogitat*.

43. Moreover, it is "a living and active being" (*Int.*, p. 6), a description one would at first blush expect to be more appropriate for man himself than for his mind. Indeed, mind in Reid tends to supersede man: it is an entity in its own right, something which leads a life of its own.

44. This is an argument of exactly the type which Kant, four years before Reid's *Intellectual Powers* was published, had criticized under the title of the "First Paralogism of Substantiality" in the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* (KrV). From the conception of the subject of a judgment, Kant argued, one cannot conclude to the existence of a substance in the ontological sense. (A 348-351.)

45. Cf. his *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ch. 4.

46. Kant's statement to the effect that logic has not been able to make a single step forward since Aristotle's time—it "seems to all intents to be closed and perfect" (KrV, B VIII)—is wholly characteristic of the then prevailing mood.

A typical case of the misunderstanding with which Reid's revolutionary doctrine had to cope is the note appended by William Hamilton, the editor of Reid's works, to the above-mentioned passage of Reid's *Brief Account of Aristotle's Logic* in which Reid for the first time mentions prayers, questions, commands, etc., as being on a par with propositions.

When he goes on to say that the "enumeration the logicians have given of the powers of human understanding, when they reduce them to Simple Apprehension, Judgment, and Reasoning" are therefore very imperfect, Hamilton shows his lack of understanding by adding: "This enumeration was never intended by logicians for a general *psychological* analysis" (*Works*, p. 692n.)—as if it were a psychological analysis which Reid was concerned to supply.

KANTIAN FREEDOM NATURALIZED

Norman Melchert

IT seems to be the common wisdom that there are two possible ways to understand human freedom: either (1) freedom is a kind of absolute, non-causal beginning of things, in which case it apparently must be all-or-nothing and presuppose some extravagant metaphysics; or (2) freedom can be at home in a causally determined world and can come in degrees, but only if it is hypothetical or conditional.¹ I want to argue that if we "naturalize" certain insights from Kant we can discern a variety of freedom that involves a kind of non-causal spontaneity, comes in degrees, and yet has no need of "panicky metaphysics."² I suggest we can incorporate the attractive aspects of the opposing views by thinking of human freedom as *freedom from rationally undisciplined nature*.

The key to understanding Kant is to see that he (like Hume) wants to *reconcile* freedom with causality; his differences with Hume are not over the reconciliation project, but over what a free act consists in—and, of course, his Copernican Revolution gives the project a quite different setting. But there can be no doubt that Kant wants to say that an act can be both the effect of physical causes and also the execution of a rational will: "Is it a truly disjunctive proposition to say that every effect in the world must arise *either* from nature *or* from freedom; or must we not rather say that in one and the same event, in different relations, both can be found?" (*CPR*, A536, B504).

It is easy to suspect that Kant's attempt to "reconcile nature and freedom" (*CPR*, A537, B505) is a merely verbal maneuver. Suppose that some free act, in Kant's non-conditional, originating, sense occurs. It must express itself in the phenomenal world of our experience as an event under causal laws. But that means there were sufficient conditions for its occurrence in the temporal sequence of events preceding it. Sets of such conditions can be traced back and back to before the agent's birth, when there were already (together with the laws of nature) sufficient causal conditions for the event's occurrence.³ And this seems to undermine the supposition with which we began—that the event originates spontaneously at the moment of occurrence. Assigning spontaneous freedom to the noumenal realm does not seem to help if any expression of it in the world of our experience can be predicted on phenomenal grounds long before the agent was born.

The distinction between noumena and phenomena, of course, is governed