



THOMAS REID. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man.* Edited by Derek Brookes.

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Book Reviews

THOMAS REID. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. Edited by Derek Brookes. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002. Pp. xiv + 651. ISBN 0-271-02236-1, cloth, \$95.00.

This new edition of Reid's *Intellectual Powers* is the third volume of the projected 10 volume Edinburgh Edition of Thomas Reid (General Editor Knud Haakonssen). It consists mainly in a critical edition of the *Intellectual Powers* based on the only edition of this work to be published in Reid's lifetime (in 1785) and corrected for printer's errors on the basis of manuscripts held in Aberdeen University Library's Birkwood Collection. There is, in addition, a short introduction by Knud Haakonssen, and the critical text contains numerous annotations by Brookes and Haakonssen.

The appearance of a new edition of another of Reid's major philosophical works is an event of general importance for the study of the philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment. It complements the fine edition of Reid's *Inquiry*, also edited by Derek Brookes, which appeared as the second volume in the Edinburgh Edition in 1997. Prior to the publication of these two volumes most undergraduates would have had to rely on the abridged version of Reid's *Inquiry* and *Essays* edited by Lehrer and Beanblossom. Admittedly, this edition of Reid has served a useful purpose by making important parts of Reid's philosophical writings more readily accessible, and it contains excerpts from

the *Essays on the Active Powers* as well as from the earlier *Intellectual Powers*. But for the serious student of Reid there is obviously no substitute for complete and authoritative versions of these works, and the publication of the complete text of *Active Powers* (edited by Knud Haakonssen) as the sixth volume of the Edinburgh Edition will be another most welcome event.

The introduction to this new edition of the *Intellectual Powers* provides useful information about the genesis of this work. As Haakonssen points out, Reid had indicated in his Conclusion to the *Inquiry* that his investigation of the five external senses left a number of topics requiring further philosophical investigation—such as, e.g., the powers of memory, imagination, reasoning, and taste. All of these topics, together with a further lengthy discussion of perception, are treated in the various Essays which make up the *Intellectual Powers*. Reid's treatment of them was derived from his lectures as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow (to which Reid himself refers in his Dedication), as well as from papers delivered to the Glasgow Literary Society. A further source is provided by Reid's dispute with Joseph Priestley in which, e.g., materialist hypotheses concerning the anatomical basis of perception are at issue. The *Intellectual Powers* was actually composed after Reid had retired from teaching at the age of seventy, together with the material for the *Active Powers* which was eventually published as a separate volume. As Haakonssen points out, the subsequent posthumous publication of both volumes together under the imposed title of *Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind* formed part of the influential so-called "Scottish Philosophy [of] Common Sense," perhaps somewhat to the detriment of a considered understanding of Reid's own work.

As Brookes points out in his Preface, the size of the critical text has prevented an analytical introduction (of the kind which he has been able to provide for his edition of the *Inquiry*). This might be considered a disappointing, if understandable, omission in view of the large number of issues and thinkers with which Reid engages in the *Intellectual Powers*, but at least Brookes and Haakonssen have been able to provide a large number of annotations for Reid's references, which both supply quotations where specific references are involved and also illuminate some of the more obscure references. Their edition also contains Reid's "Three Lectures on the Nature and Duration of the Soul," which provides a useful supplement to his treatment of the topics with which he is concerned in the *Intellectual Powers*. These shed important light on Reid's views about the immateriality of the soul, where he takes up issues involved in the debate between Clarke and Collins and subsequently discussed by Hume. We also find there Reid's thoughts about the immortality of the soul and the nature of its relation to the body, as well as the basis for belief in an after-life in

which virtue is rewarded and vice punished. It is worth noting finally that in addition to the Index of Names, this new edition of the *Intellectual Powers* also contains a very useful and detailed General Index which will greatly assist the student of Reid in identifying those parts of the text in which the very wide range of philosophical topics with which Reid is concerned are discussed.

Derek Brookes is to be congratulated for having produced another authoritative edition of one of Reid's major philosophical works. It will not only serve as the standard text of Reid's *Intellectual Powers* for the purpose of scholars of Reid's philosophy, but it will surely also encourage others to look more closely at the discussions to be found there of the problems associated with "the powers and operations of the human mind." Recent work on Reid has revealed how much there is to be learned from his views on such problems, and the appearance of this and other volumes in the Edinburgh Edition will help greatly in encouraging the growing interest in Reid as a major philosophical figure in the Scottish Enlightenment.

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