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Essays on the Philosophy of Keith Lehrer

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REID AND LEHRER: METAMIND IN HISTORY

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Introduction

With his recent book on Thomas Reid,[1] Keith Lehrer has contributed to draw the Scottish philosopher from the relative neglect he had suffered for many years. One wonders of course about the connections between this contribution to the history of philosophy and Lehrer's own work in epistemology. In this paper, I briefly set the historical stage on which Reid appears — as far as epistemology is concerned. Then, I give a sketch of Reid's view of epistemic justification and try to locate the 'Reidian insight' which has been praised by Lehrer. Two roles of this insight in Lehrer's epistemology will be distinguished. A doubt will be voiced concerning the reality, in Reid's philosophy, of the second role this insight plays in Lehrer's epistemology. Some questions will finally be raised concerning an epistemology which integrates the Reidian insight.

I. *Epistemology before Reid*

It is often said, with some reason, that in the modern era, epistemology plays a determinant role in theoretical philosophy: what is taken as real is determined from the standpoint of what can be known.[2] Hence the central role of the (often largely implicit) concept

1. *Thomas Reid*, London, Routledge, 1989 (Arguments of the Philosophers).
2. The story goes on: the philosophy of language takes over with Frege at the end of the XIXth century (what is taken as real is determined from the standpoint of what can be said). See e.g. M. Dummett, "Can Analytical Philosophy be Systematic, and Ought it to be?" (1975), in *Truth and Other Enigmas*, London, Duckworth, 1978, p. 441: "Frege's fundamental achievement was to alter our perspective in philosophy, to replace epistemology, as the starting point of the

of what knowledge is. Of course, no XVIIth or XVIIIth century philosopher undertook an isolated analysis of knowledge,[3] but one could say that elements of such an analysis were mingled with other questions of a philosophical or psychological nature, or were even presented as simple asides of the very process of acquiring knowledge. As a consequence, we can extract some elements of an epistemological analysis − in the style it takes in recent analytical philosophy − from Descartes and Locke, as well as from Hume and Reid. Had they been faced with the task contemporary epistemologists set out to fulfill, I do not see why these philosophers would have disagreed with the two first conditions − truth and belief or acceptance − that are generally stated today in the analysis of knowledge. The disagreement lies in the ways in which what is today the third standard condition, justification, is to be conceived of and satisfied.

Descartes plays a paradigmatical role on the historical view mentioned above. In his writings, epistemological concerns are at least threefold[4]:

a. Descartes takes justification as indubitability[5]. Indubitability could be defined in the following way:

a proposition p is indubitable for S at time t $=_{df}$

(i) S tends at time t to accept p

and

(ii) S can exclude at time t that conditions C_a-C_n, which would have the effect that p is in fact false, are realized at time t in the world in which S himself lives at time t.

subject by what he called 'logic'." But of course epistemological questions are still with us in new dresses.

3. According to K. Lehrer, the objectives of such an analysis are those "of formulating necessary and sufficient conditions for a person having knowledge (...) and of explaining how these conditions may be satisfied" (*Theory of Knowledge*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview, 1990, p. 6).

4. On all these topics, there are substantial differences between Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, as well as between them and the empiricists.

5. It may be that Descartes admits another kind of justification, the one which makes a belief probable, but it is not relevant in the case of knowledge.

The most extreme example of such conditions is that S is under the influence of a demon trying to bring S to be deceived in *all* his judgments. Now the Cartesian view is that propositions are to be accepted according to their ability to comply with the indubitability condition. This leads Descartes to use, at a point, the rather crude image of the basket of apples.[6] He sets out to sort the good beliefs from the foul ones. The third condition becomes something that has the function of a criterion for that task. It must be added that, contrary to what often happens in modern epistemological discussions, Descartes does nothing to show that this condition is satisfied in cases in which knowledge is commonly taken as given. His epistemology is revisionary rather than descriptive, to borrow P.F. Strawson's contrast. But of course no case of indubitable acceptance will fail to be a case of knowledge in the current sense.

b. Descartes proceeds to enforce the understanding of knowledge given above by means of a 'method': "By a 'method' I mean reliable rules which are easy to apply and such that if one follows them exactly one will never take what is false to be true ... but gradually and constantly increase one's knowledge till one arrives at a true understanding of everything within one's capacities".[7]

The theory of knowledge is thus treated as including general rules of scientific procedure (mathematical procedures serving as a model).[8] Well conducting one's reason, undertaking a 'reform of one's understanding' and establishing the sciences are connected prospects in Descartes' enterprise.

6. *Meditationes, VIIae Resp.*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Adam-Tannery, t.VII, p. 481.

7. *Regulae*, IV, *Oeuvres*, ed. Adam-Tannery, t.X, p. 371-372. Note that Descartes also admits local applications of a less linear methodology, for instance when it comes to circumventing the dream problem in *Meditatio* VI, or in science.

8. In France, the term 'épistémologie' is understood as philosophy of science. Carl Hempel's *Philosophy of Natural Science* (1966) has been translated under the title *Eléments d' épistémologie* (Paris, A. Colin, 1972). The translator, B. Saint-Semin, writes in his introduction: "Ce petit livre du professeur Hempel constitue une initiation aux thèmes principaux de l'épistémologie de la physique et, à un moindre degré, de la biologie, telle qu'elle est conçue dans la tradition du Cercle de Vienne." (p.V). That J. Piaget called his approach to psychology 'épistémologie génétique' shows that the term has been used even more loosely in certain quarters.

c. The previous concern is closely linked to a programme of conceptual clarification. It is obviously important to make use of adequate and legitimate concepts in the formulation of what claims to be knowledge. This is what W.V. Quine has called 'the conceptual side of epistemology'.[9]

Of course, the empiricist theory of concepts, with which Reid will be more concerned, is very different from Descartes'. But for the empiricists, again, there are ways of establishing legitimate concepts: they are those which are able to be explained in terms of certain contents of experience. Empiricist epistemology thus typically includes (on an utterly simplified account) a dual programme of reducing all concepts to logical ones plus concepts taken from sensory experience and of deriving what we will be able to treat as knowledge from indubitable data (this derives from (a) above).

Works like Descartes *Regulae* and *Discours de la méthode*, Spinoza's *Tractatus de intellectus emendatione*, Leibniz' *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis* (among other writings), Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* — with all their differences — illustrate these concerns.

II. *Reid as a turning point*

With Reid, epistemology definitely ceases to offer ways of selecting particular beliefs as items of knowledge.

a. *Rejecting the notion of a criterion.*

In the context I have outlined, what Reid has to say about the notion of a criterion is rather remarkable: "One of the fruitless questions agitated among the scholastic philosophers in the dark ages was — What is the criterion of truth? As if men could have any other way to distinguish truth from error, but by the right use of that power of judging which God has given them."[10]

9. Cf. W.V. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized", in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 69-90.

10. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* IV.iii, in *Philosophical Works*, ed. W. Hamilton, 8th. ed. Edinburgh 1895, reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1983, p. 376b.

We see in this passage that Reid has Descartes in mind: "Descartes endeavoured to put an end to this controversy, by making it a fundamental principle in his system, that whatever we clearly and distinctly perceive, is true."

In his *Theory of Knowledge*, Professor R. Chisholm has drawn a useful contrast between two attitudes in epistemology, "particularism" and "methodism". He links this contrast to the problem of the criterion. If we are particularists, says Chisholm, "(w)e may try to find out what we know or what we are justified in believing without making use of any *criterion* of knowledge or justified belief." If we are "generalists" or "methodists", "(w)e may try to formulate a criterion of knowledge without appeal to any *instances* of knowledge or of justified belief."[11]

Reid is a landmark in the history of epistemology on two counts:[12] for the first time since Descartes, his epistemology does not involve criteria of truth in the classical sense, and the perspective on knowledge which he offers is deliberately a non-methodist one. (As to the theory of concepts, Reid makes a similar move which I do not wish to consider here.)

However, Reid gives the idea of a criterion a different application, which happens to be typical of his approach: he admits that there are marks or criteria at the meta-level of general or "first principles". Reid raises the following question: "Is there no mark or criterion, whereby first principles that are truly such, may be distinguished from those that assume the character without a just title?" He proceeds to describe such marks with some detail.[13]

In the context of epistemology, the notion of a criterion is thus removed from its original application, that of a mark of true beliefs (one which allows to sort them, so to speak, one by one), to that of a mark of the general ways in which trustworthy beliefs are formed or acquired. Now several of what Reid calls 'first principles of contingent truth' among his 'principles of common sense' involve

11. *Theory of Knowledge*, 3rd ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1989, p. 6-7.

12. It may be argued, however, that there are similar tendencies in French anti-Cartesianism even before Reid.

13. *Intellectual Powers* VI.iv, 435a. I have discussed these various marks in my *Philosophie et sens commun chez Thomas Reid*, Berne, P. Lang, 1983, chap. 3.

a reference to psychological facts concerning the ways in which particular beliefs are acquired:

"(T)hose things did really happen which I distinctly remember." "(T)hose things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be."[14]

Psychological observation looms large in Reid's philosophical work precisely because the description of the general ways in which beliefs are acquired is relevant to his epistemology. We have thus located the epistemological motivation for Reid's psychological theory of faculties.

b. *Justification according to Reid.*

Which changes does this make if we consider the justification clause in the analysis of knowledge – as far as we can extract it from Reid's remarks? Let us consider a passage like the following one, in which Reid labels "judgments of Nature" the judgments of the senses, of memory, etc.: "(The judgments of Nature) ought not to be despised, for they are the foundation upon which the grand superstructure of human knowledge must be raised."[15]

If we now ask what it is that makes a belief a *justified* belief or a piece of knowledge, we come to a definition along the following lines:

S is justified in accepting that p $=_{df}$

either

(i') S accepts that p as a direct effect of the exercice of one of S's natural faculties

or

(i'') S accepts that p in virtue of S's deductive or inductive reasoning from propositions which S accepts as a direct effect of the exercice of one of S's natural faculties

and

14. *Intellectual Powers* VI.v, 444b, 445b.
15. *Id.* VI.1, 416a.

(ii) p is not otherwise 'proved guilty' – that is, proved false on the basis of other previously given beliefs.[16]

One crucial point is that these two conditions can be met while the Cartesian indubitability condition is not. This will be the case, for instance, in typical perceptual beliefs. Let us now call the 'Reidian insight' the result of the move we have been describing, a shift in the location of the justification conferring properties from the level of individual beliefs to the meta-level of belief-forming faculties, and examine its place in Lehrer's epistemology.

III. *Lehrer and Reid*

Of course Lehrer has elaborated a sophisticated theory of justification in terms of coherence, for which there is no straightforward counterpart in Reid's work.[17] Nevertheless we may be interested in establishing the roles the 'Reidian insight' plays in Lehrer's theory.[18] The first role I shall call a 'defensive' one.

a. *The 'defensive' role of the Reidian insight.*

Let me return to the question of the justification of beliefs and examine it briefly in the context of Lehrer's epistemology. When is a person S who – unreflectively or reflectively – accepts a proposition p justified in doing so? In a nutshell, the answer is this: according to Lehrer's theory, a person S is justified in accepting that p when p coheres with a set of propositions accepted by S. The notion of coherence can be expressed in terms of comparative

16. See for example *Intellectual Powers* II.xxii, 338b.
17. One of the difficulties in understanding the Lehrer-Reid connection is to put aside the strong tones of epistemological foundationalism which are obvious in Thomas Reid. Lehrer himself alludes to this foundationalism in his *Theory of Knowledge*, at the beginning of chap. 4, "Fallible Foundations". Reid's common sense stance, as is has usually been understood, is closely linked to such a foundationalist epistemology.
18. For a short presentation, see K. Lehrer's "Coherence and the Truth Connection: A Reply to my Critics", in J.W. Bender (ed.), *The Current State of the Coherence Theory*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989, p. 253-257.

reasonableness. So a person S is justified in accepting that p when, given a background set of propositions accepted by S, it is more reasonable for S to accept that p rather than to accept its competitors. The notion of comparative reasonableness of the acceptance of a proposition, on the background of an acceptance system, involves the idea that competitors of p for S, that is, propositions which, if accepted by S, would have the effect that the acceptance of p by S is unreasonable, are 'beaten'.

Typical competitors are the sceptical claims which raise doubts, when the justified acceptance of a proposition p is at stake, concerning the capacity of the source or faculty on which the acceptance of p depends to deliver true beliefs. A way of neutralizing such sceptical competitors is to show that it is unreasonable, on the background of the acceptance system, to accept them. The defensive role of the 'Reidian insight' – the shift to the level of faculties – thus is that of a neutralizer of sceptical claims within a coherence framework.

The first step of Reid's neutralizing argument is simply that there is no reason why one faculty (consciousness, say) should be trusted rather than the other ones.[19] Skeptics like Hume admit that consciousness is trustworthy while the senses are not, but they overlook the fact that all our faculties share the same origin. As a result, trustworthiness, if there is any, is distributed over all the natural faculties.

The second step is a special (pragmatic) sort of *reductio ad absurdum*. Let us suppose that the thesis is false: it is not the case that our faculties, taken in their globality, are trustworthy. The supposition may have the sense that our faculties are trustworthy only if certain criteria are met. This restriction, so goes the argument, is self-defeating, since the successful application of these criteria would precisely assume the trustworthiness of our faculties in applying them. Therefore, no additional criteria for the trustworthiness of our faculties can be admitted. The thesis is – so to speak – under constant pragmatic confirmation: trying either to controvert it, or to establish it, is confirming it (*in actu exercito*, by the accomplishment of the act itself, the medievals would have said) even before any result is reached.

19. See K. Lehrer, *Reid*, p.155.

This neutralizing procedure is epitomized in a second order principle which appears in Reid, the principle affirming the trustworthiness of our faculties: "(T)he natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious."[20]

Of course this step to the level of faculties is not effective as a means of isolating true beliefs.[21] But within Lehrer's theory, it can be seen as a 'neutralizer' of sceptical claims. I'll briefly comment on this strategy in my conclusion.

b. *The 'probationary' role of the Reidian insight*

Lehrer has made central to his own discussion of knowledge a point which is at the core of his recent collection, *Metamind*[22]: "Human freedom, rationality, consensus, knowledge, and conception depend on metamental operations and would not exist without such operations." (p. 2)

This point dominates Lehrer's convincing criticism of epistemological reliabilism. His examples show very clearly the difference between the reception of reliable information and the possession of knowledge – the latter involving an evaluation of information sources: "Lacking the metamental power to accept or reject information, (the metamindless being) lacks knowledge." (p. 18)

c. *A contrast between Reid and Lehrer*

While I'm fully sympathetic to Lehrer's analysis of the role played by metamental operations, I doubt if Reid ever really expressed the point that Lehrer has described so forcefully.[23]

Take a belief-forming faculty at work, like sense perception. Here is what Reid says about the beliefs that result: "Nature (...) forces

20. *Intellectual Powers* VI.v, 447a.

21. See my comments presented at the APA meeting, Pacific Division, Los Angeles, March 30, 1990, forthcoming as a review of K. Lehrer's *Thomas Reid* in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*.

22. Oxford, Clarendon, 1990.

23. I have tried to deal with the passages in which Lehrer finds some ground for his interpretation of Reid – as to the probationary role of the 'Reidian insight' – in a paper written in answer to K. Lehrer and J.C. Smith, "Reid on Testimony and Perception", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Suppl. Issue 1985. See "Did Reid hold Coherentist Views?", in M. Dalgarno, E. Matthews (eds.), *The Philosophy of Thomas Reid*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1989, p.193-203.

our belief in those informations (i.e., those of sense), and all the attempts of philosophy to weaken it are fruitless and vain."[24] My impression is that Reid was willing to apply what he says here about beliefs to items of knowledge as well: they are, so to speak, forced upon us. As to the dependence relation between trustworthy acceptance-forming mechanisms (which of course Reid made central to his epistemology, as it appears in the definition given above) and the relevant states of knowledge, it can be seen in two ways:

(i) *accepting* that the acceptance-forming mechanisms are trustworthy is required for the relevant states to be states of knowledge

(ii) trustworthiness of the acceptance-forming mechanisms is required for the relevant states to be states of knowledge

While Lehrer clearly endorses (i),[25] I have seen no ground, so far, to attribute it to Reid. Admitting (ii) would bring him close to a form of reliabilism. Therefore, a transition like the following one seems rash to me (if the second sentence is to express a doctrine held by Reid): "Reid remarked that it is the first principle of the human mind that our faculties are trustworthy and not fallacious. Our knowledge of the world depends on our capacity to discern when we are trustworthy and when we are not."[26]

d. *The two roles combined.*

We must note that the combination of the two roles distinguished above plays an important role in Lehrer's theory of knowledge: "It is not enough that one accepts something for it to be more reasonable than its competitors on the basis of one's acceptance system. One must have some information that such acceptance is a trustworthy guide to truth." (p.121)

Such information is ultimately provided by a principle T we accept in our acceptance system. Formulated in the first person, the principle T is this: "Whatever I accept with the objective of accept-

24. Intellectual Powers II. xxii, 339b.
25. See e.g. *Metamind*, p. 257.
26. *Id.*, p. 226-227.

ing something just in case it is true, I accept in a trustworthy manner." (p.122)

This allows for detachment from the acceptance of p to (the truth of) p (p standing here for a proposition we accept in our intellectual undertakings). Acceptance of principle T is the final anti-skeptical move in Lehrer's theory of knowledge, since it allows its own detachment − insofar as it applies to itself.

This move is characteristic of the way in which Lehrer has worked out the consequences of the Reidian insight in his own theory. The move was probably not foreseen by Reid. It is, however, foreshadowed in the principle affirming the trustworthiness of our faculties: "(T)he natural faculties, by which we distinguish truth from error, are not fallacious."[27] If beliefs are generated according to this principle, why not the principle itself ?

IV. *Some questions*

Some questions will now be raised as to the force of the Reidian insight, and certain limitations which may be inherent to an epistemology which integrates that insight will be discussed.

(i) *Epistemology naturalized − de facto?*
The analysis of knowledge is obviously transformed by the Reidian stance. One of its effects is that the ground-level of intellectual inquiries disappears from the analysis. The shift to the meta-level of faculties seems thus to leave the level of *actual* inquiries to the diversity of intellectual practice. As a consequence of the shift, the epistemologist has little to say to the actual inquirer, except perhaps "Go ahead, do your best!" So the predicament of the inquirer seems rather odd after all. If he is a trustworthy inquirer, he is right in admitting what he admits. But Reid and Lehrer − as far as their epistemology is concerned − abandon the question of determining what it is to be a trustworthy inquirer. This would in fact constitute a reversal of the shift.

Thus, if the very analysis of knowledge is left to us as a specific subject-matter of a philosophical type, the contribution of the ana-

27. *Intellectual Powers* VI.v, 447a.

lysis does not bring us as far as we may have expected from the epistemological programme (see note 3 above). The methodologies of actual inquiries that bring us knowledge, the actual acceptance policies, escape from the philosopher's scrutiny. This amounts, I suggest, to naturalizing epistemology *de facto*, even if a *de jure* approach to the very notion of knowledge is kept in force. *De jure*, knowledge is, in Lehrer's phrase, "undefeated justification". But actual acceptance policies will derive nothing specific from this analysis.

It may be that this reflects a historical stage of present-day philosophical inquiries. The sciences being established in the days of Lehrer, as some of them were in the days of Reid, overall epistemological requirements are *de facto* of no great use. But that does not clear the question of their *de jure* status. Epistemological methodism used to say something – however objectionable – as to how sciences are to be built. Shouldn't we say that something is lacking when epistemology does not contain anything as to how sciences are to be built? But there is a streak of common sense in this. By abandoning to practice the level of actual inquiries, Lehrer shows himself the heir of Scottish philosophy: precisely by eschewing any radical "methodism" and by placing his confidence in the actual way things are done in the pursuit of knowledge.

(ii) *Is the model general enough?*

In an epistemology integrating the Reidian insight, much depends on a subsystem-metamind model: knowledge is obtained in cases where a source of information is available, and where information allowing a metamental evaluation of this source is available as well and can be used.

It is not the case, however, that this model applies in all situations in which we search for knowledge and understanding. Think of the working scientist framing a new hypothesis: such a model does not work for him. There is no interest in the evaluation of the source of information when, in the first place, hypotheses are framed. At such a point, trustworthiness is not relevant. This was, however, the typical situation that traditional epistemology was willing to face.

(iii) *Does the Reidian insight prompt us to introduce the correct data?*

Let us suppose, in the just mentioned case of the working scientist, that research goes on until the hypothesis is pretty generally

accepted. The scientist's belief in his hypothesis – which he may have kept all along – has become justified. Now what is it that makes him justified in holding his belief in his hypothesis? In such a case, the justification is what we may call 'horizontal justification', i.e., depending on the tests to which the hypothesis has been subjected and on its connections with other pieces of current theory. But the general form of the answer we get from an epistemology depending on the Reidian insight is quite different: we obtain the needed justification in getting the belief from a faculty which delivers the relevant trustworthy information (and, if we follow Lehrer, in accepting that the information is such). I'll call this 'vertical justification'.

The Reidian shift, insofar as it focuses on 'vertical justification', seems to redirect the problem of justification towards a kind of data concerning the faculty involved in the formation of the belief. But these data are only marginally relevant for the justification of the belief under scrutiny. Of course, trustworthiness of the scientist's faculties is somehow 'taken for granted' (to use a Reidian phrase) all along. But it is not relevant to the justification of the specific belief under scrutiny. It is only in function of a specific sceptical challenge that we may have to introduce as a datum the (possible) trustworthiness of our faculties. Now in this context, my thesis would be the following. If, at a point, we are able to take account of the trustworthinness of a faculty as a datum in a search for justification, it is because of a suitable record of the faculty in the other kind of horizontal justification, and this, even if obtaining horizontal justification somehow presupposes trustworthiness of the relevant faculties. So vertical justification depends on horizontal justification. And if this is so, the Reidian insight finally labors under an intrinsic weakness.

These questions being raised, a concluding remark will be in place. Drawing from his specific interests, K. Lehrer has deeply transformed the received and all too simple view we had of Reid's work. He has drawn our attention upon several of its unseen and hitherto unappreciated aspects. In this ability to bring new light and understanding in this field, he now sides with the great F. Brentano who so sensibly examined the Scottish philosopher's work.[28]

28. F. Brentano, "Was an Reid zu loben: Über die Philosophie von Thomas Reid" (1905), *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 1 (1975), p.1-18.

Keith LEHRER: *Reply to Daniel Schulthess*

I do not find a great deal to disagree with in the account Schulthess offers of Reid and myself. There is a very interesting question he raises about Reid's view and mine and one that has contemporary relevance. The question is this. Reid is clearly committed to a first principle that says, our faculties are trustworthy. I build my epistemology on the idea that we accept that our faculties are trustworthy. Is that, as Schulthess suggests, a distinction between Lehrer and Reid? According to Schulthess Reid is more a kind of a naturalist, more of somebody in the camp of epistemology naturalized. All that's really involved in Reid is the idea that our faculties are trustworthy, not necessarily that we accept that they are. I want to reply to Prof. Schulthess on that point.

I take the reply to be this. Reid enunciates a set of first principles like the ones Schulthess mentioned. But he also thinks that these first principles are doxastically transparent. What I mean by saying first principles are doxastically transparent is that we believe that the principles are doxastically transparent is that we believe that they are true. The first principles are ones that Reid thinks we are convinced are true. That, of course, puts Reid and me closer together than Schulthess suggests, because one of Reid's first principles include his metaprinciple that says our faculties are not fallacious but trustworthy. According to Reid, we are not only trustworthy but we also believe that we are. It is generally characteristic of the first principles, according to Reid, that they are something we all believe.

Let me just add an additional remark I think is interesting. There is a real puzzle in Reid on my account which Schulthess discerns, because Reid says that the belief that I have that there is a table in front of me is something that I am immediately justified in believing. So when I am immediately justified in believing it, what is the relevance of general principles and metaprinciples? Schulthess sees this as a challenge to my account. The answer is very simple, though I don't think it's very explicit in Reid. Perhaps it is my invention. The idea is this. To say that we are immediately justified is to say that we are justified without any reasoning. There are many things that we might be justified in believing without any reasoning, but that does not mean that there is not any explanation of why it is that

we are justified. We might be justified in believing many things without reasoning, but there is something that makes us justified. I think what makes us justified, according to Reid, are these first principles and our belief in them.

Finally, Schulthess raises an issue to the effect that the kind of account that I give, and Reid as well, doesn't seem to deal with issues like "What's the right method for finding out the truth?" It is part of the Reidian shift, as Schulthess notes, that we don't look for such criteria. If one really adopts Reid's turning point, then of course one thinks it's a mistake to rely on philosophy as a special source of method. Philosophers might think about method and have their speculations and conjectures, just as historians of science do, about what yields the best results. Reid had his ideas about the proper methodology of science. He thought one should stick to the inductive method he attributed to Newton in order to bridle the steed of speculation with the perceived facts. He advocated the horizontal method as Schulthess describes it. I think that theoretical extrapolation is much more important than Reid did. I think it is best to let the horses run wild and then try to form some coherent picture to effect the match between thought and reality. It was, however, Reid's great contribution to show us how to explicate human knowledge without resolving those perplexing methodological questions.