



10.2478/abcsj-2024-0025

The Logic of Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment: Thomas Reid's Social Operations of Mind¹

DRAGOȘ IVANA
University of Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

This article sheds light on the logic of sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment, which has been regarded as a characteristic mode of thought and action, given the authoritative influence of David Hume's "Science of Man" (1739). Hume's "Science" focuses on the interaction between the moral self and other fellow beings able to display feelings of sympathy and thus to participate in the moral good and wellbeing of civil society. Hume's influential argument left a legacy to other Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, among them being Thomas Reid, one of his well-known opponents, who was the first to coin and discuss "the social operations of mind." The article seeks to provide an overall epistemological account of "social operations," with particular focus on the act of promising and testimony. Opposed to "solitary operations" (cf. Reid), "social operations" become successful if and only if their expression by words or signs elicits the addressee's reaction understood as the latter's choice to accept it or not. In the case of testimony, I will show how Reid's argument – sometimes paradoxical or contradictory – cannot get rid of judgement or reasoning when it comes to checking the veracity of what is testified, on the one hand, and of what is to be believed, on the other.

Keywords: the Scottish Enlightenment, the moral self, sociability, David Hume, Thomas Reid, social operations of mind, social affections, promising, testimony

Much ink has been spilt on the relationship between the moral self and sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment. It was particularly David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) that set the tone for further

philosophical enquiries and speculations, most of them insisting on the utility philosophy should have for humanity as a whole. According to Hume, human nature and morality are the prerequisites of an individual – or character – shaped by custom and habit, on the one hand, and by social interaction with his fellow beings. Hume’s epistemological argument is that morality “is more properly felt than judged of” (335). It accounts for the feeling of sympathy or fellow-feeling, which is the linchpin of what he calls the “Science of Man” (Hume x) predicated on the careful observation of human conduct engaged in everyday social practices. Common life, according to Hume, is the experimental stage on which individuals perform their identity. In a nutshell, Hume’s aim is to record experiments “as they appear in the common course of the world, by men’s behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension” (xxiii). Hume’s “Science” left a legacy to his friend Adam Smith, who continued to theorise the workings of sympathy under the guise of “the impartial spectator” in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, published in 1759. “The impartial spectator” metaphor is both an adjustor of the passions and a social norm, for Smith imagines society as a “mirror” in which “the individual looks in order to see whether his sentiments are identical with those of others, whether there is a correspondence of sentiments that constitutes approbation” (Smith 61). By the same token, and inspired by Hume too, Francis Hutcheson’s understanding of morality disproves reason as the purveyor of moral truth, substituting it for emotions taken as value judgements: “If there be any other Meaning of this Word *Reasonable*, when apply’d to Actions, I should be glad to hear it well explained; and to know for what Reason, besides a *Moral Sense* and *Publick Affections*, any man approves the Study of Public Good in others, or pursues it himself, antecedently to Motives of his own private Interest” (Hutcheson 32-33). Much like Hume, Smith’s and Hutcheson’s philosophical debates rework Shaftesbury’s concept of moral sense understood as a natural affection – as opposed to selfishness as a natural passion – whereby we distinguish between “the

sense of right or wrong” (253). Shaftesbury himself draws upon the works of the Latitudinarian Divines or Cambridge Platonists, a group of seventeenth-century thinkers who recommend the practice of good works, which is intuitively pleasant for the sake of disinterested benevolence and in man’s best interest. For Shaftesbury, the moral sense consists of both a reflective component, whose purpose is to care unconditionally for the public good, and an intuitive dimension, which helps us discriminate between right and wrong moral virtues:

So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, compassionate, yet if he cannot reflect on what he himself does, or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is worthy or honest, and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous; for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a sense of right or wrong, a sentiment or judgement of what is done through just, equal, and good affection, or the contrary. (Shaftesbury 253)

Sketchy as it is, this introduction serves to explain the relationship between the moral self and sociability as fundamental to the Scottish Enlightenment pattern of thought deeply rooted in “utilitarian humanism” (Humphreys 207). Thomas Anherter and Susan Manning have pertinently observed that Hume’s system of thought – much like those of his above-mentioned followers – aims to defy a convoluted theoretical framework, proposing an experimental method “associated by Hume and others with Newtonianism, understood loosely as a nondogmatic approach, based on verifiable matters of fact, to the interpretation of nature, including human nature” (4). All of them were thus involved in laying the foundations of an ethical project meant to stress sentiment as an agent that not only stimulates moral activity and moral judgement, but also moulds the ethical status of the self which Scottish Enlightenment philosophers perceive as the empirical basis for sociability: “the emphasis on the importance of social interaction in forming the moral self was one of the most characteristic and distinctive features of the Scottish science of man; moral self-control, it was believed, was nurtured by sympathy with others” (Anherter and Manning 6).

Notwithstanding Hume’s aim to systematise his reflections on human life under the aegis of the “Science of Man,” Thomas Reid (1710-

1796), one of the most prominent figures of the Scottish Enlightenment and also an adversary of Hume, proposes common sense as an alternative to abstract thought, being mainly interested in matters that are of utmost concern for ordinary people. In *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*,² Reid defines pneumatology, a discipline he taught at King's College, Aberdeen, between 1752 and 1764, as "the branch which treats of the nature and operations of minds" (12). As I will endeavour to show, sociability is contingent upon "social operations of the mind" which "necessarily suppose an interaction with some other intelligent being," as opposed to "solitary operations" which take place "in solitude" (Reid, *EIP* 68), such as apprehension, seeing, hearing, remembering, judgement or reasoning. Reid's philosophical study of the human mind carried out via social operations is an under-researched topic which deserves special attention in order to understand both the dynamic and logic of sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment. Besides, his insight into the human mind shows that "Reid's thought as an episode in the history of ideas is also important, in particular as an episode in the history of philosophy itself" (Gallie xiv), since his attempt to advance a theory of evidence or accurate belief enables him to declare that

the common occasions of life lead us to distinguish evidence into different kinds, to which we give names that are well understood; such as the evidence of sense, the evidence of memory, the evidence of consciousness, the evidence of testimony, the evidence of axioms, the evidence of reasoning. All men of common understanding agree, that each of these kinds of evidence may afford just grounds of belief, and they agree very generally in the circumstances that strengthen or weaken them. (*EIP* 229)

Therefore, my concern in what follows is to delve into "the common occasions of life" which, for Reid, are accountable for social relations as intellectual relations of the mind. Examined from an epistemological perspective, they reveal his major contribution to the philosophical understanding of social relations in the Scottish Enlightenment and, at the same time, his disagreement with Hume's theory of sociability. More specifically, I shall focus on the acts of promising and testimony, two social operations discussed in *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*³ and *Essays on*

the Intellectual Powers of Man, in order to underline Reid's originality, which goes beyond "the classic logician's scheme of simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning with which his philosophical predecessors and contemporaries operated" (Wolterstorff 164). In doing so, my undertaking is in line with the Scottish Enlightenment scholars' rediscovery and revaluation of Reid in the past decades as an influential eighteenth-century philosopher who was the first to examine the nature and structure of the social operations of the mind: "Why have speculative men laboured so anxiously to analyse our solitary operations, and given so little attention to the social? I know no other reason but this, that, in the divisions that have been made of the mind's operations, the social have been omitted, and thereby thrown behind the curtain" (*EIP* 70). According to Reid, social operations are not judgements, although they "can be expressed as easily and as properly as judgement," a solitary act "called a proposition" which has long been "an object of great attention to Philosophers" (*EIP* 69-70). Nevertheless, the constitutive elements of social operations can be analysed in the same way in which propositions are. This is what makes Reid's mode of thought captivating, as it goes beyond the well-established tradition of logical reasoning in order to approach the mind in a way that is "not as introverted as that of Descartes" (Coady 191).

In Essay I, chapter 8 of *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Reid discriminates between social and solitary operations, claiming that this division is rooted in nature. Unlike solitary operations, which presuppose neither the presence of another being, nor language, social operations – to which Reid also refers as "social intellectual operations" or "social intellectual powers" (*EIP* 69) – are mandatorily predicated on "an intercourse with another intelligent being" (*EIP* 68). He elaborates on this point as follows:

A man may understand and will; he may apprehend, and judge, and reason, though he should know of no intelligent being in the universe besides himself. But, when he asks information, or receives it; when he bears testimony, or receives the testimony of another; when he asks a favour, or accepts one; when he gives a command to his servant, or receives one from a superior: when he plights his faith in a promise or contract; these are acts of social intercourse between intelligent beings, and can have no place in solitude. They suppose understanding and will; but they suppose

something more, which is neither understanding nor will; that is, society with other intelligent beings. They may be called intellectual, because they can only be in intellectual beings: But they are neither simple apprehension, nor judgment, nor reasoning, nor are they any combination of these operations. (*EIP* 68)

From the outset, Reid maintains that social operations are mental acts that imply “understanding and will” and, more importantly, “society with other intelligent beings.” Human cognition and agency are complemented by social affections which are given to us by “the Author of our being,” who “intended us to be social beings” (*EIP* 69). Nevertheless, unlike social affections, which never require a response from other beings, social operations always require expression and a specific reaction, as the first part of the above-quoted passage shows. As C. A. J. Coady has shown, “Reid thinks of expression as intrinsically oriented toward communication and as requiring symbolic form” (184). I take my cue from Coady in order to suggest that communication necessarily implies a dialogic relation between the addresser and addressee, an essential aspect ignored by the literature. In other words, every social operation has a corresponding operation understood as a reaction to, or acceptance of, a promise, information, testimony, a favour, a command or a contract. In this sense, Reid makes clear that there is “a natural language of mankind, or signs that are naturally expressive of our thoughts,” which can be confined to “modulations of the voice, gestures and features” (*IHM* 51-52). Such a natural, symbolic language that conveys feelings, thoughts and desires pre-exists artificial language, which “supposes some compact or agreement to affix a certain meaning to certain signs” (*IHM* 51), and which would be impossible without the existence of a natural language. At this point, Reid subtly, if not paradoxically, juxtaposes natural and artificial expression when various moral obligations or expectations disclosed by social operations are communicated and performed by intelligent beings. The minimal condition, says Reid, is that social operations must be properly uttered and understood by the interlocutor. A promise, for instance, cannot be properly performed and fulfilled unless the addressee accepts it: “for such promise must be expressed by words, or by other signs; and before we can

rely upon it, we must be assured that they [fellow-creatures] put the usual meaning upon the signs which express that promise” (*IHM* 192). According to Reid, what makes an operation social is not just the mere interaction between two intelligent beings, but the act of communicating or expressing the operation, of understanding it and, ultimately, of reacting to it because, as an intelligent being, the other being can willingly accept it or not. Therefore, in the case of promising, the mental act goes in tandem with its corresponding act of understanding and communication, an algorithm that is applicable to other social operations, such as posing a question and answering it, giving a command and obeying it or testifying and receiving the other party’s testimony. Contracts, however, are the only exception for Reid because the commitment of both parties is binding and thus different from the act of promising in which one party makes the promise whereas the other party decides how to answer. Reid’s multifaceted perspective on social operations shows that “the expression by words or signs can take a variety of forms with regard to all social operations” (Boeker 356). It is worth mentioning that some scholars, including Nicholas Wolterstorff and Coady, have identified stark similarities between Reid’s typologically diverse social operations and J. L. Austin’s illocutionary acts, whose structure comprises an act of expression and the interlocutor’s willingness to become engaged in the operation. Coady comments that Reid acknowledges “the need for some condition of ‘uptake’ (as Austin called it) if a social operation is to be adequately performed (‘felicitous’ in Austin’s terminology). This is a condition on the audience, though it implies a responsibility in the speaker, that, minimally, the utterance be understood for what it is” (185).

If social operations are successful when and only when the above-mentioned conditions are met, then Reid’s model of sociability is an ideal one. Yet it is far from being so because he expresses the fear that social interaction may be jeopardized as long as people refuse to participate in social operations. In *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*,⁴ he concedes that “if men found in experience, that there was no fidelity on the other part in making and in keeping [declarations and promises], no man of common understanding would trust to them, and so they would become useless” (334). His fear is nonetheless assuaged by the theological

argument according to which all causation in nature is the result of God's power, while the laws of nature and, implicitly, human nature reflect God's common and benevolent way of acting upon the world:

The wise and beneficent Author of Nature, who intended that we should be social creatures, and that we should receive the greatest and most important part of our knowledge by the information of others, hath, for these purposes, implanted in our natures two principles that tally with each other.

The first of these principles is, a propensity to speak truth, and use the signs of language, so as to convey real sentiments. This principle has a powerful operation, even in the greatest liars; for where they lie once, they speak truth a hundred times. Truth is always uppermost, and is the natural issue of the mind. It requires no art or training, no inducement or temptation, but only that we yield to a natural impulse. (*IHM* 193)

It is clear that Reid considers sociability and the tendency to speak the truth and to trust others as part of our natural constitution, as is our moral drive to contribute to the public good. Also, it is obvious that such virtues are instrumental for ensuring social operations like promising and testimonial belief. Ultimately, it proves that individuals are held together by a natural form of sociability which allows them, as intelligent beings, to become engaged in mental operations based on principles that account for the formation of society.

Not the same can be said of Hume, whose pattern of thought is radically different from Reid's position. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume declares that promises are deprived of natural obligation, since their performance relies on vested interests as guarantors of social relations: "promises have no natural obligation, and are mere artificial contrivances for the convenience and advantage of society" (525). For Hume, a promise cannot be delivered by merely saying that one will do that because the obligation intrinsic to the act of promising does not derive from any natural motive. Rather, the delivery of a promise is a matter of artifice that is analogous to the commitment of the two parties in a contract, whose aim is to act in the name of self-interest, for "interest is the first obligation to the performance of promises" (Hume 523). A promise is therefore as artificial a virtue as justice and contracts, given that laws – a human invention – are "purposely contriv'd and directed to a

certain end” (Hume 529). Hume undoubtedly criticizes the selfishness of human motives stirred by passions, for “nothing is more vigilant and *inventive* than our passions” (526; my emphasis). In this context, justice – to which promising and contracting are subordinated – is the offspring of our self-interested affections which, although they fail to enable us to act justly, help us construct artificial conventions meant to ensure social stability.

Ruth Boeker has cogently observed that Reid inveighs against Hume for “failing to realize that there are social operations in addition to solitary ones. Reid believes that by acknowledging that promising is a social operation he can account for its naturalness” (365). In Reid’s view, both solitary and social operations attest to a wide array of mental operations, each of them being an autonomous mental act that cannot be engendered by other faculties of the mind. In Boeker’s opinion, Reid’s account of the naturalness of social operations derives from his realization that “social operations involve irreducible mental acts and that the relevant mental faculty is an inherent part of human nature” (365). In this context, Reid’s natural social operations can be on an equal footing only with generosity, which Hume regards as a natural virtue because it arises from sympathy: “Now as the means to an end can only be agreeable, where the end is agreeable; and as the good of society, where our own interest is not concern’d, or that of our friends, pleases only by sympathy” (Hume 577). More significantly, in contrast to Hume, Reid lays stress on “understanding and will,” both allowing intelligent beings to choose whether or not to get involved in social operations and especially to carry out their corresponding operations. Refuting Hume’s observation that there is no act of mind inherent in the act of promising and that intention to deliver a promise is vital, although Hume paradoxically claims that intention is not as powerful as the act of promising itself, Reid emphasizes that the basic mental act “is not the solitary act of intending to perform, but the social mental act of intentionally *binding* oneself to perform” (Coady 186).

Testimony is yet another important social operation, which Reid connects with his staunch belief that individuals, as social beings, have “a propensity to speak truth” (*IHM* 193) and are by nature predisposed to

social affections. Even if they elicit no reaction from the one towards whom they are directed, social affections, says Reid, show that “man is evidently made for living in society” and that “his social operations, particularly those of testifying and promising, make it no less evident” (*EAP* 334). Different not only from Hume’s artificial virtues based on self-interest, but also from the models proposed by René Descartes and John Locke, Reid’s social affections, which are inextricably linked to promising and testimonial belief, usher in a new epistemological framework. As Wolterstorff explains,

Descartes and Locke were, each in his own way, very much opposed to tradition and to the acceptance of things on testimony which tradition presupposes; and that the course which they set for philosophy has not been significantly altered. Descartes insisted that if *scientia* is to be properly practiced, the individual must begin by doubting everything anybody has ever told him or her, and continue that doubt for a very long time – how long, is not clear. Locke insisted that when we are required to do our best to determine the truth or falsehood of some proposition we must set believing on testimony off to the side and go “to the things themselves.” (165)

Reid’s discussion of testimony gravitates around knowledge provided by others, reliability and veracity. He dismisses self-reliance as a supplementary form of musing in solitude on what others report, since it fails to ensure the first-hand acquisition of knowledge. As Reid affirms, reliance on testimony is a natural principle “implanted” in our being by “the wise and beneficent Author of Nature” (*IHM* 193), which, supported by the use of language, represents the principle of veracity. By the same token, Reid defines credulity as the tendency “to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us” (*IHM* 194). He consequently highlights man’s natural urge to believe: “It is evident that, in the matter of testimony, the balance of human judgment is by nature inclined to the side of belief; and turns to that side of itself, when there is nothing put into the opposite scale” (*IHM* 194). However, Reid agrees that there are people for whom the accuracy of testimony is granted by reasoning from experience, rather than by a natural principle. Thus, he compares children’s incredulity and resistance to instruction to those who “have little knowledge of human life, and of the manners and characters of

man,” privileging “the most credulous men” because they “would be those of greatest experience, and of the deepest penetration; because, in many cases, they would be able to find good reasons for believing the testimony, which the weak and ignorant could not discover” (*IHM* 194–5). Whether inculcated by a principle of human nature, i.e. the natural and disinterested desire to believe, or upheld by reasoning from experience, trust and credulity are the fundamentals of sociability, “the greatest benefits of society” without which we would be “in a worse condition than that of savages” (*IHM* 194).

Natural language immediately – and not inferentially – conveys “certain features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body” which “indicate certain thoughts and dispositions of mind” (*EIP* 484). Likening Reid’s thesis to speech act theory, Wolterstorff affirms that Reid’s natural language always complements artificial language, in that “our discernment of which illocutionary action a person is performing depends not just on our understanding of the words she is uttering but on our interpretation of her gestures, her facial expressions, and her tone of voice” (170). Artificial language consists of signs that indicate what we believe, but it is often the case that language can be used to hide or twist the truth. “The sign,” writes Reid, “as in natural language, always suggests the thing signified, and creates the belief of it” (*IHM* 191). In simple terms, the sign represents the speaker’s utterance that leads us to a non-inferential belief of the thing signified, translated as an understanding of the speaker’s belief.

Witnesses’ distortion of truth or mistakes inevitably imply a process of private judgement and checking, but “much of the critical posture toward particular testimony that maturity rightly brings arises from an amalgam of individual experience, reasoning, reliance upon witnesses, and respect for intellectual authority” (Coady 195). Reflection, avers Reid, reinforces testimony, since it is exerted “on the character, the number, and the disinterestedness of witnesses, the impossibility of collusion, and the incredibility of their concurring in their testimony without collusion” (*IHM* 195). However, “character” “disinterestedness” and “the impossibility of collusion” can be checked only by relying on other witnesses. By and large, Reid’s account of testimony, although not devoid of ambiguities

and paradoxes, insists on our impulse, or propensity, to tell the truth, as opposed to lying, which targets a specific purpose. However, telling the truth can have a specific purpose, and Reid admits it because people “may be influenced by moral or political considerations” (*IHM* 194), which means that veracity is not the original principle. In this context, Reid’s argument “requires that the principle of veracity be understood not just as the disposition to assert only what one believes, but as that disposition combined with some sort of tendency to get it right. It would be better to call the explanatory principle the principle of *verisimilitude* than the principle of veracity” (Wolterstorff 176). Someone says what they believe and what they believe is true. This statement is attuned to the principle of credulity, which is responsible for the formation of immediate belief: someone utters something to me (words or signs, in Reid’s terminology) and I believe it (the corresponding operation).

Fascinating as it is, Reid’s theory has raised a number of objections, of which one – formulated by Wolterstorff – seems to me to be of great significance in relation to the probing of veracity and the question of reliability: “The proposed analysis remains void for vagueness until we are told how the types to be tested for reliability are to be determined. Any assertion will belong to some type or other that is reliable, and to some type or other that is unreliable. So given a particular assertion, which of the multitude of types to which it belongs is one to test for reliability?” (179). Naïve and idealistic as it may seem, Reid’s logic of sociability means natural fidelity to promises and unconditional trust in other fellow beings, both of them nourished by reasoning:

It is the intention of nature, that we should be carried in arms before we are able to walk upon our legs; and it is likewise the intention of nature, that our belief should be guided by the authority and reason of others, before it can be guided by our own reason. The weakness of the infant, and the natural affection of the mother, plainly indicate the former; and the natural credulity of youth and authority of age, as plainly indicate the latter. . . . When brought to maturity by proper culture, she [reason] begins to feel her own strength, and leans less upon the reason of others; she learns to suspect testimony in some cases, and to disbelieve it in others; and sets bounds to that authority to which she was at first entirely subject. But still, to the end of life, she finds a necessity of borrowing light from testimony, where she has none within herself, and of leaning in some

degree upon the reason of others, where she is conscious of her own imbecility. (*IHM* 197)

Consequently, reasoning helps us to gradually become conversant with, and decode, multiple facets of testimony so as to be able “to suspect” or “to disbelieve” and, conversely, to be aided by testimony when the well-versed and intelligent mature people’s reason weakens. Nevertheless, Reid seems to distinguish between reasoning, i.e. judgement as a solitary operation, and testimony, claiming that a witness’s denying or affirming something “is his testimony,” whereas a man’s opinion “in a matter of a science or of criticism . . . is the expression of his judgement” (*EIP* 406-407). Reid’s train of thought seems to be wrong in this matter as well, for a witness’s testimony can be false because it is meant to be deceitful and subject to perjury or because it contains inaccurate details caused by flawed judgement, wrong perception of things, fragile memory or the loss of it. According to Coady, Reid

is wrong to rule out all results of expertise, theorizing, and judgment as so suitable. The courts, I would argue, are a good guide here in allowing expert testimony in certain circumstances, and our ordinary epistemic practices increasingly reflect this sort of dependence on the authority of experts. Reid may have thought otherwise because, first, some of the social operations do not in themselves involve judging that something is true or false – commands, questions, even promises are geared toward bringing it about that the world conforms to our desires and thoughts, whereas warnings and testimony are oriented, at least in part, towards our beliefs conforming to the world. (199-200)

In short, Reid acknowledges that both judgement and testimony imply affirmation or negation – self-reflectively, in the case of the former, and socially or publicly, in the case of the latter. Since, as he puts it, “the powers of the mind are so many, so various, and so connected and complicated in most of its operations” (*EIP* 64), Reid seems to contradict the very division he proposes between solitary and social operations of mind, for reasoning, or judgement, is, more often than not, the common denominator of both. At the same time, experience proves to play a pivotal role in realizing what kind of words – uttered in a specific situation and manner – convey what kind of sentiments in order to enable

us to make the distinction between true or false testimony. Briefly, there is a relationship between judgement and testimony, as there is between the “understanding and will” (*EIP* 68) of the promisor and the promisee’s decision to accept the promise or not. Above all, and in spite of its shortcomings, Reid’s social operations of mind – which, as we have seen, are not totally divorced from reasoning – attest to the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers’ partly ethical and partly normative approach to the intrinsic sociability of the individual theorized by Hume as the “Science of Man” engaged in understanding the world and people’s role in it. Moreover, Reid’s social operations stand as an irrefutable proof for the performativity of the self that is naturally predisposed to social interaction in order to achieve an ethical consensus built on sympathy. As a “providential naturalist” (Brookes xiv), Reid firmly declares that

I find something within me that . . . inspires more reverent sentiments of the human kind, and of the universal administration. Common sense and reason have both one author; that Almighty author, in all whose other works we observe a consistency, uniformity, and beauty, which charm and delight the understanding: there must therefore be some order and consistency in the human faculties, as well as in other parts of his workmanship. (*IHM* 68)

Coined and elaborated in a context in which civil society as the ultimate form of human interaction presupposes transactions of various kinds, his complex and unprecedented analysis of social operations tackled in tight relation to philosophical and logical intricacies has earned Reid a well-deserved place in the reappraised history of Scottish Enlightenment and Western philosophy alike. His philosophy relies on the idea that humans are endowed with moral conscience and rational principles that enable them to accept a promise or not, or to speak the truth when it comes to testimony. Reid’s theorization of sociability is not only related to social action and interaction, but also to social operations enacted by affections which, as Reid suggests, “imply, in their very nature, our being well or ill affected to some person, or, at least, to some animated being” (*EAP* 107). Coupled with affections, Reid’s account of the social operations of the mind is an original contribution to what Hume

has coined as “the Science of Man” (x).

Notes:

¹ The present article is the result of research conducted within the UEFISCDI project no. 116/2022, entitled “The Art of Thinking in the Enlightenment: An Interdisciplinary Reappraisal,” run within the University of Bucharest between 2022 and 2024. Project director: Prof. Sorana Corneanu.

² Hereinafter abbreviated as *EIP* in the text.

³ Hereinafter abbreviated as *IHM* in the text.

⁴ Hereinafter abbreviated as *EAP* in the text.

Works Cited

- Anhert, Thomas, and Susan Manning, editors. *Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Boeker, Ruth. “Thomas Reid on Promises and Social Operations of the Human Mind.” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 103, 2022, pp. 350–371.
- Brookes, Derek R. Introduction. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, edited by Derek R. Brookes, Edinburgh UP, 1997, pp. xii-xxv.
- Coady, C. A. J. “Reid and the Social Operations of Mind.” *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Reid*, edited by Alexander Broadie, Cambridge UP, pp. 180-203.
- Cooper, Anthony, Ashley, Third Earl of Shaftesbury. “An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit.” *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, edited by John Robertson, Bobbs-Merrill, 1964, pp. 237-338.
- Gallie, Roger D. *Thomas Reid and the ‘Way of Ideas.’* Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, reprinted and edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, Clarendon Press, 1960.
- Humphreys, A. R. “‘The Friend of Mankind’ (1700-1760): An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility.” *The Review of English Studies*, vol. XXIV, no. 95, July 1948, pp. 203-218.
- Hutcheson, Francis. “An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections.” *The Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson*. Vol. 2, edited by Bernhard Fabian, Georg Olms Verlag, 1971, pp. 1-333.
- Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Edited by K. Haakonssen and J. A. Harris, Edinburgh UP, 2010.
- . *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. Edited by Derek R. Brookes, Edinburgh UP, 2002.
- . *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*. Edited by Derek R. Brookes, Edinburgh UP, 1997.

- Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments; or, An Essay towards an Analysis of the Principles by which Men Naturally Judge Concerning the Conduct and Character, First of Their Neighbours, and Afterwards of Themselves*. 1759. Henry G. Bohn, 1853.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Thomas Reid and the Story of Epistemology*. Cambridge UP, 2001.