

# Tracing Reid's 'Brave Officer' Objection Back to Berkeley—And Beyond

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**Abstract:** Berkeley's two most obvious targets in *Alciphron* are Shaftesbury and Mandeville. However, as numerous commentators have pointed out, there is good reason to think Berkeley additionally targets Anthony Collins in this dialogue. In this paper, I bolster David Berman's claim that "Collins looms large in the background" of Dialogue VII, and put some meat on the bones of Raymond Martin and John Barresi's passing suggestion that there is a connection between the Clarke–Collins correspondence, *Alciphron*, and the objection that Berkeley raises regarding persons and their persistence conditions therein. Specifically, I argue that we have evidence that Berkeley's objection to consciousness-based views of personal identity, as found in VII.8, is a response to a challenge that Collins raises to Clarke in "An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell." This is significant not just because this objection is usually—and consistently—taken to be an objection to Locke, but also because Berkeley's objection works against Collins's theory of personal identity in a way that it doesn't against Locke's.

George Berkeley wrote *Alciphron; or the Minute Philosopher* while he was in Newport, Rhode Island between 1729 and 1731. The dialogue was then published in London in 1732 upon Berkeley's return from America.<sup>1</sup> In *Alciphron*, Berkeley takes aim at freethinkers, though he dubs them "minute philosophers," in an attempt to disassociate them from any positive connotation the term "freethinker" may have.<sup>2</sup> Two such freethinkers are Shaftesbury and Mandeville. However, as numerous commentators have pointed out, there is good reason to think that Berkeley additionally targets Anthony Collins in this dialogue. David Berman says, "Although Berkeley does not mention Collins directly, or quote from his writings—as he does with Shaftesbury and Mandeville—there can be no doubt that . . . [Collins] . . . is one of Berkeley's three principal targets" (11). Berman goes on to assert that "Collins looms large in the background of Dialogues I, IV, and VII."<sup>3</sup> What's most important, for our purposes, is that Berman contends that in Dialogue VII, Berkeley is responding to Collins's claims about religion's mysteries as found in his *Essay Concerning Reason* (1707), and Collins's claims about determinism, as found in his *Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Liberty*

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<sup>1</sup> See David Berman, *Alciphron in Focus* (New York: Routledge: 1993), 1; and Adam Grzelinski, "Alciphron; or the Minute Philosopher: Berkeley's Redefinition of Free-Thinking," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Berkeley*, eds. Richard Brook and Bertil Belfrage (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 174.

<sup>2</sup> Berman, *Alciphron in Focus*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Berman, *Alciphron in Focus*, 11. Berman notes that in Dialogue I, Berkeley takes issue with Collins's claim that all religions are false (11). Berman also claims that in Dialogue IV, Berkeley's target is "Collins's insidious exploitation of the Browne/King theory in his *Vindication of the Divine Attributes* (London, 1710)" (11).

(1717).<sup>4</sup> More recently, Pascal Taranto has argued that there is good reason to think that the *Alciphron* character Diagoras is meant to represent or defend the views of Collins.<sup>5</sup>

Raymond Martin and John Barresi also connect Berkeley's *Alciphron* with Collins. They mention in passing that *Alciphron* is a dialogue "in which the minute philosopher is modeled on 'free thinkers' like Collins, and perhaps even written with the Clarke–Collins debate specifically in mind."<sup>6</sup> They additionally mention that it is in this dialogue that Berkeley raises his objection to consciousness-based views of personal identity (65–66). Specifically, Martin and Barresi assert that in *Alciphron*, "Berkeley proposed that the same *man* might be several *persons* if there is a complete break in consciousness between the man's earlier and later phases." This objection, they go on, "which probably was the source of a similar, but better known objection in Reid, divides a man into three phases, A, B, and C, and shows that defining a person in terms of consciousness leads to a contradiction when the C-person has remembrances of B but not of A, and the B-person has remembrances of A" (66).

Here I want to bolster Berman's claim that Collins "looms large in the background" of Dialogue VII, and put some meat on the bones of Martin and Barresi's passing suggestion that there is a connection between the Clarke–Collins correspondence (1707–1708), *Alciphron*, and the objection that Berkeley raises regarding persons and their persistence conditions therein. Specifically, I will argue that we have evidence that it is *precisely* with the correspondence between Anthony Collins and Samuel Clarke in mind that Berkeley pens VII.8, and raises his much-discussed objection to consciousness-based views of personal identity. Put differently: we have evidence that Berkeley's objection to consciousness-based views of personal identity, as found in VII.8, is a response to a challenge that Collins raises to Clarke in "An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell." This is significant not just because this objection is usually—and consistently—taken to be an objection to Locke, but also because Berkeley's objection works against Collins's theory of personal identity in a way that it doesn't against Locke's.

In what follows, I will begin with a brief overview of Locke's view of persons, and then turn to Berkeley's objection in VII.8, as it is typically cited and discussed. I will then put Berkeley's objection into a broader context by turning to earlier passages in *Alciphron* and the Clarke–Collins correspondence. I will briefly discuss Reid and return to Locke along the way.

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<sup>4</sup> Berman, *Alciphron in Focus*, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Pascal Taranto, "Le personnage de Diagoras," in *Berkeley's Alciphron: English Text and Essays in Interpretation*, eds. Laurent Jaffro, Genevieve Brykman, and Claire Schwartz (New York: Georg Olms Verlag: 2010), 361–70.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *Naturalization of the Soul* (London: Routledge: 2000), 65–66.

## 1. Locke on Persons: An Overview

Locke claims that “*Person* stands for...a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as it self, the same thinking thing in different times and places” (2.27.9).<sup>7</sup> Importantly, Locke denies that sameness of person rests in sameness of soul. This means a person can persist despite having a different soul. We get evidence for this when Locke claims: “But yet to return to the Question before us, it must be allowed, That if the same consciousness...can be transferr’d from one thinking Substance to another, it will be possible, that two thinking Substances may make but one Person” (2.27.13). Additionally, a person can fail to persist despite having the same soul. This becomes clear if we consider what Locke has to say about Socrates, Nestor, and Thersites. He says:

Suppose a Christian *Platonist* or *Pythagorean*, should upon God’s having ended all his works of Creation the Seventh Day, think his Soul hath existed ever since; and should imagine it has revolved in several Humane Bodies, as I once met with one, who was perswaded his had been the Soul of *Socrates*...would any one say, that he, being not conscious of any of *Socrates*’s Actions or Thoughts, could be the same Person with *Socrates*?...Let him also suppose it to be the same Soul, that was in *Nestor* or *Thersites*, at the Siege of *Troy*...But he, now having no consciousness of any of the Actions either of *Nestor* or *Thersites*, does, or can he, conceive himself the same Person with either of them? Can he be concerned in either of their Actions? (2.27.14)

The answer is “no!” and Locke goes on to say as much:

So that this consciousness not reaching to any of the Actions of either of those Men, he is no more one *self* with either of them, than if the Soul or immaterial Spirit, that now informs him, had been created, and began to exist, when it began to inform his present Body, though it were never so true, that the same Spirit that informed *Nestor*’s or *Thersites*’s Body, were numerically the same that now informs his. (2.27.14)

Having the same soul as y thus does not make one the same person as y.

We should note that Locke makes similar claims about human beings or men. A person can persist despite being (related to) a different man. This comes through in the prince and the cobbler passage. Here Locke claims:

[S]hould the Soul of a Prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the Prince’s past Life, enter and inform the Body of the Cobbler as soon as deserted by his own Soul,

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<sup>7</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Cited by book, chapter, and section.

every one sees, he would be the same Person with the Prince, accountable only for the Prince's Actions: But who would say it was the same Man? (2.27.15)

The person we are calling the “prince” persists despite no longer being in the same man. But a person can fail to persist despite no such sci-fi switch: “If the same *Socrates* waking and sleeping do not partake of the same consciousness, Socrates waking and sleeping is not the same Person” (2.27.19). “Socrates” here is supposed to pick out the man we call “Socrates.” Although Socrates is the same man by day as he is by night, he is not the same person by day as he is by night.<sup>8</sup> Thus although we use the terms “person” and “human being” or “man” interchangeably when we speak colloquially, Locke makes an important distinction between these terms.<sup>9</sup> He thinks that “human being” or “man” and “person” pick out different objects.<sup>10</sup> Likewise for “person” and “soul.”<sup>11</sup>

With this in mind we might then wonder: What is a person for Locke? What makes any person the same over time? In addition to being things that can think, reason, reflect, and consider themselves as persisting over time, Locke goes on to tell us that persons are the kinds of entities we hold morally accountable for their actions. In other words, persons are agents. He says, “*Person*...is a Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery” (2.27.26).

Right after Locke defines “person,” he begins to elucidate what makes any person the same over time. As we might expect given the passages just quoted, he says, “[S]ince consciousness always accompanies thinking, and ‘tis that, that makes every one to be what he calls *self*; and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists *personal Identity*; *i.e.*, the sameness of a rational Being” (2.27.9). Here Locke is claiming that it is sameness of consciousness that makes for sameness of person. Moreover, it is not that consciousness plays a role in the persistence of persons, along with other factors. It is sameness of consciousness *alone* that makes for sameness of person. We can thus say that what it takes for any person at time 2 to be identical with a person at time 1 is that the person at time 2 has the same consciousness as the person at time 1.

That said, it is important to note that Locke does not commit himself one way or the other when it comes to the nature of the substance that gives rise to the consciousness any person has. This is because Locke thinks substratum—or the substance that underlies and supports any particular substance’s qualities—is impossible for finite minds to penetrate. Additionally there is nothing in the concepts “thought” and “matter” that allows us to deduce that one excludes the other, and God could have superadded the ability to think to

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<sup>8</sup> Further evidence for this can be found in Section 20, to which we will turn later.

<sup>9</sup> Locke uses the terms “man” and “human being” interchangeably and usually just uses the former.

<sup>10</sup> I am using the term “object” in an ontologically neutral sense. (For Locke, ideas are the objects of the understanding.)

<sup>11</sup> Locke also asserts that sameness of body is neither necessary nor sufficient for the persistence of any person. This assertion can be found in: 2.27.11, 14, 17, and 18.

formerly inert systems of matter (4.3.6). Locke is thus neither committed to substance dualism, nor materialism, though he is very clearly committed to the notion that the persistence of any person depends upon the persistence of her consciousness. With the basics of Locke's theory of personal identity in hand, we should now turn our attention to Berkeley's objection in *Alciphron* VII.8, as it is typically cited and discussed.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Berkeley and Reid's Respective Objections

In *Alciphron* VII.8, Euphranor—whose perspective is favored by Berkeley—says:

Let us then suppose that a person hath ideas and is conscious during a certain space of time, which we will divide into three equal parts, whereof the later terms are marked by the letters A, B, C. In the first part of time, the person gets a certain number of ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of time, he retains one half of his old ideas, and loseth the other half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: so that in B his ideas are half old and half new. And in the third part, we suppose him to lose the remainder of the ideas acquired in the first, and to get new ones in their stead, which are retained in C, together with those acquired in the second part of time. Is this a possible fair supposition? (VII.8, 299)<sup>13</sup>

*Alciphron* responds by saying, "It is" (VII.8, 299). And Euphranor continues, "Upon these premises, I am tempted to think one may demonstrate that personal identity doth not consist in consciousness" (VII.8, 299). When *Alciphron* asks why this is the case, Euphranor goes on to say:

You shall judge: but thus it seems to me. The persons in A and B are the same, being conscious of common ideas by supposition. The person in B is (for the same reason) one and the same with the person in C. Therefore, the person in A is the same with the person in C, by that undoubted axiom, *Quae conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter se*. But the person in C hath no idea in common with the person in A. Therefore personal identity doth not consist in consciousness. (VII.8, 299)

Berkeley's point seems to be that given the law of transitivity, which says that if C is identical to B, and B is identical to A, then C is identical to A, we should conclude that C is identical to A, given that C and B share ideas, and B and A share ideas. Nevertheless, we can't come to this conclusion, since C has no ideas in common with A. In other

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<sup>12</sup> For additional background on the much-debated topic of Locke on personal identity, see Jessica Gordon-Roth, "Locke on Personal Identity," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2019). Other recent literature on this topic worth noting (and cited in Gordon-Roth's "Locke on Personal Identity") include Ruth Boeker, "Locke on Personal Identity: A Response to the Problems of His Predecessors," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 55 (2017): 407–34; Antonia LoLordo, *Locke's Moral Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Shelley Weinberg, *Consciousness in Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> George Berkeley, *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1732), in *Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, eds. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop (9 vols.; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons: 1948–57), vol. 3. Cited by dialogue number, section, and page.

words, a consciousness-based view of personal identity leaves us caught in the midst of a contradiction.

As Martin and Barresi, and others, note, this objection does anticipate a very similar objection made famous by Thomas Reid a half century or so later (1785).<sup>14</sup> Much like Berkeley's objection, Reid's "brave officer" objection, aims to show that if we place personal identity in consciousness, we find ourselves caught in the midst of a troubling contradiction, wherein one can both be, and not be, identical to the person who committed *x* act. But, unlike Berkeley, Reid explicitly identifies *Locke* as his target. Reid says:

Suppose a brave officer to have been flogged when a boy at school for robbing an orchard, to have taken a standard from the enemy in his first campaign, and to have been made a general in advanced life; suppose, also, which must be admitted to be possible, that, when he took the standard, he was conscious of his having been flogged at school, and that, when made a general, he was conscious of his taking the standard, but had absolutely lost the consciousness of his flogging. These things being supposed, it follows, from Mr. Locke's doctrine, that he who was flogged at school is the same person who took the standard, and that he who took the standard is the same person who was made a general. Whence it follows, if there be any truth in logic, that the general is the same person with him who was flogged at school. But the general's consciousness does not reach so far back as his flogging; therefore, according to Mr. Locke's doctrine, he is not the person who was flogged. Therefore, the general is, and at the same time is not, the same person with him who was flogged at school.

In the case that Reid asks us to imagine, we are supposed to assume Locke's theory of personal identity, and maintain that sameness of person consists in sameness of consciousness. If we do, Reid expects we will conclude that the general (C) is the same person as he who took the standard from the enemy (B) because the general (C) is conscious of having done so. Additionally he who took the standard from the enemy (B) is the same person as he who was flogged at school for robbing the orchard (A) because he (B) is conscious of that past traumatic experience. Thus C (he who is was made general) is identical to B (he who took the standard) and B (he who took the standard) is identical to A (he who was flogged at school).

Given the law of transitivity, we should conclude that C (the general) is identical to A (the flogged school boy). But, since we are assuming Locke's theory of personal identity, Reid thinks we cannot come to this conclusion. Despite the pull of logic, Reid thinks we have to conclude that C (the general) is not identical to A (the school boy). This is because C (the general) has no consciousness of having been flogged at school (A).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, ed. James Walker (Cambridge: J. Bartlett, 1852), 248–49.

<sup>15</sup> For more on how historians of philosophy think Locke might respond to Reid's "brave officer" objection, see Sam Rickless, *Locke* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014), 127; Weinberg,

Reid uses the same *reductio* against Locke's theory of personal identity that Berkeley uses against an unnamed target in *Alciphron* VII.8. So, why might we think that Berkeley has the Clarke-Collins correspondence in mind when he raises his objection? I contend that if we expand our scope some, and move beyond the passages of Berkeley's objection that are typically cited, we can find the evidence we seek.

### 3. Putting Berkeley's Objection into Context

If we take a step back, and consider earlier passages, we see that *Alciphron* begins the discussion of persons by claiming that he thinks there is "no such mystery in personal identity" (VII.8, 298). *Alciphron* additionally makes clear that he thinks personal identity consists in consciousness (VII.8, 298). Then Euphranor launches into a challenge of this view. He says:

We will suppose now...that a person, through some violent accident or distemper, should fall into such a total oblivion as to lose all consciousness of his past life and former ideas. I ask, is he not still the same person? (VII.8, 298)

*Alciphron* responds by explaining that he is "the same man, but not the same person" (VII.8, 298). Then *Alciphron* goes on to claim that we speak erroneously when we refer to a person losing their former consciousness, "for this is impossible, though a man perhaps may, but then he becomes another person" (VII.8, 299). The thought is that a person can survive *some* change in ideas, but not a wholesale change: "In the same person, it must be owned, some old ideas may be lost, and some new ones got; but a total change is inconsistent with the identity of person" (VII.8, 298-99). In other words, for *Alciphron*, persons and their consciousnesses—or the content of their consciousnesses—do not (wholly) come apart.

This *does* sound reminiscent of a point that Locke makes in 2.27.20, where he says,

But yet possibly it will be objected, suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my Life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same Person, that did those Actions, had those Thoughts, that I was once conscious of, though I have now forgot them? To which I answer, that we must here take notice what the Word *I* is applied to, which in this case is the Man only. And the same Man being presumed the same Person, *I* is easily here supposed to stand for the same Person. But if it be possible for the same Man to have distinct incommunicable consciousnesses at different times, it is past doubt the same Man would at different times make different Persons.

In this passage, Locke is making the point that if one has a complete break in consciousness with person *x*, then one is no longer person *x*, though one may indeed be

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*Consciousness*, 153; and Udo Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). For a response from a metaphysician weighing in on the current debate over personal identity, see Marya Schechtman, *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of a Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

the same man that once housed person *x*. In *Alciphron* VII.8, Berkeley thus could be working to show that if a gradual change in consciousness results in a complete break, we end up in the midst of a contradiction, if we accept Locke's picture of persons.

Nevertheless, if we turn to the Clarke–Collins correspondence with the expanded scope of Berkeley's objection in mind, we see signs that Berkeley has *Collins* in mind when he pens VII.8. In "An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell,"<sup>16</sup> Collins says:

Suppose a man lives and believes as a good Christian ought to do for forty years, and then has a distemper in his body which obliterates all the ideas lodged in the numerical individual immaterial substance, so that on his recovery there remains no memory, no consciousness of any idea that he perceived for forty years past. And further, suppose this numerical individual immaterial substance to get ideas again as a young child does, and, until its separation from the body, leads a dissolute and debauched life. Here, on my principles, is the same being at different times—as much two persons as any two men in the world are two persons, or as the same man mad or sober is two persons. Now I ask him whether or no they are two distinct persons? If he answers they are two distinct persons, I ask him how one of them can be punished eternally, and the other eternally rewarded, on supposition that the same numerical individual substance is necessary to continue the *same person*? And if they are two persons, whether personal identity must not consist in consciousness alone, without any regard to its existing in the same or different substances? If he answers that they are not two persons, but one person, I ask him whether he can suppose this being rewardable or punishable? And what kind of consciousness it will have when it is either rewarded or punished? (236-37)

Collins has a consciousness-based theory of personal identity, and here we get Collins referring to a man who loses all memory, or consciousness of the past, *due to a distemper in his body*, before raising concerns about punishment and reward as tied to personhood. This is *strikingly* similar to what Euphranor is after when he describes a person who loses all consciousness of his past life "through some violent accident or distemper" (VII.8, 298).

In fact, both Collins and Euphranor use the term "distemper"—a term not found anywhere in Locke's *Essay*.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, what Euphranor goes on to show is that if it is the case that the man is a different person after the distemper than he was before, due to a complete change in ideas, the same will be the case between C and A, though the latter is the result of a gradual change. In other words, something that Collins embraces—the

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<sup>16</sup> *The Correspondence of Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins: 1707–8*, ed. William Uzgalis (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> We should note that in 2.10.5, Locke does refer to disease stripping the mind of its ideas, and in 3.6.4 Locke additionally refers to a fever or fall taking away reason or memory, or both. But in these sections of the text Locke is not specifically referring to the persistence of persons, and there is no mention of "distemper," as there is in the Collins letter. I contend that this does not move us away from the position that Berkeley is responding to Collins in *Alciphron* VII.8.

same man can be different persons at different times, due to a change in consciousness—leads to a contradiction, if the change comes about slowly enough. According to my reading, Euphranor thus begins with Collins’s own example of the human being affected by the distemper and moves on to a thought experiment of his own—the A-B-C case—to show that despite the intuitive appeal of the distemper case, the identity of persons *cannot* lie in consciousness, as Collins supposes.

What I am suggesting, then, is that while there is a connection between how Euphranor begins the discussion of persons in VII.8 and Locke’s discussion in 2.27.20, there seems to be a *tighter* connection between the way in which Euphranor proceeds and the thought experiment that Collins uses in “An Answer to Mr. Clarke’s Third Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell,” as quoted above. Put more plainly: It is arguable that Berkeley’s objection as found in *Alciphron* VII.8 is a direct response to the thought experiment found in Collins’s “Answer to Mr. Clarke’s Third Defense.” This bolsters Berman’s claim that Collins “looms large in the background” of Dialogue VII. Moreover, this is what Martin and Barresi likely have in mind when they suggest in passing that there is a connection between the Clarke–Collins correspondence, *Alciphron*, and the personal identity objection that Berkeley raises therein. But, this only becomes clear if we expand our scope and read the passages *directly preceding* those usually quoted in *Alciphron* VII.8, with the details of the Clarke–Collins correspondence in mind.

#### 4. Additional Reasons to Think Berkeley is Targeting Collins

Admittedly, this argument goes by a bit quickly. I thus want to provide additional data supporting the notion that Berkeley is targeting Collins in VII.8. To start, it is important to remember that Berkeley explicitly cites Collins’s *Discourse of Free-thinking* in §6 of the *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, published just one year after *Alciphron*.<sup>18</sup> Berkeley thus has Collins very much in mind around the time that he is writing *Alciphron*. In addition, it is important to remember that there is strong evidence for Berkeley’s familiarity with, and admiration for, Samuel Clarke. Evidently, Berkeley was quite keen to find out what Clarke thought of his *Principles*—though, sadly, he never did.<sup>19</sup> This supports my contention both that the Clarke–Collins correspondence is in Berkeley’s mind as he drafts *Alciphron* and that Berkeley would be interested in targeting Collins contra Clarke. Perhaps more importantly, Artem Besedin has recently argued rather convincingly that in other sections of *Alciphron* VII, Berkeley has the Clarke–Collins correspondence in mind.<sup>20</sup> Thus, collectively, there is quite a lot of evidence pointing to Berkeley responding to Collins in VII.8.

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<sup>18</sup> I’m grateful to an anonymous referee at *Berkeley Studies* for pointing this out.

<sup>19</sup> I’m grateful to the same *Berkeley Studies* referee for reminding me of this point. (See letters 20–24 in Hight’s edition of Berkeley’s correspondence for more information.)

<sup>20</sup> Artem Besedin, “George Berkeley’s Conception of Accountability,” *Ruch Filozoficzny* 74 (2018): 115–33, especially 120–23.

## 5. Why Does this Matter?

I take it that this matters for at least two reasons. To start, the objection that Berkeley raises in *Alciphron* VII.8 is *consistently* taken to be an objection *to Locke*. Secondly, Berkeley's objection works against Collins in a way that it doesn't against Locke. I will return to Reid's "brave officer" objection to argue for this first point, before offering a deeper look at Collins's and Locke's respective theories of consciousness and personal identity to argue for the second.

Much work has been done to trace Reid's "brave officer" objection back to its originator. Some commentators focus on finding the earliest iteration of this line of objection. For instance, Martin and Barresi have argued that this line of objection can be traced back to Henry Grove (1720),<sup>21</sup> while Udo Thiel contends that Jonathan Edwards raises a similar objection in his early notes on 'The Mind.'<sup>22</sup> Other commentators have focused on trying to determine who, or what, *inspired* Reid to craft the "brave officer" objection. To this end, M.A. Stewart has worked to show that Reid's inspiration for the "brave officer objection" was likely George Campbell (1748), rather than Berkeley.<sup>23</sup>

What is interesting is that as the commentators just mentioned work to uncover the lineage of Reid's "brave officer objection," they *consistently* take the target of Berkeley's objection, as it is found in *Alciphron*, to be *Locke*. This comes through rather plainly when M. A. Stewart says, "In spite of the similarity, Berkeley's is a more sympathetic reading of Locke than Campbell's or Reid's."<sup>24</sup> Thiel makes a similar point when he says that Berkeley's

few explicit discussions of personal identity are brief and devoted to a critique of Locke's theory. The most original objection to Locke appears in *Alciphron* of 1732, wherein he argues that Locke's theory is inconsistent with the transitivity of the identity–relation. This point was taken up later in the century by Thomas Reid in his 'gallant officer' story.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, despite the different stories commentators tell about Reid's "brave officer" objection, and Berkeley's role therein, they consistently describe Berkeley's objection in *Alciphron* as an objection aimed at Locke. Bringing Collins into the picture as Berkeley's target, as I have here, thus significantly alters the story, as it is usually told.

Nevertheless, at this point, it is worth noting that it is unclear what commentators mean when they assert that Berkeley's objection is an objection to Locke. One way of reading

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<sup>21</sup> Martin and Barresi, *Naturalization of the Soul*, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Udo Thiel, *The Early Modern Subject* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2011), 211.

<sup>23</sup> M.A. Stewart, "Reid on Locke on Personal Identity: Some Lost Sources," *The Locke Newsletter* 28 (1997), 109–110.

<sup>24</sup> Stewart, "Reid on Locke on Personal Identity," 112.

<sup>25</sup> Udo Thiel, "Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity" in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth Century Philosophy*, vol 1, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2008), 299.

this claim is that Berkeley is drafting the objection in VII.8 with bits of Locke's *Essay*—and especially 2.27—explicitly in mind. In other words, Berkeley is sitting there with the *Essay* open, taking aim at it. If this is what commentators mean, then I think that they have the story wrong. This is because, as I have worked to show, there is evidence that the more likely scenario is that Berkeley pens *Alciphron* VII.8 with the Clarke–Collins correspondence in mind. This makes Berkeley's objection significantly different from the many other similar objections raised at the time. And this is something that has been entirely missed in the hard work that has been done to trace the lineage of Reid's "brave officer" objection.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, another possibility is that Berkeley assumes that when he raises an objection to Collins, he is simultaneously raising an objection to Locke. Thus, stating that Berkeley's objection in VII.8 is an objection to Locke could just be shorthand for this point. Collins is a Lockean, and appeals to Locke throughout his correspondence with Clarke. So this could be a viable interpretation both of what commentators mean, and what Berkeley intends.

Unfortunately, it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to discern what Berkeley's intentions were. To my knowledge, there is no evidence in Berkeley's journals or other writings pointing in one direction or the other. But, I contend that if we take Berkeley to think that his objection in VII.8 applies to Collins (and Collins alone), we end up with a more sympathetic reading of Berkeley than if we assume otherwise. This is because there are significant differences between Collins's and Locke's views, and at least one of these differences ends up mattering quite a lot when it comes to the force or success of Berkeley's objection.

#### 6. The Differences between Collins and Locke: Why Think There are Any Such Differences in the First Place?

As I work to draw out the differences between Collins and Locke, I want to start by noting that although Collins appeals to Locke throughout his correspondence with Clarke, Clarke turns to Locke repeatedly throughout this exchange as well. Moreover, although there are bits of Collins's view that are thoroughly Lockean—and there are even passages of Collins's letters that appear to be lifted straight out of Locke's *Essay*—there are points

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<sup>26</sup> Even Martin and Barresi suggest that Berkeley's target is Locke in VII.8. And this is the case despite the passing gesture they make toward connecting *Alciphron* with the Clarke–Collins correspondence. They say, "Grove discussed fission examples. And, as we shall see . . . he was an acute critic of Locke on personal identity, and even expressed a famous objection to Locke that is later used by Berkeley and Reid, and for which Berkeley generally gets the credit" (Martin and Barresi, *Naturalization*, 71). They repeat this point on p. 72 as well. I suspect that part of what is going on here, and more generally, is that as Martin/Barresi and other commentators work to trace the lineage of Reid's brave officer objection—whose target is Locke—they become blinded to the possibility that Berkeley's objection could actually have a target other than Locke. Thus, while Martin and Barresi sense a connection between Berkeley's objection and the Clarke–Collins correspondence, they never get to the point of advancing the argument I've worked to make here.

at which Collins explicitly distances himself from Locke. One such point comes in “An Answer to Mr. Clarke’s Third Defense” where Collins says,

His fourth argument to prove *thinking cannot be a mode of motion* is a citation from Mr. Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which he cannot but suppose I will give some deference to. But why should he expect any deference from me to any man’s words, any further than they carry evidence along with them—except those of the inspired writers—is as surprising to me as that Mr. *Locke* should be made choice of as a proper authority to submit to. However, since Mr. *Clarke* is so far mistaken in me as to think I would pay any more deference to Mr. *Locke* than I do to him, I will on this occasion freely declare it to be my opinion that I look on it to be contrary to the duty of a rational agent to pay any manner of deference in matters of opinion or speculation to any man, or number of men whatsoever—and that could I so far prostitute my conscience as to submit to any mere human authority, Mr. *Locke*’s would in all likelihood be last for my purpose.<sup>27</sup>

This passage is important both because it highlights ways in which Clarke is appealing to Locke for his own purposes, and because it opens the door to a picture of Collins as something other than Locke’s mouthpiece. With this, we can turn to some of the differences between Collins and Locke.

## 7. Collins and Locke on Divine Punishment

Both Collins and Locke take persons to be agents, who are subject to punishment and reward for their actions. Nevertheless, Collins and Locke appear to have different conceptions of what desert looks like at the Divine level. Put more plainly: Collins and Locke seem to have different theories regarding what punishment from God can entail.

Collins appears to think that human beings can be sentenced to suffer eternal torment in the afterlife for their misdeeds in this life. I say this because Collins refers to eternal punishment on a number of different occasions in his exchange with Clarke. This comes through in the distemper thought experiment where, as we have seen, Collins asks whether the good Christian-turned sinner ought to be punished or rewarded eternally. But Collins also refers to eternal punishment in an earlier letter. In “Reflections on Mr. Clarke’s Second Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell,” Collins challenges Clarke’s contention that “all sensible creatures . . . [are] . . . subjects of eternal rewards” (142), by asking “whether mites, fleas, lice, oysters, rats, and mice, may be punished eternally, as well as enjoy eternal rewards?” (142). Collins then goes on to point out that “[i]f he answers that they must only enjoy eternal rewards, then he elevates brutes above men, and places them in a much more eligible condition” (142). This implies that men are subject to eternal punishment, in addition to eternal reward.

Moreover, earlier in “An Answer to Mr. Clarke’s Third Defense,” Collins asserts that it is “inconsistent with his justice to punish eternally a man who obeys his laws, and to reward

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<sup>27</sup> *The Correspondence of Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins: 1707–08*, ed. William Uzgalis (Peterborough: Broadview Press: 2011), 220.

a man who disobeys them” (201). This reference to eternal punishment is important, because while the distemper thought experiment and the “mites and fleas” passage (142) could leave open that Collins is framing challenges in what he takes to be Clarke’s terms, this passage (201) seems to suggest that eternal damnation is a doctrine to which Collins himself subscribes.

On the other hand, Locke explicitly and clearly rejects the doctrine of eternal damnation. This comes through the posthumously published “Resurrectio et quae sequuntur.”<sup>28</sup> Here Locke argues that, as St. Paul makes clear, the ultimate punishment for sinners, after torment, is *final* death.<sup>29</sup> Collins might not have been aware of Locke’s rejection of the doctrine of eternal damnation, since the “Resurrectio” is essentially a note that Locke wrote to himself, and was only published in 1829.<sup>30</sup> But this marks one likely point of departure between Collins and Locke when it comes to persons. Moreover, this is the case despite the fact that Collins often expresses this point in terms of men, rather than persons.

#### 8. Collins and Locke on the Substantial Nature of Finite Thinkers

We find another point of departure between Collins and Locke if we take a closer look at their respective views on the substantial nature of finite thinkers. As we have seen, Locke is open to the idea that matter can think, or give rise to consciousness. Nevertheless, Collins takes this suggestion and runs with it. Thus while Locke maintains that the more likely scenario is that the soul or whatever thinks in us is immaterial, Collins comes to the opposite conclusion. As Larry Jorgensen puts it,

A significant difference between Collins and Locke, then, is that Collins thought that material systems provided a better explanatory basis for consciousness, which changes the probability calculus. Collins provides evidence that casts doubt on Locke’s claim that ‘it is in the highest degree probable’ that humans have immaterial souls. Although he is building from a Lockean starting point, namely the possibility that God might superadd thinking to matter, he ends up with a naturalized version: thinking ‘follows from the composition or modification of a material system’ (Clarke and Collins, 2011, p. 48).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to give an exact date for Locke’s “Resurrectio,” though Philip Long [*A Summary Catalogue of the Lovelace Collection of the Papers of John Locke in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society Publications, new series vol. 8, 1959), 28] suggests that it was written about 1699. See *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul*, ed. Arthur W. Wainwright (2 vols; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), II, 679.

<sup>29</sup> For more on Locke’s argument against eternal damnation, see Jessica Gordon–Roth, “John Locke,” *Wiley–Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, eds. Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro (forthcoming).

<sup>30</sup> Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 129.

<sup>31</sup> Larry Jorgensen, “Locke and Anthony Collins,” in *The Lockean Mind*, eds. Jessica Gordon–Roth and Shelley Weinberg (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

Collins thus thinks that the more likely scenario is that material systems give rise to consciousness.

We see evidence for this when Collins claims that contemplating and meditating make us just as tired as singing and dancing (127). The idea is that each of these activities are physically taxing because they are equally physical or corporeal. More importantly, Collins claims that if we carefully consider the nature of thinking, or human consciousness, we will conclude that it has to be caused by something material and divisible, rather than something immaterial and indivisible:

Thinking, or human consciousness begins, continues, and ends—or has generation, succession, and corruption—like all other modes of matter, as, like them, it is divided and determined, simple or compounded, and so on. But if the soul or principle of thinking be undivided, how can it think successively, divide, abstract, combine or amplify, retain or revive impressions in the memory? And how can it be capable, partly or wholly, to forget anything? All which *phenomena* are naturally conceived, and may be commodiously explained, by the springs and movements, and receptacles, by the vigor, perfection, disorder or decay of a bodily organ—but not by anything indivisible. (127)

Thus, far from simply arguing that it is possible that matter could be made to think, as Locke does, Collins argues that we should conclude that only matter could give rise to the features of consciousness that we experience. If we dig deeper into Locke and Collins and turn our attention to the connection between consciousness and personal identity, we will see that the differences between the two philosophers do not end here. As it turns out, *this* is where the differences that really matter when it comes to Berkeley's objection lie.

## 9. Collins and Locke on Consciousness and Personal Identity

So far we have seen that consciousness plays a key role in Locke's theory of personal identity, but I have not said much about what consciousness is for Locke. In part, this is because it is very hard to pin down what Locke means by "consciousness." Nevertheless, it is clear that Locke thinks that ideas or thoughts are fleeting. Locke claims that, like motion, thoughts perish the moment they begin: "[T]hey cannot exist in different times, or in different places" (2.27.2). On the other hand, consciousnesses persist. This has to be the case, since it is the identity of consciousness that makes for the identity of any person over time in Locke's view.

One way of thinking about consciousness is as the power to think self reflectively. It is that which gives any individual a first person—point of view—which has its start in a particular place, at a particular time. Here I am following Margaret Atherton. Further following Atherton, we might also think of consciousness or conscious life as analogous to animal life, for Locke. No other person can have my consciousness any more than any

animal can have another animal's life (283).<sup>32</sup> To this I would add that my consciousness or conscious life is not identical to the particular thoughts or ideas it contains any more than an animal life is identical to the particular metabolic or respiratory events it contains. So long as my consciousness continues, I, as a person, continue, according to Locke.

This means that consciousness is something over and above the individual thoughts or ideas it produces, for Locke. Thus an individual at time 2 can have the same consciousness as she did at time 1, and thus be the same person as she was at time 1, despite not having the same ideas as she did at time 1, according to Locke. The other thing to note is that while Locke thinks using the power of memory to reignite or recreate an idea from an earlier time is a sign that an individual has the same consciousness as she who had the past idea, remembrance is not what *makes* any individual's consciousness the same over time. In other words, whether an individual has the same consciousness as she who committed *x* act is a fact that is not dependent upon whether she currently remembers committing *x* act. Rather, in Locke's view, it is, as Shelley Weinberg puts it, "an objective metaphysical fact."<sup>33</sup>

On the surface, Collins's theory of personal identity looks just like Locke's. Collins moves away from a traditional substance-based view, and places the persistence of persons in consciousness instead. Nevertheless, most of Collins's claims about consciousness make clear that consciousness is *not* the kind of thing that can persist over time. As Collins puts it, "[A]ny particular act of consciousness is incapable of continuation of its existence, wherefore its identity can only consist in being that very numerical act of consciousness that it is" (231). Collins uses the term "consciousness" to pick out individual acts of thinking in this passage and other similar ones. As such, consciousness does not have diachronic identity.

Collins additionally denies that persons have a conception of themselves as persisting over time. Collins makes this point in "Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell" when he says, "I deny that we have any consciousness at all that we continue the same individual being at different times" (147–48).<sup>34</sup> He makes this point again later, when he declares, "we are not conscious that we continue a moment the same individual numerical being" (223–24). Thus two fundamental aspects of Locke's view—(1) persons are the kinds of entities that can consider themselves as themselves in different times and places (2.27.9); and (2) sameness of consciousness is what makes for sameness of person—are points that Collins denies.

Still, Collins does not give up on personal identity, or consciousness's role therein, altogether. Collins does think that persons persist, and that consciousness is essential to any person's persistence. But, a careful look at the passages wherein Collins makes such

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<sup>32</sup> See Margaret Atherton, "Locke's Theory of Personal Identity," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 8 (1983): 273–94.

<sup>33</sup> See Weinberg, *Consciousness in Locke*, 153. That said, I'm not certain that I have precisely the same notion of that which this metaphysical fact amounts to as Weinberg.

<sup>34</sup> I'm grateful to an anonymous referee for reminding me of the importance of Collins's "Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defense" for getting clear on Collins's view on persons.

claims makes clear that he uses the terms “consciousness” and “memory” synonymously therein. In other words, when Collins speaks of consciousness as the kind of thing that can have persistence, he is referring to a memory, or memories (see 147–48, 223–24, 233, 234, etc.). Thus, as William Uzgalis makes clear, it is memory that allows any person to persist over time in Collins’s view:

Anthony Collins, on the other hand, develops a materialist version of Locke’s account of personal identity. He holds...that personal identity is preserved through changes in the substance that composes the body and the brain by memories being revived and imprinted over again on the brain as the particles that make up the brain change over time. It is the transference of this memory information that preserves personal identity over time. (32-33)

Another way of putting the point is that while no consciousness—or act of thinking—can persist over time for Collins, memory connects individual acts of consciousness, and it is this connection that makes for personal identity in Collins’s view. As Jorgensen puts it,

Personal identity, then, does not consist in the continuation of a single individual consciousness, for Collins. Individual consciousnesses ‘perish the moment they begin’ (Clarke and Collins, 2011, p. 234). Personal identity consists in the connection of a present consciousness with past consciousnesses: ‘Present consciousness or memory is nothing but a present representation of a past action, and . . . personal identity consists only in having such a consciousness or memory.’ The present representation of past actions provides for a continuation of the *self*, even if consciousness (the momentary act of thinking) is distinct and fleeting, since the representation of past actions provides a basis for ‘sympathy and concern’ for those things that are one’s own (Clarke and Collins, 2011, p. 235). (9)

Thus, while Locke thinks that there is one consciousness which persists for every person who persists, or sameness of person rests in sameness of consciousness, Collins thinks that a series of connected consciousnesses is what makes for the diachronic identity of persons. Moreover, memory is that which is doing the connecting in Collins’s view. There are thus significant differences between Collins’s and Locke’s respective views.<sup>35</sup>

With these differences in mind, we should return to Berkeley’s objection, as it appears in *Alciphron* VII.8. What I aim to show is that we not only have evidence that Berkeley is directly targeting Collins, rather than Locke, in VII.8, but also that the differences between Collins and Locke on consciousness and personal identity make Berkeley’s objection *work better* against Collins than it does against Locke. The latter is the task I take up in the next section of the paper before concluding.

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<sup>35</sup> For more on Collins on consciousness and personal identity, see William Uzgalis, “Anthony Collins on the Emergence of Consciousness and Personal Identity,” in *Philosophy Compass* 4 (2009); and Vili Lahteenmaki, “Anthony Collins on the Status of Consciousness,” *Vivarium* 52 (2014): 315–32.

## 10. Why Berkeley's Objection Works Better Against Collins than It Does Against Locke

In Berkeley's objection, we are supposed to imagine an individual whose memories erode over time. This is what I take Berkeley to mean when he (as Euphranor) speaks of "retaining" and "losing" ideas between A, B, and C. Since memory is the glue that, as it were, holds persons together for Collins, C not remembering anything of A's conscious life is going to prove to be particularly problematic for Collins. This is because it seems that Collins would have to admit that C and A are not the same person. Yet C and B are the same person according to Collins's view. This is because C can remember bits of B's conscious life. Moreover, B and A are the same person for the same reason. Collins's theory of personal identity thus does appear to result in a contradiction, as the objection charges. In other words, since it is the case, according to Collins, that where there is no memory, there is no personal identity, Collins's theory of personal identity is particularly vulnerable to the objection Berkeley poses in *Alciphron* VII.8.

On the other hand, Berkeley's objection doesn't seem as pressing for Locke. This is because while we can be sure that if a person at time<sub>2</sub> is conscious of x at time<sub>1</sub> via memory, the person at time<sub>2</sub> has the same consciousness as the person who experienced x at time<sub>1</sub>, we cannot be certain that the contrary is true, in Locke's view. That is, we cannot necessarily conclude that the person at time<sub>2</sub> does not have the same consciousness as the person at time<sub>1</sub> just because the person at time<sub>2</sub> does not remember x at time<sub>1</sub>.

This is because, as Atherton points out (277–78), consciousness and memory are not one and the same thing for Locke. If they were, we could not make sense of instances in which we are conscious but where memory is not being invoked. This is also because we are finite beings with less than perfect memories—as most of us can attest, and Locke himself notes. As Locke puts it, consciousness is "interrupted always by forgetfulness, there being no moment of our Lives wherein we have the whole train of all our past Actions before our Eyes in one view" and "even the best Memories . . . lose . . . the sight of one part whilst they are viewing another" (2.27.10).

We know that one can only extend one's consciousness back and reignite or recreate a perception or idea via the power Locke calls "memory" if one's consciousness indeed includes that experience. Given what Berkeley says, we know that C can do this with B. We thus know that C has the same consciousness as B. We also know that B can do this with A. We thus additionally know that B has the same consciousness as A. Given the law of transitivity, we therefore know that C has the same consciousness as A. Given this, and assuming Locke's theory of personal identity, we cannot help but conclude that C is the same person as A. This is because, for Locke, sameness of person rests in sameness of consciousness, and we know that C has the same consciousness as A. The contradiction that arises for Collins does not arrive for Locke as a result.

At this point readers might now worry that some of the passages from Locke's *Essay* that we have already seen suggest otherwise, however. In particular, some might worry that Locke thinks we *do* need to remember x act to be the same person who committed x act. I

will consider the passages in Locke's chapter on identity that seem to be in tension with the resolution I just offered and explain why they are not. I will begin with section 14—where Locke discusses Socrates, Nestor, and Thersites.

As we have seen, it is in this passage that Locke claims having the same soul as another is not enough to make one the same person as another. This section of the text makes it appear as if Locke is also claiming that it is because the Platonist or Pythagorean is not conscious of, for instance, questioning Glaucon (as Plato reports in Book VII of the *Republic*), that the Platonist or Pythagorean is not the same person as Socrates. Nevertheless, later in that passage, Locke makes clear that being conscious of *even just one* of y's actions or thoughts makes it clear that one is the same person as y. Here Locke says, "But let him once find himself conscious of any of the Actions of *Nestor*, he then finds himself the same Person with *Nestor*" (2.27.14). Although Locke puts the point in terms of Nestor, rather than Socrates, this seems to suggest that if the Platonist or Pythagorean remembers drinking the hemlock, this would be enough to make clear that the Platonist or Pythagorean has the same consciousness as Socrates, and thus is the same person as Socrates. This is because questioning Glaucon is an event that predates drinking the hemlock in Socrates' conscious life. In other words, Socrates is the same person when he drinks the hemlock as he was when he questioned Glaucon. (Questioning Glaucon and others is how he got charged with crimes subject to the punishment of death in the first place!) The Platonist or Pythagorean thus remembering drinking the hemlock is enough to make clear that he is identical with Socrates, despite his no longer having access to the memory of questioning Glaucon. Moreover, we have just this kind of situation in the case that Berkeley describes. Since C has access to bits of B's conscious life via memory, that is enough to make clear that C is the same person as A. This is because we know that B has access to bits of A's conscious life via memory, and B is the same person as A.

There are other sections of the text that appear to pose problems for my answer to Berkeley's objection, however. Let us return to section 20. As a reminder, it is here that Locke claims:

But yet possibly it will still be objected, suppose I wholly lose the memory of some parts of my Life, beyond a possibility of retrieving them, so that perhaps I shall never be conscious of them again; yet am I not the same Person, that did those Actions, had those Thoughts, that I was once conscious of, though I have now forgot them? To which I answer, that we must here take notice what the Word *I* is applied to, which in this case is the Man only. And the same Man being presumed to be the same Person, *I* is easily here supposed to stand also for the same Person. But if it be possible for the same Man to have distinct incommunicable consciousness at different times, it is past doubt the same Man would at different times make different Persons. (2.27.20)

In this section of the text, it appears as if Locke is claiming that forgetting an act or thought makes one a different person than she who engaged in that past act or had that past thought. Moreover, if this is the case, then we should conclude that C is not the same person as A.

It is important to realize, however, that part of what Locke is trying to communicate in this passage is that “person” and “man” are names that stand for, or pick out, different objects. Thus, as we have seen, sameness of man is not sufficient for sameness of person. Additionally what Locke describes here is a situation in which a person wholly loses the memory of some parts of her life *beyond the possibility of retrieving them*. It is arguable that the only way to lose parts of a life beyond the possibility of retrieving them is if there is a change in consciousness. In fact, we know that this is the case for Locke, because he tells us as much. He says “But if it is possible for the same Man to have distinct incommunicable consciousnesses at different times, it is past doubt the same Man would at different times make different Persons” (2.27.20). Given the set-up of Berkeley’s objection, we *know* we do not have distinct and incommunicable consciousnesses. We know that C has the same consciousness as B, and that B has the same consciousness as A (since C has access to B’s conscious life via memory and B has access to A’s conscious life via memory). We thus know that C has the same consciousness as A. Given Locke’s theory of personal identity, we thus cannot conclude that C is not the same person as A, and must conclude the opposite instead.

With this in mind we should lastly consider what Locke has to say in section 24. He says:

Indeed it may conceive the Substance whereof it is now made up, to have existed formerly, united in the same conscious Being: But consciousness removed, that Substance is no more it *self*, or makes no more a part of it, than any other Substance, as is evident in the instance, we have already given, of a Limb cut off, of whose Heat, or Cold, or other Affections, having no longer any consciousness, it is no more of a Man’s self than any other Matter of the Universe. In like manner it will be in reference to any immaterial Substance, which is void of that consciousness whereby I am my *self* to my *self*: If there be any part of its Existence, which I cannot upon recollection join with that present consciousness, whereby I am now my *Self*, it is in that part of its Existence no more my *Self*, than any other immaterial Being. For whatsoever any Substance has thought or done, which I cannot recollect, and by my consciousness make my own Thought and Action, it will no more belong to me, whether a part of me thought or did it, than if it had been thought or done by any other immaterial Being any where existing. (2.27.24)

Here it once again looks as if Locke thinks that if a person does not recollect x act or thought, she is not the person who committed x act or had x thought. If this is the case, then it appears that C is not the same person as A.

Nevertheless, in this passage Locke is emphasizing that sameness of soul is not what makes for sameness of person. The point he is making is that even if a soul used to be joined to a person’s consciousness, this does not mean that whatever that soul does after that person’s consciousness separates from it can be of any concern to her. Here we get a change or separation in consciousness. Moreover, it is for that reason that there can be no recollection or remembering. We know that there is no separation or change of consciousness between C and A, however. Thus the failure of recollection that Locke describes in section 24 does not provide evidence for the claim that not remembering x

act is enough to make one a different person from she who committed x act. It therefore does not provide evidence for the conclusion that the C is not the same person as A, either.

### 11. An Issue in Locke's View that Berkeley's Objection Highlights

That said, Berkeley's objection does raise an important issue worth considering. What if a person at time 2 does not remember having murdered another at time 1? That is, what if C doesn't remember committing a murder as A? Moreover, what if C is serving time for that heinous act? Locke describes being punished for that which one does not recall as equivalent to being created miserable (2.27.6). Should C, who does not remember the murder, then be punished for the murder, according to Locke?

It seems given what I just said about Locke's stance on punishment and misery, the answer would be "no." The thing to keep in mind, however, is that Locke claims that the sober man is, and should be, punished for whatever crimes he commits as a drunkard, even though the sober man does not recall them. This is for a number of reasons. To start, we have to keep people off the streets who get themselves into situations in which they are likely to commit such crimes. Additionally, we are finite beings with limited knowledge. We do not know if the sober man actually fails to recall the drunkard's acts. More importantly, we cannot know whether the sober man is unable to recall the drunkard's acts, or just fails to do so. That is, we cannot know whether the sober and the drunk man actually have different consciousnesses. Finally, when Locke claims that being punished for that which one does not recall is the same thing as being created miserable (2.27.6), he is describing Divine Punishment and Reward. On Judgment Day if we were to be judged and punished for that which we could not be *made* conscious, it would be the same as having been created miserable.

This brings to the fore an important issue that has been lurking in the background, and that is the difference between not remembering and being unable to remember. As we saw in section 20, it seems the only time one would be unable to remember, or could not be made to remember x act, is if one has a distinct consciousness from she who committed x act. It is not clear how one can be made to remember what one currently does not. But even in our everyday experiences we are sometimes made to remember something we have not thought about in many years, due to a scent, or a song, or what have you. Presumably God, who is omnipotent, has the ability to do this to the highest degree.

There is a fact of the matter whether x is a part of an individual's conscious life or not. Moreover, God has access to this fact, and can make it known to us. This is, at least in part, what Locke means when (quoting scripture) he claims that on Judgment day, "the Secrets of the Heart shall be laid open" (2.27.22). Thus, despite the failures of our judicial system, a person will only be eternally rewarded or divinely punished for that which was a part of her conscious life. On the other hand, there appears to be no such fact of the matter in Collins's view.

Given this, and what I have said above, we should now be able to see that there are numerous differences between Collins's and Locke's views. An objection to Collins is therefore not necessarily an objection to Locke. Moreover, Berkeley's objection works much better against Collins than it does Locke. Of course, this is not to say that we couldn't craft a response to Berkeley on the behalf of Collins, but rather that the "out" available to Locke is a lot more obvious than the "out" available to Collins. Put another way: the response we can offer Berkeley on behalf of Collins is going to be complicated by the fact that Collins thinks it is not a singular consciousness, but rather connected consciousnesses, that make for personal identity, and the additional related fact that what makes any two consciousnesses so-connected is *memory*.

### Conclusion

The aim of this essay has not been to offer a new reading of how Locke might respond to Berkeley, but rather to show that Berkeley's objection as found in *Alciphron* VII.8 is really an objection to Collins. This is significant not just because this objection is consistently taken to be an objection *to Locke*, but also because Berkeley's objection works against Collins in a way it doesn't against Locke. If I am right, reading Berkeley's objection *as an objection to Collins* thus gives us a more sympathetic reading of Berkeley than we might arrive at otherwise. This is important since many are quick to charge Berkeley with misrepresenting his opponents' views—and especially in *Alciphron*.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, J. S. Mill's "Berkeley's Life and Writings" (1871).