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The Aptly Named ‘Cratylus’? Berkeley’s on Shaftesbury in *Alciphron*, III

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In *Alciphron* (1732) Berkeley engages in extensive criticism of the Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury. Berkeley’s criticism of the Earl is remarkably aggressive. It culminates in §§12–14 of the *Third Dialogue*, where Berkeley launches a vicious personal attack against Shaftesbury, under the name of ‘Cratylus’. In this way the third dialogue differs radically in tone from Berkeley’s other philosophical works and has been viewed with shock and derision. In this paper I will show that Berkeley names Shaftesbury ‘Cratylus’ because he wants to impute the kind of self-deception against the Earl that Plato vividly describes in the dialogue *Cratylus*. This, moreover, is the key to correctly understanding Berkeley’s argument against Shaftesbury’s moral theory, which is an attack on a pernicious form of moral subjectivism, rather than an attack on virtue ethics, as is commonly thought.

> ‘Becoming watery is death to the soul.’
> Heraclitus B36

> ‘Such a person no longer believes in his own being, no longer believes in himself, sees everything in moving points flowing out of each other, and loses himself in this stream of becoming. He will, like the true pupil of Heraclitus [Cratylus], finally hardly dare any more to lift his finger.’
> Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*

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1. Introduction

In *Alciphron* (1732) Berkeley calls Shaftesbury 'Cratylus' and attacks his character, his idea of virtue, and his purported Stoicism.[1] Berkeley is thought either to paint Shaftesbury as a moral sceptic (Wishart 1734; Rivers 2000) or to find fault with his view because it represents a form of Stoicism that is incorrect from the point of view of either social policy or moral motivation (Jaffro 2007; Irwin 2008).

In this paper, I show that Berkeley's approach to Shaftesbury is a considered, but at times, esoteric attack on something that Berkeley saw as completely alien to all human wisdom and truth. He does not think Shaftesbury is either a moral sceptic or a Stoic of any kind. Instead, Berkeley sees him as an external world sceptic (as Berkeley understands it) that presented himself as a thinker in the Stoic tradition, but that in fact maintained a kind of pernicious moral subjectivism.

In §2, I explain Berkeley's claim in his pre-*Alciphron* writings that the central problem with the moral outlook of Shaftesbury and the so-called 'free-thinkers' generally lies in a form of scepticism about the external world. In §3, I turn to the central passage in *Alciphron III* where Berkeley attacks Shaftesbury under the name 'Cratylus'. This is commonly seen as a criticism of Shaftesbury's 'Stoicism'. I note the similarities of this criticism with Mandeville's approach to Shaftesbury, and more generally the 'Augustinian' criticism of Stoicism as motivated by pride. I also raise issues with such a comparison. In §4–§6, I examine Berkeley's view of the relation between Shaftesbury and the Stoics: first, in *Alciphron III* (§4); second, in the respective frontispieces of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* and *Alciphron*, as well as considering how these relate to Plato's diagnosis, in the dialogue *Cratylus*, of the self-deception of its eponymous main character (§5); and, third, in *Alciphron VII* (§6). The main takeaway from this analysis is that Berkeley's approach is unique in that it shifts focus from the Augustinian-Stoic debate on the psychology of moral motives that preoccupied Mandeville and his predecessors to the metaphysical nature of values. His criticism of Shaftesbury/Cratylus primarily targets the Earl's subjectivism regarding what moral values are. In §7, I show that this shift is part of a sustained effort in Berkeley's later works to view the free-thinkers, and Shaftesbury in particular, as breaking with all previous religious and moral learning.

1. All references to Berkeley's writings are from the standard edition (Berkeley: 1948–1957). The following abbreviations are used: *Part I of A Treatise concerning the Principles of Knowledge* = PHK (Section number), *Thee Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* = DHP (page number in *Works*), *Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher* = ALC (Section number), *The Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained* = TVV (Section number), *Passive Obedience* = PO (Section number), *The Will of God* = WG (Page number in *Works*).

2. Free-Thinkers and Scepticism

In the *Principles* (1710) and *Three Dialogues* (1713), Berkeley's stated aim is to confute scepticism and atheism and set the sciences on a firm footing. In the *Three Dialogues*, the spectre of scepticism is a central dialectical tool. The debate between the two protagonists, Hylas and Philonous, is framed in terms of a competition about who is the least sceptical, understood as a competition about who can avoid denying 'the reality of sensible things, or professes the greatest ignorance of them' (DHP 1713: 172). Berkeley's understanding of scepticism is intimately linked to his view of material substance. Scepticism follows, Berkeley holds, from the assumption that real things are different from ideas and exist independently of the mind. This, he argues, is the basic move made 'by *sceptics* of all ages' (PHK 1710: 87), and it is the first assumption made by Hylas (Berkeley's dialectical opponent) after they have agreed on the terms of the competition (DHP 1713: 173). Berkeley's use of the term 'sceptic' is therefore rather narrow. It refers specifically to scepticism about the external world, and this specific position is, to Berkeley's mind, refuted through his immaterialist philosophy. The purported effect of Berkeley's immaterialism, he explains in the *Preface* to the *Three Dialogues*, is that 'the study of morality and the Law of Nature were brought into fashion among men of parts and genius, the discouragements that draw to scepticism removed'. Scepticism, then, has a crippling effect on theoretical reasoning and the sciences, but Berkeley also took it to be a threat to morality.

In the *Preface* to the *Three Dialogues,* Berkeley further explains that 'it was my intention to convince *sceptics* and *infidels* by reason, so it has been my endeavour strictly to observe the most rigid laws of reasoning.' But, he continues, there is *another* kind of 'sceptic and infidel': one who does not accept strict rules of reasoning. Berkeley characterises them as 'libertines in thought' who employ a 'loose, rambling way, not altogether improperly termed *free-thinking*'. Clearly, then, the *Three Dialogues* is not aimed at these maverick free-thinkers who eschew the Enlightenment rules of engagement. Instead, Berkeley confronts this cohort in *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*. In this work, as he puts it in the *Authors Advertisement*, the 'author's design [is] to consider the Free-thinker in the various lights of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic'. Chief among the free-thinkers or, as Berkeley calls them now, 'minute philosophers' (ALC 1732: 1.10) is Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury. In the *Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained*, Berkeley describes him as 'a loose and incoherent writer' (TVV 1732: 3), language that is very similar to his description of free thinkers in the *Three Dialogues*, suggesting that he had in mind the Earl's work *Characteristicks of*

Men, Manners, Opinions, Times already when he penned the *Preface* to the *Three Dialogues*.[2]

3. On Contemplating Mankind in One's Own Mirror

Berkeley's central attack on Shaftesbury in *Alciphron* occurs in dialogue III. His approach in this dialogue, in particular when Shaftesbury is considered under the name 'Cratylus', has horrified commentators for centuries. Thomas Fowler, writing in 1882, was taken aback by 'the personal attack on Shaftesbury, under the name of Cratylus, in which the refined and gentle Berkeley verges on coarseness' (Fowler 1882: 148–49). Jessop, whose introduction to the standard edition of *Alciphron* is in large part a eulogy to that work, finds it necessary to state, with emphasis, that 'Berkeley *did* misrepresent Shaftesbury.' He continues, with palpable unease: 'Berkeley's every mention of him [Shaftesbury] being either hostile or contemptuous, and often bitterly so. The blemish must be admitted' (Berkeley 1948–1957: 3.11). More recently, Rivers has characterised Berkeley as Shaftesbury's 'most ferocious and intellectually formidable adversary, who felt no qualms about misrepresenting his views in *Alciphron* in order to demolish his reputation' (Rivers 2000: 113). The chief offending passage reads:

> Cratylus, a man prejudiced against the Christian religion, of a crazy constitution, of a rank above most men's ambitions, and a fortune equal to his rank, had little capacity for sensual vices, or temptation to dishonest ones. Cratylus, having talked himself, or imagined that he had talked himself, into a stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue, did, under the pretence of making men heroically virtuous, endeavour to destroy the means of making them reasonably and humanly so: a clear instance that neither birth, nor books, nor conversation can introduce a knowledge of the world into a conceited mind, which will ever be its own object, and contemplate mankind in its own mirror! (ALC 1732: 3.13)

This is a remarkable passage and a useful starting point for considering Berkeley's overall approach to Shaftesbury in the dialogue and in *Alciphron* as a

2. For more suggestions of Berkeley gesturing towards Shaftesbury in his early works, see Jaffro (2022: 542), who argues that Berkeley makes an implicit reference to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* in the 1713 *Guardian Essay* 126, and Jones (2021: 183), who has argued that there is an implicit reference to Shaftesbury in *Guardian Essay* 81, and that it is likely written by Berkeley on the grounds of corroborating statements made by Eliza and Anne Berkeley.

whole. Berkeley firsts states that Shaftesbury had both (i) 'a crazy constitution'[3] and (ii) 'a rank above most men's ambitions, and a fortune equal to his rank'. I take Berkeley to mean that because of (i) Shaftesbury 'had little capacity for sensual vices,' and because of (ii) he had no 'temptation to dishonest ones.' This is likely a reference to a set of passages in Shaftesbury's *Sensus Communis*, where Shaftesbury *first* stated categorically: 'A man of *thorough good breeding*, whatever else he be, is incapable of doing a rude or brutal action. He never deliberates in this case or considers of the matter by prudential rules of self-interest and advantage' (Shaftesbury 1999: 60). According to Berkeley's (i), it was Shaftesbury's own constitution, namely his physical frailty and, possibly, somewhat unusual approach to sensual desire (Tierney-Hynes 2005: 613), that explained why he could not contemplate doing any 'rude or brutal action', not through a moral achievement. *Second*, Shaftesbury claimed that an *honest* man 'cannot deliberate in the case of a plain villainy. A "plum" [a sum in the order of £100,000] is no temptation to him' (Shaftesbury 1999: 60). Here Berkeley's (ii) implies that it was Shaftesbury's immense wealth and abnormal social standing, 'a rank above most men's ambition, and a fortune to equal his rank,' rather than, say, an appropriate aesthetic appreciation of his natural affection to his king and country that explained why such a sum would not tempt him. On Berkeley's view, Shaftesbury conflates his socioeconomic and psychological anomaly with moral achievement through a kind of conceit.

The charge of hypocrisy is not novel. Mandeville, who is the target of *Alciphron II*, made a very similar argument in the essay *A Search into the Nature of Society*, first published as part of the 1723 edition of the *Fable of the Bees*. Here, Mandeville states that Shaftesbury's notion of virtue is 'a vast inlet to Hypocrisy' (Mandeville 1988: 212). Specifically, Mandeville speculates that it is Shaftesbury's 'quiet indolent nature' that led him to 'shun everything troublesome, and choose […] to curb his Passions, more because of the inconveniencies that arise from the eager pursuit after Pleasure, and the yielding to all the demands of our inclinations than any dislike he has to sensual enjoyments' (Mandeville 1988: 212). He further claims that Shaftesbury, being 'educated under a great philoso-

3. Some consideration should be given to the connotation of the word 'crazy' in the mid-1700s. The word comes from the old French word 'acraser' which means 'to break, shatter or crack'. In the late 1500s, the word started to be used to describe objects such as buildings and ships that were cracked and unsound. The word later began to be used to describe people who had broken or cracked minds. The transposition from one meaning to another is natural enough, but I would also speculate that the psychiatric disorder known as the 'glass delusion', where one fears that one is made of glass and is likely to shatter, might have helped the widening of the meaning of the word. This condition appears in the predominantly aristocratic human psyche in the late medieval and early modern period. See Speak (1990). Charles the VI of France suffered from this condition, and it is also alluded to by Descartes in *Meditation* I.

pher [Locke], who was mild and good-natured as well as an able tutor' might have 'a better opinion of his inward state than it really deserves, and believe himself virtuous, because his passions lie dormant' (Mandeville 1988: 228).

For Mandeville, Shaftesbury's hypocrisy was that perpetuated by Stoics through the ages. As 'what these Stoicks asserted of themselves exceeded all human Force and Possibility […] the Virtues they boasted of could be nothing but haughty Pretence, full of Arrogance and Hypocrisy' (Mandeville 1988: 127). Mandeville points specifically to Seneca for an example of stoic hypocrisy: 'I could swagger about Fortitude and the Contempt of Riches as much as Seneca himself, and would undertake to write twice as much in behalf of Poverty as ever he did, for the tenth Part of his Estate' (Mandeville 1988: 228).

The reason why the stoic outlook is thought to be so hypocritical is explained by the role that the vice of pride plays in human psychology and morality. Pride is a ubiquitous motive of human action. It leads us to overvalue ourselves and perform actions out of a desire for social approval. Our estimation of the approval we receive is relative to the approval we observe others receiving. Therefore, for social approval to reinforce our overvaluation of ourselves, it is important that we appear to be better than we really are, as 'the Pleasure of being esteem'd by a vast Majority, not as what they are, but what they appear to be' (Mandeville 1988: 116). Acting from pride is therefore a vice. At the same time, Mandeville famously held that this private vice was 'so beneficial to Society, and so necessary to render it wealthy and flourishing' (Mandeville 1988: 114). The Stoics were therefore doubly wrong. They first denied the incontrovertible fact that they were motivated by pride, then they aimed to subvert the good outcomes of acting from pride.

Mandeville's analysis of our pride-centered nature is indebted to French neo-Augustinian moralists of the seventeenth century, for whom the dominance of pride and self-love characterized our fallen state, and, again, informed their assessment of the Stoics (Lovejoy 1961, Brooke 2012, Douglass 2023). According to Augustine in the *City of God*, the Stoics 'in their stupid pride, believe that the Final Good is to be found in this life, and that they can achieve happiness by their own efforts' (Augustine 1998: XIX.4). More specifically a contemporary reader of *Alciphron* would likely have seen Mandeville in the context of Rochefoucauld.[4] His neo-Augustinian *Reflections; or Sentences and Moral Maxims* carried the epigraph: 'our virtues are, most often only vices disguised', giving the reader a distinct flavor of what is to follow. Seneca is the target of the book as a whole, as the frontispiece engraving by Stéphane Picart that appeared in the first four editions of the *Maxims* made clear. The engraving depicts a cupid labeled 'L'Amour de

4. For confirmation that the connection between Mandeville and Rochefoucauld would have naturally struck readers of *Alciphron* at time of publication, see Hervey (1732: 45).

la Verité' pointing and laughing at a bust of Seneca, having just removed both a mask and a laurel wreath, revealing his true, hideous face.

With this context in mind, it could be thought that Berkeley is inserting himself into a long-standing debate about some fundamental aspects of human nature. We can distinguish between, on the one hand, a broadly negative view that is often referred to as 'Augustinian', though it has been the teaching of many religious and secular thinkers before and after Augustine.[5] This view sees mankind as having a 'fallen' nature and unable to act virtuously from their own nature. This includes the secular wing represented by Rochefoucauld and Mandeville, which has been maintained 'throughout most of Western—not to speak of Eastern—thought' (Lovejoy 1961: 1). Lovejoy saw the canonical statement of this view in the writings of the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, who observed in the seventh century BCE that 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick' (Jeremiah 2001: 17.9). On the other hand, Stoicism sees humanity as essentially dignified and self-sufficient. We can act in accordance with the good by aiming to act virtuously. At the same time, individuals should only focus on what they can control and accept the inevitable changes of life without succumbing to negative emotions.

By accusing Shaftesbury's alleged Stoicism of hypocrisy, it might seem that Berkeley is adopting the 'Augustinian' side of this debate. Several commentators have interpreted the 'Cratylus' passage as an attack on Stoic 'disinterested virtue'. In particular, Jaffro (2007) and Irwin (2008) understand Berkeley as targeting a broadly Stoic conception of moral psychology.[6]

However, understanding Berkeley's approach to Shaftesbury as an 'Augustinian' attack on Stoicism quickly runs into a number of issues. When Berkeley describes 'Cratylus' as 'having talked himself, or imagined that he had talked himself, into a stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue', it matters

5. Augustine's conception of pride is irreducibly connected to the concept of original sin and in direct contrast to the 'love of God' (Augustine 1998: xiv.13). Therefore, speaking of secular Augustinianism in this context will be somewhat anachronistic, see Douglass (2021: 289ff). Douglass nevertheless states, in relation to speaking of Mandeville as 'Augustinian' that 'the more general complaint that the Stoics overestimated our capacity to control our passion and achieve true happiness can be supported by a naturalistic analysis of human nature' (Douglass 2021: 291).

6. Jaffro also makes a broader, but connected, point about Berkeley's engagement with Shaftesbury across the seven dialogues of *Alciphron* as a whole (see Jaffro 2022 in particular). Jaffro contends that Berkeley targets Shaftesbury because he sees him as presenting a unique project of philosophical education. On this view, Berkeley takes Shaftesbury to be revamping classical Stoic *paideia* for an 18th century audience and therefore being a direct rival to Berkeley's own Christian educational programme (Jaffro 2022: 542–43). I agree with this assessment of *Alciphron* as a whole and see this paper as complimenting that view by showing why Berkeley not just took Shaftesbury's purported Stoicism to be impractical and unrealistic, but also deeply incoherent in a way that is damaging to the human subject. In this way, one of the upshots of this paper is that it shows why, to Berkeley's mind, Shaftesbury's educational programme was so problematic.

whether he is in the grips of Stoic enthusiasm or if he just 'imagined' it. As we shall see shortly, Berkeley has a lot more to say on this point later in the dialogue. It is also noteworthy that we have seen that Berkeley repeatedly points to a form of scepticism as the main issue he has with the 'free-thinkers' and paints Shaftesbury as his main free-thinker target. It would therefore be peculiar if, when he finally confronts Shaftesbury, the central objection is to his Stoicism. Further, why call Shaftesbury 'Cratylus'? We have reason to think that Berkeley carefully considered the names for each character in *Alciphron*. As explained further below, the historical Cratylus was not a Stoic but an extreme Heraclitean relativist and subjectivist. Finally, is it accurate to view Berkeley as an 'Augustinian' on the 'Augustinian'- 'Stoic' continuum? While this is a large and complex issue that cannot be fully resolved in this paper, I want to show how Berkeley positioned himself on this matter with regards to his criticism of Shaftesbury.

4. Did Berkeley See Shaftesbury as a Stoic?

To begin to address these issues, this section will consider in some detail Berkeley's approach to Shaftesbury's moral philosophy as it relates to Stoicism. In response to the harsh criticism of Shaftesbury/Cratylus, Alciphron, who is Shaftesbury's spokesperson in the dialogue, declares that Shaftesbury 'had a mind to make men incorrupt and virtuous upon the purest and most disinterested principles.' This frames the rest of the discussion of Shaftesbury's system in the dialogue which considers the issue of normative force that is at the heart of the conflict between 'self-interest' and the 'beauty of virtue' as reasons for moral actions.

Berkeley's response comes in two stages. First, he considers the more practical issue of the best way to organize society, given certain assumptions about moral psychology. Because *typically* people are motivated by self-interested motives (a point on which Alciphron agrees at this stage of the dialogue), a moral system that will allow people to act on such considerations will be more effective in keeping people's action in line with the demands of morality. As Berkeley puts it: 'His [Shaftesbury's] conduct seems just as wise as if a monarch should give out that there was neither jail nor executioner in his kingdom to enforce the laws, but that it would be beautiful to observe them, and in so doing we would taste the pure delight which results from order and decorum' (ALC 1732: 3.13). Berkeley instead believes that the most well-ordered society will be one in which the members firmly direct their individual self-interest towards what is moral. But this is a socio-political issue, not one that concerns the question of the *possibility* of a strictly disinterested morality.

As we move from section 3.13 to section 3.14, the notion of disinterested virtue becomes the main topic. Here, Shaftesbury's/Cratylus' spokesperson is Alciphron and Berkeley's view is voiced by Crito. The key passage is the following:

> ALCIPHRON: is it not true that certain ancient philosophers, of great note, held the same opinion with Cratylus, declaring that he did not come up to the character, or deserve the title of a good man who practised virtue for the sake of anything but its own beauty?
>
> CRITO: allowing the disinterested Stoics (therein not unlike our modern Quietists) to have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense, yet what is this to those who are no Stoics? If we adopt the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece, and consistent with the whole. But he who shall borrow this splendid patch from the Stoics, and hope to make a figure by inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times, will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended. (ALC 1732: 3.14)

Berkeley's juxtaposition of Shaftesbury, the Stoics, and the Quietists is crucial here. How are we to understand this triad? Irwin reads this passage as follows: 'Berkeley implicitly accuses Shaftesbury of endorsing the enthusiasm of the French Quietists, because of his emphasis on disinterested moral motivation. Berkeley compares the Quietists to the Stoics who "have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense"' (Irwin 2008: 365n344). As Irwin sees it, Berkeley is accusing Shaftesbury of holding the strict disinterested view of moral motivation that Berkeley attributes to the Quietists and the Stoics. I agree that in this passage, for the sake of argument, Berkeley allows that the Stoics took true disinterestedness to be necessary and sufficient for virtue.[7] Further, as Berkeley rightly points out, this was in fact a view explicitly adopted by the Quietists. The cornerstone of their outlook is that a person in the morally ideal state of 'pure love of God' will act virtuously not on account of any self-interested motive but solely for the reason that it is the will of God. Infamously, as the leading Quietist Fénelon declared with his so-called 'impossible supposi-

7. Earlier in 3.14, when considering Seneca and Marcus Aurelius on the mortality of the soul, Berkeley disputes this claim.

tion', such a person would act for that reason even if to do so would lead one to 'suffer the pains of hell for all eternity' (i.e., contrary to any internal motivation) (Fénelon 2014: 224).

The question now is: what does Berkeley intend to say about Shaftesbury's relation to this extreme form of Stoicism (or genuine Quietism)? On Irwin's view, Berkeley is criticising the very idea of external reasons for moral action, and so he is criticising Shaftesbury because he is an extreme Stoic (or genuine Quietist).[8] But Berkeley's argument here is not targeted at the particular idea of disinterested virtue. First, Berkeley says that if we set up for 'complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine [of disinterested virtue] with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece, and consistent with the whole.' He also refers to this strong form of disinterested virtue as 'this splendid patch'; suggesting that he finds the position to be admirable to some extent.[9]

Berkeley raises the issue of disinterested virtue not to reject it but to diffuse Alciphron's response by explaining that he agrees that the idea is noble and could be coherent in a Stoic framework. This suggests that Berkeley's approach towards the disagreement between the Augustinian and the Stoic moral view is quite complex. He prefers the Augustinian view on the level of sociopolitical policy. However, he then makes clear at length that he lauds the Stoic view on the central philosophical issues of the possibility of disinterested virtue.

Next, Berkeley states: 'yet what is this to those who are no Stoics?' Berkeley's point is that even assuming that the Stoics do have a strictly disinterested notion of moral virtue, and accepting that it might be a laudable view, all this is of no

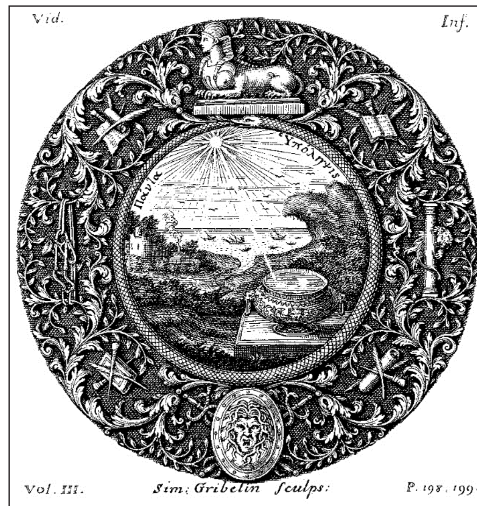
8. It should also be noted that Berkeley married Anne Berkeley [née Foster] in 1728, shortly before he started work on *Alciphron*. She was a Quietist, as is seen from her letters to William Samuel Johnson and Adam Gordon. She sent Johnson various manuscripts that she wished him to bring to America as they 'may conduce to the happiness of your country' (Berkeley 1933: 37). These included the Quietist Nathaniel Hooke's *Letter to a Lady* as well as her own translation of some of the leading Quietist Guyon's writings. But her interest is these matters are not merely scholarly. Her letters show her as a devout Quietist (Berkeley 1933: 41). As she explains to Johnson, 'I consider my self a Unbodied Spirit who am Crucified to the World and the World unto me & who wish to be million of times more so than I am' (Berkeley 1933: 40). Gordon speaks of her 'pure disinterestedness' in his sketch of her character (Berkeley 1791: 1.8). It would be sufficient for Berkeley to make a point against genuine disinterested virtue by considering Stoicism in a 'for the sake of argument' mode. Would Berkeley go out of his way and mention the sect his wife adhered to as an example of an incorrect moral outlook, and one that is associated with his virulent attack on Shaftesbury?

9. Could he be sarcastic with his usage of the term 'splendid' here? There is a significant extraneous reason to think that he means it sincerely. Anne commented on this very passage in one of her letters to Adam Gordon, and she is typically thought to be a competent interpreter of her husband's views. There, claiming to state the view of her husband, she writes: 'Lord S- [Shaftesbury] […] stole *fine brilliant sentiments* from the ancient philosophers, and patched them together with shreds of modern infidelity' (Berkeley 1791: 1.115, italics added). She clearly reads 'splendid patch' as 'fine brilliant sentiments' in a straightforward, non-sarcastic way. For discussion of these passages in Anne's letters and their relation to her husband's views, see Storrie (2011).

use in a defence of Shaftesbury's moral theory because Shaftesbury is no Stoic. Instead, Berkeley states that Shaftesbury 'borrow this splendid patch [the doctrine of disinterested virtue] from the Stoics,' but fails to emulate these ancient sages because he is 'inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times'. The result is a *disfigurement* of the stoic ideal. Shaftesbury 'will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended.' Specifically, Berkeley cites as problematic for the coherence of Shaftesbury's position his failure to adhere to a Stoic account of 'good and evil' (Berkeley 1732: 3.14). Berkeley does not further elaborate on this point in *Alciphron* III, but I will now argue that this is really the crux of Berkeley's criticism of Shaftesbury as 'Cratylus' in *Alciphron* as a whole.

5. The Two Frontispieces

In pursuing this issue and with the idea of 'disfigurement' still in view, the first thing I want to suggest is that Shaftesbury and Berkeley are engaged in a peculiar game of visual metaphors. An examination of this interplay shows how Berkeley thinks of Shaftesbury's purportedly Stoic conception of good and evil. Like Rochefoucauld, Shaftesbury has a frontispiece in volume one of the *Characteristics* that comments on Stoicism. This image is central to Berkeley's attack on 'Cratylus' in *Alciphron*.



Both the page numbers and the central image refer the reader to the third volume of the *Characteristics*, the *Miscellaneous Reflections on the Said Treatises, and Other Critical Subjects*, 4.1. The page numbers in the bottom-right were added

in the second edition. In Shaftesbury's instructions to his 'publisher' Micklethwayth for revising the second edition of the *Characteristics*, he somewhat gleefully stated that: 'None will be the wiser for this reference, except those who deserve it, and ought to have what light can be given 'em on such terms as these' (Paknadel 1974: 297).

In the *Miscellany*, Shaftesbury presents himself as a commentator on his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit*. The page reference on the Frontispiece is meant to highlight the following sentence and accompanying footnote:

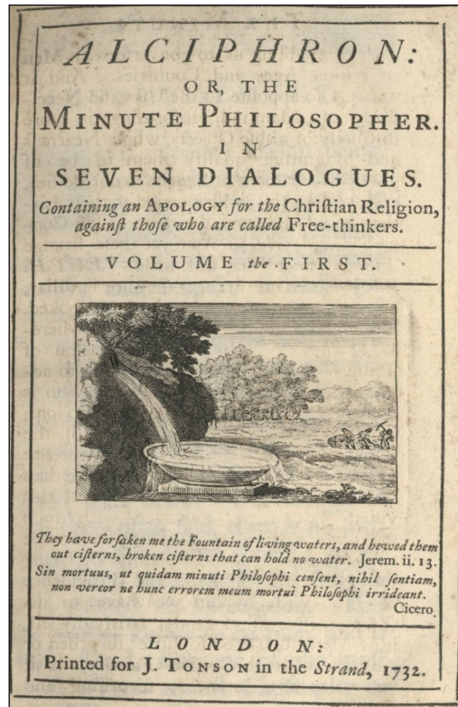
> Here, therefore, arises work and employment for us within, to regulate fancy and rectify opinions, on which all depends.*
> *Apprehension is everything, and this is up to you. Therefore, remove the apprehension when you wish, and there is a great calm as though you were rounding the headland, and all is still and the bay is still: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 12.22. The soul is like the basin of water. Fancies are like the ray of light that strikes upon the water. Thus, when the water is disturbed, the ray seems too to be disturbed; but it is not. And so when anyone is agitated, it is not the arts and the virtues that are confounded but the spirit in which they exist. And when this steadies, they do as well: Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.3.20–2. (Shaftesbury 1999: 422–23)

The depictions of a still harbour and of a jug of water reflecting sunlight in the Frontispiece are references to the central Stoic metaphors that Shaftesbury quotes. The phrase 'panta hypolêpsis' (often translated as 'everything is opinion' or 'everything is apprehension') inscribed at the top of the picture is a phrase sometimes used by Marcus Aurelius, for example in the passage that Shaftesbury quotes above.

Berkeley's *Alciphron* also has a frontispiece for each of the two volumes. My contention is that it represents Berkeley's understanding of Shaftesbury as a disingenuous Stoic. The picture for volume one is depicted below.

The picture shows water flowing from a waterfall into a cistern of dubious quality. The picture of the cistern that spills water might reasonably be regarded as alluding to Shaftesbury's Stoic still water picture on the Frontispiece, as will be explored more fully shortly.[10] Below the picture are two quotes, one from the

10. Berman takes the leaking cistern picture to symbolise the 'the rejection of God and religion by the free-thinkers' (Berman 1994: 106). I will defend the view that Berkeley's intension here is more specific, namely a comment on Shaftesbury's discord with Stoicism. Berman also believes that on a deeper, esoteric level, the broken cistern picture symbolises Berkeley's failed Bermuda project, which he often likened to a fountain of knowledge (Berman 1994: 106–07). While it is somewhat speculative, I agree with Berman that it is possible that Berkeley meant his picture to signify a multitude of meanings on different levels.



ALCIPHRON:
OR, THE
MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.
IN
SEVEN DIALOGUES.
Containing an APOLOGY *for the* Chriſtian Religion, *againſt thoſe who are called* Free-thinkers.

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

They have forſaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water. Jerem. ii. 13.
Sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti Philoſophi cenſent, nihil ſentiam, non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui Philoſophi irrideant.
Cicero

LONDON:
Printed for J. TONSON in the *Strand*, 1732.

arch-Augustinian Jeremiah, the second from Cicero. Cicero was not a straightforward Stoic, but his own position relied heavily on Stoicism.[11] The quote from Jeremiah 2.13 reads: 'They have forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' The quote from Cicero's *De Senectute* 85 reads: 'But if when dead I will be without sensation, as some minute philosophers think, then I have no fear that these seers, when they are dead, will have the laugh on me.' According to Berkeley, what is at stake is not contained within the debate between Augustinianism and Stoicism. Shaftesbury has created something new and 'modern'.[12] In response, Berkeley summons both of the old warring factions to fight the new enemy.

Below the picture on the title page of the second volume we find a quote from Plato's *Cratylus*: 'The worst of all deception is self deception' (Plato 1997: 428d). If Shaftesbury is aptly named 'Cratylus', then we would expect Berkeley to raise some issue of self-deception with regard to him. It is worthwhile at this point to consider what Berkeley wants to signify by deciding to call Shaftesbury 'Cratylus'. In *Alciphron,* Berkeley targets Antony Collins as another 'free-thinker'. Collins is referred to by the name 'Diagoras'. Diagoras of Melos was a 5th cen-

11. Cicero discusses how he sees himself as following the Stoics in *On Duties* I.6 and III.20.

12. Berkeley would therefore agree with Charles Taylor when he says that: 'Shaftesbury's philosophy, for all its Stoic inspiration, is crucially shaped by a modern, we might say post-Christian, mode of thought' (Taylor 1989: 255).

tury BCE Greek poet and sophist commonly considered the first known atheist. Collins purports, though without much conviction, to be a deist but Berkeley believes that he is really arguing for atheism.[13] In the case of Collins as Diagoras, Berkeley has a straightforward reason for giving his freethinking opponent an ancient name connected to his esoteric message, as Diagoras was to a large part famous for his atheism.

The case of 'Cratylus' is more complex. The historical Cratylus was a 5th century BCE Greek philosopher who was a follower of Heraclitus. Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics*, reports that Plato at an early age was acquainted with Cratylus and his Heraclitean-inspired views about the perpetual flux of sensible objects (Aristotle 1984: 987a32–b7). When the various comments about Cratylus that we have from Plato and Aristotle are pieced together, a somewhat tragic picture emerges. In Plato's dialogue of the same name, Cratylus is still a young man who is an articulate and confident exponent of the view that the nature of things is best described as fluidity and flux, and that the names of things are so framed as to capture this fact. Aristotle's depiction of Cratylus shows someone who becomes successively more extreme in his understanding of the flux theory. 'Cratylus [...] criticized Heraclitus for saying that it is impossible to step twice into the same river, for *he* [Cratylus] though one could not do it even once' (Aristotle 1984: 1010a11–14). In the *Rhetoric,* Aristotle states that Aeschines of Sphettus 'described Cratylus as hissing with fury and shaking his fists' (Aristotle 1984: 1417b1–2). Sedley suggests that this behaviour 'according to the analysis of primary sounds in Plato's dialogue (Plato 1997: 427a1–8) is one way in which the human voice conveys motion' and that this could be understood as an expression of Cratylus' 'increasingly desperate struggle to fit language to the world's fluidity' (Sedley 2003: 20). The final stage of Cratylus' struggle is manifested in a capitulation of language in the face of the utter flux of nature. As Aristotle comments in the *Metaphysics*, Cratylus 'finally did not think it right to say anything but only moved his finger' (Aristotle 1984: 1010a12). The picture of Cratylus is accordingly of an extreme relativist, whose outlook led to a peculiar form of cognitive dissonance. I will argue that Berkeley takes Shaftesbury to be guilty of the kind of self-deception that Plato describes in that dialogue and ultimately ascribes to the title character.

Plato also has something to say about the consequences of this kind of deception that is relevant to Berkeley's attack on 'Cratylus'. In the long central part of the text, Socrates considers the etymologies of the names of the virtues. Upon hearing words such as 'wisdom' and 'justice', Socrates receives a premonition: 'By the dog, I think that's a pretty good inspiration—what popped in to my mind

13. David Berman has shown that Berkeley's criticism of Antony Collins in *Alciphron* is aimed not at Collins official deistic views, but specifically against what Berkeley took to be his hidden, esoteric atheistic position (Berman 1989: 72ff).

just now!' (Plato 1997: 411b). What occurs to Socrates at that moment is an analogy between the activity of the name-givers of old and contemporary philosophers. Both parties, Socrates holds, are guilty of a deep and peculiar confusion or deception:

> Most of our wise men nowadays get so dizzy going around and around in their search for the nature of the things that are, that the things themselves appear to them to be turning around and moving every which way. Well, I think that the people who gave things their names in very ancient times are exactly like these wise men. They don't blame this on their internal condition, however, but on the nature of the things themselves, which they think are never stable or steadfast, but flowing and moving, full of every sort of motion and constant coming into being. I say this, because the names [the names of the virtues] you just mentioned put me in mind of it.' (Plato 1997: 411b–c)

The mistake that the purportedly wise men of old and new make is to confuse their own 'internal condition' for the nature of reality (Ademollo 2011: 208). They confuse and/or deceive themselves, and by doing so affect a constant change in themselves when attempting to understand nature. Then they project this change and confusion into external reality, proclaiming *it* unstable, changing, and flowing.

In the final passage of the dialogue, Socrates is speaking with Cratylus, and again returns to this confusion or mistake on the part of the purportedly wise men of old and new:

> Let's investigate one further issue so as to avoid being deceived by the fact that so many of these names seem to lean in the same direction—as we will be if, as seems to me to be the case, the name-givers really did give them in the belief that everything is always moving and flowing, and as it happens things aren't really that way at all, but the name-givers themselves have fallen into a kind of vortex and are whirled around in it, dragging us with them.' (Plato 1997: 439b–c)

Here Socrates wants to impress on Cratylus the seriousness of the issue and is possibly hinting at the historical Cratylus' unfortunate later days. If we follow those who have this confused approach to reality, they will 'drag […] us with them […] into a kind of vortex'. A bit later, Socrates warns that Cratylus' view will lead him to 'condemning both himself and the things that are to be totally unsound like leaky sinks—or believe that things are exactly like people with runny noses, or that all things are afflicted with colds and drip over everything'

(Plato 1997: 440c–d).[14] By presenting cases of things spilling out from where they should be, Plato is again bringing out the idea of mistaken projection or 'leaking out' of the inner world onto the outer. Cratylus is characterised as someone who embodies the very antithesis of what later became the idea of Stoic calm.

On the basis of the two frontispieces and related quotes, I propose the following hypothesis: in the two title pages of *Alciphron,* Berkeley subtly hints at issues that he wants to raise with regards to Shaftesbury. First, the leaky cistern image is pointing to a fundamental failure in Shaftesbury's self-styled Stoicism by mocking Shaftesbury's frontispiece. Second, by citing Plato's claim in the *Cratylus* that the worst kind of deception is self-deception, he signals, when he later calls Shaftesbury 'Cratylus', that Shaftesbury is suffering from a kind of self-deception. When we look at the self-deception passages in Plato's Cratylus, we see that Plato uses the language of leaky vessels to describe the nature of the self-deception, so the two clues in the title pages of Alciphron point towards a single issue—Shaftesbury's alleged Stoicism is understood by Berkeley as a case of 'Cratylusian' self-deception.

6. Shaftesbury and the Stoic Notion of Good and Evil

Can we locate a plausible candidate for a failed attempt to approximate Stoic notions of good and evil that could count as a form of confusion between inner nature and the outer world in Shaftesbury? I believe Berkeley understood the *Conclusion* of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry* in this way. The import of this passage is contested in contemporary Shaftesbury scholarship, and I do not wish to state that the reading I will present here is the only correct one. It is sufficient for my purposes that the reading has plausibility.

The *Conclusion* is the culmination of Shaftesbury's philosophically most rigorous exposition of his moral theory. The theory, very briefly, is this: Shaftesbury holds that the terms 'good' and 'ill' ultimately refer to the benefit something has to the universe as a whole (Shaftesbury 1999: 164–65; 169). With regard to human beings, Shaftesbury takes the motives, rather than the consequences of action, to be the relevant feature to be measured by this standard. Further, purely intellectual deliberation is not sufficient to enable motives to crystalize into action. Instead motives necessarily involve 'passions', or as Shaftesbury calls them, 'affections'. A good affection, one that promotes the well-

14. It is noteworthy that Ademollo, in his commentary on the Cratylus, has translated the crucial phrase 'παντα ὥσπερ κεραμία ῥεῖ' as 'all things flow like pots' because the word 'ῥεῖ' has 'flow' as its primary signification. However, as Adermollo also recognises, pots do not flow. As he puts it in a footnote to his translation of the relevant passage, 'Besides meaning "flow", ῥέω also m'eans "leak" and thus can be said of a pot' (Ademollo 2011: 486n75).

being of the universe as a whole, is 'natural', it is how we as human beings are designed to relate to the world (Shaftesbury 1999: 169–72). However, to have natural affections is not yet moral goodness or virtue (Shaftesbury 1999: 172). Instead, virtue requires that one relates to the affections in an appropriate way; that is to say, that one has a reflective response to one's own affections. The first-order affections become objects of consideration, and affections towards these 'objects' give rise to the second class of affections. This second order affection is understood as an aesthetic appreciation of the balance and harmony of first-order affections in the mind (Shaftesbury 1999: 1722–723). It is this second order affection that motivates a virtuous person. Shaftesbury models this capacity for second order affection as a moral sense (Shaftesbury 1999: 173).

This account of moral sense leads to an ambiguity in his account of the nature of moral properties. On the one hand, a good act, or intention when it comes to human beings, is evaluated in terms of the extent to which it coheres with the design of the whole. Therefore, virtue is evaluated on the basis of an accord between an affective state in an agent and the structure of the universe as a whole.[15] On the other hand, the moral sense is sometimes described as evaluating not a relation between an internal affection and the external world, but as evaluating the various internal affections, independently of the external world.[16]

We find this ambiguity and a way of resolving it in the Stoic theory of moral action on which Shaftesbury claims to model his own approach. A famous, purportedly Stoic, statement presented by Diogenes Laertius is that: 'living according with nature is living in accordance with virtue, since nature leads us to virtue' (Laertius 1964: 7.87). 'Nature' in this formula refers to two things. First, it refers to our own constitution, as in what is natural for human beings. Second, nature is the course of events of the universe as a whole. These two senses of 'nature' are brought in accord because our nature is seen as part of nature as a whole. This leads the Stoic to hold that being virtuous requires one to have a correct rational understanding of the course of events in the world and understand oneself as an actor within this whole. As Diogenes concludes: 'Therefore, the end turns out to be living in agreement with nature, taken as living in accordance both with one's own nature and with the nature of the whole' (Laertius 1964: 7.88). Diogenes attributes this conclusion to the early Greek Stoic Chrysippus. It is reiterated by the later Roman Stoic thinker Epictetus, who is a central point of reference for Shaftesbury's articulation of his own moral theory, in particular in his private notebooks, or *Askemata*. In Epictetus' *Dialogues,* the reader is reminded that they are a 'citizen of the universe, and a part of it; and not a subservient,

15. For commentators who emphasise this side of Shaftesbury's moral theory, see Schneewind 1997; Rivers 2000; Irwin 2008, 2015.

16. This aspect of Shaftesbury's moral theory is given particular emphasis by Sidgewick 1902; Taylor 1989; Den Uyl 1998; Gill 2000, 2006.

but a principal part of it. For you are capable of understanding the divine governance of the universe, and of reasoning on what follows from that.' He continues by stating that it is the 'calling of the citizen […] never to deliberate on anything as though detached from the whole [of nature] […] never exercise any impulse or desire, except by reference to the whole' (Epictetus 2014: 2.10–3.4).

Similarly, the apparent ambiguity in Shaftesbury's account of the moral sense can be given a Stoic resolution if moral virtue depends in some way on a relation between the inner judgements of the second order affections in our mind and the structure of external reality. However, Shaftesbury at point explicitly *denies* that his conception of virtue depends on a relation between internal and external nature. Instead, he claims that his conception of virtue is exhausted by the account of the appreciation of one's inner life's structure. This point is most forcefully presented in the following passage from the *Conclusion* of the *Inquiry*:

> For let us carry scepticism ever so far, let us doubt, if we can, of everything about us, we cannot doubt of what passes within ourselves. Our passions and affections are known to us. They are certain, whatever the objects may be on which they are employed. Nor is it of any concern to our argument how these exterior objects stand—whether they are realities or mere illusions, whether we wake or dream. For ill dreams will be equally disturbing, and a good dream, if life be nothing else, will be easily and happily passed. In this dream of life, therefore, our demonstrations have the same force, our balance and economy hold good and our obligation to virtue is in every respect the same.' (Shaftesbury 1999: 229–30).[17]

While Shaftesbury does not preclude that the moral sense accords with external nature—indeed he considers the two accounts complimentary and mutually reinforcing—the accord between the two is not required for moral virtue. His view allows that a person can be morally perfect even if all their beliefs about the universe's structure are false. This concern has been expressed in contemporary readings of Shaftesbury:

> His [Shaftesbury's] goal was to show that virtue essentially involved both being moved by certain kinds of passions and acting in accord with the universal system designed by God. But this new idea ['even if all our beliefs are false, we will still have a conclusive reason to be virtuous'] amounts to an abandonment of the second part of that goal, in that

17. See also *Miscellany* 4.2 (Shaftesbury 1999: 428).

> it reneges on the commitment to a correspondence between our moral affections and the systematic design of the universe. It is as though Shaftesbury is pulling up the anchor in objectivity and allowing affection to blow morality wherever it will.' (Gill 2006: 125–26)[18]

It is my contention that Berkeley came to a similar conclusion over 270 years prior; in fact, he appears to have been the first one to do so. He believed that this is the view that Shaftesbury mistakenly takes to be tantamount to the Stoic view that external goods have no intrinsic value, and that virtue is instead a matter of how one comports oneself towards impressions—that 'all is apprehension'. According to Berkeley, the *Frontispiece* in the *Characteristics* is accordingly meant to illustrate Shaftesbury's Stoicism, understood as the claim that the only thing that is relevant for moral virtue is how one comports oneself towards one's inner life. However, for the Stoics, this only makes sense within a non-sceptical framework that equally prioritises external nature and human nature. Without this, they would descend to moral subjectivism. As we saw above, Shaftesbury, in some modes, takes it to be a distinctive feature of his position that he is assuming external world scepticism to be true. Therefore, we can see how, for Berkeley, Shaftesbury is fundamentally at odds with the Stoics, as the latter position requires what Shaftesbury, at least at times, explicitly denies.

We have seen that Berkeley claims that there is a problem with Shaftesbury's attempt to frame his conception of good and evil in a Stoic tradition. We have also seen that later commentators have identified such a problem in Shaftesbury's apparent endorsement of external world scepticism, and that it leads to moral subjectivism. This aligns with Berkeley's portrayal in the *Preface* to the *Three Dialogues*, where he describes unnamed free-thinkers—likely referring to Shaftesbury—as sceptics and links this scepticism to a flawed moral theory.

This hypothesis is still somewhat speculative. Therefore, the next step in this inquiry is to consider if there is any specific evidence in *Alciphron* that: (a) Berkeley takes the central problem of Shaftesbury's conception of 'good and evil' to lie in the acceptance of external world scepticism and moral subjectivism; and (b) why Berkeley is exceedingly concerned about this position.

With regard to (a), at the end of the seventh and final dialogue of *Alciphron*, there is a standoff between Euphranor and Alciphron. The former is refusing to let the two freethinking gentlemen leave until they provide a clear and direct answer about their true beliefs. Alciphron, who at this point is very keen to disentangle himself from his inquisitive host, responds as follows: 'Since it must be so, I will now reveal what I take to be the sum and substance, the grand arcanum and ultimate conclusion of our sect, and that in the two words, *panta hypolêpsis*.'

18. See also Gill (2000: 538ff).

To which Euphranor responds: 'You are then a downright sceptic' (ALC 1732: 7.24). Here, Berkeley finally links Shaftesbury's professed Stoicism on the frontispiece to scepticism.

Some care should be taken with regards to the kind of scepticism Berkeley is imputing here. According to commentators who have analysed this passage, Berkeley is suggesting that Shaftesbury is a moral sceptic. Another way to understand his point, which I want to suggest is more appropriate, is that Shaftesbury concedes to a scepticism about the external world, which in turn leads to a certainty within the moral realm, albeit a perniciously subjective form of morality. Rivers, following Wishart, takes Berkeley to intend the former interpretation (Wishart 1734: 42–5; Rivers 2000: 120). Therefore, they both see Berkeley's claim as a 'complete (and presumably deliberate) misrepresentation of what Shaftesbury means by his motto' (Rivers 2000: 120). Rivers and Wishart hold that Shaftesbury's use of the motto is not an endorsement of scepticism of any kind because Shaftesbury, as they correctly point out, states in the *Inquiry* that the principles of morality are established with the greatest certainty. In fact, they appeal to that very passage in the *Inquiry* in which Shaftesbury explicitly states that his view is compatible with external world scepticism in *defence* of Shaftesbury against Berkeley's claim that Shaftesbury is a sceptic (Wishart 1734: 44–5; Rivers 2000: 120). However, as we have seen, by insulating morality from the complete external world scepticism that he grants, Shaftesbury may still claim that morality is established in accordance with the utmost certainty. But Berkeley would also be making a reasonable point in saying that the relevant passage in the *Inquiry* also grants external world scepticism and, therefore, leads to a conception of good and evil that would be unrecognisable to the Stoics precisely because it completely eschews external nature.

Turning to (b), we can accept this entire line of reasoning by Berkeley and quite reasonably ask—'so what?' If we accept that values themselves are accounted for by second-order apprehensions, why think that Shaftesbury has deserved any criticism, let alone Berkeley's exceedingly harsh criticism, beyond noting that he is not really a classical Stoic?

In the very last section of *Alciphron*, Crito considers the negative effect of 'free-thinking' on the 'youth' and what can be done to counteract it: 'men follow vice for the sake of pleasure, and fly from virtue through an abhorrence of pain. Their minds, therefore, betimes should be formed and accustomed to receive pleasure and pain from proper objects, or, which is the same thing, to have their inclinations and aversions rightly placed' (ALC 1732: 7.31). The task of appropriate moral education is to align the feelings of pain and pleasure to 'proper objects'. In *Passive Obedience* (1712), Berkeley explains that these proper objects are suggested to us by the structure of the experiential, external world

(PO 1732: 6.19). In that work, Berkeley develops this idea in some detail.[19] Here, he explains that as we become aware of the 'nature of things', we find that nature is arranged in such a way that an action that involves a small amount of displeasure now is often connected with events that yield great pleasure in the future. Further, as our 'nobler faculties' develop, we find that there are goods that are greater than the sensible ones; and so we come to be obliged to act on goods that are far off or too refined for our senses. Given Berkeley's Christian belief in the existence of God and the afterlife, it follows that for him there are 'eternal interests' and that the way to aim for this is to follow God's will (ALC 1712: 6.19–20).

Berkeley's point is therefore that people are led astray by 'free-thinkers', and in particular by Shaftesbury, because they do not provide this connection between pain and pleasure and 'proper objects', but attach pain and pleasure to further aspects of changeable internal objects that cannot serve as consistent standards, such as aesthetic judgments about affections. Not only is the internalisation of values incorrect, but it is also a mistake that leads to immorality. This is the conclusion of Berkeley's account of Shaftesbury as a sceptic. It is not a matter of internalism or externalism about *motives for action*, but about internalism and externalism about *moral values*.

7. Implications for Berkeley—The 'Will of God'

Berkeley was determined to confront and defeat what he considered a new and profoundly misleading way of conceiving human nature. To do so, he brought in all the reinforcements he could muster and formed allegiances that would perhaps not have been obvious to him in the past. In this way, Shaftesbury is portrayed by Berkeley as contributing to a radically new 'modern' understanding of the world and the human subject's place therein because it does not rely on a rational and normative external nature.

In his early reflections on moral obligation, as discussed above, Berkeley takes a somewhat pessimistic view of human nature, initially grounding moral action in self-interest. He links this to a Christian perspective, framing the rational and normative good as rooted in God's will, supported by divine sanctions. Matters are different in *Alciphron* as Berkeley goes to great length to harmonise with the quite different Stoic and even Quietist positions on moral motivation. Berkeley takes this harmonising tendency even further in his very last writing, the sermon suitably named *The Will of God* written in 1751, which includes the following remarkable passage:

19. At PO 6:19. See Storrie (2018: 163ff; 2022: 421ff) for a discussion.

> For, what else is the design and aim of vertue or religion, but the making our several distinct wills coincident with, and subordinate to, the one Supreme will of God? In which coincidence or subordination, all our happiness is included: whether, with Epicureans, we place it in the pleasures of sense, or, with others in living according to nature, or with some others in a calm constant tenor of mind, undisturbed by appetite or passion.' (WG 7.136)

In the end, therefore, Berkeley appears to believe that human nature is multifarious, sufficiently so to accommodate both Christian morality as well as the various ancient approaches to *Eudaimonia*. This explicitly includes the Epicurean view, but also, it appears, the Stoic view. Berkeley's approach here, as in *Alciphron*, is to hold that the central aspect of 'vertue', as well as religion, centrally concerns the nature of values, while allowing that human beings might differ quite fundamentally about what motivates an individual to seek out what she values.

8. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that Berkeley took Shaftesbury to be conceited, but not in the way that 'Augustinians' took Stoics to be hypocrites. Instead, Berkeley is sympathetic to *both* Stoic and traditional Christian accounts of moral psychology. Berkeley's criticism of Shaftesbury is that the Earl promulgated a form of relativism and moral subjectivism under the guise of Stoicism. This makes Berkeley's choice of eponym for Shaftesbury apt. In the broader context of *Alciphron* as a whole, Berkeley wants to portray the free-thinkers, and Shaftesbury in particular, as a modern and radically distinct movement, not only from Christian thought, but from all ancient learning. To this aim, he wants to shift the focus from motives for action and towards the nature of values.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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