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In the course of this paper I will attempt to describe Berkeley position on self-knowledge, as well, I will attempt to interpret Hylas' concerns with Philonous' (Berkeley's) position.

In the beginning (of the third dialogue), Philonous describes self-knowledge as something known immediately or intuitively. Philonous describes the self as a spirit, separate from ideas, an "indivisible, unextended thing that thinks, acts and perceives" (p. 232). Philonous argues that the soul is a spirit that furnishes us with ideas, and that through self-knowledge we can reflect on our own soul and attain a notion of God. Philonous argues that the idea of God is our own soul intuitively reflected upon with heightened powers and imperfections removed. In addition, we are not made of ideas, in fact, we are separate from ideas and our soul is not an idea but an intuitively sensed spirit or being that exists. Philonous also argues that we have an immediate knowledge of our mind and ideas, and through this knowledge, we are able to comprehend the possibility of the existence of other spirits.

The separation of spirits and ideas are two specifically different things to Berkeley. Spirits are active and cannot be perceived while ideas are passive and created by the spirit. While the spirit cannot be perceived as an idea, we know the being of our selves by reflection. Philonous goes on to argue that we have a notion of spirit, not an idea of it but a notion through reflection. We are, according to Philonous, "a thinking active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas." (p. 233)

Philonous has not proven his position on self-knowledge. According to Philonous nothing can exist which may contradict itself, in accepting the spirit as intuitively known yet not having an idea of the spirit, Hylas is arguing that this is a contradiction and therefore Philonous must "accept matter or reject the spirit"(p. 232). Philonous argues that matter is not intuitively known

and that there is no idea or notion of its existence, and for it to exist would be contradictory and therefore not possible. It is, according to Hylas, impossible for Philonous to have no idea of any spirit yet admit that there is a spiritual substance and at the same time deny the existence of matter based on the claim that we have no notion or idea of it.

It seems clear that the argument, which Philonous is presenting, is based on the fact that he has a notion of spirit not an idea and that there is no idea or intuitive notion of matter. It is an argument that seems hard to argue against. Hylas seems more concerned with an idea of matter, where Philonous is content to satisfy the existence of spirit based on a notion.

In conclusion, it is not clear whether Hylas has argued satisfactorily against Philonous based on the argument presented. They both raise valid arguments for and against the existence of spirit and the knowledge of ones self. Hylas also argues quite truly that Philonous seems to contradict his own set of beliefs. However, Berkeley may be right in relying purely on a notion, it can be said that we all have a notion of ourselves and not necessarily an idea but an intuitive notion that we are more than just ideas. Therefore, a contradiction does not exist and since we cannot intuitively sense matter, Philonous seems right in his argument that; because we see no "sign or symptom whatever that leads to a rational belief of matter" that we should not believe in it. Hylas does an admirable job of rejecting Philonous based on a contradiction, however Philonous does a better job convincing the reader by not contradicting his argument and only requiring a notion to be present and not an idea.