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This paper is by no means put forth as Berkeley scholarship. It is just the work being done in a csula classroom for coursework towards a master's degree in philosophy. I don't really have anything else to say. I don't have a snappy title to 'engage' the reader with to make myself seem witty, so there. If you want to email me about this paper or anything my email is jamesinger88@hotmail.com. If you use any portion of this paper for any reason please ask me first or at least send me the comments you got on my work. Thanks.

(2) In this short paper I will put forth Berkeley's position on self-knowledge by carefully explicating the text while injecting some analysis of his assertions [specifically p.231 through p.234]. To further illustrate the Philonous' argument I will consider some objections Hylas makes to Philonous in the *Three Dialogues* within my own critiquing of Philonous¹ throughout the paper. I will end by commenting on Hylas' objection.

To contemplate Berkeley's position on self-knowledge, we will begin by looking at Philonous' comments concerning the self and the existence of God. Philonous begins this passage by considering whether it is possible to have an *idea*² of God. We cannot have an *idea* of God or any other spirit because these [things] are *active*, and cannot be represented by things inert. *Ideas* or *sense perceptions* are considered *inert* because they are [things] which are perceived by a *perceiver*. God or Spirits are *active* in that they are the perceivers [active] and not that which is solely perceived [inert].

This brings us to a somewhat Cartesian stance³ where Philonous asserts, "I do nevertheless know, that I who am a sprit or thinking substance, exist as certainly, as I know my ideas exist." (p.231 line 26 ff.). This knowledge comes for Philonous as intuitive and is not

¹ It should be understood here that Berkeley and Philonous are analogous and that Hylas is the representation of an educated rational scientific man.

² For the purposes of this paper it will be important to note that the term *idea* used by Berkeley is interpreted as *sense perception* throughout. This may be wholly wrong but nevertheless it is the interpretation that I will use here.

³ Considering the foundational view of the '*cogito*', "I think, therefore I am."

perceived as *ideas* are perceived. What Philonous knows with certainty then is that he is a thinking thing and that as a thinking thing there are *ideas* as such which appear to him.

This thing that Philonous considers himself to be is *spirit* or *soul* (p.231 line 30 ff.), which is *unextended* and *indivisible*. *Spirit* is *indivisible* because it is *unextended*. *Spirit* is *unextended* because Berkeley's definition of *extended* means that which is perceivable (*i.e. sense perception* or *ideas*). Philonous claims that a [thing] which perceives *ideas* cannot itself be an *idea* nor can this [thing] be like an *idea*. *Ideas*, by nature, are *inactive* and *perceived* (p.231 line 35 ff.).

At this point Philonous puts forth something that will have to be considered in more detail because at first glance it has a very paradoxical appearance. First, it must be understood that Berkeley seeks to insert some proof for the existence of God into his system and that the above considered *spirit* must be *necessarily* connected to this proof for the existence of God. Philonous claims that his *soul* gives him an *idea* of God (*idea* being held here in a wider sense than previously considered (p.231 line 38 ff.)). This notion of God is created by Philonous' reflection upon the heightened nature of his own soul (p.231 line 40 ff.). Philonous considers this *idea* as *active* rather than that of an *inactive sense perception*. He deems this to be an "active thinking image of the deity." (p.232 line 2 ff.).

This inference comes from the earlier asserted self-knowledge. This concept seems inconclusive to proving God's existence. It seems more to be the case that Berkeley is admitting to only imagining [God] here. In this sense, how is his *idea* of [God] different than the *idea* of a [Unicorn]? It does not seem to be the case that Berkeley is *perceiving* God in the same sense in which he is directly *perceiving* his *spirit*, as a thinking thing, nor does it seem like he *perceives* [God] in the same sense that he *perceives* a sunset. It seems that he is

spuriously inferring that because he is *perceiving* himself, he can also *perceive* of any entity which has the “heightened powers” of his own *spirit*.

I cannot see how God differs from any other non-existent being in this above argument. Surely one can conceive of a being that which is similar to the “self” but has some heightened powers. I can perceive of my own *spirit* and then of a similar *spirit* with “heightened powers” that is always jolly, omniscient, red faced, and rides around in a flying sleigh pulled by eight reindeer delivering presents to children who are well behaved however, this does not have any bearing on the existence or the non-existence of this or any other entity.

Berkeley further infers that because he can conceive of his own *spirit* that he can also conceive of the existence of possible other spirits. This brings up a further worry. It seems apparent that following the Cartesian like realization of the *self*, all of Berkeley’s following inferences step on eggshells. His conception of God is founded on his imagining of a *spirit* that is comprised of a heightened sense of his own *spirit* and then he takes another troublesome step to assert that he can conceive it ‘possible’ that further *spirits* exist. The element of ‘possible’ here given by Philonous is unsettling. How can it be that ‘possible’ could denote that it is certain that other *spirits* exist? It seems more to be the case that Berkeley is aware of himself as a thinking entity and anything more is only ‘possible’ or ‘imagined’.

Philonous considers his *reflexion* and *reasoning* to be concrete modes of inferring the existence of not only the possibility of other *spirits* but also the real existence of God. It seems that by the *feeling* of dependence on God for *ideas* and *self*, it follows that God exists (p.232 line 8 ff.). Philonous further considers this dependence to stem from the fact that all things are within the mind of God (p.235 line 5 ff.). It follows from this that nothing exists without perception, yet all things are perceived by God because in essence they are all a construct within the mind of God and therefore have no real tangible existence. Does the world itself

then have no tangible existence because it exists in the mind of God and God alone exists in the real world? It follows here that only God is real and everything else is in God's mind. God stands alone clutching his head (p.232 line 10 ff.).

Philonous concludes this portion of his argument by stating that one does not perceive *matter* objectively as one perceives an inactive being or *idea*. Similarly, one does not know *matter* as one knows one's self through reflexion. Nor is *matter* known by some reconciliation or combining of the two concepts. Lastly, *matter* is not known by reason alone. In this sense *matter* has no real existence. As laid out above, *matter* is a construct within the mind of God (p.232 line 13 ff.).

To consider Hylas' response I will also rely on the points explicated above. Hylas objects to Philonous' claim that we do not have an *idea* or an image of our own soul yet the soul renders an 'active' image of 'the deity'. Hylas wonders how Philonous could get an *idea* of 'the deity' when he does not have an *idea* of his own soul (p.232 line 20 ff.). He contends that Philonous turns around to assert that *spiritual substance* does indeed exist but that we have no *idea* of it. Hylas points out that at the same time Philonous argues that there is no material substance because it is impossible to have any notion or *idea* of it.

From Hylas' point of view it seems to be the case that Philonous is claiming something dangerously close to [P and ~P]. If spiritual substance exists without an *idea* of it, how can material substance not exist because there is no an *idea* of it? There seems to be an inherent contradiction within this argument especially considering the argument above that attacks Philonous' argument for the existence of spiritual substance (*i.e.* God).

The leap that Berkeley takes to assert God's existence is something inherent to many philosopher's systems that believe in God. They make spurious assumptions that may sway the believer. To an agnostic or an atheist these leaps seem presumptuous or plainly false.

Berkeley's initial considerations of the self as a thinking thing seem to mirror Descartes to some degree and similarly the jump to the existence of God appears in both arguments.

In Philonous' reply to Hylas, Berkeley further asserts that there are many things which exist without being perceived by men but all things are perceived by God and therefore have existence within the mind of God (p.232 line 34 ff.). This argument seems to fall back on the leap to the existence of God. Philonous turns his argument around to rely on an assumption created on shaky grounding. It follows then that Philonous thinks it to be that there is no good reason to believe in *matter* but only the perception of *matter* (God's perception) (p.233 line 10 ff.).

Philonous does claim that we do not have any "immediate evidence nor a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of other finite spirits." This, still assuming God exists, shows that Berkeley is still under the skeptical belief that there is no existence outside of his own mind which itself is within the mind of God (p.233 line 18-20).

Hylas recognizes the apparent contradiction in Philonous' argument, and in some sense it is possible that Berkeley took these arguments very seriously however, it does not seem that he noticed the logical fallacy of his argument which assumes the existence of God and then uses the assumption as if it were a true unquestionable premise. Hylas comes to believe that Philonous sees existence as an entity of "floating ideas without any substance to support them."

If the character of Hylas was not penned by Berkeley, Hylas may have attacked some of the deeper recesses of the topical questions he began to raise. The inquiry within Philonous' self knowledge argument stated throughout is an attempt on my part to further the persuasive questions originally sought by Hylas. After considering these arguments and responses the only self-knowledge I can attribute Berkeley to hold with any certainty is that; he exists as a thinking thing which perceives phenomena. After this, and similarly to Descartes, propositions

arise such as Descartes' *evil genius* and Berkeley's world as existing only in the mind of God.

At the base, all that remains is, "I do nevertheless know, that I who am a spirit or thinking substance, exist as certainly, as I know my ideas exist." (p.231 line 26 ff.).