

# Richard Burthogge's Epistemology and the Problem of Self-Knowledge

## Introduction

This paper focuses on the epistemology developed by Richard Burthogge, the lesser-known seventeenth-century English philosopher, and author, among other works, of *Organum Vetus & Novum* (Burthogge 1678) and *An Essay upon Reason and the Nature of Spirits* (Burthogge 1694). Burthogge's ideas had a minimal impact on the philosophy of his time, and have hitherto not been the subject of a detailed study – one short dissertation and only a few papers have been published about his thought.<sup>1</sup> This situation has reflected, to some extent, the long-lasting lack of interest among scholars in less important doctrines. While the most influential thinkers of the early modern age have been thoroughly studied, there has been surprisingly little research on the so-called *minorum gentium* philosophers. Instead of finding their way through a maze of secondary figures operating in a multitude of linguistic, socio-political and cultural contexts, the authors of synthetic accounts of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy usually preferred to focus their attention on the great names of the day, such as Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke or Berkeley. Consequently, the minor doctrines, by their nature less original and interesting, disappeared under the shadow of great doctrines – partly under the weight of comparative difficulties, and partly due to the natural hierarchy of importance. Thus, however, a multi-dimensional mosaic of doctrines forming the original landscape of early modern philosophy was replaced by an archipelago of separate theories – more or less closely related to each other. Accordingly, although the general topography of early modern thought is perfectly known, the created map contains only a few main points scattered at a considerable distance from each other. At the same time, we lose sight of the internal logic and dynamics of the whole system; for

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1 For the most important of these works see: Ayers 2005) Grünbaum 1939; Landes 1920, 1921; Lyon 1888, 72–96; Sgarbi 2012; see also: Cassirer 1922, 543–53; Nuchelmans 1983, 117–19; Šoć 2012.

the first thing required to trace a line of development of any historical process is to identify and describe in detail all its relevant components, small as well as large ones – and this is precisely what we lack in the case of early modern philosophy.

For this reason, the need for a deeper analysis of the minor philosophers of the time has been recently emphasised, so that a new history of early modern philosophy could also include the less important doctrines (for example by Rutherford 2006, 1–4). Of many paths needed to be traversed to achieve this goal, that is, to supplement the existing map of “metropolises” with some “small towns” and “villages”, one of the most interesting leads through an unfrequented Burthoggean route. The reason for this becomes clear immediately if one considers the evolution line of early modern philosophy in its most general form, in which it is simplified to the axis Descartes – Kant, with Kantian transcendentalism seen as an extreme variant of the Cartesian philosophy or as Cartesianism taken to the ultimate epistemological consequences. Against this background, Burthogge’s writings contain a highly original concept of idealistic constructivism, developed in the post-Cartesian theoretical context, and anticipating (all proportions kept) Kant’s idealism (see, for example, Landes 1920, 1921). Moreover, his epistemology has also some interesting implications – once again Kantian in spirit – for the issue of self-interpretation and self-identity. Therefore, the detailed examination of the coincidence of ideas between Burthogge and Kant can not only deepen our understanding of early modern British philosophy, but may also throw new light on the inner logic of development of the whole of post-Cartesian epistemological thought.

The paper is in two parts. In the first and more extensive one, I outline the basic assumptions and principles of Burthogge’s epistemology (as presented in Burthogge 1694). In the second part I discuss the general implications of his theory for the problem of self-knowledge and personal identity.

## **Part One: Burthogge’s Epistemology**

### **Act of cognition**

At first glance, Burthogge’s epistemology may not seem to differ significantly from the traditional models of medieval and ancient philosophy. The only means the human mind has at its disposal to know the external reality are its three “cogitative” faculties or powers, that is “reasoning or intellection”, “sensation” and “imagination” (Burthogge 1694, 3–4). What is novel in Burthogge’s epistemological position is a remarkable idea of structural and functional uniformity among them – all three faculties are structurally and functionally similar or even isomorphic (Burthogge 1694, 3–4). Consequently, every intellectual and sensuous act of cognition or, the same thing put in Burthogge’s own terms, of “cogi-

tation” (in a broad sense of the term, see below) or “knowledge” contains in its structure three isomorphic elements or aspects.

The first of them is defined as “apprehension” (Burthogge 1694, 4), a term firmly rooted as far back as the scholastic idea of *apprehensio simplex* (considered the first operation of the mind) and by the well-established usage in seventeenth-century logic and philosophy associated with the concept of pure, judgment-free grasp of an object by the intellect. Under one name or another, the idea of such an act underlay the theories of the most influential philosophers of the time. It plays, for example, a prominent role in Descartes’ account of intellectual cognition (see, for example, his concept of intellectual *perceptio* in Descartes 1644, 12–13). No less importantly, given the unprecedented impact of the book, it appears also among the basic concepts of the Cartesian-inspired *Port Royal Logic*.<sup>2</sup>

Apprehension is an “act”. While Burthogge uses this expression most frequently to describe one particular kind of apprehending, namely the intellectual one (Burthogge 1694, 23–24), a structural-functional similarity of the cognitive powers allows us to extend it to all types of cognition, and consequently to cognition as such. Furthermore, it is precisely thanks to an act of apprehension that every cognition, intellectual as well as sensuous, takes the form of an act.<sup>3</sup> Apprehension is, therefore, the most basic and most central operation performed by the mind while knowing. It constitutes the structural core of cognition and determines its specific ontological form. However, if cognition is to be characterised as “apprehension”, it is not merely because of its act-structure, but because of its “reference to the *object*, which is known” (Burthogge 1694, 4). Apprehension is, therefore, by its very definition, an object-directed act. The proper object of apprehending referred to here is an external, out-of-mind thing, as is clear from the context (Burthogge 1694, 3–4). At the same time, it is only its indirect or, as Burthogge calls it, “ultimate” object (Burthogge 1694, 72–73). The reason for this is that, as we will see below, an act of apprehension is always mediated by “conceptions” (Burthogge 1694, 4), that is by certain conceptualisations in the form of images or notions, which Burthogge also considers to be the objects, namely the “immediate” ones, of apprehension.<sup>4</sup>

As each cognitive operation incorporates an object-directed apprehension, every act of cognition, intellectual as well as sensuous, can be considered an intentional act in a broad sense of the term. There are at least two immediate consequences of this claim. Firstly, every cognitive content has some objective, external reference. Secondly, neither mind nor object can be reduced to a pure stream of sense data, but on the contrary they are to be considered ontologically independent from the content of a cognitive act. These conclusions may, in turn, clarify the meaning of the term “perception”, used in a scanty definition of

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2 Arnault and Nicole had used the French word “concevoir” in their original work (Arnault and Nicole, 1662, 27). The term was, however, usually translated as “apprehensio” or “apprehension” in Latin and English editions of the book, respectively; see, for example, Arnault and Nicole, 1674, 1; 1685, 41–2.

3 Here and elsewhere the term “sensation” includes “imagination”, the latter, as we will see below, being a special kind of the former.

4 See, for example, the title of the third chapter of *Essay*: “Of notion, the *immediate object of apprehension*” (Burthogge 1694, 51).

apprehension provided by Burthogge at the beginning of his *Essay* (“conscious perception”, Burthogge 1694, 4). It must be interpreted as a dynamic act of the mind, akin to “seeing” (Burthogge 1678, sect. 5; 1694, 23), and not as passive, inert reception, thereby resembling Descartes’ *perceptio* rather than Locke’s perception.

Two features make Burthogge’s approach to apprehension unique compared with those of the most prominent philosophers of his time. The first is a deliberate and systematic extension of this concept to cover sensation and imagination, and not only intellectual cognition, as for example with Descartes, thereby giving act-structure, object-direction and intentionality to all kinds of cognition. At the same time, once again contrary to the Cartesian views, apprehension of an object, that is a pure grasp of it, represents only one of the aspects of Burthogge’s cognition and cannot be performed independently as a distinct cognitive operation.

Thus every cognition is not only apprehension, but also “cogitation” (a term undoubtedly alluding to Cartesian philosophy). The word is used by Burthogge in two senses. In its narrow, technical sense it is defined as “conscious affection”, that is “affection with consciousness of that affection” (Burthogge 1694, 4). Each cognition is, therefore, a conscious act – with “consciousness” understood here as the most elementary awareness present in every conscious, even the most rudimentary, mental state (Burthogge 1694, 4–8). Owing to the semantic connection between “cogitation” and consciousness, the term can also be, and often is, used more broadly to denote a cognitive act as a whole (see, for example, Burthogge 1694, 58–60).

All that has been said so far may still look like a traditional, even Scholastic, account of cognition. What is truly revolutionary about Burthogge’s epistemology – or rather what could have been truly revolutionary, if it had been noticed by his fellow philosophers – is the idea that an external object of cognition is never presented to the mind directly, as it is in itself, but under some special form or manner of conceiving – “*modus concipiendi*” – specific to the human cognitive faculties due to their immanent structure (Burthogge 1694, 56).

An important preliminary remark must be made before discussing this part of Burthogge’s philosophy in detail. Although being an essential component of each cognitive act, the perception as described above, that is as an act of the mind directed towards an external thing, does not constitute an initial stage of cognition. In actual fact, it is only a secondary phenomenon. For Burthogge as for Locke, by whom he was clearly influenced in this respect, it is the “affection” of the sense organs, “caused” or “occasioned” by an external thing, that triggers the whole machinery of cognition:<sup>5</sup>

In all *acts of sensation* there is first an *affection* of the organ, and then a *perception* of that affection by the soul; or rather, a perception excited in the *soul* by means of

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5 This is also true of intellect, which is not an independent source of knowledge, parallel to the sense. The former works only with the material obtained from the latter: “the understanding converses not with things ordinarily but by the intervention of the sense” (Burthogge 1694, 60). Burthogge’s theory of cognition, much as that of Kant, is therefore a hierarchical or at least sequential one.

that affection [...] a soul cannot but by *means* of *organs*, take any notice of external objects, nor the organ be a means of conveying any notice to the soul, but by being first *affected* itself. (Burthogge 1694, 152)

Accordingly, the most basic definition of “knowledge” or “cogitation” is the “conscious affection” (Burthogge 1694, 4). Nevertheless, affection (or synonymously: “impression”, Burthogge 1694, 5–8) is not to be understood as a cognitive content of a kind – some raw, external *datum* – provided for the mind through sense organs and then cognitively processed or simply absorbed into knowledge. Not only is the affection not a component of knowledge, it is not as such present in the mind. In fact, the term denotes merely the cognitive stimulus provided by the external object with the aim of activating the mind. It refers to the stimulation of the mind by the external world, or, which is the same thing viewed from the other side, to the mind’s being stimulated (affected) in some way. In this sense and only in this sense, the external thing can be said to “excite” something in the mind (Burthogge 1694, 70).

Having been affected, the mind responds actively to “form” (Burthogge 1694, 52, 56) or “frame” (Burthogge 1694, 64, 93) a “conception” – when regarded as a structural component of knowledge – or a “modification” – when considered from the ontological point of view (Burthogge 1694, 6–7). Thus we reach the third of the aforementioned features of the human cognitive faculties as characterised by Burthogge, namely their “conceptivity” (Burthogge 1694, 3). The human mind is essentially active and creative in cognition. Far from being a passive absorbent of the external data, it reacts to the stimulus provided from outside with an act of creative conceiving or, even more precisely, conceptualising. This is the proper meaning of Burthogge’s term “conception”, referring both to the process, that is to an “act of conception” (Burthogge 1694, 5), and to the product of such conceptualisation. Conception, so understood, is a spontaneous and automatic process. For the mind, forming conceptions is simply a way of acting – a manifestation of its internal mechanics. In other words, it is inherent in the cognitive faculties that they cognise by conceiving (Burthogge 1694, 3–4, 56). For structural reasons conception is also prior to any conscious act (Burthogge 1694, 71).<sup>6</sup>

As implied by the idea of structural and functional uniformity among the cognitive faculties, the conception is a universal mechanism of cognition:

It is as proper to say, that the sense and imagination do conceive, as that the reason or understanding doth; the former does as much conceive images and sentiments, as the latter does ideas and notions. (Burthogge 1694, 4)

Although essentially identical in their conceptive way of functioning, the cognitive faculties differ from one another in their particular manner of conceiving; otherwise they could

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<sup>6</sup> According to Burthogge’s view, it is only a diversity of conceptions that enables consciousness to arise (Burthogge 1694, 4–6).

not be considered different faculties at all. The difference concerns the formal means used by them in the process of conceptualisation. While reason conceives by means of “ideas or notions”, sense and imagination do the same by means of “images”:

*Sense*, (by which I mean the power of seeing, of hearing, of tasting, of smelling, and of feeling,) is that by which we make acquaintance with external objects, and have knowledge of them by means of images and apparitions, or (which is a better expression, as being more general and comprehensive,) by *sentiments* excited in the external organs, through impressions made upon them from objects. (Burthogge 1694, 9–10)

*Reason* or understanding, is a faculty by which we know *external objects*, as well as our own acts, without framing images of them; only by *ideas* or notions. (Burthogge 1694, 10)

*Imagination* is internal sense, or an (after) representation of the images or sentiments (that have been) excited before in the sense. (Burthogge 1694, 10)

Since sensation and imagination are essentially one and the same cognitive power of conceiving by means of “images, or sensible representations” (Burthogge 1694, 10), all human cognitive powers “may be reduced to *two*, to *sense* and *reason*” (Burthogge 1694, 10), the two terms denoting no more than two different forms of conceptualising – in an imaginative or notional way, that is by forming images or by forming notions. Thus the difference between sense and reason comes down, in Burthogge’s view, to the difference between two types of conceiving.

Notions and images produced in the process of conceptualisation (i.e. “conceptions” in the nominal sense of the term) are considered to be the “immediate objects” of conception taken as an act (see above): “conception properly speaking, is of the image, or idea” (Burthogge 1694, 4). However, it must not be forgotten that all the aspects of cognition discussed above, that is its apprehensiveness, cogitativity and conceptivity, form in fact one inseparable whole, so that

conception and cogitation, really are but one act, and consequently, all conceptive are cogitative powers, and cogitative powers conceptive. (Burthogge 1694, 4)

In other words, all three cognitive faculties do “*agree* and concur in this, that they are *conceptive* and *cogitative* [...] powers” (Burthogge 1694, 3). Therefore, not only conceiving, but also cognition as a whole refers to the conceptions (i.e. to notions or imagines) as to its “immediate objects”. On the other hand, as a result of the object-direction given to the knowledge by apprehension, images and notions get a reference also to the ultimate objects of cognition, thereby becoming two conceptually different ways of knowing the external reality (see, however, footnote 58). Apprehension, cogitation, conception – all these operations are inextricably interwoven in the cognitive act, as clearly evidenced by Burthogge’s very first definition of knowledge:

Cogitation is conscious affection; *Conscious affection*, is affection with consciousness of that affection; and by another name is called *knowledge*. Knowledge, as it has a double relation, so it may be considered two ways, to wit, either in reference to the *object*, which is known, and so, properly, it is *apprehension* or conscious perception; or, as it respects the *image* and *idea*, by means of which we do perceive or know that object, and so it may be called *conception*. (Burthogge 1694, 4)

## Modus concipiendi

Since conception is a creation of the mind it must be subject to the conditions imposed on it by the structural-functional properties of the mind. In other words, its mental origin must have some effect, probably profound, on it. Cognition is, therefore, extensively code-termined by the mind. That is Burthogge's most fundamental principle, the implications of which are systematically drawn and discussed throughout his whole epistemology:

Every cogitative faculty, though it is not the sole cause of its own immediate (apparent) object, yet has a share in making it: thus the eye or visive faculty hath a share in making the colours which it is said to see; the ear or auditive power, a share in producing sounds, which yet it is said to hear (..) and there is the same reason for the understanding, that it should have a like share in framing the *primitive notions* under which it takes in and receives objects. (Burthogge 1694, 59)

Thus we have reached a point, when the term "*modus concipiendi*" can appear on stage, for in the technical language of Burthogge's philosophy it refers precisely to that particular aspect of each conception which is determined by the structural and functional properties of the human mind.<sup>7</sup> Since every act of cognition is essentially an act of conceiving or conceptualising, and that conceptualization is always performed in the manner and with the means which are determined by the internal structure of human cognitive faculties, no knowledge is simply a pure grasp of the given data. On the contrary, the mind conceives affection (and through it the external thing) on its own ontological terms. In short, no knowledge is simply given, but is always constructed. Consequently, external reality is never presented to the mind as it is in itself, but under the subjective mode of human conceiving, namely:

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7 The term as such was not Burthogge's invention. It had been used much earlier, already in medieval philosophy. Furthermore, some closely related terms played an important role in the Aristotelianism of Giacomo Zabarella and the Paduan school (*modus considerandi*, Zabarella 1578) as well as in the anti-Aristotelianism of Arnold Geulincx (*modus cogitandi*, Geulincx 1892a, 1892b). However, within the specific context of Burthogge's epistemology the term gained new meaning and significance.

*modus concipiendi*, a certain particular *manner* of conceiving; a manner of conceiving things that corresponds not to them but only as they are *objects*, not as they are *things*; there being in every conception some thing that is purely *objective*, purely notional; in so much that few, if any, of the ideas which we have of things are properly *pictures*; our conceptions of things no more resembling them in strict propriety, than our words do our conceptions, for which yet they do stand. (Burthogge 1694, 56)

However, this does not mean that the external objects have no role in producing knowledge. In fact, they do, even though it is not easy to assess the exact degree of this participation.<sup>8</sup> Burthogge's complete view on knowledge is, therefore, that it is a result of interaction between the mind and the external thing, in which both of them play their part:

[the external things] by the various impressions that they make upon us [...] do either occasion only, or cause, or (which is most probable) concur unto in causing with our faculties. (Burthogge 1694, 59)

Nevertheless, the creative impact that the mind makes on knowledge is enormous. In fact, the scale of the mind's participation in the creation of knowledge is one of the most original features of Burthogge's approach. Admittedly, also the other philosophers of the time and earlier took some account of the mind's influence on cognition, but only with respect to the formal aspects of cognition. A paradigmatic example in early modern philosophy is the Cartesian theory of intellectual knowledge, in which the mental component of cognition, that is its ideational form of being, is considered to be only a way of internalisation of the object into the mind, thereby not affecting the content of the knowledge being acquired (Descartes 1641, 1644). In contrast to this view, in Burthogge's opinion, an impact made by the mind's activity is universal, affecting the content of knowledge just as intensely as its form, and to such an extent that the external reality becomes unknowable in itself (see next section).

*Modi concipiendi*, much like Kant's pure concepts (Kant 1996, 121–204), have two aspects: one nominal and the other functional. They are conceptions, but unlike other conceptions they are purely mental creations – they are not formed by the standard process of conceptualising affection, that is, with the participation of external things. Nevertheless, they are inherently involved in this process, serving as a primary and inescapable instrument for any conceptualisation (which is the principal reason for describing them as “manners” or *modi* (Burthogge 1694, 56) and consequently providing each standard conception with some “purely notional” content (Burthogge 1694, 56). At the same time, though

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8 Therefore, Burthogge can say that “the immediate objects of cogitation are external in their *grounds*” (Burthogge 1694, 73, quoted more extensively below).



purely mental in nature, they are not ready-made, innate concepts, but rather (and again in remarkable agreement with the later Kant's view) virtual ones that exist only through and within the particular acts of conceiving.

Furthermore, there are two different types of *modi concipiendi* corresponding to the general division between two basic kinds of conceiving – a sensuous one and an intellectual one. Thus “light and colour” and “sound” serve as model examples for a sensuous manner of conceiving (Burthogge 1694, 57). Burthogge's crucial idea here is to explain the inadequacy of some sensible qualities (as described by Galileo, Descartes, and most famously by Locke) in terms of their mind-dependency – a view that can be seen as one of the key novelties of his epistemology and as a turning point in the whole early modern process of gradual subjectivisation of sense perception. A detailed discussion of this issue exceeds, however, the scope of this article and will be presented in another paper.

As required by the unitary theory of cognitive faculties, an account and explanation of perceptual relativity discussed above is then adequately applied to intellectual cognition, thereby extending the subjectivity of knowledge, hitherto considered specific to sense perception, to cover all kinds of cognition. As a result of this step, Burthogge strikingly anticipates the Kantian theory of categories by postulating the existence of certain mind-dependent universals underlying each intellectual act:

So the *understanding* apprehends not things, or any habitudes or aspects of them, but under *certain notions* that neither have that being in objects, or that being of objects, that they seem to have; but are, in all respects, the very same to the mind or understanding, that colours are to the eye, and sound to the ear. To be more particular, the understanding conceives not any thing but under the notion of an *entity*, and this either a *substance* or an *accident*; under that of a *whole*, or of a *part*; or of a *cause*, or of an *effect*, or the like; and yet all these and the like, are only *entities of reason* conceived within the mind, that have no more of any real true existence without it, than colours have without the eye, or sounds without the ear. (Burthogge 1694, 57–58)

## Burthogge's idealism

Since not only the form, but also the content of all knowledge is partly determined by the cognitive faculties, all what is known, all the cognitive contents and entities, are to be identified as mental products – “phenomena”, “appearances” or “*entia cogitationis*” (Burthogge, 1694, 59–60) – which, as such, cannot be properties or even resemblances of the external things (even though they are partially caused or occasioned by them). Consequently, Burthogge clearly anticipates Kant in claiming that the external world is unknowable in itself, being accessible to the human mind only through the phenomena that the mind itself co-produces – “under the masquerade of *sentiments*”, as Burthogge puts

it (Burthogge 1694, 114).<sup>9</sup> At the same time, there is a fundamental difference between his version of idealism and that advocated, for example, by Berkeley or Arthur Collier. It consists in the explicit claim that there actually is some external. Once again like Kant, Burthogge does not even consider any other possibility:

the immediate objects of cogitation are external in their *grounds*, as well as in appearance, and in truth, are therefore external in appearance, because they are so *really* in their grounds [...]. For *things without us*, are the causes that do excite such images and notions *in us*: in the order of nature, we do *see* a thing so long *as*, and no longer *than*, we keep our Eye upon it; and therefore that we do see it, must come from some *impression* from the thing. (Burthogge 1694, 73)

Thus, ultimately, Burthogge's epistemology turns out to be the idealistic constructivism of a kind that is as Kantian in spirit as it was possible for pre-Kantian philosophy:

It is certain that things to us men are nothing but as they do stand in our *analogy* that is, in plain terms, they are nothing to us but as they are known by us; and as certain, that they stand not in our analogy, nor are known by us, but as they are in our faculties, in our senses, imagination, or mind; and they are not in our faculties, either in their own *realities* [as they be without them], or by way of a true *resemblance* and *representation* [by *picture* and proper representation], but only in respect of certain *appearances* or sentiments [*appearances* and *phaenomena*], which, by the various impressions that they make upon us, they do either occasion only, or cause, or (which is most probable) concur unto in causing with our faculties [...]. In sum, the *immediate objects* of cogitation, as it is exercised by men, are *entia cogitationis*, all phaenomena; appearances that do no more exist without our faculties in the things themselves, than the images that are seen in water, or behind a glass, do really exist in those places where they seem to be. (Burthogge 1694, 59-60; the phrases in brackets come from Burthogge 1678, sect. 9)

It is easy to recognize the crucial steps of Burthogge's argument. First, contrary to most British philosophers of his time, who believed senses to be the supreme means of cognition, Burthogge reintroduced the intellect as an independent source of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, by defining sense and reason as apprehensive, cogitative and conceptive powers, he achieved structural and functional unification of the cognitive faculties. Finally, he exploited fully the potential of the early modern discovery of the relativity of sense perception by interpreting it in terms of the mind's activity and applying it effectively to intellectual

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9 "Sentiment" is frequently used by Burthogge as a synonym for "conception" (see, for example, Burthogge 1694, 24).

10 He was probably influenced in this by Geulincx and other logicians from Leiden (Nuchelmans 1983, 117-20), where he studied and received his medicine doctorate in 1662 (Landes 1920, 254).

cognition. The recipe and ingredients were simple, but the dish was surprisingly innovative and original, even though his contemporaries and the cook himself (as we will see in the next section) hardly noticed it.

## Part Two: Self-Knowledge and Personal Identity

From all that has been said thus far about Burthogge's epistemology, several interesting consequences can be derived for the problems of self-interpretation and self-identity. One general implication of his theory, mentioned above, is that due to the attribution of intentional structure to each cognitive act, neither knowing mind nor object known can be reduced to a pure stream of sense data. On the contrary, they are to be considered ontologically independent from the content of cognition. However, while the distinction presupposed by the very concept of intentional apprehension provides a sufficient basis for differentiation between the general notions of "mind" and "object" (seen as polar opposites of one cognitive act), serious difficulties arise when we consider the identity of any particular subject performing a cognitive act. Basically, three principal strategies to address this issue are available in the post-Cartesian framework of seeing the mind as an ontologically independent entity, and all of them appear to be more or less ineffective when employed in Burthogge's epistemology. The reason for this lies in the limitations of self-knowledge resulting from the fundamental restrictions imposed on cognition by Burthogge's theory. Since these constraints are not placed exclusively on externally directed operations, but apply also to internal cognition, that is to self-knowledge, the conclusion about unknowability of the thing-in-itself, discussed above, refers to the mind just as much as to external objects. Let us examine briefly the implications of this fact.

The first of the above-mentioned strategies for dealing with the problem of personal identity tries to ground it in some extra-mental properties of the subject, preferably material ones. Thus the subject's identity is defined in terms of the relationship of the mind with the outer, material world, and specifically in terms of the observed attachment of the mind to one particular body (referred to as "its own" one) – a concept that is essentially yet another variant of the old Aristotelian view of matter as a principle of individuation. However, as suggested above, Burthogge's epistemology presents insuperable obstacles to the implementation of such a solution. As, according to his view, the mind has no access to the external world in itself, and consequently human knowledge is confined within the realm of mental phenomena (which the mind itself co-produces), the subject's identity cannot be defined in terms of the relationship to the reality about which it knows nothing except that it exists. Matter simply cannot be considered the principle of individuation when there is no certainty that there is any such thing as matter at all. Admittedly, the concept of matter, being (as any other concept) partially caused or occasioned by external things, is

somehow grounded in the external world. Nevertheless, it presents the outer world as it is seen through the subjective “glasses” of human conceiving. In other words, what the mind experiences as matter is, on Burthogge’s principles, merely a mental construct, formed by combining the intellectual conceptions of substance and accidents with no less conceptual sensible properties of extension, motion, etc. Therefore, to explain the subject’s identity in material terms would be essentially the same as to connect it with a certain selected set of mental objects – which, in fact, would mean changing the whole strategy for dealing with the problem in question.

The serious problem in interpreting Burthogge’s philosophy is, however, that most often he does explain personal identity in terms of individuation by matter:

were spirits absolutely pure and simple, without any concretion of matter, there could be no distinction among them as to *individuals*, as well as none in relation to kinds. For since all individuation (except only that of the central pure mind) is *numerication*, and all numerication arises from division, and division has no place but in Matter, or in things by means of matter. It is evident that there can be no distinction of spirits as to individuation, if there be no ingredience of matter in their making [...] in short, we may observe *in our selves*, (that mind as I have noted before) is *individuated by matter*. (Burthogge 1694, 167–168)

At the same time, another view – one probably more consistent with his general nominalist standpoint (Burthogge 1694, 60–61) – can also be found in his writings, namely that spirits need not to be individuated by any special principle, but are individual by their nature (Thiel 2011, 73):

they seem to me to come nearest to the truth, who do affirm, that a singular or individual becomes so, not by any distinct principle of individuation, but immediately *per se*, and in that, that it is in being. (Burthogge 1694, 270)

While inconsistency between the above two statements is only apparent, as has been shown by Thiel (Thiel 2011, 73), there is another, much deeper, inconsistency between his free considerations about reality in itself and his epistemological principles, as they had been laid down in *Essay*. This inconsistency reflects a more general duality running throughout all his work. While the epistemological theory presented in the first chapters of his essay anticipates, as we have seen, Kantian idealism, the remaining part of his deliberations represents almost entirely a dogmatic point of view – to put it in Kantian terms (Kant 1996, 34). Although sometimes Burthogge seems to recognise this inconsistency by warning that his discussion is made only in the “notional way” (Burthogge 1694, 96, 106), through the whole *Essay*, as if by a gestalt switch, his standpoint changes from Kantian-type idealism to Cartesian-type dualism. This might explain why his revolution has remained unnoticed – it was because it had not been noticed by Burthogge himself.

The second of the above-mentioned strategies for solving the problem of personal identity is to define it in terms of intrinsic properties of the mind. At first glance, this method seems more promising than the first one. Considered from the purely theoretical point of view, Burthogge's epistemology, at least in its initial form presented in the first half of *Essay*, belongs more to the modern, post-Kantian, philosophy of consciousness, than to the tradition of early modern dualism. This affiliation is confirmed by three original features of his approach.

First, as we have seen, every human cognition presupposes some elementary form of consciousness or awareness. Consequently, each cognitive act of the mind can accurately be considered a conscious or, as Burthogge's puts it, a "cogitative" act. Accordingly, "cogitation" is to be treated as the first and the most general synonym for knowledge. Secondly, and more importantly, Burthogge makes every effort to achieve what can be called the extensive mentalisation of the cognitive powers and acts. Specifically, he firmly and deliberately rejects any attempts to explain sense perception in purely materialist or mechanistic terms:

sense and imagination, as well as the understanding and reason, are mental and spiritual, not merely mechanick and material powers. (Burthogge 1694, 8–9)

The sense, sensuous acts and sensible qualities are, therefore, mental phenomena, and they are so, as we have seen, for ontological, structural reasons. Finally, a remarkable idea of structural and functional uniformity among all human cognitive faculties and acts enables Burthogge to provide a unified theory of consciousness, which is similar, in its crucial points, to modern phenomenology rather than to the empiricist or rationalist philosophy of his time.

Nonetheless, the idea of explaining personal identity in terms of the structural properties of the mind also faces serious obstacles, mostly for the same reasons as the first strategy did. Since self-knowledge is no exception to the structural-functional principles imposed on cognition, the mind can also be known only under the subjective conditions of human conceiving. It is, therefore, just as unknowable in itself as the external things are. Accordingly, even such a general definition of the mind as "cogitative, thinking, or perceiving substance" (Burthogge 1694, 106) must be tempered by the reservation that

we have not any real immediate conception of [substance], but only a notional. Or (to speak more plainly, according to the principles laid before) substance as such, is not a thing conceived just as it is in its own reality, but a thing conceived under a certain notion. (Burthogge 1694, 96–97)

All in all, the mind can be self-interpreted at most indirectly – as it manifests itself by its faculties, powers or acts. In other words, the situation of Burthogge's subject is very similar to that of Kant – in between the two noumenal realities, one external and the other internal.

The last and apparently the most fruitful strategy for dealing with the question of personal identity in accordance with the basic principles of Burthogge's philosophy is the

one suggested by Locke in his own discussion of the problem. On this approach, suitably adapted for the purposes of Burthogge's theory, the subject's identity would be determined by the specific set of conceptions (immediate objects of cognition) appearing in one's mind. A great advantage this solution has over the other two methods is that in principal it does not require any cognitive access to the external reality. When applied to Burthogge's epistemology it has one major disadvantage, though (aside from the general defects discussed extensively in the literature). When no knowledge of the subject in itself is available, the identity defined in this way may be completely false. Thus it is a sense of identity rather than identity as such that is examined with this method. In fact, one might just as well argue – as, indeed, it was argued by some of Kant's successors headed by Hegel – that, instead of many internal and external substances, there is, in reality, only one substantial mind, thereby opening the door to the monistic idea of absolute consciousness; a theoretical shift that fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on one's perspective) did not take place in British philosophy, because of the minimal impact Burthogge's ideas had on it.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Burthogge's epistemology suffers from substantially the same disadvantages as those of Kant. This similarity certainly deserves a close examination, which obviously cannot be conducted here. However, one general historical conclusion can be drawn already at this point. It concerns Kant's idealism. Rather than viewing it as a unique and isolated theory, we should consider it the most significant representative of the whole class of constructivist-idealistic doctrines that emerged in response to the problems created by Cartesianism. The main purpose of this paper was to show how the writings of the lesser-known English philosopher can shed some light on the way to achieve this goal.

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