From Empiricism through Metaphysics and the Fallacy of Egocentric Predicament in Locke’s Epistemology

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Abstract

The implication of Locke’s empiricism goes beyond the limit/scope of which simple ideas and qualities come to us and impress themselves on us; this is especially as it concerns his unempirical substance. A painstaking analysis seems to suggest that Locke was not thorough to the end as at some point he was inconsistent with the tents of the tradition he spearheaded. Flowing from this and in lieu of examining his position, this research employed the critical analytic method to appraise his empiricism. From the analysis, it was palpable that Locke being a man of his time, set up from empiricism and the pragmatic physicalism of his time and with this he betrayed his foundation and expunged consistency as he dovetailed even into rationalism (via demonstration) and finally but strangely berthed in a metaphysical substance. This infamous drive was due to his brand of epistemological dualism which finally led him into the fallacy of egocentric predicament which is the crux and novelty in this research.

**Keywords:** Ideas, Qualities, Substance, Dualism, Empiricism, Egocentric Predicament.
Introduction

Philosophy as an academic enterprise has wonder as its *terminus ad quo*. Both Plato and Aristotle alluded to this fact. Aristotle says ‘it is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize. And in the *Republic*, Plato tells us that ‘there is no other beginning of philosophy than wonder. And this was the major preoccupation of the Milesians and those ancient scholars. From then, philosophy was ushered into entered the medieval era where the schoolmen basically sought a rapport between man, the cosmos and metaphysical realities. Then came the renaissance interlude where humanism and art flourished. This ushered in the enlightenment era, where men started to again raise some salient questions about man, his potential and expected mode of operation. This precipitated the issues in the modern era where the issue of method popped up especially considering the wave of science and its ancillaries and corollaries. Scholars then wanted to know the cause, course, the reliability and the validity and limit of human knowledge. This gave rise to the emergence of the schools of rationalism and empiricism as contending theories of knowledge, methods of knowledge acquisition and epistemic justification. At this point, philosophers wanted to establish and re-established the content and nature of the human intellect and knowledge. The rationalist led by Rene Descartes the Frenchman subscribed to reason/innatism. This view was responded to by the empiricists championed by Locke. However, what was striking was that both schools sought to replace medieval consciousness in their own distinct way, based on the autonomy of the human mind. In the midst of this initial disposition to respond to the concerns of other contending school and method, quite a plethora of modes were unearth and noticeable and sometimes some of the responses tended to veer off the mark or foundation and even the background of the scheme or the initial intention and drive. This indeterminate disposition was replete in the postulations of Locke even as the precursor of the empiricist tradition and method of knowledge acquisition. It is based on this startling slip from no less a person like Locke that this paper intends to interrogate the postulation of Locke critically because it seems that indeed he veered off the line with the introduction of an immaterial/metaphysical substance even within an empirical scheme; this is not to even mention his position of the demonstrative mode of knowledge that seems to cast aspersion on his tradition. This could be understood when one appreciates the fact that Locke was interested in sort of dualism, epistemological dualism and he could not properly harness the schemes therefrom. It is palpable that it was this indiscretion and lack of management that led him to fall for the fallacy of *egocentric predicament*. This indeed is the novelty in the analysis of his epistemology and also a salient and unique point that this research intends to examine and expose. And this will go a long way to really demonstrate whether Locke was successful in his initial intention of clearing the ‘rubbish’ from the way of knowledge acquisition. To ease comprehension and ensure useful speculation, this discourse will start from some preliminaries which include his impression about empiricism amongst other related and expedient themes.
John Locke and Empiricism

Empiricism came up in an unpretentious way; it was destined to alter the course and content of modern philosophy… Locke who was the founder of empiricism in Britain aimed at the most modest objective of clearing the ground a little and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge (Stumpf 1982, 254).

Locke toed the line of Descartes in moving away from the remnant of the medieval scholasticism but particularly rejected Cartesian rationalism in favour of empiricism. Empiricism as a theory contends that knowledge can only be gotten via the senses with the collaboration of experience and the guidance of ideas and perception. Locke a medical doctor by profession read Descartes works and got attracted to philosophy; indeed he found a kindred spirit in Descartes. He was able to do this because among other things he studied the natural sciences so he was in tune with the physical realities and their activities. Locke found the stodgy scholasticism that still pervaded the Oxford of his days to be perplexed with obscure terms and useless questions. As a medical doctor he was the personal physician and adviser to Lord Ashley (later to become the Earl of Shaftsbury). Through this and other assignment he acquired a great deal of experience in politics and even held political positions. He even helped to draft a constitution for the American Carolinas in 1669. And when trouble broke out in England he fled on exile to Holland and it was while in this exile that he wrote some of his most celebrated works viz; Two Treatise on Government and An Essay Concerning Human Understanding published in 1690. And the later one remains one of the principal sources of empiricism in modern philosophy and influence philosopher like Hume Immanuel Kant.

Precincts of Human Knowledge

After a conversation on morality and religion with his friends around 1671 John Locke formulated two draft of the Essay in 1671 (Locke 1894). He accused them of building an epistemological edifice devoid of a foundation. He then argued that the first task would have been to examine the level of human knowledge and check if it can carry out enquiries concerning things such as ‘the principles of morality and revealed religion’. Then he started to inquire into the sources, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the ground and degrees of belief, opinion and assent (O’ Neil 1968). To examine our abilities and see what objects our understandings were or were not fitted to deal with. His intends his epistemological programme to inquire into the origin, certainty and extend of human knowledge together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion and assent (Copleston 1964).

He was however ready to accept the fact that every of our questions does not have answers. It might sound defeatist but, it helps us to understand the limitations of our human intellect, as Lawhead noted, “if we can find out how the understanding can extend its view, how far it has faculties to attain certainty and in what cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content
ourselves with what is attainable by us in this state’...the discoveries we can make with this ought to satisfy us (2002, 280). Locke asserts that if he could describe what knowledge consists of and how it is obtained, he could determine the limits of knowledge and decide what constitute certainty. This is akin to the quest of certainty of Descartes but Locke lowered the expectations, he finds security in the practical and the mundane and refuses to indulge in any speculative flight of fancy. In the process of ‘clearing’ and ‘removing’ Locke hit upon a bold and original interpretation of how the mind works and from this, describes the kind and extent of knowledge we can expect from the human mind. This led him to conceive that the scope of human knowledge is limited to and by our experience; though others before him had expressed the same view (Bacon and Hobbes stated that knowledge should be built on observation). And on that ground, we can also call them empiricist.

Locke on Ideas

Locke’s focal point in the Essay was ideas. He stated that ideas are the foundations for building knowledge, that our knowledge is limited to ideas. For Locke, an idea is anything that is the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding. They are things like; whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, man, etc. About ideas, he states that “whatever is the object of understanding when a man thinks. Whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking. (Locke 1898). Locke did not restrict ideas to abstractions or abstract things like ‘justice’ ‘goodness’ but also empirical things. Ideas are derived from sensation and the perception of the operation of our own mind which may be called ‘internal sense’. Ideas can even be concrete qualities found in sensations, such as colours, tastes and sounds. The novel method that Locke used in espousing this notion about idea is the historical plain method.

The idea is that ideas must be traced back until one gets to its original sources. This process is not of logical analysis but concrete. He further reasons that all knowledge is derived from experience and the immediate object of human knowledge is ideas. This means that we do not have direct knowledge of things themselves but only of our ideas about them. We come to this level when things impress themselves on our minds leaving in them images of copies which represent them. Ideas are therefore representation of things. Locke postulated two kinds of ideas, simple ideas and complex ideas. Locke stated that any idea found in the mind must have been deposited there by some experience, that the mind is in a clean and clear state tabula rasa ‘a dark closet’. Things are then imprinted on it via experience. The origin of idea is experience in the form of sensation and reflection. All knowledge come via the senses. Locke made it patent that we cannot have the experience of reflection until we have experience sensation first. In reflection, the mind appreciates its own operations (sense operations). The mind for Locke is the genesis of ideas since it is a blank sheet. Notice should be taken of the spatial metaphor that shapes Locke’s thought. The mind is like an empty container that holds the atom of thought. It is evident that Locke emulated Newton’s science of physical particles. For Locke, there is a direct relationship between his own ‘physics’ of the mind and Newtonian physics. The world is made up of particles in motion, some of which bombard the senses, e.g. as the particles of odour harass the nose.
Simple Ideas: Locke explicated that knowledge can be explained by discovering the materials out of which it was made. The most fundamental and original mental particles are simple ideas. They can’t be analyzed into smaller particles. The mind cannot invent a new simple idea it has not experienced, it only passively receives such ideas from experience. However, once it has acquired a collection simple idea; it can process them by repeating them, comparing them, or uniting them into various combinations. These simple ideas come in two varieties; the first comes from sensation with qualities like yellow, white, cold, soft, e.t.c. The second category is ideas of reflections. These are gained via experience of our own mental operations, knowledge from introspection hence we have ideas of perception, thinking, doubting, and believing as well as of the emotions and other psychological states.

Complex Ideas: Locke maintains that the mind cannot originate ideas but it has the power to process then into complex ideas. In other words, complex ideas are combinations of simple ideas that can be treated as unities and given their own names like; beauty and gratitude. Locke classifies complex ideas according to the three activities of the mind that produce them; compounding, relating and abstracting. The first sort of complex ideas compound simple ideas e.g. several observation of space can be combined to form a complex idea of immense space. Complex ideas also relates to simple ideas e.g. bigger and smaller, cause and effect, e.t.c. Lastly, the process of abstraction gives us important set of ideas called abstract or general ideas, these are ideas from which all circumstances of time and space and all other particularizing factors (like height, colour, size) have been removed. E.g. a given book is the combination of the ideas of its particular colour, weight, size, e.t.c. Locke affirms a correspondence or resemblance between simple ideas in our minds and the things they represent, it therefore follows that simple idea are nothing but copies or representation which things leave in our minds when they impress themselves on them.

The Ontological Status of Lockean Innatism

Just like Bacon and Descartes, Locke wanted to clear any debris on the way of genuine knowledge acquisition. His first project was to clear the debris of unintelligible terms and useless systems of thoughts so that he could make a fresh start towards a novel epistemological reconstruction. The most pressing of this rubbish he wanted to jettison was that of innatism. Accordingly, the first book of the Essay is concerned in arguing, as against Plato, (see, Theaetetus), the scholastics, Descartes, Leibniz among others that there is no innate ideas or principles. In the second book, he talks about how experience gives rise to various kinds of ideas. (See, Book II, chap I, sec. 2). Innatism as a theory claims that some kind of ideas, principles, and knowledge are not acquired via the senses but are in-built/natural in the human mind. This is the kpim of the rationalist thesis. Like the idea of God, morality, ethical principles and some natural and logical laws. Even the universal agreement of certain principles was used as proof for innatism. Locke in responses stated that all might not agree to some universal principles because human experience which is the source of knowledge is not uniform. Also, if all can know these principles and laws why can they not be known by children and imbeciles, because, of course, they also have minds. He also countered this
by stating that if they were in-born while is it that children don’t know them from birth? And he queried how ideas can be in the mind without the mind knowing them. Some people do not also have uniform moral principles. Locke contends that doctrine of innatism is superfluous because it contain something that he could not explain in terms of his empirical account of the origin of ideas. Locke however does not repudiate the idea of universal principles, but he rejects that they are innate

**Lockean Qualities: A Review**

Locke well acknowledged the fact that there was an external world and that we can know it though he posited that things in themselves cannot be known. The problem that came out of this position is, if ideas constitute the sum of our knowledge, and our ideas are in the mind, then how can our knowledge relate to the external world? Arising from this is Locke’s description of the relation between human ideas and object of perception through qualities. Qualities which are immediate object of perception in the object could either be in the form of primary or secondary qualities. Locke used the term ‘quality’ to buttress his point. For Locke quality refers to ‘the power of matter to produce ideas in our mind’. E.g. if we see a bucket as blue, round e.t.c., it means that the bucket has the power to produce such ideas. Primary qualities are qualities that are observed in the external object itself. This quality is what Locke called the primary qualities of the thing. Qualities like; solidity, extension, figure, motion rest, number and shape, they are in bodies as any object one observes has these qualities. The ideas corresponding to these qualities are a faithful representation of how things are really in the external world.

The secondary qualities indicate that bodies have the power to produce subjective experiences in us. They are qualities that are not in the things themselves but are only powers in things with which they impress themselves on such qualities; secondary qualities are only in the percipient. They are those things which are not really in the objects of perception but only power in objects which they impress on our senses. They subsequently produce some idea in us. They include; colour weight, size, sound and taste. Locke made this distinction because he thinks a clear-headed reflection on common experience demand it. For example, we can have different opinions about the height of a particular object but, we can check our opinions against the objective properties of the object itself. An apple is round always not rectangular irrespective of the viewing situation. However, the colour of the apple will change when viewed from an angle of sunlight or light. The lesson is that the shape remains the same as it is the primary quality but the colour changes as it is the secondary quality and it does not affect the nature of the thing itself. Whereas the primary qualities characterize the objects, the secondary were not only dispositional, they were also powers which enabled the objects, under suitable conditions to produce ideas in us (Hume 1982).

However, since Berkeley, Locke’s dualism has been philosophically outdated. Nevertheless, it dominated practical physics until the rise of quantum theory in our own day. Not only was it assume explicitly by physicists, but it proved fruitful as a source of many important discoveries. The theory that the physical world consists only of matter in motion was the basis of the accepted
theories of sound, heat, electricity. Pragmatically, the theory was useful however mistaken it may have been theoretically. According to Bertrand Russell, this is typical of Locke’s doctrines.

Locke on the Ontology of Substance

The separation of the primary and the secondary qualities precipitated Locke to evolve his own epistemology of substance. The idea of qualities cannot hold devoid of a substance that clasps them in being. What is that that possesses the colour, taste, shape, of the secondary qualities and what clutches the extension, solidity, and figure of the primary qualities? the answer according to Locke is substance. If there is motion, there must be something that moves, qualities cannot float around without something that melds them together. This is the underlying principles that these qualities collapse on and into. This can also be coded from Aristotle distinction between substance and accidents. Locke used the idea of substance to explain the idea of sensation; stating that, it is the substance that gives regularity and consistency to our ideas. It is substance that constitutes the object of sensitive knowledge. Locke pithily but palpably remarked that this substance cannot be known. He avows that things in themselves (Kantian noumena) cannot be known, that when we strip matter of its qualities what remains is the abstract idea and it cannot be perceived hence it cannot be known. The idea is only a supposition that those qualities are predicated on something, a material from which idea comes to impress themselves on our open mind. In this same way, Locke went aboard empiricism to state the existence of some immaterial and unempirical substances. Locke supposed that there must be an immaterial substance sustaining the simple ideas of thinking, reflection, doubting etc. This stance underscores the Lockean theistic propositions. ‘The complex idea we have both of God and separate spirits are made up of the simple ideas that we receive from reflection. The idea of God, as the idea of substance, is inferred from other simple ideas and is the product not of immediate observation but of demonstration.

Reflections on the Lockean Dualism and the Fallacy of Egocentric Predicament

In terms of influence on Locke that of Gassendi was evident. Gassendi was Sixteen century mathematician and scientist turned philosopher who was a contemporary of Descartes. He rejected his universal doubt and the reliance of reason as the sole giver knowledge; Gassendi contends that though reason plays its part, all knowledge must start with the senses. And that the world is a machine and we have to learn about it by looking at it Also, though Locke disagrees with Descartes in many respects, he is essentially a Cartesian because he studied philosophy the way Descartes developed it and took it as his starting point (King 2006). Little wonder why some scholars like Hume rescinds from referring to Locke as a consistent empiricist. Besides Locke’s primary and secondary qualities are the ones that can be quantified and studied in physics. Here he typified Galileo and Descartes in his attempt to bring nature into the mathematical realm. Locke posited that the real properties of the world are only those that can be examined scientifically. All other qualities are merely by-product of these. The implication of this is that the world of the Poet, Artist and naïve
experience is a world of appearances; while the world of the Newtonian science which lacks colours, odours, etc, becomes the real world. Locke only succeeded in further inflating the gully between; the world of our experience and the world that science presents to us.

It is pertinent to take cognizance of the fact that, the primary and secondary qualities of Locke were done so that he can attempt to differentiate between appearance and reality. It replicates the pattern in the Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysics; the distinction between matter and form and substance and accident. In addition, Locke should not present this position as a novel one just from him, because Democritus preempted something similar when he asserted that colourless atom are the basic reality and the colour, tastes and odours are the results of particular organization of these atoms. Democritus postulated that perception whether it is sense or intellectual is a physical process. Democritus further stated that certain objective qualities like hardness, destiny and weight are objectively present in the object and other senses, qualities like taste, colour are sense-reactions in the sense organs (Walsh 1985). Descartes also separated the secondary qualities from the basic substance he called extension. Particularly deficient in Locke’s discussion of primary and secondary qualities is his hypothesis that there was something that could possess these qualities and this he called substance. This inelegantly propelled Locke to assent to the being of a non-empirical substance as flagrant in his dissimilarity between objective primary and sensible secondary qualities. This smack of a blatant abuse of logic which made him culpable of the fallacy of logical jump; because he was making provision for something that cannot be experienced or justified even according to his own rule which then portends a threat to his empirical suppositions and justifications.

From the above, it will be edifying to further affirm here that Berkeley admired the empirical status of some of Locke’s theories; as he also contends with him that all our knowledge is about ideas not things (as his esse est percipi stems from Locke analysis of the secondary quality distinctions), thus taking a leave from the physicalism of Locke’s secondary qualities. Albeit, as we rightly submitted and in tandem with Hume’s resolved, Locke was not invariable with his empiricism. He was indeed carried away with qualities and was beleaguered in trying to fully explain them; this precipitated him to traverse the periphery he set for himself and went on to cause more problems, leaving some rubbish on the lane against his initial disposition. Astonishingly, Berkeley, a fellow empiricist, famously vilified Locke arguing that there was no basis for a distinction between primary and secondary qualities, Berkeley also denigrated Locke for asserting that primary qualities were any more real that the secondary ones. This point of Berkeley is apparent because his epistemology of esse est percipi before he also confused it with the existence of spiritual substances via intuition (spirits and minds), was initially based on the secondary qualities. On his part, Locke was convinced that there must be something (substance) that is the foundation of objective existence and carries the primary qualities, but he was at sea in defining it based on the implication on his empirical method. Hence, his distinction between objective primary and sensible secondary qualities allows for an invincible substance; which effaces the pristine principles of empiricism. This seeming ‘rubbish’ of Locke necessitated further pruning from Bishop George Berkeley. Berkeley reasons that the world we know is the world we experience; it is our experience,
our perception that is the real objects of our knowledge (Berkeley 1901) And it only then takes a brief reflection to appreciate the fact that the empiricism of Locke enters into a complex stage and therefore goes beyond the limit of experience when he rests the argument for the existence of self, God and external world on demonstration and intuition which are meta-empirical.

The above disposition simply marks Locke’s inglorious voyage from empiricism to metaphysics. It is interestingly so because this is not the first time he is making this trip. He made the same trip when he moved beyond the primary and secondary qualities into the world of an unknown substance as already stated above. And this seems to suggest that Locke’s empiricism goes beyond the limit and scope of which simple ideas and qualities come to us and then impress themselves on us; this is especially as it concerns the unempirical substance. The query arising from this is; if we cannot know the substratum, how do we know it exists? Does the knowledge of substance stem from our experience? However, some scholars would be quick to comment that Locke must not be utterly persecuted for allowing reason to prevail in the tribunal of justice as a way of evaluating the validity of all opinions and belief derived from sense experience. And it is on this ground that some people conceive of him as a metaphysician. From his defenses and philosophical system, it seemed that unlike philosophers like Berkeley, Hume, Kant Locke’s preoccupation was not to push one precise idea or method to its extreme conclusions, but rather to account for reality by staying as close as possible to common sense and daily realities as against reason; this was vivid however in the fact that he was always willing to admit that there were limits and flaws in his explanations. In that sense, it can be said that his empiricism also contained a mega dose of healthy pragmatism.

From his conjecture, it is brazen that, Locke was impetuous; he was always sensible and willing to sacrifice logic rather than to be seemingly paradoxical. He enunciates general principles which are capable of leading to strange consequences. To a logician, it is irritating but to a pragmatician it is rather a sane judgement. It is obvious that valid reasoning from sound principles cannot lead to error, but a principle may be so nearly true as to deserve theoretical accolade, but may lead to irrelevant justifications and absurd consequences. This is therefore a justification for common sense in philosophy, but only as showing that our theoretical principles cannot be quite correct as long as their consequences are condemned by an appeal to common sense which we feel is irresistible. Nonetheless, the theorist may retort that common sense is more infallible than logic. But this retort made by Berkeley and Hume would have been wholly foreign to Locke’s intellectual temper (Russell 2008).

Patently, from this, one can glean that spark of liberality and lack of dogmatism in Locke, this presaged that Locke brought the stints of his liberalism to the fore in his epistemological scheme which somewhat abstracted the system. Overtly, Locke’s physical realism was more conspicuous in his distinction between primary and secondary qualities; and whatever epistemological difficulties the distinction might entail; Locke was persuaded that the new physics required it. Indeed, the distinction was made by Boyle, Descartes, Galileo and others before him and it was familiar (and practicable) in his days. Admittedly, there is a problem in the assertion that a certain motion in body produces in me the idea of a particular colour; all the same, Locke was nonetheless swayed that it
was so. Amazingly, in such difficult cases Locke fell back upon the omnipotence and wisdom of God and the fact that our knowledge is suited for our purpose.

A thoroughgoing analyst would by now underscored the fact that John Locke seems to subscribe to a position known as epistemological dualism and the view holds that knowing contains two distinct aspects: the knower and the known. And given the basic empiricist benchmark that all knowledge comes from our own ideas, which in turn are based on our own sensation and perceptions, epistemological dualism then presents us with a fundamental problem which is: if all knowledge comes in the form of my own ideas based on sense data, how then can I verify the experience of anything external to the sensations that constitute sense data. That is, won’t the very process of the verification take place within the realm of my own ideas? This fixation that Locke led epistemology into is what this paper calls the fallacy of egocentric predicament. The crux of this fallacy is based on the fact Locke’s copy theory seems to put us on an egocentric position of being able to know only a world of our own mental constructions, a self-limited world and experience indeed. Now the fallacy is that is there no external world? Can there be any mind other than my own? How could I know? How could I distinguish another mind from my own if all that I have ever known and appreciated are just my own perceptions. And if as Locke suggests, all true ideas are based on sense data that correspond to something else, how can we ever verify the objective, independent existence of an external reality. And if that is the case how then can we ever apply Locke’s own standards of verification to his notion of primary qualities.

Now, at this point it seems as if all one can know are his or her own perceptions (secondary qualities). As soon as one is aware of them, one has labeled and organized them. That is, even if external object exist, the process of perceiving sense data is a process of becoming aware of my ideas. I don’t ever seem to be able to actually experience things-in-themselves. If, as Locke claims, my ideas are ‘messages’ from my senses, how can I or anyone verify that the messages come from independently existing things. And Locke himself asks, “how shall the mind, when it perceives nothing but its own ideas know that they agree with things themselves? Now Locke tries to avoid the egocentric predicament by asserting that we ‘somehow know’ that mental and physical substances and an objective external reality exist. We don’t just have a clear idea of the difference between minds and bodies or other aspects of ultimate reality. For Locke, sensation convinces us that there are solid extended substances (matter and bodies); and reflection that there are thinking (minds, souls); experience assures us of the existence of such beings; and that one has the power to move body by impulse, the other by thought; this we cannot have any doubt of. Experience, I say, every moment furnishes us with clear ideas both of one and of the other. But beyond these ideas, as received from their proper sources our faculties will not reach (Locke 1894).

In other words, Locke holds on to both a ‘commonsense’ view of reality and his copy theory of truth, even though he cannot verify either by appealing to the copy theory. In spite of the major differences with Descartes, Locke draws surprisingly similar conclusions for similar reasons. Both Locke and Descartes shield away from pursuing the logical consequences of their basic premises. Descartes was able to establish the momentary certainty of the cogito but had difficulty moving beyond his own mind when he attempted to provide a certain foundation for
the external world and God’s existence. Locke was able to demonstrate the importance of experience as an element of knowledge and show that many of our ideas are based on sensation and experience. He was also able to show the inadequacy of pure reason as a foundation for all knowledge. But, like Descartes, Locke was unable to move from direct knowledge of his own ideas to direct knowledge of external reality. So, pursued to its logical conclusion, Locke’s empiricism does seem to end in the egocentric predicament. If it does, not only are we denied knowledge of an external independent reality, but we are also denied the possibility of knowing God, for what simple sensations and experience can there be on which the idea of God rests? But it is like Locke chose, in the end to affirm certain beliefs at the expense of philosophical consistency. However, the second of the British empiricists tried to be more consistent (Soccio 2007).

By and large and consciously speaking, no one has built a philosophy that is at once credible and self-consistent. Locke aimed at credibility, and tried to achieve it at the expense of consistency. It is pertinent to state here that, most of the great philosophers have done the opposite. This is because a philosophy which is not self-consistent cannot be wholly true, but a philosophy which is self-consistent can very well be wholly false. Agreed that most fruitful philosophies have glaring inconsistencies, but this has made them to be partially true. So, there is no reason to suppose that a self-consistent system contains more truth than one which, like Locke’s is obviously more or less wrong (Russell 2008, 289). In spite of these scathing comments on the empirical foundations of Locke’s epistemology, it is noteworthy to state that he remains the first person to investigate the innatism of the continental rationalists of the modern era; and build up the idea that the senses and experience are critical partners in the quest for truth and knowledge acquisition. He also remains the father of modern empiricism which has immensely contributed to the growth, development and appreciation of activities of the human intellect. However, it is obvious that he was not consistent and this derailed the truth value in his system. He set up from empiricism and pragmatic physicalism which prevailed in his time and was the bulwark of his system; and because he betrayed and expunged consistency he dovetailed even to rationalism (via demonstration) and finally berthed in a metaphysical substance that was meta-empirical. From where his epistemological dualism was evident and the fallacy of egocentric predicament caught up with him.

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