

exists, he said, because thought exists therefore I exist. This statement contained an important truth—the truth, namely, that every one can be certain only of his own thoughts; but it conceals a hidden assumption, namely, that thinking implies something or somebody who thinks.

This, of course, is the common-sense view—the view of which all the dialectics and metaphysics of ancient and mediæval times could not rid themselves. It took a hundred years of further thought before Berkeley and Hume between them showed that the existence of a process, be this external motion or internal motion (that is, thought), though it suggests to us a something which moves or thinks, leaves this something undefinable, and that our knowledge of it is reduced to the simple fact of motion and thought.

As Descartes did not recognise the real importance of his step in advance, but brought in the idea of a Something which lies beneath or behind the thinking process, he retained the metaphysical notion of substance, and in the sequel arrived at the notion of two substances—the inner thinking substance and the outer extended substance. By opening out this track of thought he became the father of a long series of philosophical systems on the Continent, which adopted in the main the old dialectical method, leaving aside the introspective region of research which he had had a glimpse of.