

and progressive it is sufficient for Knowledge to be clearly defined and generally accepted. Consistency (or coherence) and concurrence (or agreement) in thought is sufficient to make it a powerful agent in progress.

Whole generations of civilised history and culture, great societies of human beings, have existed and thriven under the sway of systems of thought and knowledge which, though consistent and universally accepted, have to future generations and other societies seemed to be full of superstition or error. And even at the present day we have by no means got beyond the possibility of such wholesale delusions and consequent condemnation.

In the course of this search for certainty, for something that cannot be doubted, Descartes took a memorable step in advance: discarding words and phrases, he penetrated beyond and beneath them, recognising that, quite apart from the nature or meaning of words as such, they referred to an inner process in every individual mind. This process is thinking. Even if all our knowledge were reduced to uncertainty and dissolved in doubt, there still remained as the remnant which we cannot get rid of, our doubting itself; and doubting is thinking. Thus the only certain thing is thinking. Had Descartes remained there and recognised what this statement implied, he would have not only discovered but cultivated the large region of the inner world—the world or stream of consciousness. Instead of doing this he fell back into the old tracks of thought: he resorted again to metaphysics and dialectics. Instead of saying, thinking or thought