

One of the difficulties is that not much has been said that gets at the nebulous, elusive, intuitive, creative, gestating, formative, uncertain, ill-structured, pre-scientific early stages in part because not much is known in any precise or validated way. Whatever may be known, experienced or suspected would be in widely scattered sources under other headings and not generally or fully treated in works concerned with inquiry as such. Especially since people who make it their main business to write about research are likely to be concerned with the acceptability and verification of what they write, one would expect the coverage to be more generous on matters that are better established.

A second difficulty, one that too often goes unnoticed, is that so-called problems are mental constructs that commonly have no empirical referents. Even to add that problems are as they are perceived only increases rather than reduces the difficulty. For Gertrude Stein, famed poetess, it may be that a rose is a rose is a rose. For people concerned with inquiry on many levels, however, the term embraces a variety of meanings and connotations that require sorting out. As one example, the use of the term in common parlance and by an investigator working at the front edge of a given discipline need not be the same. As another, it is common for a newcomer to confuse an intellectual itch about an ill-defined problem area with a well-defined research problem. In both examples, what one takes to be known, the character of the problem, may get in the way of what needs to be known for the purpose of research.

Common to both examples above is that problems are as they are perceived and as one elects to define them for general purposes or for the purpose at hand. Clearly, if the factory lights go out and production cannot proceed,