

ONE

Introduction: Problems Identified

Introduction

The objective of this text is to provide sound underpinning for dissertations, theses, research projects and, where necessary, more advanced interdisciplinary research programmes. This book draws together a diverse set of material that gives a comprehensive assessment, understanding and application of philosophical positions, paradigms of inquiry, ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods or data collection. Indeed, this text recognises the difficulties regarding philosophy, theory, truth, knowledge, reality, when developing understanding, and the absolute minefield these issues engender for individual researchers and larger interdisciplinary research programmes and projects. This book involves an original perspective on other similar texts because, even though distinct works exist regarding these individual areas, there has been limited coverage of the relationship between philosophical issues in general and through methodological approaches the impacts these have on researchers, participants and data collection procedures. For example, considerations regarding the nature of reality and the role of theory in the pursuit of knowledge will have implications for the methodology and methods pursued in a research project. Methodology will impact on methods and have considerable influence on what knowledge is considered to be and the consequent outcomes of the investigation. If one considers that knowledge or reality exists external to individuals then the researcher is required to undertake data collection procedures in an empirical and distanced manner; usually this perspective pursues an objective detached stance. However, if one considers there is a relationship between reality and mind then such a stance is impossible to attain and subjective tendencies will resonate throughout the research process. Consequently, this text explores these issues and begins with an assessment of notions regarding reality that were identified, discussed and debated in antiquity and further developed through Enlightenment and the thoughts of among others David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer.

Chapter 1 provides explanations regarding theory and practice and identifies correlations between ideas relating to knowledge, truth and reality. Knowledge, truth or reality can either involve abstract conceptualisation or be grounded and developed through practical situations and data. Indeed, these areas may be considered reflections of human relations and stances regarding levels of

subjectivity and objectivity. Furthermore, this chapter introduces problems regarding ideas about knowledge, reality, truth and how these may be reflected through different ontological perspectives (conceptualisations of reality or truth) as well as the relationship between the observer and observed (epistemology). Kant considered that knowledge could be developed through critical thinking, which involved both application of received doctrines and systems as well as one's inherited thoughts, prejudices and traditions. To obtain a non-biased position or objectivity one must take the thoughts of others into account. Objectivity was not some higher standpoint but the very fact of understanding the social and subjective nature of self and others. Objects need to be viewed from different perspectives through, which one's point of view may expand. Thought is extended by taking into account the thoughts of others. We compare and contrast the possible judgements of others by putting ourselves in their place through the concept of imagination (Kant, 1952).

Definition Box

Reality, Truth, Knowledge and Theory

Reality: Related to knowledge and can be totally separate from or a construction of the mind. Positivist perspectives of reality differ from phenomenological notions of reality; positivism sees reality as totally independent of humanity whereas the latter considers them to be intrinsically linked.

Truth: Truth is a difficult concept to pin down and may be interpreted as reflections of reality based on evidence which is determined by an understanding of reality; that is ontological and epistemological positions. Truth provides an understanding of reality at a given point in time; truths like theories do not hold for eternity, when truth and/or theories change so does the nature of reality.

Knowledge: Knowledge incorporates our stock of explanations and understanding of why reality and the truth and theories that reflect this are as they are; knowledge involves interpretations of facts derived from data as well as abstract comprehensions of phenomenon.

Theory: Theory provides ways of explaining or giving meaning to understandings extrapolated from data. Theory can be expressed through immutable laws at one extreme and social or constructions at the other. Theory is a means of reflecting reality, truth or knowledge.

Each relates to the distinction between clear objective external realities that can be understood perfectly by human beings and solipsistic comprehensions of the world which consider phenomenon to be determined by the subjective mind.

Ontology and Epistemology: Does an External Reality Exist?

For empirical science and positivism a real external world exists, which focuses on empirical occurrences and concentrates on the precise nature and rules of

events. Conversely, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant states that 'all objects of any experience possible to us are nothing but appearances that are mere representations which ... have no independent existence outside our thoughts' (1992: 519). Transcendental idealism identifies an ordinary means of awareness which may not perceive objects as they truly exist. We only have access to reality through our perceptual capabilities, consequently it is not possible to say whether what we see is accurate; the mind constructs an understanding of phenomenon. So phenomenon as perceived or experienced involves representation; thought may initially consider that it is capable of describing an existing reality, but, all it may provide is a means of making actions transparent to self. However, the idea of an objective reality has been accepted for many years and such a notion is difficult to dispel. That said, this idea should not be taken as gospel and the pursuit of objective reality our only goal; especially in contexts where none may be realised. Indeed, once this is taken on board then other means or ways of understanding may refocus our thoughts and expand our pursuits of knowledge and truth. A distinction exists between a posteriori knowledge, which can be understood through direct awareness of phenomenon (empirically) and a priori knowledge that is known through propositions (non-empirically). Normally, a posteriori knowledge depends on support from sensory experience whereas a priori knowledge depends on intellectual processes or pure reason. Fundamentally, Kant distinguished between things that exist in themselves and the appearances of phenomenon; we know the world through the projection of pre-existing categories apparent within the mind and are not able to access things in themselves. That is, we can only have an interpretation of entities or objects as they appear to us once they have been categorised and edited by the means at our disposal for understanding the given phenomenon.

Kant (1992) argued that elements of occurrences and events are initially 'phenomenon of the brain' and made up of 'subjective conditions' (Schopenhauer, 1966: 3). As soon as someone comprehends that the 'world is my representation' it should be recognised by all as a truism. However, it is not a proposition that everyone understands and becomes or turns into an assessment of the relationship between the ideal and the real (realism and idealism); 'the world in the head (ideal) and the world outside the head (real)'. Schopenhauer, argued that understanding was 'limited to the facts of consciousness; in other words philosophy is essentially idealistic' (Schopenhauer, 1966: 5) and because it denies that the world is not primarily representation, realism is nothing but an illusion. Knowledge of truth 'is rendered more difficult only by the fact ... that not everyone has sufficient power of reflection to go back to the first elements of his consciousness of things' (Schopenhauer, 1966: 5). This is because the idea of the objective has its embryonic existence in the subjective; that is consciousness.



Question Box

Knowledge

Socrates saw virtue as knowledge and to be virtuous was to both know oneself and understand what one ought to do. One would consider that because virtue is knowledge and knowledge can be taught then so can virtue. However, on the one hand, Socrates argues that there are no experts of virtue while on the other hand he considers that virtue may be taught. But what if there are no experts to teach virtue? Indeed, he attempts to overcome this problem by considering that 'the soul ... has learned everything that there is. So we need not be surprised if it can recall the knowledge of virtue or anything else which ... it once possessed' (Plato, 1976: 129–30). When we learn a basic principle, if we persevere, the rest will follow. The soul remembers what it forgot at birth 'for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection' (Plato, 1976: 130). Knowledge is already present and only requires recollection.

Express your considerations regarding this understanding of knowledge and learning from first principles. Does knowledge or what is sought pre-exist the research process?

Given that the starting point is the subjective self, would the objective world exist without consciousness (without idealism or the subjective)? Indeed, if we imagine an objective world without a knowing subject we actually achieve the opposite of what we intended. 'We become aware that what we are imagining at that moment is in truth the opposite of what we intended, namely nothing but just the process in the intellect of a knowing being that perceives an objective world' (Schopenhauer, 1966: 5). The real world is phenomenon of the mind and the assumption that an external world exist no more than a contradiction. When we undertake a research project we approach the world with pre-conceptions about the relationship between mind and external reality; such will affect the methodological approach, research programme and methods of data collection. If one considers reality to be an external entity then it is likely that the research will pursue objectivity and test or falsify hypotheses or null hypotheses through data, experimentation and or statistical analysis. If we consider the world and mind to be intrinsically linked a more interpretive approach would be appropriate.

Kant considered that space and time themselves were due to the intuition or perception of the subject and were consequently not things-in-themselves. Subsequently, that which exists in time and space is not objective and things-in-themselves that can only be subjective and an objective world representation. Through our 'mind we represent to ourselves objects as outside us ... Space is not an empirical concept ... derived from outer experience ... Space is a necessary ... representation' (Kant, 1992: 67–8). Furthermore, time is also 'a necessary representation that underlies all intuitions' (Kant, 1992: 74). All things involve reflections of the mind continually interacting in relation to time and space; who and



where we are in the era we exist will determine our notions and understanding of things, while at the same time things impact on our notions of time and space.

In many contexts, idealism is misinterpreted as denying the existence of empirical reality and the external world. However, idealism transcends realism and leaves the external world untouched but at the same time considers that the object and the empirical real is conditioned by the subject in two ways: first it is 'conditioned materially or as object in general, since an objective existence is conceivable only in the face of the subject'. Second 'it is conditioned formally, since the mode and manner of the object's existence, in other words, of it being represented (space, time, causality) proceed from the subject and are predisposed in the subject' (Schopenhauer, 1966: 8). Indeed, this links Berkeley's concept of idealism (the object in general) with Kantian (special mode and manner of objective existence).

Reflection Box

George Berkeley

In his *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) George Berkeley (1658–1753) argued that the external world were no more than collections of ideas. This was a striking proposal and many dismiss the idea with some indignation. However, Berkeley was a serious philosopher and considered that God produced sensations or ideas within our mind. He further argued that if his ideas were fully understood he would be identified as a philosopher that defended truth against 'the mob' or 'the vulgar'.

Consider Berkeley's position and the implications this has for the relationship between object and subject.

Fundamentally, time and space which underpin the notion of an objective reality are themselves subjective-based entities. Kant dealt with this but does not use the notion of brain or mind. Indeed Kant based his subjective stance on the 'faculty of knowledge'. The intellect creates the order of things 'and exists only for things, but ... things also exist only for it' (Kant, 1992: 9).

Realism considers that the world exists independently of the subject. However, let us remove the subject and leave only the object and then return the subject to the world; the world then repeats itself to the subject exactly (as a perfect mirror image of that which exists). 'Thus for the first world a second has been added, which, although completely separated from the first resembles it to a nicety. Now the subjective world of this perception is constituted in subjective, known space exactly as the objective world is in infinite space' (Kant, 1992: 9).

The question becomes the extent to which an external world corresponds to our subjective interpretation? Which returns to the question; is the world of subjective or objective origin? John Locke and David Hume assumed an objective or external origin because they argued understanding was drawn or developed from experience; it is a posteriori. Whereas, Kant and Schopenhauer considered



the world to be a priori and subjective in origin because the ‘only thing actually given empirically in the case of perception is the occurrence of a sensation in the organ of the sense’ (Schopenhaur, 1966: 11). No one can doubt that ‘knowledge begins with experience ... Nevertheless it ... may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge ... supplies from itself’ (Kant, 1992: 41–2).

Realism identified that the object existed without the subject. However, it is difficult to clearly conceive of such an object. Through knowledge and representation it is not possible to know things from within because the knowledge of all things comes from without. We may only understand from within if we are capable of getting inside things ‘so that the inside would be known directly’ (Schopenhaur, 1966: 12). Furthermore, knowledge of the world remains ‘a mere representation since no path is here possible which leads beyond this’ (Schopenhaur, 1966: 12).

Idealism and Materialism

There also exists a distinction between idealism and materialism, which may be investigated through assessing the existence of matter. Is matter real or an ideal? Is matter a representation or is it independent of the mind? If independent then matter is a thing-in-itself, if a representation then idealistic. Locke asserted the unquestionable existence of matter whereas Berkeley denied this assertion.

Materialism points out that the ‘knower is a product of matter as that matter is a mere representation; but is also as one sided; for materialism is the philosophy of the subject who forgets to take account of himself’ (Schopenhaur, 1966: 13). Furthermore, no less correct is the assertion that all matter exists as representation (*Materia menacium verax*): Matter is a lie and yet true. The world is more than mere representation and that the object is conditioned by the subject. Indeed a ‘consciousness without object is no consciousness at all. A thinking subject has concepts for its objects: a sensuously perceiving subject has objects with the qualities corresponding to its organisation’ (Schopenhaur, 1966: 15).

Reflection Box

Subject and Object

Subject: World is my representation only I exist.

Object: Without me there is nothing. You are a part of me and quite accidental.

Subject: You and your form are conditioned by me and neither would exist without me. You are represented by me and I am the locality of your existence; I am the basis of your existence.





- Object: You are transitory and last but a moment I on the other hand remain from millennium to millennium. I am eternal.
- Subject: Eternal time and space is merely representation which I carry within me you simply manifest yourself in this a priori conditioning. It is in this way that you first exist. If I am transitory then so are you. Only the individual is transitory who is my bearer and which like everything else is my representation.
- Object: Even if I accept your existence beyond the fleeting moments of individuals your existence is still dependent on mine. You are subject only so long as you have an object. I am the object that holds all together without which incoherency would reign.
- Subject: As I am tied to individuals you are tied to form. No one has seen either of us in abstraction or naked. 'At bottom it is one entity that perceives itself and is perceived by itself, but it's being-in itself cannot consist either in perceiving or being perceived as these are divided between us' (Schopenhaur, 1966: 18).
- Both: We are necessary elements of a whole. Necessary to one another's existence. Only misunderstanding can set us up as enemies in opposition to each other.

Each encapsulates the world as representation or the phenomenon. Subtract this and one is left with the purely metaphysical (the thing-in-itself). Consider this conversation between the object and subject.

Overall, representation and the objective world encompass two extremes. The one extreme is the knowing subject without world the other external world without subject; they are in fact really one and the same thing considered from two opposite points view' (Schopenhaur, 1966: 15–16). Kant (1997) alludes to a similar position when he explained the consciousness of his existence. First from the place he occupied in the 'external world of sense and extends the connection in which I stand in unbounded magnitude with worlds upon worlds and systems upon systems'. Whereas the second, 'begins from the invisible self, my personality and presents me in a world which has true infinity but which can be discovered only by the understanding, and I cognise that my connection with that world (and thereby with all those visible worlds as well) is not merely contingent, as in the first case, but universal and necessary' (Kant 1997: 133). When undertaking research one takes self to the given problem; self defines perceptions of the problem and the same difficulty defines the questions self will ask. The process is interactive and iterative and involves the researcher recognising both subjective and objective tendencies in developing research strategies and programmes.

Identifying Others in the World

The distinction between subject and object may also be considered when we identify others in the world. We know we exist and the existence of others follows from this; in the social sciences if we do not analyse others what do we actually





Table 1.1 Subject and object

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>
Represented and conditioned by humanity.	Exists prior to humanity and is eternal.
Eternity and reality merely representations of the subject.	The existence of the subject is reliant on the existence of the object.
Reliant on individuals for existence to be represented.	Reliant on form for existence to be represented.
Subject reliant on the existence of object.	Object reliant on existence of the subject.

investigate? Through undertaking data collection we accept the existence of others in the world. 'Even my own person is object for another and is therefore that other's representation, and yet I know certainly that I should exist even without the other representing me in his mind' (Kant, 1997: 6). One may deal with this in the following way; the other whose object I am is not an absolute subject, but initially a knowing entity. 'Therefore if he too did not exist' or any other person exist other than myself 'this would still by no means be the elimination of the subject in whose representation alone all objects exist' (Kant, 1997: 6). For other people are only known indirectly by me.

I know my body only in perception of my brain. This perception is brought about through the senses and on their data the perceiving understanding carries out its function ... It follows from this that the existence of my body as an extended and acting thing always presupposes a knowing being different from it, since it is essentially an existence in the apprehension, in the representation and hence an existence for another being. (Kant, 1997: 6)

The starting point for dealing with this issue could be Hegel (1977) and the naïve mind's emergent comprehension of external reality. Mind becomes aware of itself through subjective and objective self-consciousness. Subjective awareness of self is not enough to enable self-consciousness because this is unable to sufficiently inform human beings about what they are like in the world. Humans need a complimentary objective stance. Self needs an objective recognition of its own consciousness to provide an understanding of its own reality. Only another human being can provide this; through reflecting for consciousness a sense of its own external being.

In this context, objective truth lies in mutual recognition; that is the recognition of 'others' in the world. Others define 'self' and 'self' defines 'self' in relation to the definition of 'others'. Community defines 'self' and 'self' defines community. 'The savage lives in himself; sociable man outside himself, in the opinion of other ... and so to speak, derives the sentiments of his own existence solely from their judgement' (Rousseau, cited in Pippin, 1997: 93). The objective 'self' accepts Rousseau's identification of the situation and provides a potential means of dealing with it (Pippin, 1997). Hegel argued that the transition is not that straightforward because initially the existence of the 'other' will be perceived as a threat to being and a





negation of 'self'. Before the subject is confronted by another he/she existed in a world of things. Consequently, the subject deals with the 'other' by treating it as a thing and validates its own image as an entity in control of a sea of things. Because the subject does not yet see itself in an objective form, it treats other consciousness as entities to be controlled. In a research context, initially the other is something to be analysed and assessed in an external fashion; a positivist position initially exists. However, through recognition of other and community a form of unity prevails and the study may shift to more constructivist ontological and epistemological positions. Indeed, through recognition we may map changes in comprehensions of research and the role of others in the knowledge generation process.

Subduing 'other' leads to conflict and enslavement and undermines opportunities to enable full self-consciousness (early anthropology and ethnographic studies reflected such positions). The form of 'recognition' initially understood is subordination or reduction of the 'other' and through a life-death struggle in the pursuit of recognition, social life and political union emerge. Death of 'other' does not solve the problem of 'recognition'. Victory must be attained and 'recognition' accepted before the death of 'other'. Indeed, a master-slave relationship arises, which underpins the emergence of 'recognition', self-consciousness and social life. Hegel does not mean that all relationships are enslaving but that this was the dialectical basis for political, economic, social relationships. The struggle for 'recognition' involves an ongoing process and a continuing feature of social life. For Hegel the master-slave relationship was not an early form of social structure; 'the development of social relationships ... is not ... simply ... one leading from one to another, but self inclusive, each earlier stage incorporating a higher form than the earlier ones, the master-slave relationship is a protean source of the various relationships, political, economic, social and sexual' (Hampsher-Monk, 1992: 426).

Initially, it looks like the master has realised 'the peak of human existence, being the man who is fully satisfied (befriedigt) in and by his real existence, by what he is' (Kojève, 1980: 46). Indeed, through victory the master seems to have ensured 'recognition'. However, to ensure self-awareness consciousness needs the recognition of an equal. The master has only won by reducing the 'other' to the status of a thing in the world. Because the master existed in a world of things there had been no progression of consciousness. 'His consciousness has progressed no further than its existence in a world of unconscious objects' (Kojève, 1980: 427). Recognition is required from someone (another human being) of equal status.

On the other hand, the slave is conscious of another independent mind in the world. Although forced to recognise the master or 'other' the slave progresses from a subjective conceptualisation of 'self' toward an objective awareness of 'self'. Through synthesising a consciousness experienced subjectively in 'self', and a consciousness experienced objectively, in another, the slave is able to have an objective awareness of 'self' subjectivity. The positive aspect of enslavement relates to an understanding of the futility of ego, which clears the consciousness and identifies the importance of labour.





Reality for the master is defined by consumption whereas through work 'the slave ... increases his awareness of himself and his relationship to an initially intractable Nature in the course of transforming it for his master' (Hampsher-Monk, 1992: 427). As noted above, this transition is not easy, as the individual primarily perceives others as a threat to 'self' (Hampsher-Monk, 1992: 427). However, Hegel continually indicated that humans are unable to organise a total concept of 'self' unless this is in relation to 'others'. Without recognition the Master is unsatisfied with his existence and only a satisfied consciousness is able to complete history and arrive at ultimate truth. 'If History must be completed if absolute knowledge must be possible' (Kojere, 1980: 47) through becoming satisfied only the slave can realise this. This is why Hegel considered that truth was revealed in the master/slave dichotomy; 'The human ideal, born in the Master can be realised and revealed, can become Wahrheit (truth) only in and by slavery' (Kojere, 1980: 47). Self and other become intrinsically linked and work and study lead to emancipation and truth. True self and understanding of self is formed through critical thinking and making judgements about self, other and the world in which we exist. Self and other are defined and social science rendered explicit; we may only fully comprehend ourselves through analysis and critique in communities.

Critical Thinking and Judgements

Critical thinking is only possible when community and the judgements of others are brought into the equation with standpoints or opinions of each individual open to inspection. Consequently, although critical thinking is done alone the individual thinker is not isolated; as noted research and thought as well as knowledge development is undertaken through community. When people can form no idea of distant and unfamiliar things they judge them by what is present and familiar' (Vico, 1999: 76). Individuals use theoretical abstraction and generalisation to comprehend issues beyond experience. Things are assessed in terms of common sense or an 'unreflecting judgement shared by ... human-kind' (Vico, 1999: 80). In his early writing, Husserl considered that day to day life encompassed 'bric-a-brac that has to be cleared away in order to reveal subjectivity' (Giddens, 1977: 25). However, Heidegger and Schultz considered that commonality or daily existence should not be cleared away and bracketed but embraced as the field which the student of social phenomena should never abandon. This is the lifeworld, which 'includes everything that is taken for granted and normally not reflected upon in the attitude of common sense' (Bauman, 1978: 175). Research is a generalisation of non-experiential thought though the comprehension of everyday thought; there exists a relationship between experienced practical existence and more abstract theoretical frameworks. For social sciences the relationship between theory and practice (praxis) provides the basis for knowledge generation and in-depth understanding.





Reflection Box

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking does not indicate extensive empathy through which one understands what goes on in the minds of others. For Kant, Enlightenment meant to think for one's self. To liberate one's self from prejudice. This means abstracting from what is usually perceived as self-interest and moving to a more general standpoint. Not the generality of a concept but a general impartial view point. However viewing human affairs does not tell one how to act nor apply wisdom appropriated through occupying a general standpoint to the particulars of policy and politics.

Is the general standpoint simply the position of the observer?

One must have an untroubled mind to accomplish true cognition. Kant (1992) argued that the body interfered with the speed of thought which consequently limited the mind and that the philosopher remained a human being and existed in a social context not a lofty position from which to observe. He argued that every human can provide good sense following reflection. 'Do you really require that a kind of knowledge which concerns all men should transcend the common understanding and should only be revealed to you by philosophers?' (1992: 651–2). There should exist within the social sciences a relationship between philosophical/theoretical and empirical/practical positions; the rational and empirical co-exist in the formation and generation of knowledge.

Kant (1952) indicated that he had 'a consuming thirst for knowledge, the unrest which goes with desire to progress in it, and satisfaction in every advance in it ... if I did not believe that (what I am doing) can give worth to all others in establishing the rights of mankind' (cited in Adreth, 1982: 27–8). For Kant, Enlightenment meant the liberation from prejudices and the authorities and incorporated a purifying event which was realised through critical thinking and critique; Enlightenment involved a new way of thinking. Enlightenment needed human beings to mature and have confidence in 'one's own understanding without the guidance of another' (Kant, 1995: 54). Humanity needed to have confidence in its own interpretations of events and a recognition that knowledge was not divine and or removed.

Pre-Enlightenment humanity lacked the courage of its convictions and even though some people had the courage to stand by their own understanding or interpretation others did not. People are lazy and even when freed from guidance remain 'immature for life' (Kant, 1995a). Revolution can change an autocratic regime into one that is democratic. However, a revolution is unable to bring about changes in the way people think as similar ideas to the previous regime will take the place of those that controlled the unthinking masses, such as happened in the English, French and Russian revolutions. True enlightenment of this kind requires freedom, the freedom to question and 'make public use of one's reason in all matters' (Kant, 1995a: 55). Truth is found through humanity learning to think





for itself 'to look within oneself ... for the supreme touchstone of truth; and the maxim of thinking for oneself at all times is Enlightenment' (Kant, 1995a: 249). If people fail to do this they will not warrant such freedoms, they will be unworthy of liberty and will surely lose it. Indeed, those who do not use the freedom available will undermine those who attempted to use their freedom correctly; that is, those who did have the best interests of humanity at heart (Kant, 1995a).

According to Kant, philosophy became critical through Enlightenment and critique; through Enlightenment philosophy came of age. However, when Kant spoke of critical thinking he did not simply mean critique of books or systems but of the very faculty of human reason of thought itself. Hegel argued that by its nature philosophy needed to be prepared and made palatable for common people; it was the opposite of common sense 'by which we understand the local and temporary limitations of generations; in its relation to this common sense, the world of philosophy as such is a world turned upside down ... (because) the beginning of philosophy must be a lifting of oneself above the truth given by common consciousness, the premonition of a higher truth' (cited in Adreth, 1982: 35). For Marx, the link between theory and practice was critique. For Kant the interactive element between theory and practice was judgement. He was thinking of the doctor or lawyer who initially learns theory then practices medicine or law. Applying general rules to specific cases. Kant's moral teaching relies on the 'ethical', because ethics is based on a thought process; act so that the maxim of your action can be a general law, a law that you too would have to obey. It is, again, the same general rule; do not contradict yourself (your thinking ego) or the entity that determines both thinking and acting. 'Critical thinking according to Kant and ... Socrates exposes itself to the test of free and open examination' and this means that the more people who participate in it the better (Adreth, 1982: 39). Political freedom is required and this is clearly defined throughout Kant's works as 'to make public use of one's reason at every point' by which he meant the 'public use of one's reason . . . as a scholar before the reading public' (Adreth, 1982: 39). The scholar is not the same thing as citizen; the scholar is a member of the society of world citizens and in this context should lay difficulties and problems before the public and give them the opportunity to afford judgement. Fundamentally, freedom of thought and speech provide the right for an individual to indicate opinions and persuade others to think. The Kantian perspective opens the way toward social science and especially critical theory perspectives regarding individual and social existence. Through critical approaches to social existence the way we assess and analyse existence has become wider and with the application of methodologies beyond positivism, we have extended the means by which we are able to comprehend self and community.

Critique and understanding presupposes some rationality both in self and the community at large. Kant (1952) argued that critical thinking and even the act of thinking itself 'depended on its public use; without the the test of free and open examination' no thinking and no opinion formation are possible. Reason is not made 'to isolate itself but to get into community with others' (cited in Adreth,





1982: 40). It is agreed that thinking is a solitary business; dialogue between selves. However unless this thought can be communicated either in speech or writing anything discovered in solitude will wither on the vine. As noted, knowledge accumulation and transfer moves beyond self; knowledge, understanding and truth are determined and verified through discussion in communities where it involves both self and other recognition. Kant proposed that it was humanity's natural vocation 'to communicate and speak one's mind, especially in all matters concerning man' (Kant, 1995b: 85–6). Humans are social entities that need to interact through communication, without discussion and debate, critical thinking would be impossible and the realisation of freedom unassailable. Without others we would not be able to think nor test our thinking in a public realm. For antiquity there was little point in having great insights then remaining silent. In this context, individual philosophers were held responsible for what they thought and taught which allowed the transformation of philosophy into the means by which truth and knowledge may be pursued. Initially, this transformation was initiated by the sophists who have been considered the representatives of the Greek Enlightenment, it was then nurtured and sharpened by Socrates 'this is the origin of critical thought whose greatest representation in the modern age . . . was Kant who was entirely conscious of its implications' (Adredt, 1982: 42). Fundamentally, we witness the very foundation of thought within social science, one that involved critique from objective and subjective perspectives; knowledge does not reside in some higher echelon, it is a social and practical phenomenon. Knowledge is not simply bound up with common sense, but social grounding does provide a level of understanding and is consequently an element incorporated in knowledge accumulation.

Thinking critically does not simply apply to received doctrines and systems but to one's own thought and the prejudices and traditions one inherits. By taking a critical stance in relation to one's own thought one develops the art of critical thought. To obtain a non-bias position or objectivity one must take the thoughts of others into account. Kant (1952) argued that objectivity was not some higher standpoint but the very fact of understanding the social and subjective nature of others. Objects need to be viewed from different perspectives and so expand ones point of view 'from a microscopic to a general outlook that it adopts in turn to every conceivable standpoint, verifying the observations of each by means of the other' (cited in Adredt, 1982: 42). Research involves the relationship between the individual undertaking the investigation and the environment being researched as well as previous research and the thoughts and analysis of others.

Individual thought is enhanced by taking into account the thoughts of others. We compare and contrast the possible judgements of others by putting ourselves in their place through imagination and empathy (we analyse and critique). Critical thinking is only possible when the judgements of others are brought into the equation; when the standpoints of each and all are open to inspection. Consequently, although critical thinking is done alone it does not cut one off from all we are within the world and social entities and have knowledge of wider perspectives.





Through imagination others are brought into the equation and the space for analysis becomes totally public and the forum for Kant's world citizen or the investigator of issues and problems (the researcher). Through the research process in terms of critique and analysis the researcher learns to 'think with an enlarged mentality (and) train's one's imagination to go visiting' (Adredt, 1982: 43). That is to go beyond one's locality through generalisation and theoretical thinking.

Critical thinking does not allow one to understand what goes on in the minds of others, it means to think for oneself and through analysis achieve liberation from prejudice. This does not mean a completely objective stance but one that recognises attempts at non-bias but subjective analysis; what Kant labels 'enlarged thought'. By enlarged thought Kant meant abstraction from the limitations we attach to judgement, which can involve self-interests and our ability to think critically. The more adept the individual at moving from perspective to perspective the more generalised his/her thinking will be. Not in terms of the generality of concept, for example, dog but one that is closely connected with particulars 'with the particular conditions one has to go through in order to arrive at one's own general standpoint' (Adredt, 1982: 43–4). The general perspective has been considered objective or impartial as it is a point from which to watch and judge; to reflect on human affairs. One is not told how to act nor apply wisdom found through occupying the general perspective to the particulars of political life. Kant informs us about 'how to take others into account; he does not tell us how to combine with them in order to act' (Adredt, 1982: 44). So is the general perspective simply the perspective of the spectator? Obviously, a relationship exists between the spectator or the researcher and the entity or individual under investigation; objectivity is important but within the analysis a level of subjective assessment is required, Kant is unclear about the combinations between subjectivity and objectivity. That said, this issue is contestable today and points toward different ontological and epistemological positions.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined issues and difficulties for individual researchers, projects and programmes; regarding what is the relationship between the world, thought, the researcher, the researched and the issue under investigation? To what extent can an external reality exist and what are the implications for the researcher, truth and knowledge accumulation? Does common sense or practical world have any place in the development of knowledge? Schopenhaur (1966) perceived representation and the objective world as encompassing two extremes. 'The one extreme is the knowing subject without forms of knowing and the other crude form without quality. Both are absolutely unknowable; the subject because it is that which knows; matter, because without form and quality it cannot be perceived' (Schopenhaur, 1966: 15). Intellect and matter are different sides of the same coin



and 'the one exists only for the other, both stand and fall together; the one is only the others reflex; They are in fact really one and the same thing, considered from two opposite points view' (Schopenhaur, 1966: 15–16). Concepts should relate to the empirical world it does not matter how abstract notions become 'the proper function of these is to make such concepts ... suitable for use in the experiential world' (Kant, 1995a: 237). In any research project such a perspective requires some consideration; some reflection regarding the relationship between mind and the external world is necessary.

One may argue that for both Schopenhaur and Kant there exists two concepts of truth, reality, knowledge and theory developed to reflect and explain these phenomenon. The first involves an intense commitment to truthfulness, that is, a wish to see through the counterfeit to see reality and have (to an extent) a level of theoretical certainty and predictability; in this context, knowledge is attainable. The second perceives the difficulty of attaining such lofty outcomes and that a subjective or relativist position is the best we may accomplish. For example, Heidegger argued that truth was 'a word for what man wants and seeks in the ground of his essence, a word therefore for something ultimate and primary' (1962: 9). Truth is ground in human Desein or becoming and derived from 'a primordial experience of world and self' (Heidegger, 1962: 9). What is sought already exists in the very essence of being and understanding; every study is consequentially subjective in nature.

Heidegger indicates that the search for truth is embedded within us and the world and as Hamlet identified 'the truth will always out'. Consequently, we briefly outline four positions that relate to truth, reality, knowledge and theory: correspondence; coherence; pragmatism and consensus/constructivist positions. Each of these positions is underpinned by ontological and epistemological assumptions that are discussed in more detail in the following chapters but for now we will outline the basics before we go on to discuss the relationships between theories, paradigms of inquiry and methodology.

The first position considers that there exists a correspondence between truth and reality; notions of truth and knowledge correspond with something that actually exists and there is a relationship between statements thoughts and things. This is a traditional model of knowledge and truth which is gauged by how entities relate to an objective reality. Truth and knowledge are universal and absolute (absolute knowledge exists, which is true at all times). In the same way theory should accurately reflect objective reality through thoughts, words and symbols. There are difficulties with this in terms of apprehending objective reality and using language in a precise manner. For example, in many instances meaning is unclear and transient.

The second position requires that truth, knowledge and theory fit with a coherent system; that truth and knowledge through theory are the properties of a system of propositions and may be applied to specifics only in accordance with the general system. However, there is discussion regarding whether there is one absolute true knowledge system or many possible systems. For Hegel, truth and knowledge



involved the whole or completeness, which must by its very nature, then be present in each of its moments. If a single material fact cannot be reconciled then the proposition or entity is not true knowledge and the theoretical framework regarding this notion is disproved. Both the correspondence and coherent positions link closely or are underpinned by aspects of positivism, the former incorporating a naïve realist position and the latter (especially the idea of multiple true systems) a more critical realist perspective. In a critical realist context, pragmatism considers that truth, knowledge and theory need to be verified through experience and practical application. For William Pierce, truth, knowledge and theory were fallible and always incomplete partial approximations. John Dewey argued that truth was incomplete and found through experience but always self-corrective through being tested by the community. Truth is confirmed through application to concepts and practice (as with Kant, theory and practice were necessary components). Indeed, such an approach moves toward a historical realism and the development of reality through historical and social formulations. However, each necessitates metaphysical objectivism where truth exists independently of beliefs.

In a similar vein, the consensus position argued that there are many ideas of truth, knowledge and reality because each is socially constructed in cultural and historical terms and shaped by power struggles in the community. In contrast with correspondence, coherence and to an extent pragmatist positions, constructivists considered that no external objective reality or system exists. Knowledge, truth, reality and theory are considered contingent and based on human perception and experience. *Verum ipso factum* (truth in itself is constructed) (Vico, 1999). Truth, theoretical reflection or the basis of reality and knowledge are agreed through democratic processes and discussion. The dilemma regarding the constitution of knowledge, truth, reality and theory relates to broad perspectives of ontology and epistemology outlined by positivism and phenomenology. The former considers that a truth is consistent; that it is observable, understandable and exists in an external context (of course the post-positivist would consider a truth as such until it was displaced and question whether humanity is able to fully understand truth). The latter, to varying degrees considers that because interpretations of reality, knowledge and truth are intrinsically tied to the subject externality is difficult to establish, consequently truth and knowledge and the theories that reflect these are transitory and flexible.

Rorty and Engel (2007) debated the concept of truth; Richard Rorty considered that truth involved limited explanatory use and that some sort of metaphysical entity or substance labelled truth did not exist. The idea of truth fails to correspond with some independent entity that existed within the world; that is a certain reality. No correspondence between statements, propositions or judgments and reality existed (attempts to engineer correspondence was meaningless). Statements should be justified and no differentiation between justification and truth existed. Indeed, justifications are agreed by groups, communities and societies so no final agreed truth is possible. Therefore the search for ultimate





Table 1.2 Truth and reality

Correspondence theory	Clear relationships exist between truth and reality. Reality is clearly and accurately reflected through words and numbers (positivism and post-positivism).
Coherence theory	Truth and knowledge should fit with coherent systems. Coherency exists between specifics and the general (positivism and post-positivism).
Pragmatism	Truth and knowledge are verified through experience and practice (critical theory).
Consensual/constructivist theory	Truth is developed through consensus within communities and between groups (constructivist and participatory).

truth cannot direct nor be the objective of science and philosophy. However, even though the idea of truth has been rendered mythical it does not follow that we can say nothing about the world and humanity. Values worth defending and championing remained, for example, liberty, democracy, tolerance and community. Rorty argued that truth involved no more than the endorsement of a statement; we can believe x is true but this does not mean such is the case. In other words, just because we assert that x is true this does not mean that it is so, we simply provide the assertion with the compliment of truth. No distinction exists between truth and justification; truth involves the justification held by a given community. Truth becomes a device that is used when human beings make statements and involves the objective of scientific inquiry. However, the validity of truth as such an objective loses credibility when we argue that truth is an impossible thing to realise; it is an unrealistic endeavour. Indeed, if truth is impossible to achieve then how can it incorporate an ultimate goal? Truth is unable to determine and regulate inquiry because it is impossible to know. In response to this perspective of truth, Pascal Engel argued that truth involved more than a simplistic mechanism for assertion or a means of affirmation through stating that x is true; truth incorporates more than an assertion regarding a statement and corresponding belief. Indeed, an assertion statement and belief may only be identified as correct if it is true. Basically a belief can only be correct if it is true. Consequently, belief is the aim and basis of truth. If an individual does not believe a proposition for any other reason than the fact that it is true, he/she would be acting irrationally or does not truly believe the proposition identified. There exists triangulation relating assertion, belief and truth which involves a normative element which identifies truth as a correct belief and ultimately what we conceive as knowledge. An individual may assert that they do not simply represent themselves in believing that x is true but that they represent themselves in terms of knowing x so that a wider audience may ask how x is known. Consequently the idea of knowledge as encompassing a correct belief becomes normative.



Through synthesising ontological positions, theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, this text identifies interpretations of truth as theory and assesses the extent that this may be observable in relation to human action. Chapter 2 intends to develop these considerations with an emphasis of the role of theory in the research process and the relationships this may have with ontology, epistemology and methodology.

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