

AGAINST INTERPRETATION*

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Words are astonishingly like people. They have characters, they almost have personalities--are honest, useful, obliging...or treacherous, vain, stubborn.... They shift, as people do, their conduct with their company. They are an endless study in which we are studying nature and ourselves at a meeting point where our minds are trying to give it form or to take it from the world. (A.I. Richards, in *Roget's Thesaurus*, 1946:v)

INTRODUCTION

The title is from Susan Sontag's essay of that name (1961), to be cautionary about interpretation. Factors in Q methodology have to be interpreted: but interpretation, from time immemorial, has had two meanings, one *ars explicandi*, the other *ars intelligentia*, that is, explication (or explanation) and understanding, respectively. It was against the former that Sontag directed her wit, and into the latter that she

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put her insight, "to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more" as immediate experiences.

Q methodology (Stephenson, 1953) involves itself in both forms of interpretation. Its factor theory is clearly analytical, and explicatory in form. But when factors are interpreted, *meanings* are at issue, and these are understandings. However, "understanding" is a very ambiguous term, long subject to controversy in philosophical psychology. Understanding a factor in Q is a complex matter, involving every trick of *abduction* (Stephenson, 1961), to make discoveries which are more than mere logical conclusions from known premises. Instead, Q factors point to the necessity for insights, hunches, guesses--supported, subsequently, by facts.

What is proposed, then, is to offer cautionary words about interpreting factors. Without careful attention to the theory that Q deals with affectability, i.e., *feelings*, interpretations can be misleading. Feelings are uniquely subjective, to each of us separately: if we can grasp what they mean, then we may in due course raise questions about their social implications, about the "social ills, castration anxieties, and religious fantasies" against which Susan Sontag gave warnings.

PART 1

PRELIMINARIES TO Q METHODOLOGY: AFFECTABILITY

SELF-REFERENT STATEMENTS

We began, as Q technique began (Stephenson, 1935), with the empirical fact that self reference abounds amongst us humans. Consider, for example, the following statements from a Q sample to be used in a study of illicit love affairs:

Until you've had an affair you may always wonder. It's hard to say "I'm having an affair." That's something other people do.

When I'm involved in an affair, I'm very depressed, not highly productive in my job, very exhausted. I feel emotionally drained and it is difficult for me to have other relationships.

In the long run I'm glad about my affair. But when I think about the specifics I hate them.

Years before I had an affair I knew I wanted to have one. I consciously knew I wanted one. It didn't much matter who it was with.

I think the most important factor in an affair is the mental and emotional relationship, not the physical one.... The physical one just adds a little spice to life.

I'm diminished in one way and freer in another because of having an affair.

If it weren't for other infatuations, people wouldn't realize the specialness of marriage.

The statements are conversational, collected from people who have had, or known illicit affairs. Each is self referent. "I" is everywhere at issue, implicitly or explicitly. Each statement is in the form of a pronouncement, as if it were a matter of fact, the gospel truth.

Q technique, as is well known, begins with such statements, and with the knowledge that they are of statistical proportions. Several hundred statements can be gathered about illicit affairs, constituting a "population" or "universe," now called a *concourse* to which *concourse theory* applies (Stephenson, 1978a). "Ideas," Charles Peirce observed, "grow continuously." It was his essential *law of mind* (Buchler, 1955), and it is ours, too, except that we call it a *law of concourse* (Stephenson, 1980). Ideas, in the subjective domain, do indeed grow infinitely. The law is fundamental in Q.

A concourse has important empirical properties: everyone in a culture can *understand* something of each statement in a concourse. Yet each statement may mean something different to everyone, and something different to the same person in different circumstances: to "wonder" about an affair may mean a yearning, an annoyance, cold comfort, a regret...and

so on. The concern is with *understandings*, in the common conversations and everyday communicability between people, and within oneself--the folkways of a people and their culture.

Nor should we overlook that *understanding* and *truth* are traditionally linked: the Church holds to truth in its Bible, which Sunday sermons serve to explicate --a neat example of the difference between *understanding* as truth, and its *explanation* in a sermon. Different churches, however, hold different gospel truths, and we are left to wonder *what* is the real truth. The situation is very different in science, where scientists all over the world give the same meaning to "temperature" and the thousands of other constructs of its domain. Testability replaces guesswork, insights, and hunches. So it is in Q: its concern is with truths, as self references. But it seeks to put these to test in the way of science.

THE LAW OF AFFECTABILITY

Peirce's *law of mind*, as concourse, is the first law in Q methodology; and the second law, also from Peirce, is that understandings, as new meanings, form in *feeling* (Buchler, 1955). For Herbert Spencer, the great nineteenth century philosopher, feeling was the "raw material" of mind. For Charles Spearman also, who gave us factor theory, feeling, from *pleasure* to *unpleasure*, was the cardinal principle of mind--perhaps the *only* principle. Q technique gave substance to this basic principle--which undoubtedly explains its versatility.

We begin with a study in which 41 individuals (17 men, 24 women) each perform a Q sort with a Q sample of 48 statements from a concourse on illicit affairs. The instruction was to represent one's views on illicit affairs. The "forced frequency distribution" for the Q sort was as follows:

	(unpleasurable)			(neutral)			(pleasurable)				
Score	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Frequency	3	4	4	5	5	6	5	5	4	4	3
	(n = 48)										

This is a theoretical requirement, namely, that *feeling* is subject to the Gaussian concept of error-of-measurement, such that a quasinormal frequency distribution of scores results from quantification of feeling.

The 48 statements, each on its own small card, are shuffled like a pack of playing cards, and the individual performs a Q sort, proceeding alternately from the ends of the distribution to the middle. The Q sorter then enters scores in a Q-sort score sheet. He or she is also invited to comment in confidence about the statements scored +5 and also those scored -5.

Susan Sontag would no doubt be scathing about this representation of feeling. But she could scarcely doubt the intention, which is to deal with a person's *understanding* of this-or-that. The technique is well described by a distinguished Dutch scholar, Professor H.C.J. Duijker, as follows:

Human situations are to some extent like snowflakes: They are innumerable, they exhibit a multitude of forms, and above all they are highly perishable. Q-methodology, Stephenson's great contribution to psychology, was designed to deal with this "infinite variety," to make it accessible to scientific explanation without distorting it. Q sorts can be carried out with all kinds of perceptual or experimental data, and as many instructions can be used as the experimenter can invent. To my knowledge it is the most flexible technique in psychology. And it works, even with small children. (Duijker, 1979: 18)

Each Q sort is such a situation, the expression of a person's "highly perishable" feelings. The result, for the present example, is 41 distributions of scores (the 41 Q sorts), in principle infinite in variety.

FACTOR THEORY

It would be remarkable if any two Q sorts, from different persons, were exactly alike; and unlikely that

all will be totally different. It is the purpose of factor theory to determine which distributions, if any, are approximately alike, on the theory that they have the same *eigenwerken*, the same "characteristic value," the same feeling.

It is important to recognize the almost subatomic nature of this. There are 820 correlation coefficients for 41 Q sorts, each Q sort correlated with every other; and since there are 48 statements in the Q sample, there are $820 \times 48 = 39,360$ pieces of information in Duijker's snowstorm! It is to this that factor theory applies, searching in the snow for "characteristic values," each an apparent thrust holding some Q sorts together. A thousand musings can scarcely exhaust a person's reflections and memories about a past illicit affair, although time no doubt ravishes them as well; a thousand can scarcely exhaust what is experimental, either, while performing a Q sort about the affair. It is obviously a highly complex matter, consonant with the 39,360 pieces of information. Q technique "idealizes" this complexity.

It happens that the statistical and mathematical theory for factor theory (Q) is the same as that for quantum theory in nuclear physics--as though recognition of the same complexity in nature as in mind (Stephenson, 1982a, 1982b). It is reasonable to wonder, therefore, whether factor theory may reach into substantial phenomena of the mind (so called) when it searches for "characteristic values." Quantum theory finds quarks and antiquarks by technique (the giant atom-smashing accelerator). Factor theory finds *operant factor structure* by Q technique and Q methodology. Instead of quarks and antiquarks there is *form* of a universal kind (Stephenson, 1982b).

Factor analysis is by no means an automatic matter, of putting coins into a machine for a Pepsi-Cola. Q methodology is much more than Q technique and factor theory: its concern is also with the innumerable conditions of instruction for Q sorts, involving *laws*, which determine what the conditions of instruction will be. Thus, in the present study, a Q sort representing one's feeling about illicit affairs is determined by *Taylor's law* (as I call it) which states that

such Q sorts will be consistent over a considerable period of time. A Q sort given today will not differ much from one given months later, for the same condition of instruction (Taylor, 1953; Stephenson, 1982a). Planned action is governed by theory, but also in terms of *laws* which past experience has supported. Forty-one individuals would never have been part of a scientific inquiry unless there was evidence that their Q sorts would be consistent expressions of feeling. But note, at the same time, that how reliable each Q sort may, or may not be, is only incidental: what are at issue are connections between the Q sorts from different individuals, as evidence *de novo*.

KAREN HUNT'S STUDY

The study we are to examine was conceived and undertaken by a former student, Karen Hunt, who (in her covering remarks to prospective subjects) noted that the "position sex had a hundred years ago" is not as it is now. She added, "As the authors of *The Dance Away Lover* observed, people have affairs and know that other people have them, and there is very little forthright talk about them and consequently there is widespread ignorance about the impact they have on people's lives." Karen wanted to "explore the impact, to take a closer look at how an affair affects our lives." An "affair" was defined as "an emotional and sexual relationship in which one or both people are married to someone else."

The 41 Q sorts were factored, using CONSORT, a computer program (Stephenson & Nesterenko, 1980) based on my program of 1958, in use ever since. It employs the centroid method of factor analysis, partly because of the straightforward arithmetical principles involved which one could calculate manually before the days of the modern computers. CONSORT provides the correlation matrix (the 820 correlation coefficients for the 41 Q sorts), a centroid factor solution, and finally a table of factor scores for the 48 statements of the Q sample for each factor. Data can be entered into a computer terminal, and within minutes this

wealth of information is printed out before one.

The solution provided five factors, I to V, which are uncorrelated; it can be assumed, therefore, that very different *feelings* are involved.

Table 1 lists those individuals who most clearly define their respective factors--with a significant loading (0.40 or more) for their own factor, with negligible loadings on the other factors.

Table 1
Q SORTS ASSOCIATED WITH FACTORS

Factors:	I	II	III	IV	V
	2	(-)5	3	5	8
	9	10	17	(-)18	
	19	11	32	38	
Q sorts	20	23	35		
	22	28	39		
	24	30			
	25	37			
	26				
	34				
	41				

Data from the Q-sort score sheets show that the factors are no respecters of sex, marital status or age: men and women can appear on any factor, as can married, single, or divorced persons, young or older.

The factor scores were calculated for each of the 48 statements on each factor, and printed out in standard score units. The scores are a statistical blessing, achieving universality of unit (pure numbers, whose mean is zero and standard deviation 1.00 for every Q sort, for every Q sample, every person). These are transformed to the original Q-sort scores of Q technique (from +5 to -5 on an 11-point scale) for convenience.

RECOGNITION OF FEELINGS

Each factor is in the form of a theoretical Q sort, different from the arrayal Q sorts adhering to it. According to the second of our laws of "affectability," each factor must have its own distinct feeling running throughout it, from one end of the Q sort to the other, and it is this we try to grasp as understanding. The concern is not to explicate it in terms of other theories, such as Freudian dynamism, the unconscious mind, or the like, but to find what affections are at issue, such as one sees in *Roget's Thesaurus*, whether it is excitement, pleasure, discontent, fear, endearment, envy, hate, contempt, benevolence or whatever of everyday feelings.

It may be wondered what *theory* lies behind the law of affectability: for how does it come about that words in common usage, in *Roget's Thesaurus*, find a place as fundamental in factors, as basic *meanings*? The answer is in "Methodology of Trait Analysis" (Stephenson, 1956); but it is sufficient at this point to say that there is need to foster a subjective science in close touch with recognition of *affections*, whether general such as pleasure and pain, or personal, sympathetic, moral, or religious, such as we shall find directly in the comments made by Q sorters about their Q sorts. This is not to deny an important place for dynamic processes also at issue, but one's concern is to be cautionary, to give full weight to affections. Grasping an affection is a matter for *understanding*, not interpretation.

There are different ways of setting about this grasp of feeling. For my own part I like to spend a lot of time with each factor, statement by statement, constructing each factor array for myself by cutting up typed sheets of the Q sample and stapling statements in order of their factor scores. This gives time to cogitate about statements, which I find difficult if the computer program prints them out already.

It is important to remember that the statements have no normative meanings. In this connection it is interesting to read Professor I. A. Richards' intro-

duction to the 1946 copy of *Roget's Thesaurus*, with which we began this paper. He wrote that

...words are astonishingly like people.... They shift, as people do, their conduct with their company. They are an endless study in which we are studying nature and ourselves at a meeting point where our minds are trying to give it form or to take it from the world. (p. v)

This is remarkably in line with our own thesis, that statements in concourse shift their meanings with their company--they may have different meanings in different factors. The meeting point is indeed where nature and ourselves try to give *form* to subjectivity (in our case), or to take it from the world as objectivity (in the case of objective science).

Thus, affectability is the primary source, for us, of all factors. We note especially how far statements scoring *zero* on a factor are homologous with *no* feeling, as theory requires.

In addition to a first glimpse through each factor in turn, we also look at the statements which discriminate most between the factors, such as the following from the table of factor scores:

	<i>Scores on Factors</i>				
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>V</i>
21. When I am involved in an affair I am monogamous. It's an important relationship and I don't want to be involved with anyone else.	+5	-3	-4	-5	-4
23. Guilt has no place in an affair. It's two adults exercising their freedom and having fun in the process.	-3	+5	-1	-1	-2
9. In my life and the lives of many others I know, there is an intense <i>longing</i> to do something different, daring, even if they never carry it out.	+1	+1	+5	0	-1

31. When people feel the need for another relationship, you can be sure something is missing in that marriage. +3 -1 +1 +5 -5

42. I think an affair is the most destructive thing you can do. It is destructive to yourself and everyone involved. -4 -5 -2 -2 +5

From an initial look at the factors, notions form as to underlying feelings for each. Thus, in the present case, the following rough notions were formed about Karen Hunt's factors:

In factor I there is *unease*, whatever the immediate gratifications may be: uneasy pain is here.

Affairs for factor II are *natural fun*, doing no harm to anyone--it's a process of "growing up." A certain naivete that everything is happy--a sort of Keatsian "bower of bliss."

Factor III expresses *promiscuous self-gratification*, daring for personal satisfactions with no strings attached. There is thrill of the chase or being chased; flattery; excitement. It is highly "playful," not merely prostitutional, since each affair is likely to be skillfully planned.

Factor IV represents *vicarious satisfaction*, taking what happens to come along to alleviate dissatisfaction.

Factor V is not well defined, but looks like a married person being *tempted*, whose sense of responsibility and morality is holding up.

These are very broad designations, abductory, that along some such lines the factors are touching the affectability of illicit affairs. Each is likely to be manifested in different ways.

Broadly, however, we can see in factor I the breaking up of marriages, with pain to everyone concerned. In factor II there is naivete, but beneath it a search for maturity. In factor III all is mature, and illi-

cit affairs are elaborate "play." Factor IV is a matter of taking what offers, with awareness that it is only vicarious satisfaction--there could be something better. And factor V suggests temptations, but not actual involvement: like President Carter, there is "sin" in the heart!

What next, then? It is always interesting to see how far the Q sorter's own comments support (or deny) what one has understood so far.

COMMENTARY

The Q-sort score sheet invited each person to make comments as to why they chose statements scoring +5 and -5. In the present study they confirm the above understandings. One may wonder, therefore, why not look at the comments at the outset?

However, it is foreknowledge of these understandings that enables us to know *what* to look for in the comments: one would scarcely know where to begin otherwise. It is only possible to grasp a common theme when comments belonging to persons on the same factor are put together, separate from the others. Note also that comments are with respect to statements in the Q sample--they are not undirected.

The comments, undoubtedly, add verisimilitude to the abstract, brief understandings given above, as the following excerpts indicate.

Factor I (Uneasy)

...marriages are terribly vulnerable to an affair; I cannot believe that something so filled with love and elation (as in an affair), and in a sense of goodness and openness--at least for me--was a bad thing, but the hurt for my wife has been enormous and terrible, and for my children as well, and in the end, to a lesser extent(?) for me also.

...the Big Lesson about affairs, for me...in my experience and others whom I have watched--the affair *never* works...you do, in fact, set yourself up for hurt and eventually get it!

...I went from a destructive marriage to a relationship that is much more fulfilling. However... the transition was not necessarily easy or without pain.

...None of the realities of everyday life were a part of our affair. It was strictly office, dinner and my place...Every area of my life was under control...my job, my happiness. I could only try to please him and try to win his approval and affection.

...I love the involvement--the affair...(but) it is disturbing, and I hate the resulting sneakiness and dishonesty and, quite frankly, constraints.

...I am diminished because of the guilt, and because I feel I am not living up to my values. I'm freer in another sense, that I have a new appreciation of myself as a desirable woman.

...I do not feel affairs are the answer to marital problems. At best, they tend to alleviate the stress and unhappiness of some marriages for a brief while. I don't believe people "sell out" to have an affair: it seems to me to be an outgrowth of a much more complex and profound situation. If a person "plans" to have an affair, it is probably not as satisfactory or enjoyable as a spontaneous reaction to an unexpected (and therefore stimulating) experience.

...I always had difficulty reconciling myself to the fact that I was having an affair and tried to fool myself that I really wasn't, that it was different than other affairs. It wasn't.

...The affairs allowed me to grow. I had to depend on *me*, and I learned to like it. But I was not able to build a lasting relationship...an affair is certainly a "dead end" in that the potential to build does not exist. Sex alone is meaningless, senseless. You have to be able to *talk*

to the person when the physical part is over.

The comments point to the *unease*, to ultimate pain whatever the immediate gratifications. We shall see, when the factor itself is interpreted, that these comments take on added significance.

Factor II (Natural)

...Secrecy is destructive. If you can't share the affair with everyone directly concerned, you shouldn't have the affair. What someone doesn't know *can* hurt him or her. As for guilt, why feel it when you're doing something openly, by choice? If everyone concerned understands that affairs are good for a marriage, that an affair points up the uniqueness of each relationship, all will be well.

...When you are a complex person, you have the problem that there are so many potential points of disagreement. So you have to be secretive and hypocritical. It's a matter of survival...Why should I be monogamous when my partner isn't?

...Feel strongly that my need for other relationships stemmed in great part from what was lacking in my marriage...affairs have been a part of my growth process.

...One of the beautiful parts of my affair has been new models for openness which have paved the way for more beautiful sex. And I honestly believe this affair has forced my partner to be more loving and open in his marriage (which is a good one). Undoubtedly this has been the most exquisite sexual relationship for me and frees me to also have a flowing day-to-day life, and I honestly believe enables my lover to creatively enjoy his work and family.

...I totally believe affairs handled with sensitivity are not destructive to me or others.

...Any *good* relationship can be a growing experience, so they can't be all bad. You must know what you are going into and be able to deal with the emotions that evolve. With no expectations of unrealistic happy endings, you can protect yourself from hurt.

...I usually feel good when having an affair; what a boost to be learning about a new person or things! You must be in control to not be in a dead-end situation. I would not have an affair to negate any commitment to marriage, although some people (I'm sure would). I'm more of a realist, and would have to deal with that *prior* to having an affair. (I'm not married, so this is my idealism talking.) [She apparently means, would an offer of marriage depend upon belief that you hadn't had affairs before? Or what?]

...Affairs have indeed changed and opened up my whole life...for me all affairs started out as friendships first, sexual relationships much later.

Here again the comments support the *understanding*. There is indeed a certain adolescent quality in the comments, but not as in Keats' "bower of bliss"--not passing fancies, but real experiences, worth having apparently.

Factor III (Promiscuous "play")

...I had an affair not because I wanted to become emotionally involved with someone but because I needed some kind of tangible evidence that another person could find me interesting/attractive. As a matter of fact, the married man provided the "perfect guarantee" for me that this would be a "no-strings-attached" situation and, at the same time, was the necessary "proof" to myself that I could be interesting/attractive. Looking back on it, I think I should have attempted to deal with my poor self image in some other way, i.e., one less shallow and calculating. I was using the married man

only to prop up a sagging ego. While I do not regret the affair, I am not particularly proud of myself for deliberately using another person.

...the entire relationship was premised on the physical aspects...how it made me feel attractive and how it added to my "technical expertise"--nothing more, nothing less.

...I was away from home, and the "other person" whom I found attractive was so persistent, I wondered if I might be missing something.

...I find an affair highly exhilarating...an affair is not necessarily at odds with a marriage commitment. It is possible to love and care about more than one person at a time.

...I have always been more excited by the chase, the intrigue, the challenge, than the person after we've caught each other. I enjoy variety both in the people and in sex and the affair gives me this. I try to limit my affairs to married men in order to avoid commitments. It's just an opportunity for variety, although I have not gotten over feeling guilty about my affairs.

...Never have I felt in love with any of the men I have had an affair with, intensely attracted, very fond of, but not in love. Although I feel guilty about these relationships (she's married, 39) I also feel a little "high," flattered that I am attractive to someone else. My affairs have all grown out of a physical and mental attraction not necessarily friendship first, although I have remained friends with all but one with whom I have had an affair.

These comments suggest, it seems a ruthless competency bordering on promiscuity--but it is a developed kind of relationship, skillful, adept.

Factor IV (Vicarious gratification)

Although only three persons are significantly "on" the factor, it is strongly defined. One person (no. 18) is *negative* on the factor. The gratifications should therefore be direct, not vicarious. Another person (no. 5) also appears on factor II (negatively): the feeling for that factor had to do with "growing up," naivete--its negative counterpart would therefore be over-grown, as if fully experienced in sexuality.

No. 5 was a male, whose comments support the latter interpretation:

...I was never monogamous when I had an affair. Sometimes I had sex with three partners, spouse, lover, and another person. The conclusion that "something is missing in the marriage" explains why an outside relationship is sought.

It is something of this vicarious gratification that appears as *positive* on factor IV. The other person (no. 38) who is positive on factor IV comments as follows:

...I hate the chase. I'm no good at flirting. I like a very direct approach. No cat and mouse.

She had scored statement 47 a +5: it is as follows:

47. I think most affairs among married people are promoted by negative messages from their spouses. They feel sexually incompetent, unattractive, as though they had nothing to offer.

This, she commented, "is a biggee for me." "I knew my husband loves me, and still does, but not in that very vital way (I need)." She scored 19 a -5: it is as follows:

19. In a relationship I assume I'm in control, that we will end up together if that's the way I want it to go.

About which she comments: "This kind of thing, while enviable, is totally alien to me. I usually feel, in life really more than in love, not in control--sort of swept along by the tide" (she is married, age 39).

The two cases, nos. 5 and 38, are alike in the vicariousness of their affairs--they drift into them, but with strong sexual demands, to offset marital difficulties, presumably sexual. The other case, no. 18, is *negative* on this factor, and at some risk of over-extending patience, it is interesting to have a complete report of this young unmarried woman's comments. Note at once that there is no *drifting* in her make-up.

Commentary from no. 18

Statements 27, 29, and 40 each scored +5:

27. I entered into an affair because it was exciting, flattering.

29. In an affair I feel so comfortable and accepted. That no matter what I do or say the other person isn't going to reject me. I feel free and relaxed.

40. For me the excitement in the affair is the thrill of the chase and the challenge of whether one can capture...or be captured.

The young woman, 26 years of age, writes about the positive statements as follows:

I tend to be the kind of person who must always test herself by setting *personal goals and/or challenges* and seeing if they can be met. This tendency does not exclude the pursuit of an attractive man. I enjoy an initial flirtation with a good looking, appealing man to see if I can arouse his curiosity, and, if the timing and factors are right and the other party is responsive, then that challenge of capture has been met. It usually doesn't matter who "captures" whom. It simply de-

depends on the individual. It's just as fun and challenging to be caught. There was an element of excitement I enjoyed during various affairs. Like many people, I enjoy being complimented. I feel I have been lucky in that all of the men I've had affairs with have been most attentive, flattering and supportive--but during the course of our affair only. (Support and flattery have not always continued after ending the affair. But that's another subject altogether, eh what?)

I agree with statement number 40 simply because all of my affairs have been with older men. Older men tend to have a wonderful ability to concentrate just on the needs of the woman. They have experienced, for the most part, that overachieving, often arrogant and insensitive phase of their lives when being a success is paramount. I found I was more relaxed and more myself with an older man. That feeling of judgment is less evident. Rather, more of an atmosphere of acceptance and humor at overseeing the little picky things pervades. The key word is tolerance.

It is particularly interesting to note the affectability at issue--enjoyment, flattery, support, sensitivity, relaxation, success, acceptance, humor, tolerance--all words that could be straight out of *Roget's Thesaurus*.

The statements scored -5 were the following:

10. Affairs afford you a variety of experience with new and sometimes superior sexual partners.

22. I suspect any marriage can weather an affair if love and respect are there.

38. I suppose I felt "guilty" because I *didn't* feel guilty, at least not in the way I thought I would. No thunder bolts. I did all these "awful" things and yet I came out feeling quite happy.

About these she comments:

I must admit that the word "superior" in statement number 10 stood out the most to me. Never--ever!--were the men I had affairs with sexually superior. (I wish...) They were competent--at best patient and willing to please--but never anything to write home about. Nor did I necessarily learn anything sexually from them. I experienced new partners, yes, but rarely a variety. The variety, for me, could only be defined on how much they did or didn't want to talk and how quickly they fell asleep or whether they, like in the movies, smoked a cigarette "after."

I almost feel the use of the term "weathering" in statement number 22 is obsolete. Among so many of my married friends and the men with whom I have had affairs, knowledge of an affair and loving and respecting the spouse have had little bearing on one another. In other words, the affair seems to be just another factor in a poor relationship and I view love and respect as really having little to do with the situation. (Help!) It's not a matter of weathering out a situation. It's more a matter of tolerating the incident(s) of infidelity. Affairs, I've observed, have been overlooked and tolerated for a variety of reasons: it's too much trouble to get a divorce or there are the children to consider or family or peer pressure is too great. Then there's the element of being thrown back into single life, or more frighteningly for the woman, being forced to be independent and learning to rely only on herself. There are still large numbers of women, I feel, who find it terribly difficult to adjust to an independent existence--financially and socially.

Trust, I would assume, should have a major function in whether a marriage can survive an affair. Being friends and liking the spouse should mean something. But if all these factors are in place, using the common elements of marriage (love, respect, friendship, trust) one would assume an affair should never take place, right?

In response to statement number 38: I never really once felt guilty--one way or another. I

didn't feel the things I did were "awful"--simply that they were a matter of fate. What was done was done. Frequently, the numbers of times we spent together were too few and far between to allow for any guilt feelings. Besides, I always felt, with the exception of one affair, that from the beginning we would never have any future together. A good part of my formative years were spent during the "Me" decade. I suppose I never gave feeling guilty a second thought because I was having too much fun and seeing to *my* needs.

Again note the affectability: loving and respect, fright, trust, friendship. In the *positive* direction (opposite this young woman's) there is running away from commitment to marriage; in the *negative* (as for no. 18) there seems to be a search for marriage, and respect for it if achievable. She respects the moral position in others; meanwhile she takes what opportunities provide. The factor is *foraging*, whether positive or negative.

PART 2

FACTOR INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

Factors are theoretical Q sorts, "idealized" from the Q sorts from which they are calculated. They are weighted averages of the Q sorts. One's expectancy, however, is that they will be indicative of something unbeknown to the Q sorters, or to the experimenter. This is on the basis of the *law of affectability*, that new ideas form from concourse by way of confluences of feeling. The beginnings, however, are in *feeling*, a common element running through a factor from one end of it to the other, in such a way that the statements of the Q sample arrange themselves in a perfect order, each statement in its appropriate place, like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle fitted neatly together.

This may seem impossible, given the random nature of the statements. Yet when one sees it, it is evident that the statements, like words, shift their meanings in factors, in company with those around them. The factors have to be substantial, their course comprehensive. For our example we shall suppose that these conditions apply to factor 1 of the above data. It is the "strongest" factor, having most Q sorts adhering to it.

FACTOR I

If the capacity is available, a computer program can print out the factors, from statements gaining +5 to those gaining -5, as transformations from the statistical standard scores (quantsal units) to those of the original integer scale used in Q sorting. It has been my practice to construct the factors manually, by cutting statements from the xerox-copied Q sample and stapling them on legal pads, from +5 to +4, omitting +3, +2, and +1, then stapling those gaining zero (0), omitting -1, -2, and -3, and ending with those for -4 and -5. The extremes are most indicative, counting for saliency as the *square* of the numbers: a statement gaining +5 is worth 25 for saliency, compared with 16 for a statement gaining +4. Such we keep in mind when "interpreting" a factor.

Though lengthy, it is worth having factor 1, so arranged, in front of one, as follows:

Score +5

17. Affairs often begin as a friendship and move into a sexual relationship without either party intending it.

21. When I am involved in an affair I am monogamous. It's an important relationship and I don't want to be involved with anyone else.

37. An affair is a dead-end kind of situation to get yourself into...You set yourself up for potential hurt because you can't call the shots or con-

trol the situation.

Score +4

4. I think the most important factor in an affair is the mental and emotional relationship, not the physical one...The physical one just adds a little spice to life.

7. In the long run I'm glad about my affair. But when I think about the specifics I hate them.

18. I felt I was in love. The affair just naturally followed.

35. It may be the excitement lasts a long time because there is never enough time together to get out of the skyrocket stage. You never have a chance to see the flaws.

...and so it continues, for statements scoring +3, +2, +1, and zero (0), the latter at the center of the Q sort, and indicative of *no* feeling. The *zero* statements are as follows:

Score 0

3. It's hard to say "I'm having an affair." That's something other people do.

11. There was a sexual attraction, I was unhappy and it was convenient.

12. I hate the sneaking around but I suppose there is a certain titillation there.

22. I suspect any marriage can weather an affair if love and respect are there.

30. I don't think affairs are harmful if in the long run they motivate you to change and start growing in a direction where you have been stymied. Affairs can teach you a lot about life.

32. I think the pill is the key. It's just about removed the big worry, the fear of pregnancy. It's had a great deal to do with freeing people.

...and so to statements scoring -1, -2, -3, -4, and -5, the latter listed below:

Score -4

20. One of my criteria in an affair is that everyone involved be open. I think secrecy is a very negative thing.

39. By having open affairs while you are happily married, you can erase the need for wander lust later on.

42. I think an affair is the most destructive thing you can do. It is destructive to yourself and everyone involved.

45. Part of the attraction of an affair is there are no roles and no strings attached.

Score -5

2. Years before I had an affair I knew I wanted to have one. I consciously knew I wanted one. It didn't much matter who it was with.

40. For me the excitement in the affair is the thrill of the chase and the challenge of whether one can capture...or be captured.

44. I just want sex and occasional companionship, no ties. An affair fits that bill.

At first glance the factor suggests "emotional attachment," "commitment," "a mental and emotional relationship of love," not merely a physical matter. It is so interpreted by almost anyone who examines it. The negative end suggests something of the same acceptance--as *not* being destructive (42), as *more* than sex

(44), *more* than thrills of the chase (40), *not* a safety value for wander lust (39), natural (17), exclusive (21).

The statements at zero (0) suggest the same steadiness--it doesn't seem to matter what people say about your affair (3); sexual attraction and convenience weren't of significance (11); sneaking around and titillation aren't in the picture (12); nor is weathering marriage (22); nor is being stymied at issue (30), not the "pill" (32).

It all seems *objective*, as if rational, an acceptable state: which no doubt leads to a conclusion that a *love relation of commitment* is at issue.

It may well be so. But cheek-by-jowl with this conclusion is statement 37, that affairs are dead-end situations, setting you up for potential hurt; also, when you think about the specifics, you hate them (7); and you really never have a chance to see the flaws (35). At the other extreme, scoring -4, is a hint that roles and strings *are* attached to affairs (45). In the light of these strongly evoked reactions, it seems difficult to accept the nonchalance of the statements scoring zero (0): was there really nothing sexually attractive, no unhappiness or convenience (11)? No sneaking around or titillation (12)? And why, if love and respect are there, should an affair in some sense not matter much to the trust in one's married partner (22)? All the statements scoring zero seem out of place.

One looks around, now, for evidence supporting this *uneasiness*, that things are not quite what they seem at first sight.

A glance at the comments (Part 1) for factor I indicates at once that *unease* is at issue, and apparently uppermost in the Q sorters' minds since these comments are their explanations as to why they chose the statements scoring +5, and others -5; affairs are said to be "terribly vulnerable," "the hurt for my wife has been enormous and terrible, and for my children as well"--as for the man himself; affairs "never work"; "the transition was painful"; "completely constricted"; "the sneakiness and dishonesty is hated"; "one is diminished by guilt"; "the affairs are com-

plex"; "one fools oneself"; "one cannot build a lasting relationship."

But what discriminates one factor most from others provides perhaps the best evidence for a factor's meaning: the comparison between factors I and II is particularly insightful, as in the following data:

	Scores	
	I	II
21. When I am involved in an affair I am monogamous. It's an important relationship and I don't want to be involved with anyone else.	+5	-3
37. An affair is a dead-end kind of situation you get yourself into... You set yourself up for potential hurt because you can't call the shots or control the situation.	+5	-5
7. In the long run I'm glad about my affair. But when I think about the specifics I hate them.	+4	-2
35. It may be the excitement lasts a long time because there is never enough time together to get out of the skyrocket stage. You never have a chance to see the flaws.	+4	0
24. The problem with affairs isn't one of morality but that it destroys other relationships.	+3	-3

Factor II was characterized as "natural," a "growing up" process. The monogamous nature of factor I is surely a relic of marriage (21); the *hurt* is clear at 37, 7, 35, 24. That there *was* a distinct love relation, a commitment, is not contradicted by these feelings, but, on the contrary, would seem to be their *raison d'être*. Thus, the total factor begins to clarify: there *was* commitment, and the guilt of having an affair is not assuaged. The underlying feeling, even if one remarries, is of *unease*.

One can appreciate, then, that first appearances

may be misleading, and that an interpretation may have to swing, like a pendulum, from one extreme to the other before settling upon a balanced place.

Finally, there are the statements scored +3, +2, +1, and -1, -2, -3. They become a testing ground for the correctness of the interpretation reached so far.

Score +3

24. The problem with affairs isn't one of morality but that it destroys other relationships.

31. When people feel the need for another relationship, you can be sure something is missing in that marriage.

34. I think an affair often ends because of the responsibilities the married person has. Not because the feelings between the lovers stop.

36. I think there's hardly an instance where physical attraction is all there is. It almost always goes beyond that.

Score +2

6. I'm diminished in one way and freer in another because of having an affair.

15. I think a lot of people enter into an affair because they want somebody to sort of stroke their forehead and say, "There there." It can work both ways.

27. I entered into an affair because it was exciting, flattering.

33. Some people use infidelity to punish their marriage partner or to distance them.

38. I suppose I felt "guilty" because I *didn't* feel guilty, at least not in the way I thought I would. No thunder bolts. I did these "awful" things and

I came out feeling quite happy.

Score +1

9. In my life and the lives of many others I know, there is an intense *longing* to do something different, daring, even if they never carry it out.

13. The most constructive thing you can do is figure out why you want to have an affair and deal with that rather than having an affair.

16. There's still a double standard. Men always had affairs and it didn't seem to inflict much harm on them. But society looks at women differently.

28. Having an affair is running away from the commitment a marriage requires.

47. I think most affairs among married people are promoted by negative messages from their spouses. They feel sexually incompetent, unattractive, as though they had nothing to offer.

All of these fit into the *unease* feeling--that other relationships are destroyed; something is no doubt missing in the committed marriage (31); concurrence (34); more than mere sex (36); one is diminished in self regard (6); weakness of character (15); of course affairs are exciting (27)(but not at all as much as to other factors); punishment (33); longing (9); think twice (13); double standard (16); having an affair promoted, at least somewhat, by negatives from spouse (47).

The only doubts occur for statements 38 and 28. In both cases, however, none of the other factors has a score higher than these scores for the statements. There is excitement, of course, in an affair, and it is not unreasonable to assuage any guilt--after all, some remarry from the affair. Only statement 28 seems to deny the thesis that having an affair is indeed "running away from commitment a marriage requires."

One might have thought it should be scored higher. One's only rationalization must be that conscience makes for cowardly retrospection, otherwise statement 28 should have scored +5.

At the other extreme the scores are as follows:

Score -1

1. Until you've had an affair you may always wonder.
25. I think whether you have an affair is largely determined by the kind of family you grow up in and how they deal with the question of intimacy.
26. An affair can give you an exhilarated, relaxed, fun feeling...Marriage doesn't often produce that.
29. In an affair I feel so comfortable and accepted. That no matter what I do or say the other person isn't going to reject me. I feel free and relaxed.
41. An affair (if your mate doesn't know about it) can help enhance and preserve a marriage rather than sabotage or destroy it.

Score -2

8. If it weren't for other infatuations, people wouldn't realize the specialness of marriage.
14. I am made up of all sorts of people and one person can't possibly meet all those needs or understand all the people that are within me.
19. In a relationship I assume I'm in control, that we will end up together if that's the way I want it to go.
43. I'm a private person. I need time alone. An affair gives you security without constant intru-

sion.

48. I've always been able to rationalize my actions. Give me 20 minutes and I can convince myself of anything.

Score -3

5. When I'm involved in an affair, I'm very depressed, not highly productive in my job, very exhausted. I feel emotionally drained and it is difficult for me to have other relationships.

10. Affairs afford you a variety of experience with new and sometimes superior sexual partners.

23. Guilt has no place in an affair. It's two adults exercising their freedom and having fun in the process.

46. In today's society, an affair is a kind of rite of passage, not only accepted, but expected.

Starting from -3, affairs are *not* a rite of passage (46); guilt *has* a place, it's *not* fun (23); sexual experience *isn't* involved (10); but affairs as such are not depressing, and one has one's spouse anyhow (5). One doesn't rationalize (48) and affairs *don't* give security (43); it's not how I wanted it (19); my needs are straightforward (14); marriage *is* special (8). Affairs are *not* enhancing (41); one isn't really free and relaxed (29); nor is it *fun* (26); it's *not* a matter of family upbringing (25); and it *isn't* really a matter of wondering what an affair would be like (1).

All of these speak of affairs as in some sense unacceptable. Uneasy hangs the head when conscience is as much a part of a person as his leg or arm--as Thomas Jefferson said.

Thus, what at first sight might have been understood as a *positive*, strong emotional involvement and commitment as an affair, has to be qualified by *unease*, a *negative* counterpart, that affairs break mar-

riage vows, and unhappiness remains. Factor I is a complex of conscience.

In saying this we step into a realm of explanation, if conscience is to be the motif. Basically, however, it is a grasp of *feeling*, of unease, that begins any further possibilities of cogent interpretation. To grasp the *unease* is not a dynamic-psychological interpretation, but common knowledge.

Two matters complete the interpretative exposition: first, it is surely a surprise to find 48 apparently quite disparate statements organizing so neatly, like a completed jig-saw puzzle, in the factor array. Scarcely a statement seems out of place, and the zero position is indeed a break-point between positive and negative feelings. Second: to say that the interpretation is *new* will raise eyebrows. After all, conscience is all about us: but not in factors II to IV. Moreover, it can be suggested that 50 years ago factor II would not have appeared: its frank acceptance of sex as natural is a reflection of the revolution in sex culture in the United States.

The example is presented, however, not because a discovery has been made, but to give emphasis to the Sontag Rule (as we may call it), to "*see* more, *hear* more, *feel* more" of what is manifest before delving into dynamic, sociological, or other interpretations. A factor is not always what it may appear at first glance, and to *feel* more of it can offer something of the "pure, untranslatable, sensual immediacy of some of its images," and this is the primary objective of understanding, as antecedent to explanation.

Continued in the next issue

AGAINST INTERPRETATION:

PART 3. THE SINGLE CASE