

# Q METHODOLOGY AND THE SUBJECTIVITY OF LITERATURE\*

William Stephenson  
*University of Missouri*

It was Alexander Pope who proposed to teach anyone (even ordinary readers) to write epic poems: as recipes of housewives go to the making of puddings, so a few "mechanic rules" contribute to the writing of poetry (Pope, 1900). Modern literary structuralism seems 'to support Pope's satire, for has it not found systematic form in folktales (Propp, 1970)? And has it not encouraged some to equate literature with modern science, entropy, feedback and all (Scholes, 1974)? These conceptions are in the *objective* methodological framework. "One member of a family leaves home," so begins Propp's formula for the *Morphology of the Folktale*. It is in the form of a statement of fact, like any in the objective world, and subject to verification and falsification, in the manner of deductive science.

---

That configuration, form, or structure has been

\*Originally presented at the Buffalo Conference on Researching Response to Literature and the Teaching of Literature, State University of New York at Buffalo, October 27-29, 1977.

*Operant Subjectivity*, 1980(Jul), 3(4), 111-133.

demonstrated objectively in narrative is of course a matter of interest. It cannot be assumed that recipes for such structure were available to the tellers of tales, and the question arises, therefore, as to the possibility of structure in the human mind itself. If there is form to folktales, what occasioned it in the minds of the tellers, who were apparently unaware of it? Is there form, indeed, in the "free creation" of ideas? Was Shelley on the right lines, in his *Defense of Poetry*, to assert that poetry is a lawful expression of words and thoughts? If so, what are the laws? And is there correspondence between structure in the printed narrative, and in the reader's mind?

Q methodology and its connected theories answers these questions affirmatively. But we have to be careful to define their involvement, which is with subjectivity. In Roland Barthes' (1974) brilliant analysis (shall we say psychoanalysis) of Honore de Balzac's *Sarrasine* the "lexies" are in the objective framework, and his analysis follows suite. His analysis, however, also involves personal asides and interjections, matters of his own particular opinion, outside the objective frame, typically as follows:

I feel disgust for the castrate.... The story has no object; it is only a story.... Sarrasine has a connotation of femininity.... The story is like a deep daydream.... Sarrasine has the right to cry--his dream has been destroyed; he is about to die....

and so on, for a hundred more. (The story, if anyone needs a reminder, is about Sarrasine's tragic infatuation with a castrato in female costume.) There are reasons to suppose (as the present paper will indicate) that such subjective statements are the breeding ground of creative thought, and that they are as subject to form, configuration and structure every bit as much as the folktale, the narrative, and indeed anything in the objective frame of science.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our fundamental concern is with the nature of consciousness and the profound distinction between its objective and subjective modes. Consciousness, for us, is not what psychologists (and common sense) say about it, but is merely *communicability* (Stephenson, 1968, 1969). This is the basic truth of semiology. It takes two forms, corresponding to objective and subjective respectively, the key distinction between which is widely overlooked by philosophers. The objective mode of communicability is purely *informational*, subject to the rules of testability and falsification (Popper, 1959); its concern is with singular propositions, with universal implications. Thus, Popper begins with a statement, "This is a glass of water," and it means the same to all scientists, who may test the purity of the water (singular), the refractibility of the glass (singular), etc., and ultimately will reduce both water and glass to atoms. The subjective mode is wholly different. A glass of water, subjectively, can mean a thousand propositions in the mind of one person:

It is sometimes better than a meal.... There is scarcely anything more refreshing.... It's good for the kidneys.... Softens a hangover.... My daily constitutional.... My child's comfort at night.... Stands for tranquility.... It invites me to drink.... It could be a symbol of reality.... The prophet's drink, but not for me  
....

and so on *ad infinitum*. None of these statements is readily testable (if at all); they are of statistical magnitude about any particular object, idea, concept; and each statement is in the form of feeling, with self-reference (*implicit or explicit*). It is *me* who feels; *my* belief; *my* opinion; *my* observation. Moreover the statements are matters of common usage in everyday conversation, implying *self* rather than special knowledge or information in any objective sense.

Our theory of subjective knowledge, and Q methodology, begins with this concept, of innumerable self-referent statements about an object, concept, situation or anything to which the term subjectivity can apply; it calls them *concourses* ("populations," "universes"), and there is now a theory of concourses (Stephenson, 1978). Each statement of a concourse corresponds to what James Ward (1886), first of modern English psychologists, called a "presentation," "the simplest form of psychical life."

This is the first principle in our theory. Children in our culture, by the time they are three years or so of age, already are subject to concourses (for example the pictures in their story books provide concourses for studying children's subjectivity by Q methodology). In my study of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (Stephenson, 1972), the concourse was the innumerable statements of opinion made by analysts of Keats' poetry, from Edgar Allen Poe to T. S. Eliot, from Keats himself to Professor Dickstein in his *Keats and His Poetry: A Study of Development* (1971), though it could have been a concourse of self-referent statements from persons who were engaged in conversation about the *feelings* they had (not the *knowledge* they professed) upon reading the "Ode." All studies with Q methodology begin with concourses: the theory of concourses is perhaps the most significant contribution that can be made to a general theory of knowledge.

\* \* \* \* \*

The second principle has to account for the *creating* of knowledge, for what Einstein called "free creation" of thought, controlled "by empirical experience and subject to empirical testing" (Einstein, 1934). Our solution to this problem is based on empirical findings in Q method, expressed as *laws*, with theoretical foundations in the subjective psychology of James Ward (1886) and Charles S. Peirce (1933-4). Peirce looked for creative thought at the level of feeling, much as Ward had done; he talked of "ideas,"

corresponding to Ward's "presentations" and to our self-referent statements--none with innate implications. If we invite a poet to express his feelings about a "glass of water"--or anyone else to do so--*the beginnings are with such "ideas" in a concourse.* To assume that these "ideas" could mean the same thing to everyone would, as Peirce put it, "be nonsense." Feelings are at issue, and it was Peirce's notion that these flow into a *continuum* of feeling, which gains significance for the person. The outcome is something created, new, and not a mere putting together of fixed "ideas" as jig-saw pieces fall together, but a "living reality" as real as the "feelings themselves out of which [the new idea is] concreted." For Peirce this was a lawful matter, the "supreme law" of mind (Buchler, 1950, p. 349).

It is also our supreme law. Peirce admitted that "we cannot in our present knowledge say how it goes," but *law* it was, and nothing in it trifling or arbitrary. We now know what "lawful" means, too: it is not a matter of regularities, but of indicating *what* to look for, and *how* to look for it.

The *how* for Peirce's lawfulness is the technique of Q sorting, called Q technique.<sup>1</sup> We provide a poet, or anyone, with a sample of statements from a concourse: that for a "glass of water" will serve, with say 50 self-referent statements, printed on small cards, one statement to a card. Along with statements already mentioned, here are a few additional examples of self-referent statements from the concourse:

---

<sup>1</sup>Unhappily no simple account of Q methodology exists; I can only recommend my *The Play Theory of Mass Communication* (1967) for a not-too-difficult description of some of its applications. Text books are critical about Q technique because, it is said, it is "not objective," which of course speaks well for it since its essential purpose is to represent subjectivity objectively, which it can achieve with any required degree of reliability.

It always seems better at home than anywhere else.... Ugh! It's full of animalcule.... The glass fits the mouth, and we take this for granted, as we do the water.... It is as insipid as it is colorless and smooth.... Cool and refreshing--but there's better.... It reminds me of something essential to existence.... It forces you to seek meaning in something very ordinary....

And so on, and on. The sample of 50 such statements constitutes a Q sample. The selection of the sample from its concourse follows familiar statistical practices, though there is also a special procedure in relation to small sample theory (Stephenson, 1953). Given the set of cards upon which the statements are printed (as we have said, one statement to a card), the subject is invited to read through them, and then to sort them according to a given condition of instruction: he may be asked to represent what he feels about the context, "a glass of water"; or, if a budding poet, asked to suggest what could enter most (and least) into the writing of an *Ode to a Glass of Water*. The conditions of instruction can be as varied as the infinite statements of the concourse, to serve different experimental purposes.

The rationale for this Q sorting, as the sorting of the statements is called, is as follows. Theoretically, Peirce's "continuum of feeling" is represented as brought about by innumerable small influences which cause the "flowing together"; this suggests that the statistical *law of error* will apply to its quantification. On whatever basis the Q sorter thinks of the statements amongst themselves *differentially*, i.e., comparatively, there will tend to be as many with *positive* (pleasure) as with *negative* (unpleasure) feeling, most of them being in between, little felt for either pleasure or unpleasure. The poet might regard "the prophet's drink, but not for me" with some glee, and "it's good for the kidneys" as abhorrent to his poetic sensibility; or of course a modern poet might put these statements round the other way, so perverse is human nature! For reasons

buried in decades of research in psychophysics (Fechner, 1860) and its method of impression (Beebe-Center, 1932), it makes good sense to help the Q sorter in this lawful direction, by suggesting that the 50 statements be Q sorted on a quasi-normal (statistical) frequency basis, of the following order:

	Positive			Neutral			Negative		
Score X	+4	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
Frequency	3	4	6	7	10	7	6	4	3

(n=50)

The subject first sorts the statements into three piles--those with positive feeling, those more or less neutral or insignificant in feeling, and those with negative feeling. The piles are then further sorted: three statements are found which have the *highest* saliency of pleasure and are given +4 score; of the statements remaining, four are chosen with lesser but still high saliency and these gain score +3...and so on. Similarly from the negative pile, three statements highest in *unpleasure* are allotted score -4; the next four, score -3...and so on, proceeding alternatively from the two extremes until ten statements remain at the zero (0) score. That the distribution of scores seems arbitrary is a mere technicality; almost any dispersion about zero will serve, and any shape of distribution, provided the statements are to some degree ranked.

What follows is almost beyond belief. By way of statistical theory the Q-sort scores are transformed to *standard scores* (mean 0, standard deviation 1.00), *the same unit for all Q sorts, for everyone, for all conditions of instruction*. Moreover, since the neutral point on the Q sort corresponds to little or no feeling, this null must be the same for all measurements, a dead level of insensibility of feeling, homologous with the zero score; which means that all measurements in the subjective domain begin from one and the same real origin; and for complex situations we can safely assume that all measurement is the same scale, whose standard deviation is 1.00. There is at

last a universal measure, the same for all subjectivity, for everyone.

The *what* of Peirce's lawfulness is an empirical matter. Q sorts open the way to the discovery of form, structure and configuration in subjectivity. The possibility stems from analogy with D'Arcy Thompson's famous work on *Growth and Form* (1942): every leaf on a tree is alike in form, yet no two are identical. The biologist defines in general terms the shape of the leaf, as he does of a snail-shell, the twist of an antelope's horn; he isolates the *form*, ignoring the deformations. Nature, Newton said, delights in such "transformations" of a "type." Why, then, should subjectivity be an exception to nature's delight? The Theory of Factors (Spearman, 1927) is in direct relation to the profound Theory of Transformations (Burt, 1940). Factors, with which we are now to be concerned, are empirical evidence of configuration and form, Q sorts being their transformations, like leaves of a tree. The form we find is called *schematical*: hidden within the Q sort there is likely to be a structure of feeling (Peirce's continuum), which runs from one end of the Q sort to the other, and the interpretation of which corresponds to "free creativity." Schemata are evidence of new ideas.

\* \* \* \* \*

With the above beginnings the ramifications for subjectivity are boundless. It is a simple matter to develop studies in which several persons each perform a Q sort with a given condition of instruction for the same concourse and Q sample. The Q sorts are correlated and factor analyzed (now a routine matter by computer program).<sup>2</sup> It will be readily accepted that if adult persons (any) are asked to perform a Q

---

<sup>2</sup>A program for centroid factor analysis of Q-sort data, CENSORT, is copyrighted and distributed by Comstat Associates, Inc., 1108 Brookwood, Iowa City, IA 52240.



sort describing what they feel about a "glass of water," some are likely to project a prosaic, practical, matter-of-fact theme ("I take it for granted"; "should be on every speaker's rostrum"; "it's very ordinary"), whereas others may wax poetical or philosophical ("it stands for tranquility," "a symbol of reality"). Such differentiations occasion no surprise. But this is a mere beginning. If we invite say 20 graduates in English literature, each to use the Q sample to indicate in what direction an *Ode on a Glass of Water* might take, the factors are the first evidence of purely *objective* configuration in subjectivity. For if there are twenty such budding poets there are likely to be only three or four factors, and one at least of these, like a new compound in the chemist's test tube, could be a new schemata, integral to the concourse, and inherent in subjectivity. Any professor of literature who cares to think this through will grasp that perhaps Alexander Pope wasn't far from wrong in his satire, that there is a "mechanic" basis to an epic; or, with Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*, that there is lawfulness in the expression of words and thoughts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some examples follow. T.S. Eliot felt that *non-communicability* characterizes our culture, a theme central to his poems and plays. We speak in clichés. Sweeney could gossip about birth, copulation, and death, but "cannot communicate his feelings": his "public" mode of communication is disordered, vulgar, inadequate to express reality (Weathers, 1967: 157). Eliot proposed a way out for the Sweeneys; they desire, he believed, "to come out of silence," to enter a "private" world of communicability, in which the individual

...can say his prayers, express his loves, attend to his affairs even while those around him are victims of cant and confusion. (Weathers, 1967: 159)

This can only come about, according to Eliot, by arduous effort, to enter the "green lands of [private] articulation." Eliot's conception was debated at an elite conference (*The First International Symposium on Communication*, Thayer, 1967) in which the assembled experts agreed that Eliot's notion was purely subjective, and therefore incapable of scientific testing. "No, it remains subjective," Professor Weathers concluded. One distinguished expert thought that, even so, Eliot's thesis

...seems to me to show a profound insight into the way in which comprehensibility of a man's utterance may depend on your own readiness to be open, in the depths of your being, to what it may cost you to understand. (D. MacKay, in Weathers, 1967: 169)

The expert opinion evaporates with a touch of Q and our theories. It is quite a simple matter to put Eliot's thesis to a scientific test, and the task is made easier by the concourse of Eliot's rich self-referent statements from the mouths of his many characters. From *Wasteland*, *The Cocktail Party*, *Sweeney Agonistes*, *Prufrock*, *Family Reunion* and the rest, there is a concourse resplendent with such statements as the following:

We can't sit here in silence.  
 You mustn't use such words! You don't know how  
 much it is hurting.  
 It is impossible to say just what I mean.  
 The word "insult" has no meaning for you.  
 I didn't think you would be interested.  
 It's nice to have someone to talk to now and  
 then.  
 You are taking things the wrong way.  
 There must be another way of talking that will  
 get us somewhere.  
 Why do you never speak to me?  
 ...and so on for a hundred more.

These statements are all in the conversational frame-

work of everyday communicability. Any Q sample from the concourse, of say 40 statements, can be used to test, and to work with, Eliot's thesis. When college-age sons and daughters are asked to say what they feel about their parents with such a Q sample, the factors are direct evidence for the thesis, one way or the other. There is no place for love in some families, suggests one factor--and it shows itself differently for different families so afflicted. Societal cliches suffuse other families according to another factor. And there is a factor for the pity of it--"it matters, but we don't understand each other."

It will be said, but isn't this merely formalizing the obvious? The answer is, yes, but this is a beginning. Meanwhile what of Eliot's belief that people strive to reach "private" communicability? Or of MacKay's feeling, on the cost of comprehending? How are such matters to be subjected to test? The answer is that self is involved, and that we can now make this substantial and testable.

\* \* \* \* \*

Consider, for example, Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. The play is set in Connecticut. The hero is a self-avowed sinner (B) who is generous, honest, loving, devoted (A) to his neighbors, the farmer and his rough-and-hearty daughter, with whom he is in love. The hero pours out his feelings one night, in a drunken frenzy in the moonlight, sobbing in the lap of the girl he desires but cannot ravish. He is unable next morning to remember what his raving and sobbing was about (C), though it looks to us like a childish breast-fixation. He leaves the girl, still virgin; as he had long promised, he gives his inheritance, the farm, to father and daughter, for a pittance when he could have sold it for "a goldmine."

The *self* we are interested in is that of the hero, and it is representable by way of a "single case" (Stephenson, 1974). By now the reader knows that a

concourse has to be formed, in this case of statements made by the hero or with reference to him in the play itself--and it is readily derivable. To represent self we can simulate the hero, as he performs a set of Q sorts with a Q sample from O'Neill's concourse, under different conditions of instruction, each a day apart to reduce confounding. Table 1 gives such a set of instructions, together with the results of a factor analysis of the thirteen Q sorts (*a* to *m*).

TABLE 1

Conditions	Factors		
	A	B	C
<i>a</i> As I am when I feel religious	X	-	-
<i>b</i> As I am usually	-	X	-
<i>c</i> As I felt at confirmation	X	-	-
<i>d</i> As I am when sinning	-	X	-
<i>e</i> The person who influenced me most	-	-	X
<i>f</i> What my father is like	X	-	-
<i>g</i> What my mother is like	-	-	-
<i>h</i> What my father is like, angry	-	X	-
<i>i</i> What my mother is like, "loving"	-	-	X
<i>j</i> An ideal Christian	X	-	-
<i>k</i> What God is like	X	-	-
<i>l</i> What a wrathful God is like	-	X	-
<i>m</i> Jesus personified at the resurrection	-	-	X

(X=significant factor loading; others insignificant)

The factor structure represents the hero's subjectivity in the play thema, and of course the hero himself is quite unaware of it. It is *operant*, that is, objective--straight from the computer program. The conditions of instruction cover lawful possibilities; their purpose is to elicit laws that we know about already. As we see, there are three factors. Factor A is in variables *a*, *c*, *f*, *j*, *k*, and is itself a Q sort (averaged from these five variables): it gives the *form* that each of these five variables has transformed. Similarly for B for variables *b*, *d*, *h*, *l*; and *e*, *i*, *m* for factor C. An interpretation of

each factor is obvious without resort to the statements of the Q sample. Thus, A is the feeling our hero has of himself as a good Catholic; it is how he feels religiously (*a*), as at his confirmation (*c*); and his father was conceived as such a Christian (*f*); indeed ideally so (*j*) in the image of God (*k*). (What the precise conception is, is realized from the Q sort representing the factor, i.e., from the schemata, the configuration of the statements of the Q sample for the factor.) Factor B is totally different: it is what our hero is usually (*b*), a sinner (*d*), like an angry father (*h*), blameworthy (a wrathful God, *l*) --drinking, whoring, such was our hero. Factor C is different again: it is acknowledgement of a "loving" mother (*i*), who greatly influenced him (*e*), and somehow personified as Jesus at the resurrection (*m*)--perhaps at rest, yet not just Godlike (not *k*), and not the ideal Christian (*j*). Mother is unique, outside the frame of A, B, C; variable *g* is not loaded on any of the factors.

Does it not appear likely that C is our hero sobbing, raving, crucified? Misbegotten, unable to make love to his loved-one, in her bounteous lap, and under the full moon? His daily *self* is B; and A is his generous, loyal, trusting demeanor.

Factor structure, like the above simulation, is readily reached empirically: in a hundred studies since the 1950s we have abundant examples of factorial designs of the above "single case" kind. The method is the same in all, as are the laws. Every condition of instruction is in the form of a hypothesis, tested by Q sorting. The instructions serve to allow *laws* to function if they are present; and the order in which the Q sorts are performed is predetermined. Four laws are involved in the above example: first the *law of schemata* appears for each factor *if it is operant and not merely chancelike*, each for a distinct continuum of feeling. *James' law* is evident, that some factors are *me*, others merely *mine*: on weekdays B is the hero's *me*; on Sunday mornings it could be A (factors are not fixtures

of the mind, but in functional relation to given situations). *Rogers' law* is that subjectivity may be idealized, as factor A manifestly must be. *Freud's law* is clearly at C, that defense mechanisms are to be expected. These laws were first mentioned in 1953 (Stephenson, 1953), and there are several others (Stephenson, 1974). The *self* is thus grasped as factor structure, in functional interactions, subject to laws...

...flowing in time, but no longer a "stream of consciousness." Instead, it is a communicating person, talking to himself or others, in which his selfhood mediates differentially, subject to laws. (Stephenson, 1953)

It is in such terms that we can put testability into Eliot's problem of human aspiration for "private" communicability, and into MacKay's concern for the high cost of comprehending. It was Shelley, again, who said that the mind is a receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Factor structures bring such combinations to the surface of the mind, and whenever literary analysis suggests that an author's selfhood is critically involved in his work, probes by Q are in order. An analysis of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* is a case in point: it has been said that Joyce's "ego" spreads into all the characters in his masterpiece, and indeed also into the very rivers, rocks and trees of Dublin and the world (Scholes, 1974). We can challenge the conception. "Ego" is replaced in Q by factor structure, and by one experimental design or another studies can be undertaken to indicate how far we, too, reading Joyce, find ourselves in inanimate objects! I have already provided a prototypical study in support of Professor Dickstein's thesis on the development of self in Keats' poetry (Stephenson, 1972). Nor in these studies is it merely a matter of playing statistical charades with literature: each study is concrete evidence that a certain *objectivity* underlies the subjectivity everywhere accepted, and by everyone assumed to be untouchable by scientific

method.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is another important range of applications of Q methodology which involves our version of Newton's long-lost *Fifth Rule* (Stephenson, 1975-76). When there are several different hypotheses for a condition, none capable of either proof or disproof, what can be done? Consider, for example, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. This has been the subject of every kind of critical analysis since its publication in 1714. Representative of this variety are the essays in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Rape of the Lock* (edited by G. S. Rousseau, 1969). For Rousseau (and of course many besides) the values of the aristocratic culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are satirized in the poem, notwithstanding the flourishing of the arts with Handel, Gainsborough, Wren. J. S. Cunningham (in Rousseau, 1969) lays stress on the "delicacy" of Belinda's world (p. 18). Professor Brooks discusses the poem's "pervasive sexual symbolism" that we are not "forced to take" (p. 29). And of course Belinda is a goddess who puts on her divinity at her dressing table (p. 23). For Cambridge Professor Ian Jack, the poem is complex Mock-Heroic, with a moral meaning (p. 51). Harvard Professor Brower examines the serious aspects of the poem--its mocking of solemn learning and the *litterati* of the time (p. 60). Professor Wasserman, from Johns Hopkins University, says that "Pope makes hideous and savage" the society of his time (when judges sacrificed lives as inconsequentially as they made selections from a menu). The mythopoeic activity in the epic is the subject of Rebecca Parkin's essay, and the scissor clipping of the lock is sacrilege (p. 89). These interpretations are in the subjective domain, and all are plausible. But are they subject to proof or disproof, or are they, as Professor Weathers remarked of Eliot's thesis, merely "subjective"? Different emphases are given in the collection of interpretations to *culture*, the *poem* as such, the *rape*, the *divinity* of Belinda, and the

*myth* involvements, not to mention lesser concern with Clarissa's morals and the Baron's effrontery. What is the relative worth of such interpretations?

Interpretation is speculative hypothesis; and it may seem far-fetched, but Sir Isaac Newton was faced with the problem of diverse hypotheses (or interpretations) about gravity, comparable with the literary divergences just mentioned. He wanted a Rule of Reasoning (like the Four Rules upon which objective science has prospered since his time) which would help him to deal with a plethora of hypotheses about gravity. There was the Cartesian theory of vortices; also the theory of "harmonic circulation"; and others more far-fetched, including God's all-pervading influence. How could one recognize a worthwhile hypothesis and dispose of speculations by a Rule of Reasoning? Newton's Fifth Rule was his attempt, but it merely said *hypotheses non fingo*, don't *feign* hypotheses (misinterpreted as "don't make hypotheses"); he apparently abandoned the Rule, and as Koyre (1965) put it, it has slept amongst Newton's papers ever since. Koyre could make nothing of it, though it seemed to have unusual significance for Newton. Gerald Holton (1973) adopted it for thematic propositions such as the scientist's faith in lawfulness, complementarity, and the like. But Newton was concerned with *theory* about nature and not merely with the underpinnings of scientific knowledge. Our own version of the Rule, which Newton would have accepted, sticks to his objective. It follows from our theory of concurrence, operant factors, and factor structure; it is to the effect that

...if hypotheses (incapable of proof or disproof) with respect to a concurrence are represented (each hypothesis) by Q sorts, their factor analysis can indicate new hypotheses, and, by rules of reasoning, acceptable solutions for the concurrence.  
(Stephenson, 1975-76)

Application of this Rule to the various different interpretations of *The Rape of the Lock* is easily ef-



fects. The necessary concourse is taken from the essays edited by Rousseau in the aforementioned book (1969); it consists of such statements as the following:

- ...The issues in the poem are matters of taste: matters of morality are never raised.
- ...The comparison of Belinda to the sun is a wild exaggeration; but it contains an element of imaginative truth.
- ...The Homeric and Christian myths help suggest a spiritual approach to reality, and especially to human affairs.
- ...etc. for a hundred more.

The emphasis in the several essays, as noted earlier, was on the *cultural-social* implications, the *poem* as such, the *rape*, the *divinity* of Belinda, and *myth* (Clarissa and the Baron receive little mention). Clearly the first of the above statements has reference to the *poem* as such, the second to the *divinity* of Belinda, the third to *myth*. Following our practice in Q methodology, a Q sample is selected from the concourse which contains an equal number of statements from each of the matters emphasized in the essays--we chose nine for each of the five categories (cultural, poem, rape, divinity, myth), making a Q sample  $n = 45$ . With this we can apply the Fifth Rule, in several different ways. It would be admirable if each contributor to Rousseau's selected essays could have represented by a Q sort his or her position about the poem. Or any one student of Pope could undertake, in a "single case" study, to represent the positions of these several contributors. I have undertaken the latter role, to exemplify the Rule: I performed nine Q sorts, with the  $n = 45$  Q sample, after carefully reading the essays in Rousseau's book, representing the interpretations in Table 2. The ninth variable (Communication-pleasure) is my own interpretation, that the poem is purely "playful," as Pope seems to have intended, hopefully doing no one any harm, or any good either, except to the personal self-enhancement of everyone concerned

TABLE 2

Conditions	Factors		
	A	B	C
1 The poem as satire (Rousseau)	X	.	.
2 <i>Delicacy</i> of Belinda's world (Cunningham)	X	.	.
3 Sexual symbolism (Brooks)	.	.	-X
4 Belinda as goddess (Brooks)	.	X	.
5 The mock-heroic (Jack)	.	X	.
6 The serious aspects (Brower)	.	.	X
7 Social allusion (Wasserman)	.	.	X
8 Mythopoeic activity (Parkens)	.	X	.
9 Communication-pleasure (Stephenson)	X	.	.

(X=significant loading; all others are insignificant)

(Stephenson, 1967).

Factor analysis yielded the operant three-factor solution given above, in simple structure. Whatever meanings are given to the factors, they indicate that three principles are at issue, each as broad or broader than those represented by any of the nine Q sorts. It does not take long to see that A, for Q sorts 1, 2, 9, in some way concerns communication-pleasure; B, for 4, 5, 8, is classicism; and C, for 3, 6, 7, is bipolar, 3 being negative, pointing to rejection of sexual symbolism in serious social involvement (6, 7).

This Rule is of profound significance for all subjectivity, in theology, art, literature, science--wherever subjectivity is at issue--and completes Newton's task, as the Fifth of his Rules of Reasoning.

\* \* \* \* \*

The final step in Q methodology is a table of factor scores, in standard score terms, for each of the statements of the Q sample, for each factor. My Q sample for the study of Pope's epic had 45 statements; the computer program ends with a list of the statements, each with its three factor scores, as in

the following example for one of the statements of the Q sample:

	<i>Score on Factor</i>		
	A	B	C
Pope wished to laugh the quarrel out of court, and in such a way as to give serious offense to nobody.	1.52	0.12	0.13
	(standard scores)		

Clearly the statement has considerable significance for A, but is neither one thing or another for B and C. There are 45 pieces of data of this kind, representing "wordless thinking" of the mind, by Peirce's law. The investigator has now to match his own conscious mind with the data, to find out what it means. It did not take long, in this case, to see that A is in the context of elegant spoofing, of taste not morals, of inconsequential sylphs, and of course (as above) of Pope wanting to laugh the incident of the lock out of court with no harm to anyone. B has reference to devil worship, a goddess substitute for Christianity, with sylphs as a divine order. Factor C is down-to-earth, with Pope commenting on the sordid culture of his time, and the rape is an affront, notwithstanding female sin. When one thinks of it, this is about all there *could* be--a playful little thing, as Addison said; or a mock-heroic epic; or a social commentary. All other interpretations play on these basic themes.

It may be said that we reach, by elaborate means, the obvious. That it does so is inducement enough, however, to see what it may reach that is not obvious, as we shall next indicate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Modern literary structuralism, according to Scholes, sought "nothing less than the unification of all sciences into a new system of belief" (Scholes, 1974, p. 2): it was a reaction to fragmentation of knowledge into isolated disciplines. So, indeed, was Q methodology, from 1935. Literary structuralism, how-

ever, is in the objective mode, of physics and modern science, which, since Newton, has split the world into two parts--of science, and of the mind--and Scholes' structuralism does nothing to mend the split. It is very different for our theory of consciousness as communicability: subjectivity can now take its place in a unified theory of knowledge, the same for literature as for the sciences.

It remains only to prove that communicability, not consciousness, is the substantive matter of knowledge. Julian Jaynes, in his *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976), argues that consciousness evolved only recently, some 3,000 years ago, with the development of "written" forms of language. For Jaynes, consciousness has properties, like any substance in the real world of physics; one such is "spatialization"--one's nose, feet, breakfast table, the Tower of London and the constellation Orion are in space, and in that direction we find quasars and black holes. Obviously this is the objective mode of communicability. But if we enter into conversation with people about space, the talk is of "heaven up there," "it is infinite," "space must be eternal," "an attribute of God, the frame of His presence and action," "just nothing," "space without matter is an easy, even a necessary idea," and so on and on in a *concourse*. So spoke Palingenius, Giordano Bruno, Newton, Descartes, Henry More, Berkeley and many a philosopher over the past three or four hundred years, and so speak people today, with the same *concourse*. As for any *concourse*, it is subject to Q methodology and therefore to analysis far beyond the categorical attributes of consciousness; we find factor structures for the *concourse* today, for graduate students, the same as they could have been for Newton, Bruno and Berkeley centuries ago (Stephenson, 1975-76). Similarly for each attribute of consciousness assumed by Jaynes: one only has to compare our treatment of "me" and self with the lack of any in Jaynes, to see what harm is done by categorical assumptions. Accepting the objective framework for consciousness means a

closed door for advances into subjective knowledge; accepting communicability leaves the door open for advances "inside" as well as "outside," for subjective as well as objective laws. If it is thought that this is merely a matter of semantics, the mistake is egregious. Newton and Descartes, creators of objective science, lived side-by-side with demoniacal beliefs, the burnings for witchcraft and sorcery of the times, only three or so centuries ago--inhuman aberrations of subjectivity, supported by the scholars, lawyers, diplomats, theologians, in masses of *Lettres Spirituelles*, *Histoire des Diabes*, and the like treatises, all in the subjective frame. And are we really in any better shape now? Who shall say that the objective regard of subjectivity isn't due for serious regard? And what discipline, out of its shame, should begin to look at it more than that traditionally associated with the humanities? The present author is certain that we can now dig more certainly into subjective reality than is currently attempted by the pseudo-subjectivity of dynamic psychology. There is form in the free creation of ideas, not in a static shape of sculpture, but in the flowing of a feeling-full self, now as operable as anything in modern science. There is not a single concept in all literature that isn't subject to our theory that consciousness is merely communicability, and that communicability is operable by way of the theory of concourses and Q methodology. All, moreover, in standard terms, with a unit of measurement common to everyone.

William Stephenson, 2111 Rock Quarry Road, Columbia,  
MO 65201

#### REFERENCES

- Barthes, R. *S/Z: An essay*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Beebe-Center, J.G. *The psychology of pleasantness and unpleasantness*. New York: Van Nostrand, 1932.
- Buchler, J. (Ed.). *The philosophy of Peirce: Select-*

- ed writings*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950.
- Burt, C.L. *The factors of the mind*. London: University of London Press, 1940.
- Dickstein, M. *Keats and his poetry: A study in development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Einstein, A. *The world as I see it*. New York: Covici, Friede, 1934.
- Fechner, G.T. *Elemente der psychophysik*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1860.
- Holton, G. *Thematic origins of scientific thought: Kepler to Einstein*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Jaynes, J. *The origin of consciousness in the breakdown of the bicameral mind*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
- Koyré, A. *Newtonian studies*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1965.
- Peirce, C.S. *The collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-35.
- Pope, A. On epic poetry. In C.C. Starkweather (Ed.), *British essays*. Vol. 1. London: Colonial Press, 1900.
- Popper, K. *The logic of scientific discovery*. New York: Basic, 1959.
- Propp, V. *Morphology of the folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970.
- Rousseau, G.S. (Ed.). *Twentieth century interpretations of the Rape of the Lock: A collection of critical essays*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- Scholes, R. *Structuralism in literature*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Spearman, C.E. *The nature of intelligence and principles of cognition*. London: Methuen, 1927.
- Stephenson, W. *The study of behavior: Q-technique and its methodology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953. (Midway Reprint, 1975)
- Stephenson, W. *The play theory of mass communication*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.
- Stephenson, W. Consciousness out - subjectivity in. *Psychological Record*, 1968, 18, 499-501.

- Stephenson, W. Foundations of communication theory. *Psychological Record*, 1969, 19, 65-82.
- Stephenson, W. Application of communication theory: II. Interpretations of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn". *Psychological Record*, 1972, 22, 177-192.
- Stephenson, W. Methodology of single case studies. *Journal of Operational Psychiatry*, 1974, 5(2), 1-16.
- Stephenson, W. *Newton's Fifth Rule: Exposition of Q, pro re theologica, pro re scientia*. Unpublished manuscript, 1975-76.
- Stephenson, W. Concourse theory of communication. *Communication*, 1978, 3, 21-40.
- Thayer, L. (Ed.). *Communication: Theory and research*. (Proceedings of the First International Symposium) Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 1967.
- Thompson, D.W. *Growth and form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942.
- Ward, J. Psychology. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 9th ed. Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1886. Pp. 37-85.
- Weathers, W. An exemplary theory of communication in modern literature. In L. Thayer (Ed.), *Communication: Theory and research*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 1967.

In addition to Stephenson's contributions, applications of Q to literary concerns include papers by N.S. Blount, *Journal of Educational Research* 1965... J.N. Britton, *British Journal of Psychology* 1954... S.R. Brown, *American Political Science Review* 1977... Brown, *Political Subjectivity*, Yale University Press, 1980... H.J. Eysenck, *Character and Personality* 1940 ... J.D. Harless, *Journalism Quarterly* 1972... L. Kohlberg, *Daedalus* 1963... L.N. Nelson, *Elementary School Journal* 1967... E. Strenski, *College English* 1979.

*Genius seems to consist in the power of applying the originality of youth to the experience of maturity.*  
(Michael Polanyi)