Abstract
A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Oxford

Conceptualisation of personal relationships
Rosalie Burnett
Lincoln College
Michaelmas term 1986

Previous research into everyday conception of personal relationships has been sparse and fragmented, and the various specialisms fail to deal with the broader issue of interpersonal understanding. Following review of the research and theoretical background, with particular reference to changing paradigms, a holistic approach is proposed for an exploration linking the content of explanation and reflection about relationships with the incidence of conceptualising. The methodology, employing content analysis, illustrative studies and a musical analogue, is outlined.

Initially focusing on verbalised conception in the form of accounts, a procedure of 'simulated correspondence with a confidant' was employed to facilitate unrestricted disclosures in general descriptions of relationships. Three coding schemes were devised for content analysis of accounts (and for independent use in subsequent research). These pertained to: (1) specific concepts and themes; (2) explanation of interpersonal effect and significance; and (3) inter-subjectivity in accounts. Overall indications from the content analyses are that accounts are characterised by superficiality of detail and insight, and concentrate more on basic viability, and on social and visible aspects of personal relationships than on intimate and psychological aspects. The limitations of content analysis, and the deficiencies disclosed, suggest attention should be given to omission in content as much as inclusion, and also to the prior issues of motivation and the extent of relationship 'mindfulness'. A musical analogy (with particular reference to representation, knowledge and appreciation) is employed to advance the exploration beyond the linguistic aspects of conception to a more general model of relationship awareness.

A second set of studies turn to (1) the frequency and occasioning of reflection on relationships; (2) reappraisal over time; (3) interest in relationships compared with other subjects of general interest; and (4) factors which disincline conscious relationship deliberation and analysis. There are indications throughout of a sex difference, with men as less reflective, less inclined to participate in providing accounts, and less interested in personal relationships. Disincentives are suggested, and a theory of 'relationship mindlessness' is discussed, connecting impoverishment of content and incidence with the late emergence of 'personal relationships' as a subject of formal scholarly enquiry in psychology.

It is proposed that such mindlessness, and associated disincentives, are implicated in relationship problems, and that extension of relationship education, knowledge and interest are indicated. The practicalities and possible form of learning about relationships and consciousness-raising were explored in a trial relationship understanding course. Counter-indications for such consciousness-raising were evaluated by analogy with music appreciation.

Extended Abstract

In Chapter 1, the domain of the investigation is introduced, linking content ('what' people conceive with regard to relationships) with the prior question of incidence ('when and why' conceptualising occurs). Conception is broadly defined to include all forms of relationship knowledge, perspectives and understanding, and is otherwise referred to as 'relationship mindfulness'. The rationale for an exploration into the nature of ordinary relationship conception is discussed with reference to its critical role in realising relationship outcomes, and also the inadequate coverage of the conceptual dimension in previous personal relationship research. Contributory work which has been done tends to be focused on specific topics, separating, for instance, normative and prototype knowledge from the function and use of such knowledge, and failing to connect adult causal explanation with other forms of thinking and with the development of social cognition. It is argued that these specialisms have resulted in neglect of the more pervasive issue of interpersonal understanding and relationship awareness, and proposed that, for this, a holistic approach is initially appropriate.

Chapter 2, first, roots the investigation into a contemporary research context, explaining theoretical assumptions and research values. Methodological choices are connected to developments within social psychology, favourable to an approach in which structural analysis and demonstrative theory are viable alternatives to a hypothetico-deductive approach. The analytical framework is explained with reference to approach (holistic) and procedures (analogy and content analysis of accounts). A Vygotskian position is followed in initially placing emphasis on the verbalisation of conception in the

form of accounts. A music analogy, which is a source of description and hypothesis throughout, is introduced. The phases of the project are outlined in advance, together with a description of procedural issues of relevance to more than one phase of the investigation.

Chapter 3 describes a search for insight into what is contained, explicitly and implicitly, in views and knowledge of relationships. For this purpose, relationship accounts, written in the form of simulated letters to a confidant, were obtained, and a scheme (Scheme 1) for their analysis devised. The construction, categories, use and results are described. Concepts and themes are organised into categories primarily suggested by initial examination of accounts. A comparison of the most and least frequently mentioned categories led to the suggestion that it is the more social aspects and basic viability (e.g 'Contact', 'Ease of interaction', 'Activities together' and 'Similar activities) which are emphasised more than emotional and intimate aspects (e.g.'Caring and concern', 'Understanding', 'Authenticity'). Further, the range of concepts used is not very extensive. A possible interpretation is that relationship knowledge and representations are superficial. The results of the analysis are equivocal not least because of the limitations of content analysis, and also non-linguistic levels of conception. The implications to be drawn, therefore, with respect to mindfulness are provisional, and other aspects to be explored are suggested. The tension between stressing linguistic and alternative levels of understanding involves a dialecticism which will continue to feature.

Additional analyses are necessary for an evaluation of the nature of conceptualisation conveyed within accounts, and two further content analysis schemes were decribed with results in Chapter 4. These deal with conceptualisation of relationship meaning and outcomes (Scheme

2), and inclusion of mutuality and inter-subjectivity (Scheme 3). Both are an attempt to discover other indicators of relationship conception as spontaneously revealed in accounts, and to consider the implications for relationship awareness. Results indicated the rarity of explicit analysis of interpersonal meaning and significance, and a marked emphasis on objective, instead of inter-subjective, references to 'other' in their discussion of the 'other', in contrast to more subjective discussion of self. These analyses again give rise to consideration of non-verbal aspects of interpersonal conception, plus the extent to which such knowledge and awareness is generally conscious and readily made explicit. The inherent contradictions in alternative positions which are discussed are illustrated by analogy with listening to and understanding music.

Chapter 5 has a linking function in that it connects the analyses in chapter 3 and chapter 4 in respect of sub-populations, but also anticipates later studies and theories. The analyses confirm the same picture of fairly sparse conceptions. Comparisons point more definitely towards the need to take into account questions of motivation, interest and incidence. It was found that the omission of emotional and psychological aspects is more pronounced in men's accounts. Male participants display most reticence with regard to being explicit about relationships. This is indicated in recruitment, and 'drop out' figures, as well as in length of contributions, and the nature and range of concepts. Despite a higher proportion of negatively valenced concepts, accounts from a group of participants with a problematic relationship history were shorter and conceptually more narrow than accounts of the main participant group; this is counter to indications in attribution theory research. There are no striking differences between accounts of friendships and of sibling relationships. Comparison between concepts applied in prototype

descriptions and those included in actual relationship accounts highlights in the latter the importance attached to basic viability and affect and the relative low prominence of more prototypic characteristics.

Two studies concerned with the incidence of conceptualising were reported in chapter 6, the first focusing on incidence and types of thinking about relationships, and the second (longitudinally connected with the 'simulated letter project') addressing the nature of events which may be associated with updating of accounts and reappraisal. Both rely on self-report. The analyses indicated that reflection about relationships tends to be light-weight in content, and to be stimulated most often by special occasions or times of crisis. Investigation of reappraisal of earlier accounts suggested that an overall view of a relationship may often remain static. Findings again discriminated between men and women, suggesting that men are less reflective about relationships. The studies provided further illustration for a theory of 'relationship mindlessness', aligning the male-female discrepancy with a mindlessness-mindfulness dichotomy in approaches to relationship. The tendency for this to correspond with gender can be better understood within the wider context of cultural values, which are turned to next.

In chapter 7, the nature of relationship conception is put into the context of relationships as a subject of academic, intellectual and recreational interest, and individual differences in inclination to be analytical and communicative about relationships. Thus, inhibiting factors and disincentives to think, talk and be otherwise mindful about relationships are considered from the perspectives of cultural values and individual motivation. Findings in a study comparing interest in relationships with interest in other subjects,

suggest that while participants' single 'closest relationship' evokes more interest than other subjects, the remainder of 'own personal relationships' are less interesting to men than women, and that 'other people's relationships' are of relatively low interest to both sexes. A follow-up study to investigate the sex difference in inclination to think and communicate about relationships suggested that men find explaining and communicating about relationships more difficult and rated analysis as less useful. It was argued that academic plus masculine values have not been conducive to the development of interest and corresponding awareness in relationships, and inherent characteristics of relationship experience (emotional, trivial, confidential) make it an intrinsically awkward subject for serious discussion. The present social and academic climate, however, is conducive to a relaxing of those contraints, and the realities of learning about relationships and consciousness-raising were turned to in the final chapter.

Chapter 8 finishes the investigation by considering the implications and applications of the preceding analysis. A description is given of a training course in Relationship Understanding, which was an experimental attempt to 'put to the test' the recommendations which have been presaged throughout. The realities of those implications are confronted in critical evaluation of the pros and cons of conscious relationship monitoring and a more intellectual and informed approach. An attempt to resolve the conundrum of a capacity which needs to be better informed but which cannot simply be taught, is made with reference to the music analogy, and its extension into a model of relationship appreciation. In particular, formal learning and consciousness-raising as an intervention for unsatisfactory relationships are appraised. The chapter culminates with a brief synopsis of findings and theories.

CONCEPTUALISATION

OF

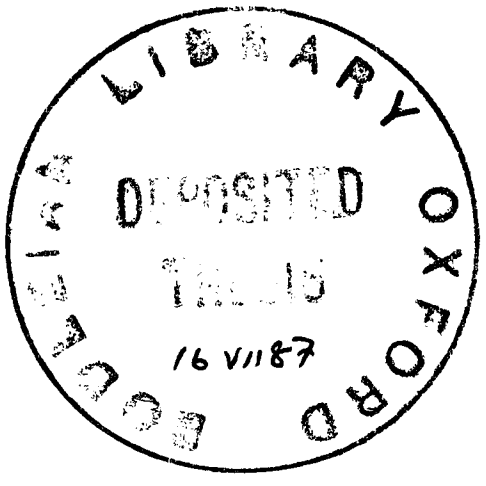
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Rosalie Burnett

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the

University of Oxford



Michaelmas Term 1986

Lincoln College

Acknowledgements

My thanks are owed to ~~thank~~ Michael Argyle and Gerald Ginsburg for their supervision and interest during earlier stages of this research, and I would especially like to thank David Clarke for his continuing supervisory support, reassurance and optimism. I am grateful to the Economic and Social Research Council for financial suppport, and to officers of the Lancaster and Morecambe Probation and After-Care Services for their co-operation and interest and for allowing me access to clients; and I am indebted to the members of the Subject Panel, Oxford University Department of Experimental Psychology, who took part and to all other participants from different locales.

I am glad to have this opportunity to express gratitude to a number of people. In particular, I thank Dorothy Harrison, Pauline Harrison, Shirley Burnett and Sidney Burnett for their unfailing love and faith in me. Also, I owe special thanks to Monica Henderson for assistance with coding, and to Jessica Mathieson, Helen Fensome and Philippa Merriman for distributing questionnaires. I have benefited, at different points in time, from the warmth and moral support, or practical help of Peter Naish, Giovanni Carnibella, Sarah Collins, Tom Crawshaw, Steve Duck, Charles Antaki, Mansur Lalljee, Sonia Livingstone and Elizabeth Marx. I would also like to thank Michael Hall for his friendship, Frank Swartz for the Richard Strauss songs, and Gerry Rafferty for "The Right Moment".

But - first and last - nobody helped as much as Peter Burnett, and, to be selective, I thank him for believing in me, for his loving encouragement, for always being cheerful, for typing the longest table and printing-out the finished product, and for taking care of me and enabling me to do it.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1
THE CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH
1

1.1 RATIONALE 1
Centrality 1
Neglect 4
1.2 INVESTIGATIVE DOMAIN 5
Locating the research area 5
Two complementary issues 9
1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW 10
Content of relationship conception 10
Incidence of relationship conception 15
Summary of chapter 21

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE
22

2.1 FOREWORD 22
2.2 INVESTIGATIVE FOUNDATIONS 22
Research approach 22
Level and form of analysis 26
2.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK 32
The musical analogue 32
Accounts as data 39
2.4 PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK 45
Procedural issues 45
Phases of investigation 48
Summary of chapter 53

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTUAL CONTENT OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTS
54

3.1 FOREWORD 54
3.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF
RECURRING CONCEPTS AND THEMES 55
Introduction 55
Description 58
Construction 61
Modifications and coding problems 63
Results 72
3.3 CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS 77
Evaluation of content 77
Limitations of verbal content analysis 80
Beyond words to awareness 82
Summary of chapter 88

CHAPTER 4
AWARENESS IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTS
90

4.1	FOREWORD	90
4.2	OTHER INDICATORS OF RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTION	92
	Finding other indicators	92
	Types of explanation	95
	Explanation of meaning	98
4.3	SCHEME FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES	99
	Introduction	99
	Coding categories	100
	Results	102
	Discussion	103
4.4	SCHEME FOR ANALYSIS OF INTER-SUBJECTIVITY	105
	Introduction	105
	Coding objective and categories	106
	Results	108
	Discussion	109
4.5	RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS	109
	Conception as awareness	109
	Emotional and perceptual understanding	110
	Kinds of knowledge	112
	Summary of chapter	113

CHAPTER 5
POPULATION DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTING
115

5.1	FOREWORD	115
5.2	SELECTIVE COMPARISONS	116
5.3	SEX DIFFERENCES	121
	Introduction	121
	Results	122
	Discussion	125
5.4	RELATIONSHIP TYPE DIFFERENCES	131
	Introduction	131
	Results	133
	Discussion	134
5.6	QUALITATIVE RELATIONSHIP DIFFERENCES	137
	Differentiation in reality	137
	Personal-intimate distinction	139
	Summary of findings and chapter	140

• • •

CHAPTER 6
THE INCIDENCE OF RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTUALISATION
143

6.1 FOREWORD 143
6.2 THINKING ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS 144
6.3 REFLECTION ON RELATIONSHIPS 148
Introduction 148
Method 150
Results 151
Discussion 161
6.4 REAPPRAISAL OF RELATIONSHIPS 163
Introduction 163
Method 164
Results 166
Discussion 169
6.5 RELATIONSHIP MINDLESSNESS 170
Summary of chapter 172

CHAPTER 7
MOTIVATION FOR RELATIONSHIP MINDFULNESS
174

7.1 FOREWORD 174
7.2 INTERESTS STUDY 175
Introduction 175
Method 177
Results 178
Discussion 179
7.3 ATTITUDES 182
Introduction 182
Method 183
Results 184
Discussion 184
7.4 RELATIONSHIPS AS A SUBJECT OF STUDY AND INTEREST 189
Science and personal relationships 190
Lifting the taboo 190
Conclusion 191
Summary of chapter 192

. . .

CHAPTER 8
TOWARDS RELATIONSHIP MINDFULNESS: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
194

8.1	FOREWORD	194
8.2	RELATIONSHIP UNDERSTANDING COURSE	196
	Introduction	196
	Purpose and objectives	196
	Programme	199
	Evaluation	201
8.3	RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION	202
	The dilemma	202
	Superfluous knowledge	205
	Insincerity	207
	Disruption	208
	Other objections	210
8.4	RELATIONSHIP APPRECIATION	211
8.5	SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS	214
	Efficacy of the approach	215
	Empirical conclusions	216
	Theoretical conclusions	218
	Final note	221
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	224

INDEX OF TABLES

	On or following page
1.1 Tabular comparison of studies on conception of relationships	11
2.1 Tabular representation of the stages of investigation	46
3.1 Coding categories for descriptive and explanatory concepts and themes	59
3.2 Comparison of coding categories with the categories of La Gaipa (1977) and of Davis and Todd (1982)	63
3.3 Concept category totals and concept reference totals	74
3.4 Percentage and frequency of reference to concept categories	75
3.5 Summary statistics for concept categories	76
3.6 Summary statistics for theme categories	77
4.1 Categories of references to relationship effect and outcome	102
4.2 Examples of subjective references	107
4.3 Examples of objective and ambiguous references	107
4.4 Means for inter-subjectivity categories	108
5.1 Categories and concepts by sex, relationship type and age group	117
5.2 Summary statistics for Group B concept references	119
5.3 Sex differences in participation and accounts about personal relationships	123
5.4 Comparison of concept references by men and women	124
5.5 Summary of coding comparisons for men and women	125
6.1 Comparison of reflection given to relationships by type	152
6.2 Relationship type differences in producing accounts	152
6.3 Sex differences in producing accounts of relationships	152
6.4 Reappraisal and revision of relationship conception after two months	167
6.5 Reappraisal and revision of relationship conception after nine months	168
7.1 Means for men and women comparing inclination to think and communicate about personal relationships	184

INDEX OF FIGURES

	Following page
2.1 Four ways of participating: an analogy between music and relationships	36
2.2A musical model of factors affecting relationship knowledge and awareness	37
3.1 Ten categories each with an example, or one category with ten examples	71
3.2 Comparison of positively termed and negatively termed references	76
3.3 Factors relevant to conceptual breadth of relationship accounts	81
4.1 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity in references to 'other' in accounts of different relationship types	108
5.1 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity by sex and age-group	118
5.2 Comparison of conceptualisation for prototype and actual relationships	134
5.3 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity in references to 'other' in accounts of different relationship types	134
6.1 Incidence and content of relationship reflections	153
7.1 Thinking, talking, knowing and caring about personal relationships compared to other subjects of interest	178
7.2 Sex differences in self-ratings of inclination and in levels of task participation	184

APPENDICES

A: GROUP A MATERIALS

A1.1 Introductory letter
A1.2 Siblings and friend questionnaire
A2.1 Request and instructions for first simulated letter
A2.2 Information Sheet
A2.3 Definitions of relationship types specified
A3.1 Follow-up questionnaire: version A
A3.2 Follow-up questionnaire: version B
A3.3 Letters and reminders
A4.1 Request and instructions for second simulated letter
A5.1 Early reappraisal questions
A5.2 Later reappraisal questions

B: GROUP B MATERIALS

B1.1 Procedure for probation officers
B1.1 Request and instructions for probation officers
B1.3 Instructions for use by clients
B2.1 Follow-up questionnaire: version A
B2.2 Follow-up questionnaire: version B

C: CODING SCHEMES AND EXAMPLES

C1.1 Scheme for content analysis of descriptive and explanatory concepts and themes
C1.2 Coding form
C1.3 Examples of letters
C1.4 Examples of coding categories
C2.1 Scheme for content analysis of reference to effects and outcomes
C2.2 Coding form
C2.3 References to relationship effects and outcomes
C3.1 Scheme for analysis of inter-subjectivity
C3.2 Coding form

D: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES

D1.1 Reflection on relationships questionnaire
D2.1 Interests Questionnaire

E: RELATIONSHIP UNDERSTANDING COURSE MATERIAL

E1.1 Invitation and programme
E2.1 Relationship assessment for for client
E2.2 Relationship assessment form for client's relative
E2.3 Relationship assessment form for probation officer

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH

> ... a large number of the findings [about personal relationships] point to one startlingly overlooked fact: sometimes people think about their relationships and sometimes they do not'
>
> (Duck, 1986, p.95).

1.1 RATIONALE

Centrality

A basic tenet within the work to be described is that understanding of relationships cannot be attained without also understanding the conceptualising which accompanies them, and that an investigation of the one must lead to the other. Duck (1980; Duck and Sants, 1983; Duck and Perlman, 1985; and in the opening quotation) has repeatedly pointed to the neglect of conceptual aspects. Despite the proliferation of research into personal relationships during the current decade, it will continue to be 'specious' (Duck and Sants, 1983) and less than 'true to life' until the subjective dimension is prominently featured.

In Act III, scene 3 of Shakespeare's Othello, there is a major turnabout in the central character's conception of his relationship with his wife, the final consequence of which is that he kills her. Described by her father as `a maiden never bold; of spirit so still and quiet that her motion [emotion] blushed at herself' (p.42), he had thought of her as `the gentle Desdemona' and spoke of their relation-

ship in terms of `I cannot speak enough of this content' (p.61), but as a result of malevolent gossip, he comes to reassess her as loathsome 'whore' (p.127) who has abused him. His former view of their relationship is upturned. He explains what he now sees as his previous misconception: 'what sense had I of her stolen hours of lust? I saw't not, thought it not, it harmed not me' (p.96)...`All of my fond love thus do I blow to heaven. 'Tis gone.'(p.100), and reacts with curses and dire plans: 'Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!... I will withdraw, To furnish me with some swift means of death For the fair devil'(p.101). In this particular instance, the conceived problem is invented, but the fatal consequences are 'real' enough.

A reverse case - failing to conceive that there <u>is</u> a problem - resulting in a conceptualisation which has been superceded by events, is exemplified in Flaubert's (1950) portrayal of a marriage in <u>Madame Bovary</u>. Here, the husband is contentedly ignorant of his wife's profound dissatisfaction with their marriage. His complacency and his belief that he makes her happy, exacerbate her frustration and disillusionment, while serving to perpetuate his own contentment: 'To make it harder, Charles had apparently no notion of what she suffered. His unquestioning belief that he made her happy seemed to her a stupid insult' (p.121). With an alternative view, he might have acted in some way to disincline her from the disastrous choices she makes including her eventual suicide. His conception influences the trajectory of the marital relationship as did Othello's, although in this instance, by default.

These two literary examples of misconception illustrate the relation of subjective views to 'reality' in an exaggerated way, given the finality of the results in each case. The outcomes are all the more poignant and convincing as indications of the formative effect of

conception, because they arise in cases where the beliefs, impressions and thoughts could be externally invalidated, or, at least, where a discrepancy between them and the other party's claims could be disclosed. While Othello's action is explicable as a mistake arising from deception, and Monsieur Bovary's perspective may be seen through as self-deluding, that both have conceptions which are discrepant with the external situation is not relevant, of course; rather it is the ultimate significance of their views in then effecting changes in the external world which is important.

On an interpersonal micro-scale, it is appropriate to investigate errors of judgement and sources of misconception. But with regard to the origin and impact of conceptions over the long-term and on a macro-scale, the deviation between reality and conception (after it has been publicly represented in the form of an account or a narrative or a telling) is less important than its social effects (Gergen and Gergen, in press). In either case, the view is becoming more prevalent in social psychology that separation of mental phenomena from social phenomena is itself tenuous, and that, on a macro-scale, 'reality' is formed by the rules and conceptions jointly constructed in discourse and accounts (Shotter, 1984; Harre, 1984; Antaki and Lewis; Gergen and Gergen, in press). The speculative basis for this theoretical position may be stated as follows:

> What if human nature is not independent of our thoughts about it, and theories can in some instances change the things they are theories about; what if human nature is...a product of the processes of exchange and contact between people as they live their daily lives?
>
> (Shotter, 1980, p.19).

Thus, the content of private and joint conceptions of relationships is not epiphenomenal; it is creative of the reality of relationships. In dialectical fashion, the reverse process occurs, with collective representation incorporated into individual knowledge structures,

referred to in private interpretation and decision.

Neglect

The preceding argument gives subjectivity a formative role, from either the micro-level of private conception or the macro-level of public representation. In between these, Duck and Sants (1983) have discussed the combination of 'insider' perspectives and several 'outsider'perspectives in realising the relationship. These various positions reflect an expanding consensus towards emphasising the constructive or formative role of representation, in thought and in communication. However, with regard to conceptual aspects, thinking within relationships seems to be one of the last aspects to be examined. In a recent review of the field, Duck and Perlman (1985) summarised the position as follows:

> ...thinking about relationships is an important activity that alters their trajectories ...research on exchange has focussed rather more on what happens in interactions themselves, whilst much important relational activity (such as planning, reviewing, explaining and reconceptualising) can occur eqally well outside of interactions...The single most important question for research in future is to discover how 'relationships' are created, both subjectively and objectively, from strings of interactions, and from the changing beliefs that people form about them.
>
> (Duck and Perlman, 1985).

This is a methodologically uncertain territory, not easily accessed and requiring alternative approaches. Some paradigm shifts have made it possible to venture in this direction, and relevant theoretical groundwork has begun under the headings of 'descriptive psychology' (Ossario, 1978), 'ethogenics' (Harre, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985), 'social constructivism' (Gergen and Davis, 1986), and 'social accounting' (Semin and Manstead, 1983; Shotter, 1984; Burnett, McGhee and Clarke, in press). These positions, however, tend to emphasise communicative and social aspects, and a move towards 'collectivism', away from the dominant 'individualism' of psychological research. With this swing, the role of private conceptualising in personal relation-

ships is in danger of being disregarded. Yet it is the individual's reflective activities - recollections, assessment, anticipations, fantasies, etc. - which have been largely neglected (Duck, 1980). A straightforward explanation for this omission, may lie in the sheer difficulty of obtaining data on this more private and elusive side of relationships. There is also the problem of defining a manageable terrain of study without missing overlapping areas.

1.2 INVESTIGATIVE DOMAIN

Locating the research area

Defining the headings 'conception' and 'conceptualisation' is complicated by the range of other terms which have related meaning. In an exploratory study it is appropriate to begin with broad definitions instead of deciding on some prior specification which would subsequently block avenues of enquiry. However, an advance indication of the issues regarded as relevant is necessary to locate the domain of enquiry. Given the numerous permutations of meaning in respect of 'conception', various subsidiary avenues of enquiry are possible. A first issue is whether the concern will be, more literally, with verbal concepts, or goes beyond linguistic representation to unarticulated knowledge, perception, intuition, empathy and other emotional rather than intellectual forms of understanding. Additionally, it may be queried whether it is primarily the product (knowledge possessed, beliefs held, cognitive level) which is of interest, or the process (the patterns and paths of reasoning, the manipulation of information and mental wiring, the physical links between thought and feeling), or the functional use (the occasioning of conception, and implications for everyday living of relationships); and, whether the concern will be with the individual's perhaps unshared and unique relationship picture, or with the more public perspectives, unwittingly negotiated

between partners and third parties, and aligned with contemporary societal conceptions of what is meaningful, what is involved and how relationships work.

There can be little merit in examining conceptions as a sterile test of relational knowledge; it is knowledge and thoughts about relationships as they pertain to everyday relating which are relevant. While the investigation is approached from the angle of verbal or more informational knowledge, and, indeed, with some pre-judgement about the viability of this form of understanding, it is important that this focus should not result in neglect of other channels and forms of understanding. To be of relevance, conception on any level will have to be associated with other facets of interpersonal understanding, so that the nature of relationship awareness more generally, can be uncovered. Though involving different mental processes, it is nonetheless liable to be in operation simultaneously to verbal processing at the time of, for instance, making making judgements and plans, or of explaining one's own actions and interpreting those of others. Even while specialising, therefore, a more global project necessarily connects conception embodied in words and alternative forms of understanding (perception, sensitivity, empathy) contained within and as a more general awareness about relationships. The main focus initially is on the more cognitive and verbal aspects.

In addition to being interpersonal, relationships are intrapersonal ('on my mind'; 'in my heart'; 'in my head'); the individual's subjective, inner experience, of relationships is the broad investigative domain, including perceptual and affective experience as well as conceptual, and both conscious and sub-conscious. This is a return, perhaps , to 'person perception' terrain, but cultivating it to include relationships as well as individuals, and widening the bound-

aries to include the more cognitive, and intellectual activities of attribution theory and social cognition. Within this terrain, 'conception' is being used as a catchall for various mental activities, some more cognitive than others, (imagining, assessing, reflecting, construing, analysing, interpreting, evaluating, explaining, remembering, fantasising, planning and interpreting personal relationships) and their products, from subliminal impressions to rehearsed knowledge. Given this broad definition of 'conception' to include all forms of relationship knowledge, perspectives and understanding, it is might be appropriate to refer to it as 'relationship mindfulness', following Langer's (1978) use of the mindfulness-mindlessness dichotomy. This is distinct from the term 'relationship awareness', which may be used synonymously, but which also allows for the additional connotations of sub-conscious awareness (though compare Duck and Acitelli's (1986) use of the term, which will be returned to in chapter four).

'Representation' (e.g. Moscovici, 1984) and 'accounts' (e.g. Burnett, McGhee and Clarke, in press) are alternative rubrics which might have been used, but both of those point more to communication and collectivism. It remains appropriate to emphasise the reflective, individualistic polarity, this being the most under-researched, and to maintain a balance which present trends towards focus on 'joint action' threaten to overshadow. Relationship conceptualising, as a private experience centred on self and one's interpersonal affairs, arguably is where individuality makes most claim. The locus of enquiry is intramental instead of intermental (Vygotsky, 1962), but that is partly a methodological convenience, and the degree to which this is appropriate or not awaits information about the ratio of private to public representational activity.

Although the stress is less on communicated knowledge and thoughts than on private deliberation and the subjective viewpoint, it

may be unhelpful to dichotomise between the private and less easily articulated aspects and conceptions which have been made known and are available to public transference and transformation. A disjunction between them is artificial: as Antaki (in press) has observed in a review guide to relationship account research, the reciprocal relevance of work on 'performable' and the 'unperformable' accounts is obscured by the division between investigators specialising in these respective areas. 'Conception', denoting the formation of ideas and views in the mind, puts emphasis on conscious processing and has linguistic implications, with some promise of being 'performable', that is, capable of being made explicit and articulated, in contrast to less readily accessible implicit knowledge, intuitions and non-verbal perceptions. This is particularly appropriate for the studies to be discussed, which employ verbal accounts as tools for investigation and also emphasise the role of language in relationship awareness. However, following Vygotsky (1962), thought is not being equated with language, and the 'subtext' (p. 149) as well as those elements of thought which fail to be expressed in words are very much within the bounds of investigative concern, though inevitably they are much more the subject of speculation. This equally applies to the affective level of understanding, which is not necessarily in harmony with conscious articulated thoughts but which, on another level, is likely to be a potent source of influence on understanding and decision in relationship (Clarke, in press).

The angle and approach of enquiry is <u>social</u> social psychological, not the information processing, or artificial intelligence approaches of more cognitive social psychology - a distinction which others have made (Armistead, 1974; Antaki and Lewis, 1986) and which will be explained in the next chapter - and thus the interest is in the

products and functions of conceptions and conceptualising rather than mechanistic explanation of processes within the mind. Two complementary issues have been the focus of enquiry, and these will now be introduced.

Two complementary issues

The initial point of enquiry was exploration of the content of relationships conception, the main place of search being people's own words within descriptions, explanation, evaluation and reports of thoughts about personal relationships, to convey their knowledge, perspectives and understanding. This literal analysis of content is developed by moving on to less explicit meaning denoted in language, or conveyed via formal aspects. The first issue is therefore an exploration of what people conceptualise about relationships. The significance of implications to be drawn about the content of conceptions must be relative to the extent to which people do indeed engage in conceptualising as an activity, whether in private reflection, or during interaction. Therefore, the second key area of enquiry is the incidence of relationship conceptualisation; that is when and why, including the frequency with which it occurs, and motivational and attentional aspects of relationship conceptualising.

Though being treated as secondary, these existential aspects of occurrence are really the prior question. The investment of research effort in structural analysis of content would be uneconomic without additional enquiries regarding the spontaneous incidence of the relevant conceptual activities (explanation, assessment, appraisal, etc.). A similar proviso has been made in respect of attribution research. A vast edifice of knowledge has been built up regarding processes of causal reasoning, errors, biases and heuristics under the heading of attribution theory, but the crucial complementary question of its actual occurrence or not has only latterly been stressed (e.g.

Bond, 1983; Eiser, 1983). Bond refers to this negligence as a 'meta-issue', and an understandable oversight on the part of psychologists, because they 'are intensely interested in the causes of behaviour and interact with undergraduates who share this interest' (p.149). Much more than a meta-issue, in the present investigation the incidence of thinking about relationships, referring to knowledge and perspectives, explanation and evaluation, and so forth, is treated as a complementary half of the central research question, under the umbrella heading of 'conceptualisation'.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Content of Relationship Conception

A search of the literature reveals a wide range of sources concerning the content of interpersonal conceptions. Pertinent work has been done within numerous academic and applied disciplines including sociology, social psychology, developmental psychology, communications research, psychotherapy and family studies. In overviewing the studies concerned, it should be noted that straightforward comparison is not possible given that (1) there are differing objectives for covering similar ground, and (2) they are usually specialised in coverage. In attempting to formulate a connected view of relationship conceptualisation, from static knowledge to active interpretation, the separate pieces must be brought together. For instance, children's understanding of friendship is separated from adults' causal reasoning about behaviour in marriage, both of which are separated from investigation of beliefs and expectations about kin. Any connections are very much a matter for speculation.

These points can be exemplified by a selective review, which at the same time reveals some methodological features which are of issue.

(More applied studies from psychotherapy and family studies are not represented for space reasons and because they tend to be even more 'out on a limb' from complementary work). There is a heterogenous range of studies which deal with some sub-set of conceptual activities. A selection of structural studies which have yielded information relevant to the question of what conceptions of personal relationship are about, are presented in tabular form (Table 1.1). This shows the main points of contrast and similarity more readily than is possible in text. With the possible exception of the study by Wiemann and Krueger (1980), the present research had alternative objectives to those presented here, though collectively they spread into much of the same terrain.

TABLE 1.1

Various features of the reviewed studies have methodological and conceptual relevance to the present enquiry, and it is useful therefore to examine them with regard to these features, dealing with each in turn. The columns of Table 1.1 show the issues in question. Relevant distinctions, for instance, include social psychological versus developmental approach; whether participants are adult or children; the type of personal relationship investigated and whether these are hypothetical or 'actual' relationships; and whether data were obtained in open-ended account form or in response to rating scales and questionnaire items. These major differentiating features will be selectively considered.

The respective aims of the selected studies range across identification of underlying dimensions of perception (e.g. Wish, Deutsch and Kaplan, 1976), generational differences in expectations about relationships (Rands and Levinger, 1979), construal about persons (Peevers and Secord, 1973), construal about relationship (Weimann and

TABLE 1.1

Tabular comparison of studies on conception of relationships

STUDY	AIM	METHOD	CUE QUESTION / SPECIFIC TASK	RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES	SUBJECTS	KEY FINDINGS
Argyle and Furnham (1983)	Testing hypotheses with regard to satisfaction and conflict in relationships	Factor analysis of self-ratings on 15 sources of satisfaction and 15 sources of conflict	People were asked to rate the amount of each on the given sources	Own family, friends, colleagues	27 men 25 women	3 satisfaction factors: instrumental reward, emotional support, shared interests. 2 conflict factors: emotional conflict criticism
Berndt (1981)	Map age related changes of friendship expectations	Content-analysis of interviews about friendship expectations	"How do you know if someone is your best friend?" "What would make you decide not to be friends with someone anymore?" + standard probe questions	Prototype: best friend, friend	192 children, different class backgrounds, and 3 age-levels	8 response categories: defining features of friendship, friend's attributes, play/ association references, friend's prosocial behaviour references, refs. to friend's avoiding aggression, intimacy or trust, loyal support, faithfulness
Bigelow and La Gaipa (1975); Bigelow (1982)	Testing cognitive developmental stage hypothesis for children's friendship expectations; analysing friendship expectations	Essays coded into 21 friendship expectation dimensions; factor analysis of dimensions	"Think about your best friend of the same sex and write an essay about what you expect from them that is different from acquaintances"	Own: best friend compared with acquaintances	480 children grades 1-8	friendship expectations classified into situational stage (grades 2-3), contractual stage (grades 4-5), internal psychological stage (grades 6-7). 1982 study: stage structure does not follow an invariant sequence

STUDY	AIM	METHOD	CUE QUESTION / SPECIFIC TASK	RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES	SUBJECTS	KEY FINDINGS
Davis and Todd (1982)	Develop a conceptualisation of friendship and love	Testing construct and predictive validity of Paradigm Case Formulation	Describe each relationship on a multiple item rating form	Own: best friend; close friend; acquaintance; former friend; spouse/lover; same sex close friend	95 women, 55 men (students + members of community) + 56 women, 37 men (undergraduates)	Spouse/lover relationships described as involving more passion, mutual love & practical and emotional support than friendship
Furman, W. et al. (1984)	Seek out commonality underlying descriptions of different relationship types	Factor analysis of ratings	Rate list of characteristics with regard to different relationships	Own: siblings, friends, parent-child	200 5th grade 75 5th grade	Siblings & friendships relatively similar, but parent-child relations are somewhat different. There are both similarities and differences in respect of each.
Heyman & Shaw (1978)	Find people's own constructs of relationships	Content analysis of spoken descriptions	In your work experience can you think of a situation which make you feel annoyed or angry?	Own: colleagues	Nurses	Typology based on 4 discrete rule models re. actors' notions about rights & obligations to self & other. 4 constructs to represent views of relationship reciprocity, egocentrism, altercentrism, exchange
Kayser et al. (1984)	Testing hypothesis that laypersons can construct a typology of relationships	Rating questionnaire variables on 5-point scales	Rate intensity of 'mutual feelings', the importance of listed 'goals' and 'resources'	Prototype: (2 person, 5 person, sphere) Friend relationship Loving relationship Work relationship	89 German students 102 US students	Laypersons distinguish between these 3 types along the following dimensions: (a) affective climate, (b) cognitive motivational orientation, (c) resources to be exchanged

STUDY	AIM	METHOD	CUE QUESTION / SPECIFIC TASK	RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES	SUBJECTS	KEY FINDINGS
La Gaipa (1977)	Identify cultural definitions of friendship & develop a theoretical model of friendship	Open-ended interviews Content analysis of 1800 statements, reduced by Likert-scaling and factor analysis	Describe critical incidents that explain or illustrate why you consider this person to be your best friend	Interviews-Own: Best friend Questionnaires - Prototypes; best friends; close friends; good friends; social acquaintances; casual acquaintances	150 - all ages	9 major factors: self-disclosure; authenticity; helping behaviour; acceptance; positive regard; strength of character; similarity; empathic understanding; ritualistic social exchange
Marwell and Hage (1970)	Identify salient dimensions of role relations	Inductive procedure to analyse the inter-relationships among properties of relationships; ratings & factor analysis	Assign score to each role relationship to each of 16 systematically derived variables	Prototypes: 100 role relations e.g. father-son, dentist-patient, bridgeplayer-partner	2 groups of raters, the authors, 56 graduate students	3 major factors: Intimacy, Visibility, Regulation
Peevers and Secord (1973)	Identify concepts used to describe peers	Content analysis of unstructured interviews	Tell what person is like	Own: friends, disliked peer	80 - five age levels from kindergarten to college	4 dimensions: Descriptiveness Personal involvement Evaluative consistency; Depth
Rands and Levinger (1979)	Test hypothesis about generational differences in expectations about relationships	Multidimensional scaling of rating-scale data	Rate the likelihood of 30 different behaviours for each of 14 relationships	Prototypes: relationships betw. 22 yr. olds of today + 50 yrs. ago. (acquaintances, good friends, close relationships and married pair	40 college students and 40 at 70+ years	1. Today's couples rated as more likely to express feelings & have physical contact 2. Closeness and sex composition of the relationship had strong effects on probability estimates

STUDY	AIM	METHOD	CUE QUESTION / SPECIFIC TASK	RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES	SUBJECTS	KEY FINDINGS
Serafica et al. (1982)	Test hypothesis that the capacity for abstraction is the organising principle in the development of friendship conceptions	Coding descriptions of friend and friendship - coding first for form, then for content	Standard initial questions, followed by probes	Own and prototype: Best, close and casual friends	30 children and 90 young adults	Number of attributions increases with age; abstract responses increase with age
Selman (1976)	Establish developmental levels of friendship conceptions	Dilemma-interview procedure	Orientating questions about the dilemma, with follow-up questions depending on child's response	Prototype: friends	93 3 - 4 year olds	4 stages: Stage 0: momentary; physicalistic Stage 1: one-way assistance Stage 2: two-way reciprocal Stage 3: intimate, mutual with enduring affective tie
Triandis et al. (1968; 1972)	Cross-cultural comparison of perceived dimensions of role relations	Rating appropriateness or likelihood of 120 different behaviours for different role relations	Rate appropriateness or likelihood of 120 different behaviours for 100 role-relations	Prototype: 100 role-relations (e.g. father-son, secretary-boss)	Greek and American	3 fundamental dimensions: association - dissociation; superordination - subordination; intimacy

STUDY	AIM	METHOD	CUE QUESTION / SPECIFIC TASK	RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES	SUBJECTS	KEY FINDINGS
Weimann and Kruger (1980)	Examine the way in which people describe their relationships	Content-analysis of open-ended written descriptions	Write an essay	Own: best liked same-sex friend; best liked opposite-sex friend; least liked other	216 undergraduates	Relationships described in terms of: Affect; Approach-avoidance; Structure; Support; Incongruity
Wish, Deutsch and Kaplan (1976)	Identify fundamental dimensions of people's perceptions of interpersonal relations	Rep. grids and ratings on bipolar scales; INDSCAL MDS analyses of rating-scale data	Rate all relations on 14 9-point bipolar scales. Instructed: "take into account all aspects of the relationships...", in making their judgements	Own and prototype: 20 own relationships 25 typical	87 university students	4 dimensions: Cooperative - Competitive; Equal - Unequal; Intense - Superficial; Socioemotional and informal - Task orientated and formal
Wright (1985)	To test capacity of the Acquaintance Description Form scales (ADF-F) to discriminate between relationship types	ANOVA of self-ratings followed by Newman-Keuls analysis	Use ADF-F scales to indicate the degree of applicability and probability of occurence of statements about specific person	Own: same-sex best friend opposite-sex best friend spouse or fiance or current romantic interest	118 women, 93 men (volunteers from church-groups and service-clubs)	'exclusiveness', 'performance', 'emotional expression' and 'voluntary interdependence' were found to discriminate between friendship and other relationships

Krueger, 1980) age-related changes in conceptions and expectations (e.g. Serafica, 1982; Bigelow, 1982) and, as an ultimate objective, linking conceptions to social behaviour (e.g. Santa, 1984). There are those which are set up to provide empirical support for various hypotheses (e.g. Rands and Levinger, 1979; Kayser, Schwinger and Cohen, 1984), those which are more exploratory (e.g. Peevers and Secord, 1973; Davis and Todd, 1982; Argyle and Furnham, 1983), and those which are contributory to overarching theories which emerged from them (e.g. Selman, 1976; La Gaipa, 1977).

For classificatory purposes, a distinction can be made between structural analysis (e.g. Heyman and Shaw, 1978) and investigation of cognitive development (e.g. Serafica, 1982; Selman, 1982). The former concentrates on the descriptive explanation of the content of conceptions, while the latter is concerned with indicators of different levels of social cognitive development. This divison (which reflects research specialisms) is imprecise in that both have implications for the other, whether the emphasis is on beliefs, knowledge, perspectives, etc., per se, or whether 'content' is drawn on as a source of empirical support for theories of relationship behaviour and interaction. The traditional separation of studies concerned with children's psychological development from investigation of parallel adult development is unhelpful when an overview is wanted which connects knowledge, perspectives and theories with levels and forms of understanding.

Another way in which relevant studies may be distinguished is by the type(s) of relationships they concern. Personal relationships, which take their identity first and foremost from the individuals who participate in them, may be distinguished from role relationships (such as doctor-patient), wherein it is the role which is relevant

rather than the persons, and from impersonal relationships which lack both of these identifying characteristics. From among the studies contrasted in Table 1.1, a few combine both personal and role/impersonal relationships (Kayser, 1985; Triandis, Vassiliou and Nassiakou, 1968; Wish, Deutsch and Kaplan, 1976). Some relationship types which are more equivocal are also included. 'Colleagues', 'neighbours' and even 'acquaintances' might be regarded as borderline, depending on the nature of the interactions which have occurred and how well each party is known to the other. In that personal relationships can become impersonal and vice-versa, it need not be a contradiction for research on personal relationships to include both. A rather different contrast is between hypothetical and actual relationships. In some of the reviewed studies, subjects were asked about their <u>own</u> relationships (e.g. Sants, 1984; 'Why is (name) your best friend?'); in others they were asked about relationships in general, or hypothetically (e.g. Berndt, 1981: 'What would make you decide not to be friends with anyone?). The findings of Wish, Deutsch and Kaplan, (1976) would suggest that this is not a major differentiating variable, but, in spontaneous conceptualising, it is feasible that it is more differentiating than conventional type distinctions (e.g. friends versus lovers).

Although there are several generic terms - personal relationships, close relationships, primary relationships, long-term relationships - it is common for investigations to concentrate on one type only (marriage, or romantic relationships, or friendship have been popular choices), or to focus on comparison (e.g. Davis and Todd's (1982) comparison between love relationships and friendship). In addition to role distinctions, divisions according to levels of intimacy are often of concern (e.g best friends versus close friends), and also differentiations by sex-composition. Indeed, divisions by

type have formed separate topic domains especially in anthropology (kinship) and sociology (family). In developmental psychology, parent-child relationships have tended to be studied separately and in a different context from children's friendships, and in social psychology, investigation of personal relationships has emphasised heterosexual relationships (e.g. Levinger and Raush, 1977; Kelley et al., 1983) and more often than not has treated friendship as a separate phenomenon (e.g. La Gaipa, 1977; Wright, 1984). It is only recently that social psychologists have brought them together under the generic headings of 'personal relationships' (e.g. Duck and Gilmour, 1981) and 'long term relationships' (e.g. Argyle and Henderson, 1984).

Comparison of studies is complicated by variations in the type(s) of relationship investigated. As can be seen in Table 1.1 under the heading 'Relationship Categories', there is the added discrimination which some investigators make between levels of intimacy and preference: for instance, La Gaipa, (1977) makes a distinction between 'best friend', 'close friend' and 'good friend'. Classification by type and level obscures the possibility of double categorisation (e.g. a sibling might also be a friend), and the shifts that might take place from one sub-category to another (e.g. as when a close friendship weakens into a more casual association, thus forcing a limitation onto academic representation). Davis and Todd (1982) mention violations being followed by strengthening of the friendship such that they are transformed into another friendship category. This kind of differentiation might be regarded as unhelpful for much the same reasons as Duck and Sants' (1983) objection to state distinctions: relationships are in process, and the division into types or levels, as well as states, simplifies but in a way which distorts 'reality'.

A final distinguishing feature is whether they elicit cognitions

via free response questions (unrestricted spoken or written accounts) or via structured questionnaires (in which the participant is required to choose from given items). La Gaipa's (op. cit.) work demonstrates that it is possible, though time consuming and laborious, to impose the discipline of measurement without compromising the thinking of participants with imposed choices; in this study, questionnaire items, later used in factor analytic studies, were drawn from content analysis of essays. A less obvious constraint may be present in the nature of instructions given, since this is likely to provide some intentional or unintentional clue about which issues are salient. Even when the aim is to avoid restricting answers, subtle differences in question wording are likely to orientate thought. Compare, for instance, 'Describe why this person is your best friend' with the instruction used by La Gaipa: 'Describe critical incidents that explain or illustrate why you consider this person to be your best friend'. The second case provides guide-lines for responding. Not all of the investigators report the exact instructions, and so the extent of such prompting is unclear.

Incidence of Relationship Conception

It has been mentioned that diversity and specialisation has the effect of separating issues which potentially are mutually informative. This is especially the case with regard to the general failure to link content with incidence. Thus, what people know, believe, understand, and so forth, has usually been investigated without reference to occurrence. The pattern tends to be to either to adopt a representational approach with a view to discovering the content of, for example, 'implicit theories' (Rands and Levinger, 1979), 'conceptions' (Kayser, Schwinger and Cohen, 1984), 'constructs' (Weimann and Krueger, 1980), 'schemas' (Planalp, 1985), etc., or to develop

theories of knowledge strategies and processes (e.g. Berger, in press), or to explore patterns of reasoning, particularly errors and discrepancies (Orvis, 1976). When such contents or activities of mind are exercised is generally not discussed. (Some rare exceptions will be considered shortly). Thus we may discover, for instance, expectations (La Gaipa, 1977) and prototypes (Davis and Todd, 1982) of friendship and the stages of conceptual development with regard to children's beliefs and cognition of friendship (Bigelow, 1977; Selman, 1976) without learning the circumstances under which such knowledge and understanding is exercised outside the research situation. There is an implicit assumption that the findings in respect of knowledge and reasoning have validity beyond the investigative situation. (Whether conception is made indirectly manifest in interactive performance, as was investigated by Sants (1984) with regard to children's friendships, is not the immediate issue here).

Several investigators have drawn attention to neglect of the 'when' question in attribution research (Manis, 1977; Eiser, 1983; Bond, 1983). Wong and Weiner (1981) probably helped to break the mould, in a study of attributions of success and failure. Though the subject matter is not relevant to relationships, it is nonetheless of interest, because it raises questions about the spontaneity of (in this case causal) thinking, and how to investigate it. They designed a series of experiments to seek out 'when people ask "why" questions', and found that it is events which are negative and unexpected events which are most likely to stimulate thinking of an attributional nature. It would be unwise to generalise from this given the limited subject matter: in four of the five experiments conducted, 'negative events' are examination failures or poor examination results, 'positive events' are examination success, and 'unexpected' refers to the opposite of what had been expected, that is, success as opposed to

failure or vice versa. The emphasis is on the 'why' questions people said they would ask themselves following the described events, although allowance was made for other kinds of questions, and one of the experiments invited thoughts as well as questions to be noted. However, the study is primarily concerned with causal thinking and, as such, has only peripheral relevance here.

Two other studies, Abele (1984) and Holtzworth-Monroe and Jacobson (1985), still within attribution field and dealing to a greater or lesser extent with personal relationships, follow Wong and Weiner's lead, in questioning the circumstances of cognitive activity. Abele's investigation, more than any other at the time of writing, has similar concerns to the present project insofar as it also pertains to both the nature of certain kinds of social reasoning, and the occasioning of such thinking. There is some indirect inclusion of relationships as one of the subjects of thought: that is, 'self' and 'other' are included among items. Abele introduces a typology of thinking, ('causal', 'evaluative' and finalistic'), and distinguishes between expectedness and unexpectedness of events, and between positive and negative moods of the respondents. Subjects were required to imagine what they would think in hypothetical cases put to them, and to then classify the kind and amount of thinking they would do. This fairly complex task followed a training session. The data obtained are metacognitive in that they report not what they thought, but what they believe they would think.

An investigation by Holtzworth-Munroe and Jacobson (1985) is also superficially similar to the present work, in its focus on events preceding thinking about relationships. However, they focus narrowly on marital relationships, and causal thinking. They found that negative behaviour elicits more causal thinking than does positive

behaviour, and that partners in distressed marriages are more likely to produce causal attributions which maintain a negative view serving to perpetuate distress. They expected partners in an unhappy marriage to be more causally analytical than partners who were free from such distress, and found that this was the case with husbands, but that such marital states did not discriminate between the attributional activity of the wives. In an attempt to attain some external validity, they used an 'indirect probe', which was to note down anticipated thoughts and feelings if some listed imaginary events were to occur. As with Abele's investigation, some imaginative effort by participants is demanded.

Harvey and his colleagues (Harvey, Weber, Huszti, Garnick and Galvin, 1976; Weber, Harvey and Stanley, in press) have conducted a number of studies investigating aspects of people's retrospective explanations of relationships. These are usually open-ended and are described as 'accounts', rather than explanations or attributions; again, emphasis on causal reasoning gives them an attributional slant. Harvey has concentrated more on retrospective accounts of terminated relationships; to this extent, the accounts involved are also more like accounts in the narrower sense of the term intended by Scott and Lyman (1968) in their discussion of excuses and justifications, that is, accounts which are given in response to predicaments. However, this research programme allows for a more complex view of motivational aspects. Links with the question of the incidence of relationship conceptualising will be made in later chapters with regard to discussion of the goals and motivation of accounts.

According to the classic paradigm, attribution research has usually been cast into a framework of causal reasoning (Fincham, 1985). Even as a source of understanding causal explanation, much attribution research could be considered inadequate. Lalljee and

Abelson (1983) have criticised the causal emphasis of attribution theory and its resulting neglect of the goal-directed nature of laypersons' explanations. In addition, they have argued that it is too general a model for examining explanation of specific domains. With regard to laypersons' relationship understanding, therefore, the work of attribution theorists is likely to be too general and too retrospectively preoccupied with causes. It is curious that 'why' questions have been emphasised so much , while 'what' questions have scarcely surfaced. As suggested by Antaki and Fielding (1981), more fundamental and prior descriptive explanation, or explanation of meaning, has usually been omitted. Lalljee and Abelson (op. cit.) suggest that real-world knowledge and the use of knowledge-structures, like scripts, are missed by the classic covariation model with its focus on more abstract reasoning, in situations which are posed as being problematic. It is just such specific real-world knowledge which is likely to feature in descriptive explanation, in instances where the individual seeks to attain or affirm understanding of what an issue means (as well as or instead of its cause or purpose). If such investigations are brought together, it may well emerge that the various forms of explanation closely overlap, and, further that a much wider range of thinking and explanation types may co-exist, in the same sense-making activity, from abstract formal reasoning to detailed fantasies.

Newman (1981b) has suggested that much attributional activity pertaining to relationships is implicit, relying for instance on 'scripts'. Others, too, (Planalp, 1985; Miell, 1984), investigating knowledge structures relevant to relationships, emphasise information processing and cognitions, without linking them to emotion. To complicate matters still further, a more realistic model of relation-

ship conception should allow for emotional responses, which whether they are prior to and separate from reasoning (Zajonc, 1980), or an intrinsic characteristic of some thinking, are surely of some direct or indirect influence, either on decisions and on insights (Clarke, in press) or on the quality of interpersonal understanding (Berenson, 1981).

Collectively, the studies reviewed suggest a model of relationship conception as usually implicit or 'mindless' (following Langer's use of the term), involving reference to knowledge structures, such as 'scripts' (Schank and Abelson, 1977) to explain causes, and being lifted to a conscious level following unexpected or unpleasant events. The reasoning and thinking which does occur is passive and reactive. Certain research tendencies have limited progress. Relationships are likely to be treated as the context for theories of information processing, with investigation directed towards developing attribution theory rather than aimed at gaining insights into relationships. For example, the findings of Orvis, Kelley and Butler's (1976) study were received with interest because they showed an evaluative bias in attributions not evident in previous work on actor-observer divergences. As is usual with specialist areas, the rationale often has more bearing on some intrinsic theoretical controversy, than on an issue of independent importance. Fincham (1985), points out that attributional activity is often used with wider meaning so that it 'becomes synonymous with commonsense explanations for events which may or may not involve causal attribution' (p.204), but even with this expansion, there remains an unhelpful separation of the various activities coming under the broader headings of conceptualisation and mindfulness which if investigated less divisively may enable a more valuable research contribution to the issue of interpersonal understanding and awareness.

Summary of chapter

The domain of investigation has been introduced, linking the content of conception - 'what' people conceive with regard to relationships - with the prior question of incidence - 'when and why' conceptualising occurs. 'Conception' is broadly defined to include all forms of relationship knowledge, perspectives and understanding, and dubbed 'relationship mindfulness'. Review of the literature led to the claim that personal relationship research lacks adequate work on the conceptual dimension, and that, in consequence, the broader question of interpersonal understanding or awareness, which is of primary relevance to relationship well-being and duration, has been neglected. The critical role of conception in realising relationship outcomes, and the inadequate coverage of the conceptual dimension in previous research, together constitute the rationale for investigation. Contributory work which has been done tends to be focused on specific topics, separating, for instance normative and prototype knowledge from the function and use of such knowledge, and failing to connect adult causal explanation with the development of social cognition. A more holistic approach is appppropriate in beginning to address the more general issue of relationship awareness.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

2.1 FOREWORD

The context of changing research paradigms and values has facilitated a more exploratory investigation of a multi-faceted and indeterminate domain. The aims here are: (1) to clarify and situate the research objectives and theoretical biases and assumptions; (2) to introduce and give the rationale for the methods of choice; namely, accounts as sources of data, and analogy as a tool of description, interpretation and analysis; and (3) to provide a synopsis of the project - how it evolved from descriptive content analysis of conceptions with an emphasis on explicit knowledge to more speculative exploration of functional aspects and deeper awareness; and, more practically, to set out an outline of the sometimes serial studies and phases.

2.2 INVESTIGATIVE FOUNDATIONS

Research approach

The somewhat global scope of this project, evident in the extended subject-matter and generality of key concepts, is in keeping with a more holistic approach, (Diesing, 1972) thus attempting to 'honour the whole' (Reason, 1981, p.321), avoid the distortions of

fragmentation and alienation, resulting from 'permitting only a very restricted range of behaviour to be counted', (Rowan, 1981, p.93), and incorporate the nuances and functional ambiguity and indeterminateness of commonsense meanings (Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985). There has been a deliberate attempt to avoid being awkwardly confined by the enclosures of tight definition, as for instance seems to have occurred for attribution researchers when their enquiries have spilled into neighbouring areas of non-causal reasoning, e.g. finalistic reasoning, (Abele, 1984), and 'descriptive explanation' (mentioned by Fincham, 1985). Such openness necessarily allows choices of directions. Prior suppositions and expectations are not set out as these were not employed as pre-experimental hypotheses. This, and the methodological protocol which accompanies it, would be incompatible with openness to discovery in a relatively unexplored area. The conventional procedure, 'setting out a list of hypotheses and shooting each one down with a "yes" or "no"' (Rowan and Reason, 1981, p.132) necessarily denies the contradictions and so leads to resolutions which may not be plausible from the standpoint of real life experience, and even from the more objectified and focused perspective of laboratory work, may lead to concealment of conflicting possibilities of interpretation (Crowle, 1976).

The present investigation is in the spirit of hermeneutics and ethogenics; hermeneutics, in the sense of linking the subject to its wider context, and in dialectical inclusion of contradictions and also the dialectical procedure of switching between the parts and the whole (Rowan, 1981); and ethogenics, in use of commonsense as the starting point, in concentration on structural properties of conception and in eschewing statistical procedures as a means to explanation (Harre, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985). While it is possible, via authoritative professional language and respectable scientific methods, to create an

illusion of certainty where there continues to be ambiguity, there are other criteria, and what is an important criterion for scientific credibility for one researcher may be a loss of realism for another. In this project, the rigours of traditional experimental psychology are traded for a more flexible form of analysis and design, open to speculation and changes of direction. This work generated its own priorities, from which emerged modest data but extensive coverage. The project is offered as groundwork in a neglected domain. Empirical support beyond that presented here will be required to build on this theoretical base and to provide more detailed description.

Social psychological paradigm

Social psychology has come through its crisis - at least, from the perspective of the individual researcher wanting to get beyond the constraints and unrealities of positivism and much that has been orthodox. There is a tolerance of varied approaches, and thus previous research barriers and taboos have been removed enabling headway to be made in multiple directions. With regard to explanatory paradigms, however, the shifting process is perhaps still occurring, with more and more investigators orientating their enquiries away from causes and towards functions and goals, or, minimally, giving some credence to the importance of human agency and the unfixed quality of social psychological phenomena. Rychlak (1984), among many, has argued that an explanatory framework of efficient causation has proved to be inappropriate in psychology; he suggests that the present period is likely to be identified in retrospect as one during which there was a paradigm shift to a formal-cause framework. Recent trends in science and the switch from individual to relationship as the unit of analysis, Rychlak suggests, are major factors in this time of change. The recent surge of work on personal relationships is bringing into prom-

inence a more dynamic and teleological model of humans, who act on premises and with purpose, and between whom social reality is negotiated. Rychlak points out additional extrinsic motivation for a paradigm shift, in the form of scientific prestige, given changes presaged within the field of physics.

The status of ordinary explanation is of central relevance in these shifts of purpose. Whereas commonsense has formally been treated as there to be superceded by psychological generalisations, now it is being increasingly included, as the fount of reality, to be described or to be incorporated prior to explanation. Thus, proposals for a changing psychology are for a 'two-pronged discipline' (Lock, 1981) comprising a non-empirical investigation of universal substrates and an empirical investigation of cultural systems; and, similarly, for a 'three-tier psychology' (Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985) in which structural analysis as a first stage, (followed by discovery of mechanisms and processes) incorporates commonsense theories into scientific psychology, and extends them via theory-guided empirical research. Others in this 'critical camp' (Ginsburg, 1985) have put forward the complementary contentions, that social reality is jointly constructed in the accounts people give to each other (Shotter, 1984), and that discourse and accounts have vital pragmatic effects (Gergen and Gergen, in press). Emphasis is given to the pragmatic and rhetorical role of language, to situated meaning, and to agency and intentionality. The shared slant is on social life as continuously constructed action by participants, and psychological explanation as a more descriptive task, concerned with meaning. This calls for a different set of assumptions on which to base psychological research, and a focus on meaning and on structural (or descriptive) explanation. It is within the context of these changes that the scope and procedures of the present project took shape.

Level and form of analysis

Given the diversity of camps and specialisms and their influence on subsequent methods and theories, it is necessary to be more precise about the level of analysis; that is, the explanatory angle from which the issues are addressed. Firstly, the aim is to gain understanding in the sense of insight about structure and meaning rather than explanation in the sense of predictive insight (Westland, 1978). Further, the bias here concurs with the view that it is more aptly social psychological (and more pressing) to concentrate on the products of mental activity than on cognitive processes (Antaki and Lewis, 1986), and that presenting relevant topics in information-processing and computational rhetoric is misleading and reductionist because it exaggerates the calculating, rational and logical aspects of mind while omitting the functions which are not comparable with computers. Inquisitiveness about the workings of the mind can take different forms, and in this project, the questions did not extend to 'mental computation' and the 'wiring of the system', (op cit., p.5), and another angle of questioning was taken.

Taking products or objects of cognition as the focus of interest, however, need not be followed by a veto on the workings of the mind, and, on the contrary, appreciation of mental events (cognitive, emotional, etc.) remains the objective in this form of investigation, albeit described in phenomenological terms, and via a different, non-computational metaphor of the project. In clarification, to use a distinction between approaches made by Antaki (1981), in reviewing work on ordinary explanations, the explanatory approach taken in this investigation is closer to a representational approach than an information processing approach. The issues addressed are distinct from how the person arrives at conception in the sense of what mental processes are involved, and implying efficient causation. Rather, an objective

is to represent the nature of conceptualising; what is featured in it, and what motivates its occasioning and form. Another difference of emphasis here, which should be mentioned in disclaimimg the social psychological relevance of mechanistic efficient causation, is concern with functional aspects of conceptualisation in relationships, as opposed to any aspect of (developmental, biological, etc.) origin.

History of the research project

A note on how the project evolved, including changes of direction, will help clarify the research structure, its connections and disconnections, and choices which were made. By definition (unless there is so little to discover that the course can be decisively mapped out in advance), the direction of research cannot be entirely predicted; and accordingly there were some shifts of emphasis and turns of plan. Initially the focus was on the content of conceptualisation, and for this, collecting accounts and devising content analysis schemes was selected as the principal investigative technique. The limitations and emergent problems of content analysis, together with the objectives of applicability and relevance, suggested expansion into motivational aspects of conceptualisation as more pertinent means to address the key issues than continuation of the originally intended detailed content analysis for in-depth description and population comparisons. The focus on the content present in accounts, gave way to consideration of that which might be absent. For instance, more weight was given to the possibility that relationship knowledge may be significantly implicit, not only because thinking and communicating involves implicit meaning, but, substantially, because of various disincentives and barriers being more explicit.

Methodological tools

Access is problematic because of the hidden nature of the

subject-matter, and, recalling the watch under the lamp-post anecdote related by Westland (1980), an effective search procedure does not necessarily hold the solution: the light under the lamp is of no value if the watch was lost in a place where the light does not shine.

The ethogenic principles (Harré and Secord, 1972; Harré, 1977; Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985) of the present work are instanced by the use of accounts and analogy. A guiding principle has been to render explicit that which tends to be implicit in commonsense notions about and within personal relationship. This follows Harré, Clarke and De Carlo (op cit.):

> For us the task of scientific psychology consists of making the implicit psychologies of everyday life explicit, and then, in the light of that understanding, applying the techniques of theory guided empirical research to develop, refine and extend that body of knowledge and practices (p.16).

In the content analyses and the exploratory studies of incidence, this project begins to conform with the above statement, though it is an exploratory beginning, with the empirical work more illustrative than 'guiding' at this point. In place of hypotheses and the tight procedure of experiment, more open-ended studies have been conducted, based on provisional ideas about what is involved and should be better understood. Interpretations are drawn from the analogue of music to elaborate and extend description yielded by content analysis schemes and questionnaires. Convincing arguments for the constructive use of analogy have been made by Oppenheimer (1956), Gergen (1980), and by Harré (1981; and with Clarke and De Carlo, 1985). Movement towards 'refinement' and 'extension' is achieved by the use a rich metaphor (music), and by practical experiment (relationship understanding courses). As indicated, explanation is of the structural and analytical kind, rather than efficient-causal and mechanistic.

There is an element of 'participant observation' in this project,

though not in the precise meaning of the term, and therefore not comparable with, for instance, Wilkinson's (1981) participant observation in her investigation of impression formation. A degree of experiencing what is involved in being a subject is applicable however, in that the author included self in pilots, and drew insights from auto-observation (Harré et al, op cit., p.119). Using one's own life experience to develop and inspire intellectual work (Wright Mills, 1970) lessens alienation from the participant's role.

Metaphor and Analogy

Studies of the history and philosophy of science have shown the importance of analogies in revealing the structure of phenomena, and in the development of ideas (Oppenheimer, 1956; Harré and Secord, 1972; Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985). Similarly, Gergen has suggested that 'if a compelling metaphor can be effected, there is much to be gained' (1980, p.269). An effective metaphor or analogy has the potential to disclose that which would otherwise be invisible (Harré et al., op. cit.). Given the initial and exploratory nature of the present project, it is appropriate to begin with an analytical model to aid identification of relevant factors and theory development prior to firmer hypothesis formulation and experimentation. The choice of analogy is obviously paramount here: 'analytical analogies can be applied to vaguely defined phenomena of interest to bring out certain aspects for study, in much the same way a cytologist might stain a bacterium to reveal some of its internal architecture. What he or she sees will be partly determined by the particular stain chosen' (Harré, et al. op cit., p.41). Clearly, some analogies used in the ~~the~~ study of personal relationships have been of dubious value, and a prevailing emphasis on a narrow choice (e.g. exchange; attraction) may have the reverse effect and obscure vision (Duck, in press).

Optimally, the chosen analogue or metaphor has 'generative

capability', in that alternative forms of action may become manifest; and, it also functions as an 'integrative mechanism', by suggesting various components involved and how they might cohere (Gergen, 1980). A recent example in social science has been the use by Antaki and Lewis (1986) of 'mirror' as an extended metaphor affording a linking theme in investigation of metacognition.

In-depth enquiry into relationships begs comparison with an art. Indeed, the metaphor of 'actor' is institutional in sociology, and the dramaturgical model (Goffman, 1969; Harré and Secord, 1972) has become so integrated into academic terminology that it scarcely retains its analagous perspective in some instances. Though music is initially the least obvious for comparison, when explored further, it promises to be the most fecund. The special potency which music has for exploration of personal relationships is that it does not (like drama) employ words, nor does it (like visual art) lend itself to literal description, and therefore any analysis of understanding and meaning must focus on non-verbal aspects. Linked to this, the relative insignificance of intellectual responses compared to the more essential emotional and aesthetic responses to music invites increased emphasis to non-intellectual aspects of conception, and to the relative importance of different levels of response. A separate strength of a musical analogy is the dualism of understanding implied by a phenomenon which though familiar and accessible to all on a basic level, is (more than is true of other arts) remote from the majority of people as a specialism with its own language and theory of meaning, and as a practical ability removed from most by training and talent.

There is enough material (a vast specialist vocabulary and multiple dimensions) within the subject for it to provide both an 'analytical model' for theoretical development, and a readily co-

ordinated 'source model' leading to explanation (Harre et al, op cit.). More specifically, for the present purposes, representing, listening to and understanding music will be used as an analogue for the structural analysis of relationship conceptualisation and related knowledge and awareness. There is scope for further development of the musical model; in its present form it will be valuable in making the findings more intelligible and in elaborating interpretations, and particularly in allowing complexities and contradictions to be represented and resolved.

Accounts

In addition to ethogenic appropriateness of accounts, there is further theoretical validation for their use as in preference to more 'extensive' generalised procedures. This is briefly indicated in the following, and will be elaborated at appropriate junctures. An ethogenic, holistic approach calls for a procedure which allows commonsensical meanings on the one hand, and individuality on the other, to become manifest. Use of accounts and self-report places the emphasis in the early stages of the investigation on linguistic aspects, and away from perceptual and affective components. A case is made initially for concentrating on the verbal aspects of conception, though the limitations and implications of this focus will be an issue returned to at various points in forthcoming chapters. For reasons of economy, and at the risk of over-emphasisng the individual's role in formulating a view of relationships the empirical side of the enquiry has been limited to conceptions of only one party in any relationship, although, as pointed out by Duck and Sants (1983), and argued more radically by Shotter (in press), views of relationships are likely to be ~~the~~ jointly constructed and to be continuously shaped by external representations of third parties and cultural influences.

2.3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The musical analogue

Other Analogies

Social scientists use analogies for analysing and explicating their field. Notable examples in social science are a dramaturgical model, introduced by Goffman (1969) and developed by Harré and Secord (1972), and the social skills model (Argyle and Kendon, 1967). In the area of personal relationships, the most popular model has been some variant of a marketing analogy, including exchange theory (Levinger and Raush, 1977), equity theory (Hatfield and Traupmann, 1981), investment theory (Wright, 1984 - although he has now abandoned the analogy), and contract theory (Kayser, Schwinger and Cohen, 1984). A recent analogue is with rules, as in games (Argyle and Henderson, 1985).

The popularity of the exchange model is readily explicable in the emphasis it gives to reciprocity and the simultaneous existence of positives and negatives in any one relationship, and in its economic vocabulary, used to explicate the distribution of relationship gains and losses. It allows for both being in relationship to other and having other related to self - a balance which, as Davis and Todd (1985) point out, is often missed in analyses of friendship. An exchange view is sometimes criticised on moral grounds, because of its mercenary overtones. Similarly it is regarded as theoretically insufficient, because it fails to explain experiences of relationship as intrinsically, even when not extrinsically, rewarding (Wright, 1984).

The more recent use of the 'rules' metaphor to explain relationship success and failure (Argyle and Henderson, 1985) is a convenient rubric under which to examine contemporary norms and expectations.

However, the analogy carries implications of obligation and compunction which detract, in a moral sense, from its suitability as a perspective from which to view personal relationships. Between intimates, some deviation from rules is more readily tolerated: friendship, at least, has been defined by some scholars in contrary terms, suggesting that it is freedom from rules which characterise friendships (and by extension, perhaps other voluntarily sustained personal relationships). For example, Paine (1969) looking at friendship from an anthropological perspective, stressed the introduction into close friendships of private 'rules of relevancy', these being understandings known only to the parties involved, and introduced by them rather than imposed from outside. Similarly, Wright (1984) among others has emphasised the voluntary quality of friendships, with the implication that whatever parties perform for each other is out of choice and only secondarily an observance of rules.

Both of these theories have value as an uncomplicated way of representing certain elements of relationships, guiding research and practical application with regard to those elements. However, they cannot be applied as self-contained explanatory paradigms, and must at least be supplemented by additional concepts if the complexities and phenomenology of relationships are to be included. For a wider view, an analytical system is required which is at once complex enough to model the corresponding real life complexity, yet sufficiently self-evident to draw on for clarification. It should be equally applicable to observable events and psychological events, and to collective as well as individual experience. An analogy is needed which is centred on personal creative expression directed towards and influenced by others. Any of the arts would be appropriate, allowing for individual and shared expression, for appreciation as well as creativity, and for the combination of various faculties and abilities. Drama is the

most readily comparable, given its direct correspondence with scenes of life, and is rich with obvious metaphor. Compared with drama and visual art, music is distanced from literal correspondence, and it requires more imagination to make the metaphorical links, but once this barrier is crossed, it promises to reveal some less obvious parallels.

Relationships as music

A preliminary introduction to the musical analogy will be helpful given its novelty. The art form of the familiar dramaturgical analogy (Goffman, 1969; Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985) intentionally mimics social and interpersonal life, and so is especially co-ordinate with it. No imaginative leap is required in order to observe parallels and the terminology makes literal sense when applied to social life. Thus drama seems custom-built for use by social scientists. In contrast, a suspension of disbelief is required in order for comparisons to be drawn between music and interpersonal life. Music does not contain the same obvious metaphors, so that comparisons have to be made more explicitly. This remoteness is a disadvantage, and probably explains its virtual omission from the language of social science despite its great potential in other respects for its application more generally in the study of personal relationships (Burnett, 1985). As was suggested earlier, the claims being made here rest on the belief that analogies have a vital role to serve in the investigation of new areas.

The language of music is non-verbal. Unlike drama, it cannot be discussed in its own language, and, unlike paintings, the content cannot be described literally. Comprehension cannot be readily conveyed or shared with others. In-depth understanding requires knowledge on several levels, which puts it beyond the reach of the non-expert.

Yet despite this elusiveness, and a resistance to verbal description and discussion, on a fundamental level it is universally accessible and can be responded to effortlessly. Parallels with relationships are suggested. On this basic level, it is meaningful via perceptual and emotional channels, irrespective of any theoretical knowledge. There is therefore the paradox of a phenomenon characterised by familiarity and accessibility, which can only be fully explained by scholars of music, and can only be directly performed by those with the skill and aptitude.

Its resistance to literal representation and the discontinuum between basic familiarity and expert knowledge, extend the comparative potential between music conception and relationship conception. The non-intellectual, non-verbal, emotional and aesthetic and often sub-conscious nature of common response, point to the possible importance of these aspects in conception of relationship. In music there is a rich repository of ideas and language, to be used as a counterpart (rather than alternative) to the dramaturgical model, and promising to open up alternative visions of aspects of relationship.

Without making any specific links at this juncture, such detail being left until points where they can optimally fulfil their purpose, it is appropriate here to highlight some of the most obvious and general comparative themes by way of introduction. Experience of music is characterised by sensory-perceptual and emotional responses, intellectual and cognitive responses being secondary or possibly non-existent. It is experienced consecutively; that is, the meaning is realised sequentially, but small units elicit separate responses. It has a vital expressive element which is additional to prior content. Given themes are open to innovation and improvisation. The same musical event is widely accessible or available across all standards and levels of comprehension and performance. To identify aspects of music

which will be most relevant to the present purposes, the alternate forms of participation in music should be observed with their hypothetical parallels in relationship participation. A four-way correspondence between participation in music and participation in relationships is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Quadrants iii and iv (Creation) represent active or productive participation, (that is performance and action, and composition and construction) and quadrants i and ii (Observation) represent more passive reactive or responsive forms of participation (that is, recall and reflection and listening and imbibing). Further, with reference to quadrants i and iv (Realisation), one can be present and directly involved in either the relationship interaction or the music-making, or alternatively a respondent to displaced events, hearing music 'in the head' and imagining relationship phenomena, as represented by quadrant ii and iii (Representation). It is primarily in these last two quadrants that the subject-matter of the present investigation resides.

The various sources of knowledge and the range and levels of abilities, involved in both music and relationship participation, provide a further basis for comparing the two provinces. A model of knowledge and competence is suggested, in which relationship participants are analogous to 'listeners' and 'performers' at a concert, each bringing varying degrees of competence on several levels of knowledge, skill and aptitude, affecting performance and response. With regard to a live performance, extrinsic factors (like acoustics) and other incidentals (like mood), which may be condusive or aversive to performing and listening, need adding to the model. These factors are

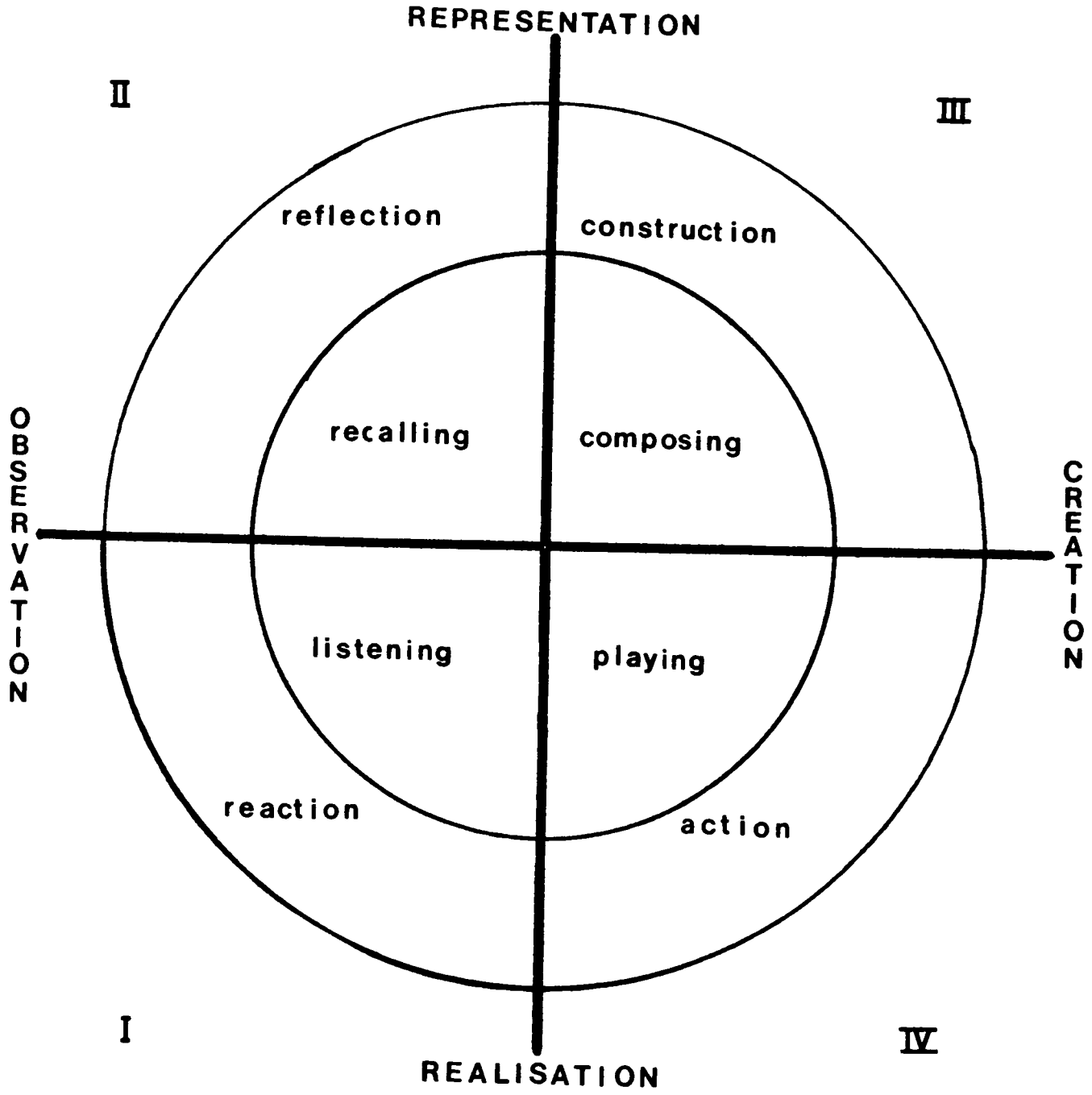


Figure 2.1 Four ways of participating: an analogy between music and relationships

depicted in Figure 2.2. Affect - liking for the specific piece and/or its manner of performance - is given special prominence to illustrate its assumed primacy over other factors (Zajonc, 1980; 1984). The model illustrates performance en vivo; referring back to the 'representation' quadrants in Figure 2.1, conceptualisation of relationships (perspectives, self-accounts, theories, and so forth) may be regarded as analogous to 'composing' when creative, or mental replays and 'having a tune on the brain'.

Figure 2.2

The music-relationship parallels are increased, and thus the theoretical potential extended, if the distinction between the roles of 'performer'and 'listener' is treated as interchangable, and if those participating include amateur performers, self-taught musicians and music followers and enthusiasts who are unschooled in relevant theory and skill. Allowing for varying degrees of accomplishment and different forms of learning, suggests some distinctions in relationship knowledge and performance which may prove to be important. This extension would include folk music, for instance, paralleling informal learning passed on through each generation, with improvisation and adaptation, and with spontaneity and fallibility; and which may be contrasted with the polished accomplishment and rigorous training, precise timing and planned harmony of playing in a professional orchestra. While 'music' as a general label is an uneasy metaphor for 'relationship', the associated verbs (e.g.performing, playing, expressing, hearing), adjectives (e.g. folk, rehearsed, recorded, harmonious, background) and elements (e.g. dynamics, rhythm, timbre, instruments, accompaniment) may be readily appropriated and used to advantage.

To anticipate another comparable aspect, which is basic to its

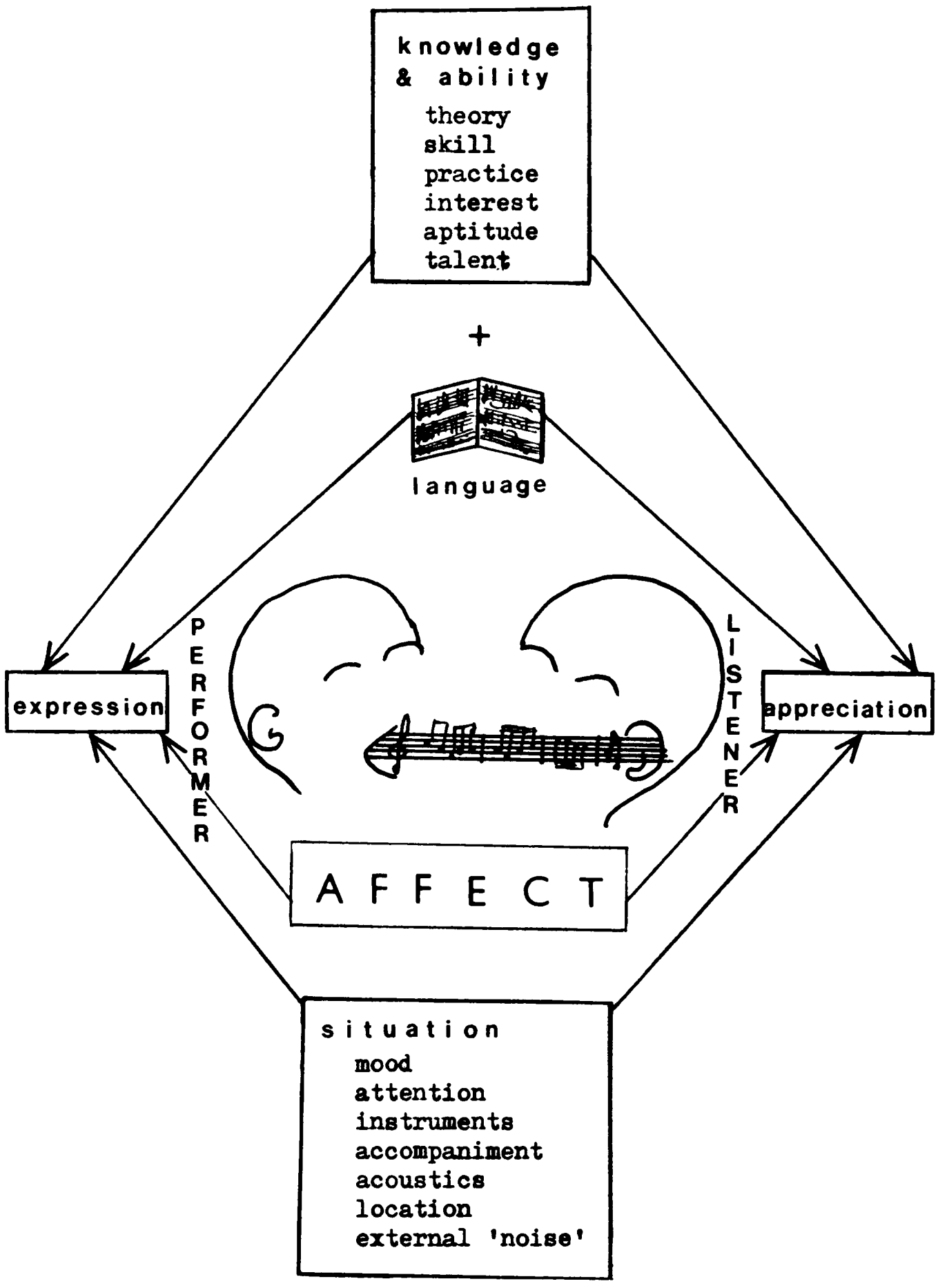


Figure 2.2 A musical model of factors affecting relationship knowledge and awareness

expediency, there is much similarity in the nature of responding to music and within relationships. Both can inspire, excite, and provide sensory pleasure as well as intellectual stimulation, and both can enhance or deflate well-being. There is a characteristic immediacy of response, which is on the level of the senses and often accompanied by affect, but only secondarily, if at all, involving intellect. Indeed, affective evaluation (whether the music/person is liked) seems to be both initially and ultimately the main influence on evaluation if not continuing involvement. The non-intellectual (affective, sensory) response to a personal relationship must be as crucial to realising it, as is the sensory and affective response to music: there is no music unless it is heard (by sound or vibration) and it is arguably still not yet music until it is also felt. Relationships have an emotional identity ('happy', 'cold', 'flat', 'passionate') relevant to defining them, much as the content of music takes its character from expressive elements which are peripheral to melody. The feeling and the form, or the emotional quality and the events taking place, are inseparable, because both are realised in the context of the other.

It is also important to capitalise on the ~~the~~ corresponding interactive nature of music, (between performers and between listener and performer). Thus, for example, the musician might be inspired in his playing by a particularly receptive audience, and the extent of the listener's motivation is likely to change with factors which vary the appeal of incoming sounds. The form and depth of 'listening' may be likened to differences in relationship awareness, varying from the concentrated analytical attention of a music critic at one extreme, to a casual and barely conscious hearing of background music whilst otherwise preoccupied.

The intention in the above introduction has been to specify some

of the principal connections within the analogy, and to anticipate some of the links which will be made. Components of the analogy will be employed to elaborate on issues at appropriate points in subsequent discussion.

Accounts as data

A preliminary issue concerns assumptions about the extent to which accounts, particularly free response or the open-ended variety, can be expected to yield information about conception. Implications to be drawn from accounts regarding relationship knowledge and awareness rest upon the condition that the communications obtained are indeed representative of underlying conception as opposed to being indicative only of extrinsic communicative functions. An initial stance on this should be stated, though this will be tentative and open to modification as the investigation proceeds. The adoption of accounts as a principal procedure may be taken as an indirect statement of the theoretical position from which this work was begun, but the objective of remaining open to links between conception and interpersonal understanding more generally, makes it necessary to keep the starting assumptions under review.

It is self-evident that communications depart from the conceptions which underlie them: there is not a one-to-one correspondence between verbal expression and the thoughts which lead to it, nor (extending conception to include non-verbal insight and grasp) between verbal expression and implicit knowledge and perceptual and affective awareness. For a variety of reasons, there is scope for discrepancy between conception and verbalisation on paper, given the special skills involved, and, given ramifications of the recording, as opposed to simply relating, of potentially secret information. The following possible objections could be made against treating communicated accounts as indicative of underlying conception: (1) Conceptions are

largely implicit and therefore people will be unable to share them. This is in line with the classic Nisbett and Wilson (1977) argument. Along the same lines, there is the less extreme case of having difficulty in formulating inner speech into the more grammatically structured and complete form of communicable language. (2) An account-giver might engage in editing in order to impress, or conceal, or to save time, or may be selective according to what is seen as acceptable criteria for inclusion in relationship evaluation and description. (3) Clues contained within the question regarding what issues are of interest, are likely to influence what is selected in response. Different scripts and other knowledge structures are likely to be activated, according to the requirements of the specific issue (Lalljee and Abelson, 1983). (4) Accounts are constantly being updated (Miell, 1984), and the present explanation is liable to continuous alteration. Further, recall is influenced by the accounter's present mood (Bower, Monteiro and Gilligan, 1978).

Given the above grounds for caution, it is tempting to despair of accounts as a viable methodological procedure. To do so, though, would be to dismiss a potentially rich data source. Therefore, notwithstanding the above difficulties and limitations, precautions were taken to obviate them and close up some possible discrepancy between private and communicated representation. The procedure employed was intended to remove or reduce obvious inhibitors and possible extrinsic motivations. Ryle (1949) suggests 'we employ a special artifice to keep [our thoughts] to our selves' (p.28): it may be that reducing motivational grounds for editing and censoring thoughts in respective communication will facilitate more confident use of accounts. At least, with regard to thought as 'inner speech' (Vygotsky, 1962), setting up conditions conducive to the goal might be expected to yield sufficient correspon-

dence between private and shared meanings. There is some surer basis, therefore, in the procedure to be described, for treating the accounts obtained here as a relatively reliable product of attempted description and evaluation, either conveying what had already been accomplished in an earlier effort, or as a new accomplishment stimulated by the request.

Related assumptions are that in some instances accounts are verbal reconstructions of previous formulations, in others they are verbally constructed for the first time for the purposes of the account, but that usually some combination of both of these will apply. Having been embodied by language from which the accounter receives feedback, there is likely to be some variable amount of revision and editing, as part of an attempt to elucidate the product of conception. As a combination of former and original thought and knowledge, translated into and conveyed by written language, these accounts are in effect the current version of the way a relationship is conceptualised, 'frozen' onto paper, while the conception per se is liable to continuing change in adjustment to ongoing events, or any source of stimulation to reappraise, or just simply from the information-processing viewpoint, is liable to distortions of memory. The basis for the assumption that the accounts can be treated as genuine representations, is precautions taken at the procedure stage.

A defining characteristic of personal relationships is their privacy. However in a situation of trust, and where there is an acceptable reason for sharing 'personal' information, people might be expected to be more disclosing. An attempt was made to set-up such circumstances in the present case, using a 'simulated letter-writing exercise' together with precautions which conformed with the conditions of confidentiality. Participants were not instructed to provide an account for a researcher; rather, they were asked to write

a letter to a confidant, imagining that this person had enquired about one of the participant's relationships, requesting to be told all about it, and, further, imagining that the reply was being written to him or her. It was suggested that the confidant could be imaginary or a real person who would qualify. Detailed instructions (Appendices A2.1 and B1.3) were given, including a rationale for adopting this procedure. Further details are given below. The relevant conditions for creating conditions of confidentiality were as follows:

(1) protection of anonymity
(2) requesting openness
(3) simulating conditions conducive to openness
(4) unobtrusive investigator
(5) minimal cueing in prompt question
(6) allowing sufficient time
(7) asking for an account in writing.

Participation was not anonymous, but identity was protected and in 'low profile', to provide a safer basis for disclosure of 'sensitive' information. Partial anonymity in effect was variously secured by use of code numbers rather than names to label any communication returned to the investigator (the payment slip was returned direct to a secretary), by encouragement to use pseudomyms and initials in referring to people, and by the physical distance and invisibility of postal contact only. Other ways of discouraging concealment or omission were: specific verbal encouragement and instruction to be open and forthcoming; and, to facilitate the latter, setting up a situation where comprehensiveness and lack of the usual social constraints and inhibitions would be appropriate. The postal contact not only allowed them to maintain their own anonymity but also reduced investigator effects, such as unintentional cueing, and demand characteristics. Thus with regard to conduciveness for candour, points (1) to (4) should have helped to reduce the likelihood of knowingly omitting or distorting representations. Point (2) might have

helped to evoke the appropriate mood and frame of mind.

Other restraints on the fullness and explicitness of accounts were removed. With regard to (5) the non-specific nature of the enquiry, potentially invited a long answer given that there were no limits on the subject of relationship information to be included, but, equally, might have left participants with too much uncertainty about what to include and thus led to shorter answers. No explicit guidance was given on length, but a two-sided A4 sheet was sent out, with a note suggesting that more could be added. In respect of point (6), no restriction on time was stated, and reminders were not sent out until after approximately two months. A second objective in allowing an extended period in which to write the reply, was to simulate the time aspects of the correspondence too: natural pauses between letters and opportunity to reflect and 'work out' a response. In this way, participants were given the fullest opportunity to range widely and lengthily in their accounts.

Despite the limitations of requesting accounts in written form, notably, differences in writing ability and inclination, there is no equivalent speaking situation which would be as free from extraneous influences (point 7). Speaking onto a tape would not lend itself to a similar role-play, and would seem much more contrived; and an interview brings with it inevitable experimenter effects. Obtaining accounts in writing has the advantages that it can take place removed from the experimental setting, away from 'laboratory' influences and pressure, at the participant's own convenience and leisure. In the present instance, account-writing is the procedure of choice because it allows 'thinking time' and is conducive to a more considered opinion. Subsequent evaluation of content will be on the basis that participants were allowed ample opportunity to retrieve relevant knowledge and to organise description and explanation.

All the above tactics justify additional confidence in use of accounts as indicative of authentic conception, in preference to data obtained solely from rating scales, checklists and other questionnaire items, or alternatively from the more public, prohibitive and situationally intrusive atmosphere of an interview. In summary, discrepancies have been minimised. What has been considered in the preceding, is whether these 'public' accounts are representative of 'private' accounts. More fundamental is the question of whether pre-verbalised conception or 'non-verbal thought' (Vygotsky, 1962) is likely to be conveyed via this means. The possibility that non-verbal elements are quite separate from such communications would limit implications of any analysis of verbal output. However, assuming that non-verbal elements are at least partly translatable into words, the following are possibilities: (a) The activity of accounting (whether to another or to self) may be the point at which relevant conceptions are verbally embodied. If the task here constituted the first time such accounting had occurred, then conceptualisation and its communication are confounded. (b) If the accounting has already been formulated and is stored away in verbal form, it can simply be edited for communication purposes. Communication issues are therefore unavoidable. The possibility of some distortion is unavoidable given the artificiality of the experimental situation, despite care taken to minimise it, but the view held here is that this will not be enough to discredit the claims being made for the validity of accounts as data. Without overlooking the various needs and intentions which extend the communicative goals and functions of accounts (Schlenker, 1980; Semin and Manstead, 1983), unadulterated sharing of authentic conceptions may at times be the principal intention, and in such cases at least, Ryle's (1963) argument that 'we have to take special pains to keep things back' (p.173) is worth emphasis. In sum, accounts are inevitably

limited as a source of data about interpersonal conception in its widest sense, but with regard to the open-ended accounts which were obtained, procedural precautions permit them to be treated as reasonably faithful indices of that part of conceptualisation which the individual is able to verbalise. Whether there is much that is residual which is either not readily or not appropriately expressed by words will be a matter for forthcoming discussion.

2.4 PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

Procedural issues

Many of the issues in this section are of the procedural kind usually reserved for within the report of any individual study. In this instance, it avoids unnecessary repetition to have separate presentation, given that the same method has overlapping relevance in more than one phase of the project. The design of the project is complicated by shifts of focus and approach, by the serial nature of some but not all of the studies and by dwindling of participant numbers on the way. Because of these complications the phases are shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.1, and then briefly annotated after description of the participant groups.

TABLE 2.1

Participants

Group A. Members of the Subject Panel of the Department of Experimental Psychology. The numbers vary depending on the study. People in this group received small payments for their participation in each study, though it seems likely that at least some are more motivated by an interest in psychology and research, or a wish to be usefully and purposefully involved, than by financial reward. A deli-

Stage	Title	Participants group completed		Theme	Chapter
1	Siblings and friends: screening + prototype descriptions	A	74	content	5
2	Simulated letters to a confidant	A			
	(i) account('letter')		69	content	3,4,5
	(ii)information sheet		69	incidence	6
	Simulated letters to a confidant	B			
	(i) account('letter')		30	content	4,5
	(ii)information sheet		30	incidence	6
3	Follow-up questionnaires on motivation	A	77	incidence	7
		B	30		
4	Second simulated letter to confidant	A			
	(i) account('letter')		62	content	3,4,5
	(ii)information sheet		62	incidence	6
5	Reappraisal	A			
	(i) 2 months later		23	incidence	6
	(ii) 9 months later		57	incidence	6
6	Reflection on relationships questionnaire	C	80	content and incidence	6
7	Interests questionnaire	C	100	incidence	7
8	Relationship understanding course	D	12	content and incidence	8

TABLE 2.1

Tabular representation of the stages of investigation

berate policy was to include a wider than is usual age-range, with no upper limit, in order to attain a more representative sample, but also to reflect the increasing longevity and to avoid the usual bias which there is in research towards younger people and students. The original sample comprised three age-groups, 25-39, 40-59, and 60+, each including twenty four participants.

Group B. Clients of Lancashire Probation and After-care Service selected as having a history of problematic personal relationships. The final number of participants was 30. The possibility of making small payments for participation was discussed but declined by the service staff on the grounds that more clients beyond the small number deemed suitable would be motivated to volunteer.

Group C. Mixed groups, including employees of a Department Store, librarians, students on vocational training courses, university students, taxi-drivers and their families, and probation service officers, volunteers and clients. The Littlewoods staff received a low payment, but the others were unpaid volunteers.

Relationship Types

Siblingship and friendship were the subjects of enquiry emphasised in earlier studies. Initially, it had been intended to concentrate on these, not in order to specialise but, on the contrary, because these were selected as exemplary of personal relationships in general, and to move away from the bias in the field on heterosexual relationships (Ginsburg, 1982; Mikula, 1984). Indeed, siblings (apart from a typical absence of a sexual element) are arguably the personal relationship par excellence: they cover the whole affective and relational range, from emotionally charged friendship in continuous contact, to neutrality or indifference and drifting contact, to hostile disregard and avoidance or loss of contact. Regardless of

which, there is at least a nominal relationship and siblings have potentially the longest period of relationship duration beginning at one's birth and ending at one's death. The pilot stage - which comprises phase 1 in the chart presented in Table 2.1 - was followed by later phases in which siblings were not given any more theoretical emphasis (they continue to feature prominently because of the serial nature of a part of the project) than other personal relationships. However, the supposed commonality between siblings and other personal relationships remains of exemplary relevance to the shape which emerges from theoretical and data analysis.

Friendships were distinguished by duration, and continuity. Thus, there were three divisions: long-term friends, short-term friends and former friends. (More exact specification is given in Appendix A2.3).

Phases of Investigation

Phase 1.Siblings and Prototypes.

a) Preliminary questionnaire about relationships with their siblings. Participants (mainly from the Subject Panel on the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford) were asked to provide detailed factual and evaluative information about all of their siblings, to give the usual sociographic information about themselves, including a statement of whether or not they had a current close friend and a former close friend. Appendix A1.2 shows this questionnaire.

b) Open accounts of prototype siblings and friends. This was set in the form of a comparative question, and gender was changed to match that of the participant. Example (for a female subject): 'Two friends (female) whom you have never met before are introduced to you. You are told that they are friends to one another. They agree that they are friends, but claim:'We are more like sisters than friends'. What would be special about the relationship between two friends for them to make

such a claim?'. Equivalent versions for the case of siblings claiming to be more like friends, were randomly alternated.

Phase 2. Accounts of Personal Relationships

(a) Simulated letters to a confidant. The same Subject Panel participants who took part in phase one, and a second group solicited from Lancashire Prabation and After-care Service, were asked to write a descriptive and explanatory account of one of their relationships - either, one of their siblings, or a current friend, or a former friend. The type of relationship was allocated on a random basis, though the outcome appears less than random because many participants, claimed not to have a current close friend or a former friend, whereas only people with siblings had been accepted as participants, thus this relationship could not be denied. Where a sibling had been allocated and the participant had more than one, the particular sibling to be the subject of the account was specified.

The fairly detailed instructions were sent to participant group A through the post (Appendices A2.1 - A2.3), and were given to group B by their probation officers (Appendices B1.1 - B1.3). Instructions for group A were meant to be self-explanatory, whereas for B they were modified in the knowledge that probation officers would be communicating them to the people in question, and a second very much simplified but less comprehensive version of instructions (Appendix B1.3) was intended to be left with clients for later reference. The instructions were in terms of: 'describe the relationship you have/had ['had' being necessary for former friendship and lapsed sibling contact] with ... and explain how it came to be that way'.

Participants were instructed to write their answers in the form of letters to a confidant, either real or imaginary, defined as 'a person you can trust and confide in easily...someone you can relax and

be open with'. In an attempt to offset any suspicion or scepticism about this simulated letter approach, they were advised that: 'the point of asking you to do this is that we are interested in the spontaneous answer you would give when feeling at ease, rather than the more formal answer you possibly might give to an interviewer or researcher'. Additional aspects of procedure aimed at reducing doubts and inhibitions about doing the task included advising participants not to worry about spelling, grammar or writing-style; providing for partial anonymity (concealed identity) by the use of code numbers instead of names and suggesting the use of aliases or initials for people referred to in accounts; plus, repeated assurances of confidentiality. The participants were asked to return their 'letters' in stamped addressed envelopes, together with a completed Information Sheet intended for feedback on their reactions to the task and about their account and their choice of confidant. In order to simulate letter-writing more realistically, the task was set as a reply to an enquiry from the supposed confidant and no time limit was imposed.

b) Information Sheet. Sent or given out with instructions containing questions about the simulation, the completed 'letter', and the choice of confidant. This is shown in Appendix 2.2.

Phase 3. Follow-up questionnaire on thinking and communicating about relationships

a) As soon as the 'letters' in phase 2 had been received, participants were sent a follow-up questionnaire (Group A were also sent £2 payment) containing items for self-rating on a seven-point scale (Appendices A3.1, A3.2, B2.1, B2.2). These items concerned or related to inclination-disinclination to think and communicate about personal relationships in general, to think and communicate about those asked to write about in particular, and to do the task as set. There was no payment for completion of this, but Group A people were

advised that it would be followed by a further task (its nature not specified) for which there would be the usual minor financial reward.

b) A different version of the Follow-up questionnaire (version B) was sent out to participants who declined to write or failed to return the 'letter'. Again, there was no payment. For Group A participants, a waiting period was allowed of approximately four months (not so unusual between corresponding friends) during which time one or two very courteous and sometimes effective reminders were sent. This alternative questionnaire contained identical items but with the conditional verbs substituted where necessary: e.g.'It would have embarrassed me to write about this relationship' instead of 'It embarrassed me to write about this relationship'. Both versions are shown in Appendix A3.

Phase 4. Comparative accounts of personal relationships

a) Second simulated letter to a confidant. The same participants in Group B, excluding 'drop-outs', were asked to write a second letter about another of their relationships. Instructions (Appendix A 4.1) were identical to the first occasion, but the type of relationship was reversed; that is, if they had already provided an account about a sibling then a friend or former friend was allocated. Participants had not been advised that they would be asked for this second account. Contact was again postal.

b) Information Sheet. This was the same as in phase 2, and is shown in Appendix A2.2. Group A participants were subsequently sent £2 payment.

Phase 5. Changes in relationship accounts

a) All of Group A (72) were sent a questionnaire (Appendix A5.2) relating to changes, if any, in their relationship with the subject of first simulated letter. Again, participants had not been led to expect this request, and again, all contact was by post.

b)Twenty four of Group A participants were contacted again after a minimum of two months, and asked for a third 'letter', this time about the same person they had discussed in letter one, but in the form of telling what, if anything, had happened in that relationship; that is bringing the confidant up to date. The request together with accompanying questionnaire is shown in Appendix A5.1.

Debriefing

All participants in group A were sent a letter informing them about the nature of the reseach and some of the findings. Group B participants were sent thank you letters.

Phase 6. Reflection on relationships

Open-ended questionnaires (Appendix D1.1) were distributed to 80 Group C participants, asking for information relating to 'motivators', 'content' and 'conclusions' reached in respect of relationships 'recently thought about a lot'. Data was also obtained on which relationships had been the subject of recent reflection.

Phase 7. Interests

Fixed choice questionnaires (Appendix D2.1), were distributed to 100 Group C participants, asking for self-ratings on 'how much you talk about...know about...think about...[and] care about...' fifteen different subjects, including 'person you are closest to', 'own relationships' and 'other people's relationships'.

Phase 8. Relationship Understanding Course

Some experimental groupwork was conducted to test out some recommendations about formal training and relationship consciousness-raising. Two nine weekly session courses were held for 12 clients of the Probation and After-care Service. Questionnaires based on the earlier content analyses were used for assessment purposes and for presentation of relevant information. These are shown in Appendices E2.1 -E2.3. Selected excerpts from films, other audio-visual material,

group discussion and practical exercises were used in sessions, and home assignments were set to encourage relationship assessment and analysis. The subject content of each session is described in chapter eight. ~~and a selection of the materials used appear in Appendix E.~~

Summary of chapter

This project has been undertaken within the post-crisis climate of social psychology in the eighties, and so has benefited from an atmosphere favourable to an approach in which structural analysis and demonstrative theory are viable alternatives to a hypothetico-deductive approach. The first objective of this chapter has been to root the investigation into the context of contemporary social psychology, and to explain the assumptions which have shaped its direction. Next, the analytical framework was explained with reference to the methodological approach and tools. The musical analogue, which will be drawn on as a source of description and hypothesis, was introduced. Assumptions and reservations regarding the use of accounts as representative of conception were discussed. In the third section, the framework of the project was set out. Phases of investigation have been outlined, and matters of procedural and analytical relevance to more than one study have been preliminarily described.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL CONTENT OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTS

3.1 FOREWORD

This chapter concentrates on an analysis of relevant concepts used in accounts of actual personal relationships. The verbalisation of conception, whether specifically for this occasion or previously accomplished, is taken to be a necessary though not sufficient indication of relationship conception, enabling ideas to be fixed on, conveyed and organised. A content analysis scheme, constructed to investigate the regularities within 131 written accounts concerning actual relationships, is introduced. The construction, application and findings from this Scheme for Analysis of Recurring Concepts and Themes will be described, with reference to the content of accounts and limitations of explicit content analysis. The results for the population as a whole will be presented, (with results in respect of sub-divisions being deferred until chapter five).

Problems associated with using accounts to obtain indications of conception have been addressed in the previous chapter. The choice of this procedure reflects some prejudgement about the salience of verbalisation (whether as internal monologue or communicated dialogue) to conception, though, as has been indicated, it is assumed that non-verbal elements are involved. Perceptual and affective levels of responding are taken to be at least as vitally linked to mindfulness

as theories and rationalisations, in that much thinking is pre-verbal (Vygotsky, 1962), and affective responses have primacy over cognition (Zajonc, 1984). Notwithstanding the influence of emotions on conception (Clarke, 1986), nor the importance of non-verbal language (Noller, 1984), the starting position here is biased towards the salience of verbal thought. It may be regarded as the major tool of understanding, if only because of the instability and undeveloped nature of ideas in ~~the~~ its absence. Perhaps the best illustration of this is to be found in William Golding's (1955) novel The Inheritors, in which the Neanderthal characters struggle to make sense of their environment and to communicate without an adequate verbal language:

> "I have a picture..." But, though the tilt of her head, the eyebrows moved slightly up and apart, asked a question, she had no words with which to define it. She tried again."But if - See this picture..." ...Presently Fa forgot her picture and stood up.' (1961, p.49).

Thus, verbal expression is the mid-wife of awareness; language enables the organisation, and substantiation of that which would otherwise ~~otherwise~~ be merely potential knowledge, elusively coming and going.

3.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RECURRING CONCEPTS AND THEMES

Introduction

Free description

In the set of studies involving content analysis, a procedure was required which would encourage, as far as possible, the disclosing of the linguistically conveyable part of conceptions, but without any cueing or prompting. The rationale for using accounts and procedural safeguards has been described in chapter three. Free description in written accounts as the method of choice for accessing conceptions, focuses the investigation narrowly on verbalisation, but is predicated by the principal role of language in representations of relationship.

There are reservations with regard to how far forward such analysis will reach in a search for the structure of conception and understanding, but a claim can be made for language as a vehicle for realising conception both between persons and intra-personally: 'a thought unembodied in words remains a shadow' (Vygotsky, 1962, p.153)

Motivation

The intention of the simulated letter-writing procedure is to obtain relationship accounts which are unconstrained in content and in length. 'We have to take special pains to keep things back' (Ryle, 1963, p.173); this positive note in Ryle's statement lends optimism to the methodology adopted for eliciting explanations. Despite such optimism, the realities must be countered, and a preliminary note on motivation is necessary. The task of detailed accounting, whether self-directed, spoken or written is likely to be experienced as a demanding one. Even the participants in Wilkinson's (in press) investigation of impression formation, who were carefully chosen for their aptitude, regarded the exercise of keeping a record of their ongoing views as 'hard work'. Personal relationships, especially when only recently formed, are characterised by uncertainty (Miell, 1984); and this, according to Baxter and Wilmot (1985) partly explains a reticence about discussing the state of the relationship.

Conversely, there are a number of goals and motives, for formulating and sometimes sharing explicit accounts - at least following the termination of relationships - (Harvey, Weber, Huszti, Garnick and Galvin, 1986; Weber, Harvey and Stanley, in press), such as 'quests for understanding' and 'recovering self-esteem'. Of course, communication of a relationship perspective is likely to have goals extrinsic to organisation of ideas and collecting of thoughts. Confronting submerged knowledge and thoughts is the underlying idea of Freud's 'talking cure', though this like the 'casework' discussions

of social workers has clarification as an objective in addition to the cathartic effect of a release for self-expression.

Comparable studies

Work which has involved study of relationship concepts was selectively reviewed in chapter one. The most comparable studies, (albeit considerably more elaborate), are investigation by La Gaipa (1977; in press), and Davis and Todd (1982; 1985). Specification of similarities and distinctions can best be considered after presenting the scheme, though immediately relevant points of comparison are that La Gaipa's work has been more concerned with friendship than personal relationships in general, and Davis and Todd have concentrated on prototypes rather than actual relationships, and - most importantly - in the present work the emphasis is on conception in spontaneous use, and without prompting, rather than the full extent of people's knowledge which may be elicited. Wright (1985) has also developed a sophisticated tool for categorically distinguishing between different relationship types; again the objective of investigation differs from the present one. The relevance of relationship type distinctions, and of prototypes versus actual relationships will be returned to in chapter five. There have also been studies under the specialist heading of children's friendship with which the present study could be compared, but quite different aims are involved, and much of this concerns prototypes, and makes use of non-verbal indicators of conception. Heyman and Shaw (1978) and Wiemann and Krueger (1980) both employed open-ended accounts from adults, and stressed the relevance of letting participants use their own language, but the former was a very preliminary form of investigation which did little more than fill out a distinction between conflict and affect in descriptions of relationships, and the latter ultimately imposed a highly reductionist

theory thus defeating the intial objective.

Description

The scheme is set out in Appendix C1.1. Its purpose is to enable coding of all references to the relationship and its participants. It consists primarily of coding categories for Relating Concepts, which are all phrases, sentences and statements referring to reactions and responses of each party with regard to the other. (For coding purposes, the person providing the account is labelled 'participant', and the other person in the relationship is labelled 'other'). The Coding Form (Appendix C1.2) provides for distinction between reactions of 'participant to other', 'other to participant', and, in a third column, mutual or reciprocal reactions - 'to each other'. In this two-way emphasis, the Relating Concepts are comparable to Newman's (1981a) 'interpersonal attributions', described as '...explanations dealing with one's perceptions of "self in regard to other" and "other in regard to self".' (p. 63). Newman describes this as a new category of causal explanation, indicating that it has previously been missed. In the present context the interpersonal emphasis is the obvious choice in place of a straight self-other dichotomy. That the latter has been the standard distinction in attribution theory is arguably an anomaly resulting from several decades work on the social psychology of strangers.

The distinctions in the present scheme also cater for ~~t~~he both <u>having</u> a friend/sibling and <u>being</u> a friend/sibling - another differentiation which has been described as overlooked (Davis and Todd, 1985). Additionally, the coding involves differentiation between negative and positive reference to Relating Concepts; some behaviours and responses may be more significant in their absence, the shifts from positive to negative and more to less are likely to be relevant, and investigation needs to include for contrasts within the same

relationship.

In pilot coding, yet a further distinction was made between reference to 'past', 'present' and 'future'; this would be of value in investigating the relevance of change, duration and time perspective; but proved unwieldy in the present otherwise complicated scheme. The coding categories which were eventually used, following trial coding, modifications and further trials, are set out in Table 3.1. with brief definitions. Examples for each category are given in Appendix C2.2.

The remaining categories are labelled Themes (although, the Relating Concepts come under this definition also) to bring together recurring subjects and forms of explanation either not included in the Relating Concepts or considered worth treating as of separate interest. Again, these are set out in Figure 3.1, and again, the final list is shorter than the original one, unworkable categories having been excluded, though the issues remain of interest, and will be discussed. The Relating Concept categories, including a secondary 'Other' category for miscellanaeous items which did not recur enough to merit separate provision, are mutually exclusive. However, the Theme categories are not mutually exclusive with each other nor with Relating concepts.

TABLE 3.1

It will be noted that the categories are not all of the same degree of conceptual specificity. Some are, in effect, sub-categories of others (e.g. 'Support and Guidance' as a subtype of 'General Help') Others are reserved for broad terms which could denote many of the other concept categories (e.g. 'Close, Intimate, etc.'). An objective of the coding scheme is to capture the discrimination made by participants and so it should 'draw lines' in at least the same places.

TABLE 3.1

Coding categories for descriptive and explanatory concepts and themes

(a) concepts

1. PRACTICAL HELP. Help or aid involving deeds and action often with tangible or visible results, or in form of gifts and practical advice.

2. SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE. Help whereby the recipient benefits in terms of well-being or state of mind; psychological help.

3. HELP IN GENERAL. Help which is both practical and psychological, or the type of help is not specified.

4. SELF-DISCLOSURE. Openness of verbal communication and being confident to express and entrust other with personal information.

5. ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE. Accepting or tolerating other's behaviour or viewpoint without inclination to change him/her.

6. AUTHENTICITY. Genuine or sincere and spontaneous behaviour when with other; being unpretentious, unrestrained by social conventions or being true to self.

7. GENERAL REGARD. Positive evaluation of other, including approval, admiration, esteem, respect, being proud of, etc., with respect to the other in general, or other's qualities in general.

8. SPECIFIC REGARD. Positive evaluation of other, including approval, admiration, esteem, respect, being proud of, etc., with respect to specific qualities of the other.

9. LACK OF RIVALRY AND COMPETITIVENESS. Absence of rivalry and competitiveness, and associated emotions like envy and jealousy, between self and other.

10. CARING AND CONCERN. Feeling of, or expression of, caring for other, including warmth, kindness, protective love, compassionate love, and emotional responsiveness to the other's needs and affairs.

11. GENERAL UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY. Knowledge, awareness or appreciation of other's general state, situation, views or feelings.

12. SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY. Knowledge, awareness or appreciation of other's specific state, situation, views or feelings.

continued ...

(continued)

13. EASE OF INTERACTION. The experienced ease or difficulty, harmony or conflict when in the company of other.

14. ENJOYMENT OF INTERACTION. The experienced pleasure or displeasure when in the company of other.

15. ACTIVITY TOGETHER. Activities, jobs, games and other things done together or done by both in the company of each other.

16. CONTACT. Frequency or amount of interaction or contact with other, whether in the direct face-to-face terms, or by telephone or letter, or any combination of these.

17. COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY. Long-term intentions with respect to other and relationship with other; and being there for and faithful to the other during testing times.

18. BONDS AND INTER-DEPENDENCE. Sense of being linked, united or part of each other, because of shared identity or psychological dependence and need.

19. ROLE RULES AND EXPECTATIONS. Acting responsibly or correctly according to the rules, or norms and obligations associated with particular roles occupied by the parties with respect to each other.

20. 'CLOSE', 'INTIMATE', etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'close', 'intimate' or in similar terms denoting closeness.

21. 'FRIENDLY', 'AMICABLE', etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'friendly', 'amicable', 'pally', 'matey' or in similar terms denoting friendliness.

22. 'GOOD, 'GET ON', 'OKAY', etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'good', 'okay', 'fine', 'alright', or in terms of 'getting on' and similar general evaluative terms.

23. OTHER. Description of the relationship or interpersonal state or feeling in terms of concepts not included in the scheme's concept categories.

24. SIMILAR ACTIVITIES, INTERESTS, OCCUPATION. Comparison between self and other in terms of activities, interests, leisure pursuits, hobbies, occupation, etc.

25. SIMILAR BACKGROUND, SITUATION, EXPERIENCES. Comparison between self and other in terms of situation, circumstances, background, experiences, past, etc.

continued...

(continued)

26. SIMILAR VALUES, VIEWS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS. Comparison between self and other in terms of values, views, emotional states, goals, disposition, personality, behaviour.

27. COMPLEMENTARITY. Comparison between self and other in terms of complementarity.

28. UNSPECIFIED SIMILARITY. Comparison between self and other in terms of similarity which could be any or all of the similarity concepts in the four preceding categories.

(b) themes

29. EXTRINSIC FACTORS INFLUENCING RELATIONSHIP. Extrinsic, largely uncontrollable, factors described as positively or negatively influencing or affecting the relationship, including the parties' years of age, marital status, residential proximity, circumstances/situation, health, and world events.

30. THIRD PARTIES. The influence or effect on the relationship of another person or persons.

31. CRITICAL INCIDENTS. Incidents or events which are associated with a definite change or a turning point in the relationship.

32. SALIENT INCIDENTS. Incidents or events which were probably critical to the relationship, though they are not explicitly described as such.

33. GENERALISATION OR THEORIES. Statements about relationships in general, or type of relationship in general, or about people or groups of people in general.

34. RELATIONSHIP COMPARISONS. Comparison between the relationship being described and another relationship, or others, including actual relationships and typical relationships.

Thus, some categories were sub-divided which would otherwise have carried too great a proportion of the references, and so have obscured qualifications and separate points being made. This is best illustrated by an example: a point about liking the other person on the whole ('General Regard') may be contrasted with a reference to disapproval of his political views ('Specific Regard'). Another example is the separate mention which may be made of financial aid ('Practical Help'), counselling ('Support and Guidance'), and being nursed when ill ('General Help'), each perhaps with some separate significance attached to them. In contrast, a number of references which were not distinguishing or specific enough to code into existing categories, yet occurring too numerously to be relegated to a miscellaneous subsidiary group, made designation of additional categories necessary. For example, describing a relationship as 'good', begs further questioning about whether it is good in one or more of the ways denoted by other categories in the scheme, but it is nonetheless a meaningful concept on its own and can be used without further explication.

The size and complexity of the coding task, plus expedience, have necessitated some abridgement and simplification of earlier versions. There is scope for further elaboration and the scheme requires reliability testing plus use on independently obtained accounts before it can be offered as a definitive coding procedure. However, despite some omissions, it remains relatively comprehensive and detailed, and has enabled systematic and thorough description of the references used in open-ended accounts. It has therefore served its immediate purpose of analytical description, and even without change, remains available as a useful exploratory tool for relationship accounts.

Construction

As has been indicated, in constructing this scheme, the intention was to describe what is given within the accounts systematically, but without imposing a prior category system. Items for inclusion in this coding scheme were obtained first and foremost from the accounts. The final categorisation was supplemented, secondarily, by drawing on personal experience (cf. 'auto-observation' - Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985), and refined, latterly, by reference to relevant literature. Items were extracted from accounts following careful study of them, and were organised into preliminary groups according to the author's judgement of their explicit similarities and differences. Two obvious queries which must arise from this in view of the methodological issues which have been stressed, need to be settled before proceeding. First, the level or degree of specificity of the classification should be explained. Second, the more fundamental question of whether the author has imposed subjective views despite an over-riding intention not to, must be considered.

With regard to the specificity of categories, the aim was to 'steer a middle course', so that the level of distinction in the accounts could be represented. Consider, for instance, the study by Wish, Deutsch and Kaplan, (1976), who reduced 25 bipolar scales to four dimensions, providing a useful summary of views, but losing subtleties of value to the users. Clearly, too much reduction would obscure distinctions being made, the detection of which is an objective. However, without some kind of classification, no description could be achieved. The optimum level ought to be tight enough to impose structure and pattern, but open enough to reveal naturally occurring distinctions. Social psychology history lessons on the necessity of enabling participants to use their own words, (e.g. Kelly, 1955; Hastorf, Richardson and Dornbusch, 1958) are not well

learned, however, if, having achieved this, the concepts and distinctions are then lost in the vanishing act of either factor analysis and other statistical reduction techniques (e.g. Wish et al., op. cit.), or in descriptive data reduction (e.g. Wiemann and Krueger, 1980). As Davis and Todd (1985) have remarked, 'intelligibility and usefulness' should be given priority over any statistical considerations. An enthusiasm for data reduction runs the risk of eliminating distinctions which are separately meaningful within people's perspectives.

The Relating Categories arising from the early stages of construction, proved similar to inventories in La Gaipa's (1977) investigation of friendship and Davis and Todd's (1982) exploratory study of love and friendship prototypes. (In addition, Wright (1985) has developed the Acquaintance Description Form for differentiating between relationship types, from which similar items emerge). Each of these are the product of sophisticated and long-term research programmes, and in these respects comparison of the present study with them is inappropriate. They are of interest on three counts: (1) They are strikingly similar, both to each other and to the central categories selected for the present scheme. Table 3.2 presents the parallels between them and the concept categories in the present scheme. (The order of items has been changed to best depict the overlap). (2) They attain the right level of sub-division, being neither too generalised nor too specific. (3) Both utilise data reduction procedures which, when compared with each other, serve as a good gauge of the optimum point to stop when aiming for a helpful organisation of required information without losing it. The dimensions of friendship given by La Gaipa, as shown in the table, followed factor analysis, and the items listed in respect of Davis and Todd's

investigation precede factor analysis. The final list, in the latter, for friendship and love relationships - Viability, Passion, Intimacy and Support - is only helpful when the items it comprises are known. Given that the scheme of this project bears a similarity to those two, the respective gains and losses of data reduction procedures on the comparable items in the present scheme could be previewed and their utility for coding here judged accordingly.

TABLE 3.2

There are, additionally, some obvious differences which should be mentioned. Davis and Todd (op. cit.; 1985) used a very different procedure, starting out with paradigm case formulations; the present analysis, starting with open description of real cases, is almost a reverse procedure. Some of their work has been concerned with differentiating between relationship types (mainly friendship and love), whereas in the present analysis commonalities between personal relationship types are stressed. La Gaipa (op. cit.) did obtain open-ended accounts, but, again, these were not of actual relationships.

Modifications and coding problems

Expansion and exclusion

This coding scheme was modified during the course of several coding trials using accounts obtained during a pilot, examples of published accounts of relationships in novels and biographies and a random selection from the main sample. Practice coding was done independently by the writer and a second postgraduate student. Results were compared and discussed, and amendments subsequently made. This process was repeated. The main changes will be indicated here with brief explanations.

Expansion

As indicated previously, it was found necessary to divide some

TABLE 3.2
Comparison of coding categories with the categories of La Gaipa (1977) and of Davis and Todd (1982)

LA GAIPA (1977)	PRESENT STUDY	DAVIS & TODD (1982)
	References to the presence or absence of:-	
SELF-DISCLOSURE Feeling free to express and reveal personal information	SELF-DISCLOSURE Openness of verbal communication and being confident to express and entrust other with personal information	see INTIMACY ...in many cases, by virtue of confiding in each other..
AUTHENTICITY Openness and honesty in the relationship; being real,genuine and spontaneous	AUTHENTICITY Genuine or sincere and spontaneous behaviour when with other; being unpretentious; being true to self	SPONTANEITY Feel free to be themselves in their relationship, rather than feeling required to play a role, wear a mask or inhibit expressions of their personal characteristics
HELPING BEHAVIOUR Expressing concern for one's well-being; giving help readily without being asked; providing psychological support	HELPING (a) Practical. Help or aid involving action, often with tangible or visible results (b) Support and Guidance. Help whereby the recipient benefits in terms of well-being or state of mind; psychological help (c) Unspecified. Could be either psychological or practical or involves an overlap between them	MUTUAL ASSISTANCE Are included to provide each other with assistance and support and, specifically assume that they can count on each other in times of need, trouble or personal distress
ACCEPTANCE Acknowledging one's identity, integrity and individuality; not taking advantage of another	ACCEPTANCE AND TOLERANCE Accepting or tolerating other's behaviour or viewpoint without inclination to change him/her	ACCEPTANCE Accept each other as they are, without being inclined to change or make the other over into a new, different person
EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING Interpreting accurately the feelings of another person; understanding how one really feels; really listening to what one has to say	UNDERSTANDING & EMPATHY Knowledge, awareness or appreciation of other's state, situation, views or feelings either (a) General- in general, or (b) Specific- some particular viewpoint or feeling, often connected with a specific situation or incident	UNDERSTANDING Have come to understand one another [....] in the more fundamental sense of understanding the rationale of the other's behaviour. In such cases, one person is not routinely puzzled by his/her friend's behaviour
POSITIVE REGARD Providing ego-reinforcement; enhancing one's feeling of self-worth; treating one as deserving of respect and as an important, worthwhile person	REGARD Positive evaluation of other, including approval, admiration, respect, esteem, pride in, etc. with respect to other's qualities or personal characteristics (a) In General- evaluation is concerned with the complete person, or to (b) Specific qualities or characteristics of other	RESPECT Respect each other in the sense of taking it that each exercises good judgement in his or her life choices
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER Striving to achieve and conform to the objective value system of society	ROLE RULES & EXPECTATIONS Acting responsibly or correctly according to the rules, or obligations and expectations associated with particular roles occupied by the parties with respect to each other	
RITUALISTIC SOCIAL EXCHANGE (No definition given)	ACTIVITY TOGETHER Activities, games, jobs and other things done together or done by both in the company of each other	INTIMACY Are intimate in the sense of sharing experiences by virtue of doing things together and, in many cases, by virtue of confiding in each other. The intimacy may extend to physical intimacy, but it need not take such forms to count as intimacy.

TABLE 3.2 (Cont.)

LA GAIPA (1977)	PRESENT STUDY	DAVIS & TODD (1982)
	References to the presence or absence of:-	
	ENJOYMENT OF INTERACTION The experienced pleasure or displeasure when in the company of other EASE OF INTERACTION The experienced ease or difficulty, harmony or conflict when in the company of other	ENJOYMENT Enjoy each other's company. Such enjoyment needs to be understood as a dispositional characteristic of the relationship - not incompatible with negative states
SIMILARITY Possessing similar points of view; expressing agreement on controversial issues; possessing similar attitudes and interests	SIMILARITY Comparison between self and other in terms of: (a) Activities, Interests, Occupation (b) Background, Situation, Experiences (c) Values, Views and Personal Characteristics (d) Complementarity, and (e) Unspecified/General Similarity	
	BONDS & INTERDEPENDENCE Sense of being linked, united or part of each other, because of shared identity or psychological dependence and need	
see HELPING BEHAVIOUR ...expressing concern for one's well-being	CARING & CONCERN Feeling or expression of caring for other, including warmth, kindness, protective love. compassionate love, emotional responsiveness to other's needs and affairs	
	COMMITMENT & LOYALTY Long-term intentions with respect to other and relationship with other; being there for and faithful to other during testing times	
	LACK OF RIVALRY AND COMPETITIVENESS Absence of rivalry and competitiveness between self and other, and of the associated emotions of envy, jealousy and resentment	EQUAL ELIGIBILITIES Participate as equals in the sense that those things one person is eligible to do the other is also eligible to do
	'CLOSE', INTIMATE etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'close', 'intimate' or in similar terms denoting closeness	
	'FRIENDLY', 'AMICABLE' etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'friendly', 'amicable', 'pally', 'matey' or in similar terms denoting friendliness	
	'GOOD', 'GET ON', 'OKAY' etc. Unspecific description of the relationship or interpersonal feeling as 'good', 'okay', 'fine', or in terms of 'getting on' and similar general evaluative terms	

categories into one for generalised references to the concept(s) and one or more subcategories either for types or for specific instances. In this way the scheme was made more capable of capturing recurring distinctions across accounts. Thus, a category for 'Help and Support' was subdivided into 'Practical Help', 'Support and Guidance', and 'Help in General, Unspecified Help'; an old category 'Positive Regard and Liking' was subdivided into 'General Regard' and 'Specific Regard'; 'Understanding and Empathy' was subdivided into 'General Understanding and Empathy' and 'Specific Understanding and Empathy'; 'Experience in Interaction' was subdivided into 'Ease of Interaction', 'Enjoyment of Interaction' and 'Activities Together'; and 'Similarity' was divided five ways, into 'Similarity of Activities and Interests', 'Similarity of Background or Situation', 'Similarity of Views, Values and Personal Characteristics', 'Complementarity' and 'Similarity in General, Unspecified Similarity'. Finally, it was necessary to subdivide a 'General and Miscellaneous' category which would otherwise have been overloaded with, in effect, uncoded references; this category was originally used for both broad and vague concepts and miscellaneous concepts which did not fit in any of the designated categories. It was split into three categories for commonly occurring general concepts and one for the miscellaneous group: these are, 'Close, Intimate, etc', 'Get on, Good, Okay, etc.' Friendly, Amicable, Matey, etc' and 'Other'.

Exclusion

The original version included a number of categories which were left out in later amendments or which were not used in the main analyses. Such omissions were made either because the concepts as such featured too rarely in accounts, or because practical difficulties made coding unrealistic, or because it was decided that they could be more appropriately analysed via a separate coding

scheme.

Conceptual categories labelled 'Sharing' and 'Trust', and theme categories labelled 'Preferences' and 'Achievements' were dropped from amended version of the scheme. The collected prototype descriptions indicated that 'sharing' and 'trust' could be treated as separate categories, but trial coding of accounts of actual relationships suggested that these were rarely being used as absolute concepts and that the nature of the sharing or trust involved varied across concepts, e.g. sharing of activities = c.15; shared experience = c.25; sharing of possessions = c.1; trust with secrets = c.4; trust to be genuine = c.6; trustworthy person = c.8; trust to be there = c.17. The same point pertains to the concepts of 'Missing' (c.23) and 'Needing' (c.18). In accordance with the emphasis on explicit coding in this scheme, separate categories (equivalents to the general categories c.20, c.21 and c.22), would have been allocated for these had there been recurring absolute references to them.

Two other concept categories, 'Complementarity' and 'Similarity in General' have been dropped from some statistical analyses. 'Complementarity', which is given some prominenece in studies of heterosexual relationships (e.g. Kerckhoff and Davis; 1962; Winch, 1974) and in some accounts of siblingship (e.g. Brain, 1977), was referred to very exceptionally in the accounts collected. References to 'Similarity in General, Unspecified' were virtually always accompanied by further reference(s) specifying the type of similarity or difference. It remains of interest though, in connection with how much people generalise. An additional theme concept, 'Preferences', was excluded because of lack of such mention in the practice sample of accounts; it was intended for references to what is valued and liked best in people and in relationships, which it was anticipated would be likely to

arise given the reflective and evaluative nature of the task. 'Achievements' are referred to frequently and may be relevant to differences in men's and women's accounts, and between accounts about friendship and siblingship (chapter five); this category was not used for later coding because the concept is not strictly interpersonal, and because mention of interpersonal responses to achievement could be coded elsewhere, e.g. 'Rivalry', 'Regard', 'Incidents'; statements about achievement are additionally coded by scheme three.

Categories for 'Explanation' and 'Intention and Goals' were ruled out because of coding difficulties and because the issues raised would have taken this project too close to information processing issues, in divergence from the central areas of interest. The category of 'Explanation' was intended for coding of references explaining action, state of mind or situation or self, other or both; to qualify for inclusion, references made explicit use of explanatory phrases, like 'because of ...', 'owing to ...'. 'Intention and Goals' was to be used for coding references explaining action, state of mind, situation, etc., of self, other or both in explicit terms of 'because he wanted to ...', 'in order to ...', 'his reason being ...'. These categories were of interest especially in conjunction with the retained category 'Extrinsic Factors' in analysing the extent to which accounts were explanatory as distinct from descriptive.

A category 'Intention and Goals' was singled out in order to contrast references depicting parties as agents in control and making choices on the basis of reason, with references about influences, effects and incidents over which the parties were depicted as having no control. However, the coding was problematic because of the restriction to explicit references. Cause and intention could be inferred from many additional references which did not meet the criteria of containing an explicit causal phrase, thus running the risk of over-

inferring. These obstacles to coding serve to highlight the overlap between description and explanation. The methodological and theoretical issues raised are sufficiently complex to suggest the appropriateness of a separate investigation. From the three original 'explanation' categories, the category of 'Extrinsic Factors' was retained for necessary and fortunately less obdurate coding of the content of explanatory references. In contrast to the latter, the two explanatory reference categories excluded were concerned with formal aspects of the relevant references rather than the subject content of the explanation.

Such a scheme could never be perfected if only because the social representation of relationships is subject to continuous change and the language used to address conceptualisaton is not static. However, construction presented frequent dilemmas and more basic imperfections should be acknowledged. During construction of the scheme, decisions about where to allocate items were often not straightforward. Ambiguous statements and concepts, and those which have multiple meanings were particularly problematic, because the most explicit meaning varies, depending on context, yet only one place can be selected when the scheme is being established. In cases of more than one viable alternative, designation decisions were sometimes fairly arbitrary, the non-selected category being annotated with what amounts to cross-indexing to the selected category. The scheme remains open to further improvements which may be suggested by its usage and also by advances in understanding of relationship representations.

The first stage of construction was a two-way process, involving looking to the accounts for what would be the content of the scheme, and looking to the scheme for its coverage of the content of accounts.

Initially, at least, constructing the scheme and analysing representations of relationships were complementary processes and therefore, inevitably, issues regarding one are bound up with issues for the other. Decisions made during the construction of the scheme, (most notably, the decision to code only explicit content as far as reasonably possible) are relevant to the interpretation of the findings, and will be referred to again in discussion of results. The present purpose is to identify problematic issues in matching code to content and to indicate how they were resolved.

Some of the recalcitrant questions posed early on centre round whether the task was one of coding words or coding meaning. Linked issues are whether apparent differences in relationship conception are de facto different 'ways of putting it', whether many apparent conceptual differences are de facto differences of level and degree rather than kind, and whether ruling out inference rules out sensible assumptions. In summary terms, the basis of coding dilemmas, is that whereas in many instances a given statement can have multiple meanings, in other instances multiple statements all refer to approximately the same point. Thus, putting the scheme together involved allowing for multiple meanings of any one statement or reference whilst guarding against alternative ways of referring to a single meaning. At one extreme, an apparent use of the identical reference may conceal two conceptual statements, that is, the same phrase may be used by the account-giver to denote two or more concepts. An example, which also shows why the importance of using context has been emphasised, is 'I'll always help her out'. In one instance this might mean 'I'll always baby-sit or help her out with cash if she is stuck', codable as 'Practical Help', and in another instance may be 'come what may, I'll always be there to help her out in whatever way she needs' which would be coded under, 'Commitment and Loyalty'. At the other extreme, an

apparent difference between two statements may be merely a difference in form of verbal expression; diverse sentences and clauses could be getting at the same point. For example, 'she means the world to me' and `I care about her deeply'. The coding of both these under 'Care and Concern' is unlikely to be contentious because the former is not a literal statement. Another straightforward example is 'I can read his mind' and 'I know him extremely well' both of which would be coded as 'General Understanding and Empathy'. A more problematic example is 'she never bothers to contact me', coded 'Contact', and 'she doesn't care about me' coded 'Care and Concern'; the uncaring implication of the first statement is ignored in coding. The explicit meaning coding rule is subject to modification. There are some more marked instances of deviation from this rule in cases where the reference to a concept is in 'words to that effect' or where no alternative meaning was viable. The scheme therefore writes in implicit meaning within the limits of necessity: overall, a course was steered between attention to surface meaning and recognition of implicit meanings which apply in common usage. There is no easy solution for the fact that many references are open to both surface and deeper meaning, but a manual of guidance dealing with the typical alternatives and laying down a fair range of examples is a good way to pre-empt subjective inference.

A tantalising aspect of scheme construction and use is that some relationship issues which can be repeatedly identified in accounts are inconsistently referred to in sometimes explicit terms and sometimes implicit terms. This is complicated by a corresponding inconsistency in reference either to means (towards an outcome in relationships) and ends (the effect, result or personal significance of an action, behaviour or event). In other words, an account may sometimes refer to either outcome, achievement or underlying significance, and at other

times to the corresponding route, means or manifestation. Further, an implicit reference to an effect in one case, e.g.'she's too wrapped up in herself', may be an explicit reference in another, e.g. 'she's not bothered about me'. Possibly with some loss to the analysis of results but to be systematic in coding, it was necessary to ignore the latent semantic connections and to avoid imputing meaning where none might have been intended. Thus, if the accounter mentioned the endpoint, e.g. 'we understand one another perfectly', it was not part of the coding job to trace the route which led to it, e.g. perhaps familiarity due to longevity of the relationship or perhaps empathic ability. This distinction between means and ends (or input/outcome, or deed/effect, etc.) is of recurring salience to this research project, and will be returned to again in discussion. It is also the basis for scheme 2.

Another complication was posed by the possibility of deceptively dissimilar terms to express various levels of intimacy or involvement in respect of the same relationship characteristic, misleadingly suggestive of a difference in kind. For example, 'finding it easy to be with each other', 'confiding personal information' and 'being authentic' occur at increasingly deeper levels of intimacy and are prima facie different conceptually, and their respective coding under 'Ease of Interaction', 'Self-Disclosure' and 'Authenticity' reflects this. However, with a slight change of verbal expression, they begin to look like instances of the same phenomenon, varying only in level of intimacy; that is, 'ease of conversation', 'open communication', and 'feeling free to say anything' suggest an overlap of meaning (though these translations would not affect the coding within this scheme). In principle, this overlap could be the basis for an entirely different categorisation, according to interpersonal activity or the channel of interpersonal events, which in this case would be

'talking' This is almost a reverse of the previously discussed coding problem in which inference was in the direction of deeper meaning or second order meaning. Here inference is towards the manifest activity or event, or the first order meaning. Using more examples of 'talking', Figure 3.1 contrasts the alternative between bringing together different instances of an activity or process into one category, or treating each instance as a difference in kind and therefore allocating it to a different category. The principle of coding explicit meaning and the stages of construction described, result in a categorisation which mixes processes and results, means and effects.

Figure 3.1

In summary of the problems met: first, a verbal statement may be open to various interpretations in addition to its literal meaning; second, a statement may be consistently used in an implicit rather than literal sense; third, several verbal expressions may be used synonymously to express the same semantic point. Two important features of the present procedure - a detailed manual, and use of context - facilitate systematic treatment of these linguistic inconsistencies. Although the manual could be more comprehensive, it is sufficiently detailed to eliminate the need for inference in the majority of instances; most of the inference is already done in that many synonymous and associated items plus examples are included in the manual. Another necessary aspect of the coding procedure is that coders use the whole account; they are not presented with separated or extracted concepts and phrases (as has been the case with comparable studies, e.g. La Gaipa, 1977; Weimann and Krueger, 1980). An implication of this is that when the accounter uses key words in a novel way, has a slight shift of emphasis, or when his chosen words in a

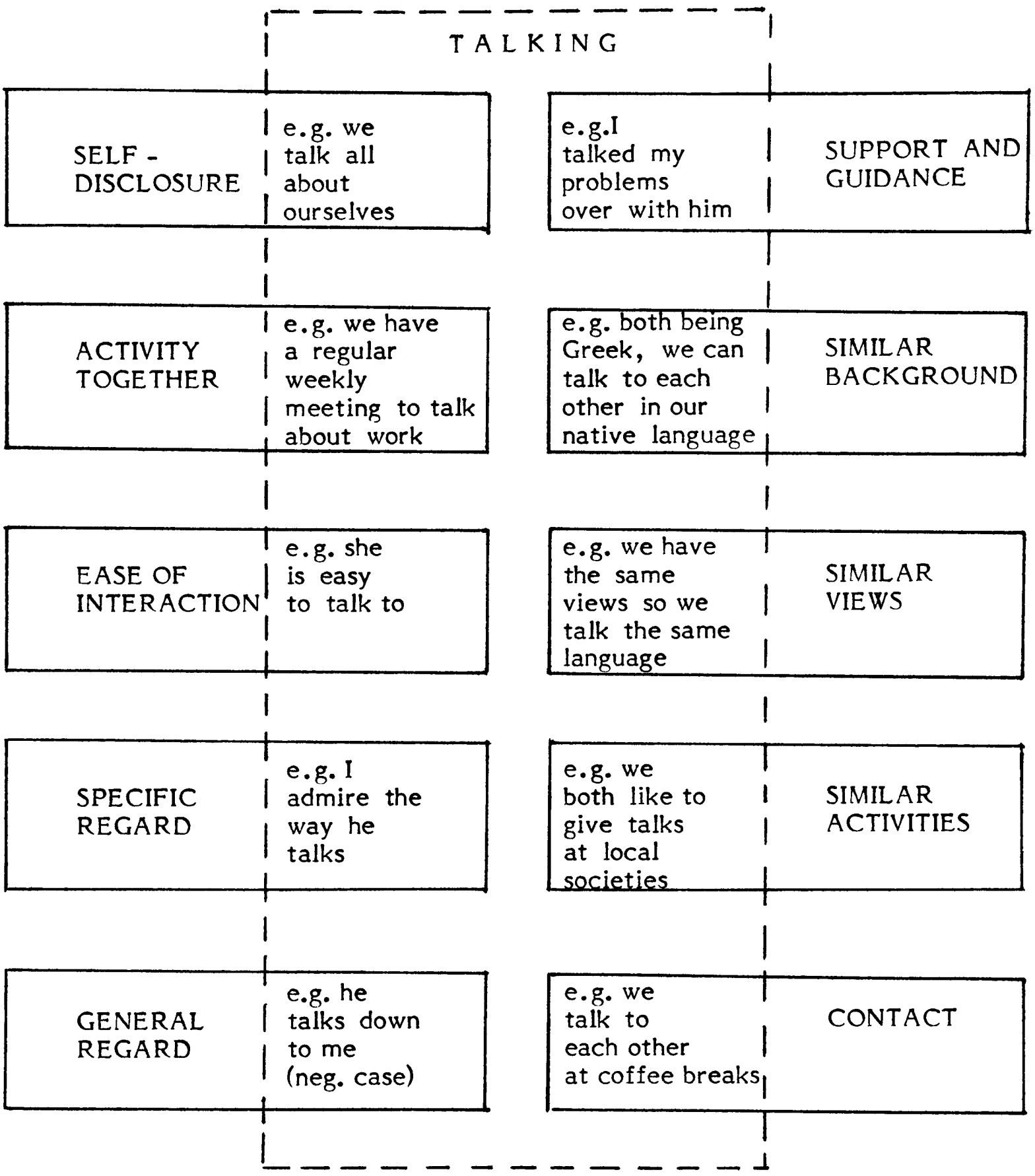


Figure 3.1 Ten categories each with an example, or one category with ten examples.

reference are not included in the manual, use of context can facilitate intelligent coding within the guidelines of a comprehensive manual.

Results

From the 36 men and 36 women who particpated in the set of studies which form the core of this project, 59 of them provided two accounts, and 13 provided one, but declined the request to produce a second. Other participants, (i.e. 'dropouts') who contributed to additional stages of the project, did not provide accounts.

Obtaining two accounts from participants enables comparison of relationship type (chapter five) but prevents treatment of the 131 accounts as independent cases. There were virtually no significant order effects, but some noteworthy differences between data in respect of full participants (2 accounts) and data in respect of semi-participants (1 account); the results presented in this chapter are based therefore on 72 accounts, one contribution from each participant. Half are about siblings and half about friends or former friends.

References to Relating Categories were scored separately from references to Theme categories, partly because the latter were not mutually exclusive from the former, and partly because each way of scoring is separately informative. In respect of the Relating Categories, there were two overall totals for each participant, one serving as a measure of the range of categories used, and the other as a measure of the quantity of interpersonal concepts irrespective of range. The first scoring was the number of categories used based on presence or absence of reference to each (binary record) and the second scoring was the total of all references to each category (continuous record). Likewise, there was continuous and binary scoring for Theme categories.

A coding form, shown in Appendix C1.2, was used to record the content of each account. Accounts were read repeatedly and carefully so that all references to the concept and theme categories could be identified. Every codable reference was entered on the form against the appropriate concept and/or theme category. Concept category references were coded two ways: firstly, as a positive or negative input to the relationship; and secondly, as input from either the participant, the other party, or both parties.

Specific Categories.

Table 3.3 shows means for references by category. Combining the sub-categories of 'Help' and the sub-categories of 'Similarity' elevates these two groups as the most commonly applicable in the accounts; that is, there is more reference to kinds of help and kinds of similarity than to any of the other concepts which have been isolated. This blurs the distinctions which the analysis yielded. Comparing percentages for Relating Concept categories, there are five concepts referred to by more than 50 percent of the sample. These were 'Contact' (72.7 percent), 'Specific Regard' (62.5 percent), 'Ease of Interaction' (61.1 percent), 'Activity Together' (59.7 percent) and 'Close, Intimate, etc.' (54.2 percent). Turning to the least frequently mentioned concept categories, less than 20 percent of the participants referred to 'Specific Understanding and Empathy' (19.4 percent), 'Lack of Rivalry (18.1 percent), 'Acceptance and Tolerance' (16.7 percent) and 'Authenticity' (13.9 percent). In addition, 'General Understanding and Empathy' (30.6 percent), 'Caring and Concern' (31.9 percent), 'Support and Guidance (23. 6 percent) and 'Commitment and Reliance' (20.8 percent) are mentioned relatively infrequently.

Only a slight difference of order emerged when accounts were compared for their relative employment of positive references, that is, reference to categories in terms of positive input and positive

outcome. The order is similar for negative references also. The most dramatic shift is in respect of 'Similar Values, Views and Characteristics' (52.8 percent) which rises from the rank of 20 in the list of positively referenced category frequency, to the rank of 1. This position in the negative list is inflated by references to age differences, which were placed here during code construction as instances of personal characteristics. In retrospect, such references may have been more appropriately coded as 'Similar Background, or Situation' together with status but then, that category too would have been distorted by over-inclusion.

The means for concept categories are shown in Table 3.3, including both the means for binary data and the means for continuous data.

TABLE 3.3

The main figures to note and contrast here are, allowing for a total of 26 interpersonal concept categories, which include three similarity categories, the mean number of categories referenced (mean = 10.38) and the mean total of references to interpersonal concepts (mean = 20.80). References to positive input, that is to something which is favourable or on the plus side in the relationship, were nearly double references to negative input, with the mean number of categories referred to positively and negatively being 8.88 and 4.93 respectively, and the mean total of references in positive and negative terms being 13.41 and 7.38. Most of the positively termed references are in respect of both parties, that is 'we' or 'the relationship', (with a mean of 3.80 for categories and 5.52 for total), thus emphasising the mutuality of relationships. However, the lowest means for positively valenced input (category mean of 1.9, and total mean of 2.37) and for negatively valenced input (category mean of 1.04, and reference mean of 1.45) is in respect of 'participant',

TABLE 3.3

Concept category totals and concept reference totals

a) summary statistics for binary data

No. of cats*	category sub-division	mean (n=72)	standard deviation	mini-mum	maxi-mum	sum
26	all categories	10.38	3.78	3	21	748
26	positive input	8.88	4.78	0	21	636
26	negative input	4.93	3.67	0	19	355
23	positive by participant	1.91	1.58	0	6	138
23	positive by other	2.25	2.03	0	10	162
23	positive by both	3.80	2.73	0	12	274
23	negative by participant	1.04	1.38	0	9	75
23	negative by other	1.36	1.89	0	11	98
23	negative by both	1.44	1.31	0	5	104
5	similarity	.97	1.16	0	4	70
5	difference	1.08	1.03	0	4	78

b) summary statistics for continuous data

No. of cats*	category sub-division	mean (n=72)	standard deviation	mini-mum	maxi-mum	sum
26	all references	20.80	10.80	4	61	1498
26	positive input	13.41	8.24	0	38	966
26	negative input	7.38	6.96	0	44	532
23	positive by participant	2.37	2.21	0	9	171
23	positive by other	3.51	3.51	0	15	253
23	positive by both	5.52	4.43	0	20	398
23	negative by participant	1.45	2.38	0	16	105
23	negative by other	2.45	3.70	0	18	177
23	negative by both	1.58	1.48	0	5	114
5	similarity	2.23	3.48	0	17	161
5	difference	1.90	2.52	0	12	137

*totals for 26 categories include the three principal similarity categories, and totals for 23 categories exclude them; figures for all five of the similarity categories are entered separately.

whereas the highest means for negatively valenced input (category mean of 1.44 and reference mean of 2.45) are in respect of 'other'. This indicates that accounters give relatively less emphasis to what they themselves bring to the relationship, either constructively or destructively, and relatively more emphasis to what the other party contributes or, in particular, fails to contribute.

TABLE 3.4

Table 3.4 shows the percentage of accounts in which each of the concept categories are mentioned, and their absolute frequencies. 'Complementarity' was mentioned three times in one acount but otherwise did not occur, and so was omitted from analysis. 'General/Unspecific Similarity' has been omitted because it was always accompanied by specification via one of the other similarity categories, unlike other general categories. There are separate columns in respect of occurrence of positive and negative references to the categories. More than 50 participants referred to 'Contact' (72.2 percent), 'Specific Regard' (62.5 percent), Ease of Interaction (61.1 percent) and 'Activity Together' (59.7 percent). All the other categories were mentioned by at least 10 (13.9 percent) of the participants. The same four categories were the most often mentioned in positive terms, and apart from 'Activity Together' they were mentioned in negative terms more than other concepts with one exception: 'Similarity of values, views, etc.' (52.8 percent) was referred to in negative terms (difference, in this case) more than any other category. At least 25 of the participants referred to 18 of the 26 listed categories in positive terms, but only 7 categories were referenced in negative terms. Reference to negative input relative to positive input is shown graphically in Figure 3.2

TABLE 3.4

Percentage and frequency of reference to concept categories

%	Freq	CATEGORY REFERENCE	%	Freq	POSITIVE REFERENCE	%	Freq	NEGATIVE REFERENCE
72.2	52	Contact	61.1	44	Contact	52.8	38	Same Values, Views
62.5	45	Specific Regard	56.9	41	Activity Together	44.4	32	Specific Regard
61.1	44	Ease of Interaction	41.7	30	Specific Regard	38.9	28	Contact
59.7	43	Activity Together	41.7	30	Ease of Interaction	31.9	23	Ease of Interaction
54.2	39	'Close', 'Intimate', etc	38.9	28	Self-Disclosure	27.8	20	Same Situation
48.6	35	Same Values, Views	36.1	26	Practical Help	26.4	19	'Close', 'Intimate'
48.6	35	Same Situation/Background	36.1	26	'Close', 'Intimate'	26.4	19	Other
45.8	33	Other	34.7	25	Help in General	18.1	13	General Regard
43.1	31	Practical Help	33.3	24	Same Situation	16.7	12	Self-Disclosure
43.1	31	Self-Disclosure	31.9	23	General Regard	15.3	11	Lack of Rivalry
41.7	30	General Regard	31.9	23	'Friendly'	13.9	10	Roles, Rules, Expectations
37.5	27	Same Interests	30.6	22	Caring and Concern	12.5	9	Same Interests
36.1	26	Bonds	30.6	22	Bonds	11.1	8	Activity Together

continued...

TABLE 3.4

continued...

%	Freq	CATEGORY REFERENCE	%	Freq	POSITIVE REFERENCE	%	Freq	NEGATIVE REFERENCE
36.1	26	Help in General	29.6	21	Other	11.1	8	Bonds
36.1	26	'Friendly'	27.8	20	Enjoyment of Interaction	9.7	7	Help in General
31.9	23	Caring and Concern	27.8	20	'Get on', 'Good', 'OK'	9.7	7	Understanding
30.6	22	Understanding	27.8	20	Same Values, Views	8.3	6	Practical Help
30.6	22	Enjoyment of Interaction	25.0	18	Same Interests	8.3	6	Specific Understanding
29.2	21	'Get on', 'Good', 'OK'	22.2	16	Support and Guidance	8.3	6	Commitment and Reliance
25.0	18	Roles, Rules Expectations	19.4	14	Understanding	6.9	5	'Friendly'
23.6	17	Support and Guidance	16.7	12	Accept and Tolerate	5.6	4	Caring and Concern
20.8	15	Commitment and Reliance	16.7	12	Roles, Rules, Expectations	4.2	3	Authenticity
19.4	14	Specific Understanding	13.9	10	Commitment and Reliance	2.8	2	Enjoyment of Interaction
18.1	13	Lack of Rivalry	12.5	9	Authenticity	2.8	2	'Get on', 'Good', 'OK'
16.7	12	Accept and Tolerate	11.1	8	Specific Understanding	2,8	2	Support and Guidance
13.9	10	Authenticity	6.9	5	Lack of Rivalry	0.0	0	Accept and Tolerate

---

Figure 3.2

It is noticable that only two categories are referenced more in negative than in positive terms, namely 'Similarity of Values, Views, etc.' (52.8 negative compared to 27.8 positive) and 'Specific Regard' (44.4 negative compared to 41.7 positive). The other categories which are highest in a negative direction are 'Contact' and 'Ease of Interaction'; these three together indicate that a high proportion of the negative references are concerned with aspects which detract from viability of the relationship. Summary statistics in respect of the continuous data record of concept category reference are presented in Table 3.5. This shows which categories are referenced most often, not just across accounts but also within accounts, revealing that more account coverage is given to evaluation and description of individual qualities than the order of frequency had indicated (Table 3.4). It should be noted that the mean for reference to 'Similar Values, Views and Personal Characteristics' is inflated by inclusion of age comparisons in this category. There is a highly skewed distribution in respect of 'Specific Understanding and Empathy', 'Roles, Rules, etc.' and 'Lack of Rivalry', but the means for these remain relatively low.

TABLE 3.5

The results of coding for theme categories are presented separately (Table 3.6) because they cannot be considered comparatively with the concept categories, many of the relevant references having been coded as both 'concept' and 'theme'. Further, these categories were not mutually exclusive and have been investigated for what they reveal independently and as part of the overall picture.

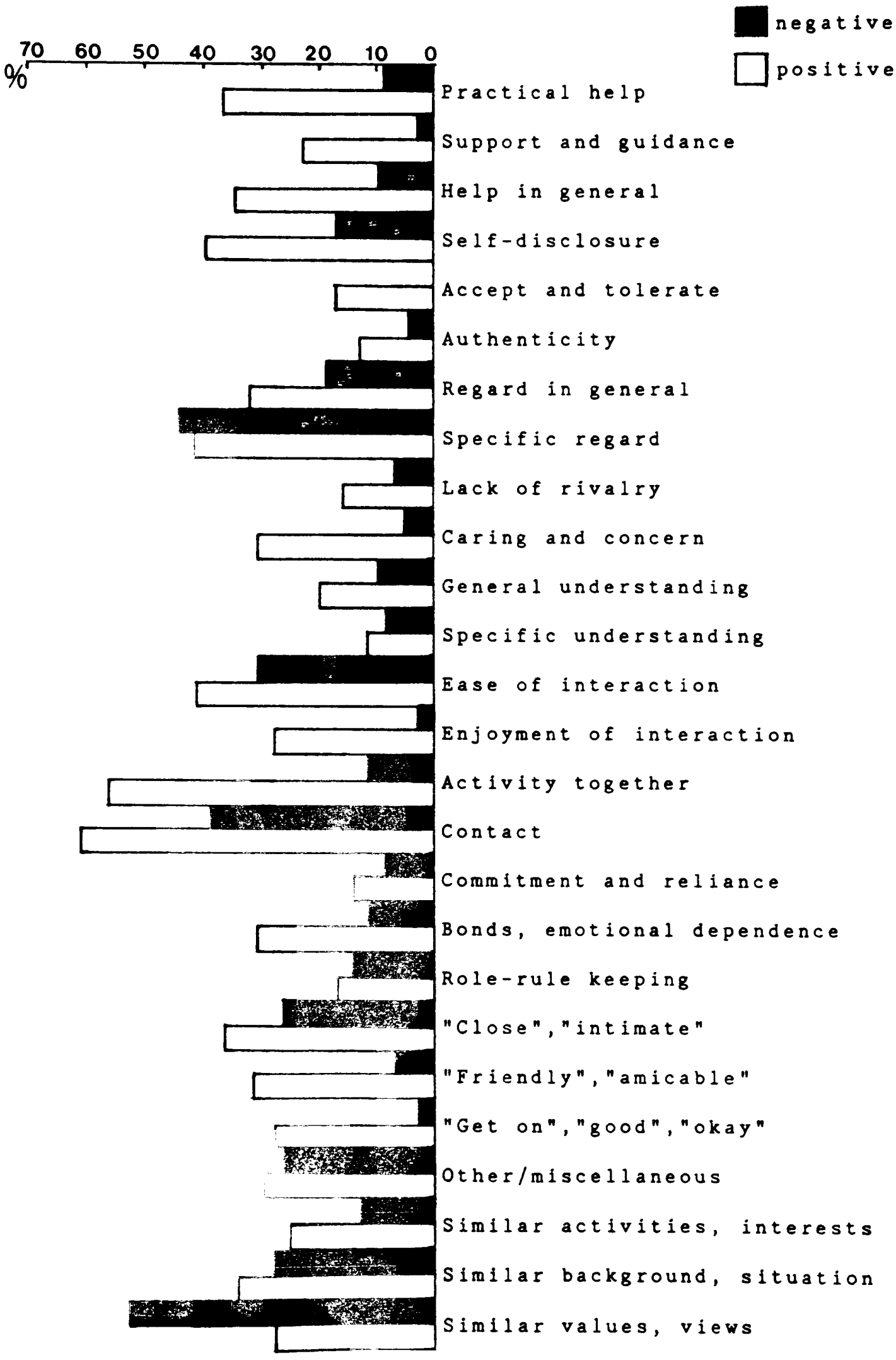


Figure 3.2 Comparison of positively termed and negatively termed references

TABLE 3.5

Summary statistics for concept categories

Category	Mean	Std.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Max	Sum
Specific Regard	2.16	2.48	.53	1.15	9	156
Similar Values, Views, etc.	1.91	2.36	2.03	1.53	9	138
Contact	1.77	1.75	.46	1.04	7	128
Activity Together	1.40	1.61	.27	.98	5	101
Similar Background, Situation	1.09	1.45	.65	1.26	5	79
General Regard	.97	1.61	8.01	2.44	9	70
Ease of Interaction	.97	1.04	2.43	1.24	5	70
Self-Disclosure	.81	1.11	.16	1.17	4	59
Practical Help	.76	1.14	2.32	1.64	5	55
Close, Intimate	.76	.88	1.77	1.25	4	55
Other	.75	1.09	6.98	2.22	6	54
Similar Activities, Interests	.65	1.16	7.81	2.58	6	47
General Help	.62	1.02	4.11	1.94	5	45
Caring and Concern	.59	1.13	4.86	2.28	5	43
Bonds, Interdependence	.56	.86	.83	1.36	3	41
General Understanding, Empathy	.52	.94	2.96	1.90	4	38
Enjoyment of Interaction	.51	.88	1.57	1.63	3	37
Lack of Rivalry	.50	1.42	18.89	3.98	9	36
Friendly, Amicable	.50	.80	4.84	2.00	4	36
Role Rules and Expectations	.37	.89	22.32	4.14	6	27
Support and Guidance	.36	.73	3.90	2.12	3	26
Commitment and Loyalty	.34	.82	8.01	2.82	4	25
Good, Get on	.33	.55	1.23	1.45	2	24
Specific Understanding, Empathy	.27	.73	23.95	4.30	5	20
Authenticity	.23	.61	7.40	2.77	3	17
Acceptance and Tolerance	.22	.56	9.59	2.94	3	16

TABLE 3.6

Because of the exploratory status of this content analysis, the main enterprise was construction of the coding scheme, and therefore more research attention was given to this than to the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The coding of the second accounts was of a preliminary nature, and will therefore not be included here.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Preview of Discussion

Much ground is to be covered in this section. First, there will be a ~~detailed~~ summary of results with regard to actual concepts used, and this will be followed by a more impressionistic overview. The special circumstances in which these accounts were elicited increase the likelihood that they are more than usually detailed and complex; therefore, where the results are equivocal, they are construed critically with regard to the underlying depth and insightfulness. The overall conclusion gives rise to suspicions that underlying conceptions of relationship tend towards being facile and superficial, and that knowledge structures are applied without much further interpretation. Any conclusions to be drawn are dogged by various difficulties inherent in content analysis and the ambiguity of language. These issues will be addressed, following preliminary description and discussion of results. Interpretation of explicit verbalisation is tempered by questioning of how and to what extent it corresponds with everyday conception of relationships.

Evaluation of content

Descriptive evaluation

According to this analysis, therefore, relationships are being

Table 3.6
Summary statistics for theme categories

'Themes'	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Min	Max	Sum
GENERAL-ISATIONS	.40	.85	.72	3.1	0	5	29
THIRD PARTY INFLUENCE	.47	.85	.73	1.8	0	3	34
CRITICAL & SALIENT INCIDENTS	.78	.98	.96	1.4	0	4	56
COMPARISON WITH OTHER RELATIONSHIPS	61	.70	.49	.7	0	2	44

described most frequently in terms of, first, whether there is a viable relationship ('Contact'), whether the parties like each others' personal qualities ('Specific Regard'), whether they do anything together ('Activity Together'), and whether there are individual differences which detract from the relationship, and -but only in the most nominal or general terms - whether the relationship is experienced as sufficiently close ('Close, Intimate, etc.'). The most frequent as a group compared with the least frequent as a group, semantically suggest that the more intimate aspects of relating are under-stressed, whereas emphasis is given to the more basic features affecting their very viability, and which might apply to more casual/ non-personal relationships. It is unsurprising to find that 'Contact' exceeds the others in frequency, given that this is the prior condition for the relationship and its formation and continuance.

An interpretation of the results is that the categories most frequently mentioned are likely to apply to most personal relationships, whereas the least mentioned apply only to the more 'personal' (defining 'personal' as the extent to which the relationship is between the parties as opposed to anyone else and the extent to which it involves and affects the parties). The frequencies suggest a bias toward the more superficial aspects of the relationships and more emphasis on aspects fundamental to forming and maintaining a relationship and less emphasis on the more intimate or personally involving aspects. This could be attributed to the type of relationship being discussed, or it could be suggested that extra personal relationships are in short supply or harder to achieve. Equally, it might be argued that accounts are confined mainly to the more basic and unremarkable aspects of relationships because remaining concepts which pertain to relationships have emotional overtones, and therefore attention to

them, in private deliberations as well as for communication purposes, is often aversive. These more emotionally slanted concepts are therefore underemphasised, understated or omitted.

Interpretative overview

The results are not highly suggestive in any direction, and an overall evaluation is therefore likely to reflect the investigator's own biases and value judgements. In the following, the author's prejudices and concerns will be evident, in addition to an emphasis on 'absence', on the basis that what has not been included may be as meaningful as that which is manifestly in evidence. With some exceptions, the accounts do not impress as particularly complex, deep and exciting, as might befit portrayal of personal relationships.

The bias towards general concepts, and the emphasis on viability, activity, sociability and biographical events, and the economy of reference to concepts denoting affect and intimacy, suggest a way of framing relationships which has more of a 'male' slant to it. That is, the most frequently used concepts are, if anything, closer to relationship qualities associated with men (Booth and Hess, 1974; Weiss and Lowenthal, 1975). This typification exaggerates the trends within them, but, if anything, they are more 'public' than 'private', and more about activity than expression. Perhaps they may be summarised as ~~more~~ more 'sociological' than 'psychological' and more 'masculine' than 'feminine'. It may be stretching the point, to describe them as generally impoverished; indeed, as monologues, they are probably longer and more detailed than is usual in everyday exchanges - though this may justify the criticism because these longer accounts were obtained in uncustomary circumstances requiring more focused thought than is usual.

This negative view contrasts with the picture of insightfulness and depth suggested by descriptions of accounting in some other

research, for instance, in studies by Weber, Harvey and Stanley (in press) and Wilkinson (in press). In these cases, there was selection of atypical subjects: Wilkinson advertised for introspective participants, and Weber et al. enlisted people who were sufficiently interested to be attending a course about relationships following the loss of a partner. Elsewhere, a favourable impression may ensue simply from the investigator's illustrative extracts from more articulate and insightful accounts.

Limitations of verbal content analysis

There are several issues which make the results of such a content analysis equivocal, especially when speculating about the nature of underlying awareness. Firstly, there are the interpretative problems of language. Coding of explicit statements only may result in an underestimation of meaning, but looking for further connotations is as likely to lead to overestimation. Secondly, as was considered in chapter three, there are a number of situational and extrinsic reasons for possible discrepancy between the public other-directed version of the account, and the private self-directed version. In this case, procedural safeguards are presumed to have reduced but not eliminated this. Finally, returning to the question of non-verbal elements of conception, there remains the possibility that what is expressed in words, however articulate and forthcoming the accounter, can only ever partially represent the associated knowledge and awareness.

Communicative factors

The special circumstances in which these accounts were elicited were described in chapter three, but various sources of bias and distortion are beyond research control, and these undoubtedly had some minimal effect on the content of accounts. The range of communicative factors can be divided into (1) who the audience/reader is, (2) the

subject of discussion, and (3) the medium of communication. The specific variables under each of these headings, listed in Figure 3.3, are self-explanatory and do not need discussion, but form the constant situational context against which interpretations of accounts must be set.

Figure 3.3

Interpretative problems

Content analysis and scheme construction have been dogged by problems of linguistic interpretation. In concentrating on referential meaning in the analysis, and subsequently speculating about the omissions, the underlying conceptions may have been underestimated. Such difficulties are inherent in content analysis (Livingstone, in press). The coding scheme has emphasised explicit references. This systematically deals with commonly used terms and expressions (and any uncommon ones which are explicitly mentioned in a guide), but the remaining, often ambiguous and vague remarks present a problem, especially when taken out of context: either the coder's interpretations are imposed or the references in question are omitted. Latent meanings are therefore in danger of being lost in content analysis. Apart from the obvious necessity of relaxing the requirement to only code explicit meaning in non-literal instances ('she drives me crazy'), it is not always clear where the dividing line is between a careful reading of the accounter's intended meaning and inference on the part of the coder. A detailed coding guide with many examples may promote inter-coder reliability, but will still be biased by the original interpretative decisions.

Some coding discrepancies will inevitably arise, given the subtlety and often ambiguous nature of language. However, apart from making coding problematic, ambiguity and connotation should perhaps be

WRITER FACTORS
- rich experience of personal relationships - formal and informal education about personal relationships - interest in and mindful about relationship - emotionally open and uninhibited - time and motivation to complete this task - articulate, literate and enjoys writing
COMMUNICATION FACTORS
- accepted assurances of confidentiality - no principles against disclosing personal information in confidence - assisted or not deterred by simulated letter-writing task - has a 'confidant' in real-life - assisted by imagination to carry out the simulation
RELATIONSHIP FACTORS
- relationship is intimate, varied or involved and there is much to discuss - relationship is 'above board' and can be freely discussed - relationship is not painful and can be easily discussed - relationship is complex or eventful and there is much to discuss

Figure 3.3 Factors relevant to conceptual breadth of relationship accounts

more appropriately regarded as intrinsic to conception, symptomatic of its dynamic nature and openness to revision and reversal. Indeed, it has been argued that such ambiguity is necessary, leaving 'room for manouvre' (Harré, 1981), and it is often in its various connotations rather than explicit content that interpersonal meaning is established, though equally misunderstandings arise.

Beyond words to awareness

The accounts have been summarised critically, with emphasis given to deficiencies rather than strengths, and factors which might invalidate this critical view (namely, the communicative context, and the non-literal nature of language) have been raised as possible objections. Beyond these intrinsic considerations of content analysis, the present emphasis on verbal expression of ideas and knowledge remains questionable. A tentative justification for the use of accounts (more specifically, simulated letters) was given in chapter two, but the relevance of verbalisation and explicit knowledge to understanding, and the extent to which these can be relied on as a guage of conception, now requires further elaboration.

The starting position of this investigation has been that words have primacy, that understanding in relationships, and what is believed about them, is crucially linked to the words which are used. Whether from the macro-perspective of social accountability (Shotter, 1984) and social constructionism (Gergen and Davis, 1985), emphasising the origin of beliefs, or from the micro-perspective of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934) and language as a mediator of dyadic and individual thought (Vygotsky, 1962), an initial guiding assumption has been that words realise and convey conceptions within and between persons. From both perspectives the stress is on language as the conveyor of meaning.

However, this choice of emphasis may have more validity from a

cultural and historical standpoint (Gergen and Gergen, in press). For individuals, in their private day-by-day contacts, the link between meaning and words, and (especially) between sense and words may be more tenuous and haphazard (Vygotsky, 1962). Even if social reality is linguistically constructed (Shotter, op. cit.; Gergen and Davis, op. cit.) - and mind, also, for that matter (Lock, 1986) - it need not follow that ~~that~~ 'reality' can only be accessed via language. Social and linguistic constructivism need not be incompatible with theories of affective dominance (Zajonc, 1980; Clarke, 1986) once allowance is made for other channels of sense and meaning which are separable though tending to be enjoined with linguistic sense. And, of course, social inculcation of linguistically conveyed meanings has no bearing on individual differences in linguistic competence and performance. Though there is no real contradiction between these positions from a long-term cultural perspective, for individuals in relationship, contradiction may arise from alternate forms of making sense. The argument which has been set out here, supports claims for the centrality of language socially, but casts doubts on its omnipotence in small scale interpersonal interaction, thereby still leaving scope for questions to be raised about the viability of using accounts as indicative of conception. In addition to understanding achieved by non-verbal communication (Argyle, 1975; Noller, 1984) and dialogues of the emotions (Tomkins, 1965; Clarke, 1986), there remains the objection that words used are not a reliable indicator (Selman, 1982) because of their availabilty to parroting, different shades of meaning, and susceptibility to being forgotten.

Related to the above is the extent to which knowledge and understanding is implicit. There is a general assumption among investigators of social cognition (Schank and Abelson, 1977; Langer, 1978) and

attribution (Fincham, 1985) that, much of the time, understanding takes place sub-consciously. A proportion of research on personal relationship knowledge indicates a largely sub-conscious level of processing (e.g. Miell, 1984; Planalp, in press). The extent to which such knowledge is 'brought into play' and is articulatable is in doubt, but some variability of access to the 'pyramids of consciousness' (Antaki, 1981) seems a fair summation, enabling cautious reference to what may be pronounced. Making implicit knowledge explicit involves effort and reconstruction. The degree of sub-consciousness in access to knowledge structures is problematic in the present investigation of relationship mindfulness. It makes suspect the reliance on verbal accounts for indications of the scope and nature of mindfulness. Thinking ahead to practical aspects, it may be that lack of conscious thoughtfulness is implicated in the haphazard fate of personal relationships, and that improving the status quo will require more explicit deliberation and theorising and taking notice of relevant events and information, and, more generally, relationship consciousness-raising. The following distinction made by Harvey (1985) is one which is relevant here:

> While at one level attribution may be continuous throughout the relationship (e.g., 'Now why did she pull that crazy act in front of our friends?'), at another level it may seldom be initiated except after a relationship has ended (e.g.,'Now what kind of a person was he really?' or "I lived with her all those years and still wonder what her most basic self was like. I wish I could know more...'). (p. 35).

A similar contrast is made by Newman (1981b). She distinguishes between implicit interpretation, involving for instance reference to 'scripts', and rarer reasoning on a conscious level. The issue of rarity, which will be addressed in later chapters, raises here questions about the extent to which knowledge can be readily accessed and made explicit to self and others, when the occasion arises. Conscious accounting becomes a special case; the value of investigating it is not undermined - on the contrary, in that it might be the

basis for action and decision-making in the future period - but implications with regard to the nature of ongoing relationship understanding are certainly affected, indicating the need for the functional distinction between having knowledge and being aware to be better understood. Any difference between conception on a conscious level and on an implicit level, makes it more noteworthy that some special effort may be involved and that conscious attention is an occasional thing.

The argument that relationship construal and attribution is implicit much of the time carries the implication that relationships are conducted 'mindlessly' - in Langer's (1978) sense of the term - and that reasoning on a conscious level is generally unnecessary. In that conscious attending need not invoke words, it would not be strictly accurate to suggest that perceptual and sensory responses are not instances of mindfulness. To suggest that responses via the senses are separate from intellectual responses would be to make the classic category mistake (Ryle, 1963) and likewise to split imagination and perception from thought as if they are unrelated or in opposition, is unhelpful. Indeed, it remains possible that perceptual or nonverbal monitoring is sometimes more effective.

Relationship Mindfulness

The question of where mindfulness 'comes in', and the redundancy or otherwise of conscious attention and conscious explanation, of which the relationship accounts for this study are an instance, is aided by the analogue of listening to music, where awareness (for any hearing person) is minimally on a sub-conscious level. Thus, in comparative terms, much of the time, ongoing relationships are like the background music of life, sometimes a source of irritation or boredom, sometimes a source of pleasure or positive stimulation, only partly or

barely stirring consciousness, and against which other activities, events and preoccupations occur. Taking notice may require some sudden aversive noise, a repetitive 'melody', a novel and especially appealing 'tune', or alternatively a specialist interest.

The metaphor of relationships as 'background music' may be further applied in seeking to explain the explicit content of conceptions as indicated in accounts. In the event of being asked for an evaluation and explanation of the 'music', attention would be uncustomarily turned to it, perhaps for the first time, and the individual might be faced with areas of uncertainty and ignorance. In comparison, at times when relationships are in the foreground or centrally preoccupying, relevant information and details are already consciously available. In the (literal) case of music, given that response to it is only secondarily or not at all verbal and intellectual, the listener may still be in considerable difficulty if attempting to formulate his evaluation into words. Music and relationships entail extremes of attentiveness. With continuous experience of either, a familiarity fallacy may arise, whereby deeper understanding is never sought, because it is assumed that no futher knowledge is required. Conversely, there is the potential for extreme and totally absorbing arousal. Separately from subsequent conceptualising which may be stimulated by such arousal and absorbtion, the emotion may facilitate a direct route to greater insight (Berenson, 1981; in press). While music is a special case, comparable nonverbal and non-intellectual aspects of relationship evaluation suggest a parallel.

Thus, there are two sources of limitation for verbalisation; person and relationship may indeed be evaluated substantially on a sensory and affective level even when at the forefront of the mind, but part of a difficulty in explaining relationships is likely to arise from a constant dismissal of them to the background of

attention. In relationships as in music, the superficial nature of attention, which in both cases is arguably all that is required, frees attention for other concerns, but entails the likelihood that insights gained from fixing on details will be missed. Additionally, understanding may remain on a tacit incomplete level, suspended and unrealised. When people describe their understanding as 'intuitive' or 'instinctive', non-intellectual routes to awareness may be implicated, but an additional probability is that they are referring to unattended fragments of knowledge which have not been formulated into words, and which some elaboration in thought would clarify.

The question to be summarised from the above discussion, is what aspects of mind are necessary for relationship awareness. Without conscious attention, the approach to understanding must be non-intellectual and on the level of sensing, limited to that which is sometimes designated, enigmatically, as tacit or instinctive or grasped on a 'gut level'. These other channels continue to be vital when explanatory attention is transferred to a linguistic and theoretical dimension. Thus, musicians might be able to describe and so clarify a musical event, and to articulate the nature of their reactions to it, perhaps thereby gaining more control and enabling insights to emerge, whilst continuing to respond through non-intellectual channels to the music, - as they must, to give it the qualities which distinguish music from a mere assembly of noises. Likewise, in a relationship, the theoretical addressing and organising of experience is an addition, not an alternative, to other levels of response. The point is that conceptualising realises the understanding into another form, enabling it to emerge. The verbalisation of conception, therefore, whether accomplished previously, or specifically for this occasion, is considered a necessary though not sufficient indication of relationship

conception, because of the organisation of ideas and focus of attention it accomplishes.

In conclusion, even whilst arguing for the relevance of verbal aspects, the limitations force themselves - difficulties of access (communication factors, problems of interpretation) and the fact that, anyway, words are not the sole 'stuff'of language and understanding. Though concentrating on explicit verbal thought, 'sensing' and 'feeling' cannot readily be set aside. In stressing the importance of explicit accounting, other facets of understanding intrude. A continuing feature of this investigation is a v y ing for the position of central importance of juxtaposed aspects of mind. Each seems to be the key to insight. On the one hand, there are words to bring understanding forth, giving it birth; on the other hand, there is something prior to words, more basic, more urgent, needing no theories, rationalisation or logic, which registers and has effect even before it has been to possible name it.

Summary of chapter

Attention was given to analysing the concepts and themes in open-ended accounts of relationship in order to ascertain the explicit content of explanation and description. A detailed schema was developed, and the elements and concepts appearing most frequently were described and discussed in the context of problems of implication and interpretation. Overall evaluation concentrated on absence and a negative interpretation of the adequacy of the underlying knowledge and awareness, and gave rise to the speculation that relationship knowledge is superficial, and tends to neglect the more intimate, inner aspects of relationship (the psychological aspects) focusing more on deeds, events, activities and social aspects. This view is highly speculative, and communication and linguisitic factors which mitigate it were considered. The relevance of language to conception

together with informed consciousness has been discussed in the context of analogy with responses to 'background' music, before going on to other forms of content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

AWARENESS IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTS

4.1 FOREWORD

A comparison of the most and least frequently mentioned categories, and discussion of ambiguity and implicit content in relationship accounts led to a critique of them as less conceptually rich than might be expected of general accounts of personal relationships, especially given that the circumstances promoted open and full disclosure. The general conclusion is that it is the more superficial and social aspects of personal relationships which are emphasised, while the emotional and more personal or intimate aspects tend to be understated or left implicit. There was discussion in the previous chapter of the need to moderate the negative view of relationship conception emerging by recognition of the limitations and obstacles to literal content analysis. It remains possible that verbalisation, either outwardly or inwardly, is a poor indicator of how relationships are represented within the mind. Further, the influence on the accounts of the type of relationships described, both nominally and in terms of how 'personal' they are, is yet to be considered (in chapter five). The coding scheme provided a framework for examining content, but in imposing such a framework the danger is that the objective of open-ended accounts is defeated. Other questions which could be asked regarding the content of accounts, and indications within them of

understanding, are necessarily excluded.

The content analysis so far has picked out the more explicit references to relationship characteristics, events and themes. This has perhaps emphasised knowledge at the expense of understanding. There may be something else within accounts, less explicitly evident, but which is conveyed within the account as a whole. Certainly, a wider assessment of conception can be made on the basis of a more holistic evaluation than can be made from isolating bits of information. Before going on to comparisons of content analysis for sub-populations, it is necessary to extend the analysis of content to other indicators of relationship conception occurring spontaneously in accounts. Despite the relevance of the previous analysis, it only allows a glimpse into the various aspects pertinent to evaluation of relationships. Further analyses are necessary, not least because the language in explanations of relationship is often beyond literal content analysis, and is open to different interpretations. Some indirect or qualitative measure, comparable with, for instance, 'cognitive complexity', (Schroder, Driver & Streufert, 1967) or of 'mutuality' (Sullivan, 1953), may be capable of making distinctions of greater relevance. Developmental literature, and indeed, everyday experience, indicate the viability of some other clue to understanding within accounts beyond specific concepts used. As Selman (1982) has contended, reliance on concepts alone is unsafe, given variablity in language use. Developmental psychologists have used alternative criteria to assess the presence of social and relationship understanding, including abstraction (Serafica, 1982), co-ordination of perspectives (Selman, 1982), and, of course, relationship behaviour per se, (Sants, 1984). A mixture of theoretical knowledge, personal knowledge, consideration for 'other', empathy and sensitivity, general

insight, and attention to specific detail all seem to be involved in intelligent relationship conception. It is appropriate, therefore, to return to accounts for further exploration. The question of how much these extra-linguistic aspects can be expected to be in evidence, again gives rise to a tension in discussion between emphasising the importance of verbalisation to conception, while at the same time questioning its sufficiency.

4.2 OTHER INDICATORS OF RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTION

Finding other indicators

In respect of children's social understanding, Selman (1984) has suggested that it is unsafe to rely on the concepts used, insofar as interpretations and usage are likely to vary, and understanding of an event may precede possession of the usual associated term. Although, as was claimed in chapter three, it is desirable to use a procedure which enables respondents to use their own terms unprompted, Selman's point is well taken in that it seems appropriate to look for understanding beyond literal analysis, though still within the realms of what may be expressed linguistically. Numerous other analyses are possible. For instance, reference to qualitative aspects of relationships, such as underlying significance of manifest action and reaction. Another kind of analysis could make more of the positive-negative distinction which has been considered, by coding more specifically the 'adverbial qualities' (Duck and Sants, 1983), that is, the way actions and feelings are expressed. There are different ways of conceptualising relationships, just as there are different ways of listening to music. E.M. Forster (1947) in Howard's End shows a comparable variability in perceptions and conceptions of music: a group of concert-goers hear the same symphony in contrasting ways -

one attends to the tonal qualities of the various instruments, another notes formal elements such as 'intervals' and 'counterpoint', while another more straightforwardly hears the melody, and another hears the interplay of emotions evoked by the music.

An important consideration in examining content, as was explained in the previous chapter, has been to look for what is mentioned spontaneously; this involves eliminating demand characteristics and avoiding the cueing of responses as far as this is possible. This achieved, the results would better reflect the issues which assume prominence and meaning to the individuals themselves, irrespective of any which are considered to be of investigative merit. Some imposition of research values is impossible to avoid at some stage: in the content analysis of concepts, the final categorisation is ultimately extrinsic to the participant's own perspective. Detached objectivity is even more difficult to achieve when going beyond literal content analysis. With this problem in view, the next consideration concerns what else within the accounts shows relationship knowledge and awareness. Deciding what to look for involves imposing some ~~some~~ prior idea of what would be a measure of relationship awareness: for instance, sophisticated reasoning? insightful observations? an emphasis on reciprocity? Would a person with high 'relationship sensibility' or 'relationship intelligence' simply march in and tell a story, or would it be appropriate to respond with something more profound, touching the lives of the people concerned in a way which is meaningful to them? Which kind of reasoning would be appropriate?

As a way forward, a useful approach may be to look for what is apparently seen as requiring explanation, and, further, to consider what form of explanation, if any is emphasised: causal, moral, teleological, descriptive, and so on. In addition, it may be useful to seek out some indication of maturity in interpersonal level in the develop-

mental social-cognitive sense. Via examination of these issues, it will be proposed that two major aspects of relationship, which can be expected to be evident in a more integrated conception, are (1)interpersonal outcome and effect, and (2) inter-subjectivity and mutuality. Accordingly, two further schemes of content analysis were constructed, at the same time as looking for evidence of these in the accounts obtained. Both the schemes and the results are tentative. The schemes have not been subjected to reliability tests, and there are insufficient accounts for any statistical testing of results to lessen the prelimimary nature of the findings. The deliberations which led to the construction of these schemes, together with preliminary results, will be turned to now.

There are two caveats with respect to the findings in these analyses. First, it is important to recall (as evident from the procedure described in chapter three) that the information sought was not categorically solicited, and therefore participants are unlikely to be disclosing all that they would reveal of relevance had they been asked directly to supply the same. Clearly, instructions indicating that these issues were of interest would have led to rather different results. However, and importantly, the same differentiation may apply in the living-out of relationships, with people being more knowing, and more potentially considerate of the other, than is revealed when otherwise preoccupied, and when they have not been specially asked to show their knowledge and consideration. Any relevant information contained gratuitously in accounts will probably be a closer reflection of what naturally comes into play. A second caveat echoes an issue in chapter three regarding what might be missing because it is not `spelt out'. The literal content may be a poor indication of what is known and held in mind. Again, however, what is under the

surface but not expressed in accounts may be under the surface and undemonstrated in relationships, (and perhaps, therefore not as functional). There may be a sense in which conceptualisation is only partly realised until it is expressed. But interpretation requires caution against underestimation on the basis of absence of elements which were unsolicited.

In summary, further analyses are necessary for an evaluation of the nature of conceptualisation conveyed within accounts. To decide on what kind of additional analyses, it is appropriate to ask both what else is there within accounts, and also to query what else could reasonably be expected to be there, given its salience within relationships. In beginning to address these issues, consideration will be given to the kinds of explanation which might indicate deeper awareness, or a richer understanding than analysis has so far suggested.

Types of explanation

In the simulated letter-writing exercise, the request was framed to invite more than one kind of explanation: "describe the kind of relationship you have with [name/type of relatee] and explain how it came to be that way ... in other words, describe and give reasons for the quality of your relationship with him/her". Insofar as some cueing is difficult to avoid completely, this was at once an invitation to go into descriptive detail and also to evaluate and give a causal (using the term loosely) explanation. There was no requirement to be analytical, intellectual, theoretical or contemplative - but the scope for any of these was there, especially given the lack of time pressure.

Orvis, Kelley and Butler (1976) remark that the attributional perspective assumes people are interested in causes. However, it may be, as Lalljee and Abelson (1983) have pointed out, that only extra-terrestials, children and social psychologists are likely to ask 'why'

questions of the kinds of everyday phenomena examined in attribution theory. In a general assessment of relationships, other forms of explanation may be more appropriate, and it was assumed that that an unconstrained open account would allow explanation of more than one type. As well as aimed at allowing participants to use their own analytical framework, this was partly a deliberate intention to avoid the singularity of attribution research, with its peculiar focus on causal explanation. For instance, spontaneous explanation is likely to be more forward looking, concerned with outcomes (the 'finalistic reasoning' which Abele (1984) includes) and purposes (and therefore 'teleological' (Rychlak, 1984) in content), and these may be more prominent than the efficient causes emphasised in attribution research.

In addition to 'why' questions, descriptive explanation, focusing on 'what' questions, is likely to be at least as prominent in such a general exposition. Antaki and Fielding (1981) indicate that such descriptive explanation is prior to other ('reason' and 'meaning') explanation, and may occur as a matter of course on an interpretative level, though as continual decoding rather than as self-conscious questioning. Runciman (1983) has suggested three types of explanation: primary (reportage), secondary (causation) and tertiary (explanation of what it is like). Primary and tertiary correspond with basic and deeper descriptive explanation, each of which could be expected to be approaches to the task set before participants. It is difficult to tease the different kinds of explanation apart within open-ended accounts. In the present investigation, for instance, a separate count of these in a selection of accounts, revealed that causal and agency explanation in the form of 'because' and 'in order to' statements is not prominent, and that considerably more of such explanation may be

inferred than may be reliably picked out if detection goes beyond statements around explicit cue phrases. (For the reasons indicated, the analysis of causal statements has not been reported here). Causal and agency references overlap with and are not readily distinguishable from descriptive and moral explanation.

For an evaluation of conception, it should be asked what kind of explanation would show, if not greater sophistication of reasoning and knowledge, depth of understanding and awareness in the way the relationship is conceptualised. For instance, would attention to agency explanation and omission of decriptive detail indicate a more advanced form of conception, or a better grasp of relationships? Alternatively, would tertiary explanation (Runciman, op.cit.) show a more advanced level of relationship awareness, perhaps connected with empathy, and thus necessary in understanding of another? Participants were asked a very general question about one of their relationships: the non-specific nature of the task perhaps necessitates questioning of what is normally taken for granted, leading to basic descriptive and agency explanation. There is also the possibility that, given the complexity of relationships, the generality of the question may also serve as a cue for in-depth search for meaning, as an extension of the basic descriptive and agency cognitions.

A comprehensive description, involves questioning of fundamentals, which may lead to more philosophical enquiry, Given the free scope to describe and explain one of their relationships, it is reasonable to speculate that accounts will include a level of assessment and evaluation which will touch on the meaning of relationships, in terms of, not just basic description as might be given to the curious extra-terrestrial but, the emotional value, psychological impact, personal changes and developments which are an outcome of that relationship, even if only in negative terms. However, there are

different levels of explanation, and it is possible to concentrate on, for instance, manifestations while disregarding underlying meaning, or to consider first order but not second order effects.

Explanation of meaning

The accounts tend to concentrate on specific events and behaviours as opposed to underlying significance or, to use a distinction made by Furman, Adler and Buhrmester (1982), the emphasis is on first order variables rather than on the underlying second order latent variables. Events are enumerated, and specific instances are described perhaps more overtly than psychological aspects, (though this can be inferred from various relating attributes which the previous analysis drew out). This is in contrast to comparable developmental studies concerned with social cognition, where relationship accounts are elicited, but where the stimulus question is about a relationship category (e.g. Berndt, 1981) rather than one of the subject's own relationships. The general question may focus attention on the prototype, inviting responses which are more definitional, uncomplicated by the often petty detail of real-world cases, and thus closer to philosophical identification of meaning. In other cases, not necessarily limited to hypothetical relationships, (e.g. La Gaipa, 1977), the probe question (e.g. 'why is this person your best friend?') invites emphasis on outcomes, expectations and philosophical beliefs. The orientation of such investigations is towards what Fincham (1985) has referred to as the `influential impact' of relationships.

In the present study, the very general questioning and openness of context left scope for, though did not prompt, this more secondary and philosophical explanation. It would therefore have been fitting for some attention to have been given ~~to be given~~ to what the parties

'do' for each other ultimately in addition to what they 'do' for each other in a more immediate sense. If, as is the general indication in attribution theory and social cognition, such theories and beliefs are generally only operative sub-consciously, (e.g. Newman, 1981; Fincham, 1985) then it becomes less likely that such insights will feature explicitly in accounts anyway. In this case, the underlying understanding of relationships would only be accessible via direct questioning, as in Rands and Levinger's (1979) study of implicit relationship theories, or by inference from descriptive categories,- as in Rosenberg and Jones's (1972) study of an implicit theory of personality. However, the special circumstances and the philosophical nature of the questioning may qualify this as one of the rarer exceptions when deeper probing occurs (Harvey, 1985).

There are different levels on which this may be accomplished, from statement of direct effects of specific action, to philosophical excursions regarding why people need each other. Because the simulated letters were about a specific relationship, extensive theorising about relationships in general was unlikely, (though see examples of 'Relationship Generalisations' and 'Relationship Comparisons' in Appendix C1.4).

4.3 SCHEME FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS AND OUTCOMES

Introduction

Much has been written and a great deal of evidence has been presented about the fundamental role of relationships in meeting basic human needs (Davis and Roberts, 1985), in provision of social support and health benefits (Leavy, 1983), enabling self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961), or individuation (Storr, 1963), and serving self-referent needs (Wright, 1984), and so forth. Indeed the rationale for personal relationship research derives from recognition of their

crucial effects, whether beneficial or detrimental, on participants. This scheme is directed to the question of whether relationship conception includes acknowledgement of the potential within relationships for developing, changing, or making some impact on the individuals involved. While it may be assumed that people have some knowledge of the potential and significance of relationships in general, it is not known whether such knowledge is connected with their own relationships, or whether it is primarily theoretical and rarely brought to mind. The objective of this analysis, therefore, is to explore the place given to interpersonal influence, impact, change and so forth (summarised as effect and outcome) in open-ended description and explanation of sibling and friend relationships.

Coding categories

The scheme, with examples, coding instruction and coding form, is set out in Appendices C2.1 and C2.2. Its purpose is to code explicit references in relationship accounts to either party causing, influencing or being implicated in some change, impact, effect or outcome for the other party. There are four categories of change, etc. These are: (1) self-concept, (2) mind, personality (3) behaviour and action, and (4) health, well-being, life. Because the interest is in explicit conception of such effect, all such references are admissable, regardless of causal attribution or the direction or evaluation of outcome. Thus, reference to both negative, as well as positive, effects are included ('he stopped me getting married'), plus reference to attempts to change, influence, have an effect (e.g. `he tried to convert me to his religion'), and near cases of effect (e.g. `I nearly left home because of him';`she almost persuaded me to give up my job'); references to absence of effect (e.g. `he hasn't succeeded influencing me'); inverted references to effect (e.g. `if it hadn't

been for her I'd still have been employed'); references to the possibility of effect (e.g. `I think I was a big factor in her decision to move'); instances where the effect is not directly attributed to the other person, but is attributed to self's response to the other (e.g.`knowing he was there enabled me to pull through'; `having her to care for gave my life meaning'), or attributed to the relationship (e.g. `our friendship coloured my childhood'). Some other distinctions and criteria for inclusion are given in the coding instructions in Appendix C.

Relevant references extend to relationship effects as well as the effects of the two individuals (e.g. 'our friendship has changed me'as opposed to 'he has changed me'), and include those which are expressed in clear causal terms (e.g. `she made me...'; `because of him, I...'), and more equivocal cases in expressions of association, formal causation and enabling conditions (e.g. `ever since we became friends, she...'; `I did... and therefore he...').

A preliminary analysis revealed how scarce such references were, even despite the broad inclusion criteria. It was observed that some of the statements about effect and outcome concerned more temporary results or ones which are, arguably, less significant - that is, not leading to any change within the person or his/her lifestyle. However, they could qualify because they conform with the conception of one party making an impact on the other. An elaboration of the scheme was therefore widened to include more transient and more trivial interpersonal outcomes, which are termed 'minor' instances, in contrast to 'major' instances. The coding sub-categories are the same for both `major' and `minor' types. To qualify as `major', the reference is to an impact, effect, change or outcome which, if not permanent, has some stability and therefore applicability over a period of time. `Minor' impact, effect, etc. is non-recurring and transient or apparently

trivial. It is necessary to make use of context to make a distinction between `major' and `minor' in ambivalent instances. Some examples of each, (direct extractions or summary versions of instances in accounts), with the sub-category number in parenthesis, are as follows:

major
She helps me to grow (2)
She has made life more precious to me (4)
He seems to bring out the best in me (2)
X was the greatest influence in my formative years (2)
If anything happened to him I'd feel that half of me had gone (4)
She ruined my life in more ways than one (4)
minor
I introduced her to yoga, which was a great success (3)
He taught me to keep clean hair, teeth and ears (3)
She used to make me feel rather boring (1)
Meeting her has resulted in a social life for me (3)
She is a tonic to me when I see her (4)

Such references within accounts are not all as concise or as explicit as in the examples above and in the coding guide; some only lose their ambiguity from context. Indeed, the schema is biased toward more explicit reference. The coding involved assigning all such references to, first, either the `major' or the `minor' category, then to `participant' or `other' column depending on which party is instrumental (both columns if the direction of effect is reciprocal or effect is attributed to `the relationship'), and finally to one of the four sub-categories.

Results

Table 4.1 shows the results of this analysis in respect of 131 accounts provided by Group A participants, from the subject panel of the Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford. The relevant references are few enough for them all to be listed, in categories, in Appendix C2.2.

TABLE 4.1

TABLE 4.1
Categories of references to relationship effect and outcome

	Category	P to O	O to P	P↔O	total (%)
MAJOR	self-concept		2		2 (3.2)
	mind; personality	1	2		3 (4.8)
	behaviour and action	1	3		4 (6.3)
	well-being; health	2	3	1	6 (9.5)
	life; general	5	4	2	11 (17.5)
	total (%)	9 (14.3)	14 (22.26)	3 (4.8)	26 (41.3)
MINOR	self-concept	2	2		4 (6.3)
	mind; personality	2	6	1	9 (14.3)
	behaviour and action	1	8		9 (14.3)
	well-being; health	1	5	1	7 (11.1)
	life; general		5	3	8 (12.7)
	total (%)	6 (9.5)	26 (41.3)	5 (7.9)	37 (58.7)
	grand total (%)	15 (23.8)	40 (63.5)	8 (12.7)	63

Key: P = participant O = other ↔ = to each other

From the 131 accounts, there were only 63 such references. These were in respect of 39 percent of the accounts, and 40 percent of the participants. As shown in Table 4.1, 58.7 percent of these references relate to minor rather than major effect, a distinction which was exemplified above.

Discussion

As was the case in the content analysis of concepts, omission is perhaps as interesting and informative as that which has been included. While the actual categorisation and corresponding distribution of references has intrinsic interest, to dwell on that leads away from the rarity of all such references, which may be of greater significance. The indication is that people tend ~~to~~ not to estimate their personal relationships in terms of the fundamental positive and negative effects on each other. The task is one which could be expected to have given rise to such considerations, despite the absence of relevant probe questions. The choice of relationships, though presumably often not the participants' closest, does not satisfactorily explain this omission, because the scheme includes for reference to negative effect; it does, however, indicate the need for more research to obtain clearer results.

There was no significant difference between the number of such references in both relationship types. This was as anticipated. The relationship between siblings goes back to formative years for one party at least, when possibly more time was spent in interaction together than with parents (Pepler, 1981), so that the opportunity for mutual influence has been extensive. In the case of friendship, the close and voluntary nature of the relationship allows an openness and susceptibility to such influence.

The results suggest that deeper analysis is relatively rare, and that description which has not been directed towards causal or

purposive explanation, deals with whatever has manifested itself in an obvious way. It is concentrated on interpersonal 'noise': critical events and biographical turning points, characteristic feeling and interpersonal actions which intrude upon consciousness. They include occasional glimpses into second order causes and reasons, but the positioning of these gives them the quality of being freshly glimpsed insights, rather than reported scripts being shown on request. It is likely that the activity of focusing on the relationship in order to make it intelligible, leads the accounter to second order understanding. To elaborate on this in terms of analogy with music appreciation, the individual may be satisfied that (s)he knows a familiar piece of music well, and if called upon to evaluate it may not find the task difficult, but it remains possible that more concentrated and appropriately inquisitive listening may enable the person to detect other characteristics affecting enjoyment and understanding.

Unconscious reservations may interfere with thinking about relationships in these terms. Such conceptualising involves the accounter in some possibly uncomfortable confrontation of self and other's motives and the extent to which the relationship is satisfactory. A more cynical interpretation is that effects, in terms of gains and losses have been estimated, but are not mentioned, because it is taboo to talk about them. This would be in line with Baxter and Wilmot's (1985) finding that the 'state of the relationship' was the most taboo among taboo topics of conversation - though a difference is that their participants were dating couples, and the participants in the present study were already giving an account of the state of one of their relationships. Motivational aspects will be of continuing importance, and will be the subject of chapter seven.

4.4 SCHEME FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTER-SUBJECTIVITY

Introduction

The developmental perspective on conception relevant to relationships includes both descriptive and structural studies. In a review of both, Selman (1981), has argued that the descriptive approach, (which employs the concepts used as a measure of conceptual development) is unreliable because of the lack of a one-to-one relation between production of words and comprehension. Structural studies, therefore look for indirect evidence of the cognitive aspect of interest, use some independent measure, such as abstraction capacity (Serafica, 1981) and, as in Selman's own case, co-ordination of perspectives.

While it is clear that it would be unwise to assess understanding on the simple criterion of choice of words, the difficulty may be less readily resolved, than is implied by Selman, once the question of incidence is raised. Indirect indicators of social cognition elicited by specially devised tasks may provide a more efficient means of assessing knowledge and understanding, but they may lead to an erroneous representation of the extent or level of conception involved if the relevant issues are not referred to in everyday interaction, and so lie dormant. In other words, the level of understanding and extent of knowledge evident in a test situation is an unreliable index for the demonstration of that knowledge and understanding in uncontrived situations. Similarly the present analysis retains the problems inherent in using words for indications of conception.

Further, the content analyses thus far have emphasised knowledge at the expense of emotional aspects, including motivation, caring and empathy. The analytical analogue suggests the possibility that the

theoretical and intellectual responses are dispensable, but perceptual responses are not, and an emotional response, while it may not always be present, is likely to be the most crucial level of response, when it is. The third content analysis was developed following questions about the presence of a non-intellectual aspect of importance to relationship awareness.

A relevant question is whether accounts show development of mature relationship conception, as evidenced by the proportion of references to other, and the extent of perspective taking. Together, these are comparable to (or in the same spirit as) 'mutuality' (Sullivan, 1953) and 'co-ordination of perspectives' (Selman, 1981).

Coding objective and categories

The objective of this scheme, which is shown in Appendix C3.1, is to code all references to 'other', 'we' and 'self' according to whether they are from a subjective or objective perspective, comparable to some extent with a distinction between insiders' and outsiders' perspectives (Olson, 1977). The 'we' category includes references to 'the relationship', 'our friendship' and the like. Because it is not always possible to distinguish between objective and subjective references, a third category for references which are 'ambiguous' in this respect had to be reserved. In addition to being aimed at discovering the balance between subjectivity and objectivity, the analysis simultaneously serves as a measure of egocentricity and alter-centricity in accounts. The mid-way position is of course a third possibility, in cases where the emphasis is on reference to 'we' and the 'relationship' as opposed to either of the individuals. A summary of the divisions (given in full in Appendix C3.1) within the scheme is as follows:

SUBJECTIVE REFERENCES
O's views, feelings, etc. (about P)(about O)(about O+P)(other)
O+P's views, feelings, etc. (about P)(about O)(about O+P)(other)
P's views, feelings, etc.(about P)(about O)(about O+P)(other)
OBJECTIVE REFERENCES
traits, personality, way of behaving (of O)(of O+P)(of P)
acts, deeds, activities (of O)(of O+P)(of P)
appearance (of O)(of O+P)(of P)
biographical, situation, events, etc. (of O)(of O+P)(of P)
AMBIGUOUSLY SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE
(Key: P=participant O+P=we, the relationship O=other)

Application of the scheme therefore involves two-way coding of every reference to parties, first, according to who it concerns (participant or person providing the account, the other person in the relationship, or both together), and second, according to whether it is subjective or objective. The coding form is shown in Appendix C3.2. `Subjective references' are those which refer to views, feelings, attitudes, intentions, motives, thoughts... and others in the family of concepts which refer to what is in the mind of the individual and his psychological experience. In other words, these are points made from an 'inside' perspective. Objective references, in contrast, refer to the person from a detached or 'outsider' standpoint, which is in some sense externally evident without recourse to the person's psychological experience.

In distinguishing between objective and subjective references, a comparative point is that whereas in the `objective' section, it is references to or about one or both of the parties which are coded, in the `subjective' section the coded references are about the viewpoint, feeling, or other psychological experience of either or both of the parties. These views, etc. may be in respect of each other, the relationship or something extrinsic to it.

The coding sub-categories, under the divisions of 'subjective' and 'objective', are 'other', 'participant' and 'participant plus other'. Every reference to either or both of the parties is therefore

TABLE 4.2

Examples of subjective references

category	other's	participant's plus other's	participant's
about participant	'she seemed to care for me 'he things I'm strange' 'she says she likes and respects me' = 2 'I don't know what he thinks or feels about me' = 2 'I'm sure she sees me as selfish' 'she understands how busy I am' 'he tried to use me'	'we are both pleased with the change in me' 'neither of us thought I'd end up there' 'we agree that I was wrong'	'I get annoyed with myself' 'I don't really know myself' 'I want to improve but I'm pleased with my progress' = 2
about other	'he feels he can be open now' 'he was probably pleased with himself' 'she expected me to give her advice' 'he will be angry with himself' 'all this has made her feel insecure' 'he has never appeared bitter about his misfortunes'	'we both believe we can do it' 'we both knew she would go' 'neither of us expected him to change'	'I want her to be happy' 'I am pleased with her situation' 'I expected him to do well' 'I hoped she would change her mind' 'In my opinion, she is selfish'
about other and participant	'I know how she feels about us' 'she was uncertain about our future' as friends' 'she thinks we are both lucky' 'she hopes we will get over it' 'he thinks I am brighter than him' 'he believes we were treated differently'	'we are both surprised we have remained friends so long' 'neither of us thought we would get on' 'we intend to spend more time together' 'we knew we would enjoy being together 'we did not expect conflict between us'	'I hoped she would be open with me' 'I look forward to a better relationship' 'I doubt if the hostility between us will last' 'I don't understand what went wrong between us' 'I intend to continue this friendship'
about other people things, life, situations, and in general	'she expects the best from everyone' 'he doesn't get depressed and isn't subject to moods, [unlike me] = 2 'she seemed angry with our parents' 'she loves dancing' 'he was interested in photography' 'he likes to travel and wanted to go to America' = 2	'we both feel the same way about things' 'our attitudes to everyting are divergent' '[we chatted] about the joys of rearing children' 'we intend to have a good time' 'X. amuses me'	'I love my job' 'I want to get a new car' 'I enjoyed the holiday' 'Iget uptight about things' 'my marriage had broken down. and I was upset' 'and I'm feeling fine, these days' = 2

TABLE 4.3
Examples of objective and ambiguous references

category	about other	about other and participant	about participant
traits personality way of behaving	'she is likeable, efficient, and a stimulating friend' = 3; 'she is odd' 'she is more intelligent [than I]' 'I value his warmth and kindness' = 2 'he behaved nervously' 'she exudes self-confidence and knowledgability and is self-assured but not intimidating' = 4	'our personalities are different' 'we were inseparable' 'we haven't got a lot in common 'our relationship is friendly and chatty' = 2 'we are both stubborn'	'I'm an outgoing person' 'I behave confidently' 'I'm not as intelligent [as him]' 'I always get up early'
acts, deeds, activities	'he got the job', he did a lot for me' 'she won'; 'he played the piano' 'she has regular dinner parties' '[I let her] talk and cry' = 2 'he laughed and talked a lot' 'she collects antiques [like me]' 'he stays at home a lot'	'we go skiing together' 'we maintain contact' 'we have interests in common' 'we shared many escapades' 'we worked at the same place' 'we chatted together about ...'	'I attend an art class' 'I gave her a birthday present' 'I teach' 'I will telephone him regularly' 'I will be going on a skiing holiday'
appear- ance	'her hair is fairer [than mine]' 'he looks [like me]' 'she was tall and slim' = 2	'we both have blond hair' 'we look alike'	'my hair is fairer [than hers]' 'I look [like him]'
biographical, status, situation, events, background, possessions, etc.	'she is older than me' 'he has been divorced twice' 'he is married, with four children, and lives near me' = 3 'she was under the doctor for a while' 'he went to Australia'	'we went to the same school' 'we are from different class backgrounds' 'our upbringing was quite strict' 'we both have motor cars'	'I went to boarding school' 'I got married and moved away' = 2 'I was involved in an accident'
ambiguous - subjective or objective	'she left home defeated and embittered' 'he is an anxious person	'our friendship deepened' 'the bonds became firmer' 'we seemed to click' 'we are close' 'we get on well together'	'I am affectionate'

included. The categories (explained further in the Scheme set out in Appendix C2.1) with examples are given in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

TABLE 4.2

TABLE 4.3

Results

Figure 4.1 shows that the means for subjective references to to 'other'(4.3) and to 'we'(3.0) are lower than the respective means for objective references, which are 5.4 for 'we' and, showing considerable increase, 11.8 for 'other'. In contrast, there are more subjective (5.8) than objective (4.9) references to self. The sub-categories for each of these groups are given in Table 4.4, and some population differences will be referred to in the next chapter.

Figure 4.1

TABLE 4.4
Means for inter-subjectivity categories

subjective about other	mean	sd	var	min	max
O about P	1.4	2.6	6.9	0	17
O about O	0.2	0.5	0.2	0	2
O about O+P	0.1	0.4	0.1	0	2
O about etc.	2.6	3.2	10.4	0	14
subjective about both	**mean**	**sd**	**var**	**min**	**max**
P+O about P	0	0	0	0	0
P+O about O	0	0	0	0	0
P+O about O+P	1.7	3.2	10.2	0	23
P+O about etc.	1.3	1.9	3.4	0	11
objective about other	**mean**	**sd**	**var**	**min**	**max**
about O traits	3.8	4.1	17.1	0	21
about O actions	3.8	4.1	17.1	0	19
about O appearance	0.3	0.9	0.8	0	5
about O life events	4.3	3.4	11.9	0	18
objective about both	**mean**	**sd**	**var**	**min**	**max**
about P+O traits	1.1	1.7	2.9	0	11
about P+O actions	3.2	3.1	9.5	0	14
about P+O appearance	0.04	0.3	0.1	0	2
about P+O life events	1.2	1.8	3.1	0	8

KEY: P=participant O+P=we, the relationship O=other

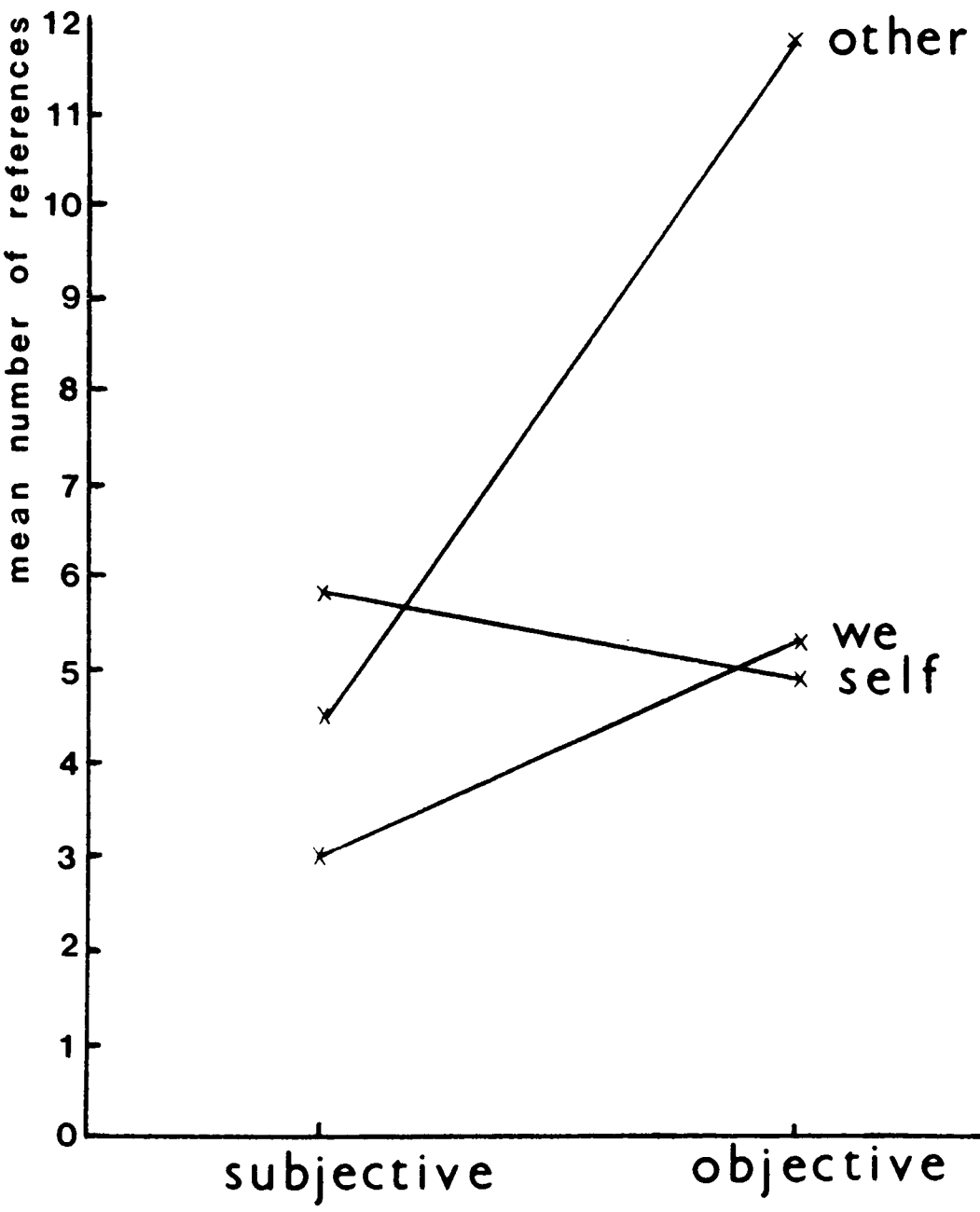


Figure 4.1 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity in references to 'other' in accounts of different relationship types

Discussion

Conclusions have to be tempered by the possiblilty that the ratio of self-other references may vary with other factors besides locus of centricity, most obviously by differences in how eventful or problematic things have been for each party. Also, differences in linguistic style or accounting style may affect centricity, though this emphasis may simply reflect the focus of conception. An impressionistic account for instance, concentrating on the emotional tone of the relationship and on what is valued in it, may not be as other-centred as one which goes into events, simply because it summarises, and looks at implications and deeper meanings rather than concentrating on descriptive detail of particular occasions or a 'blow by blow' account of action.

4.5 RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

Conception as awareness

The analyses reported in this chapter have gone beyond surface content for deeper or indirect indications of insight and understanding. Schemata have been more probing, in search of, first, more philosophical elements in conception, and second, indications of social cognitive maturity in the form of taking the other's point of view. These aspects of interpersonal knowledge and understanding are still within the ambit of 'relationship conception' as it has been broadly defined here. However, it may be more appropriate now to refer to it as 'relationship awareness', in that the concept of 'awareness' has more obvious connotations of non-linguistic sense-making processes in addition to theoretical knowledge. Acitelli (1984) with Duck (Acitelli and Duck, 1986) have suggested the introduction of 'relationship awareness' to refer to individuals' conscious, continuously developed

and modified perspective on their relationship. There is no incompatibility with what has been suggested here, though in the present work it is not assumed that such awareness is always conscious; indeed, the specification of 'awareness' as distinct from 'conception' is to accommodate less conscious, less intellectual aspects of relationship knowledge, though at the other extreme 'awareness' it may be taken to imply deeper understanding, and multi-faceted knowledge, penetrating insights, perceptiveness, and so forth. 'Awareness' is more appropriate than 'conception' for the analyses of this chapter, because it has these additional connotations.

Emotional and perceptual understanding

The implications of the analysis of inter-subjectivity, in particular, have moved investigation away from intellectual and knowledge-based understanding to more emotional and perceptual elements involved in understanding. For the same reason, the focus is directed away from explicit language and elements of conception conveyed linguistically, to hidden levels of consciousness, and to knowledge which may be founded more by impulses, mood, and affective empathy than by buried structures of cognition. It is clear that much interpersonal understanding is gained, or missed as the case may be, by perceptual decoding of nonverbal exchanges (Argyle, 1975; Noller, 1984). Once again, allowance should be made for the contribution of non-intellectual routes to relationship knowledge. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1984) use the term 'emotional antennae' (attributed to women) to describe an extra facility in gaining interpersonal understanding. Whether the source of such a facility is a biological capacity for empathy (Hoffman, 1977), inculcated values introduced in childhood (Rubin, 1983) or whether it involves some deliberate effort in striving to love others (Fromm, 1957), it is partly on an affective level that appropriate understanding is reached. Some investigators

have proposed that the emotional system allows the only effective route to understanding others (Berenson, 1981; in press; Clarke, 1986; in press).

The contention that non-linguistic routes are crucial to personal understanding of others, gives rise to the possibility that factual or theoretical relationship understanding is quite separate from understanding of the 'other', and that analysis of accounts for indications of this aspect of relationship knowledge is misguided. Indeed, Berenson (1981) has argued that interpersonal understanding cannot be adequately expressed via language because, even if the relevant information is articulated, it is taken out of the context of the relationship and is qualitatively different:

> There is also a crucial difference between having such understanding and trying to convey it. Two people's deep understanding of each other manifests itself within their relationship which is its natural home. Trying to express something of this ~~this~~ understanding is trying to shift it from its natural habitat...(p.184)

On this fundamental level of striving to understand another person, theoretical knowledge concerning relationships in general, or the relationship in question, is surely secondary. On this level, just as crucial as emotional involvement, are the specific factual details about the other person, which when separated into individual items are no more than trivia, but which make it possible to assess his or her actions and response in context - 'to know where he/she is coming from'. Rather less trivial are the other's views, feelings, etc., which were the subject of analysis above, and which Peters (1974) describes as: 'far more important for understanding another person than any generalizations about human nature suggested by psychologists...' (p.58). However, (assuming he/she did not have to ask other for all of this information), the person's own theories, which may in turn be derived from psychological theories and other

cultural sources, are likely to have aided these particular insights. To this extent, at least, understanding of another can be conveyed via language.

Kinds of knowledge

It is useful to consider Ryle's (1949) distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' for its relevance here. Essentially, this is a contrast between practice and theory, between executing a deed and intellectualising about it. He refutes the 'intellectualist legend' whereby it is suggested that performance may be improved by reference to theoretical knowledge, and claims instead that proficiency is achieved by practice and not by rule learning or intellectual formulation. Intelligence is displayed in action, without ~~there~~ any prior consideration being necessary. With regard to understanding in relationships, the argument may be extended to suggest that there may be no connection between formulations of understanding in an account, and understanding conveyed within an exchange between persons. One of his more persuasive examples is that of a 'Hamlet of the boxing ring', with obvious implications. With regard to the musical parallel, his point would be that knowing how to play an instrument need not be accompanied by a repertoire of musical theory, nor an understanding of how music effects its charm.

By implication, it should not be assumed that a successful interactant in relationships will be able to communicate about them, or will have access to theoretical knowledge, because a different kind of knowledge is relevant. This can be linked to Berenson's (1981) argument, mentioned above, with regard to the context of interpersonal understanding and the qualitative difference between an inside and outside perspective. On the bases of the preceding arguments, verbal accounts cannot be expected to be especially valid indicators of

knowledge and understanding. Both of these positions seem to underestimate representation and the role of language in conveying and accessing meaning. It is appropriate to emphasise the emotional inside perspective as Berenson has done, but it is not beyond outsiders to enter into a vicarious understanding and to empathise simply on the basis of words, and, in the same way, for insiders to convey their understanding to others. Ryles's argument emphasises skills and applications of knowledge, and may not be applicable to conducting a relationship, where 'performance' (or 'skill'or 'practice') is only one side of the phenomena: the more receptive ('listening', formulating role) is the other side. The more reflective aspects, capable of being formulated and expressed in words, are necessary on some level to realise the relationship. Representation is indivisible and its formulation in words may be key to this, but in addition a kind of awareness which is achieved by focused interest, and by being emotionally 'caught up' with someone (Berenson, in press) may underlie alternative forms of knowledge: 'knowing what'; tertiary knowledge or knowing what something is like (Runciman, 1983).

Summary of chapter

Earlier speculations about the structure of relationship conceptions were based on a literal content analysis of pertinent concepts used. Further analyses were undertaken to fill out the picture of relationship conceptions. Two other coding schemes were constructed to check accounts for evidence of first, conceptualisation of relationship effects and outcomes (Scheme 2), as an indicator of theoretical knowledge of relationship meaning; and second, inclusion of mutuality and intersubjectivity (Scheme 3). Both are an attempt to discover further elements in relationship conceptualisation, as spontaneously revealed in accounts, and to consider the implications for understanding of personal relationships. Scheme 2 revealed that

explicit reference to the significance of parties to each other is infrequent. Application of Scheme 3 showed that objective information is emphasised with respect to the other and the relationship, but subjective references exceed objective references in respect of self; however, the self is discussed less than other. Both are an attempt to discover further elements in relationship conceptualisation, as spontaneously revealed in accounts, and to consider the implications for understanding of personal relationships. Again, the issue of non-linguistic aspects of relationship conception came into prominence, and the focus was extended to allow for other levels of knowledge and relationship awareness.

CHAPTER FIVE

POPULATION DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONSHIP ACCOUNTING

5.1 FOREWORD

An obvious consideration in looking at the content of people's relationship conception is whether there are any differences between population sub-groups, notably differences in respect of the type of relationships being discussed and differences according to gender of the discussant. The emotional status of the relationship (warm/cold, happy/unhappy) and the individual's relationship background are likely to be other important distinguishing characteristics. In the previous analyses, such differences were deliberately avoided in order to consider the more general relational issues and commonality, which might otherwise have been scrambled in the process of making comparisons. As with any specialism, differentiation may result in over-looking basic issues. An example of this would be attributing the high divorce rate in both Great Britain and North America to the nature of marriage as an institution, whilst failing to make connections between the troubles of spouses and comparable constraints and similar patterns of conflict experienced within all long-term personal relationships. Commonality between relationships has therefore been given first priority. However, some fresh insight may be gained and the general results more readily explained from examination now of sub-populations.

The following is primarily a continuation of the main content analysis of relationship accounts (participant group A) begun in chapter three and continued in chapter four, and with results pertaining to the same accounts and coding schemas: in brief, Relating Concepts (Scheme 1), Outcome and Effect (Scheme 2) and Inter-subjectivity (Scheme 3). Summary results in respect of participant group B will also be shown; these participants were selected on the basis that they had a history of failed relationships. The degree of personal relationship 'success' or 'failure' in respect of Group A is not known, this not having been a criterion at the time of their selection, but it may be assumed that this sample is more averagely representative in this respect. The scheme for coding of relating concepts was also applied to prototype descriptions of siblings and friends, and the main results will be compared with the central analysis. The results to be presented are highly selective, mainly because many of the comparisons were not statistically significant, and it would merely fill paper to set these out, and also because larger numbers of participants are required to enable further comparison of sub-groups in subsequent research. Most space will be given to sex differences and to relationship type differences, following some selective comparisons.

5.2 SELECTIVE COMPARISONS

Some combined results are set out first, to facilitate comparison. In the earlier chapters, population differences were deferred. The main summary distinctions in respect of men compared with women, sibling accounts compared with friendship accounts and three age groups are shown in Table 5.1. (a) gives the results for presence or absence of the Relating Concept categories (in Scheme 1),

and (b) gives the mean number of references across all Relating Concept categories. Sub-divisions relate to the negative or positive valence of references and similarity categories, with further sub-divisions for the direction of action or feeling (i.e. participant to other, other to participant, or to each other). One-way analyses of variance revealed some significant differences, but many of the comparisons were not significant. The most noteworthy difference here is that women used a wider range of relating concepts than did men.

TABLE 5.1
Categories and concepts by sex, relationship type and age group

a) mean number of concept categories used

	men	women	sibings	friends	20-39	40-59	60+
all	8.97	11.80***	10.97	9.80	12.12	10.25	8.79*
positive	7.39	10.28**	8.42	9.25	10.83	9.00	6.67*
negative	4.33	5.53	6.14	3.72**	6.58	4.25	3.96*
similar	.94	1.00	.64	1.30*	1.08	.92	.92
different	1.08	1.08	1.44	.72**	1.25	1.04	.95
positive P-O	1.53	2.30**	2.14	1.69	2.12	2.12	1.50
positive O-P	1.75	2.75**	2.17	2.33	3.00	2.25	1.50*
positive P+O	3.22	4.39*	3.67	3.94	4.75	3.71	2.96
negative P-O	.78	1.30	1.39	.69*	1.33	1.00	.79
negative O-P	1.11	1.55	1.55	1.11	1.79	.91	1.29
negative P+O	1.36	1.53	1.72	1.16	2.21	1.33	.79***

b) mean number of concept references

	men	women	sibings	friends	20-39	40-59	60+
all	18.22	23.39*	22.61	19.00	26.33	19.54	16.54**
positive	11.42	15.42*	12.92	13.92	16.04	13.29	10.92
negative	6.64	7.86	9.61	4.89**	10.00	6.17	5.58*
similar	1.97	2.50	1.83	2.64	3.17	1.87	1.67
different	2.00	1.81	2.81	1.00**	2.46	1.54	1.71
positive P-O	1.97	2.78	2.67	2.08	2.54	2.62	1.96
positive O-P	2.50	4.53*	3.44	3.58	4.58	3.17	2.79
positive P+O	4.86	6.19	5.44	5.58	6.17	5.87	4.54
negative P-O	1.03	1.89	2.17	.75**	2.08	1.42	.87
negative O-P	2.14	2.78	2.97	1.94	3.50	1.67	2.21
negative P+O	1.47	1.69	1.97	1.19*	2.37	1.58	.79***

* p<.05
** p<.01
*** p<.001

With regard to comparisons in repect of Scheme 3 (Inter-subjectivity), the analysis suggests that participants become more objective and correspondingly less subjective in their references to other as they get older. This is particularly the case with regard to women, who in younger age-groups were marginally more subjective and less objective. Older people have more biographical details to report in respect of life-long relationships (siblings), and this would explain the increased references to ~~more~~ a more factual type of information. The more prohibitive and restricted past of the older participants may have some bearing on decreased mention of information of a more personal and emotional (inside perspective) nature. Figure 5.1 shows the distinctions.

Figure 5.1

Failed relationship history

Group B participants, 30 clients of the Probation and After-care Service, undertook a modified version of the simulated letter-writing procedure followed by Group A participants. Modifications were made to meet differing participant needs anticipated and also the administrative differences (e.g. initial contact, incentives). Details of the selection criteria and procedure may be seen in the relevant material in Appendix B.

There is evidence (e.g. grammar, spelling) of greater variability of literary competence within this group, reflecting more difficulty in the writing task for some, but all had reached at least an adequate level of literacy to complete the task. Table 5.2 sets out the main results.

TABLE 5.2

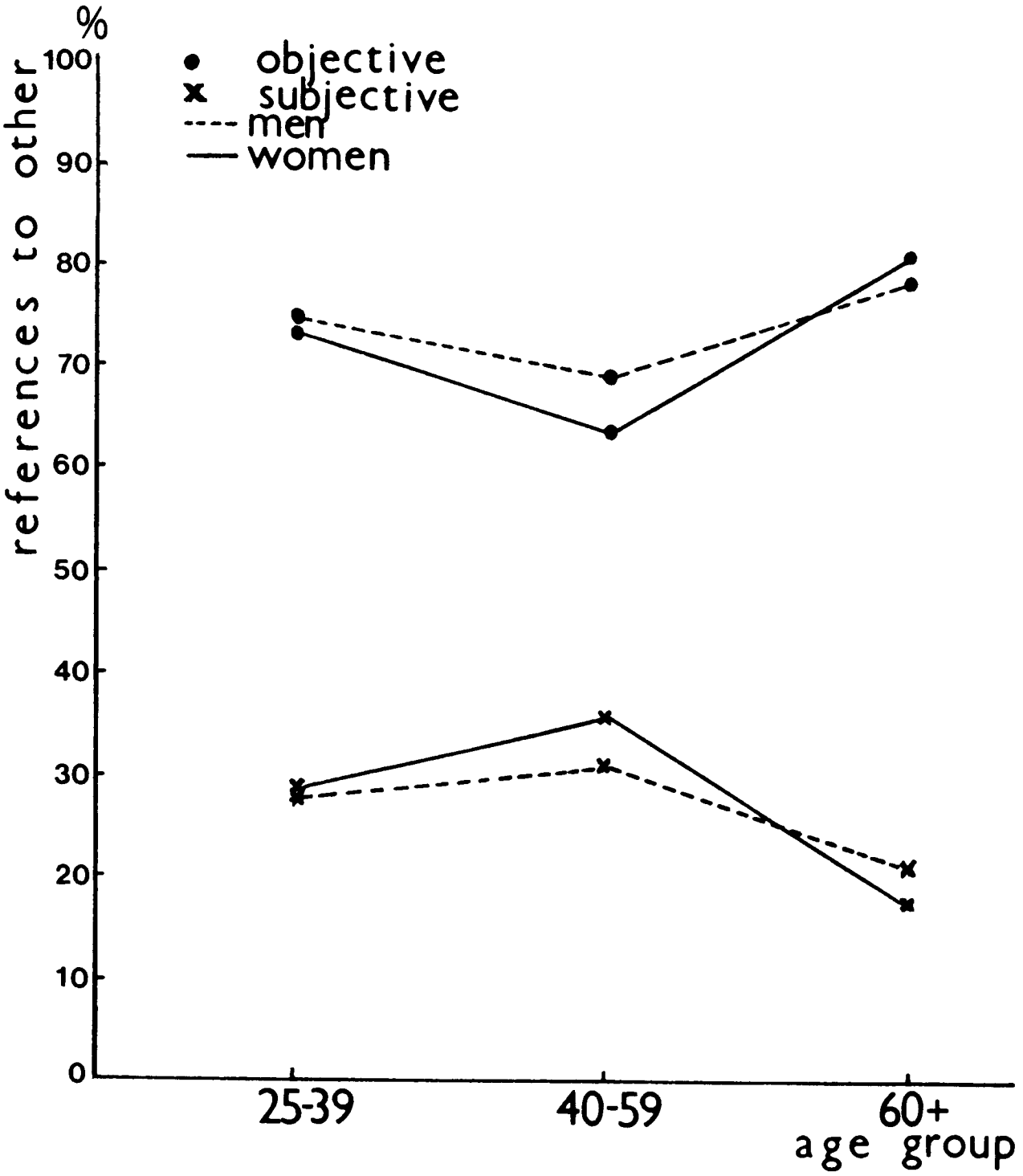


Figure 5.1 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity by sex and age-group

TABLE 5.2
Summary statistics for Group B concept references

	categories (n = 26)	mean (n = 30)	min	max	sum
	(binary)				
W	all	8.6	3	12	129
	positive	6.2	2	10	94
O	negative	3.5	0	12	52
	(continuous)				
M	all	17.3	5	42	260
	positive	10.1	2	17	152
E	negative	7.2	0	27	108
N	total words	346.3	62	650	5195

	categories (n = 26)	mean	min	max	sum
	(binary)				
	all	8.3	3	15	125
	positive	5.2	0	14	78
M	negative	4.5	0	10	67
	(continuous)				
E	all	15.6	4	31	234
	positive	8.2	0	30	123
N	negative	6.7	0	30	100
	total words	277.1	90	550	4156

The present corpus was too small for close comparison with the main group of accounts, but on the results obtained the indications are than a background of unhappier relationships correlates with having less to say about them, though the difference is less in respect of the men in both groups. The sex difference is less marked in Group B, though, again women have more to say than the men. Group B participants use less positively valenced Relating Category references and proportionally more negatively valenced references than Group A.

The literature would lead to some ~~some~~ expectation that accounts by people in troubled relationships will be fuller. Negative events stimulate attributional activity (Wong and Weiner, 1981) and terminated relationships are more likely to become the subject of thought and of accounts than are untroubled and ongoing relationships (Harvey et al., 1986; Weber, Harvey and Stanley, in press). A range of goals and motivations may be served. For instance, the right account will enable the accounter to maintain self-esteem and to feel less responsible; and in the case of continuing positive affect, thinking and talking about the relationship may be part of the mourning process and subsequent 'grave dressing' (Duck, 1982). Accounts have the function of keeping the relationship alive (Weber, Harvey and Stanley, op. cit.).

The results obtained here, therefore, do not confirm the pattern indicated in previous research. However, two points are relevant: although the participants were chosen for their negative relationship history profile, and were likely to be experiencing conflict in their present relationships, in this instance they may have been describing one of their happier liaisons. And, a literacy level lower ~~than~~ than the corresponding level for Group A (and for the typical research subject) may apply. To offset this though, they are likely to have had more practice in accounting, having frequently been in predicaments

(conflict with the law as well as relationships), and therefore often called upon to account for themselves. Thus, perhaps some of the 'work' involved in formulating an explanation and clarifying a perspective has already been undertaken.

5.3 SEX DIFFERENCES

Introduction

Over a ten-year period of interviews about friendships, Wright (1982) found that women represent their friendships with reference to intimate and emotional aspects while men describe them in terms of activities and less personal characteristics. Similarly, interviews conducted by Bell (1981) led him to conclude that men are more concerned with sociability and joint activities and themselves as agents, whereas the women he interviewed referred much more to friendships as forums for expressing their feelings and revealing themselves. Self-disclosure and sharing of confidences has frequently emerged in studies as more often named by women than by men as an important aspect of friendship, and another differentiation, noted by Bell (1981) and by Wright (1982) of salience to results here, is that women tend to conceptualise their relationships more holistically and with regard to a wider range of factors, whereas men may have a tendency to classify relationships according to specialist roles and and what they do with particular people (Bell, 1981; Wright, 1982). The same picture, contrasting men's emphasis on activity and outward manifestations of friendship, with women's stress on emotionality and intimate exchanges, is suggested in findings reported by Booth and Hess, (1974), Weiss and Lowenthal, (1975). The latter contrast 'commonality', including shared experiences and shared activities in male friend's reports, with 'reciprocity', including confiding, help-

ing, and emotional support, in female friends' reports. This accords with Gilligan's (1982) suggestion that women's 'images' of relationships and the decisions they make regarding them are centred round their concern with connectedness, while men's conceptions of them are influenced by the importance they attach to separateness, assertion and control. Gilligan's thesis is that men and women conceptualise interpersonal problems differently, because they are encouraged to formulate alternate moral belief systems. It has frequently been suggested that men are less expressive than women (Hodson, 1984; Dosser, Balswick and Halverson, 1986); this is likely to be reflected in the openness, emotional content and amount of time spent on conceptualising. Hinde's (1984) review of sex differences looks at the implications of evolutionary biological differences, pointing to how these may have a continuing influence on relational attitudes and values, for instance inclining women to confront and discuss problems because of their dependence on a stable relationship, whilst male interests are served better if they remain uninvolved, and with a control that gives them the freedom to philander.

Results

The most marked differences are in range of continued participation (having already been recruited at an earlier stage, and having already made a contribution). Comparisons are shown in Table 5.3 below. Other comparisons of interest are length of accounts and range of categories used. The latter was mentioned in reference to Table 5.1, but the difference disappears in respect of the second account produced, possibly because those who were inclined to continue in the project are more communicative about relationships.

TABLE 5.3

TABLE 5.3
Sex differences in participation and accounts about personal relationships

	Men	Women
Accounts		
number of accounts returned	60	71
number of participants returning 1 account only	12	1
number of 'drop-outs' (returned 0 accounts)	11	0

	Men		Women	
Words	mean	(n)	mean	(n)
number of words - 1st account	382	33	487	36
number of words - 2nd account	346	27	446	35*
total number of words	724	60	940	71
Categories	mean	(n)	mean	(n)
number of categories - 1st account	8.9	33	11.8	36***
number of categories - 2nd account	10.1	27	11.1	35
total number of categories	19.7	60	23.8	71

*p<.05
***p<.001

With regard to presence or absence of category reference, there were statistically significant differences obtained for just five of the Relating Concepts. These were Practical help, Self-disclosure, General regard, Specific understanding, and `Friendly'/`amicable'. When all the Help categories are combined, this constitutes a sixth difference. The percentage occurrence for each is shown in Table 5.4. All of these were applied more often by the female participants, with the exception of 'Friendly'. Results were similar with regard to repeated reference to categories: means are shown in Table 5.5. Given that men consistently gave shorter accounts, those categories used more by them are of note: in addition to 'Friendly', mentioned above, they also referred more than women to 'Activities together', 'Similar activities' and 'Similar values, views', but these were not statistically significant results. Women were more subjective and inter-subjective (Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.4

TABLE 5.5

TABLE 5.4
Comparison of concept references by men and women

(a) percentage occurrence

positive + negative	men (n=33)	women (n=36)
practical help	27.8	58.3**
help in general	50.0	83.3**
self-disclosure	27.8	58.3**
regard in general	25.0	58.3**
specific understanding	8.3	30.6**
"friendly","amicable"	47.2	25.0*

* p<.05
** p<.01

(b) mean number of references

	men	women
practical help	.67	.86
support and guidance	.28	.44
help in general	.61	.64
self-disclosure	.52	1.11*
accept and tolerate	.08	.36
authenticity	.17	.30
general regard	.50	1.44**
specific regard	2.05	2.28
lack of rivalry	.27	.72
caring and concern	.36	.83
general understanding	.38	.67
specific understanding	.08	.47*
ease of interaction	.86	1.08
enjoyment of interaction	.36	.66
activity together	1.42	1.38
contact	1.33	2.22*
commitment and reliance	.22	.47
bonds, emotional dependence	.53	.61
role-rule keeping	.19	.55
"close", "intimate"	.63	.89
"friendly","amicable"	.64	.36
"get on","good","okay"	.30	.36
other/miscellaneous	.50	1.00
similar activities, interests	.80	.50
similar background, situation	1.00	1.19
similar values, views	2.22	1.61

* p<.05
** p<.01

TABLE 5.5
Summary of coding comparisons for men and women

item	men	women
inter-subjective references to 'other' and 'we'	6.2	8.3**
objective references to 'other' and 'we'	14.3	19.9
total (including ambiguous) to 'other' and'we'	21.6	29.9**
subjective references to self	5.0	6.5
objective references to self	4.1	5.5
total (including ambigous) to self	9.2	12.1*
references to minor effect	0.3	0.7*
references to major effect	0.4	0.4
total references to effect	0.7	1.2

notes: ambiguous = unclassified as either subjective or objective
*p<.05
**p<.01

Discussion

Content in accounts

The findings with respect to the particular categories which men and women use do not seem to be especially illuminating, the low significance levels for differences making it unwise to speculate much about the few relevant categories. Feminist literature (e.g. Gilligan, 1982) and reports of practitioners (marriage counsellors, family therapists, etc.) (Hodson, 1984) and investigations of the `inexpressive male' (Dosser, Balswick and Halverson, 1986) lead to an expectation that men would have less to say in general, and would use less emotional and intimacy concepts. The results here conform to this pattern, though not dramatically. Explanations abound in the literature. For instance, Gilligan (op. cit.) sets out a theory that males and females have different perspectives on relationship because socialisation practices lead them to adopt differing moral principles, men cherishing individual autonomy and women placing a premium on interpersonal connection. Compatible with this position, Gergen and Gergen (in press) place differences in male and female 'relational

discourse' into a long-term historical perspective, to illustrate how it has been in the interests of their basic security that women have adopted a richer relevant language. Evolutionary-biological explanations of differences (Hinde, 1984) suggests similar relationship communication incentives for women, matched by disincentives for men. In contrast, a number of more practically orientated discussions of contemporary personal life, stress male disadvatage, attributing differences in communication and emotional expression to gender role socialisation, and the interaction effect on identity formation of the child's sex and the sex of the principal caretaker (Goldberg, 1983; Rubin, 1983; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1984; Hodson, op. cit.).

The much shorter average length of male accounts together with their use of less conceptual categories, might suggest that they are more vague in their conceptualising (the only category used significantly more often by male participants was the unspecified 'Friendly' category), or that they are less inclined to go into detail, in a communication and perhaps also in their thoughts. Conversely, the greater willingness on the part of women to participate and the greater length of their accounts support everyday observations, that women simply have more to say about relationships. That they use a wider range of concepts (though not significantly here) suggests that their conceptions of relationships are more complex. This fits with the suggestion by Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) that women perceive more complexity in relationships, and Wright's (1982) suggestion that women view their friendships more holistically than do men.

Some special willingness or ability, or both, may underlie women's higher level of participation. Inclination and ability to communicate about relationships might link with richer conceptualisation and more relationship awareness. There may well be an

association between the greater verbosity which women show, other kinds of expressiveness and a capacity to make relationships work. For control purposes, a comparable study involving simulated letters to a confidant concerning another neutral or masculine biased subject, would be useful. Another study which goes some way towards the same purpose, the Interests Study, will be described in chapter seven. That women are more active in conceptualising and discussing relationships should not, of course, be allowed to mask the possiblity that they may remain unclear about some aspects; and it does not follow that they are completely competent in this respect.

Non-accounting

Focusing on the content within accounts of those who did participate risks overlooking the significance of those who opted out. Recalling that incidence is complementary to content, the question of why it is so much more difficult to obtain male than female recruits in studies of relationships may hold crucial clues for explaining conceptualisation on the subject. A quick scan through investigations of personal relationships and the respective figures for male and female participant numbers reveals that such unevenness is commonplace, yet is generally noted without further mention. Generalising, it may be an omission for any such discrepancy to be neglected from results: outside the experimental situation, responses of non-contributers may be more typically revealing of the phenomenon in question than responses of participants. When exploring data, it may be at least as important to note what is absent, as what is present, in that the implications of negative findings may be equally or more functionally significant than positive results (Westland, 1978). Accordingly, in the content analyses which have been reported, omissions have been treated as meaningful results, revealing possible limitations in relationship knowledge and understanding. As an extension of this

position, it is valid to ~~the~~ treat non-participation outcome as a negative finding, rather than to dismiss it as methodological complication. Therefore, in looking towards an explanation of absence within accounts provided, opting out of producing one at all (even though still joining in for other parts of the series of studies) may be provisionally regarded as a more extreme case of omission and trends in those obtained. In both cases, men are less forthcoming; thus, it may be appropriate to seek a linked explanation for both outcomes, which takes account of this sex difference.

It has been claimed that men are uncomfortable discussing relationships (Miller, 1983; Hodson, 1984). Hodson refers to men's problems in this respect as 'nonspeak' and suggests masculine pride and the fear of being regarded effeminate, suppression of emotions and difficulty in verbally explaining themselves as among possible reasons for the problem. Miller (op. cit.), who eventually interviewed close to 1,000 men about friendship, apparently met with corresponding resistance:

> Most [men] find the subject unutterable. Some will, of course, talk popular sociology, others will discover philosophical truisms, but they can't really talk about friendship itself. Partly it is a lack of poetry in most men. They do not have the words for such a subject. Partly it is a taboo against looking at something so sacred. Often it is a reluctance to look at anything so painful.
> (p.xiii)

Explanations for the differences in content are of relevance here to the suggestion above that talk about friendship (and, by extension, other personal relationships) is taboo. More specifically, 'homophobia' (Tognoli, 1980), intimacy incapacity (Hodson, op. cit.) and intimacy selectivity (e.g. Reis, 1984) might be applicable, together with reasons given by participants for taboo relationship topics, for instance 'futility of talk', 'embarrassment' (Baxter and Wilmot, 1985). Theories of socialisation differences and socio-

biological explanations, mentioned above, are of general relevance. This question of communication reticence and inhibition will be returned to in the context of motivational factors.

There is some indication that the type of relationship is a factor. In the present study, men were were more likely to comply with the request to write an account if the relationship was with a sibling. This suggests that the alternative, friendship, is more communicatively inhibiting for men, or conversely that discussing siblings is reacted to as less embarrassing and less threatening to masculine self-concept. It could simply be that fewer men than women have friends, and a number of surveys bear this out. Lewis (1978) reports that it is quite common for men to be without a same-sex friend throughout their lives. However, even allowing for this discrepancy, the very high return rate from female participants correlating with longer accounts containing more relevant concepts, indicates the need for further explanation.

Empirical evidence obtained by Reis (1984) suggest that selectivity more than incapacity underlies the comparative lack of male intimacy behaviour; that is, dropping their guard in this way is more situationally specific for men. Again, the evident preference for writing about siblings than friends is compatible with this hypothesis. In keeping with this notion of selectivity on the part of men, Bell (1981) has suggested a greater public-private distinction for men: `I have found in interviews that while men may withhold very personal feelings from even best friends, the degree to which they reveal themselves to an interviewer indicates that they can and will reveal a good deal to a suitable and safe other' (Bell, 1981, p.89).

Sex similarity

Similar indications in other comparisons make it difficult to resist the conclusion that the various possibilities in the extract

from Miller above, are peculiar to men. It is easier to generate explanatory theories if the contrasts made between men and women regarding emotional expressiveness and relationship communication are clear-cut. However, the differences were not great (with the exception of male-female 'drop-out' figures), and for this reason alone, explanations which emphasise the dichotomy may be unwise. Further, while there is sufficient evidence here and elsewhere to leave little doubt that women verbalise more about relationships, and more specific differences are in the expected direction, a more fundamental explanation may be reached if factors affecting both sexes are brought to bear, and commonality in inclinations and disinclinations is also noted.

Although the sex differences found are in the expected direction, many anticipated contrasts fail to reach significance. The usual gap may have been narrowed by characteristics of the study. The procedure, promoting candour and, perhaps the relationship types in question, was reasonably condusive to overcoming communication inhibitions. That is, this might have been a situation (comparable with Bell's interviews mentioned above, and conforming with Reis's (op. cit.) 'selectivity hypothesis') selected as appropriate for such disclosures. Additionally, (although the argument throughout is towards greater generality of the conventionally distinct relationship types), siblings and friends, as opposed to lovers and spouses, may have invited more similar responses. Similar findings and conclusions were drawn by Wright (1982). He reported that differences are not particularly startling though the minor contrasts found are those which socialisation patterns and sex roles would predict. Wright suggests that male and female friendships become more alike when they are long-term and `very strong'. Equally, the sibling relationships and long-term

friends in this sample, might invite a similar blurring of steroetype differences. Siblingships, especially, may permit a personalism suppressed in everyday friendships, because they go back to the less inhibited days of childhood.

There is a possibility of differences being exaggerated where this is the sole focus of interest. The results here are therefore closest to Wright's (op. cit.) in that there is only a trend toward sex differences, and the minimisation of expected difference can be readily explained with reference to the circumstances of the study (promoting disclosure, and involving, mostly, long-term relationships). The self-selection of the participant sample eliminates the potentially greater differences: given the respondent sample and 'drop-outs', the results do not pertain to a normal distribution. There is also the possibility that men and women are becoming less distinct in their views with social blurring of sex roles (Goldberg, 1983). In line with this, is the suggesion that men and women begin exhibiting each other's characteristics after mid-life (Sheehy, 1977); if there is any basis to this theory, it would be of relevance in the present study, given the larger than usual proportion of participants over sixty years (a third of the sample).

5.4 RELATIONSHIP TYPE DIFFERENCES

Introduction

Some of the major investigations of siblings and friendship (Bell, 1968; Firth, Hubert and Forge, 1970; Allan, 1979) have a sociological slant, and are limited to a specific cultural setting (social class, place, period); this, and the possibility of changing action patterns and concepts since their publication, restrict their present applicability. The literature illustrates the extreme contrasts within sibling relations, from the intimate interdependence

and close friendship of 'special' sibling relationships (Allan, op. cit.) to the neutrality or blank indifference of `low access' siblings (Bank and Kahn, 1982). Others - rivalrous adult siblings (Ross, 1982) - are comparable to ex-marriage partners who, having gone through an angry and hostile period of getting divorced, remain distanced from each other by enduring hostility and resentment.

Proverbial and classic distinctions between friendship and siblingship emphasise elements of choice and obligation, commitment and loyalty (`A friend loveth at all times, but a brother is borne for adversity', Proverbs, 17; `One man in a thousand ...will stick more close than a brother', Kipling, The Thousandth Man ; `It is chance that makes brothers but hearts that make friends', Von Geibel, cited in Schutz, 1977). The direction of contrast in these is inconsistent, but dissimilarity is underlined. Other maxims and commonsense theories stress the similarity (as in: 'a good friend is my nearest relation'). The variability of experience in relationships is indicated in these contrary commonsensical truths. Some experience of their similarity is also indicated in the reference to interchangeability in all relationships (e.g. 'he is more like a friend than a brother'; there is almost a cultural tradition for making verbal comparisons (Adams, 1967), and loose use of labels, such as `aunt' and `uncle' (Ballweg, 1969).

The two relationship types chosen were siblings and friends. Because of the possible phenomenological and behavioural range they denote, it might be claimed that these two can be treated as representative of all personal relationships. Sibling relations cover the gamut of affect levels, from hostility and estrangement to intense positive emotion including love, with indifferent acceptance in between. Siblings across the life-span also represent all the

variations of contact and of proximity. While, friendship is not subject to the same variability of affect as siblingship, being by definition coloured by positive affect (`People think that good men and friends are the same', Aristotle), but all other types of personal relationship - family including spouses, parents and adult children, colleagues and neighbours - are often described also as friends, and the range is completed in the present investigation by the inclusion of 'former friends'.

Results

As was shown in Table 5.1, type of relationship (whether sibling or friend) does not lead to a particularly pronounced distinguishing pattern, (although when the types are further sub-divided into type of friendship and sex of sibling, it becomes evident that the short-term close friends and sisters inspire richer accounts). There were more negatively valenced concepts in sibling accounts with a mean of 6.14 for siblings and a mean of 3.72 for friends ($p<.01$) and more references to differences, the means being 1.44 for siblings and 0.72 for friends ($p<.01$). Apart from the comparison between self and sibling, the longevity of the relationship would predicate periods to be contrasted and inevitably involving some negative reference. 'Rivalry', 'Shared Activities' and negative 'Similarity ...' concepts were the most differentiating categories in comparison between friendship and siblingship accounts.

It is in the prototypes descriptions that conceptual differences most emerge. These, incidentally, concentrate much more on positives than do actual relationship accounts, but the nature of the task is biased in that direction. Descriptions of friendship and siblingship prototypes distinguish between types in predictable ways, more than do the non-hypothetical accounts. Applying Scheme 1 to a comparison of both, further suggests that the type distinction is not as relevant in

general descriptive overviewing of actual relationships. The prototypes, which in themselves were comparative, are more likely to include reference to similarity (37.5 percent compared with 27.8 percent), commitment and reliance, including trust,(38.9 percent compared with 13.9) rivalry (30.6 percent compared with 6.9 percent) and acceptance (23.6 percent compared with 16.7 percent). The real relationship accounts, on the other hand, were far more likely to include reference to the amount and nature of contact (61.1 percent, compared with 19.4 percent), activities together (56.9 percent compared with 18.1 percent), ease of being together (41.7 percent compared with 18.1 percent) and regard for specific qualities (41.7 percent compared with 1.4 percent). The contrasts are depicted in Figure 5.2. There is very little to distinguish friends from siblings with regard to analysis of objectivity and subjectivity (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2

Figure 5.3

Discussion

The indications therefore are that while a detached perspective might mark out distinctions as salient, such differences in real experience are often overshadowed by more basic considerations of viability, for instance, in terms of 'contact' and 'ease of interaction'. The prototypic distinctions do not seem to be particularly relevant. Allan (1979) found that siblings often double as close friends to each other, especially working class siblings. Other rare comparisons between friends and siblings are less relevant here because they have involved children (Clark and La Gaipa, 1979; Furman, and Buhrmester, 1984).

It may be concluded, from this particular analysis, differences

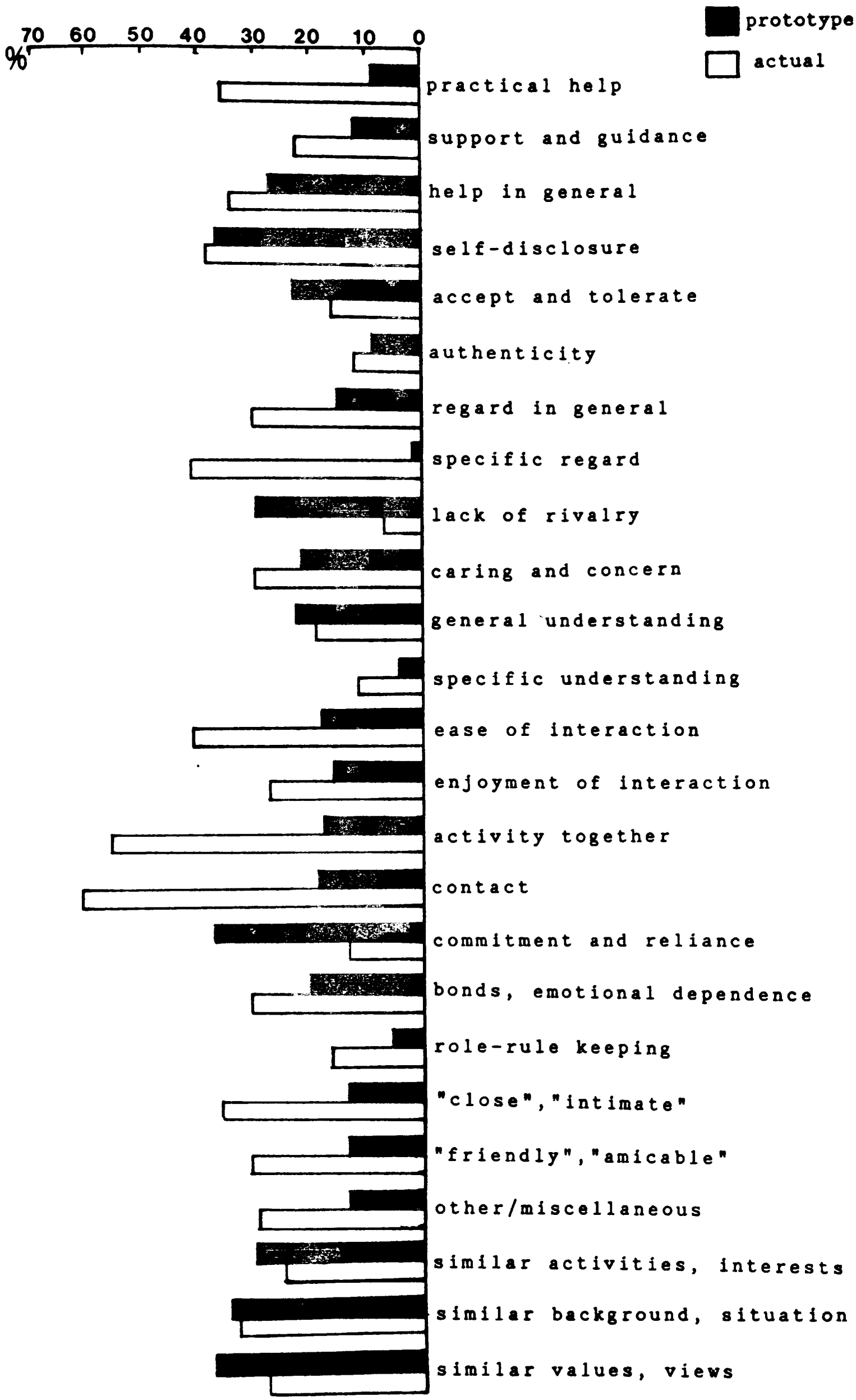


Figure 5.2 Comparison of conceptualisation for prototype and actual relationships

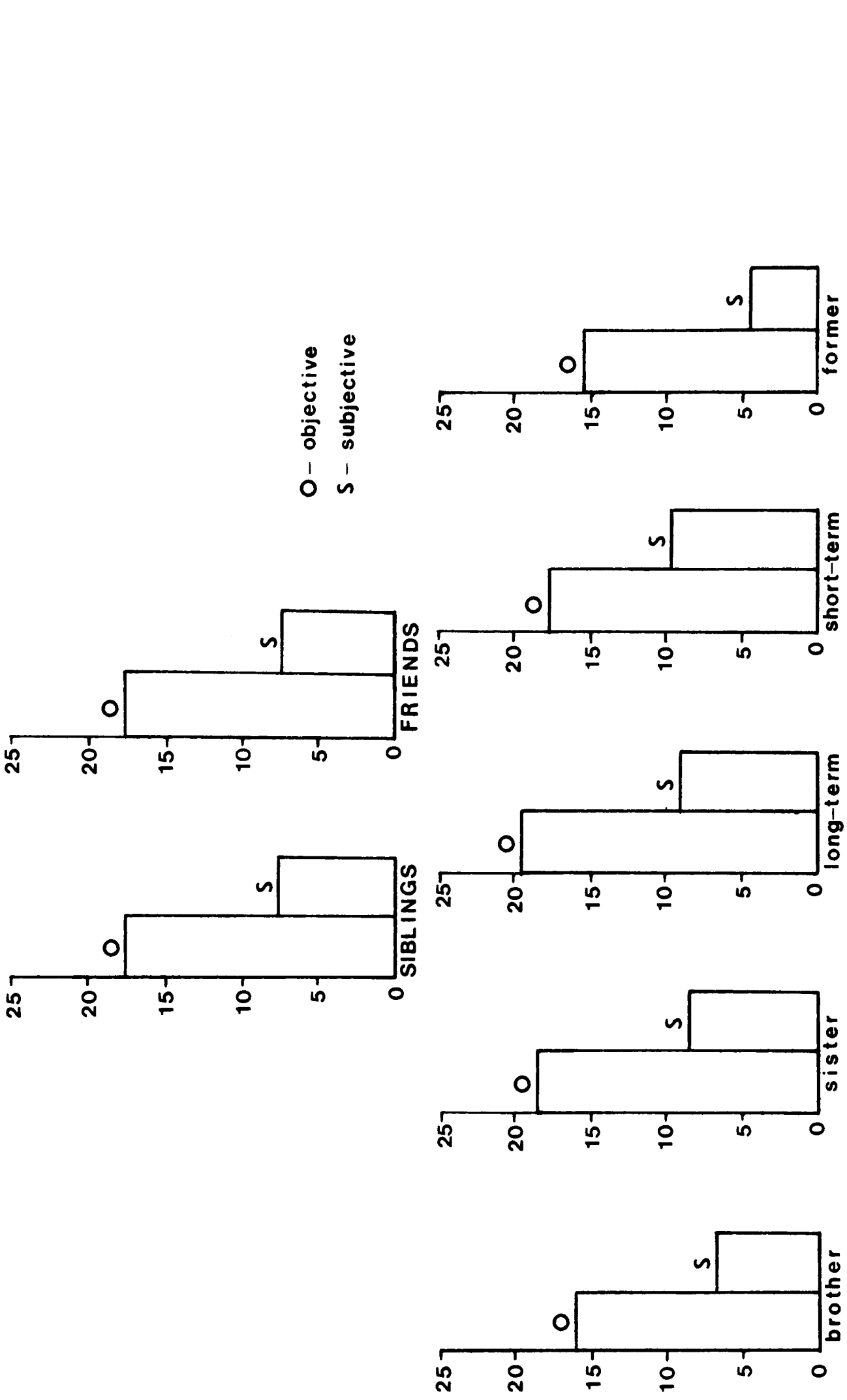


Figure 5.3 Comparison of subjectivity versus objectivity in references to 'other' in accounts of different relationship types

of importance in abstract categorisation, blur in views of relationships in reality, in which case distinctions are based on alternative criteria. Davis and Todd (1982) used factor analysis of their relationship scales and ignoring type distinctions obtained a particularly large first factor, accounting for 85 percent of the common variance; they do however find more factors in within-type analyses.

In comparison of conceptions of actual relationships, there are no pronounced differences emerging to differentiate between siblings and friends. It is possible that differences are concealed by the inclusion of both a former friend category, and all siblings irrespective of closeness. It is likely that further exploratory probing would have yielded more differences, However, on a more general level, it is of relevance that any such specific differences are not pronounced.

There are more category differences contrasting siblings and friends in prototype accounts than in accounts of their own relationships, and participants use less words but more categories to describe prototypes than they do for a particular instance among their own relationships. Also, prototypes are essentially descriptive (what the relationships are like ideally) whereas accounts of real cases are partly descriptive of emergent states and events which the parties have experienced. In contrast to accounts of the actual, prototypes include very few negatively couched references to concepts (sibling rivalry and the obligatory nature of sibling-sibling contact being the only recurrent exceptions). Any differences which are found are more note-worthy for having been completed by the same participants; a carry-over effect is unlikely because they were completed on different occasions widely spaced apart. Some alternative explanation for the main differences must be sought, and the most parsimonious seems to be that the two

exercises are different in important respects. For the prototypes, participants were asked in effect to focus on the distinguishing characteristics of the type; indeed the exercise was intended to elicit just that kind of information. For the simulated letters, the focus was on what the relationship `is like and how it came to be that way' - not at all on the role type, nor on its comparative characteristics. The two tasks as requested were therefore different. Assuming prototype knowledge is stored separately from memories and representations of own relationship experiences, then each task involves searching in a different place, though both may be informed by the other, i.e. case studies for the prototypes, and generalisations to make sense of own experience. In the case of prototypes, participants are running through their knowledge and are more likely to be comprehensive, whereas with specific relationships, they have the other person and their own feelings as reference points, and in reviewing their experiences they are describing the major landmarks in those scenes rather than being exhaustive.

There are other explanatory factors for the deviation between actual and prototype which need to be included. The prototype description task lent itself to listing of information as an alternative to essay-like structure, and as part of encouragement to write more, the instructions included an invitation to write in note-form if preferred. The letter-writing study also contained comparable though not identical encouragement and persuasion round the possible deterrant of an essay format. In addition to the the mechanics of the task, the prototype task involves an account which is not `personal': it is information, and not disclosure. Therefore the possible emotional blocks and moral objections do not apply. Further, and importantly, the prototype exercise has participants focus on type and

comparison, but it is of interest that in the simulated letter exercise those distinctions do not emerge, even though the same conceptual categories are used, if less exhaustively.

Depending on how realistically relationships are represented in accounts, it could mean that the distinctions are only theoretically valid, or that they are for some reason not a significant aspect of experience. Indeed, it could be argued that distinction by type is unhelpful to research, because it forces too rigid a division between relationships which have much in common and are experienced in other terms. This objection is comparable to Duck and Sants' (1983) criticism of the concept of states in personal relationship research.

5.5 QUALITATIVE RELATIONSHIP DIFFERENCES

Differentiation in reality

The above sub-population comparisons could be considerably extended, both statistically and by replication with other subjects. But, regardless of the sophistication and comprehensiveness of such analyses, questions of implication and validity remain. To what extent is it valuable to concentrate on specific types of relationships as well as or rather than personal relationships in general? Those who have made such differentiations an objective of study would clearly argue that it is, and it is evident from their investigations, as discussed above, that distinctions are indeed made by participants. However, that the distinctions are not necessarily of subjective importance in actual relationships, in some contrast to prototype representations, is suggested by the results here. 'Between-group differences are generally more interesting and seem more important than between-group similarities. Therefore, it is almost always tempting to emphasise differences and overlook similarities'. A similar observation has been made by (Wright, 1982, p.18). An emphasis

on distinctions may be at the expense of doing justice to parallel features. For instance, Davis and Todd (1982) identified distinction in `social knowledge' of friendship and, what they call, love relationships. They found two additional clusters of characteristics for the latter, namely `passion' and `giving one's utmost'. `Passion' includes fascination, exclusiveness and sexual desire. `Giving one's utmost' is comparable to `commitment' in the content analysis scheme, and all of these could feature in what is nominally a friendship, while all may be absent in relations between jaded or disaffected lovers. The distinctions from a cultural-historical perspective may be seen as terminal, fixed only by changing social expectations and values.

Thus, some rules of relationships in the eighties (Argyle and Henderson, 1985) may be the taboos of the nineties. Recent popular opinion polls (Sunday Times, 2.6.82; News of the World, 15.9.85) suggest, for instance, that fidelity, comparable with `exclusiveness' (Davis and Todd, 1982), in marriage is now regarded as less important than, for instance, boredom (comparable with 'enjoyment'in the Davis and Todd study and 'enjoyment of interaction' in the present project) and less important than 'talking about feelings' (comparable with 'self-disclosure' here, and Davis and Todd's 'intimacy') - characteristics which they have in common with other personal relationships. This is not to suggest that the specific physical aspects are irrelevant, though even in this respect, the distinctions may be exaggerated in that the emotional intimacy which can accompany sexual intimacy need not be confined to such physically intimate partnerships in a society less wary of intimate personal expression.

Further, as pointed out by Furman, Adler and Buhrmester (1984) some of the conventional distinctions may be attributable to

linguistic differences in descriptive traditions more than actual relationship properties; apparently dissimilar labels may refer to corresponding phenomena. Even without these objections, the prototype distinctions are not necessarily borne out in real life. The tendency for one type to overlap another in experience (e.g. spouse as best friend) and for the reality of a relationship to be untrue to its prototype, makes the formal boundaries seem fairly arbitrary, and incidental to distinctions more linked to experience.

Personal - intimate distinction

The helpfulness of conventional distinctions has been questioned, and it has been suggested that similarities and differentiations cut across prototype boundaries which, though of formal descriptive value, are less meaningful when making sense of real experience. In interpretation of the findings of content analysis it has been suggested that accounts tend to be 'thin' with regard to the more personal, or intimate aspects of relationship. The result is that, even when lengthy and detailed, they may lack a depth and complexity which is, arguably, characteristic of personal relationship experience. A possible basis for this is, rather than the accounter's way of conceptualising, the type of relationship selected for focus: on that basis, it would be necessary to conclude that friendships and siblingships, though they qualify as personal relationships, are comparatively impersonal. Thus, a distinction arising is that some personal relationships are more 'personal' than others.

However, there is no bar on intimate emotions and exchanges between friends and between siblings, and it may be over-simplistic to look for a straightforward correlation between intimacy and relationship type. Given the affective range within friendships and sibling relations, and the fluctuating nature of relationship experience, to expect conventional distinctions to be matched by a

corresponding distinction in thought and experience risks another artificial division (cf. Duck and Sants (1983) criticism of the research of relationship 'states'), and ignores the dynamics and vicissitudes of all relationships, in which intimacy may sometimes feature and sometimes not (cf. Duck and Acitelli's (1986) discussion of intimacy as a process). It is therefore relevant to look for some indication of this in relationship conceptions.

A distinction is needed within the personal relationship domain which cuts across conventional type divisions and which allows for a qualitative difference between intimate interaction and more casual personal contacts. Such a differentiation is likely to have a more crucial explanatory role than nominal comparisons which have been made, because it concerns a qualitative distinction between and within relationships, at which point they become more than the background and colour of social life, and are then consciously involving, stimulating and transforming experiences. Beyond this very personal or intimate level, the potential effects are relatively marginal. Fincham (1985) has similarly suggested that research should include for an 'intimate-distant' dimension, though, a difference in the present argument is that the distinction should be within a narrower continuum of positive personal relationship experience, and not limited by nominal type, allowing for a significant qualitative difference.

Summary of findings and chapter

Sub-population analyses confirm the same picture of fairly sparse conceptions, though there are trends suggesting that women and younger (under 40 years old) participants produce fuller accounts.To summarise noteworthy distinctions indicated in the data obtained in respect of participant Group A (average relationship history), with regard to sex differences, 'Help', 'Understanding' and 'Self-

disclosure' were primary differentiating variables; women emerged as more other-centred in that they refer proportionally more often to the other, but more inter-subjective or more psycho-analytical in that they make more references to psychological or internal variables. Overall, a general under-inclusion of emotional and psychological aspects is more pronounced in men's accounts; For age differences, 'Self-disclosure' was the only differentiating category, being mentioned less by the older group (over 60 years of age). For relationship type, 'Rivalry', 'Shared Activities' and negative 'Similarity between friendship and siblingship accounts. There is no marked difference between accounts of friendships and of sibling relationships until these are further subdivided into type of friendship and sex of sibling, revealing that short-term close friends and sisters inspire richer accounts. Descriptions of friendship and siblingship prototypes distinguish between types in predictable ways, more than do the non-hypothetical accounts, whereas they do not include the frequent reference to 'Contact', 'Ease of Interaction' and 'Specific Regard' which are prominent in the latter, suggesting that, in considerations of real relationships, relationship ideals (e.g. 'Commitment and Reliance', 'Acceptance') are much less relevant than the simple viability of being together. Relationship history comparisons were limited by a too small sample size, but it is of interest that participants with a history of problematic relationships, contrary to some indications in attribution research, did not provide fuller relationship accounts than the average group. In keeping with corresponding experiences, they used proportionally more negative references and less positive references to relating concepts than did the more typical participant group.

With regard to which of these comparisons may be significant, it

should be emphasised that similarities in accounts outnumber differences. The most striking contrast has been the much higher tendency for men to opt out of participating, despite an initial willingness, when confronted with the request to provide a relationship account. A possible disinclination to reflect on and communicate about personal relationships, at least in more personal detail, is reflected in the differences in length and concept range and concept frequency in male and female accounts. The implications of this will be further investigated in remaining chapters. The discussion has anticipated issues and studies which will be the subject of chapter six (occasioning of conception) and chapter seven (interest in relationships). Comparisons point more definitely towards the need to take into account questions of motivation, interest and incidence.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INCIDENCE OF RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTUALISATION

6.1 FOREWORD

Claims for the formative role of relationships conceptions, perspectives, interpretations, etc. rest on an assumption that individuals are mentally active in these respects. A critique of the content of elicited accounts has different implications if, in everyday life, ideas about relationships are stored away and scarcely ever addressed. In this event, conceptions are implicated only by default. The frequency of conceptualising as an activity, therefore, is pertinent. It is necessary to ascertain whether there are certain periods within the life of a relationship when such matters are constructed or deliberated, and when they are referred to or revised. The occasions of conceptualising as an activity need to be discovered. Frequency and occasioning are likely to be linked with different kinds of thinking, and given the variablility here, some attention to content again needs to be considered.

The accounts which have been the subject of previous chapters may be authentic as explanations to a trusted and inquisitive confidant, but it is likely that they are in some respects unrepresentative of everyday thinking about relationships. It remains possible that, in a non-investigative context, conceptions are more detailed and complex, and more focused on the 'personal' aspects than analyses have

suggested, but that this was not drawn out within this investigative situation. However, the converse may apply: it is possible that the accounts reveal more thoughtfulness and insight than is usual in day-to-day reflection about relationships, because being asked to explain a relationship in such a general and open way is not an everyday occurrence and, as has been claimed more generally by Langer (1978), ~~was~~ something unusual may have to occur to provoke mindfulness. The task calls for concentration of mind and collection of relevant memories and knowledge. Conscious conceptualising, whether self-directed or communicated to others, may be a constant occupation or may be linked to unusual occasions. Which of these is applicable requires an investigation of what is thought-provoking with regard to relationships. Conception-stimulating events and the time factor - how often, and changes as the relationship evolves - may be referred to as questions of 'incidence'.

Two studies concerned with the incidence of conceptualising will be described in this chapter, the first focusing on the incidence and types of thinking about relationships according to self-report data, and the second (which is a longitudinally connected with the 'simulated letter' studies) addressing the nature of events which may be associated with updating of accounts and reappraisal.

6.2 THINKING ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

In the 'letters to a confidant' studies, a few participants included comments such as: `I haven't thought about this before...' and `It hadn't occurred to me until now...'. Such remarks suggest that such issues are not ordinarily addressed. There is a contrast here with the indication by Weber, Harvey and Stanley (in press) that accounts are well rehearsed and stored away ready to be retrieved for

display like a photograph album.

Fincham (1985) in raising the question of whether attributions occur in relationships, offers the explanation that: 'It is easy to dismiss this iconoclastic question as it seems difficult to conceive of a relationship devoid of attributions' (p.214). In investigating knowledge and reasoning, there is always a danger of building an image of people as more aware and mindful than perhaps they are, as a consequence of treating the situationally stimulated and co-operative research participant as typical of the population (s)he represents. It cannot be assumed that the mindfulness which is a response to experimental tasks is a regular occurrence outside a research setting; special circumstances may be required to elicit it (Langer, 1978; Wong and Weiner, 1981).

There are conflicting indications in the literature with regard to relationship mindfulness, some investigators indicating that it is constant, others that there have to be `suspicious enigmatic circumstances' (Shotter, in press). Harvey advises that: 'an intense search for meaning always accompanies a close relationship; the latter does not exist without the former' (1985, p.23), and 'this search goes on in our conscious and unconscious, minding activity whether or not one orally announces the search to others'. Elsewhere, he makes the important qualification that: 'While at one level attribution [used in its broadest sense] may be continuous throughout the relationship ... at another level it may seldom be initiated except after a relationship has ended' (1985, p.35). He is referring here to the kinds of issue being addressed: whether daily events requiring ongoing interpretation, or a more deliberate and searching kind of appraisal. Miell (1984) suggests, with regard to amendment and extension of the relationship 'picture', that ' ...this process never ceases, it is continuous throughout the life of the relationship', (p.1.18).

Similarly, Duck (1984) suggests that assessment, evaluation and other processes of judgement and attribution are a persistent feature: 'these processes do not spring magically to life only during dissolution or in the repair of relationships: they are always there' (p.167). It is clear, however, that neither of the preceding authors is suggesting that the processes are necessarily or even generally on a conscious level, and that in stressing continuity, they are referring more to the dynamic nature of construal, attribution, conception, etc. than the degree of deliberate thoughtfulness.

The relative role of conscious and unconscious conceptualising needs further elaboration, but in investigations of knowledge structures and attributional activity, when specified, it is generally assumed that these are operative on an unconscious level. Depending on how 'conceptualising' is defined, and with reference to conceptions as ideas, it becomes possible that it is mostly latent, and not readily accessible to thought, or, going on to the level of communication, remains fixed to thought and inner speech, and not ~~not~~ readily articulatable: 'the transition from inner to external speech is not a simple translation from one language into another' (Vygotsky, 1962 p.148).

There has been considerable amount of investigation into the content of attributions and knowledge structures, but, curiously, its relevance to experience and action has tended to be assumed, as if this implicit theory or that attribution paradigm, this prototype and that script, and so forth, are in operation beyond the occasion of their eliciting. No previous study has addressed precisely the issue of what occasions relationship mindfulness. Duck (1986) has recently referred to the sporadic nature of relationship thinking, and the surprising negligence of this in research. Apart from general work on

mindlessness (Langer, 1978), the relevant work, discussed in chapter one, has tended to focus on attributional processes, and often specifically on causal attributions. The investigation by Holtsworth-Monroe and Jacobson (1985) into attributions about marriage is limited in its applicability to the present project, because of its confinement to attributions of a causal kind, and disregard for more descriptive explanation, and more analytical appraisal. Abele (1985) extends investigation of social reasoning to include different types of reasoning, including 'evaluative' and 'finalistic' thinking in addition to causal thinking, but relationships are only indirectly included among the selected domains of reasoning.

Some findings are worth note. Rare empirical studies on the occasioning of attributional activity give emphasis to unexpected and/or negative events as an impetus for cognitive activity, (Wong and Weiner, 1981). Lalljee, Watson and White (1981) found that explanations were more complex following unexpected behaviour. In some contrast, Abele (op.cit.) found ~~that~~ the affective meaning of an event to the individual concerned to be rather more thought-proving than the degree of expectedness, especially when pertaining to private life, as opposed to work situations. Work on self-monitoring (Snyder and Canter, 1980) is focused on monitoring in novel situations. Again, from attribution research (though decidedly overlapping with relationship research), is the work of Harvey and colleagues (Harvey et al., 1986; Weber, Harvey and Stanley, in press). In this, the focus is on relationship failure and termination as a stimulus for thought. Thus, the literature puts the emphasis on the extraordinary, or deviations from the status quo, and violations from intentions and goals. Extending this position to relationships, the implied contrast is that when everything is 'on course', relationship negotiation is on 'automatic pilot'. Ironic conclusions which might be drawn are, that

interpersonal happiness goes unnoticed, unpredictability sharpens the intellect, and the optimum way to preoccupy another's thoughts is to shock them.

Clearly, an argument can be made for it being more functional to usually confine reasoning and other cognitions to some level beneath consciousness. However, the resulting awareness is probably of a different quality, lacking in content and skimming the surface, similar to a scarcely conscious awareness of background music, ranging from drifting attentiveness to ignorance and indifference.

6.3 REFLECTION ON RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

There is no single satisfactory term to describe the various cognitive activities implied in this study. Some other positive labels suggest a process more calculating, detached and divorced from emotion than is required. `Reflection' or `reflective activity' , defined as `individuals' time out of relationships, when they review, evaluate, interpret and assess...' (Duck and Miell, 1984, p.238) seems to be as apt as any, although here it does not exclude reflective activities during interaction, as a responsive commentary on relationship experience or stimulated by communicative exchanges. An alternative is `thinking about' relationships, but this would include the thinking which accompanies relationship talk as well as lone musings. `Reflection' is also intended to include less serious and purposeful thoughts than it might immediately denote, such as fantasies, recollections and `dwelling on' a 'moving' moment. On any level, the type of thinking may be functional (e.g. an idle thought may lead to more purposeful analysis), therefore distinctions are likely to be both difficult and unhelpful. What is required is a cognitive term which

stretches from existential enquiry about the meaning of relationships to brooding in thought to a single instance or image held in recall, and which is inclusive of a set of semantically similar concepts more specific or slanted in meaning: pondering, considering, questioning, assessment, appraisal, evaluation, analysis, introspection, contemplation, meditation and others. The common element is the lingering conscious attention given, but although the label `reflecting' is being used in the following to cover all of these, a relevant distinction to be made will be between more conscious, searching and purposeful kinds of reflection and the more simple and less deliberate `having relationships on the mind'.

The study to be described relies on self-report and so is necessarily limited to conscious thinking. Subconscious and `passing' thoughts are excluded for practical investigative reasons, although it is not suggested here that they have no relevance for subsequent events. Rather, to borrow a categorisation made by Antaki (in press) in respect of accounts of relationship, they belong under the heading of `unperformable', are hard to reach yet are `inarticulately operative on the person's actions and feelings'. To discover these and their importance, investigation has to take a different route and look to the affective dimension of the mind (Clarke, 1986; in press). On another level, the practical orientation of this project, is that the reflective activity of interest should be at least partly available - despite and not ignoring affective links - and capable of being `worked on' and extended as part of a person's resources. The question posed in this study may be summarised, then, as: Are people generally thoughtful about their personal relationships? What motivates thoughtfulness? And, what is the content and nature of their thoughts?

A necessary tangent must be taken to note methodological problems, and the limitations they impose on empirical investigation

into the issues in question. By definition, unsolicited spontaneously occurring relationship reflections are not directly available to the investigator, and retrospective reports cannot be accepted without some degree of scepticism because of the likelihood that they have been influenced by memory and by self-presentational motives such as a tendency to check errors before recounting the story. The same and more problems apply to obtaining self-report data about context and motive; subjects cannot be expected always to recognise the rationale for their thinking even if they had one, and if they are able to identify a cause or a reason or relevant context, this does not negate the possibility of others. In research of this nature, an unavoidable obstacle is that people do not necessarily remember or know how or want to answer questions truthfully about when and why they reflected on a relationship, except in a rough and ready way, and that they will tend to select only a single answer when perhaps multiple answers would be more correct. Further, what they impart is a way of representing what they believe, hope or pretend is 'the truth'. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they will not succeed in identifying some authentic threads of thought and putting them into a meaningful context.

Notwithstanding the difficulties discussed, it was hoped that the study to be described would be illuminating with respect to whether the cognitive activities described are ongoing and continuous, as some have suggested, or only linked to the eventfulness of relationships. Depending on reporting differences and/or actual individual differences, an expectation was that it would be ongoing for some, but merely a kind of startle reaction for others.

Method

Eighty subjects (40 men and 40 women) from mixed social

backgrounds and spanning across the adult age-range were asked which of 19 personal relationships they 'had recently thought a LOT about'. They were then directed to select the three (or up to three) best remembered cases and answer open-ended questions about each: (1) Do you usually think a lot about this person?; (2) Was there anything in particular which started you thinking about him or her?; (3) What were you thinking with regard to him or her?; (4) Did you reach any conclusions or make any decisions? If so, what were they? The questionnaire used is shown in Appendix D1.1

Results

Those relationships which participants selected for their fuller accounts, from among the check-list of relationships 'thought a lot about', are set out by type in Table 6.1. To contrast this with comparable data from Simulated Letters Studies, Table 6.2 gives means from self-ratings on the 'information sheets' which were used at the time of writing 'letters'.

TABLE 6.1

TABLE 6.2

The categorisation of, what for convenience has been labelled, 'motivators', 'content' and 'conclusions' reveals the overlapping nature of each of these. The division of relections into this ordinal, linear sequence may belie a more backwards and forwards loop-like or circular reflective process, with `content' and `conclusions' generating more motivating questions, emotions and associations. If the thinking is goal-directed, then the `conclusion' or end-point may not be clearly separable from the `motivator' or starting-point. Insofar as the starting-point is related to the incidence of reflection, this connectedness of the reflection process is another way

TABLE 6.1
Comparison of reflection given to relationships by type

Relationships recently thought a lot about		
type of relationship	accounts (n=219)	% subjects (n=80)
FAMILY	77	96.25
parents	41	51.25
children	15	18.75
siblings	20	25.0
in-laws	1	1.25
PARTNERS	62	77.5
current	39	51.25
former	14	17.5
potential	9	11.25
FRIENDS	50	62.5
close	33	41.25
casual	12	15.0
former	3	3.75
potential	2	2.5
COLLEAGUES	15	18.75
peers	9	11.25
boss	4	5.0
subordinate	2	2.5
OTHER	15	18.75
neighbours	5	6.25
doctor, etc	4	5.0
other	6	7.5

TABLE 6.2
Relationship type differences in producing accounts
(111 accounts)

type of relationship discussed	number of accounts	mean rating previous thought	mean rating of how complete	mean rating of how factual
brothers	28	2.61	3.89	3.93
sisters	31	3.61	4.09	4.09
long-term friends	16	3.06	4.12	4.19
short-term friends	19	3.53	3.88	4.18
former friends	19	3.42	3.74	4.00

TABLE 6.3
Sex differences in producing accounts of relationships

	Self-ratings on 1-5 scale			
How much have you thought about this relationship before	men	(n)	women	(n)
1st account	3.15	33	3.50	36
2nd account	3.19	27	3.26	35
(1=never; 5=often)				
how complete is this reply	men	(n)	women	(n)
1st account	2.56	33	2.14	36**
2nd account	2.19	27	2.12	35*
(1=not at all; 5=very)				

* $p<.05$
** $p<.01$

in which content and incidence are complementarily inter-linked. Separation of `reflections' into the equivalent of a beginning, a middle and an end, is problematic in terms of obtaining data, but there are some different issues involved at each point, and so the distinction has investigative value.

Figure 6.1

A classification scheme has been imposed on the data. This is shown in Figure 6.1, and is discussed in sub-sections below. Some answers are likely to be in response to an unavoidable `demand characteristic' of such a study: however little the questions are slanted in favour of a positive or negative response, the possibility that they might have been reflective is raised for them, and just searching to find out will lead participants to plausible thoughts which might have accompanied recent events, and which they are then likely to convince themselves indeed applied. This is perhaps especially true of the conclusion: revisiting the thought-content may prompt a decision or conclusive line of thought for the first time, though the participant may not recognise this. Thus, the exercise of completing a questionnaire becomes part of the reflective process.

Motivators.

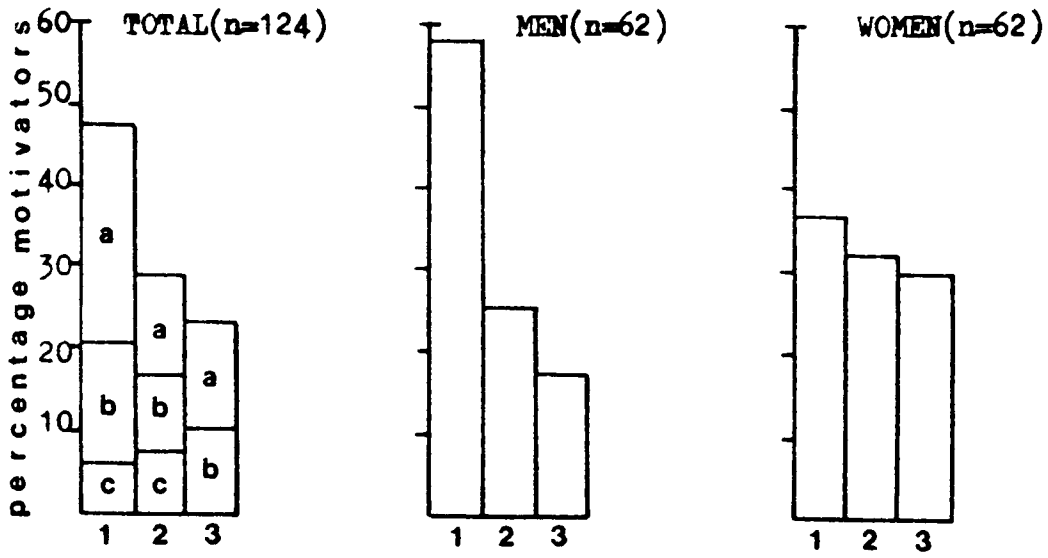
In 219 relationship accounts, 57 percent were represented as having been stimulated or motivated by something in particular, (74 percent if unelaborated `yes' responses are included, plus those where subjects claim `I think about him/her all the time', thereby implicitly identifying the potential circularity from motive for reflection to reflective conclusion). To help identify the nature of motivators, these have been organised into seven sub-categories, and then further amalgamated into three main groups (Figure 6.1). These are `Special Times' (48 percent) including negative life-events like

motivators

1. SPECIAL TIMES
a. problems and crises
b. special times
c. times of transition

2. RELATING
a. needing and wanting
b. absence
c. contact

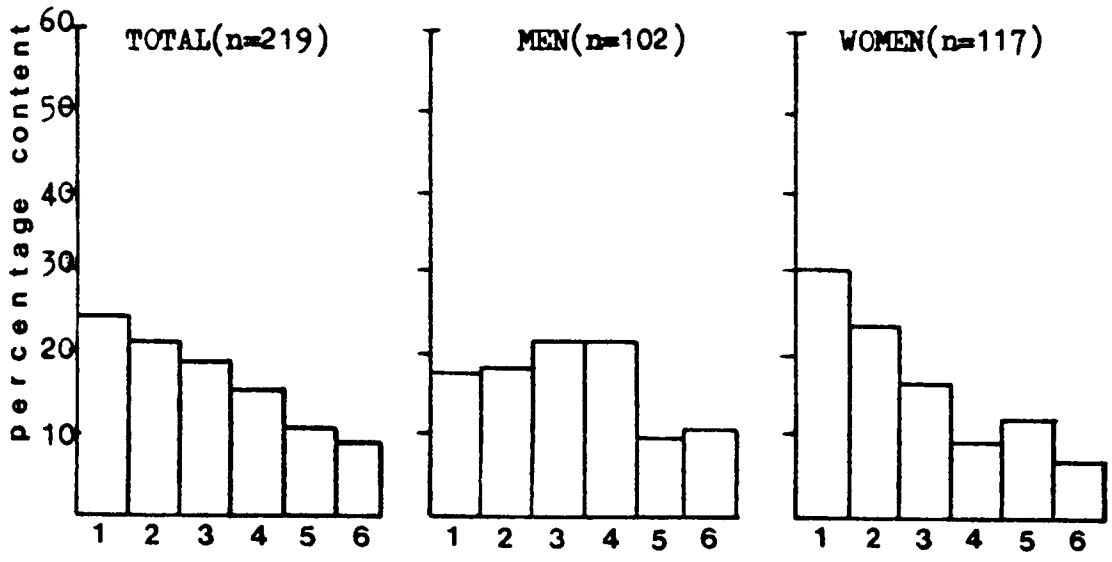
3. EXTERNAL STIMULI
a. attention catchers
b. reminders



note: motivator claimed by74.4%, but only 56.6% specified

content

1. ASSESSMENT
2. PROBLEMS AND CRISES
3. GENERAL
4. RELATING
5. OCCASIONS AND ACTIVITIES
6. BEHAVIOUR AND INTERACTION



note:each participant could have provided 3 accounts; maximum possible n=240

conclusions

1. ACTION
a. deeds
b. expression
c. inaction

2. ASSESSMENT

3. RELATING
a. contact
b. effort

4. MISCELLANEOUS



note:conclusions claimed by 60.3%, but only 56.2% specified

Figure 6.1 Incidence and content of relationship reflections

periods of illness, marital conflict, periods of illness, marital conflict, periods of transition and adjustment like settling into a new job or retirement, and special occasions such as birthdays and weddings; `Relating' (29 percent) which contains items concerned with forming, renewing and maintaining relationships; and `External Stimuli' (23 percent) which brings together items which are reminders of the other person, like a photograph or a song, and attention arousing behaviour, such as the other person's bad temper. Further division of the seven sub-categories reveals that the other's ill-health (including illness during pregnancy and mental illness) is the most frequently mentioned motivator. This, together with most other items under `Special Times', corresponds with the pattern identified by Wong and Weiner (1981) of unexpected or negative events preceding attributional thinking. However, the sub-category of `special occasions' (14.5 percent), reverses this case, being mostly expected and positive events, such as birthdays, anniversaries and holidays - though it could be maintained that these are infrequent enough to be regarded as novel. Attraction, loneliness and missing someone are rarely given as motivators (22 percent in combination): since these are the only items which focus on self, the `motivators' group appears to emphasise, surprisingly maybe, a concern with other's needs.

The range of motivators is somewhat wider than previous studies in attribution research have suggested, not being confined to unexpected or negative events - though indeed these are prominent. It is informative to note what is missing or not much in evidence among claimed reasons and provocations to reflect. More often it is the other's rather than self's predicament which is reported as leading to reflection, but the problems involved are problems of major proportions rather than the more transient troubles of day-to-day.

Positive behaviour and actions are seldom identified; it is as if they are taken for granted in keeping with the theory that events have to be unexpected or aversive before they are noticed. Similarly, in a study by Abele (1984) on social cognitions, subjects reported less thinking when events were going well or were normal; but for them it was subjectively important events - usually negative - which stimulated cognitive activity, rather than the unexpected. Other perhaps surprising omissions amongst thought-provokers as revealed in the present analysis are the media, educational discussion and other more formal or objective intellectual stimuli. Such omissions may denote a reporting bias if they are not generally recognised by participants as plausible stimulators of relection on own relationships.

Content

Reference has already been made to the continuity between `motivator', `content' and `conclusion'. In an obvious sense, all belong to content, and the separate questions invited an artificial division or the possibility of repetition. However, the `content' section is in effect the `central issue' of the account. The layout and relevant question (`what were you thinking about ...?') invited more detail than for other sections, and the responses were accordingly slightly longer, though certainly not as long as might be expected, the significance of which will be returned to later. The majority of participants confined themselves to bare statements; only 12.5 percent gave accounts of more than 25 words.

The various subjects which participants mentioned in response to being questioned about the `content' of their reflections were classified into six groups (Figure 6.1). Longer acounts containing elements of more than one category were sorted according to the principal theme. In order of frequency, the six subject groups are:

'Assessment' (25 percent), 'Problems and Crises' (21 percent), 'General' (19 percent), 'Relating' (15 percent), 'Occasions and Activities' (11 percent) and 'Behaviour and Interaction' (9 percent). Many of the 'Assessment' category are about the person (8 percent) as opposed to the relationship, and usually take the form of bald statements of opinion or feeling about the other, e.g. 'How kind she is'; 'I was thinking that he's unco-operative'. The largest sub-category for this group, and for content as a whole, concern assessment of the relationship (11 percent), again usually unelaborated, e.g. 'About our friendship and where it was going'; 'Just what a good wife and mother she is and that I couldn't do without her'. There were significantly more women than men making evaluative references of this kind.

'Problems and Crises' contains items comparable with the similarly named sub-category under 'Motivators'. The largest sub-category here is Ill-Health (10 percent). With respect to the group named 'Relating', which is concerned with starting sustaining an renewing relationships, 6 percent referred to desired or anticipated contact, e.g.'I was thinking just that I would like to see her more often'.'Occasions and Activities' nearly corresponds with the motivator sub-category 'Special Occasions', except that the former is more inclusive in the way suggested by the name. The 'Behaviour and Interaction' group primarily consists of references to either the other's negative behaviour (5 percent) (e.g. 'about her taking my money'), or to conflict (2 percent) (e.g. 'about why we can't get along better').

The variability in length of the 'content' section could be a function of presentational style or a strategy for participating in such a study, with the shorter contributions belying a possible

depth and detail of thought which the longer reports begin to show. That is, the distinction may be simply a matter of styles of reporting and degree of willingness to disclose. Compare for instance 'I was speculating about the direction of the relationship', which may just be a caption for lengthy contemplation, with the following more revealing account:

> This woman cohabits with a long-term friend of mine, so my first thought is that, if I were to have some kind of affair with her, I would be doing to my friend what my wife's lover did to me. Since I have suffered a lot as a result of my wife's lover's conduct, then surely I must nip in the bud all feelings that I have for this woman. Surely. And yet I am tempted to try to push things just a little bit further. Do I love her? I don't know. She's physically presentable, though not as attractive as my wife. What really attracts me to her is her mind, to which mine responds and we strike mental sparks off one another - that never happened with my wife. I admire the way she holds down a high-powered executive job; the way she paints and plays the violin; the way she copes with the demands of her family; her excellent cooking, her flair in entertaining, her linguistic skills, and many other talents. Even if I don't love her, she is more or less my ideal woman. But to attain her I would have to do the dirty on my friend. And this I cannot do. Or can I? What does she think of me, I wonder? I know that she likes me and enjoys my company, but since I have discovered that my feelings were more than friendly, we have not been alone together. There have, however,been special hugs and squeezes as well as kisses on meetings and parting.

Accounts were more typically (unlike the above) in the form of summary statements after the event, and so do not reveal anything of the stream of consciousness involved. Reports like that above may be a first verbalization of more abstract awareness of a situation or, like the usual more truncated responses, may themselves be summaries of much lengthier inner monologues. The problem here is in determining whether shorter responses were limited by a lack of original reflectiveness, or by other constraints. The methodology was conducive to more extended accounts; it is therefore fair to suggest that despite other possibilities, in general, relationship reflections are privately not well articulated and are unsustained. The lack of

detail and explication which was found was despite the fact that participants were able to complete the questionnaire anonymously and unhurriedly in their own place and time. Some of the lack of detail must be attributable to unequal ability to communicate via the written word, but in addition, paucity of words indicates at least in some cases a tendency for reflections to be preverbal, superficial and lacking in complexity.

Conclusions

Of the 60.3 percent of accounts for which 'conclusions' were claimed, 56.3 percent were treated as valid. The rest were unsubstantiated 'yes' responses or a report of a concluding or next event, e.g. 'he's got a letter to go into hospital' as opposed to a finishing point to the matter of reflection referred to under 'content'. Again, in describing the types of conclusions which were mentioned, it is helpful to sort responses into groups.Those found lend themselves into three-way grouping (Table 1): 'Assessment' (35 percent), 'Action' (47 percent) and 'Relating' (18 percent).Many of the items which make up the 'Assessment' category, (which is comparable to the same named category under 'content'), are statements of appraisal or evaluation regarding what the other person is like or might be feeling (15 percent), e.g. 'she's very affectionate and out-going'; 'she's never satisfied'. Less frequently (7 percent), they comprised an evaluation of the relationship or mutual feelings, e.g. 'we love each other very much'; 'I felt we had a very safe and good friendship which would last a long time'. An equal percentage (7 percent) are about self or other's view of self, e.g. 'I'm sure they are happy about what I'm doing'. Conclusions in this group are relevant to making sense and are self-directed, as distinct from action-oriented and other-directed, or else they affirm general appraisal of or feeling about the other or the relationship.

The 'Action' category contains three sub-groups, which are 'Deeds' (23 percent), 'Expression' (21 percent) and 'Inaction' (11 percent). 'Deeds' includes reports of what should be or has been done, e.g. giving money, advising, praying and, especially, some form of communication. Items in this category are usually positive and constructive, though by way of exception one refers to contemplated suicide, and another to taking violent action. A minority revealed a more detailed plan, revealing something approximating a problem-solving approach. An example is:-

> (To help a friend 'with a basic I'm not okay attitude')
> -Give him more responsibility; make him feel more part of his peer group; praise his work more often.

Another such example is:-

> (with regard to conflict between mother and daughter) - Try not to lose my temper with her and keep my cool and keep a firm eye on her. Let her know who is boss, but at the same time let her know that I love her.

'Inaction', in contrast to the above, consists of comments like 'decided there was nothing I could do about it', 'wait and see', 'keep up the same' or 'leave him to deal with it'. The 'Expression' sub-category contains conclusions concerned with self-presentation and items which are more about emotional display towards other than about action, e.g. 'Don't show feelings', 'smile more', 'be sympathetic and affectionate'.

The 'Relating' category items are primarily about making contact with other and the form such contact should take, whether visiting, phoning or writing, e.g. ('decided to write but avoid meeting her'), and, as such, this could have formed another sub-group of the 'Action' category. This group is appropriately separated, however, because it corresponds with the 'Relating' category among the 'motivators' group, and because the relevant items generally refer to doing something which is outside of or removed from action within a relationship -

that is, with making relationships or reforming them, e.g. 'I'm going to try and become friends with him'.

Content and conclusion link with each other in the case of problem-solving or goal-directed reflectiveness. However, there are other types of reflection which would not necessarily be intended to lead anywhere, such as fantasising or reminiscing. Given that the majority of accounts (60.3 percent) are reported as being conclusive (i.e. the conclusion question is answered) and, further, given that accounts are biased towards action and problem-solving, it would appear that people's relationship reflections (a) are not aimless, and (b) are more practical than theoretical, more forward-looking than retrospective, and more pinned to reality than fantasy. There was a male-female differential in reported conclusiveness (men = 66.7 percent, women = 54.7 percent); similarly there was a greater percentage of motivators claimed by men (men = 82.3 percent, women = 67.5 percent). The impression to be gained from this result is that men are more rational and more decisive in their thinking. It is also possible that this effect is produced by a combination of the cultural expectation that men act decisively, and a 'demand characteristic' to resolve the issue when faced with a question about conclusion. Another artefact, which is an extension of that mentioned above, is relevant to useful implications rather than reliability of results. There is some indication that being directed to the possibility of conclusive or purposeful reflection may have a constructive value. Some subjects (4 percent) answered 'no' to the conclusion question, but then nevertheless went on to supply a 'conclusion': asking themselves the question rounded off the reflection. Aiming for a tentative decision or resolution is likely to be of particular value where negative feelings are involved. A few participants, for instance, recognised the potential destructiveness

of negative emotions which accompanied their reflections, as in the following case where some photographs of a boyfriend's ex-fiancee had aroused strong jealousy:-

> I have to make myself think that it is not important and believe me I am trying very hard! I'm going to try and dismiss these jealous feelings, and think of what we have and tell myself that it is better than they ever had. I'm going to try and not take it out on him. Because I was, and I even started to dislike him - I am not fair to him sometimes. I am going to love him more.

Discussion

The results of the Reflection Study suggest that personal relationships are thought about frequently but superficially. The nature of the analysis unavoidably leaves scope for alternative interpretations with regard to the incidence and content of relationship reflection. The possibilities, for instance that participants were writing-shy or disclosure-shy or have short memories, could each be relevant to the sparseness, in general, of reported thoughts. That is, participants could be held back from showing just how thoughtful they are, by these plus other obstacles and aversive factors (to be discussed). Conversely, the invitation to share reflections is an encouragement of ex post facto thoughtfulness, and few people would want to present themselves as not having thought about any of the relations listed. It could be argued, therefore, that these data either understate or overstate the extent of reflective concerns. On balance, it seems more plausible that the reports are an exaggeration of the case in the general population, in that participants, as volunteers, are motivated to perform positively - to 'come up with something'; in this respect they are not representative.

The indications for frequency are higher than for depth and length of content. According to self-report, the incidence is high; from the relationships which they they were asked to select

from, subjects claimed to 'think a lot' about 34 percent, and they claimed to 'often think a lot' about 68 percent of the people/relationships they selected for accounts. Whatever the thoughts then, this suggests that our familiar others are frequently 'on the mind'. When considered against the nature of the reported 'content' though, this does not allay suspicions that much of this reflectiveness amounts to shallow musings and easily reached conclusions, in place of anything more contemplative or analytical. There are many petty and simple issues which are easily resolved, but it is not as if relationships are unproblematic! If people are as frequently but casually attentive to relationships as this study suggests, it may just be that their consciousness of these others is comparable to the kind of awareness we have for 'background music' - occasionally drawn to it but otherwise only appreciating it in a very limited way.

The content of most reported reflections is superficial and empty of detail. Given that there is an emphasis on unpleasant predicaments of 'other' and what action to take on their behalf on the one hand, but lack of detail on the other hand, people impress as thoughtful more in the caring sense of the word rather than the philosophical sense. Reflections are set in a framework of concern for others plus purposefulness (i.e. 'motivators' and 'conclusions'), but are apparently limited in complexity and length. As has been indicated, reflection can take numerous forms, including fantasy, reminiscing, replaying, planning, description, explanation, problem-solving and assessment, and there was some evidence of all of these, especially the last two. There are some notable sex differentials suggested by the results, but these can be most usefully addressed in the next section together with the implication of socialised attitudes and values. The overall indications are that, despite there being a

general tendency to think a lot about people in relationship to oneself and about specific relationship matters, this thinking is not as inquisitive, sustained, substantial or as explicitly goal-oriented as it might usefully be. An attention to subtleties and detail is missing, yet it is these on a day to day basis which affect the quality of relationships and satisfaction with them.

Why do relationship reflections tend to be impoverished and casual and mainly linked to major events, special times and generalised relationship wants and need? A step towards explaining this, involves considering motivational factors as they relate to both participation in relationship research, and to private and shared relationship reflections. Some insights regarding possible blocks or deterrents against thinking and communicating about relationships can be drawn from the follow-up data to the Simulated Letters Studies. and from returning to the issue of sex differences, discussed in chapter five, but particularly with regard to social values. These issues will be the subject of chapter seven.

6.4 REAPPRAISAL OF RELATIONSHIPS

Evaluation and review of relationships has been linked to progressive phases (Fincham, 1985) and in particular to their beginnings (Newman, 1981; Miell, in press; Wilkinson, in press) and to their endings (Harvey et al., 1986; Weber, Harvey and Stanley, in press). Fincham (op. cit.) has gone so far as to suggest that: 'that the very occurrence of mindful attributions may be a barometer of relationship development' (p.216). In examining conceptions at the onset of a friendship, Wilkinson observed a point during which cognitive activity slowed down and stopped being continuous. The particular relationships identified in the Reflections Study, include both new and long-term, and some former and prospective relationships,

indicating some level of thoughtfulness at any time in a relationship's history. Duck and Sants (1983), while observing that it that it is fallacious to assume 'that people conduct relationships with ubiquitous self-awareness and intentionality' (p.27), have stressed the 'temporal energy'(p.32) of relationships, with multiply negotiated and regularly modified perspectives as part of the relationship process.

To approach the issue of incidence and the occasioning of conceptualising from a different angle, relevant information was sought from participants in the Simulated Letters Project at later stages, exploiting ~~the~~ the possibilities for external validity of a stable participant group. The first part, involving a further account, was aimed at ascertaining any obvious amendments reported, and which specific objective or subjective events might be associated with this. The second part, at a later stage, was complicated by memory factors, and so the emphasis was shifted to direct questions about the participants' current view of the relationship given sight of the their previous account for direct comparison.

Method

The connection between the Reappraisals and other studies in the same set relating to the Simulated Letters sequence was explained in chapter two. Participants were referred back to a relationship account ('letter') and asked to provide information about themselves and that relationship. This was done in two parts, which were at different times and comprised different though comparable data sets, (Appendices A5.1 - A5.2).

Part 1. A request and instructions were was posted to 24 of group A participants (eight from each age group) from the Subject Panel, Department of Experimental Psychology, Oxford University. They had not been given prior indication of this, though had previously

been advised of further stages at some time in the future. 23 responded. The request and instructions (Appendix A5.1) returned them to the context of their earlier efforts, in particular, the imaginary context of unreserved and informative correspondence, in order to use the same ploy again. They were asked to imagine that the same confidant was responding to the earlier letter (2nd account), and was interested to know if anything had happened with respect to that relationship during the interim period, and to respond accordingly with another written reply, which could include negative or positive information. They were also asked to answer rating scales on an attached questionnaire. Some of the questions related to interim events, and others, with particular regard to demand characteristics were task-related. This study took place approximately two months after the 'letter' in question had been written (there is some variability reflecting the difference in time it had taken participants to reply) and the original 'letter' referred to was not returned to them, nor were they advised of its contents. Participants were sent £2 payment on receipt of the material.

Part 2. On this occasion, which was approximately nine months after participation in the Simulated Letter study, the earlier 'letter' (1st account) was returned to participants, together with request and questionnaire (Appendix A5.2). It was sent to the 62 people in group A who were thought to be still available. 57 of them complied, and were subsequently sent £2 payment.

The intention for both parts was to avoid, as far as possible, giving any indication that changes were expected. Care was taken, therefore, to avoid bias in instructions and items (e.g. 'have there been any changes...? was used rather than 'what changes have there been?'), and the possibility of negative returns was indicated.

However, a demand characteristic in this respect could not be totally suppressed, especially in part 1 where a further 'letter' was requested, and thus questions were included to address this problem. 30.4 percent said they felt under some pressure to report change; they were more likely to report others as under pressure than themselves, however: 69.5 percent thought others would feel pressured.

Some provision was made for lack of adequate recall (self-rating of recall after two months, and sight of the 'letter' after nine months). Questionnaire items tend to form two sub-sets: those relating to changes in life events and circumstances, and those relating to changing views, corresponding to some extent with objective and subjective, or, to borrow a more familiar distinction from attribution research, situational and dispositional.

Results

Accounts. The replies to confidant provided for Part 1 were considerably shorter than original accounts (on average about a quarter of that length). The length is unrelated to the number of changes identified in questionnaires. All provided a 'reply to confidant', ranging in length from two sentences to two A4 sides, though on the accompanying questionnaire 56.5 percent gave indication that they did not regard this as a revision of their previous account.

Questions. Percentages in respect of questionnaire items for 'after two months' are shown in Table 6.4. Only 13 percent report change in the relationship with 'other' at this stage. Thinking about the relationship is not equated with thinking about other: 70 percent report not having thought about the relationship compared with 13 percent not having thought about the other.

TABLE 6.4

TABLE 6.4
Reappraisal and revision of relationship conception after two months

Have any of the following occurred since 'letter'?	% Yes
contact with x*?	70
talked about x?	74
news about x?	78
change in rlp+ with x?	13
x changed it?	13
you changed it?	22
your circs. changed it?	22
x's circs. changed it?	22
x on your mind?	83
rlp with x on your mind?	30
rlp with other on your mind?	74
other on your mind?	87
change in your circumstances?	39
thought about your account?	61
views about life changed?	35
views about people changed?	44
views about rlps changed?	35
views about self changed?	57

+ rlp = relationship
* x = person written about

Percentages for comparable items 'after nine months' are given in Table 6.5. More changes are reported with regard to self than other. Predicatably, more change and developments are reported after nine months, than after two. This could be attributed to memory differences. For part 1, reliance was placed on memory: 65 percent reported being able to recall all or most of it, 82 percent reported recall of half or more. After nine months the benefit of hindsight was provided in the form of the original account. There is a consistent though not extreme tendency for females to report more change than men (Table 6.5). That women are more likely to change their views, or to observe more change, substantiates the same indications elsewhere in this project.

TABLE 6.5

TABLE 6.5
Reappraisal and revision of relationship conception after nine months

(a) percentage of population indicating change

What changes have there been, if any?	% change	% minus don't know**
change in assessment of rlp+?	33	
change in opinion of x*?	30	
change in x's opinion of you?	68	26
change in x's feelings for you?	46	25
change in your feelings for x?	35	
change in you as a person?	68	
change in x as a person?	68	42
change in way you act to x?	33	
change in way x acts to you?	32	
change in x's circumstances?	77	
change in your circumstances?	82	
change in things between you	49	
would 'letter' now be different?	37	

** adjusted for items with high % 'don't know'

(b) mean ratings for women and men

What changes have there been, if any?	women (n=32)	men (n=25)
change in assessment of rlp+?	1.5	1.4
change in opinion of x*?	1.6	1.2
change in x's opinion of you?	1.9	1.7
change in x's feelings for you?	1.8	1.6
change in your feelings for x?	1.7	1.3
change in you as a person?	2.3	2.0
change in x as a person?	2.1	1.8
change in way you act to x?	1.5	1.4
change in way x acts to you?	1.5	1.4
change in x's circumstances?	2.4	2.2
change in your circumstances?	2.5	2.2
change in things between you	1.7	1.6
would 'letter' now be different?	1.9	1.4
satisfaction with account then?	1.5	1.2
satisfaction with account now?	1.7	1.2

note: means from 4 or 5 point rating scales,
the lower the mean the less the change
+ rlp = relationship
* x = person written about

Discussion

From the perspective of the person's present (Duck and Sants, 1983) a relationship may look different. The question of how much an assessment or general overview of a relationship is liable to change after a few months, could be raised less hypothetically in the present investigation because of the continuing availability of participants who had formulated an assessment in the previous months. The analysis suggests that the type of relationship is not necessarily relevant, and no clear pattern emerges between updating of accounts and the changes picked out as implicated. Indeed participants sometimes seem unsure whether or not their conception of the relationship has changed; there are participants who write about change, after indicating the lack of it on the checklist of questions. Again, the task per se is a likely impetus for reflection, perhaps leading to a reappraisal in lieu of any other stimulus.

For the small sample asked to write an accompanying letter, results are insufficient for generalisation, but again, the results are open to the construal (because of brevity or repetition) of there being some struggle to find new information. This is not always a function of length; some longer accounts report very little if any change, but provide lengthy descriptions of irrelevant family news (who is pregnant, who is having a nervous breakdown, holidays, etc.), and others merely reiterate, ('As I told you last time ...). There is some evident tendency to regard lack of events and lack of contact as indication of no change (e.g. 'I have seen X only two or three times since then ... no, nothing has changed in that short period...'). This ignores the possibility that mere reflection (replaying, and planning possible futures, etc.) may result in reassessment, as was conveyed by one person at the start of a response:

> I don't think this relationship has changed at all, but I am aware of some developments in my picture of X. I mean that I feel and react to her in the same way, but I suppose you could say my view of her has changed a little...

A high percentage anticipate that their views will remain unchanged (43 percent) or will change only 'slightly' (39 percent). This, combined with high ratings for satisfaction with accounts, suggests a degree of confidence in the stability of the present view, and perhaps some failure to recognise the prospect of change. Stability is more likely in respect of lapsed relationships; there were three former friends in the sample, but including one where thinking remains active:

> I still have X on my mind at times, and would very much like to resume our relationship. Obviously, the first step would have to come from me, but I hesitate to risk a snub. However, perhaps I shall eventually be able to summonup the courage totakethe risk.Certainly it would be well worth it if the outcome were to prove favourable.

6.5 RELATIONSHIP MINDLESSNESS

These studies provided further illustration for a theory of 'relationship mindlessness' (Burnett, 1984a; 1984b) aligning the male-female discrepancy with a mindlessness-mindfulness dichotomy in individual approaches to relationship, and explaining the negative polarity with reference to cultural values. The latter aspects were partly discussed in chapter five, and will be developed in chapter seven.

While the evidence could be stronger in respect of mindlessness, these data concerning relationship reflection and reappraisal do not provide strong evidence of thoughtfulness or expertise in relationships, and are likely to exaggerate usual tendencies because of the thought-provoking effect of participation in the studies. Reported satisfaction with accounts and estimated completeness in earlier studies, plus the high claims for thoughtfulness about close

others, could be interpreted as indicative of some misguided satisfaction or complacency concerning relationships, or an over-estimation of the extent of thought involved. Between familiar others (to return briefly to comparison with music, in exemplifying this), there may be a false conviction of caring and attentiveness, similar to a belief that one has listened to background music, when in fact it was merely heard in a relatively mindless way.

Conforming to the same pattern which has been referred to throughout, inattentiveness and failure to revise conceptions is more evident among men, and perhaps especially, those who are happily married. Holtzworth-Monroe and Jacobson (1985) concluded that: 'happily married men often do not invest much time or energy thinking about their relationship or its functioning. However, when positive outcomes are not forthcoming, men are lulled out of their attributional complacency...' (p.1408). Women reported attributional thoughts to the same extent, whether or not their marriage was problematic. Their investigation was focused on causal thinking only, and moreover, only within marriage, but the pattern parallels that being suggested here in respect of personal relationships more generally. It is commonly suggested that men are nonplussed when faced with the subject of relationships. There is the possibility that the differences relate more to communication inhibitions and an unwillingness to admit to thinking about relationships. Regarding friendship, Miller (1983) has suggested `they find the subject unutterable'. Beyond communication, there is some suggestion that men are less likely to think about personal relationships. Wright (1982), referring to a decade of research, commented: `An overwhelmimg majority of men, when asked about the comparative quality of men's and women's friendships, initially responded that they had not given the matter any thought' (p.3). Motivationally, as will be further

discussed in chapter eight, it was a task that failed to draw men on a number of counts.

But all of this is to place too much of the burden of explanation on masculine pride. Other correlating factors may prove more informative. Certain values, e.g. people orientation (Little, 1967) and personality differences, e.g. intimacy motivation (McAdams, 1982) may be more explanatory. The relevant distinction may be 'relationship mindfulness', dichotomously comparable with high and low self-monitoring (Snyder, 1979), and, in inclination, with Hudson's (1966) diverger and converger profiles.

Although the sex difference clearly must be taken into account, given its pervasiveness in this investigation, the distinction may reflect changing social values, and anyway it is not so great that it should be allowed to overshadow the scope for an increase in knowledge and awareness generally. Relationship mindfulness, whether in women or men, has not been formally cultivated. Relationship 'discourse' has not been developed in the male scholarly world (Gergen and Gergen, in press); it has been left to the restricted language of private conversations, and individual passing thought; or to corner-shop gossip and women's magazines; or it has found recourse in the specialisms of novels and poetry. The tendency for signs of mindlessness to correspond with gender can be better understood within the wider context of cultural values, which are turned to next.

Summary of chapter

Two studies concerned with the incidence of conceptualising were reported in this chapter, the first focusing on incidence and types of thinking about relationships, and the second (longitudinally connected with the 'simulated letter project') addressing the nature of events

which may be associated with updating of accounts and reappraisal. Both rely on self-report. The analyses indicated that reflection about relationships tends to be light-weight in content, and to be stimulated most often by special occasions or times of crisis. Investigation of reappraisal of earlier accounts suggested that an overall view of a relationship may often remain static. Findings again discriminated between men and women suggesting that men are less reflective about relationships. These studies provided further illustration for a theory of 'relationship mindlessness', aligning the male-female discrepancy with a mindlessness-mindfulness dichotomy in approaches to relationship. The tendency for this to correspond with gender can be better understood within the wider context of cultural values, which are turned to next.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MOTIVATION FOR RELATIONSHIP MINDFULNESS

7.1 FOREWORD

Prima facie, it is surprising that a subject which is so intrinsic to human experience has taken so long to be included within the mainstream of academic social psychology, and to become an official social science discipline. Shortly after the start of the present growth period, Duck (1981) raised the question of why personal relationships have been 'very largely taboo topics for analysis and research'. A few years on and, happily, already from a reverse standpoint, Rychlak asked: `Why do we now see the emergence of the relationship conception as the focal point for psychological theorising and empirical investigation?' (my emphasis). Finding some answers to these questions could purchase an explanation of ordinary relationship conceptualisation from a wider perspective.

Perhaps the most obvious reason which might be suggested is that the omission is symptomatic of a consensus of opinion amongst both academics and laypersons that relationships are a matter of commonsense, that they 'take care of themselves', and therefore do not require the resources of science. One extension of this argument could reflect the more precious attitude of Senator Proxmire in 1975 (reported in Walster and Walster, 1978) who objected to the allocation

of public money for research on 'love' on the grounds that scientists should not spend money and time prying into a phenomenon which is valued for its enigmatic nature; underlying this may be apprehension that relationship experiences may be transformed by being turned into the subject of empirical enquiry. The former predicates a lack of intellectual interest, and the latter some reservation about being analytical in respect of personal emotional experience. The questions of, first, interest, and second, reservations and inhibitions, will be further explored in two studies to be decribed in this chapter. The indications to be drawn from these, together with the emerging picture of conceptualisation can then be extended in the context of past and present academic status of the subject and motivation related to its status as a subject of public concern, and of private talk and thought.

The first study is an enquiry into where relationships appear in the range of interests that people may have, and how they compare with those other subjects in terms of self-reported thinking, talking, caring and knowing in respect of those subjects. A second study concerns motivational aspects with regard to the simulated letter writing studies in particular, but also with regard to reflection and communication about personal relationships in general.

7.2 INTERESTS STUDY

Introduction

The indications, thus far, are that while people claim to think frequently of others in personal relationship to them, the content of those thoughts is of a superficial nature: they are not analytically or deeply thoughtful. One interpretation is that they are reporting thoughtfulness of a caring kind, rather than philosophical or rational thoughtfulness. This accords with the earlier interpretation

of results in the Reflection Study that subjective importance motivates thinking more than novelty. An ensuing question is whether this caring translates into an interest in relationships as a subject in comparison with interest in individual persons, and interest in other basic subjects. Berenson (1981; in press) has argued that one needs to be emotionally 'caught up' with a person in order to gain real understanding of them, though the dominant emotion is not necessarily sympathetic or positive; the involvement provokes thought and thus knowledge. Similarly, knowledge of relationships requires that there is a positive interest in people and in their dealings with each other, motivating an inquisitive frame of mind.

The same distinction (between informed thought, and thoughtfulness in the sense of caring) may have relevance in explaining the sex difference which has been found. In chapter six, differences were discussed with reference to relationship values (Bell, 1981; Wright, 1982), moral values (Gilligan, 1982), emotional expression (Dosser, Balswick and Halverson, 1986) and motives to converse (Hinde, 1984; Gergen and Gergen, in press). Although it was concluded that important points of commonality can be easily missed if the differences are exaggerated, nevertheless, there are continuing indications, confirmed in this investigation, that men are less interested in relationships than women. They are less likely to be motivated to communicate and think about relationships than women, and, it would follow from this, less knowledgeable.

Towards an assessment of interest as a differentiator, comparison has been made of self-ratings on indicators of interest in certain topics, including relationships. The subjects chosen are more-or-less comparable in terms of their applicability in everyday life, and even though one or two qualify as academic subjects, all have practical

aspect, and are readily accessible to the layperson. The following reports a preliminary investigation, which is to be extended.

Method

Subjects. Questionnaires (shown in Appendix D2.1) were distributed to unpaid volunteers of various social backgrounds and occupation groups, including librarians, taxi-drivers and their families, shop assistants, probation service clients, teachers and students. The final sample of 100 returned questionnaires comprised 57 completed by women and 43 by men. They were not informed about the purpose and subject matter of the research.

Procedure

Four likely indicators of interest were selected: talking, thinking, knowing, and caring. These were used as self-report items to indicate the degree of interest in each of fifteen subjects or topics, including three relationship `subjects': `own relationships', `other people's relationships' and `person closest to'. Simply including `personal relationships' as one subject amongst others of similar generality would have made it more comparable; however it was decided that some specification could yield informative distinctions.

The comparison with other subjects affords some assessment of motivational aspects relative to motivation in respect of other subjects. This is particularly pertinent with regard to a likely male-female divergence in interest in personal relationships. The partition of sex roles and values, discussed in chapter six, can be expected to be manifested in professed extent of interest in relationships, though there are difficulties in teasing apart genuine interest differentiation and reporting differences. Social desirability effects are likely to confound the issue, with participants perhaps not admitting to what does or does not preoccupy them, depending on what they regard as socially acceptable. To confound matters further, the social

approbation aspects which affect reporting may also serve to modify attitudes to the subject per se.

The possibility that self-reporting exaggerates or understates manifestations of interest in order to serve presentational ends may apply equally to all other subjects; for instance, there could be a tendency to over-claim `thinking', irrespective of the topic, if being thoughtful is generally regarded as socially desirable. But it is likely that social desirability effects are subject specific; for instance, to `care' about `clothes and fashion' may be regarded with less approbation than `care' with regard to `politics'. Clearly, these possibilities have to be weighed in drawing conclusions.

Results

(It has been intended to extend this study with a much increased participant population, at which time any statistically significant differences may be reported with more confidence).

Figure 7.1 illustrates the means for the sample as a whole in respect of each of the interest indicators, `talk', `think', `know' and `care'.

Figure 7.1

Talking. According to self-report, women talk about relationships more than men, or otherwise acknowledge or claim more relationship talk. The means in respect of 'closest person' are 3.4 for men and 3.8 for women; and the means for 'own relationships' are 2.9 for men and 3.6 for women. The largest difference is in respect of 'other people's relationships', with a mean of 2.4 for men, and a mean of 3.1 for women.

Thinking. There is no sex difference with regard to the reported amount of thought given to 'other people's relationships' (with a joint mean of 2.9) and with 'clothes and fashion' being the only



Figure 7.1 Thinking, talking, knowing and caring about personal relationships compared to other subjects of interest

subject less thought about by men, and 'cars and bikes' and 'sport' the only two less thought about by women. There is still a difference however in respect of closest person' (men 4.3, women 4.7) and 'own relationships' (men 3.4, women 4.0).

Knowledge. Women claim more knowledge in respect of all three relationship items. This is particularly the case with regard to 'closest person', for which the means are 3.7 for men and 4.5 for women. The differences in respect of 'own relationships' are 3.4 for men and 3.9 for women; and the differences for 'other people's relationships' are 2.4 for men and 2.8 for women. Men claim more knowledge about their 'daily occupation' and 'self' than any of the relationship subjects, whereas, according to self-report, women know more about their 'closest person' than any other subject given.

Caring. There is little distinction between men and women's ratings of the extent of their caring about 'closest person' (4.8 for men and for 4.9 women) and 'other people's relationships' (3.2 for men and 3.3 for women), though the trend is in the same direction as all other sex differences. 'Own relationships' differentiates between both groups more (3.9 for men and 4.5 for women).

Discussion

The overall indications are that men and women share a high interest (or professed interest) in the person with whom they have their closest relationship, and are similarly less interested in 'other people's relationships' relative to other subjects. 'Own relationships' discriminates between the sexes more than the other two relationship items, though the trend for these is in the same direction, indicating that relationships interest women more than they do men, and more than do other subjects of general relevance. From the results here, it seems clear that 'own relationships' are of more

subjective importance to women than men (in that they are highest up the list for all items after 'closest person' with the exception of 'self' in respect of knowing) in contrast men claim to talk, think, know, and care about a number of other subjects more ('self' and 'hobby' are higher on all lists, and in addition to these, both 'daily occupation' and 'sex' are more talked about, more thought about and more known than 'own relationships'. It would appear, therefore, that men make more distinction between their 'closest person' and their other personal relationships than do women, for whom they are all fairly close together in subjective importance.

It is a truism that women care about relationships more than men, based on the respective specialisms of their roles: 'Man's love is of himself a thing apart. 'Tis women's whole existence' (Byron). In some confirmation, social science research on sex differences (discussed in chapter five), and indications within the analysis thus far, lead to an expectation of some contrast between the self-report of men and women in respect of their interest in the relationship items. Although, there was some difference with regard to `own relationships', surprisingly, `other people's' and `closest person' are rated similarly by both sexes in respect of thinking, caring and knowing (women rate themselves as talking more). Indeed, both groups rate `closest person' as the highest thought about, known about and cared about. Equally, (though more so for the men than the women), both make a clear differentiation between their interest in their own relations and `other people's', reporting more thought and concern for a number of the other topics than for other people's relationships. It is not possible to determine from this study the extent to which self-presentation is involved, therefore, these results can be interpreted as indicating attitudes to ways of showing interest in relationships instead of more direct self-report of the items in

question.

It is worth noting that 'other people's relationships' are relatively low in ratings by both sexes. Both men and women seem to make a similar distinction between 'closest person' and 'other people's relationships' across all interest indicators. Women's ratings for 'own relationships' are closer to their ratings for 'closest person', whereas men rate 'own relationships' approximately in between the other two relationship items. A problem here is that, even though listed with other general interests, there are possible connotations of intruding into the private affairs of other persons. Without a distinction between 'own' and 'other's', a 'Personal Relationships' item would be ambiguously open to interpretation in the various directions which the distinctions provided convey.

It is possible, of course, given the self-report nature of the data, that these distinction relate more to differences in self-presentation. Without getting side-tracked into the implications of this distinction, it can still be claimed that the results remain of pertinence to the present issue if they are only informative about the estimated desirability of talking, thinking, knowing and caring about relationships (such beliefs are motivating and are therefore likely to similarly constrain behaviour), or about the self-deluded extent of these indicators (beliefs may affect values).

Some further elucidation is required before clear implications can be drawn. A high interest is indicated in respect of 'closest other' but a low interest emerges with regard to the relationships of others; whether these pertain to self-presentation, self-delusion or actual interest is relevant to relationship prospects, particularly with regard to the knowledge item; though no distinction was made in respect of individual and more formal knowledge on the 'how much do you know' item, it may be assumed that people rated themselves

according to what they considered to be relevant knowledge. If people generally believe themselves to be adeqately informed, thoughtful, and communicative in respect of their closest relationship their confidence is likely to perpetuate any tendency toward complacency. Herein may lie a continuing basis for avoidable breakdown and dissolution.

7.3 ATTITUDES

Introduction

There is a sex difference in the Interests study, but mostly in respect of own personal relationships with the exception of the primary one. This is aligned with the more specialist tendencies of men discussed in chapter five: it seems men single out someone special but then are more inclined to disregard others, in interest if not in deed. For both men and women, it appears that other people's relationships do not much occupy thoughts, are of low concern and are not a favourite topic of conversation either; they appear to be almost an irrelevance for men. Further to these findings, a question arising is whether there is an absence of interest in respect of the low ratings or inhibiting factors which restrain or block interest. The same question may be posed with regard to non-participants in the Simulated Letters project where the sex difference was very clear. The follow-up questionnaires obtained in respect of the latter can be appropriately considered here.

This phase of the project was intended to examine a hypothesis supported by the differentials in account-writing participation, namely, that men are less motivated to think and talk about personal relationships, whether their own or personal relationships in general, than are women. It was less easy to obtain the lasting co-operation of

male participants. Twenty-five percent of the male participants originally recruited, failed to produce a single account. Another 33 percent only produced one account. Thus 58 percent of the male subjects showed some reluctance to comply with requests. Only one of the 'drop-outs' was female (and, incidentally, an extrinsic reason for non-participation was given). Further details in respect of numbers participating can be seen in Table 5.3. The fact that there is this strong association between sex and level of participation is support for the argument made.

Method

Subjects. The questionnaire was returned by 5 (all male) of the 11 who had 'dropped out' altogether. It was also returned by 13 (12 men, and 1 woman) who had opted out of providing one of the accounts, and a further 59 participants (24 men and 35 women) who had participated fully by returning both accounts.

Procedure. A 'Follow-up Questionnaire' was sent out to the same participants who had been enrolled for the Simulated Letter project, which had been described to them as a 'Research Project on Relationships'. Related aspects of procedure were described in chapter three. A copy of the questionnaire was sent out after the first account had been returned, or after it was time to assume a nil-return (i.e. after four months and one or two reminders, or after the participant had declined). The questionnaire (shown in Appendix A3.1) contained items regarding disinclination-inclination to think and communicate about personal relationships, some referring to relationships in general, some to the specific relationship in the requested account, and some referring to the specific task. Conditional verbs were substituted in the version sent out to non-respondents, but otherwise the questions were identical, (e.g. `It would have embarrassed me to write about this relationship').

Results

Male and female ratings were compared by one-way analysis of variance. As shown in Table 7.1, there were significant sex differences for 14 of the 18 items. The clearest effects were as follows. With regard to relationships in general: men rated themselves as less interested ($\underline{F}(1,75) = 2.31, \underline{p}<0.01$), as finding them more difficult to explain ($\underline{F}(1.75) = 1.77, \underline{p}<0.05$), and as believing it less useful to analyse them ($\underline{F}(1,75) = 1.94, \underline{p}<0.01$). On the task-specific items (writing it down, the relationship/person specified, the confidant) men found it more effortful to write about the specified relationship ($\underline{F}(1,75) = 1.60, \underline{p}<0.05$), felt more uncomfortable with the task ($\underline{F}(1.75) = 1.60, \underline{p}<0.05$), were more bothered by the requirement to write to a confidant ($\underline{F}(1,75) = 2.59, \underline{p}<0.001$), and they were more embarrassed writing about the relationship ($\underline{F}(1,75) = 2.30, \underline{p}<0.01$). The questions were in randomised order, but for comparative purposes divide into three sub-groups: (1) those referring to personal relationships in general, (2) those referring to the specified relationship, and (3) those referring to the simulated letter-writing task. The sex difference is not significant for sub-group (2), but there are significant differences for all sub-groups in respect of participation level. Figure 7.2 contrasts the means for each group.

TABLE 7.1

Figure 7.2

Discussion

The results reported suggest sex differences in inclination and aptitude with regard to communication and analytical thought in respect of relationships. There is an overall tendency for women to agree less with various negative statements about analysing and explaining relationships. Taken together, the results provide some

TABLE 7.1

Means for men and women comparing inclination to think and communicate about personal relationships

Items	Men (n=41)	Women (n=36)	p (2-tail)
Relationships in general (PRs)			
Rarely think about PRs	3.49	2.69	.01
Prefer not to analyse PRs	3.67	2.81	.005
Embarrassed writing about PRs	2.84	2.40	.09
PRs are difficult to explain	4.43	3.46	.001
PRs shouldn't be discussed with outsiders	3.80	3.07	.02
Don't know much about PRs	3.21	2.77	.09
Not interested in PRs	2.30	1.76	.03
Not useful to analyse PRs	2.60	2.02	.05
Own specified relationship (X)			
Prefer not to think about X	3.09	2.39	.03
Embarrassed writing about X	2.32	1.71	.02
Distressed writing about X	2.13	2.07	.79
X is complicated	3.35	2.98	.32
Very little to say about X	3.32	2.92	.17
X is uninteresting	2.84	2.98	.63
Task of writing about relationship			
Much effort to think of reply	3.89	3.12	.01
Much effort to write reply	3.47	2.66	.01
Unconfortable in task	2.49	1.91	.03
Bothered by write to confidant instruction	3.29	1.94	.000

Note: The higher the score, the greater agreement with item. Rating scale 1-7 where 1 = in no way applies and 7 = fully applies.

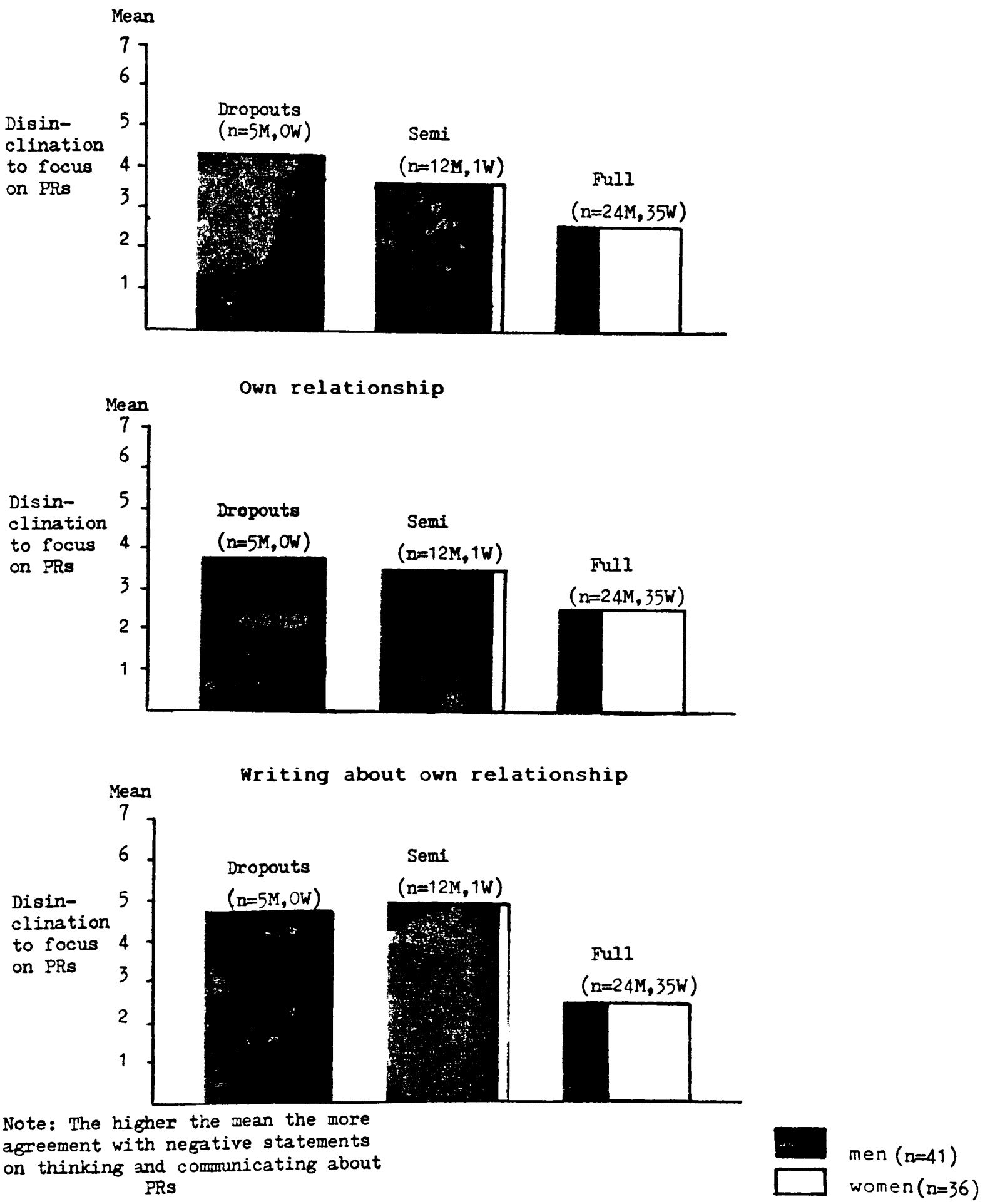


Figure 7.2 Sex differences in self-ratings of inclination and in levels of task participation

empirical support for an interpretation of men as less interested, less thoughtful and less communicative about personal relationships, more dubious about the value of analysis and discussion in this respect, and finding such activities more effortful and less acceptable.

The sex difference found is not so much of interest *per se* as the distinction in readiness to participate which it correlates. Previous discussion of male-female differences in content and reflection, apply here and need not be repeated. But in focusing on inclination to communicate about and analyse relationships, it is useful to speculate about what factor(s) might be involved, considering several possibilities in turn.

For instance, the male-female difference can be hypothetically attributed to boredom-versus-interest, or indifference-versus-concern in the subject of relationships, the latter including an emotional dimension, contrasting with the intellectualism of the former. An alternative may be in terms of evaluation of function of relationship deliberations, which may be expressed as a polarity of useless-versus-worthwhile, with men regarding relationship mindfulness and assessment as unproductive and women seeing it as functional. A third possible factor could be described as awkwardness-versus-ease, to refer to possible social difficulties in obtaining information and in communicating about the subject.

The difference obtained for items relating to the task of account writing suggest that the activities involved are much harder for men than for women. From the three groups of Follow-up items, namely General, Specified and Task) the items on Task yielded greatest sex differences (Table 7.1 and Figure 7.2), it might be tempting to see this aspect as the most parsimonious explanation for differences found: i.e. simply in practical terms, women find it easier to get

their viewpoint down on paper. There is some evidence of females being more proficient with literary and verbal skills (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1975). Accordingly, there were separate items on the questionnaire to separate the mechanics of writing from the thinking involved. The responses for both are similar.

In some contradiction, two items on embarrassment do not clearly discriminate men from women, although the rest of the picture emerging is that men are less comfortable with this kind of exercise. Paradoxically, this could be because men are also less comfortable applying such labels to themselves. The same explanation could explain the results for the item on distress - the only item where the male `disinclination' score is lower; it may simply be that men are unwilling to admit to emotions like embarrassment and distress. Similarly, in addition to a more rational basis for any reserve about relationship accounting, which could be described as discretion-versus-disclosure (as indicated by the difference on the item about discussion with outsiders), responses to Task items suggest men are more reserved on an emotional level: they are more likely to feel `silly'.

Women's greater ease and the items relating to the task suggest also an uncertainty-versus-knowledge factor; that is, knowing enough about relationships to have something to communicate. The General, Specified and Task groups each contain items of relevance to such a factor. A possibility is that the extent of the sex difference is partly obscured by men's greater concern with impression management and their public image, resulting in their reluctance to admit to ignorance. The higher frequency of the self-disclosure category in women's accounts (chapter five) is complemented in this study, where they were less likly to report disagreement with the item about it being `wrong to discuss one's relationships with outsiders'.

These suggested factors are likely to be interconnected and overlapping. For instance, interest-versus-boredom depends partly on the value placed on relationships, hence a suggested link with indifference-versus-concern and useless-versus-worthwhile. In respect of the latter as a factor affecting relationship deliberations, the discussion of the various goals of accounts by Harvey, Weber, Huszti, Garnick and Galvin (1986) is helpful. Indifference-versus-concern may partly hinge on the traditional status (or lack of it) given to the subject of `personal relationships' within academia; its omission within `pure' or 'hard' psychology, and its recency in curricula are some indication of this. Indeed, insights into the intellectual status of personal relationships as a topic could usefully draw on the distinction between `hard' and `soft' approaches to science. Another useful dichotomy, which complements the latter, is the contrast between `divergent' and `convergent' thinkers (Hudson, 1966), the former being `one who enjoys expressing his feelings about personal matters [and who] takes refuge from things in people', and the latter being a person who `concentrates on the impersonal aspects of his culture [and who] seems to have turned his back on the sphere of personal relations, and focused all his attention on areas where people and personal emotions are least likely to obtrude' (p.103). In contrast to the diverger, the converger `takes refuge from people in things' (p.109). A consequence of such disinterest or indifference may be breakdown in relationships resulting in part from not noticing. The preoccupied person therefore, may be taken by surprise.

The more intellectual variety of interest is akin to curiosity. A problem about being inquisitive with regard to other people's relationships is that it could be regarded as prying, so it may be that the `curiosity drive' (Koestler, 1978) gets averted from personal relationships for ethical reasons. These differences may be explained

in terms of indifference-versus-concern and boredom-versus-interest, conforming with descriptions of women as more caring, and men as more likely to get side-tracked by impersonal matters and to be unstimulated by questions of relationship.

A more active kind of avoidance concerns denial of emotions involved. This, in addition to lack of interest, may be the basis for an under-valuing of relationships as suggested by Brain (1976): `For some people it has become embarrassing to recognise or admit a basic need for love and for many of them it may be impossible to accept that a person's identity as an individual, society's character as truly `human' and our survival as members of that society, may depend on anything so vague, so unstimulating, so humanistic, as love and friendship' (p.207). The embarrassment about emotions involved, or avoidance of them, is a theme in comparisons of male and female friendship. Miller (1983) for instance, refers to a view of concern about friendship as `a betrayal of manliness' and points out that men are'taught not to talk about such things, not even to think about them' (p.34). Such guardedness against being misunderstood, association of emotional display with humiliation, and defensiveness against threats to integrity, will tend to make it difficult to relax and be freely expressive, particularly when emotional responsiveness is appropriate. The awkwardness-versus-ease factor is applicable here.

Sex-role stereotypes and gender identity seem central to the awkwardness-versus-ease factor. There is no intention here to discount a biological basis for differences; for instance, there is some convincing evidence for sex differences in empathy as vicarious affective responses (Hoffman, 1977). Two recent contributions to undrstanding of sex differences have been made by Gilligan (1982) and by Eichenbaum and Orbach (1984). Both of these give emphasis to the

fact that the child's caretaker is usually female, so that the sex-composition of the first relationship differs for boys and girls with consequent repercussions for gender identity and corresponding values, needs and forms of self-expression, all affecting later relationships. An important strand in the argument of Eichenbaum and Orbach is, that by the time they have been socialised, men equate intimacy with dependency. Gilligan contrasts the masculine sense of self (defined through separation) with women's sense of self (defined via connection and relationship). Both of these have clear implications for sex differences in attitudes and responses to thinking and communicating about relationships.

The negative aspects of an interest in relationships remain to be discussed; for instance, preoccupation with relationships to the exclusion of other concerns; loss of spontaneity and sincerity which might result from over-conscious attention to relationships. These will be returned to in the final chapter.

7.4 RELATIONSHIPS AS A SUBJECT OF STUDY AND INTEREST

In the above, the discussion was first of socialisation and cultural factors, and then moved onto the communication difficulties occasioned by the emotional nature of relationships, and other factors. Building on this, a wider, more embracing perspective may help to explain simultaneously the lack of depth in accounts, and reservations about relationship communication, particularly among men, linking these with speculations about why 'Personal Relationship' has only recently emerged as an academic discipline. Intrinsic characteristics of relationships, scientific values and reticence about the subject, academically and interpersonally may each be implicated together.

Science and personal relationships

The characteristics of personal relationship arguably disqualify it as a fit subject for science; conversely, it could be suggested that science is not fit to deal with certain aspects of relationships: the subject and the approach are incompatible. Science is intellectual, complex, esoteric, rational, serious, and 'masculine', 'hard', committed to the 'cult of the fact' (Hudson, 1972); whereas, relationships are trivial, prosaic, emotional, ambiguous, 'feminine', 'soft' and confidential. Several characteristics of personal relating militate against taking the subject seriously, on either an academic level or within informal discussion and meditation. These are: the frequent triviality of relationship matters, the powerful emotional component, and the privacy of individual cases. Concentrating on these factors alone, the subject becomes unattractive to social researchers modelling themselves on physical scientists, and is equally at odds with masculine values (control, independence, rationality, etc.). The subject cannot enjoy the prestige of white-overall laboratory science, and is potentially disqualified from intellectual attention by its emotional content.

Lifting the taboo

Having put forward an argument for the exclusion of the subject from academia, it is now necessary to turn back and offer a counter-explanation, not incompatible with the above, for its emergence as a key subject area of evident inter-disciplinary appeal. In speculating about where the changes might lie, that is, whether they are social or academic, it seems likely that both are implicated. Paradigm shifts from individualism to joint action, and from causalism to negotiated purpose, the corresponding new initiative in methods, the demise of over-cognitive models and the re-inclusion of affect into psychological explanation, are indications of changes in academic

traditions. And, with respect to more basic education, there is some such promise at the present time, with movements towards including subjects of daily relevance in the basic school curriculum. Socially, there is more unemployment combined with more leisure bringing additional relationship demands and opportunities into the realm of male experience, and eroding the male-female specialisms, and of course, there is the influence of feminism - '... bringing the rhetoric of relationship into the domain of male dominated scholarship' (Gergen and Gergen, in press). To summarise the position by borrowing a phrase from Duck and Perlman (1985), research into personal relationships, finally ' ...has caught the right wave of history'.

Conclusion

The critical position which has been adopted with regard to relationship conception, has been connected with (a) academic traditions, and (b) intrinsic qualities of relationship experience, both of which may constitute taboos against explicit rationalisation of interpersonal affairs. The exploration has concluded that intellectual neglect of relationships both on an individual and academic level is ultimately attributable to relationships being an intrinsically awkward subject for serious discussion. The characteristics which render it awkward - emotionality, triviality, confidentiality - explain its containment within implicit and silent conception, its confinement to intuitive, non-verbal responsiveness, and its consignment as unplanned leisure away from the resources of science and the more austere business of scholarship. Its aversiveness in these respects as both an academic and popular subject is likely to deter individuals from further addressing and deliberating relevant thoughts. The present social and academic climate, however, is

conducive to a relaxing of those constraints.

Summary of chapter

The nature of relationship conception is put into the context of relationships as a subject of academic, intellectual and recreational interest, and individual differences in inclination to be analytical and communicative about relationships. Thus, inhibiting factors and disincentives to think, talk and be otherwise mindful about relationships are considered from the perspectives of cultural values and individual motivation. It was argued that social norms and intellectual institutions have not been conducive to developing relevant interest and knowledge, and corresponding awareness and thoughtfulness. Further, intellectual neglect of relationships both on an individual and academic level is ultimately attributable to relationships being an intrinsically awkward subject for serious discussion, with characteristics which render it awkward - emotionality, triviality, confidentiality. 'Personal Relationship' has traditionally been excluded from the formal education curriculum, and has not been treated as a serious subject of interest. Indicators of interest in the subject are compared with indicators of interest in other subjects and inhibiting factors are looked at in the form of follow-up data on participation in earlier parts of the project. Relationships in general were of relatively low interest, compared to other subjects and own relationships. Women reported slightly more interest in all relationship items, and they also scored lower than male participants on factors inhibiting thought and communication about relationships. The sex difference was explained with reference to masculine and positivistic biases in traditional education values, as well as intrinsic characteristics of relationship which mitigate against intellectualisation of the subject, and are incompatible with socialised masculine values. The realities of learning about

relationships and consciousness-raising will be turned to in the final chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TOWARDS RELATIONSHIP MINDFULNESS: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 FOREWORD

The musical analogue has helped substantiate the role of inattention, theoretical ignorance, emotional guardedness and lack of interest in detracting from the content and the incidence of conceptualisation, while still leaving individuals with the conviction that they are sufficiently attentive, knowledgeable, receptive and interested. Viewed in this context, and against the potential of relationships for well-being or lack of it, the possibility of extending and deepening relationship conceptualising, particularly amongst men, is indicated, together with the desirability of consciousness-raising and formalised learning about the subject. Practical implications and applications are therefore turned to here.

Firstly, an example of practical application, in the form of relationship awareness sessions provided for groups of people with problematic relationship histories, will be described. The emphasis will be on content of the course more than on results, to demonstrate the possible form which the proposed relationship education could take. Secondly, the intention is to confront and counter likely objections to formal relationship training; both the constructiveness of relationship thoughtfulness and the possible censure of such a proposal have been implicit themes throughout this thesis. Even while

arguing strongly that furtherance of relationship knowledge and consciousness would be constructive, and despite the increasing signs in media and education that such formalisation might be welcomed ~~welcome~~ outside the pages of women's magazines, the appropriateness of it is not unequivocal, and there are some aspects where scepticism might seem well-placed. The main theoretical strands of discussion can be incorporated into a model of relationship appreciation. The chapter culminates with a summary of findings and main contentions, and will end with a final recapitulation in the light of the model.

During the preceding, there emerged a tension between, on the one hand, the isolating of some inadequacy within the content and incidence of conception, suggesting the need for more explicit knowledge and conscious deliberation and monitoring, and, on the other hand, the argument that there are other routes to understanding which are essentially independent of knowledge and theorising. While speculation, supported by the empirical side of the enquiry, was in the direction of insufficiency of formal understanding of relationship matters and events, with the adoption of the musical analogue, and once many of the parallels in responsiveness and participation are allowed, it becomes absurd to suggest that people might represent relationships to themselves wholly in cognitive or rational terms. On an inarticulate, less than conscious level, the emotional, perceptual and sensory aspects are intrinsic to experience and, as such, are vitally included within investigation of conceptualisation. With reference to emotion, the musical parallel is that without the emotional content it would cease to qualify as music. The enquiry here has emphasised the cognitive and verbal aspects of conception, but in linking knowledge to awareness and understanding, a more multi-faceted treatment of conception has been necessary. Thus an inclusive

definition of 'conception' should allow for the different sources of information and forms of awareness beyond knowledge structures.

It may be useful at this point to recall the range of activities being referred to under the headings of 'mindfulness' and 'conceptualising'. These are used to denote the range of cognitive activities which involve conscious thought, though not necessarily on a verbal level, and including 'time out' reflection, conscious monitoring of events as they occur, and ranging from explanation to fantasy.

8.2 RELATIONSHIP UNDERSTANDING COURSE

Introduction

In the foregoing, a more mindful approach to relationships has been advocated. This would include, for instance, increased conscious monitoring, theorising, reflection and planning, absorbing new information and extending relational vocabulary, and engaging in more discussion, all of which require a new metaconception of relationships as a subject which requires formal explanation, rather than one in which meaning is grasped intuitively and which optimumly proceeds without intervention. Everyday observation reveals numerous instances of unhelpful habits, deficiencies and specific failures within relationship conduct which could be incorporated into courses. Examples are discussed in recent practical guides (Beech, 1985; Nelson-Jones, 1986), and are clearly indicated in popular sources (e.g., Rubin, 1983; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1984).

Purpose and procedure

Participants. This programme was planned for and attended by clients of the Probation and After-care Service. The criteria for selection were that personal relationship difficulties were considered

to be implicated in their offences against the law; that they acknowledge such difficulties; and that they accept that they might have something to contribute in improving them. Two small groups were held, one 'compulsory' and the other 'voluntary'. The first, attended by eight members, was held as a weekly event within a programme of activities in a Day Centre for men sentenced to attend for a programme of various activities as an alternative to prison. The second group was intended for eight people in regular contact with an officer of the probation service. Because of its voluntary nature, and/or because of selection policy, it attracted only four regular participants. The option for marriage partners or equivalent to attend the latter was taken-up by just one (female). All the other participants were male.

Objectives. The explicit objectives offered to selecting probation officers were as follows: (1) To enrich participants' knowledge and understanding of their own relationships and personal relationships in general; (2) To better equip participants for appropriate action and responses in relationships; (3) To encourage a habit of being more considerate, both intellectually and emotionally, in and about relationships.

Course content. The content was selected with the joint objective of promoting a positive attitude to learning and thinking about relationship issues, as well as providing information about relationships per se. Illustrative material and discussion included a balance of 'relationship factors' (how the parties treat each other) with 'person factors' (what the parties are like as individuals), and combined attention to attainable ideals of what can be gained and improved in relationships, with the realities of negative experience, difficulties, and aspects of failure.

Materials. An outline of the course (Appendix E1.1) was sent out with the letter inviting attendance, to provide a preview. Extracts

from films, and transparencies were used to exemplify and illustrate discussion, to hold the attention of participants, and to make the course more stimulating and memorable. In addition, assessment questionnaires (Appendix E2) and worksheets (Appendix E3) were used. The latter had the double purpose of providing systematic feedback for clients and/or officers and enabling some quantitative assessment of the course.

Activities. The content for each week was informally introduced by the group leader/tutor, illustrated by film extracts and overhead projection of transparencies. This was followed by group discussion, reporting back of homework projects, and group activities such as role-playing and debate.

Evaluation procedure. To obtain a quantitative means of assessing the course, the same assessment items were included in `before' and `after' questionnaires to be completed by the participant in respect of his closest relationship/s (Appendix E2.1), by his partner/s in that or those relationships (Appendix E2.2), and his probation officer (Appendix E2.3) The `before' version was passed to officers before commencement of the course; because how much they could be expected know varied depending on how intimate their knowledge of the client and family, there was alternative provision for more general comment. Participants received the `before' version during session 2, plus an equivalent version (together with an envelope for concealment) for willing relatives. The `after' version was used for the homework assignment in the eighth session, and was given to officers for completion at the end of the course. Qualitative evaluation in the form of comments throughout the course was given more readily.

Programme

Session 1. Nearest and Dearest

Introduction to the main concepts and themes of the course: what is meant by `personal relationship' in contrast to `impersonal relationship'; the necessity of relationships; the main benefits; the effort involved in making them work. Preview of the issues to be covered in future sessions. Homework assignment: to keep a record throughout the week of (a) any relationship problems occurring, and (b) anything done for relationship partners.

Session 2. Giving and Taking

This session contrasts the benefits of relationships with the problems often involved. Introduction to a simple exchange model in terms of `give-and-take'. Homework assignment: assessment of give-and-take by self and other in closest relationship, using a questionnaire containing relevant items for self-rating on a five-point scale, and obtain equivalent ratings of self to be completed by a close relation. The questionnaire items are shown in E2.

Session 3. Breadwinners and Homemakers

Relationships in a social context: social problems and values. Questioning the relevance of sex-role distinctions, and looking at the gains of equality. Sex stereotypes as a preliminary to considering the complementary nature of emotions and deeds in relationships. Homework assignment: note any indications of `sexism' in attitudes of self and others, and compose a letter for an agony aunt problem page, dealing with actual or invented relationship problem.

Session 4. Agony Aunts and Uncles

Role-playing as agony aunts or uncles to practice adopting a problem-solving approach for own or others' problems. Homework assignment: compose a reply to an agony aunt letter provided and/ or to own letter prepared for the previous week's session.

Session 5. Promises, changes and surprises

Challenging the romantic ideal of lasting love and commitment, institutionalised in marriage. Looking at the functions and effects of emotions and change, and emphasising the notion of relationships as `in process'. No homework assignment; an opportunity to catch-up or review.

Session 6. Relationships from different points of view

Drawing attention to the possibility that the `other' has a different point of view, or different experience, of a relationship event, and, by implication, the possibility of changing that viewpoint. An opportunity via role-playing and `case-studies' to practice entering and defending the other's viewpoint. Homework assignment: to note down any situation arising where there is a clash or a contrast between own and other's point of view or emotional response.

Session 7. All in the mind

Making a distinction between valid differences in interpretation and experience, and those based on judgemental biases and incorrect information. Homework assignment: to recall mistakes and inaccuracies of view in the past, and to classify the source of error, choosing from a short typology, or write an account of a misjudgement, misrepresentation or fantasy.

Session 8. Considering relationships

To encourage increased relationship mindfulness, and, going on to the practical aspects ~~of this~~, looking at obstacles to this, providing practice through role-playing in communicating about relationship matters, and making a case for the appropriateness of combining feeling and reason to reach understanding. Homework assignment: reassessment of give-and-take in closest relationship by completion of another copy of the questionnaire used in session 2, with a view to

assessing also any adjustments which may have been effected in that relationship or the participant's relationship responses.

Session 9. Relationships day-by-day

The last session turns to the more routine, non-dramatic and mundane aspects of living relationships, for an emphasis on realism, and for practice in distinguishing trivial from more far-reaching matters. Finishing with an overview of the main `lessons' of the course, and individual feedback, identifying indications of change and outstanding problem areas to `work on' with probation officer. Final assignment: to report back to probation officer an assessment of what has been learned by course material and related analysis, what has been achieved, and to specify areas where there may be scope for improvement.

Evaluation

Working with participants whose lives are in disarray heightens suspicions that the more usual volunteer subjects in psychological studies are atypical (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1975). The intended assessment by questionnaires has not been possible because of low completion rates, especially of the `after' version, and some `spoiled' returns. Most officers felt unable to answer all questions in the preferred itemised way, because of insufficient knowledge of the client in his relationships, and, at least in part, opted for general evaluative comments. Quantitative results are therefore not available.

Evaluative comments from officers and clients were mostly positive. Attendance was higher than expected, relative to the usual poor attendance rate of probation service clients for sustained activities, whether `compulsory' or otherwise. Completion of homework assignments was higher than anticipated, and probation staff involved judged the combined output during demanding sessions to be at least

satisfactory. Long-term benefits for individuals and their relationships, with or without quantitative assessment accompanying the course, is not amenable to measurement, not least because the gains in terms of increased awareness and relationship monitoring are continuing, rather than confined to the occasion of the course.

Of relevance to outcome, a crucial factor in the success of such a programme is how positive the participant's attitude to attending and the likelihood of gain. In any education, some openness to learning is necessary for input of information and intellectual gains, and it is therefore of relevance that the percentage of probation clients who have been able to gain from formal education is lower than average, and that most of the participants were obliged to attend, either directly as part of a court order or indirectly as an informal requirement of being under a probation officer. A paradox here is that one objective of the course is to foster a positive attitude: a disinterested or sceptical person is unlikely to attend but would have more to gain. Because there was an element of reluctance among a number of the participants, and attendance was in effect a form of punishment and being controlled, it is likely that the full potential benefit for a group with disturbed relationships was not achieved.

8.3 RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

The dilemma

The suggestion that understanding between intimates might benefit from detached learning about relationships seems paradoxical given the obvious importance of spontaneous reaction, emotion, perception and sensitivity in interpersonal understanding. Whatever the arguments in favour of a more knowledgeable approach to interpersonal interaction, these contrary indications to the appropriateness of mindfulness remain, presenting a dilemma when considering efficacious

interpersonal conduct. Recommendation of a more formal approach to relationship knowledge must therefore be equivocal. In the following, the opposing positions will be juxtaposed, and the analogy of listening to music will be applied to clarify the issues and evaluate both sides.

Some of the participants in Baxter and Wilmot's (1985) investigation of taboo topics gave 'effectiveness of the tacit mode' and 'futility of talk' as their reasons for avoiding explicit communication about the state of the relationship. Likewise, Allan (1979) and Miller (1983) refer to a prevailing assumption that friendships cannot be consciously manipulated but rather take their natural course. In some contradiction to the view that personal relationships take care of themselves and do not need to be discussed or planned, self-report data within this project, reveal an accompanying claim to be caring and thoughtful about them, and an alternative position which may be adopted is that relationships require some committed effort in order to succeed (Fromm, 1957; Burnett, 1984[b]; Beech, 1985). A dilemma may be inferred from this contradiction: whether it is desirable to plan and monitor and to be more consciously thoughtful within a relationship in striving to 'make it work', ~~an effort to get relationships 'to work'~~, or whether to avoid such contrivance and instead to rely on sincerity and the conviction that with the right people everything will fall naturally into place.

Objection to relationship education and accompanying mindfulness could take at least three forms. One is that deliberation and effort interfere with sincerity and being able to accept others on face value, without which the relationship is judged to be a sham. A second objection could derive from attributing relationships (romantic ones,

at least) with an enigmatic or inexplicable quality which defies logic and theories. Thirdly, and in contrast, it might be argued that relationships are staightforward and mundane, and the necessary knowledge is acquired ontologically. Reservations, such as these, together with the lack of formal education and guidance and even, as suggested in the previous chapter, the slowness of the subject to emerge as a research field, arguably reflect a consensus that any intellectual work in relationships will always be secondary to unrationalised affect; and that the importance attached to specific events and individualising features seem to have more power in the shaping of events than ~~than~~ any amount of rational planning, deliberate effort after happiness, and relationship monitoring with theoretical commentary.

However, the alternative laissez faire approach, perhaps with the implication that marriages, ~~and~~ friendships, parent-child relations, etc. 'take care of themselves' conveys an underestimation (which may be at the root of relationship failure) of the complexity and the value of relationship knowledge. Yet~~, equally,~~ any suggestion that expertise in the subject would prevent problems arising, would be equally misguided. As has been indicated throughout, the form of conceptualising appropriate for interpersonal understanding involves more than verbal thought and theoretical knowledge. Being emotionally in tune (Berenson, 1981), and able to identify the other's emotional patterns (Clarke, 1986) are major pre-requisites, in addition to possession of minutiae of information about the other, as was discussed in chapter three.

Above all (depicted in the model in Figure 2.2), is a positive affective response: liking the specific piece of music will influence the frequency with which it is played and the manner of response to it during performance, irrespective of expertise. However, while an

obvious constraint on the potential of relationship knowledge to keep partners together is their basic affective response to each other, it is equally clear that a wider knowledge base may enable insights regarding the other which in an alteration of affective response and insights regarding relationships generally, may motivate modification of response. The music which does not immediately appeal or which is in some respects aversive, may become a rewarding favourite once some complexity of it has been understood: an effort to discover it both theoretically and by a more devoted attention may lead to its appreciation.

The hypothetical arguments and counter-arguments regarding the introduction of a more 'mindful' and informed interpersonal interaction approach may be extended. The objections that formal knowledge and mindfulness (1) is superfluous, and (2) would make relationships inauthentic, and (3) would be disruptive, may usefully be considered from the perspective of appreciating music. From the standpoint of the layperson, it could be argued that investigation is of no direct value because the subject is one which everyone learns about and so enough is known already, or, alternatively, because knowledge could interfere with spontaneity and result in exchanges which are experienced as calculated or artificial. In defiance of the law of contradiction (Rowan, 1981), both of these positions are defendable, but can also be countered.

Superfluous knowledge

The superfluous knowledge objection, was that formal education or training regarding relationships is unnecessary because people generally know enough already, such learning being built into socialisation and life experience. The argument is persuasive. The obvious analogous points to be made here are that individuals are no

more estranged from relationships by a lack of formal education in the subject than they are alienated from music by being unacquainted with music theory and formalities, and that interpersonal choices and satisfaction seem as independent of theoretical knowledge as music preferences and pleasures occur despite, for instance, an inability to distinguish binary form from tertiary form, and as ability to play an instrument does not depend on ability to read scores. Both music and relationships share the characteristic of being, more often than not, engaged in, at least on a passive level, without any formal or focused learning having previously taken place, and absence of specialist knowledge does not noticably detract from the intensity of involvement. The impassioned responses which relationships and music often evoke, and the satisfaction it is possible to gain from both, prima facie, indicate that outside guidance is redundant. To the extent indicated, some scepticism would be fair.

The limitations of the above argument with regard to the subject of personal relationships are made salient when compared with degrees of musical ability and awareness. Although it can be assumed that a high level of accomplishment is possible, based only on fortuitous informal learning, combined with aptitude and motivation, more usually musicality benefits from some form of training and conscious purposeful pursuit. This link between standards of musicality and the preparation and training which precedes it, brings into view the potential for enrichened relationship knowledge following a course of study. Theoretical knowledge promises to be valuable in isolating problematic factors in troubled relationships. Personal relationships and music are domains for which there is a body of knowledge, complete with theories, 'facts' and findings, ideas, concepts and 'truths', more organised, coherent and extensive than the knowledge 'picked-up' as experience presents itself. Familiarity with 'form' in music (and

in other arts), allows or extends understanding of meaning. Responding sometimes intellectually as well as, or instead of, with feeling is likely to prove insightful. The constructive lesson afforded by the music example is clear. It is equally clear that moderation is appropriate. Just as continual aural examination of music would interfere with enjoyment and detract from its appreciation, perpetual relationship analysis would be disruptive. A course of relationship appreciation is suggested analogous to music appreciation, to guide individuals towards becoming better 'listeners' within relationships, more effective and skilled 'performers', and more creative and informed followers or experts of the mode/genre.

Insincerity

Another aspect of the argument that being able to conduct relationships without reference to a body of formal knowledge must be a correlate of spontanaeity, a desirable and arguably necessary characteristic of relationship exchanges. To accumulate knowledge for ongoing reference and use, implies a consciousness and calculation which is contrary to the 'naturalness'associated with sincerity and the spontaneity needed for flexible, appropriate responses to the unpredicted actions of the other person. Such spontaneity is associated with innocence and adaptability and indeed with humanity itself, humans being 'hot-headed' and inclined to impetuous warmth and sudden anger. Connected with misgivings about such knowledgeability as interfering with the natural unpredetermined flow of relational interaction, is the possible concern that intellectualising because of its dryness will be orientated towards logical, dispassionate issues and therefore perhaps lead away from more usual priorities. However, on the contrary, the opposite view can be advanced. Intellectualising might be the route to the feeling dimension, simply because it

facilitates searching concentration, or because it helps in clarifying values and feelings. Inquisitiveness combined with knowledge can be expected to lead to insight regarding what is ultimately meaningful. In the arts, at least, knowledge of form and arriving at meaning are related. Regarding music, it was Schumann who explained: 'only when the form is clear will the spirit become clear to you'.

Disruption

The applied orientation of the present investigation presumes the value of analytical thoughtfulness and elaboration of conceptions. But, given that it is functional for much of human performance to be automatic, freeing attention for less routine or demanding tasks and and activities, there is the possibility that increased mindfulness would be dysfunctional. The more usual example to offer for illustration of this point would be driving - the importance of remaining vigilant, though selective enough not to be overwhelmed by excess and unnecessary information. The musical parallel (performance this time, is more illustrative than listening) indicates an alliance of continuous conscious monitoring during the performance, with a proficiency in how to play the piece such that very few decisions and plans need to be made, and full self-expression is facilitated. This could be the height of authentic expressiveness, though preceded by a period in which the skills and knowledge had to be formally acquired, and a learning of the piece.

In daily life and relationships, it may be the emotional impact of the implications which are overwhelming and therefore dysfunctional. The possible devastating results of overconsciousness are experienced by `the Outsider [who] sees too deep and too much' (Wilson, 1963, p.13) and`who has awakened to chaos' (op cit., p.14), whereas the person `in good health is thinking about other things and doesn't look in the direction where the uncertainty lies. And once a

man has seen it, the world can never afterwards be quite the same straightforward place' (op. cit., p.13). Less morbidly, but equally devastatingly for relationships, an analytical awareness may precipitate the breakdown of relationships which would otherwise last, simply because the analytical partner foresees undesirable outcomes.

Mindfulness may entail confrontation of embarrassing and distressing or painful issues, against which evasion is an effective self-protective response, as was mentioned in chapter seven. The idea of examining feelings is abhorent to some, and there may be an implicit understanding between parties that the subject of interpersonal feeling is taboo. A literary example is Bob Slocum in Something Happened, (Heller, 1975), who could not bear to focus on other people's suffering: `I will not let myself cope with such human distress' (p.107). Slocum is portrayed as typical of the person who seeks refuge from the pain of relationships in brisk, unceasing work and leisure. After the death of his most loved son, he ceases to think about him at all and 'swishes' him away from possible recall, for instance, while playing golf: '(Swish.) I miss my boy' (p.155), the single reference to him within an extended monologue of verbal thought otherwise concerned with more prosaic matters.

Non-confrontation in communication may be linked to this. Baxter (in press) has suggested that a lack of disclosure and discussion about relationship matters is a strategy for 'saving face', enabling parties to avoid confronting discrepancies, and revealing information which would be damaging to the relationship, and for 'buying time' until the relationship is secure enough not to be dismantled by such threats. Baxter indicates that this 'facework' is advantageous for the parties. The likelihood, however, is that misunderstandings will arise because the grounds of uncertainty and ambiguity are extended.

Other objections

Further possible ground for scepticism need mention. First, there is the dominance of affective responses; if action in relationships is steered primarily by emotional drives and passions (Clarke, in press; Shotter, in press), then it can be claimed that acquisition of formal knowledge must remain a purely academic exercise. To this, it might be ~~might be~~ countered that far from being a reason not to bother, this can only strengthen a pro-education lobby, because it suggests the value of recourse to the mediating effects of knowledge. A second additional counter-indication resides in the necessity of detailed specific information about the individual before (s)he can be understood, irrespective of theoretical understanding (Peters, 1974). This is complementary to Berenson's (1981) thesis, because in both cases the necessary understanding can be adequately acquired by participants of the relationship only by being an inhabitant in it. On that basis, formal knowledge is an optional extra; but it might prove to be indispensable. Thirdly, knowledge may have a desensitising effect; effected either by being 'hardened' to otherwise emotive aspects of relationships, or via a detached attitude which goes with a more enquiring and informed approach but which may detract from response on the emotional level. This argument has more force if feeling and reason are seen as oppositional, and mindfulness as an alternative to emotional reactions. It may be presumed that some emotions are more oppositional than others; jealousy, for instance, seems less conducive to understanding than, say, pride (cf. though, Berenson (op.cit.; in press) has argued that negative emotion is also effective). Contemplating how they might be complementary, positive emotions might be guided and strengthened by attentiveness and knowledgable interpretation, as a feeling for a piece of music, is similarly guided, deepening understanding.

8.4 RELATIONSHIP APPRECIATION

In the above an attempt has been made to obviate possible objections to relationship education and associated consciousness-raising and mindfulness. The music analogue was drawn on frequently, not for illustrative diversion but, with the more constructive objective of exemplifying the contradictions and precariousness of the place of mindfulness in a form of human activity and experience with which it has many parallels. The case for 'relationship mindfulness' on the level being advocated here is not straightforward. Indeed, in some respects, mindfulness is misconceived, but equally, there is little doubt that many relationships founder because intelligence is reserved for use outside them. The intention has been to argue strongly in favour of a more attentive, informed and reasoned approach to relationships, while at the same time acknowledging and allowing for diametrically opposing factors. The example of music epitomises these tensions. In particular, 'music appreciation', as a deliberate and extended exercise in understanding and ultimately enhanced enjoyment of music, replicates the dialectics involved.

There is a precarious balance in arguing in favour of analytical attentiveness in respect of experiences which retain their essential qualities without it; and similarly, in defending the irrelevance of mindfulness to meaning which is sensed and felt, though, this way, is also frequently 'missed'. 'Appreciation' in relationships, by analogy, implies a combination of careful attention to detail, plus also emotional and perceptual/sensory responsiveness, which is informed and motivated to learn more; but (the analogy also captures the corresponding limitations) wherein misconception and failure to understand may arise despite theoretical knowledge and expertise, if a

dominant negative affective response inhibits motivation to understand; and perhaps also, because there are levels and forms of understanding which require some additional input. To pursue the analogy further, and to complete the present search for the nature of relationship conception, the analogue can be expanded into a model of relationship appreciation which takes in these additional ramifications.

In the above critique, relationships knowledge and understanding have been referred to synonymously. Non-linguistic forms of understanding have continuously emerged as complementary: relationship conception is not simply an intellectual business. Perception, sensitivity, feeling, have been implicated as alternative and combined elements of understanding together with, or sometimes instead of, conscious reasoning and thought. Mentioning these aspects presents a more rounded picture, but, in contemplating music appreciation as a deliberate exercise and also as an accomplishment, the possibility occurs that yet something further should be added to arrive at an explanation which allows for depth of understanding, and the imperfect correlation between knowledge and insight. An outstanding question which is possibly crucial to the whole, concerns why some individuals show exceptional qualities of understanding and applied ability - that is, a 'talent'. A residual factor, therefore which could be added to the model which was depicted in Figure 2.2 is the flair or talent, or what is sometimes referred to as a 'gift' in respect of music and other artistic abilities, which might be detected in some individuals' dealings with significant others. Whether the origin of this is genetic (the very early signs of this in respect of artistic expression lead to the common belief that it is) or whether it is a shared capacity which is nurtured in some but not others, this

feature in music suggests the corresponding existence of an additional level of responsiveness (or maybe qualitative difference) in the appreciation of relationships.

Responsiveness, involving varying combinations of intellect, knowledge, feeling and sensory perception, may be the vital issue in completing the present model of relationship conception. First, the concept facilitates explanation of individual differences in understanding. Covering this range, responsiveness will vary in form and level from one individual to the next (and from one occasion to the next). It can be tutored and forced to some extent, but in extremes is beyond control. Secondly, responsiveness is helpful in explaining the symbiosis (Shotter and Newson, 1982; Harre, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985) between the reality of the relationship, and the participants' representation of it: the relationship is realised by the parties' response to it, and the individuals are self-actualised by their responses to each other, but without relationships are non-persons, just as music does not exist as such until it is heard, and moreover, heard in a way that evokes a musical reaction. Beyond a basic level, and across some qualitative barrier, it is the many sidedness of responsiveness and the height of it (and not the mere fact that there is a response) which facilitates appreciation and expression (between persons, or in a performance), giving life to unheard parts of the music, and unexpressed parts of the self. Thus, in summary and in returning to earlier theoretical tensions, what should be stressed is the muti-facetedness of conception, the symbiosis between the 'listener' and 'performer' and the complementary roles of appreciation (responding to what is there) and mindfulness (more creative, and aided by less conscious insights).

8.5 SUMMARY OF PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Preliminary comments

The combined results of the foregoing analyses and studies of relationship content and incidence, have raised questions about the adequacy of interpersonal awareness, with regard to the content of knowledge, the incidence of thoughtfulness and the motivation to spend time deliberating such matters. To keep the record straight, it must be recalled that data obtained has mostly shown only a trend in this direction, and that the more extreme negative interpretations drawn reflect, in part, the unfavourable statistics connected with relationship failure, and also the view that relationships involve us much more deeply and privately than the data have shown. (Indeed, the same might still be argued in respect of mainstream psychology; one must turn to psychoanalytical literature and novels for the prospect of gaining further insight, and still not be guaranteed finding it there).

More optimistic construal of the findings remains possible; a construal of conceptions as impoverished is relative to the complexity of the subject. On a superficial level, the opposite case could be made: relationships are part of everyday experience and everybody knows about them. Comparison with different levels and intensity of performing and hearing music exemplifies the relativity and multiplicity of potential participation and response. The analogy also indicates the scope for mindfulness which is more complex in content, more attentive in incidence, and representation which is informed by multiple capacities. From this more exacting standpoint,it may be argued that the results are probably, if anything, an exaggeration of the content and incidence of relationship conceptualisation, in that experimental conditions are condusive to eliciting more from

participants than might occur in unmanipulated circumstances. A more optimistic view of the analytical results would, therefore, be likely to over-estimate the adequacy of relationship mindfulness.

Efficacy of the approach

Confirmatory work would be premature in an investigation where the basic questions have not been clear and, accordingly, statistical significance has been subsidiary to psychological significance in the preceding. The breadth and flexibility of the approach enabled more extensive exploration in an area which still needs preliminary groundwork. Although the emphasis has been on theoretical formulation more than empirical findings, many directions for empirical work to proceed have been pointed out very specifically in the initial studies reported. A holistic approach invites complexity and contradiction, and it has therefore been necessary to simultaneously allow for multiple elements, and to arrive at a position with regard to the relative importance of each. The extended analogy was helpful in modelling the various elements, especially those in tension. Freedom from allegiance to a specific theoretical framework, such as 'attribution theory' or 'personal construct theory', plus recourse to a versatile metaphor, faciliated the elaboration of a theory of relationship awareness which takes in contradictory sides of the issue, and which lets issues assume the importance they seem to merit.

The author's predilection for directing research effort towards outcomes of practical value rather than into the placing of more bricks on the great wall of empiricism will have been made stark. This is in no way derisory of a more thorough-going empirical approach, and it is clear that if the beginnings here are to be taken further, it will be necessary to fill-in the structures outlined with more empirical substance. A concern has been to attain the panaoramic view of inter-relatedness, but this theoretical width has had to be

attained at the expense of statistical depth. There is, though, a sense in which application may prove to be the optimum way of testing hypotheses, particularly those concerning extension and change and subsequent gains in relationship awareness. Investigation which proceeds directly to enabling more 'effective self-management' (Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985), in a realm of social life where laboratory experiments are likely to be superceded by changes in the phenomena they aim to test, may be defended as fulfilling its most valuable purpose.

Empirical conclusions

To summarise possible deficiencies and omissions in the content and incidence of relationship conceptualisation which have been proposed, the lines of criticism are as follows:

1. Accounts, which are assumed to be indicative of underlying conceptions, are relatively impersonal. They deal more with social aspects than psychological aspects. More space is given to issues which are 'safe' (less embarrassing, less private, less intimate), but ultimately unsatisfactory given relationship needs and potential.
2. Accounts are relatively static; very few people revise their conceptions, unless external circumstances lead to objective change or prompt fresh thoughts.
3. Reflection about relationships is similarly light-weight in content. More extensive and analytical thinking about relationships seems to be limited to times of crisis, and the rest of the time is confined to empty wishes, affirmations of summary views about the person, and specific decisions, such as remembering to buy a birthday card.
4. There is a relatively low level of interest professed in other people's relationships. While this may reflect a concern not to

encroach on the privacy of others, a recognition of the importance of relationship issues, might have led to acknowledgement of a more generalised concern.

5. Male participants reveal most reticence with regard to being explicit about relationships. This is indicated in recruitment, and 'drop out' figures, in length of contributions, range of concepts, and (to a lesser extent) self-report on reappraisal, motivation and interest.

The analysis of relationship accounts, using three coding schemas, revealed an emphasis on the social, outward aspects more than the private, inward matters (scheme for relating concepts and themes), with little explicit analysis of meaning and significance (scheme for reference to effect and outcome), and an emphasis on objectivity in their discussion of the 'other' and of the relationship in contrast to discussion of self (scheme for analysis of inter-subjectivity). Other sub-population comparisons were made in addition to that between male and female participants. Analysis of accounts from persons with a background of troubled relationships revealed a somewhat smaller conceptual range with proportionally more negativity, compared with the descriptions from a more 'average' population (not selected according to any specific relationship history criteria). Comparison between concepts applied in prototype descriptions and those included in actual relationship accounts highlights in the latter the salience of evaluative interpersonal detail, and the simple existential fact of contact. 'Type' was less discriminating among accounts of real relationships than was the sex of the participant. All of these analyses need extending following validity testing of the content analysis coding schemes on independent data sets, and acquisition of accounts from a more random population which should include some spoken versions for comparative purposes. The coding

schemes, set out in full in Appendix C, constitute independently useful tools for subsequent content analysis of relationship accounts.

Theoretical conclusions

A central theme has been that participation in relationships is like an artistic enterprise involving, on the level of input, varying degrees of creativity and sensitivity as well as practical and theoretical knowledge, and a similar array of possible capacities on the part of the respondents, facilitating their understanding. A musical analogy was selected in favour of other arts as offering the greatest potential as an analytical analogue (Harré, 1981; Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985), despite less amenability to metaphorical use of its terminology than the familiar dramaturgical analogy. Personal relationships as the context for the individual's activities, were compared to background music, with regard to their relative emotional and intellectual impact and the combination of familiarity and superficial understanding with which both are received. The extent to which reception is implicit, leaving detail unrecognised and meaning unconsidered, leads to debate regarding both the necessity and insufficiency of verbalisation in reaching understanding.

The pessimistic evaluation of findings as indicating that people are not very insightful about relationships, derives in part from a the author's view that personal relationships potentially have a more profound effect than accounts of them show, and that a failure to make the psychological aspects explicit, partly explains lack of mastery over them. Non-intellectual elements, including emotion, perception and special aptitude have been indicated as underlying a differentiation between individuals who are more motivated and analytical in response to relationship issues, and those who avoid or are indifferent to the subject. This distinction, which may be labelled high and low 'relationship mindfulness' or 'relationship

awareness' is comparable with, and may be complementary to a number of other dichotomies, including divergers and convergers (Hudson, 1966) high and low self-monitors (Snyder and Cantor, 1980), high and low friendship motivation (McAdams and Losoff, 1984).

In comparing conceptions of different relationship types, it was proposed that formal type is less relevant than the intimacy level of the relational experience. That is, prototypically, the distinctions in intimacy level are <u>across</u> relationships, but in experience the most meaningful distinctions are <u>within</u> the swings and vicissitudes of specific relationships. Too much emphasis on a type distinction at the expense of within-relationship changes could simply repeat the kind of rigid distinctions which arose from investigation of relationship states at the expense of the real 'in process' quality of them (Duck and Sants, 1983). Though not conclusive there were indications in comparisons of accounts by type, sex, and affective climate, that the extent to which a relationship is 'personal' is variable in ways which do not correspond with simple conventional distinctions such as `friendship' or `kin'; and the content analysis of actual relationship conceptions, contrasted with the prototype relationship conceptions, supported this position.

Explanation for the sex difference found is aligned with recent theories (Gilligan, 1982; Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1984; Rubin, 1983) which attribute male inhibition regarding self-expression in relationships to unconducive identification processes developed in childhood. Beyond this, intellectualising about relationships 'flies in the face of' educational traditions in which a 'hard' academic approach and masculine styles of theorising have been dominant. It follows from cultural values and social expectations in conflict with being intellectually interested and showing emotional response to

relationships that men, in particular, may fail to meet the criteria for the kind of multi-faceted responsiveness which is appropriate for understanding relationships. However, at the risk of under-estimating differential socialisation practices, it follows from being subject to the same educational traditions that women may be similarly inhibited, having been schooled to share the same academic values and deprived along with men by the unavailability of a sophisticated language for theorising about relationships. Between the sublimation of relevant thoughts because they are too private and embarrassing, and the lack of practice resulting from the taboo status of the subject, only a restricted language has been made available for developing and transmitting relationship ideas.

The traditional masculine bias of academic institutions is insufficient to explain exclusion of relationships from serious philosophy and discussion. It has been argued that qualities intrinsic to relationships must be taken into account in explanations of prohibitions against the subject. It was concluded that intellectual neglect of interpersonal matters, both on an individual and more educational level, is ultimately attributable to relationships being an intrinsically awkward subject for serious discussion. The characteristics which render it awkward - emotionality, triviality, confidentiality - explain the tendency towards its containment within implicit and silent conception, its confinement to intuitive, non-verbal responsiveness, and its consignment as unplanned leisure away from the resources of science and the more sober business of scholarship. Some deliberate attempt to overcome the subject's aversiveness in these respects is indicated, once it is accepted that general relationship awareness is insufficient. The prognosis for over-riding these obstacles is presently favourable given the current popularity of the subject, which itself requires explanation. It was

mooted that the present lifting of the taboo, and growing general and academic interest in the subject is symptomatic of recent social, economic, educational changes coinciding with paradigm shifts within the discipline.

Finally, further to discussion of the various factors which may be prohibitive, it was argued that, ultimately, appreciation of any given relationship will be dependent on the direction of affect for the unique 'performance' of a relational 'player'. Relationships were compared to background music, with regard to their emotional and intellectual impact, and the combination of familiarity and inattention to detail to which they are responded.

Final Note

Content analysis of accounts and questionnaire data have served to illustrate the observation that there is an economy in people's attention to personal relationship matters which verges on negligence. It has been proposed that impoverishment of conception and diffidence about communication and scholarship on the subject of personal relationships are mutually implicated, both explicable in terms of an incompatibility between academic values and the inherent characteristics of relationship. Thus, cultural traditions and socialisation factors are implicated in psychological responses to inherent characteristics of intimacy. The sex differences which have emerged have been considered within this wider context. A more inclusive model of relationship knowledge has been developed, based on an analogy with music appreciation. This has been useful in evaluating the appropriateness of `personal relationships' as a subject of education and intellectual enquiry, and in which the objective is to facilitate practical improvement.

While acknowledging problematic aspects, a case has been made for

theory, learning, and deliberation within an essentially practical, intuitive and expressive part of life. The kind of relationship training which is being advocated would be based on a model of person-to-person interaction as not so much a skill as an art, which can be improved by theoretical knowledge, training of relevant skills, but which also requires aptitude, sensitivity and expressive inclination and ability. The last word can more eloquently be made by Fischer (1963), drawn from his discussion of the role of conscious and objective effort in the creation of a work of art:

> For make no mistake about it, work for an artist is a highly conscious rational process at the end of which the work of art emerges as a mastered reality - not at all a state of intoxicated inspiration ... Emotion for an artist is not everything; he must also know his trade and enjoy it, understand all the rules, skills, forms and conventions whereby nature - the shrew - can be tamed and subjected to the contract of art. The passion that consumes the dilettante serves the true artist: the artist is not mauled by the beast, he tames it. (p.9)

Having explored, throughout, what might be involved in relationship conceptualisation and, more generally, awareness and understanding pertaining to being in relationship, this final chapter has dealt with the `place' of deliberate relationship mindfulness, with communication and learning about relationships, and conscious monitoring and reflection and assessment. In particular, formal learning and consciousness-raising as an intervention for unsatisfactory relationships has been appraised. To summarise, there are some prima facie objections to formal learning about relationships and the associated relationship consciousness. These are only valid though if the more basic routes to knowledge are excluded from the content of the subject-matter and denied as an important part of the learning process. While the affective dimension is the sine qua non of understanding between persons, it does not follow that successful relating is always undeliberated and intuitive, an unpredicted progression of

unplanned action and spontaneous gesture, without reference to information. Contrary to this, the thrust of the preceding has been that a more prevalent educated and thoughtful approach in relationships would, on balance, lead to some reduction of a major source of human misery and enable many more relationships to achieve their potential.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abele, A. (1984) Thinking about thinking: causal, evaluative and finalistic reasoning in social situations. European Journal of Social Psychology, 15, 315-332.

Acitelli, L. (1984) Marital intimacy: theories, values and measures. Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan.

Acitelli, L. & Duck, S.W. (1986) Intimacy as the proverbial elephant. In D. Perlman & S.W. Duck (Eds.), Intimate Relationships: Development, Dynamics and Deterioration. Beverly Hills and London: Sage.

Adams, B.N. (1967) Interaction theory and social network. Sociometry, 30, 64-78.

Allan, G.A. (1979) A Sociology of Friendship and Kinship. London: Allen & Unwin.

Antaki, C.& Fielding, G.(1981) Research on ordinary explanations. In C.Antaki (Ed.), The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour. London: Academic Press.

Antaki,C.& Lewis,A.(1986) Mental mirrors: metacognition in social knowledge. In C. Antaki& A. Lewis (Eds.), Mental Mirrors: MetacognitioninSocial Knowledge andCommunication. London:Sage.

Antaki, C. (in press) Performed and unperformable: a guide to accounts of relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D. D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Argyle, M. (1975) Bodily Communication. London: Methuen.

Argyle,M. & Furnham, A. (1983) Sources of satisfaction and conflict in long-term relationships. Journal of Marriage and the Family, August, 481-493.

Argyle, M. & Henderson, M. (1985) The Anatomy of Relationships: and the Rules and Skills Needed to Manage Them Successfully. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Argyle, M. & Kendon, A. (1967) The experimental analysis of social performance. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. Vol.3. New York: Academic Press.

Aristotle (1966) Ethics. Translated by J.A.K. Thomson. Harmondsworth: Penguin (originally Allen & Unwin, 1953).

Armistead,N. (Ed.)(1974) Reconstructing Social Psychology. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Ballweg, J.A. (1969) Extension of meanings and use for kinship terms. American Anthropologist, 71, 84-87.

Bank, S.P. & Kahn, M.D.(1982) The Sibling Bond. New York: Basic Books.

Baxter, L.A. (in press) Cognition and communication in the relationship process. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Baxter,L.A. & Wilmot, W.A. (1985) Taboo topics in close relationships. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2, 253-269.

Beech, R. (1985) Staying Together: a Practical Way to Make Your Relationship Succeed and Grow. Chichester: Wiley.

Bell, R.R. (1981) Worlds of Friendship. London: Sage.

Berenson,F.(1981) Understanding Persons: Personal and Impersonal Relationships. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Berenson,F. (in press) Emotions and understanding persons. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Berger, C.R. (in press) Planning and scheming: strategies for initiating relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Construction. London: Methuen.

Berger, P.L. & Luckmann, T. (1967) The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Berndt,T.J. (1981) Relations between social cognition, nonsocial cognition, and social behavior: the case of friendship. In J.H. Flavell & L. Ross (Eds.), Social Cognitive Development: Frontiers and Possible Futures. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bigelow, B.J. (1977) Children's friendship expectations: a cognitive-developmental study. Child Development, 48,246-253.

Bond, M.H. (1983) Cross-cultural studies of attribution. In M.Hewstone (Ed.), Attribution Theory: Social and Functional Extentions. Oxford: Blackwell.

Booth, A. & Hess, E. (1974) Cross-sex friendships. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36, 38-47.

Bower, G.H., Monteiro, K.P. and Gilligan, S.G. (1978) Emotional mood as a context for learning and recall. Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 17, 573-585.

Brain, R. (1977) Friends and Lovers. St. Albans: Paladin.

Burnett, R. (February, 1984) Who cares about relationships? Paper presented to weekend course on Families, Personal Relationships and Stress, Department of External Studies, University of Oxford.

Burnett, R. (July, 1984) Thinking and communicating about personal relationships: some sex differences. Paper presented at the second International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, Wisconsin.

Burnett, R. (1985) Relationship appreciation: a musical analogy for the investigation of personal relationships. Unpublished manuscript, University of Oxford.

Burnett, R. (in press) Reflection in personal relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D. D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Clark, A.A. & La Gaipa, J.J. (1979) Sibling rivalry: the friendly answer. Unpublished manuscript, University of Windsor, Ontario.

Clarke, D.D. (1986) The heartofthe mind: a speculation onthe fundamentals of human psychology. In L.Van Langenhove, J.M. De Waele and R.Harre(Eds.), Individual Persons andHuman Action: Essays in Honour of Professor Dr. J-P. De Waele. Brussels: University Free University.

Clarke, D.D. (in press) Emotion, decision and the long-term course of relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D. D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Crowle, A.J. (1976) The deceptive language of the laboratory.In R. Harre (Ed.), Life Sentences. Chichester: Wiley.

Davis, K.E. & Roberts, M.K. (1985) Relationships in the real world: the descriptive psychology approach to personal relationships. In K.J. Gergen & K.E. Davis (Eds.), The Social Construction of the Person. New Jersey: Springer-Verlag.

Davis, K.E. & Todd, M.J. (1982) Friendship and love relationships. Advances in Descriptive Psychology, 2, 79-122.

Davis, K.E. & Todd, M.J. (1985) Prototypes, paradigm cases, and relationship assessment: the case of friendship. In S.W. Duck & D. & Perlman, D. (Eds.), Understanding Personal Relationships: An Interdisciplinary Approach. London: Sage.

Diesling, P. (1972) Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Dosser, D.A., Balswick, J.O. & Halverson, E.F. (1986) Male inexpressiveness and relationships. Journal of Social and Personal Relattionships, 3, 241-258.

Duck, S.W. (1980) Personal relationships research in the 1980s:towards an understanding of complex human sociality. The Western Journal of Speech Communication, 44, 114-119.

Duck, S.W. (1981) Toward a research map for the study of relationship breakdown. In S.W. Duck & R.Gilmour (Eds.), Personal Relation-

ships 3: Personal Relationships in Disorder. London: Academic Press.

Duck, S.W. (1984) A perspective on the repair of personal relationships: repair of what, when? In S.W. Duck (Ed.), Personal Relationships 5: Repairing Personal Relationships. London: Academic Press.

Duck, S.W. (1986) Human Relationships: an Introduction to Social Psychology. London: Sage.

Duck, S.W. (in press) Adding apples and oranges:investigators'implicit theories about personal relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D. D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Duck, S.W. & Gilmour, R. (Eds.) (1981) Personal Relationships 1: Studying Personal Relationsships. London: Academic Press.

Duck, S.W. & Miell, D.E.(1984) Towards an understanding of friendship development and breakdown. In H.Tajfel, C.Fraser and J. Jaspers (Eds.), The Social Dimension: European Perspectives on Social Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duck, S.W. & Perlman, D. (1985) The thousand islands of personal relationships: a prescriptive analysis for future explorations. In S.W. Duck and D. Perlman (Eds.), Understanding Personal Relationships: An Interdisciplinary Approach. London: Sage.

Duck, S.W. & Sants, H.K.A. (1983) On the origin of the specious: are are personal relationships really interpersonal states? Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 1, 27-41.

Eichenbaum, L. & Orbach, S. (1984) What do women want? Glasgow: Fontana/Collins.

Eiser, J.R.(1983) From attributions to behaviour. In M.Hewstone (Ed.), Attribution Theory: Social and Functional Extensions. Oxford: Blackwell.

Fincham, F.D. (1985) Attributions in close relationships. In J.H. Harvey & G. Weary (Eds.), Attribution: Basic Issues and Applications. London: Academic Press.

Firth, R., Hubert, J. & Forge, A. (1970) Families and Their Relatives. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Fischer, E. (1963) The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Flaubert, G. (1950) Madame Bovary: A Story of Provincial Life. Translated by A.Russell. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Forster, E.M. (1947) Howard's End. London: Edward Arnold.

Fromm, E. (1957) The Art of Loving. London: Allen and Unwin.

Furman, W., Adler, T. & Buhrmester, D. (July, 1984) Structural aspects of relationships:a search for a common framework. Paper presented

at the Second International Conference of Personal Relationships, Madison, Wisconsin.

Gergen,K.J. (1980)Toward intellectual audacityin social psychology In R. Gilmour & S. W. Duck (Eds.), The Development of Social Psychology. London: Academic Press.

Gergen, K.J. & Davis, K.E. (Eds.) (1985) The Social Construction of the Person. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Gergen, K.J. & Gergen, M.M. (in press) Narratives of relationship. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D.Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Gilligan, C. (1982) In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ginsburg, G.P. (July, 1982) The structural analysis of primary relationships. Paper presented at the first International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, Wisconsin.

Ginsburg, G.P. (1985) Taking talk seriously: a revision of the field. Contemporary Psychology, 30, 872-873.

Goffman, E. (1969) The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. London: Allen Lane.

Goldberg, H. (1983) The New Male-Female Relationship. London: Coventure.

Golding, W. (1955) The Inheritors. London: Faber.

Haddon, C. (1985) The Powers of Love. London: Michael Joseph.

Harre, R. (1977)Friendship as an accomplishment: an ethogenic approach to social relationships. In S. W. Duck (Ed.) Theory and Practice in Interpersonal Attraction. London: Academic Press.

Harre, R. (1981) The positivist-empiricist approach and its alternative.In P. Reason & J. Rowan (Eds.), Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research. Chichester: Wiley.

Harre, R. (1983) Personal Being. Cambridge, M.A: Harvard University Press.

Harre, R., Clarke, D.D. & De Carlo, N. (1985) Motives and Mechanisms: An Introduction to the Psychology of Action. London: Methuen.

Harre, R. & Secord, P.F. The Explanation of Social Behaviour. Oxford: Blackwell.

Harvey, J.H. (April, 1985) Attributions in close relationships: research and theoretical developments.Paper presented at California School of Professional Psychology Symposium on Attribution.

Harvey, J.H., Weber, A.L., Huszti, H.C., Garnick, N.N. & Galvin, K.S. (1986) Attribution in the termination of close relationships: a special focus on the account. In R. Gilmour & S.W. Duck (Eds.),

The Emerging Field of Personal Relationships. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hastorf, A.H., Richardson, S.A. & Dornbusch, S.M. (1958) The problem of relevance in the study of person perception. In R. Tagiuri & L. Petrullo (Eds.),Person Perception and Interpersonal Behaviour. California: Stanford University Press.

Hatfield, E. and Traupmann, J. (1981) Intimate relationships: a perspective from equity theory. In S. W. Duck & R. Gilmour (Eds.), Personal Relationships 1:Studying Personal Relationships. London: Academic Press.

Heller, J. (1975) Something Happened. London: Corgi, Transworld.

Heyman, B. & Shaw, M. (1978) Constructs of relationship. The Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 8, 231-262.

Hinde, R.A. (1984) Why do the sexes behave differently in close relationship? Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 1, 471-501.

Hodson, P. (1984) Men: An Investigation into the Emotional Male. London: B.B.C./Ariel Books.

Hoffman, M. (1977) Sex differences in empathy and related behaviours. Psychological Bulletin, 84, 712-722.

Holtzworth-Monroe, A. & Jacobson, N.S. (1985) Causal attributions of married couples: when do they search for causes? What do they they conclude when they do? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48, 1398-1412.

Hudson, L. (1966) Contrary Imaginations: A Psychological Study of the English Schoolboy. Methuen: London.

Hudson, L. (1972) The Cult of the Fact. London: Cape.

Hunt, M. (1969) The Affair. Cleveland: World Publishing.

Jourard, S.M. (1971) Self-Disclosure. New York: Wiley.

Kayser, E., Schwinger, T. & Cohen,R.L. (1984) Laypersons' conceptions of social relationships: a test of contract theory. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 1, 433-458.

Kelly, G.A. (1955) The Psychology of Personal Constructs. New York: Norton.

Koestler, A. (1978) Janus: A Summing up. London: Hutchinson.

La Gaipa, J.J. (1977) Testing a multidimensional approach to friendship. In S.W. Duck (Ed.), Theory and Practice in Inter-Personal Personal Attraction. London: Academic Press.

La Gaipa, J.J. (in press) Friendship expectations. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Laing, R.D. (1971) Knots. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Lalljee, M. & Abelson, R.P. (1983) The organization of explanations. In M.Hewstone (Ed.) Attribution Theory: Social and Functional Extensions. Oxford: Blackwells.

Lalljee, M., Watson, M. & White, P. (1982) Explanations, attributions and the social context of unexpected behaviour. European Journal of Social Psychology, 12, 17-29.

Langer, E.J. (1978) Rethinking the role of thought in social interaction. In J.H. Harvey., W.J. Ickes & R.F. Kidd (Eds.), New Directions in Attribution Research. Hillsdale,N.J: Erlbaum.

Leavy, R.L. (1983) Social support and psychological disorder: a review. Journal of Community Psychology, 11, 3-21.

Levinger, G. & Raush, H.L. (Eds.) (1977) Close Relationships: Perspectives in the Meaning of Intimacy. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.

Lewis, R.A. (1978) Emotional intimacy among men. Journal of Social Issues, 34, 108-21.

Little, B.R. (1967) Age and sex differences in the use of psychological, role and physicalistic constructs. Oxford: (Mimeo), Oxford University.

Livingstone, S. (in press). The representation of personal relationships in television drama: realism, convention and morality. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships:Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Lock, A.J. (1981) Indigenous psychology and human nature: a psychological perspective. In P.L.F. Heelas & A.J. Lock (Eds.), Indigenous Psychologies. London: Academic Press.

Lock, A.J.(1986) The role of relationships in development:an introduction to a series of occasional articles. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 3, 89-99.

Lowenthal, M.F., Thurnher, M., Chiriboga, D. (1976) Four Stages of of Life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

McAdams, D.P. (1982) Intimacy motivation. In A.J. Stewart (Ed.), Motivation and Society. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

McAdams, D.P. & Losoff, M. (1984) Friendship motivation in fourth and and sixth graders: a thematic analysis. Journal of Personality and Social Relationships, 1, 11-27.

Maccoby, E.E. & Jacklin, C.N.(1975) The Psychology of Sex Differences. London: Oxford University Press.

Manis, M. (1977) Cognitive social psychology. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 3, 550-566.

Mead, G.H.(1934) Mind, Self and Society. Chicago: Chicago University

Press.

Miell, D.E. (1984) Cognitive and communicative strategies in developing relationships. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster.

Miell, D.E. (in press) Memory for relationship development: constructing a context for interactions. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Mikula, G. (1984) Personal relationships: remarks on the current state of research. European Journal of SocialPsychology, 14, 339-352.

Miller, S. (1983) Men and Friendship. London: Gateway Books.

Mitroff, I.I. & Kilmann, R.H. (1978) Methodological Approaches to Social Science: Integrating Divergent Concepts and Theories. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Morley, R.E. (1984) Intimate Strangers: A Discussion of the Elements in the Generation, Preservation and Disintegration of Relationships and Marriage. London: The Family Welfare Association.

Moscovici, S. (1984) The phenomenon of social representations. In R.M. Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), Social Representations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Naifeh, S. & Smith, G.W. (1985) Why Can't Men Open Up?: Overcoming Men's Fear of Intimacy. London: Muller.

Neimeyer, G.J. & Neimeyer, R.A. (1985) Relational trajectories: a personal construct combination. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2, 325-349.

Nelson-Jones, R. (1986) Human Relationship Skills: Training and Self-Help. London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Newman, H.(1981a) Communication within ongoing intimate relationships: an attributional perspective. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 7, 59-70.

Newman, H. (1981b) Interpretation and explanation: influences on communicative exchanges within intimate relationships. Communication Quarterly, Spring, 123-130.

Nisbett, R.E. & Wilson, T.D. (1977) Telling more than we can know: verbal reports on mental processes. Psychological Review, 84, 231-259.

Noller, P. (1984) Nonverbal Communication and Marital Interaction. Oxford: Pergamon.

Nye, F.I. (Ed.) (1982) Family Relationships: Rewards and Costs. Beverley Hills and London: Sage.

Olson, D.H. (1977) Insiders' and outsiders' views of relationships.

In G. Levinger & H.L. Raush (Eds.) Close Relationships: Perspectives on the Meaning of Intimacy. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Oppenheimer, J.R. (1956) Analogy in science. American Psychologist,11, 127-135.

Orvis, B.R., Kelley, H.H. & Butler, D. (1976) Attributional conflict in young couples. In J.H.Harvey, W.J. Ickes & R.F. Kidd (Eds.), New Directions in Attribution Research, Vol.1. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ossario, P.G. (1978) What Actually Happens. Columbia: University of Carolina Press.

Paine, R. (1969) In search of friendship. Man, 4, 505-524.

Peevers, B.H. & Secord, P. (1973) The development and attribution of person concepts. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 27, 120-128.

Pepler, D.J., Abramovitch, R. & Corter, C. (1981) Sibling interaction in the home: a longitudinal study. Child Development, 52, 1344-1347.

Peters, R.S. (1974) Personal understanding and relationships. In T. Mischel (Ed.), Understanding Other Persons. Oxford: Blackwell.

Phillips, R.A. (1978) Men as lovers, husbands and fathers: exploration of male socialization and implications for marriage and family therapy. In C.H.Simpkinson & L.J.Platt (Eds.), 1978 Synopsis of Family Therapy Practice. Olney, MD: Family Therapy Practice Network.

Planalp, S. (1985) Relational schemata: a test of alternative forms of relational knowledge as guides to communication. Human Communication Research, 12, 3-29.

Planalp, S. (in press) Interplay between relational knowledge and events. In R. Burnett, P.McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Randolph, D. (1965) This is Music: A Guide to the Pleasures of Listening. New York: Mentor.

Rands, M. & Levinger, G. (1979) Implicit theories of relationship: an intergenerational study. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37, 645-661.

Reis, H. (July, 1984) The intimacy of same-sex interaction: why do males and females differ? Paper presented at the second International Conference on Personal Relationships, Madison, Wisconsin.

Rogers, C.R. (1961) On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rosenberg, S. & Jones, R. (1972) A method for investigating and representing a person's implicit theory of personality: Theodore

Dreiser's view of people. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 22, 372-386.

Rosenthal, R. & Rosnow, R.L. (1975) The Volunteer Subject. New York: Wiley.

Ross, H. (August, 1982) Adult perceptions of severe sibling rivalry. Paper presented at the 90th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Rowan, J. (1981) A dialectical paradigm for research. In P.Reason & J. Rowan (Eds.), Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research. Chichester: Wiley.

Rowan, J. & Reason, P. (1981) On making sense. In P. Reason & J. Rowan (Eds.), Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research. Chichester: Wiley.

Rubin, L.B. (1983) Intimate Strangers: What Goes Wrong in Relationships Today - and Why. Glasgow: Fonatana/Collins.

Runciman, W.G. (1983) A Treatice on Social Theory, Volume 1: The Methodology of Social Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rychlak, J.F. (1984) Relationship theory: an historical development in psychology leading to a teleological image of humanity. Journal ~~ity. Journal~~ of Social and Personal Relationships, 1, 363-386.

Ryle, G. (1949) The Concept of Mind. London: Hutchinson.

Sants, H. (1984) Conceptions of friendship, social behaviour and school achievement in six-year-old children. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 1, 293-309.

Schank, R. & Abelson, R. (1977) Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding. Hillsdale, N.J: Erlbaum.

Schlenker, B. (1980) Impression Management. New York: Brooks/Cole.

Schroder, H.M., Driver, M.J. & Streufert, S. (1967) Human Information Processing. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Schutz, S.P.(Ed.)(1977) The Language of Friendship. Boulter, Colerado: Blue Mountain Arts.

Scott, M.B. & Lyman, S.N. (1968) Accounts. American Sociological Review, 33, 46-62.

Selman, R.L. (1981) The child as friendship philosopher. In S.R. Asher & J.M. Gottman (Eds.), The Development of Children's Friendships. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Semin, G.R. and Manstead, A.S.R. (1983) The Accountability of Conduct: A Social Psychological Analysis. London: Academic Press.

Serafica, F.C. (1982) Conceptions of friendship and interaction between friends: an organismic-developmental perspective. In F.C. Serafica (Ed.), Social Cognitive Development in Context. London:

Methuen.

Shakespeare, W. (1962) Othello. New York: Bantam Books.

Sheehy, G. (1977) Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life.New York: Bantam.

Shotter, J. (1980) Men the magicians: the duality of social being and the structure of moral worlds. In A.J. Chapman & D.M. Jones (Eds.), Models of Man. Leicester: British Psychological Society.

Shotter, J.(1984) Social Accountability and Selfhood. Oxford:Blackwell.

Shotter, J. (in press) The social construction of an 'us': problems of accountability and narratology. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Shotter, J. & Newson, J. (1982) An ecological approach to cognitive development: implacate orders, joint action and intentionality. In J.Butterworth & P. Light (Eds.), Social Cognition: Studies of the Development of Understanding. Brighton: Harvester.

Skynner, R. & Cleese, J. (1983) Families and How to Survive Them. London: Methuen.

Snyder, M. (1979) Self-monitoring. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology.(Vol.12) New York: Academic Press.

Snyder, M. & Cantor, N. (1980) Thinking about ourselves and others: self-monitoring and social knowledge. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39, 222-234.

Storr, A. (1963) The Integrity of Personality. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Sullivan, H.S. (1953) The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry. New York York: Norton.

Tomkins, S.S. (1965) Affect and the psychology of knowledge. In S.S. Tomkins & C.E. Izard (Eds.), Affect, Cognition and Personality. New York: Springer.

Triandis, H.C., Vassiliou, V. & Nassiakou, M. (1968) Three cross-cultural studies of subjective culture. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Monograph Supplement, 8, 1-42.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) Thought and Language. Massachusetts: M.I.T.Press.

Walster, E.H. & Walster, G.W. (1978) A New Look at Love. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Weber, A.L., Harvey, J.H. & Stanley, M.A. (in press) The nature and motivations of accounts for failed relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Weiss, L. & Lowenthal, M.F. (1975) Life-course perspectives on friend-

ship. In M.F. Lowenthal, M. Thurnher & D. Chiriboga (Eds.), Four Stages of Life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Westland, G. (1978) Current Crises of Psychology. London: Heinemann.

Wiemann, J.M. & Krueger, D.L. (1980) The language of relationships: 1. description. In H.Giles et al. (Eds.), Language: Social Psychological Perspectives. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Wilkinson, S. (1981) Personal constructs and private explanations. In C. Antaki (Ed.), The Psychology of Ordinary Explanations of Social Behaviour. London: Academic Press.

Wilkinson, S. (in press) Explorations of self and other in developing relationships. In R. Burnett, P. McGhee & D.D. Clarke (Eds.), Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Knowledge and Representation. London: Methuen.

Wilson, C. (1963) The Outsider. London: Pan Books.

Wish, M., Deutsch, M. & Kaplan, S.J. (1976) Perceived dimensions of interpersonal relations. Journal of Personality and Psychology, 33, 409-420.

Wong, P. & Weiner, B. (1981) When people ask 'why' questions, and the heuristics of attributional search. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40, 650-663.

Wright, P.H. (1982) Men's friendships and women's friendships and the alleged inferiority of the latter. Sex Roles, 8, 1-20.

Wright, P.H. (1984) Self-referent motivation and friendships. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 1, 115-130.

Wright, P.H. (1985) The acquaintance description form. In S.W. Duck & D. Perlman (Eds.), Understanding Personal Relationships. London: Sage.

Wright Mills, C. (1970) The Sociological Imagination. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Zajonc, R.B. (1980) Feeling and thinking: preferences need no inferences. American Psychologist, 35, 151-175.

Zajonc, R.B. (1984) On the primacy of affect. American Psychologist, 39, 117-123.

APPENDIX A: GROUP A MATERIALS

A1.1 Introductory letter

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships

I understand that you are willing to assist with some research in connection with a project on relationships, and that you have at least one sibling (that is, brother or sister). It would be appreciated therefore if you could fill-in the enclosed questionnaire and return it within a few weeks.

Would you please fill in details for all of your siblings - even if you are not in regular contact or on good terms with any brother or sister. There is provision for details of three siblings on the form. If you have more than three could you please let us know so that we can send an extra form.

Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. A small payment (postal order) of £1.25 will be paid by return of post. Your help will be greatly valued and, of course, all information provided will be treated as strictly confidential. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Rosalie Burnett

A1.2 Siblings and friend questionnaire

Section I: In this section you are required to provide background information about your siblings, (that is, your brothers and sisters). Just use the first column if you have only one sibling. If you have more than one, details about your oldest sibling should be entered in the first column, second oldest in second column, and so on. Extra forms will be provided if you have more than three siblings. Please include half-siblings and step-siblings. (Half-sibling - a brother or sister who has one parent in common with you; step-sibling - a brother or sister who has different biological parents to you but who is related to you following the marriage of one of his/her parents to one of yours). Answer all 18 questions for sibling 1 before beginning questions for sibling 2, etc.

	Sibling 1(oldest)	Sibling 2	Sibling 3
1. Sibling Age (List by age, not name. Oldest first)			
2. Half-sibling/Step-sibling/Full sibling. (Enter whichever applies)			
3. Male or Female			
4. Occupation. (if employed, give job title)			
5. Single/Married/Divorced/Widowed. (Enter whichever applies)			
6. If married, Husband's/Wife's Occupation (if employed, give job title)			
7. Number of children			
8. City or Town of residence			
9. How many years or months has he/she lived there?			
10. Previous city or town of residence.			

Turn over for questions 11-18

Section I continued

	Sibling 1	Sibling 2	Sibling 3
11. In general, how often do you have contact with this sibling? (Contact includes visits, letters and telephone conversations) Choose a number from the scale and enter in space provided. 1 less than once a year; 2 between half-yearly and yearly; 3 between monthly and half-yearly; 4 at least once a month; 5 at least once a week			
12. How satisfied are you with the amount of contact with this sibling? 1 far too infrequent; 2 a little too infrequent; 3 about right; 4 a little too frequent; 5 far too frequent			
13. How close is your present relationship with this sibling? 1 very distant; 2 fairly distant; 3 neither close nor distant; 4 fairly close; 5 very close			
14. How beneficial or detrimental to your present well-being is your present relationship with this sibling? 1 greatly detrimental; 2 somewhat detrimental; 3 neither; 4 somewhat beneficial; 5 greatly beneficial			

Section I continued	Sibling 1	Sibling 2	Sibling 3
15. During your childhood to what extent did this sibling arouse strong feelings in you? (e.g. love, hate, happiness, anger, pride, frustration, etc.) 1 never · 2 seldom · 3 sometimes · 4 quite often · 5 very frequently			
16. (Unless your previous answer was 'never') What was the nature of your emotions towards him/her? (Examples of negative: hate, anger. Examples of positive: love, pride). 1 virtually always negative · 2 mostly negative · 3 equally negative and positive · 4 mostly positive · 5 virtually always positive			
17. Since you've been adult, to what extent does this sibling arouse strong feelings in you? 1 never · 2 seldom · 3 sometimes · 4 quite often · 5 very frequently			
18. (Unless your previous answer was 'never') What is the nature of your emotions towards him/her? 1 virtually always negative · 2 mostly negative · 3 equally negative and positive · 4 mostly positive · 5 virtually always positive			

Section II: Two friends (male) whom you have never met before are introduced to you. You are told that they are friends to one another. They agree that they are friends but claim:

"We are more like brothers than friends"

What would be special about the relationship between two friends for themto make such a claim?

Please write your answer in the space below. Don't worry about spelling, style or grammar - we are only interested in your ideas. You can answer either by listing your views point-by-point, or in essay form, whichever you find easiest.

(If you need extra space, please turn over.)

A2.1 Request and instructions for first simulated letter

University of Oxford DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
SOUTH PARKS ROAD · OXFORD · OX1 3UD *Telephone 512251*

Dear

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS

Recently you filled in a questionnaire which was mainly about brothers and sisters. We'd now like to take you up on your offer to help with the next stage of this research. In particular, it would be useful if you could write about your relationship with _____

The time involved will vary depending on how much you have to say, and there will be a standard payment of £2 which will be sent to you by return.

Here's the procedure we'd like you to follow:-

1. Think of a person you can trust and confide in very easily. If there is nobody you could treat as a confidant in this way, please invent an imaginary confidant. It should be easy for you to relax and be open with your choice of confidant, and he/she should be different from the person we've asked you to write about.
2. Now imagine that your confidant has asked you (either in a letter or in conversation) to describe the kind of relationship you have with _____ and to explain how it came to be that way; in other words, to describe and give reasons for the quality of your relationship with him/her. Take it that your confidant is genuinely interested in your reply.
3. Write down your reply on the sheet provided. It will be treated in the strictest confidence - just as you would expect from a confidant. You can write as if talking to your confidant or as if writing a letter to your confidant. Spelling, grammar and writing-style are definitely not important, - so if you're inclined to worry about such matters, on this occasion don't. Your confidant is interested in what you have to say, not in how you say or write it. You can refer to _____ by a false name or just initials if you prefer.
4. Then fill in the Information Sheet and return it with your Reply to Confidant in the stamped-addressed envelope provided.

Please do your best to imagine you really are communicating to the person you choose as confidant. The point of asking you to do this is that we are interested in the spontaneous answer you would give when feeling at ease, rather than the more formal answer you might possibly give to an interviewer or researcher. To be fairer and to make it easier for you to be open, you are not required to sign your reply and should return it anonymously; a code number provides a link with your earlier questionnaire, but this is for the purpose of fuller analysis and will not be used simply to identify you. This is part of a programme of research on relationships, and we will refer to your early questionnaire if we need to contact you again.

If for some reason you would rather not take part in this particular study, please return the material in the envelope provided. You will probably be invited to join in at another stage. Thank you for your interest and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

R Burnett

Rosalie Burnett

A2.2 Information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

The approach being used here is fairly unusual. It would therefore be appreciated if you would answer the following questions, after you have written your Reply to Confidant.

1. Is your condidant a real or imaginary person? (Tick one)
   (i) a real person
   (ii) an imaginary person

2. In which of the following category does your confidant belong (whether real or imaginary)?
   (i) friend (iv) doctor
   (ii) wife/husband (v) social worker
   (iii)parent (vi)other (please specify):

   _____

3. If you genuinely had been asked this question by a confidant, how different do you think your reply would have been to the reply you would give to an interviewer or researcher? (Pleasetick one number)

exactly the same	1	2	3	4	5	very different

4. How easy was it for you to imagine you were writing to your confidant? (Please tick one number)

very difficult	1	2	3	4	5	very easy

5. Before taking part in this study, how much previous thought had you given to this relationship? (Please tick one number)

none at all	1	2	3	4	5	a great deal

6. How compete is your reply? (Tick one number)

very incomplete	1	2	3	4	5	very complete

7. How much is your reply a matter of opinion or a matter of fact? (Please tick one number)

a matter of opinion	1	2	3	4	5	a matter of fact

Any comments_____

_____

_____

_____

A2.3 Definitions of the relationship types specified

Relationship categories:

Siblings

Any adult sibling. Individual sibling selected randomly by researcher from those entered on preliminary questionnaire (Appendix A1.2).

Friends

Including three sub-types: long-term friend, short-term friend, and former friend. Sub-type selected randomly from those entered on preliminary questionnaire, and specified as follows:

long-term: a friend you have known for several years
short-term: a friend you have not known for long
former friend: someone who was once a friend but isn't now

A3.1 Follow-up questionnaire: version A

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS: 'EXPLANATION TO CONFIDANT' FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

To what extent do each of the following statements apply to you? The numbers represent a scale gradually increasing from 1 (meaning the statement in no way applies to you) to 7 (meaning fullyapplies to you). Please circle the number which best represents your position best.

1. I rarely think about personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

2. I prefer not to analyse personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

3. I prefer not to think about the person I was asked about.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

4. It embarrassed me to write about the person in question.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

5. It would embarrass me to write about any of my personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

6. It took a lot of effort to think of my answer for this study.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

7. It took a lot of effort to get my answer down in writing.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

8. It distressed me to write about the person in question.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

9. My relationship with the person in question is very complicated.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

10. I think personal relationships are difficult to explain.
    in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

11. I felt uncomfortable taking part in this study.
    in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

continued...

12. I had very little to say about the person in question.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

13. I believe personal relationships should not be discussed with outsiders.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

14. I don't know much about personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

15. The relationship I was asked about is uninteresting.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

16. I was bothered by the instruction toimaginewriting to a confidant.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

17. In general I am not interested in personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

18. I believe there is nothing to be gained by analysing personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

A3.2 Follow-up questionnaire: version B

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS: 'EXPLANATION TO CONFIDANT' FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

To what extent do each of the following statements apply to you? The numbers represent a scale gradually increasing from 1 (meaning the statement in no way applies to you) to 7 (meaning fully applies to you). Please circle the number which best represents your position best.

1. I rarely think about personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

2. I prefer not to analyse personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

3. I prefer not to think about the person I was asked about.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

4. It would embarrass me to write about the person in question.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

5. It would embarrass me to write about any of my personal relationships.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

6. It would take a lot of effort to think of my answer for this study.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

7. It would take a lot of effort to get my answer down in writing.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

8. It would distress me to write about the person in question.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

9. My relationship with the person in question is very complicated.
   in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

10. I think personal relationships are difficult to explain.
    in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

11. I would have felt uncomfortable taking part in this study.
    in no way applies to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fully applies to me

continued...

12. I have very little to say about the person in question.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

13. I believe personal relationships should not be discussed with outsiders.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

14. I don't know much about personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

15. The relationship I was asked about is uninteresting.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

16. I was bothered by the instruction to imagine writing to a confidant.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

17. In general I am not interested in personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

18. I believe there is nothing to be gained by analysing personal relationships.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

19. I have been to busy to join in this study.

in no way applies to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	fully applies to me

Which, if any, of the above were your reasons for not joining in this part of the project? Write down the question numbers here:

_____

Were there any other reasons?

_____

_____

_____

A3.3 Letters and Reminders

a) Sent with follow-up questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships
'Explanation to confidant' - Follow-up Questionnaire

Before materials for the next stage of this project are sent to you, it would be of great assistance if you would kindly complete and return the short follow-up questionnaire, which is attached. A pre-paid addressed envelope is enclosed.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

---

b) Reminder, where necessary, for return of first 'letter to confidant', (sent before follow-up questionnaire).

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships
Request for return of papers

I hope you will accept this as polite reminder to complete and return the 'Reply to Confidant' papers sent to you in connection with the above-named project. A second copy is enclosed in case you have mislaid the first. If you are unable to proceed because you need further information, please leave a message with the Subject Panel Secretary.

Of course, you may have decided not to participate. In this case, it would make the position clear if you could simply send the papers back, blank, in the enclosed envelope. No further explanation is expected.

Thank you for your interest,
Yours sincerely,

---

continued...

c) Reminder, where necessary, for return of the follow-up questionnaire version B.

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships
Follow-up Questionnaire

I hope you will not mind me writing to you again in connection with the above, and that you will accept this letter as a polite request or reminder, not as an attempt to pressurise you.

You may recognise the attached questionnaire, (another copy of the short follow-up form), sent to you in the hope that you are now in a position to complete it. As a member of the Subject Panel, you have probably been involved in other projects, so, to remind you: This is a follow-up to two earlier packages sent to you - (1) a questionnaire on brothers and sisters, and (2) a request for a written account about one of your relationships ('letter to confidant'). The enclosed is concerned with your reactions to the task set in the second package, even if you did not complete it. In fact, because you chose not to join in, your answers would be especially valuable to this research. If you need any more information, or want to see the material in package two again, please let me know by sending me a note in the enclosed envelope.

Because it only takes a few minutes to complete, there is no payment for this particular questionnaire (sorry!), but it leads directly to a further stage for which there will be payment - though you are always free to decline.

Yours sincerely,

A4.1 Request and instructions for second simulated letter

University of Oxford DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
SOUTH PARKS ROAD · OXFORD · OX1 3UD *Telephone 512251*

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships
Explanation to a Confidant-Number 2

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to join in a third stage of this research project. Instructions are enclosed. You will notice they are identical to the instructions you received on the last occasion, with the exception that you are being asked to write about a different person.If you took part in the previous 'Explanation to a Confidant' study, you are free to choose either the same person or a different person for your confidant.

The results of the last part of this research were most interesting and helpful, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution. (If you were one of the few people who was unable to participate on the last occasion, you are very welcome to join in again for this and any subsequent stages of the project). If you prefer not to join in for any reason, please return the papers in the enclosed envelope. I hope you will be able to take part. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Rosalie Burnett.

University of Oxford DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
SOUTH PARKS ROAD · OXFORD · OX1 3UD *Telephone 512251*

Dear

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS:EXPLANATION TO CONFIDANT Number 2

INSTRUCTIONS

For the next stage of this research it would be appreciated if you could write about your relationship with:-

_____

The time involved will vary depending on how much you have to say, and there will be a standard payment of £2 which will be sent to you by return.

This is the procedure we'd like you to follow:-

1. Think of a person you can trust and confide in very easily. If there is nobody you could treat as a confidant in this way, please invent an imaginary confidant. It should be easy for you to relax and be open with your choice of confidant, and he/she should be different from the person you write about.
2. Next, imagine that your confidant has asked you (either in a letter or in conversation) to describe the kind of relationship you have with _____ _____ and to explain how it came to be that way; in other words to describe and give reasons for the quality of your relationship with him/her. Take it that your confidant is genuinely interested in your reply.
3. Write down your reply on the sheet provided. It will be treated in the strictest confidence -- just as you would expect from a confidant. You can write as if talking to your confidant or as if writing a letter to him/her. Spelling, grammar and writing-style are definitely not important,— so if you are inclined to worry about such matters, on this occasion don't. Your confidant is interested in what you have to say, not in how you say or write it. You can refer to _____ by a false name or just initials if you prefer.
4. Then fill in the Information Sheet and return it with your Reply to Confidant in the envelope provided.

Please do your best to imagine you really are communicating to the person you choose as confidant. The point of asking you to do this is that we are interested in the spontaneous answer you would give when feeling at ease, rather than the more formal answer you might possibly give to an interviewer or researcher. To be fairer and to make it easier for you to be open, you are not required to sign your reply and should return it anonymously; a code number

provides a link with your earlier contributions, but this is for the purpose of fuller analysis and will not be used simply to identify you. This research project will be continuing and we may contact you again requesting your assistance. Future contact will not depend on your response to this stage.

Thank you for your interest and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

R Burnett.

Rosalie Burnett.

A5.1 Early reappraisal questions

University of Oxford DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
SOUTH PARKS ROAD · OXFORD · OX1 3UD *Telephone 512251*

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Relationships

Can you find time to complete the attached ? As you will see, this is a continuation of the "Explanation to a Confidant" study. This package is in three parts. If you can join in, PLEASE DO PART 1 BEFORE LOOKING AT PARTS 2 AND 3. Parts 1 and 3 will take up very little of your time; Part 2 may take a little longer, but not necessarily. There will be a standard payment of £2.

If you are willing and able to do this, would you be kind enough to send completed papers to me within the next three weeks, or as soon as any holiday plans allow. A prepaid envelope is enclosed for return of papers. Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

R Burnett.

Rosalie Burnett.

PART 1

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE BEFORE THINKING ABOUT QUESTIONS IN PART 2 AND PART 3. IT WILL BE EASIER IF YOU DON'T LOOK AHEAD UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS PART.

A few weeks ago you wrote about your relationship with:-

_____

(who will be referred to as X in the following questions). Please circle one number under each of the following questions. Only circle 6 as a last resort.

SINCE YOU WROTE YOUR ACCOUNT...

1...have you had any contact with X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, none	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

2...have you talked to anyone about X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

3...have you had any news or information about X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, none	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

4...has there been any change in your relationship with X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, none	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

5...has X done anything to change your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

6...have you done anything to change your relationship with X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

7...have your circumstances or your situation changed your relationship with X?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

8...have X's circumstances or situation changed your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

9...has X been on your mind?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

10...has your relationship with X been on your mind (i.e. the way things are between you)?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

Continued- - -

SINCE YOU WROTE YOUR ACCOUNT...

11...has your relationship with any other person been on your mind (i.e. any one person in particular)?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

12...has any other person been on your mind (i.e. any one person in particular) ?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

13...has there been any change in your day-to-day circumstances and situation? (e.g. in your occupation, living conditions, routine and use of time, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

14...have you thought about what you included in your account (i.e. before receiving this latest package)?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

Note: the remaining four questions are more philosophical. They may seem out of place in this questionnaire. Nevertheless, please attempt to answer them in the same way.

SINCE YOU WROTE YOUR ACCOUNT...

15...have your views and feelings about life changed?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

16...have your views and feelings about people changed?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

17...have your views and feelings about personal relationships changed?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

18...have your views and feelings about yourself changed?

1	2	3	4	5	6
no, not at all	yes, a little	yes, a moderate amount	yes, quite a lot	yes, a great deal	I can't answer this question

PART 2

EXPLANATION TO CONFIDANT, Number 2 : HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

INSTRUCTIONS

You may remember that you wrote your account on X in response to a request from your confidant to " describe the kind of relationship you have with X and how it came to be that way; in other words, to describe and give reasons for the quality of your relationship with him/her".

With the passing of time, you may have some reason for revising your explanation, for example, in the form of additions, changes, corrections, retractions and clarifications: or there may be no reason for revising or changing it in any way. Obviously you won't remember exactly what you wrote, but please do your best to recall the points you mentioned in your account, and also the confidant you chose on that occasion.

Suppose you are having a conversation with your confidant, or you receive a letter from him/her, in which your confidant mentions your explanation about your relationship with person X, like this:-
"...By the way, thanks for telling me about you and X, and for making things clear to me. I've been thinking about what you said. Has anything changed since then? Do you still have the same views and feelings about X and your relationship with him/her?..."

What would you write, or say, in response? Write your reply on the attached sheet. If there are no revisions you would wish to make, please make an appropriate reply to your confidant. Either way, remember that your confidant knows the background details now, so it won't be necessary for you to repeat yourself. And remember he/she is trustworthy, easy to talk to, and genuinely interested in what you have to say.

PART 3

PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AFTER COMPLETING YOUR "REPLY TO CONFIDANT"

How much do you expect your views and feelings about X to change in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6
not at all	slightly	moderately	quite a lot	a great deal	I don't know

How much of your original explanation (number 2) do you recall?

1	2	3	4	5
none of it	very little of it	about 50% of it	most of it	all of it

To what extent have you felt under pressure to revise your explanation even if there was no reason to revise it ?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	slightly	moderately	quite a lot	a great deal

What proportion of participants in this study do you think the researcher expects to revise their account? Circle the number which is closest to the impression you have formed.

1	2	3	4	5	6
less than 10%	between 10% and 50%	about 50%	between 50% and 90%	over 90%	I have no idea

IF YOU HAVE REVISED YOUR EXPLANATION in any way at all, which of the factors referred to in PART 1 influenced the revisions you made? Enter the question numbers here:- _____

Are there any other reasons for revisions you have made ? _____

_____

_____

A5.2 Later reappraisal questions

University of Oxford DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
SOUTH PARKS ROAD · OXFORD · OX1 3UD *Telephone 512251*

Dear Participant,

Research Project on Personal Relationships

No doubt you will recognise the attached account. For a final study in this project, it will be very much appreciated if you would read over your account to refresh your memory and then answer the following fifteen questions. This probably won't take more than fifteen or twenty minutes, and so, in case you have time and are willing, there is an extra easy questionnaire enclosed. The payment will be £1, to be sent to you on return. Please return your answers and your account plus the extra questionnaire if you do it, in the enclosed envelope.

Many thanks,
Yours sincerely,

RBurnett.

Rosalie Burnett

QUESTIONS

AFTER YOU HAVE RE-READ YOUR ACCOUNT PLEASE TICK ONE ANSWER FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. THE LETTER X STANDS FOR THE PERSON YOU WROTE ABOUT.

1. Remember that you were asked to describe and explain your relationship with X to someone you could trust and be open with (a confidant). If you were asked to do this today, would your account be the same or different ?

exactly same	almost same	somewhat different	very different	I don't know

2. Was this a satisfactory account (accurate or truthful and complete) at the time you wrote it ?

not at all satisfactory	not really satisfactory	mostly satisfactory	completely satisfactory

3. Would it be a satisfactory account (accurate or truthful, and complete) now ?

not at all satisfactory	not really satisfactory	mostly satisfactory	completely satisfactory

CONTINUED - - -

SINCE YOU WROTE YOUR ACCOUNT - - - -

4.-Has your assessment of your relationship with X remained the same ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

5.-Have your opinions about X changed ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

6.-Have X's opinions about you changed ?

exactly same	almost same	changed a bit	changed a lot	I don't know

7.-Have X's feelings towards you remained the same ?

exactly same	almost same	changed a bit	changed a lot	I don't know

8.-Have your feelings towards X remained the same ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

9.-Have you changed as a person ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

10.-Has X changed as a person ?

exactly same	almost same	changed a bit	changed a lot	I don't know

11.-Do you act differently towards X ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

12.-Does X act differently towards you ?

changed a lot	changed a bit	almost same	exactly same	I don't know

13.-Has anything happened to X (change in circumstances;important events) ?

nothing has happened	not much has happened	quite a bit has happened	much has happened	I don't know

14.-Has anything happened to you (change in circumstances; important events) ?

nothing has happened	not much has happened	quite a bit has happened	much has happened

15.-Has anything happened between you (change in circumstances; important events) ?

nothing has happened	not much has happened	quite a bit has happened	much has happened

Optional Extra: If you would like to add anything in your own words, your notes on a separate page would be very welcome.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP AND INTEREST

APPENDIX B: GROUP B MATERIALS

B1.1 Procedure for probation officers

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS

PROCEDURE FOR OFFICERS TO FOLLOW

1. Pick out clients or their relatives who :-
   (a) have a history of failed or unsatisfactory relationships at least partly because of their own inadequacy in relationships
   (b) are over 19 years of age - no upper age limit
   (c) have at least one adult sibling - step and half siblings included
   (d) have at least one of the following: a former friend; a recent friend; a long-term friend. The term 'mate', or some equivalent, can be used if more acceptable.
2. Refer to'Definitions of the Relationship Categories'and the suggested'Random Allocation Procedure' - (attached). Use the random allocation procedure to establish in advance which relationship you will ask the client to write about. Check with client, if necessary, which of the relationships apply in his* case.
3. See 'Request' and 'Instructions' sheet. In order to be systematic, the idea is to keep as close to this wording as is comfortably possible, without being wooden. So, using 'Request' wording ask client if he will participate. If he agrees, tell him what to do using 'Instructions' wording. There's a second version of the instructions on a separate sheet, which client should be given to take away unless it's likely to confuse or make things more difficult for him. A few words need to be inserted in the take-away instructions after allocation, (i.e. person's name, 'have' or 'had', 'is' or 'was' and 'him' or 'her'). Provide paper and envelope.
4. Give client a code number, and note it down together with client's age, sex and the relationship category allocated. Code number could consist of your own initials plus number from 1 - n for each client. I don't need names, but want a way of linking accounts with any follow-up questionnaires completed.
5. If client returns account, enter the code number on the envelope. Enter the same number on Version A of the Follow-Up questionnaire. Give this to client to fill in if he is capable of doing it alone. If not, help him complete it.
6. If client doesn't return account for whatever reason,(wait about one month if there's any hope), give him Version B of the Follow-Up questionnaire. Enter code number on it. Please also give Version B to anyone who agreed to participate and then changed their mind on hearing the instructions.
7. If the above doesn't prove to be too problematic, ideally at this stage clients should be asked to write a second account - this time about a relationship of the type not already described. The instructions for this are exactly the same. So as not to overwhelm participants, it would be best not to mention the second account until after completion of Follow-Up.
8. A letter of thanks to give out to clients who participated will be provided.

*'his' and 'he' are used to denote both men and women.

Thank you for your help.
Roz Burnett.

DEFINITIONS OF RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES

Friends

a long-term friend = a friend you have known for more than three years

a recent friend = a friend you have known for less than two years

a former friend = someone who used to be a friend but isn't now (whether because drifted apart or because friendship broke down)

Siblings

brother, sister } including siblings with whom there is no longer any contact and including step-siblings and half-siblings

RANDOM ALLOCATION PROCEDURE

To avoid bias arising from people choosing to write about their most satisfactory relationships, who they write about should be allocated randomly. It will probably be more convenient to use this procedure before asking the client to participate, though you might need to check with the client that he has the relationship concerned, and to have an alternate allocation ready. You will need a dice or a random numbers table.

First throw of dice to determine TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP client is to write about

odd numbers = SIBLING

even numbers = FRIEND

A second throw is necessary if client has more than one sibling in the case of an odd number, or if more than one of the friend categories is applicable in the case of an even number.

Second throw of dice to determine WHICH SIBLING or WHICH FRIEND CATEGORY

For Sibling :
- 1 = oldest sibling
- 2 = second oldest
- 3 = third oldest
- 4 = fourth oldest
- 5 = fifth oldest
- 6 = sixth oldest

} if number is higher than number of siblings, rethrow until an appropriate number appears

For Friend :
- 1 or 2 = long-term friend
- 3 or 4 = recent friend
- 5 or 6 = former friend

} if friend category doesn't apply to client, rethrow until an appropriate number appears

B1.2 Request and instructions for use by probation officers

REQUEST

We've been asked if we can find anyone to help out with some research about people's relationships being done at Oxford University. Would you be willing to volunteer? They want people to describe how they get on with either one of their brothers or sisters or with one of their friends or former friends. If you do this, you'd have to jot your description down on paper, but you wouldn't have to put your name to it and I wouldn't see what you'd written; you don't have to worry about spelling or handwriting. Afterwards, there would be a very simple form to fill in. You'd be making a valued contribution to research and you might find it an interesting thing to do. How about it? Are you prepared to have a try? I'll give you all the details if so. [If you don't get an outright refusal, allow the client time to think about it or offer further information]

INSTRUCTIONS

Let me tell you what you've been asked to do.

[Assuming random allocation of relationship already done, begin by asking or checking for name of the sister/brother/friend/former friend concerned, unless already known to you. Giving instructions will be easier if you can refer to this person by name. The allocation procedure can be done with the client sat there if it seems appropriate and is more convenient.]

Suppose someone asked you to tell them all about you and _____, - suppose they asked you to describe the kind of relationship you have/had with him/her and to explain how it came to be that way. In other words, what is/was it like between you and him/her, and how come?

Now suppose the person who wants to know this happens to be someone you find it very easy to talk to and someone you can trust, someone you can say anything you like to. Even if you don't know anyone you could confide in like that, try imagining you are writing to such a person. If it helps, pretend you are writing a letter. It will be completely confidential. You can use false names or initials for anyone you write about, and your name won't be added, so it will be anonymous.

Just scribble down whatever comes to mind. Don't worry about grammar or spelling or the way you write - no-one is testing you. The main thing is to be open. Don't miss bits out because you are bothered what anyone thinks of you, and take your time.

Here's a sheet of paper for you to write on, and an envelope. When you have finished put your reply into the envelope, seal it, and give it to me. I will put a code number onto the envelope, and it will be sent on to the research department along with other people's descriptions.

After that, there will be a form to fill in with a few simple questions, which I can help you with if you like. This will be anonymous too, but it will have the same code number on it.

Do you have any questions? Do you want a copy of the instructions? Let me know if there are any problems - but I won't be able to tell you what to write. If you want to discuss it when it is done, that's another matter.

B1.3 Instructions for use by clients

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS

INSTRUCTIONS

Suppose someone asked you to tell them all about you and _____ ; suppose they asked you to describe the kind of relationship you _____ with____, and to explain how it came to be that way. In other words, what____ it like between you and _____ , and how come ?

Now suppose the person who wants to know this happens to be someone you find it very easy to talk to and someone you can trust. You can say anything you like to this person. Even if you don't know anyone you could confide in like that, try to imagine you are writing to such a person. It may help if you pretend you are writing a letter.

What you write will be completely confidential. You can use false names or initials for anyone you write about, and your name will not be added, so it will be anonymous. No-one is testing you, so don't worry about spelling or grammar or the way you write. Just get what you are thinking down on paper. The main thing is to be open.

When you have finished, put your reply into the envelope and seal it . Then give the envelope to your Probation Officer, who will tell you what happens next.

Many Thanks !

B2.1 Follow-up questionnaire: version A

Code Number:-

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE-VERSION A

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE TICK ONE ANSWER. ENTER TICK IN BOX.

1. Which of the following best describes your relationship with the person you wrote about ?

very cold	fairly cold	cool	fairly warm	very warm
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Did you imagine you were writing to someone you could be open with and trust ?

yes	no
☐	☐

3. Who did you write this to ?

researcher	probation officer	friend	wife or husband	boyfriend or girlfriend
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
no-one in particular	**brother or sister**	**parent**	**myself**	**other not listed here**
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Is the person you ticked in the last question a real person or someone you invented ?

real	invented
☐	☐

5. How often have you thought about this relationship before ?

never	rarely	occasionally	quite often	very often
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please turn to next page for more questions.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ? TICK ONE COLUMN FOR EACH STATEMENT.

	I fully AGREE	I mostly AGREE	I half AGREE & half DISAGREE	I mostly DISAGREE	I fully DISAGREE
1. I rarely think about personal relationships.					
2. I prefer not to analyse personal relationships.					
3. I prefer not to think about the person I was asked about.					
4. It embarrassed me to write about this relationship.					
5. It would embarrass me to write about <u>any</u> personal relationship.					
6. It took a lot of effort to think of my reply.					
7. It took a lot of effort to get my reply down in writing.					
8. It distressed me to write about this relationship.					
9. My relationship with this person is very complicated.					
10. I think personal relationships are difficult to explain.					
11. I felt uncomfortable taking part in this study.					
12. I had very little to say about the person I was asked about.					
13. I believe personal relationships should not be discussed with outsiders.					
14. I don't know much about personal relationships.					
15. The relationship I was asked about is uninteresting.					
16. I was bothered by the instruction to write to a person I trusted.					
17. In general I'm not interested in personal relationships.					
18. I believe there's nothing to gain from analysing personal relationships.					

What is you age ? _____ Are you male or female ? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS RESEARCH.

B2.2 Follow-up questionnaire: version B

Code number: _____

RESEARCH PROJECT ON RELATIONSHIPS

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE-VERSION B

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PLEASE TICK ONE ANSWER.ENTER TICK IN BOX.

1. Which of the following best describes your relationship with the person you were asked to write about ?

very cold	fairly cold	cool	fairly warm	very warm
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How often have you thought about this relationship before ?

never	rarely	occasionally	quite often	very often
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please turn to next page for more questions.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ? TICK ONE COLUMN FOR EACH STATEMENT.

	I fully AGREE	I mostly AGREE	I half AGREE & half DISAGREE	I mostly DISAGREE	I fully DISAGREE
1. I rarely think about personal relationships					
2. I prefer not to analyse personal relationships					
3. I prefer not to think about the person I was asked about.					
4. It would embarrass me to write about this relationship					
5. It would embarrass me to write about <u>any</u> personal relationship.					
6. It would take a lot of effort to think of my reply					
7. It would take a lot of effort to get my reply down in writing.					
8. It would distress me to write about this relationship.					
9. My relationship with this person is very complicated.					
10. I think personal relationships are difficult to explain.					
11. I would feel uncomfortable taking part in this study.					
12. I have very little to say about the person I was asked about.					
13. I believe personal relationships should not be discussed with outsiders.					
14. I don't know much about personal relationships.					
15. The relationship I was asked about is uninteresting.					
16. I was bothered by the instruction to write to a person I trusted.					
17. In general I'm not interested in personal relationships.					
18. I believe there's nothing to gain from analysing personal relationships.					

What is your age ? _____ Are you male or female ? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS RESEARCH.

APPENDIX C: CODING SCHEMES AND EXAMPLES

Examples of 'letters'

APPENDIX C1.1
Scheme for content analysis of descriptive and explanatory concepts and themes

Notes

1. Numbers in round brackets refer to category numbers as listed in Table 3.1.

* This is the same as Table 3.1, and so is not repeated here.

** Shown in Appendix C1.2. The Coding Form is the final version used and excludes some categories and sub-divisions in earlier versions of the Scheme.

THE MANUAL

The coding task

The coding categories, including Concept categories and Theme categories, are listed in Table 1.* The coding unit is any relevant reference in the account, and can range in length from a from a single word to a phrase or to several sentences. One sentence may contain several relevant references, whereas another may contain none. Compare, for example: 'We have never been close (c.20) or friendly (c.21) but we feel a brotherly obligation (c.19) to keep in touch (c. 16)' which contained four, and 'I have enjoyed writing about this relationship' or 'it was snowing the day we met' which both contain none. A coding form is used for each account; this is shown in Figure 1.**

References to the Concept categories - list (a) in the Table - are entered under either the section of the form headed 'Positive' or the section headed 'Negative'. At the same time, each reference is coded by the subject of the action or response, that is, whether 'participant', 'other' or both. Examples are: 'she did not understand my point of view' = negative contribution by other; 'we have fun together' = positive contribution by both. Guidance is provided with the manual, in coding instructions, and in notes under categories in cases where distinction is not self-evident.

A reference recorded in a Concept category can also be entered in a Theme category - list (b) in the Table - when applicable to both. Theme categories are not mutually exclusive; they are not comparable with each other and each is of separate interest, therefore, mutual exclusivity of this group is not a consideration. Theme categories are not subdivided according to 'time' or 'positive/negative', but some have their own subcategories as described in the scheme specification.

The bias of this scheme is towards coding of explicit rather than implicit content, with the coding brief being to code participants' own words rather then an inference drawn from the words. In practice it is not always possible, in that some statements are not intended literally, and others may be ambiguous. Where possible statements dhould be coded according to their explicit meaning. In ambiguous cases, the most obvious interpretations should be made, making use of the context. Several examples are given for each category to provide assistance. The examples given are typical derivatives from various

written and spoken sources.

In presenting the scheme, the category labels and definitions are given together with synonymous concepts and phrases. These are followed by some less obvious instances of reference to the category, plus marginal or borderline instances, which are entered after the sub-heading 'Also includes'. Other borderline instances which have been designated as belonging to a different category are indicated by the sub-heading 'But excludes' and are followed by cross reference to the correct place in the scheme. Examples, and some explanatory notes of guidance are added. The other party in the relationship discussed is referred to in the following as the 'other', and the letters P and O, as on the coding from denote 'participant' - the person providing the account - and 'other' - the second party in the relationship.

The categories

(a) CONCEPTS

1. References to practical help. Help or aid involving generous action and deeds, often with tangible or visible results from which the other benefits or is intended to benefit. Also provision of goods and services, including gifts, financial support, favours and practical advice. Negative instances are failures or refusal to provide such help.
Also includes: offers of such help, attempted help and willingness to help; tuition and practical demonstration; sharing of possessions, e.g. clothes; practical help in respect of the other's children, notably gifts and childminding; physical intervention and speaking-up for other person and physical protection.
Examples: 'I supply her with vegetables'; 'he got me the job'; 'she offered to teach me French'; ' he would do the shopping for me'; 'she makes sure we never go without anything'; 'T. never lifts a finger for me' (neg.); 'he rescued me from danger'; 'she put in a good word for me'.

2. References to support and guidance. Help whereby the recipient benefits in terms of well-being or state of mind; psychological help, ego-boosting, therapeutic discussion and counselling. Negative instances are failure or refusal to provide such help and causing emotional distress or pain.
Also includes: offers, attempts and willingness to give such help; leadership; constructive criticism; benefit to self-concept or to self-esteem.
But excludes: loyalty and undertaking to stand by other in a crisis (= Commitment and Loyalty, c.17); help by being understanding (= General Understanding and Empathy, c. 11).
Examples: 'he helped me feel better'; 'I can always turn to K. for emotional support'; 'I try to cheer her up'; 'she has benefitted from our support'; 'he's really good for my ego'; 'he's upset me a lot' (neg.).

3. References to general help,unspecified help. Help which is both practical or psychological, or which is stated in general terms so that it could be either. Negative instances include hindering, obstructing and harming other.
Also includes: offers, attempts and willingness to give such help; unspecified advice, which could be practical or counselling.

But excludes: undertaking to do anything or being willing to do anything no matter what (= Commitment and Loyalty, c.17)
Note 1: some references to 'help' shade into 'commitment', with resulting ambiguity. Commitment references use wording which indicates its unconditional nature, e.g. 'no matter what', 'would do anything', thus 'he would help me in a crisis' = c.3, 'he would do anything for me' = c.17, but 'he's committed to helping me' = c.3, and 'if he needed my help I would give it' = c.3, treating help as a restricted form of commitment.
Examples: 'I've had a lot of help from P.'; 'she's been good to us'; 'when I was ill she looked after me'; 'if he needed my help I would give it'; 'all my life he's held me back' (neg.).

4. References to self-disclosure. Openness of verbal communication and being confident to express and entrust the other with personal information; being on intimate talking terms; using talk to share rather than simply to make conversation. Negative instances include reservations about disclosure, lack of inclination to disclose, or apprehension about being misunderstood or betrayed.
Also includes: 'open communication' about anything of personal relevance, and references to 'talk' when it is clear from context that it is personal or unrestricted, and to 'telling everything'
But excludes: being on friendly talking terms (= Friendly, Amicable, etc., c.21); communication as an activity, e.g. 'holding a weekly discussion group (= Activity Together, c.15); and being able to talk easily when this talk is not specified as intimate or personal, and when it is not evident from context that it is personal (= Ease of Interaction, c.13).
Note For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who is disclosing, and negative input from the party who is not disclosing, unless the other party is explicitly held responsible e.g. 'I can't confide in him' = neg. P, but 'He won't let me confide in him' = neg. O.
Examples: 'I have always been able to confide in her'; 'as children, we shared many secrets'; 'we are disinclined to verbalise our feelings' (neg.); 'she tells me everything'

5. References to acceptance and tolerance. Acceptingor tolerating other's behaviour or viewpoint without inclination to change him/her; allowing other's faults and failings. Negative instances include rejection or avoidance of other because of something 'not good enough', not acceptable, or refusal to 'put up with' other as s/he is.
Also includes: forgiving; coming to terms with something about other.
But excludes: not being able to 'stand' or 'bear' other. (= General Regard, neg, c.7)
Examples: 'I am very fond of him, warts and all'; 'She respects my opinion even if she doesn't always agree with it'; 'he's weird but I don't mind'; '... I wouldn't want him different, though'; 'I can't forgive him for what he's done' (neg.); 'If he really knew me, he wouldn't accept me'; 'I can't tolerate her habits'

6.References to authenticity. Genuine or sincere and spontaneous behaviour when with other; being unpretentious; unrestrained by social conventions and being true to self; open self-expression and absence of any barriers. Negative instances include 'wearing a mask', pretending and pretentious self presentation, holding back and being on guard, and misleading other in order to take advantage.
Also includes: genuine interest in other without ulterior motives.
But excludes: spontaneous or open verbal communication (= SelfDisclosure, c.4).

Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who is being authentic, unless the other party is clearly held responsible, e.g. 'she's the only person I can be myself with' = pos. O. 'he won't let me be myself', = neg. O.
Examples: 'Neither of us feel that we have to put on a show'; 'I can be myself completely with A'; 'there's no barriers between us'; 'our relationship is upfront'; 'he suppresses his feelings when with me' (neg.); 'I make out I'm interested'.

7. References to general regard. Positive evaluation of other, including approval, admiration, respect, esteem, being proud, etc. with respect to the other in general - in other words, to the other as a total person; general praise and commendation. Such references will include either an evaluative verb (e.g. 'I admire him' or an evaluative adjective or adverb (e.g. 'he is a good man'; 'she is marvellous'). Negative instances include disapproval, anger, annoyance, irritation, being ashamed of, and being critical of other in general.
Also includes: liking: sweeping expressions of approval or disapproval (e.g. 'she's horrible'; 'I can't stand him').
But excludes: being fond of other, affection, warmth or love for other (= Caring and Concern, c.10).
Note 1: This is 'liking' of other as a person, in other words, liking other's personal qualities; 'liking' may sometimes be used as a toned-down substitute for 'loving', just as 'loving' may be used to emphasise liking. In the absence of further indication from context, 'liking' is to be coded here, and 'loving' as c.10.
Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who is the object of regard, and negative input from the party who is the object of disapproval or disregard.
Examples: 'he doesn't like me much' (neg.); 'she's a disappointment to me' (neg.); 'I have a high regard for him'; 'my brother is fantastic'; 'she respects me'; 'I believe I infuriate him' (neg.).

8. References to specific regard. Positive evaluation of other including approval, admiration, respect, esteem being proud of, liking for, etc. specfic qualities of other; praise and commendation of specific qualities of other. Such references will include an evaluative verb, adjective or adverb (e.g. 'he is a brilliant physicist' would qualify, but 'he's a physicist'would not). Such references may be about trivial or very specific qualities and attributes. Negative instances include disapproval of, anger about, annoyance, irritation etc. with specific qualities or characteristics, and also critical remarks, and a disregard or rejection of other's opinions or advice.
Also includes: moral judgements which are complementary or critical, praise or criticism of other's behaviour towards self (unless also codable under another category) and praise or criticism of other's behaviour to people in general (e.g. 'he's a helpful person' and 'he's been underhand towards me' but not 'he's been unhelpful to me' (= General Help, c.3); passive disregard by rejecting or ignoring other's viewpoint (neg.)
But excludes: evaluation of other's qualities and characteristics codable under another category, e.g. 'he's a helpful person to me' (= General Help, c.3).
Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party whose qualities are the object of regard, and negative input from the party whose qualities are the object of disapproval, dislike, etc.
Examples: 'her attitude annoys me'; 'W. is a good cook'; 'he has gorgeous eyes'; 'I admire her courage'; 'she doesn't approve of my job'; 'he's lazy'; 'he ignores my advice'; 'she's foolish to have behaved that way'.

9. References to lack of rivalry and competitiveness. Absence of rivalry and competitiveness, and associated emotions like envy and jealousy, between self and other. Negative instances are the presence of same.
Also includes: resentfulness; sense of equality or inequality; unfairness.
But excludes: 'envy' when used loosely to denote admiration (e.g. 'my friend has an enviable complexion' = Specific Regard, c.8).
Examples: 'unlike siblings of closer age we have never been rivals'; 'we are always competitive' (neg.); 'he can't stand the fact that I have been more successful' (neg.); 'she does not resent having to share things with me'; 'I once envied him his way of life' (neg.); 'S. is just jealous of my achievements; 'he had more privileges which I thought unfair' (neg.); 'we used to squabble over everything'.

10. References to caring and concern. Feeling of, or expression of caring for other including warmth, kindness, protective love, compassionate love, and emotional responsiveness to the other's need and affairs. Distinguished from 'General Regard' by emphasis on unselfish response to other's state of well-being. Negative instances include coldness, indifference, apathy and negligence.
Also includes: affection, fondness, warmth of feeling, 'love' in a general or unspecified sense; caring about other's needs; protective attitude; demonstrations of affection e.g. hugging and cuddling.
But excludes: 'liking' and 'love' of other's qualities or characteristics e.g. 'I love her style' (= Specific Regard, c.8); being or feeling close (= Close, Intimate, etc., c.20); emotional need for other (= Bonds and Interdependence, c.18); practical acts of caring (= Practical Help, c.1); mental cruelty and psychological harm (= Support and Guidance, neg., c.2); physical harm (= Specific Regard, c.8); practical neglect (= Practical Help, neg., c.1)
Note 1: Passionate or romantic love to be coded here, if needed, in the absence of a separate category in this scheme for accounts of siblingship and friendship.
Examples: 'he seems fond of us'; 'I worry about him a lot'; 'it's hard to tell whether D. has any feelings for the rest of us'; 'I appreciate F's warmth'; 'we love each other'; 'she's not bothered about us'(neg.)

11. References to general understanding and empathy. Knowledge, awareness or appreciation of other's general state, situation, views or feelings. Such references may be concerned with attempted understanding or with achieved understanding; and understanding may be achieved via perspective taking, longterm familiarity or communication. Negative instances include failure to understand or empathise and misunderstanding arising through not taking the other's perspective.
Also includes: harmony of mind, shared wavelength, being in tune, sympathy of spirit; vicarious feeling; communication without words.
But excludes: being able to communicate easily (= Ease of Interaction, c.1); being able to communicate freely and openly (= Self Disclosure, c.4).
Examples: 'we understand one another'; 'he can read me like a book'; 'she has no inkling of how I feel'; 'I have never been able to figure him out';'I know T. perfectly'; 'she can tell what I'm thinking'; 'N. could never see my point of view'

12. References to specific understanding and empathy. Knowledge, awareness or appreciation of other's specific state, situation, views or feelings. Negative instances include failure to understand or

empathise, and misunderstanding arising through not taking the other's perspective. Such references will include an explicit reference to 'knowing' or to 'understanding' and being able to ascertain other's state of mind, etc., as indicated by metacognitive clauses such as: 'I know that he feels ...', 'she appreciates my view that ...', 'he is aware that I think . ..', 'I realise he believes...'. etc.
Examples: 'I imagine she has been feeling hurt about it'; 'knowing him, I can see why he felt that way'; 'B. understands my views on this matter'; 'She knows that ... upsets me'; 'We know each others views about ...', 'we understand each others beliefs about ...', 'I sensed what he was going through'; 'he understood what I needed/wanted/felt/meant'.

13. References to ease of interaction. The experienced ease or difficulty, harmony or conflict when in the company of other; acceptability, peacefulness and feasibility of being together. Negative instances refer to awkwardness, tension, quarrelling, arguments and conflict.
Also includes: ease of communication; relaxed atmosphere.
But excludes: disclosure of personal information (= Self Disclosure, c.4); difference of opinion and disagreement of opinion (= Similar Views, Values, etc. c, 26); unfriendly attitude (= Friendly, Amicable, etc. (neg.), c. 21)
Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who it is easy to be with.
Examples: 'we are always relaxed together'; 'our times together are conflict free'; 'the time passed smoothly'; 'I feel more comfortable with her now'; 'we're never at ease together'; 'we quarrel a lot'; 'he gets on my nerves'; 'we don't get on well in each other's company'

14. References to enjoyment of interaction. The experienced pleasure or displeasure when in the company of other. Negative instances refer to a lack of pleasure, not having fun, being bored, discontented, sad or miserable when in company of other. Such references refer to a more positive or more negative emotion than is the case with c.13, easiness of interaction.
Note: for positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who is the source of pleasure or enjoyment.
Examples: 'X always amuses me'; 'we have great fun together'; 'I enjoy her company'; 'we always have a laugh together'; 'I find her company rewarding'; 'we used to have a great time'; 'we had a terrific weekend'; 'we don't get any pleasure from being together any more'; 'I don't enjoy spending time with him'; 'I hate staying with her'; 'we just make each other miserable when we get together'; 'he is boring to be with'

15. References to activity together. Activities, jobs, games and other things done together, or done by both in the company of each other.
Also includes: Such activities, etc. just done on one occasion together; working together or alongside one another; conversation and discussion as a planned activity; trivial and relatively inactive activities, e.g. having coffee together.
But excludes: visiting other to keep in touch (= Contact, c.16); family rituals and reunions (= Role Rules and Expectations, c.19); conversation and discussion as a means of self disclosure (= Self Disclosure, c.4); having the same interests (= Similar Activities and Interests, c.24).
Examples: 'we have always done things together'; 'we play in a band together'; 'he is going to play tennis with me'; 'we used to go to the

cinema together'; 'we go out for a meal every Friday'; 'I go round for a weekly chat'.

16. References to contact. Frequency or amount of interaction or contact with other, whether in direct face-to-face terms, or by telephone or letter, or any combination of these. Negative instances include minimal or rare contact, e.g. 'we only see each other once a year'. If 'only' is included, to be treated as negative; also wishful thinking to be treated as negative, e.g. 'I wish we were closer'.
Excludes: emotional contact and direct physical contact.
Note: for positive/negative coding, input is from party who is or isn't making contact, but both, if this isn't made explicit, e.g. 'it's ages since I've seen her' = 'neg. we'.
Examples: 'we didn't have contact for a while'; 'I wish we could meet more often'; 'we get together every week'; 'I phone her regularly'; 'we always write'; 'we've lost touch' (neg.)

17. References to commitment and loyalty. Long-term intentions with respect to other and to relationship with other; being there for and faithful to other during testing times. Strong version is commitment to the person; unconditional giving of self, standing by other through thick and thin, unfailingly. Weak version is commitment to the relationship and keeping in touch, and confidence that the relationship will last. Negative instances include not bothering to make contact, avoiding contact, letting other down.
Also includes: 'trust' in an absolute sense; being there to turn to in a crisis.
But excludes: Specific trust, e.g. trust with information about self (= Self Disclosure, c.4); future 'help' or 'support' e.g. 'I would always help her' (= General Help, c.3), e.g. 'he will give me moral support in a crisis' (= Support and Guidance, c. 2); trustworthiness, loyalty and reliability and personal qualities of other, e.g. 'she is a reliable person' (= Specific Regard, c.8).
Note: While it is possible that 'future help in a crisis' indicates commitment, it may be more specific than the unconditional self-sacrificing qualities of commitment, but this coding rule can be relaxed if there is clear contra-indication from the context. Commitment has a 'no-matter-what' quality about it.
Examples: 'She'll never fail me'; 'I can rely on him to stand by me'; 'we intend to remain friends for the rest of our lives'; 'I'll never let him down'; 'I don't think she's that bothered about our relationship' (neg); 'I didn't want to lose him'; 'he is loyal to our friendship', 'we intend to keep in touch', 'we don't put ourselves out to have frequent get togethers'.

18. References to bonds and interdependence. Sense of being linked, united or part of each other, because of shared identity or psychological dependence and need. The basis may be kinship or shared experience, and may be expressed merely as acknowledgement of the tie, or as an undeniable need.
Also includes: needing each other in order to feel alive, or to be complete; kinship bond, family ties and blood ties.
But excludes: needing other to do things, e.g. 'she sees to all my needs' (= Practical Help, c.1), and specific needs, e.g. 'he needs me for emotional support' (= Support and Guidance, c.2).
Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from the party who experiences the bond; and from both, if the reference is to both.
Examples: 'our lives are inextricably bound together'; 'we belong together'; 'we are part of one another's identity'; 'unlike most families there is no bond between us' (neg.); 'we were inseparable',

'it's a case of not being able to survive without each other'; 'it's family feeling which binds me to him'; 'even though she's my sister, I don't feel any sense of attachment' (neg.)

19. References to roles, rules and expectations. Acting responsibly, correctly or appropriately according to the rules, or obligations, norms, expectations associated with particular roles occupied by the parties with respect to each other. Such references will explicitly link the rule or expectation with the role, or will refer explicitly to 'responsibilities', 'obligation', agreed conduct, or what should and ought to happen with respect to sibling role to each other, family role to each other, friend role to each other, or any other role they occupy in respect of each other.
Also includes: unspecified references to approriate role behaviour if the adjectives 'good', or 'true' are used, e.g. 'he's a good brother', 'he's been a true friend', or if the context suggests rolerule expectations with respect to other's spouse, children, family e.g. 'my brother is a lousy uncle to my children' (neg.), 'he's done as he should with respect to our mother'; ritual events and exchange e.g. weddings, exchange of greetings cards, joining family gatherings.
But excludes: appropriate behaviour not explicitly linked with role e.g. 'he alway behaves correctly and keeps to the rules' (= Specific Regard, c.8); role comparisons e.g. 'my friend is like a sister to me', 'my sister's a good friend'; no obligations attached, therefore treated as general (= Friendly, Amicable, etc., c.21); general references to being a friend, brother or sister, if not preceded by the adjective 'good' or 'true' unless context suggests a role-rule, e.g. 'he is brotherly', 'she's a lovely sister' (= Friendly, Amicable, etc., c.21); fulfilment or violation of social norms, e.g. 'not paying back debts', cheating, breaking law, and moral codes (= Specific Regard, (neg.), c.8)
Note: For positive/negative coding, positive input is from party who keeps to the rules, etc., or acts out of a sense of obligation, even though this may be a backhanded criticism, e.g., 'he only visits me because he thinks as my brother he ought' = pos. O.
Examples: 'I feel I ought to help him because he was a friend'; 'a true friend would not have betrayed me like that'; 'he always does the right thing family wise'; 'we exchange the obligatory birthday card'; 'he doesn't act as a brother should'; 'she does everything a friend can be expected to do', 'we fulfil our sisterly obligations to one another'; 'he is a good brother'; 'we get together at Christmas with the rest of the family'.

20. References to 'Close','Intimate', 'Involvement', etc. Use of the general concepts 'close', 'intimate', 'involvement', etc. to describe the state of the relationship or interpersonal feeling. Negative instances are feeling distant, becoming estranged and drifting apart.
Examples: 'we were closer then than we are now'; 'our friendship has become more intimate'; 'we are not very close'; 'we have never been on very intimate terms'; 'we are less involved with each other'.

21. References to 'Friendly', 'Amicable', 'Matey',etc. Use of the general concepts 'friendly', 'amicable', 'matey', 'pally', etc. to describe the state of the relationship or interpersonal feeling; unspecific references to friendliness and being on friendly terms.
Also includes: being on good terms, being without malice, being pleased to see other, being cordial, taking a friendly interest; reference to 'friendship' or 'companionship' when there is no adjective, e.g. 'we have a friendship'; general references to being 'brotherly' or 'sisterly' as global equivalents to 'friendly' e.g. 'my

friend is sisterly', 'myself and my brother are brotherly', unless the context makes reference to role-rules (= Roles, Rules and Expectations, c.19).
But excludes: Specific aspects of being unfriendly, e.g. 'she ignores me' (= Specific Regard, neg. c.8); reference to friendship preceded by an adjective relevant to another category, e.g. 'we have a close friendship' (= 'Close, Intimate, etc.', c.20), 'we have a loving friendship' (= Care and Concern, c.10).
Examples: 'It is not a friendly relationship'; 'Relations between us are amicable'; 'we have always been great pals', 'she takes a friendly interest'; 'we're not on friendly terms', 'he's hostile towards me',

22. References to 'good', 'get on', 'okay', etc. Use of the general concepts 'good', 'get on', 'okay', 'fine', 'alright', 'well', etc. to describe the state of the relationship or interpersonal feeling; general evaluation of the relationship.
Also includes: references to 'good' or 'fine' relationship or friendship.
But excludes: references which use the adjective 'good' to describe the person e.g. 'she's a good person' (= General Regard, c.7), or which use the adjective 'good' to describe a 'friend', a 'sister' or 'brother', e.g. 'she is a good friend' (= Roles, Rules and Expectations, c.19).
Examples: 'we have a fine relationship'; 'things are not good between us'; 'it is a poor relationship'(neg.); 'we did have a good relationship'; 'relations between us are okay'; 'we get on great'; 'we have never had a good relationship'; 'we get on'.

23. References to other concepts. Description of the relationship or interpersonal state or feeling in terms of concepts not included in the scheme's other concept categories. In the case of such references not being identified as either positive or negative, even in context, these are to be entered as 'positive' with a question-mark.
Examples: 'It is a happy relationship'; '...strange relationship'; '... wonderful friendship'; 'unusual relationship'; 'lively relationship'; 'it has been painful and stormy between us'; 'it is just an ordinary relationship'.

24. References to similar activities, interests and occupation. Comparison between self and other in terms of activities; interest, occupation, work, leisure pursuits, hobbies, etc., including both voluntary and obligatory activities. The emphasis is on purposeful pursuits of some kind which both coincidentally like or do.
Excludes: similar interpersonal deeds (e.g. I gave him a gift and he gave me one back, = Practical Help', c.2); references to activities done together or in company of other e.g. 'we work together' (= Interaction Together, c.15)
Examples: 'we share the same interests'; 'we both love gardening'; 'we've always been drawn to different activities'; 'we did almost the same courses'; 'like me, he is interested in photography'; 'he plays tennis whereas I prefer golf'; 'we are both accountants'; 'she's crazy about sport too'.

25. References to similar situation, background and experience. Comparison between self and other in terms of situation, circumstances, background, experiences, past, status, life experience, childhood, etc.
Also includes: shared biographical facts e.g. 'we lived at the same address'; common status, e.g. 'we are both householders', and similarity in possessions and achievements; common contacts, e.g., 'we have

friends in common'; common social class.
But excludes: physical characteristics (= Similar Values, Views and Personal Characteristics, c.26)
Examples: 'our common past unites us' (also Bonds, Interdependence, c.18) 'we have the same parents'; 'we weren't in the same boat'; 'we move in different circles'; 'there's a big age difference between us'; 'we were both in the same situation'; 'we lived through it together'; 'he's married with a family and I'm still single'; 'E. and I have had to overcome the same obstacles'.

26. References to similar values, views and personal characteristics. Comparison between self and other in terms of values, views, beliefs, emotional states, goals, disposition, preferences, personality, typical behaviour, etc.
Also includes: physical characteristics; disagreement in the sense of a difference of opinion; common age.
But excludes: preferences and values connected with activities and interests e.g. 'we both love dancing' (= Similar Activites and Interests, c.24); arguments and quarreling (= Ease of Interaction, (neg.) c.13)
Examples: 'our tastes and attitudes are different'; we usually hold similar beliefs'; 'we often disagree'; 'he is almost as moody as I am'; 'she didn't have the same opinion as me'; 'like me, he is easy-going'; 'she is outspoken, but I shy away from trouble'; 'our views are often in conflict'; 'we don't look alike'; 'he is older than me'.

27. References to complementarity. Comparison between self and other in terms of complementarity, being a good pair; fitting together, setting one another off.
Also includes: compatibility; clashing of abilities, interests, views, etc; matching, in the sense of two different characteristics or abilities going together.
But excludes: matching in the sense of being identical or equal e.g. 'in him, I've met my match' (= Similary Values, Views, Characteristics, c.26)
Examples: 'our personalities clash'; 'we have complementary skills'; 'we make a good pair'; 'we made a good team because I helped him with maths and he helped me with physics'.

28. References to unspecified similarity, or similarity in general. Comparison between self and other in terms of similarity which could be any or all of the similarity concepts in the four preceding categories. Included even if accompanying references are more specific and can be coded, c.24 to c.27.
Examples: 'we have nothing in common'; 'we're so alike'; 'in many ways she and I are similar to each other'; 'we are very different'.

(b) THEMES

29. References to extrinsic factors influencing relationships. Extrinsic, largely uncontrollable factors, described as positively or negatively influencing or affecting the relationship, or some aspect of the relationship. If such references do not include explicit mention of influence, the link should be apparent from the preceding or subsequent references. Factors include the parties' similarity or difference of 'age', their similarity/difference of 'marital status',

the parties' residential 'proximity' or distance, their circumstances or 'situation', 'health' factors, 'chance', 'world events', and 'others'.
Includes: any of these which may also involve critical or salient incidents. (This forms a separate category, but is not mutually exclusive).
But excludes: any of these which would also be coded under 'Third Parties'; any reference to these factors which is not mentioned explicitly as of effect or consequence to the relationship or which is not semantically linked to relevant references e.g. 'I'm two years older than her. We went to the same school'; 'she was sixteen and I was ten when father died' ; these two examples do not mention a relationship influence and so are excluded. The following two examples make a connection and would be included. e.g. 'I'm only two years older than her, and so we always played together'; 'she was sixteen and I was ten and so she took care of me when father died'.
Examples: 'S. now lives closer to me so we'll see lots more of each other' (proximity); 'being in the same situation brought us close together' (situation); 'we were close before her marriage came between us' (marital status); 'we didn't get to know each other because of the age difference' (age); 'her poor health has tended to make me feel protective towards her' (health); 'we were fated to become friends' (chance); 'then the war came and so we lost contact for a while' (world events).

30. References to third parties influencing the relationship. Another person or persons described as positively or negatively influencing or affecting the relationship or some aspect of it, regardless of whether the person(s) knows of that influence. The influence or effect can be minor or otherwise.
Includes: Third party influence, which qualifies as critical or salient to the relationship, entered also 'Critical/Salient Incident', c. 31/32 respectively. Counted as one only if third party is a unit consisting of more than one person (e.g. family, parents, couple). There are multiple entries if the same party is mentioned as influential in more than one case; that is, each influential effect or influence is entered.
Examples: 'her husband is obnoxious, so I don't visit when he's around'; 'E. was the cause of our quarrel, and J. helped us patch things up'; 'but for my parents, we would have become enemies'; 'our children knew one another, and that was how we met'; 'we've become close since mum's illness when we had to spend a lot of time together'.

31. References to critical incidents. Incidents or events which are associated with a definite change or turning point in the relationship. Such references are explicity associated with a marked or critical outcome, change or effect. This outcome may be sudden or more gradual. An incident may have multiple effects, but it is the number of incidents which are entered, not the number of effects.
Also includes: such incidents which mark the end of contact or loss of contact; such incidents which precede a series of events.
But excludes: such incidents which mark reduction in contact in a continuing relationship (= Salient Incident, c.32, if reduction is linked to other change) such incidents which would be classed as critical if explicitly linked with change (= Salient Incident, c.32).
Examples: 'everything changed between us after her husband died'; 'I told him what I thought of him and he hasn't spoken to me since'; 'he accused me of stealing from him and I can never forgive him for that'; 'our relationship changed when we began working together'; 'going through that together brought us closer'.

32. References to salient incidents. Incidents or events which are associated with a marked change or turning point in the relationship but not explicitly mentioned as such (that is, the same as critical incidents but not labelled that way, or the effect on the relationship may not be mentioned immediately). Not mutually exclusive with relevant 'Third Party' events and relevant events coded under 'Extrinsic Factors).
Also includes: events leading to reduction or increase in closeness of parties.
Examples: 'she treated me in a despicable way. Need I say more?' 'After she got a job, this was all she talked about. I was so bored'; 'we were very close. Then I was out of the country for a year ... I don't often see him now'.

33. References which are generalisations or theories about relationships or people. Statements about relationships in general, or type of relationship in general, or about people or groups of people in general; including the participant's own theories, prevalent viewpoints, cultural maxims, proverbs, or theories taken from literature, science and media sources.
Examples: 'it's true that blood is thicker than water'; 'absence makes the heart grow fonder'; 'little things mean a lot in relationships'; 'the main thing in relationships is to be kind'; 'something vital is missing from relationships in which there is only indirect contact'; 'the world is full of unhappy people'; 'as Sartre has said, it is a necessary truth that one man can never truly know another'.

34. References which are relationship comparisons. Comparison between the relationships being described and other relationships, including actual relationship, i.e. 'specific', and typical relationships, i.e. 'general'. To be entered under one of four columns:'same type, general', 'same type, specific', 'other type, general' and 'other type, specific'.
Also includes: comparison by metaphor, e.g. 'my sister was a mother to me'; 'my brother is a real friend to me'.
But excludes: comparisons between specific characteristics of 'other' and any other person, e.g. 'he looks more like me than my other brothers'; 'she's brighter than my other friends', i.e. person-to-person comparisons.
Examples: 'I think of him as a friend as much as a brother'; 'I am closer to her than to any of my other friends'; 'R. is not my favourite sister', 'we don't treat each other as most friends do'; 'D. my other friend, is easier to get on with, but not as rewarding'; 'he probably thought of me as a second mother instead of a sister'.

PARTICIPANT No:_____ CATEGORY LABEL	POSITIVE			NEGATIVE			TOTAL		
	P	O	P+O	P	O	P+O	P	O	P+O
Practical help									
Support and guidance									
Help in general									
Self-disclosure									
Accept and tolerate									
Authenticity									
Regard in general									
Specific regard									
Lack of rivalry									
Caring and concern									
General understanding									
Specific understanding									
Ease of interaction									
Enjoyment of interaction									
Activity together									
Contact									
Commitment and reliance									
Bonds, emotional dependence									
Role-rule keeping									
"Close", "intimate"									
"Friendly", "amicable"									
"Get on", "good", "okay"									
Other/miscellaneous									
Sim. activities, interests									
Sim. background, situation									
Similar values, views									
TOTALS									

Critical incidents	Third parties	Extrinsic
Relationship comparisons	Generalisations	Words

C1.2. Coding form

APPENDIX C1.3

Examples of letters

NB: Identifying characteristics have been changed, and spelling errors and obvious grammatical errors corrected.

(1)

My sister Alison is 27 and is married to my next door neighbour's son. They got married 9 years ago. They have two children. One is 8 years old and the other is just gone 4. The relationship between me and her seemed to come around because I like children and when she used to go out she would ask if I would look after the kids and she used to put her trust in me. I still go down to her house to take them out for walks and to take the oldest out for bike rides.

(2)

T is a little older than me, married with a child, and she lives near me. Academically she is the most well qualified on our course. She finds it easy to think in abstract terms and to grasp complex concepts. She is a free thinker and not bound by the constraints and biases of her subject, and not afraid of expressing her own point of view in the face of enormous opposition. She and I are often the only people to take a different line and oppose the majority view. We usually hold similar beliefs, which I suppose I find reassuring. My background makes me an outsider in the group. I'm the only one from a privileged middle class background, and the only person who is a newcomer to the area. Possibly I'm more aware of these differences than the others are, but for that reason, I value T's friendship and acceptance and the congruence of our attitudes and beliefs which otherwise I would have felt were rooted in my class and background rather than intellectually based.

T has a great warmth. She deals well with people and is able to put them at their ease. One is not immediately aware of her academic ability or quick mind. She laughs a lot. She can relate to people who I know I intimidate, so she provides me with a link to them. She has as easy manner and says what she thinks. She exudes self-confidence and knowledgeability and is very self assured and self-possessed, but not intimidating.

We often meet outside college, or phone each other in the evening. Our families have started to meet which provides more links for shared experiences. But most of what we discuss revolves around college, which is a large shared aspect of our lives. I don't know how well we would sustain our friendship without this shared point of contact, but common interests are important to most relationships. Our friendship is very much tied up with the new environment that we are in and the new experiences we are encountering. In the past it seems that T's social life has revolved around her family, and this is the first time she has made friends outside and in her own right. Whereas for me her friendship is an extension to the friendships I already have.

I appreciate T's warmth and friendliness. She seems to find it easy to be open and has said several times how much she values ny

friendship, and how much she likes me. I find it hard to reciprocate in the same way, and hope to show through my behaviour that I value her friendship and how much she likes me. I told her I would be writing this about her, and she seemed pleased, flattered and interested.

(3)

You were asking me the other day how I had been friend with G for so many years, as many people found her difficult to get on with. Funnily enough I have never found this as I hold very few secrets from her and I do know that she will never tell anyone and therefore I trust her which in turn makes her natural and easy with me. She has a slight chip on her shoulder, I think and can be rather brusque, but underneath her remarks, her kindness and generosity are very strong. I have always found her like this in a funny way. I think she treats me more like a sister as she is very relaxed with me, and cries and tells me her problems, and shares in my and her joy as well. It means a great deal to have her as a friend.

(4)

I've known this chap for about four years now. Our relationship has changed slowly based on the fact that he has become involved with a girl he is going to marry. I get on very well with her also, but it has changed the way we treat each other, and we seem to confide in each other less. We work together sometimes, but we do have quite long periods when we don't see each other, and just lately we never seem to recover the easy way we used to have. I feel that he's becoming pompous and losing his sense of humour. I feel that I should tell him this, but can't seem to get around to doing it. We're still good friends, and I prefer being with him on a job than anyone else, and maybe we can recover the ease we used to have in each other's company - I hope so.

APPENDIX C1.4
Examples of coding categories

Practical help
'I make sure she works hours that fit in with her practical commitments'
'...in return I ran errands for him'
'I taught him and two of his friends to play the recorder'
She sometimes babysits for me'
'When we were kids, he helped me out with homework'

Psychological help
'I find I can offer her a lot in terms of emotional support'
'Her attitude in times of adversity has been of great moral support and comfort to me'
'He says I was a prop he leant on...'
'...we have encouraged each other to do our best'
'...and helped each other with emotional crises'

Help in general/ unspecified/ practical plus psychological help
'I know if I need help I acn go to my brother and if it is within his power he will help me'
'We rarely ask each other for assistance'
'Throughout this whole period, I was able on several occasions to bail her out'
'As there are only two of us, we do depend on each other in various ways'

Self-disclosure
'...we can talk to each other frankly'
'We can talk very freely abvout almost everything, particularly about our individual rewlationships with others'
'If I told her anything in confidence I am certain she would never repeat it'
'...the one person I can talk to and confide in and with whom I can discuss anything from the sublime to the ridiculous'

Acceptance
'I never feel that she is in anyway criticising or censoring'
'We like each other for what we are, warts and all'
'...and if we don't agree on something it doesn't matter because we are not the same people so we can't agree on everything'

Authenticity
'We both pretended at being friends...'
'Only once can I remember letting it all hang out [when with O]'
'There seem to be no barriers between us and we can be ourselves together'

General regard
'I like him very much as person...I respect him' (2)
'I admire ---- immensely'
'I have a great admiration for our ----'
'...as a boy I looked up to him...I suppose he was a bit of a hero to me'
'When I was old enough to see him clearly, I was utterly disappointed in him'

Specific regard
I certainly admire him for the way he never allowed mother to interfere in his marriage or with bringing up children. In some ways I suspect I admire him for his detachment from mother'
'I appreciate ----'s warmth and friendliness; she deals well with people and is able to put them at their ease'
'I found her a real pain in the neck with her everlasting tears'

Caring and concern
'I care deeply for him'
'As a small boy, he always took great care of me...'
'She has been to me a good and loving sister'
'She has always been very kind...and sympathetic'
'...I was cold and indifferent in return'
'Except for a nod when he comes in I might not be there'

General understanding and empathy and personal knowledge
'We seem to have reached some sort of mutual understanding. We can grasp each other's ideas and meanings without hte need for long explanations'
'We didn't really understand each otehr very well so it was difficult to talk about things in letters'
'I feel I just don't know him that well and never will'
'We seemed sometimes to have an almost telepathic communication'

Specific understanding and empathy and personal knowledge
'I used to ... become depressed, which she could never understand'
'I'm sure he doesn't know this is how I feel'

Enjoyment of interaction
'We had a hell of a lot of fun'
'Basically we just enjoy each other's company, and can relax completely'
'She is great fun to be with and has a terrific sense of humour. We seem to amuse each other very well'
'...but when we do [meet] it is always a happy time'
'I enjoy ----'s company, but ...'

Ease of interaction
'... because you can feel totally at ease with her'
'Her presence always had the effect of making me ... depressed and anxious'

Commitment
'I feel I tend to encourage our relationship far more than he'
'I feel I just can't be bothered to contact her. It's partly that I think she no longer makes an effort ... and I feel I just can't be bothered. I can't keep up with the friends I already have so what's the use in struggling'

Bonds
'As children, I think I thought he was part of me'
'I don't feel any strong ties there'
'I would certainly feel a great loss if anything happened to him and feel that maybe half of me had gone with him'
'During our adolescent years we were inseparable'
'I just have the feeling that she was always there, and always will be there as a background to my life'

Role-rule
'I suppose it is as much to a debt I feel I owe ---- for the former generosities he bestowed on me that I've maintained the relationship'
'My only feelings to him are the usual ones of blood-ties ...'
'We only get together at family funerals or weddings'
'I only see him at Christmas when we exchange presents for each other's children'
'I hope we'll be more sisterly in the future'
'We are brotherly, and ...'

Non-rivalry
'It seems to me that he is deeply jealous because ...'
'We were always rivals when we were younger'
'I wasn't a bit jealous of her popularity ...'
'We can enjoy each other's experiences without that slight edge of envy that so often creeps into such conversations'

"Close","intimate"
'We're not as close as I would like us to be'
'We were drifting further apart'

"Get on", "good", "okay"
'We get on better than we used to do'
'It is a good relationship'
'... but things are okay between us now'

Similar activities, interests
'...and our interests are mutual'
'We both like to travel'
'His great love was rugby...For me it was cricket'

Similar situation, background
'---- and I grew up together. We went to the same schools ...'
'... we were both engaged in the mutual struggle to win the war'
'We have many friends in common'
'... and I remember we had this in common at the time'

Similar values, views, personal characteristics
'I've found that we think alike ...'
'I see things in my sister that I know are in my own character'
'... we have a sense of humour in common ...'
'Whereas I tend to think of people in shades of black and white, ---- has at times seemed over-tolerant towards those I regard as undeserving of tolerance'
'We are both different in our attitudes to life'
'I tend to be an idealist. She, on the other hand, is somewhat more down to earth'

Complementarity
'... and we simply fit'
'... but I hope we are complementary'

General/ unspecified similarity
'We have nothing in common anymore'
'We are much of a muchness'
'She and I are not at all alike in any way'

Third parties
'I don't like her new husband - so now I rarely see her'

'The circumstances of our togetherness are rarely free and easy. When we see each other it is usually in the company of other relations who tend to inhibit one's range of conversation to the very acceptable'
'He mistrusted both of us and told us stories individully about the other one. This didn't divide us but brought us closer together through hurt and anger at his lack of trust in us'

Critical and salient incidents
'Since she married I haven't had any relationship with her'
'I divorced and got stuck with a young daughter and that's where my sister really helped out - this really made our relationship strong'
'We were getting on okay until I got into drugs'
'Going to school by train the two of us, when I was about thirteen, we always travelled in the same carriage ... Anyway one morning we went to get into the carriage and ---- told me to get out, she was not going to have me in her carriage anymore, and she pushed me out. The train was just beginning to move ... I never stood on the platform with her or travelled with her again'
'This [father's illness] and the death of our mother brought us closer to each other'
'I feel he let me down about fifteen years ago over some money he owed, still owes me. It wasn't the first time he had cheated me and it must have left a scar'

Generalisations
'Friends shouldn't be hard work'
'You can't have a relationship with anybody if you don't see them'
'A relationship is so different when you live apart'
'If you really like or love someone enough, it's easy to overlook their faults and see the good'
'... but common interests are important for most relationships'

Relationship comparisons
'We've always treated each other as brothers even to the point of introducing ourselves in that fashion' (friends)
'I felt myself as a father figure to _____' (friends)
'[When we met after a long separation] it was as if we had been best friends for years' (sisters)
'She was very cute and easy to communicate with, unlike my other sister'
'We squabbled like most brothers'
'Our friendship is less exclusive than other friendships of mine have been'
'None of my friends could take the place of this one'
'We don't have the sort of brother-sister relationship most people do. We have just like an ordinary friendship'
'You would think I was her mother' (sisters)
'The relationship I have with _____ is not really as brother, more as a person I know but don't really like'
'He is ten years younger than me. Because of mother's invalidity from the time he was born, I was his Nanny, not his sister'

APPENDIX C2.1
Scheme for content analysis of reference to effects and outcomes

SCHEME 2

The categories

1. **References to effect on self-concept.** The `other' or the relationship leads to some difference in view of self, or evaluation of self. Examples: `her experiences made me see myself as boring'; `this relationship has enabled me to come to terms with myself'; `she made me see myself in a new light'; ` I helped him understand himself'; `from our talks, we have both gained insight into ourselves'.

2. **References to effect on state of mind, and to personality.** The `other' or the relationship leads to some difference in state of mind, (including emotional state, inclination, disposition, opinion, beliefs, conception, etc.), or, more generally, personality, and psychological or personal development as an individual Examples: `my attitude to my parents has changed because of his influence'; `she makes me happy'; I believe I've influenced her values'; `I have learnt a lot from him'; `she stopped me being so bitter about the situation'; `...he changed my mind').

3. **References to effect on behaviour and action.** The `other' or the relationship leads to some difference in behaviour and action, including way of behaving, typical behaviour, activities and occupation. Examples: `through our relationship, he became more outgoing'; `he persuaded me to stop drinking'; `due to his influence, I am a reformed character'; `she makes me stop and think'.

4. **Referencesto effect on health, well-being and life in general.** The `other' or the relationship leads to some difference to state of health, sense of well-being, ability to cope and deal with problems in living, or response to life or 'everything' in general. Examples: `she has made a big impact on my life'; `he can't manage without me'; `I'd be ill without her'; `her friendship has saved my life'.

APPENDIX C2.2
Coding form

Participant number: _____

	REFERENCES TO EFFECT AND OUTCOME				
	Category	P to O	O to P	P↔O	Total
MAJOR	self-concept				
	mind; personality				
	behaviour and action				
	health; life; general				
	life; general				
	Total				
MINOR	self-concept				
	mind; personality				
	behaviour and action				
	well-being; health				
	life; general				
	Total				
	Grand total				

Key: P = participant O = other ↔ = to each other

APPENDIX C2.3
References to relationship effects and outcomes

Self-Concept (9.5%)
'Possibly I'm more aware of my differences than others are, but for that reason I value X's friendship and acceptance, and the congruence of our attitudes and beliefs, which otherwise I would have thought were rooted in my class and background'
'I need my own identity, not one that he has tried to mould me into'
'He always used to make me feel very young and stupid...'
'[Because of her being ahead at school] I felt quite inferior'
'She grew up with a sense of inferiority to me'
'She said that all [my actions] would do was humiliate her'

Mind; Personality (19%)
'Whatever she says or does, she will never change my mind'
'She makes me think about the basis of many of my prejudices'
'I help her get things into perspective'
'I helped her to grow up (she told me once)'
'She helps me to grow'
'She has learnt trust from me'
'She gives me a lively slant on life'
'She has a lively and interested mind, and consequently stimulates my mind, because I am a bit of a stick in the mud'
'I helped her to forget this man'
'The relationship taught me a lot about human nature...'
'She wants to give me things to try to make me beholden to her'
'We exchange ideas and expectations, stimulate and re-energise each other'

Behaviour and Action (20.6%)
'He taught me to keep clean hair, teeth and ears'
'Her capacity for getting involved in projects was infectious'
'I found with X I could notice a lot of things I wouldn't normally notice, and vice versa'
'I copied her in many ways'
'Most importantly, she has challenged me to match her standards'
'Looking back, I realise it was he ... who helped me come to terms with my new life-style [in the army]'
'She tried to get me to have it aborted'
'I persuaded him to buy a car'
'I was so involved with him that I chose to teach that age-group because I felt I knew so much about it'
'I introduced her to yoga, which was a great success'
'She has the rare and precious gift of enabling me to express myself'
'I think her decisiveness and ability to make up her mind quickly and be able to act on it has influenced me'
'I know she twists me round her finger. I find myself doing things for her that I had no intention of doing'

Well-Being and Health (20.6%)
'You always feel good when you are with him'

'We both gained a boost from [the relationship]'
'She is a tonic to me when I see her'
'Maybe our friendship was a buttress for a time for her insecurity and I did more harm than good'
'I would certainly feel a great loss if anything happened to him, and feel that maybe half of me had gone with him'
'Friendship with X makes life more satisfying'
'To be able to share a joke or light-hearted conversations, as we did, can be a tremendous safety-valve'
'The effects of [our relationship ending] were near disaster for her, and she was under a psychiatrist for some time'
'Her attitude in adversity has been of great moral support and comfort to me'
'I can make myself deeply sad just by thinking of her not being around in the world'
'She has spent her whole life trying to tread me into the ground, keeping me low down'
'We are both lonely people and found companionship in each other's company'
'She's been a constant source of inner strength to me'

General; Life (30.1%)
'X was my greatest influence during my formative years'
'It was a very enpowering sort of relationship [for us both]'
'We have encouraged each other to do our best'
'He seems to bring out the best in me'
'She has made life more precious to me'
'The more she sees of me, the more I see her changing [as a result of my influence]'
'I aim to try and effect a reconciliation between him and his parents as I believe this would make a tremendous difference for him'
'[Our friendship} has given me something to live for'
'[Our friendship] has given me a social life'
'I blamed her for me being left on my own"
'This antagonism didn't do any lasting harm'
'He began to lose interest in all things and I had less influence on him'
'I realised that all the nagging from her had ruined my life in more ways than one'
'She separated me from [people I need] for several months'
'Its not until you get older that you realise the effect his behaviour was having on people who cared for him'
'Her illness had a constant effect on all our lives'
'X's behaviour caused much tension between me and my wife'
'It means a great deal to have her as a friend'
'She has benefitted very greatly from her involvement with us all'

APPENDIX C3.1
Scheme for analysis of inter-subjectivity

SCHEME 3

Coding objective

The objective of this scheme is to code all references to 'other', 'we' and 'self' according to whether they are from a subjective or objective perspective, comparable to some extent with a distinction between insiders' and outsiders' perspectives (Olson, 1977). The 'we' category includes references to 'the relationship', 'our friendship' and the like. Because it is not always possible to distinguish between objective and subjective references, a third category for references which are 'ambiguous' in this respect had to be reserved. In addition to being aomed at discovering the balance between subjectivity and objectivity, the analysis simultaneously serves as a measure of egocentricity and alter-centricity in accounts. The mid-way position is of course a third possibility, in cases where the emphasis is on reference to 'we' and the 'relationship' as opposed to either of the individuals. The divisions within the scheme are shown on overleaf.

Application of the scheme therefore involves two-way coding of every reference to parties, first, according to who it concerns (participant or person providing the account, the other person in the relationship, or both together), and second, according to whether it is subjective or objective. The coding form is shown in Appendix C3.2. `Subjective references' are those which refer to views, feelings, attitudes, intentions, motives, thoughts... and others in the family of concepts which refer to what is in the mind of the individual and his psychological experience. In other words, these are points made from an 'inside' perspective. Objective references, in contrast, refer to the person from a detached or 'outsider' standpoint, which is in some sense externally evident without recourse to the person's psychological experience.

In distinguishing between objective and subjective references, a comparative point is that whereas in the `objective' section, it is references to or about one or both of the parties which are coded, in the `subjective' section the coded references are about the viewpoint, feeling, or other psychological experience of either or both of the parties. These views, etc. may be in respect of each other, the relationship or something extrinsic to it.

The Categories.

SUBJECTIVE REFERENCES

O's views, feelings, etc. about P
O's views, feelings, etc. about O
O's views, feelings, etc. about O+P
O's views, feelings, etc. about other people, etc.

O+P's views, feelings, etc. about P
O+P's views, feelings, etc. about O
O+P's views, feelings, etc. about O+P
O+P's views, feelings, etc. about other people,etc.

P's views, feelings, etc. about P
P's views, feelings, etc. about O
P's views, feelings, etc. about O+P
P's views, feelings, etc. about other people, etc.

OBJECTIVE REFERENCES

O's traits, personality, way of behaving
O's acts, deeds, activities
O's appearance
O's biographical, status, situation, events, possessions

O+P's traits, personality, way of behaving
O+P's acts, deeds, activities
O+P's appearance
O+P's biographical, status, situation, events, possessions

P's traits, personality, way of behaving
P's acts, deeds, activities
P's appearance
P's biographical, status, situation, events, possessions

AMBIGUOUSLY SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE

KEY: P=participant O+P=we, the relationship O=other

Other. Code every reference to 'other'. Usually this is straightforward, but some comparative references present a problem, regarding who the subject is; to clarify, the following would be coded as `other': `O thinks/does ..., in contrast to me'; `O feels/laughs... more than me'; `unlike me, O wants/talks ...', and the reverse cases would be coded as `participant': e.g. `I like/do ... more than O'. References to `other' include those which mention other plus a third party, e.g. `O and her husband moved up north last year'; `they [O and third party] were always arguing'.

Participant plus other. References to `we', `us', `our', `both of us', `the/our relationship', `our friendship', etc. are grouped together under `participant plus other'.

Participant. Code every reference to self where 'I' is the subject of the sentence or clause, except those referring to writing of the account or 'letter' (e.g. 'Dear Confidant, I was pleased to hear from you...). Include references to 'I'disguised as 'one' (e.g. 'one hopes we will remain friends') or expressed as 'we' when the other is a third party (e.g. 'we see O every week'). Also code references where self is referred to as 'me' or 'mine' (e.g. 'the job was hard work for me'), but not if 'other' is the subject (e.g. 'she was a special friend of mine').

Subjective. References to own or other's emotional and/or cognitive experience, including state of mind, intention, inclination, perspective, beliefs, knowledge, thoughts, reactions, and so forth. Those pertaining to `other' are being bracketed with references to own subjectivity in that they imply metacognition of the other's experience: e.g. in statements beginning `O wanted...' and `O thinks...', etc., it can be infered, if unstated, that this is information known to (`I know O wanted...') or believed (I'm convinced O thinks...') by the participant. Examples, largely drawn from the accounts, are given in Appendix C3.3 below.

Objective. References to participant's personality traits or characteristic way of behaving, deeds,activities, appearance, biographical descriptions, situation, events, etc., which do not implicate subjective experience. Examples are given in Appendix C3.4.

Ambiguous. This is a necessary sub-section for the inevitable proportion of statements which are open to interpretation as either subjective or objective. Where possible, the semantic context, is used to cue a decision, so that categorisation as ambiguous becomes a last resort. For instance, out of context, `he seemed suspicious', could be based either on observation or inter-subjective knowledge, but the context is likely to add information about either how he `acted' (objective) or what he `believed' (subjective). Trait terms which allude to inner states (e.g. `anxious', `ambitious', `confident', `embittered') but which can also be assessed by observation, are coded as ambiguous, unless distinguished by informative verbs (e.g. `he behaved confidently' - objective; `he felt anxious' -subjective). Metaphorical or indirect references to experience present further ambiguity for coding. Appendix C3.4 includes instances of ambiguous references.

APPENDIX C3.2
Coding Form for Scheme 3

S U B J E C T I V E			
category	O's	O's + P's	P's
about P			
about O			
about O+P			
about other people, etc.			
TOTAL			

O B J E C T I V E			
category	about O	about O+P	about P
traits, personality, way of behaving			
acts, deeds, activities			
appearance			
biographical, status, situation, events, etc.			
TOTAL			
AMBIGUOUS (subjective or objective)			

KEY: P=participant O+P=we, the relationship O=other

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES

D1.1 Reflection on relationships questionnaire

OXFORD UNIVERSITY. DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Have you been thinking about anyone a lot recently ? Look at the list of relationships below. For each one, tick one of the three columns.
Tick NOT GOT if you haven't got the listed relationship; otherwise tick YES or NO depending on whether or not you have thought a lot about the person.
Tick NO for anyone you have thought about just a little or not at all.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY THOUGHT A LOT ABOUT - - - ?	NOT GOT	YES	NO
- one of your neighbours			
- one of your work-mates, colleagues or fellow-students			
- one of your casual friends or acquaintances			
- one or both of your parents			
- one or all of your children			
- one of your brothers and sisters			
- one of your close friends			
- one of your former friends or ex-friends			
- any of your in-laws			
- your boyfriend or girlfriend			
- your husband or wife			
- your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend			
- your ex-husband or ex-wife			
- someone you would like as a boyfriend or girlfriend			
- someone you would like as a friend			
- your boss, supervisor or teacher			
- your employee,assistant or student			
- your doctor, therapist or social worker			
- any other (please specify).....			

If you have ticked YES to at least one of the above, please turn over.
If you have not ticked YES for any, fill in final part, marked ***.

ALL INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. ALSO YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO GIVE YOUR NAME.

IF YOU TICKED MORE THAN THREE think of the three cases you remember best, and fill in the next three sections.

IF YOU TICKED THREE OR LESS fill in a section for each one which you ticked.

FIRST PERSON. Please specify the relationship: .....

Give brief answers to the following questions.

1. Do you usually think about this person a lot ?

2. Was there anything in particular which started you thinking about him or her ?

3. What were you thinking about with regard to him or her ?

4. Did you reach any conclusions, or make any decisions ? If so, what were they ?

SECOND PERSON. Please specify the relationship: .....

Give brief answers to the following questions.

1. Do you usually think about this person a lot ?

2. Was there anything in particular which started you thinking about him or her ?

3. What were you thinking about with regard to him or her ?

4. Did you reach any conclusions, or make any decisions ? If so, what were they ?

THIRD PERSON. Please specify the relationship: .....

Give brief answers to the following questions.

1. Do you usually think about this person a lot ?

2. Was there anything in particular which started you thinking about him or her ?

3. What were you thinking about with regard to him or her ?

4. Did you reach any conclusions, or make any decisions ? If so, what were they ?

*** Would you please provide the following details about yourself:-

Are you male or female ? _____ How old are you ? _____

What is your job or daily occupation ? _____

If unemployed, list any previous jobs _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST

D2.1 Interests Questionnaire

OXFORD UNIVERSITY. DEPARTMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out how much certain matters are of interest and concern to you. There is a choice of five answers for each question. Please answer every question and tick or underline the answer you choose.

How often do you TALK about YOURSELF ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about YOURSELF ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about YOURSELF ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about YOURSELF ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about MONEY ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about MONEY ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about MONEY ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about MONEY ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about YOUR JOB OR DAILY OCCUPATION ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about YOUR JOB OR DAILY OCCUPATION ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about YOUR JOB OR DAILY OCCUPATION ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about YOUR JOB OR DAILY OCCUPATION ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about THE PERSON YOU ARE CLOSEST TO ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about THE PERSON YOU ARE CLOSEST TO ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about THE PERSON YOU ARE CLOSEST TO ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about THE PERSON YOU ARE CLOSEST TO ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about YOUR MAIN HOBBY OR LEISURE INTEREST ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about YOUR MAIN HOBBY OR LEISURE INTEREST ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about YOUR MAIN HOBBY OR LEISURE INTEREST ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about YOUR MAIN HOBBY OR LEISURE INTEREST ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about SPORT ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about SPORT ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about SPORT ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about SPORT ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIPS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIPS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIPS ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIPS ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about OTHER PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about OTHER PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about OTHER PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about OTHER PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about COOKING, SHOPPING AND HOUSEWORK ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about COOKING, SHOPPING AND HOUSEWORK ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about COOKING, SHOPPING AND HOUSEWORK ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about COOKING, SHOPPING AND HOUSEWORK ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about POLITICS AND NATIONAL AND WORLD EVENTS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about POLITICS AND NATIONAL AND WORLD EVENTS ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about POLITICS AND NATIONAL AND WORLD EVENTS ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about POLITICS AND NATIONAL AND WORLD AFFAIRS ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about CHILD CARE AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about CHILD CARE AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about CHILD CARE AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about CHILD CARE AND BRINGING UP CHILDREN ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about HEALTH ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about HEALTH ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about HEALTH ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about HEALTH ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about CLOTHES AND FASHION ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about CLOTHES AND FASHION ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about CLOTHES AND FASHION ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about CLOTHES AND FASHION ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about CARS OR BIKES ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about CARS OR BIKES ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about CARS OR BIKES ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about CARS OR BIKES ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How often do you TALK about SEX ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How often do you THINK about SEX ?

never rarely occasionally fairly often very often

How much do you KNOW about SEX ?

nothing a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

How much do you CARE about SEX ?

not at all a little a fair amount quite a lot a great deal

Please would you supply the following details about yourself:-

How old are you ? _____

Are you male or female ? _____

What is your job or your daily occupation ? _____

What is your main hobby or leisure interest ? _____

Who is the person you are closest to ? (e.g. your mother? your brother? boyfriend? wife? daughter? friend? neighbour? doctor? etc. Please specify) _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE !

YOUR HELP IS MUCH APPRECIATED.

APPENDIX E: RELATIONSHIP UNDERSTANDING COURSE MATERIAL

E1.1 Invitation and programme

LANCASHIRE PROBATION AND AFTER-CARE SERVICE

J. C. AITCHISON
Senior Probation Officer

Telephone:
Lancaster 63537/8

Reference:

Please reply to:

41 WEST ROAD,
LANCASTER.
LA1 5NU

Dear

The Relationship Understanding Group (R.U.G.) which you have been invited to attend, will be held on _____ afternoons, between _____ and _____ . It begins on ___ October, and there will be nine sessions. The programme is enclosed.

We will be using film clips, discussion , some team-work and some role-playing. You probably know a lot about relationships already but there will be much more for you to think about. You will be given opportunities to talk about what you know and to express your opinions.

I look forward to meeting you, and hope you will find the R.U.G. meetings useful and interesting.

Best wishes,

Roz Burnett.

Roz Burnett

RELATIONSHIP UNDERSTANDING GROUP

Programme

1. Nearest and Dearest
   An introduction to personal relationships

2. Giving and Taking
   What we put into and get from relationships

3. Breadwinners and Homemakers
   Today's relationships between men and women

4. Agony Aunts and Uncles
   Dealing with difficulties: a problem-solving approach

5. Promises, Changes and Surprises
   Personal change and relationship realities

6. Relationships from Different Points of View
   Understanding each other: a role-taking approach

7. All in the Mind
   Fantasies, mistakes and deception

8. Considering Relationships
   Thinking, talking and caring about relationships

9. Relationships Day - by - Day
   Applying relationship knowledge in everyday life: an overview

E2.1 Relationship assessment for for client

TO BE FILLED-IN BY R.U.G. MEMBER

THREE SECTIONS - A., B. and C.

A.

HOW MUCH DO YOU GIVE ?

Choose the person you are closest to, and answer the following questions about the way you act and feel towards him or her.
We will call this person X.
Enter your name and your relationship to X below.

NAME _____

X is my _____(e.g. wife, mother, friend,...etc.)

Turn to next page for questions

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

Give yourself a score out of 5 for every question. To do this, you have to decide how much you do or are the thing in question.

1 = "NOT AT ALL" or "NEVER"

2 = "VERY LITTLE" or "RARELY"

3 = "BETWEEN VERY LITTLE AND QUITE A LOT"

4 = "QUITE A LOT"

5 = "A GREAT DEAL" or "VERY MUCH"

Put your score on the line at the end of the question. For example, suppose your answer to question 16 is "QUITE A LOT", you write 4 on the line, as shown below.

16. How much do you think X LIKES YOU ? 4

Turn to next page for questions

Practical Help

1. To what extent do you PROVIDE MONEY FOR X ? _____
2. To what extent do you LOOK AFTER (COOK, FEED, CLEAN FOR) X ? _____
3. To what extent do you GIVE PRESENTS TO X ? _____
4. To what extent do you GIVE PRACTICAL ADVICE TO X ? _____
5. To what extent do you HELP X WITH JOBS ? _____

Support and Guidance

6. How much do you COMFORT X WHEN (S)HE IS TROUBLED OR DOWN ? _____
7. How much do you HELP X COPE WHEN (S)HE IS TROUBLED OR DOWN ? _____
8. How much do you HELP X TO BE HAPPY CONTENTED AND FULFILLED ? _____
9. How much do yoy HELP X TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW HERSELF/HIMSELF ? _____
10. How much do you COMPLIMENT, ENCOURAGE AND REASSURE X ? _____

Self-Disclosure

11. How much do you TALK TO X ABOUT YOURSELF ? _____
12. How much do you TALK TO X ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS ? _____
13. How much do you EXPLAIN THINGS TO X ? _____
14. How much do you THINK ALOUD TO X ? _____
15. How much do you HAVE LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH X ? _____

Likable and Admirable

16. How much do you think X LIKES YOU ? _____
17. How much do you think X ADMIRES YOU ? _____
18. How much do you think X RESPECTS YOU ? _____
19. How much do you think X FINDS YOU PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE ? _____

Easy Company

20. To what extent are you RELAXED WHEN WITH X ? _____
21. To what extent are you EASY TO GET ON WITH WHEN WITH X ? _____
22. To what extent are you IN A GOOD MOOD WHEN WITH X ? _____
23. To what extent are you COMMUNICATIVE WHEN WITH X ? _____
24. To what extent are you FRIENDLY AND WARM WHEN WITH X ? _____
25. To what extent are you ADAPTABLE AND OBLIGING WHEN WITH X ? _____

*26. To what extent are you CRITICAL WHEN WITH X ? _____

*27. To what extent are you ARGUMENTATIVE WHEN WITH X ? _____

Good Company

28. To what extent are you INTERESTING AND STIMULATING WHEN WITH X ? _____
29. To what extent are you GOOD FUN AND ENTERTAINING WHEN WITH X ? _____
30. To what extent do you SAY NICE THINGS TO X ? _____
31. To what extent do you LISTEN TO AND SHOW INTEREST IN X ? _____

Turn over for more questions

Contact

32. To what extent do you SPEND TIME WITH X ? _____

33. To what extent do you GO OUT WITH X ? _____

34. To what extent do you DO THINGS WITH X ? _____

Acceptance

35. To what extent do you ACCEPT OR PUT-UP WITH X's FAULTS ? _____

36. To what extent do you ALLOW X TO HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND VIEWS ? _____

37. To what extent do you ALLOW X TO HAVE DIFFERENT INTERESTS ? _____

Sincere and Genuine

38. To what extent are you STRAIGHT WITH X ? _____

39. To what extent do you ACT NATURAL WITH X, WITHOUT PUTTING ON AN ACT ? _____

Rivalry and Competitiveness

*40. How much do you RESENT IT IF X DOES WELL ? _____

*41. How much do you GET JEALOUS AND ENVIOUS OF X ? _____

*42. How much do you WANT TO DO BETTER THAN X ? _____

Understanding

43. How much do you KNOW ABOUT X ? _____

44. How much do you UNDERSTAND X ? _____

45. How much do you CONSIDER X's POINT OF VIEW ? _____

46. How much do you CONSIDER X's FEELINGS ? _____

47. To what extent can you TELL WHAT IS ON X's MIND ? _____

48. To what extent can you TELL HOW X IS FEELING ? _____

Caring, Concern and Love

49. To what extent do you CARE ABOUT X's WELFARE ? _____

50. To what extent do you LOVE X ? _____

51. To what extent are you FOND OF X ? _____

52. To what extent are you KIND TO X ? _____

53. To what extent do you SHOW WARMTH AND AFFECTION TO X ? _____

54. To what extent are you EAGER TO PLEASE X AND TO MAKE X HAPPY ? _____

*55. To what extent do you GET POSSESSIVE OVER X ? _____

Rules and Expectations

56. To what extent are you FAIR TO X ? _____

57. To what extent do you KEEP YOUR WORD TO X ? _____

58. To what extent do you FULFIL YOUR OBLIGATIONS TO X ? _____

59. To what extent do you TREAT X AS PEOPLE WOULD EXPECT YOU TO ? _____

Commitment

60. How much do you WANT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH X TO LAST ? _____

61. How much do you WANT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH X TO BE CLOSE ? _____

62. How much are you PREPARED TO STAND BY X IN A CRISIS ? _____

63. How much are you PREPARED TO BE THERE FOR X COME WHAT MAY ? _____

64. How much do you MAKE AN EFFORT FOR X ? _____

* The scores for questions 26,27,40,41,42,55, should be reversed before adding the scores for A. i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

TOTAL SCORE FOR SECTION A. = _____

B.

HOW MUCH DO YOU SHARE ?

Add the scores for answers in this section
to your A. score to get a total for
How much you GIVE

Add the scores for answers in this section
to your B. score to get a total for
How much you GAIN

B.

To what extent do you and X HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS AND PASTIMES ? _____

DO THE SAME THINGS ? _____

GO TO THE SAME PLACES ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FRIENDS OR CIRCLE OR RELATIVES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR BACKGROUND ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR MEMORIES ? _____

HAVE A SHARED IDENTITY ? _____

HAVE AN ORDEAL OR BAD EXPERIENCE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE AGE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES ? _____

OWN SIMILAR THINGS ? _____

SHARE SIMILAR ACHIEVEMENTS OR FAILURES ? _____

LIKE THE SAME PEOPLE ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR VIEWS AND OPINIONS ? _____

HAVE THE SAME NEEDS ? _____

BELIEVE IN THE SAME THINGS ? _____

KNOW THE SAME THINGS ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY ? _____

HAVE THE SAME HOPES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR PERSONALITY ? _____

LOOK ALIKE ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FEELING FOR EACH OTHER ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY TO EACH OTHER ? _____

TOTAL SCORE FOR SECTION B. = _____

C.

HOW MUCH DO YOU GAIN ?

Now answer the same questions again, this time thinking about how X acts towards you. In other words, think about what X contributes and what you gain from the relationship.

Turn over for scoring instructions

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

Give X a score out of 5 for every question. To do this, you have to decide how much he/she does or is the thing in question.

1 = "NOT AT ALL" or "NEVER"

2 = "VERY LITTLE" or "RARELY"

3 = "BETWEEN VERY LITTLE AND QUITE A LOT"

4 = "QUITE A LOT"

5 = "A GREAT DEAL" or "VERY MUCH"

Put your score on the line at the end of the question. For example, suppose your answer to question 16 is "QUITE A LOT", you write 4 on the line, as shown below.

16. How much do YOU LIKE X ? 4

Turn to next page for questions

Practical Help

1. To what extent does X PROVIDE MONEY FOR YOU ? _____
2. To what extent does X LOOK AFTER (COOK, FEED, CLEAN FOR) YOU ? _____
3. To what extent does X GIVE PRESENTS TO YOU ? _____
4. To what extent does X GIVE PRACTICAL ADVICE TO YOU ? _____
5. To what extent does X HELP YOU WITH JOBS ? _____

Support and Guidance

6. How much does X COMFORT YOU WHEN YOU'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
7. How much does X HELP YOU COPE WHEN YOU'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
8. How much does X HELP YOU TO BE HAPPY, CONTENTED AND FULFILLED ? _____
9. How much does X HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW YOURSELF ? _____
10. How much does X COMPLIMENT, ENCOURAGE AND REASSURE YOU ? _____

Self-Disclosure

11. How much does X TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIMSELF ? _____
12. How much does X TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIS FEELINGS ? _____
13. How much does X EXPLAIN THINGS TO YOU ? _____
14. How much does X THINK ALOUD TO YOU ? _____
15. How much does X HAVE LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU ? _____

Likable and Admirable

16. How much do YOU LIKE X ? _____
17. How much do YOU ADMIRE X ? _____
18. How much do YOU RESPECT X ? _____
19. How much do YOU FIND X PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE ? _____

Easy Company

20. To what extent is X RELAXED WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
21. To what extent is X EASY FOR YOU TO GET ON WITH ? _____
22. To what extent is X IN A GOOD MOOD WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
23. To what extent is X COMMUNICATIVE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
24. To what extent is X FRIENDLY AND WARM WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
25. To what extent is X ADAPTABLE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
*26. To what extent is X CRITICAL WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
*27. To what extent is X ARGUMENTATIVE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____

Good Company

28. To what extent is X INTERESTING AND STIMULATING WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
29. To what extent is X GOOD FUN AND ENTERTAINING WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
30. To what extent does X SAY NICE THINGS TO YOU ? _____
31. To what extent does X LISTEN TO YOU AND SHOW INTEREST IN YOU ? _____

Questions continued next page

E2.2 Relationship assessment form for client's relative

TO BE FILLED-IN BY RELATIVE
or FRIEND or WIFE/HUSBANDetc.
of R.U.G. member

_____ is attending a relationship understanding course, and it would be very useful if you could answer the attached questions about him or her. In the questions we refer to him/her as X.

Please answer truthfully, even if your answers are critical of X. You may find it easier to do when X is not around. When you have finished, please seal the form in the envelope provided, and then give it back to X. (Someone will talk to him/her about it later). If you need help with it, contact his probation officer.

What is your relationship to X ?
For example, is X your friend, your husband, your brother, your son, your father, your wife ...etc. ?
X is my _____

Turn to next page for instructions

SCORING INSTRUCTIONS

Give X a score out of 5 for every question. To do this, you have to decide how much he/she does or is the thing in question.

1 = "NOT AT ALL" or "NEVER"

2 = "VERY LITTLE" or "RARELY"

3 = "BETWEEN VERY LITTLE AND QUITE A LOT"

4 = "QUITE A LOT"

5 = "A GREAT DEAL" or "VERY MUCH"

Put your score on the line at the end of the question. For example, suppose your answer to question 16 is "QUITE A LOT", you write 4 on the line, as shown below.

16. How much do YOU LIKE X ? 4

Turn to next page for questions

Practical Help

1. To what extent does X PROVIDE MONEY FOR YOU ? _____
2. To what extent does X LOOK AFTER (COOK, FEED, CLEAN FOR) YOU ? _____
3. To what extent does X GIVE PRESENTS TO YOU ? _____
4. To what extent does X GIVE PRACTICAL ADVICE TO YOU ? _____
5. To what extent does X HELP YOU WITH JOBS ? _____

Support and Guidance

6. How much does X COMFORT YOU WHEN YOU'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
7. How much does X HELP YOU COPE WHEN YOU'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
8. How much does X HELP YOU TO BE HAPPY, CONTENTED AND FULFILLED ? _____
9. How much does X HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW YOURSELF ? _____
10. How much does X COMPLIMENT, ENCOURAGE AND REASSURE YOU ? _____

Self-Disclosure

11. How much does X TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIMSELF ? _____
12. How much does X TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIS FEELINGS ? _____
13. How much does X EXPLAIN THINGS TO YOU ? _____
14. How much does X THINK ALOUD TO YOU ? _____
15. How much does X HAVE LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH YOU ? _____

Likable and Admirable

16. How much do YOU LIKE X ? _____
17. How much do YOU ADMIRE X ? _____
18. How much do YOU RESPECT X ? _____
19. How much do YOU FIND X PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE ? _____

Easy Company

20. To what extent is X RELAXED WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
21. To what extent is X EASY FOR YOU TO GET ON WITH ? _____
22. To what extent is X IN A GOOD MOOD WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
23. To what extent is X COMMUNICATIVE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
24. To what extent is X FRIENDLY AND WARM WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
25. To what extent is X ADAPTABLE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
*26. To what extent is X CRITICAL WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
*27. To what extent is X ARGUMENTATIVE WHEN WITH YOU ? _____

Good Company

28. To what extent is X INTERESTING AND STIMULATING WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
29. To what extent is X GOOD FUN AND ENTERTAINING WHEN WITH YOU ? _____
30. To what extent does X SAY NICE THINGS TO YOU ? _____
31. To what extent does X LISTEN TO YOU AND SHOW INTEREST IN YOU ? _____

Questions continued next page

Contact

32. To what extent does X SPEND TIME WITH YOU ? _____

33. To what extent does X GO OUT WITH YOU ? _____

34. To what extent does X DO THINGS WITH YOU ? _____

Acceptance

35. To what extent does X ACCEPT OR PUT-UP WITH YOUR FAULTS ? _____

36. To what extent does X ALLOW YOU TO HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND VIEWS ? _____

37. To what extent does X ALLOW YOU TO HAVE DIFFERENT INTERESTS ? _____

Sincere and Genuine

38. To what extent is X STRAIGHT WITH YOU ? _____

39. To what extent does X ACT NATURAL WITH YOU, WITHOUT PUTTING ON AN ACT ? _____

Rivalry and Competitiveness

*40. How much does X RESENT IT IF YOU DO WELL ? _____

*41. How much does X GET JEALOUS AND ENVIOUS OF YOU ? _____

*42. How much does X WANT TO DO BETTER THAN YOU ? _____

Understanding

43. How much does X KNOW ABOUT YOU ? _____

44. How much does X UNDERSTAND YOU ? _____

45. How much does X CONSIDER YOUR POINT OF VIEW ? _____

46. How much does X CONSIDER YOUR FEELINGS ? _____

47. To what extent can X TELL WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND ? _____

48. To what extent can X TELL HOW YOU ARE FEELING ? _____

Caring, Concern and Love

49. To what extent does X CARE ABOUT YOUR WELFARE ? _____

50. To what extent does X LOVE YOU ? _____

51. To what extent is X FOND OF YOU ? _____

52. To what extent is X KIND TO YOU ? _____

53. To what extent does X SHOW WARMTH AND AFFECTION TO YOU ? _____

54. To what extent is X EAGER TO PLEASE YOU AND MAKE YOU HAPPY ? _____

*55. To what extent does X GET POSSESSIVE OVER YOU ? _____

Rules and Expectations

56. To what extent is X FAIR TO YOU ? _____

57. To what extent does X KEEP HIS/HER WORD TO YOU ? _____

58. To what extent does X FULFIL HIS/HER OBLIGATIONS TO YOU ? _____

59. To what extent does X TREAT YOU AS PEOPLE WOULD EXPECT ? _____

Commitment

60. How much do you think X WANTS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO LAST ? _____

61. How much do you think X WANTS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO BE CLOSE ? _____

62. How much do you think X IS PREPARED TO STAND BY YOU IN A CRISIS ? _____

63. How much do you think X WILL BE THERE FOR YOU COME WHAT MAY ? _____

64. How much of an EFFORT DOES X MAKE FOR YOU ? _____

Questions continued next page

The first 64 questions were about what X gives to you; in other words, what you get from your relationship with him or her.
The questions on this page are about what you both have in common.
Use the same scoring system. This time you are scoring your relationship, out of 5, for similarities between you ;- for what you share.

To what extent do you and X HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS AND PASTIMES ? _____

DO THE SAME THINGS ? _____

GO TO THE SAME PLACES ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FRIENDS OR CIRCLE OR RELATIVES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR BACKGROUND ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR MEMORIES ? _____

HAVE A SHARED IDENTITY ? _____

HAVE AN ORDEAL OR BAD EXPERIENCE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE AGE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES ? _____

OWN SIMILAR THINGS ? _____

SHARE SIMILAR ACHIEVEMENTS OR FAILURES ? _____

LIKE THE SAME PEOPLE ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR VIEWS AND OPINIONS ? _____

HAVE THE SAME NEEDS ? _____

BELIEVE IN THE SAME THINGS ? _____

KNOW THE SAME THINGS ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY ? _____

HAVE THE SAME HOPES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR PERSONALITY ? _____

LOOK ALIKE ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FEELING FOR EACH OTHER ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY TO EACH OTHER ? _____

ADD UP THE SCORES IF YOU WANT

* The scores for questions 26,27,40,41,42,55,should be reversed before adding, that is 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1.

TOTAL FOR QUESTIONS 1 - 64 = _____ - WHAT X GIVES TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP

TOTAL FOR QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE = _____ - WHAT YOU SHARE.

THANK YOU

E2.3 Relationship assessment form for probation officer

TO BE FILLED-IN BY

PROBATION OFFICER

RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill-in a copy of this before your client starts attending the Relationship Understanding Group, and a second copy after the end of the programme. You may know enough about your client's relationship difficulties to answer some or all of the questions in sections 1 and 2. If not, please fill-in section 3.

Your answers will be used to help identify the client's relationship problems, and - when the before and after versions are compared - as a measure of progress.

The questions concern the client and the person to whom he/she is most close. If no one person in particular qualifies, answer with respect to the two or more people who come nearest to qualifying.

Name of R.U.G. member _____

The other person is his/her _____(e.g.wife,mother...)

Name of Officer _____

BEFORE / AFTER (delete one)

Scoring Instructions

Answer as many questions as possible given your knowledge and insight regarding the client's closest relationship(s).

Section 1 is concerned with, first, what the client contributes or "gives" to the other person, and, second , with what the other party contributes, or with what the client "gains". It is easier to consider both questions simultaneously. For each question, first give the client a score out of 5 (see rating scale below), then give the other party a score out of 5. The letters e/o stand for 'each other'.

Example:

1. To what extent do they provide money for e/o ? 5/1

where the answer in respect of client is "a great deal" and the answer in respect of the other party is "not at all"

Rating Scale

1 = "NOT AT ALL " or " NEVER"

2 = "VERY LITTLE" or "RARELY"

3 = "BETWEEN VERY LITTLE AND QUITE A LOT"

4 = "QUITE A LOT"

5 = "A GREAT DEAL" or "VERY MUCH"

Section 2 concerns similarities between both parties. The same rating scale is used.

Section 1
e/o = each other

Practical Help

1. To what extent do they PROVIDE MONEY FOR e/o ? _____
2. To what extent do they LOOK AFTER (COOK, FEED, CLEAN FOR ETC.) e/o ? _____
3. To what extent do they GIVE PRESENTS TO e/o ? _____
4. To what extent do they GIVE PRACTICAL ADVICE TO e/o ? _____
5. To what extent do they HELP EACH OTHER WITH JOBS ? _____

Support and Guidance

6. How much do they COMFORT e/o WHEN THEY'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
7. How much do they HELP e/o COPE WHEN THEY'RE TROUBLED AND DOWN ? _____
8. How much do they HELP e/o TO BE HAPPY, CONTENTED AND FULFILLED ? _____
9. How much do they HELP e/o TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW THEMSELVES ? _____
10. How much do they COMPLIMENT, ENCOURAGE AND REASSURE e/o ? _____

Self-Disclosure

11. How much do they TALK TO e/o ABOUT THEMSELVES ? _____
12. How much do they TALK TO e/o ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS ? _____
13. How much do they EXPLAIN THINGS TO e/o ? _____
14. How much do they THINK ALOUD TO e/o ? _____
15. How much do they HAVE LONG DISCUSSIONS WITH e/o ? _____

Likable and Admirable

16. How much do they LIKE e/o ? _____
17. How much do they ADMIRE e/o ? _____
18. How much do they RESPECT e/o ? _____
19. How much do they FIND e/o PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE ? _____

Easy Company

20. To what extent are they RELAXED WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
21. To what extent do they GET ON EASY WITH e/o ? _____
22. To what extent are they IN A GOOD MOOD WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
23. To what extent are they COMMUNICATIVE WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
24. To what extent are they FRIENDLY AND WARM WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
25. To what extent are they ADAPTABLE WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
*26. To what extent are they CRITICAL WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
*27. To what extent are they ARGUMENTATIVE WHEN WITH e/o ? _____

Good Company

28. To what extent are they INTERESTING AND STIMULATING WHEN WITH e/o ? _____
29. To what extent are they GOOD FUN AND ENTERTAINING WITH e/o ? _____
30. To what extent do they SAY NICE THINGS TO e/o ? _____
31. To what extent do they LISTEN TO AND SHOW INTEREST IN e/o ? _____

Questions continued next page

Section 1
continued

Contact

32. To what extent do they SPEND TIME WITH e/o ? _____

33. To what extent do they GO OUT WITH e/o ? _____

34. To what extent do they DO THINGS TOGETHER ? _____

Acceptance

35. To what extent do they ACCEPT OR PUT-UP WITH e/o's FAULTS ? _____

36. To what extent do they ALLOW e/o TO HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS AND VIEWS ? _____

37. To what extent do they ALLOW e/o TO HAVE DIFFERENT INTERESTS ? _____

Sincere and Genuine

38. To what extent are they STRAIGHT WITH e/o ? _____

39. To what extent do they ACT NATURAL WITH e/o, WITHOUT PUTTING ON AN ACT ? _____

Rivalry and Competitiveness

*40. To what extent do they RESENT e/o DOING WELL ? _____

*41. To what extent do they GET JEALOUS AND ENVIOUS OF e/o ? _____

*42. To what extent do they WANT TO DO BETTER THAN e/o ? _____

Understanding

43. How much do they KNOW ABOUT e/o ? _____

44. How much do they UNDERSTAND e/o ? _____

45. How much do they CONSIDER e/o's POINT OF VIEW ? _____

46. How much do they CONSIDER e/o's FEELINGS ? _____

47. To what extent can EACH TELL WHAT IS ON THE OTHER'S MIND ? _____

48. To what extent can EACH TELL HOW THE OTHER IS FEELING ? _____

Caring, Concern and Love

49. To what extent do they CARE ABOUT e/o's WELFARE ? _____

50. To what extent do they LOVE e/o ? _____

51. To what extent are they FOND OF e/o ? _____

52. To what extent are they KIND TO e/o ? _____

53. To what extent do they SHOW WARMTH AND AFFECTION TO e/o ? _____

54. To what extent are they EAGER TO PLEASE AND MAKE e/o HAPPY ? _____

*55. To what extent are they POSSESSIVE OVER e/o ? _____

Rules and Expectations

56. To what extent are they FAIR TO e/o ? _____

57. To what extent do they KEEP THEIR WORD TO e/o ? _____

58. To what extent do they FULFIL THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO e/o ? _____

59. To what extent do they TREAT e/o AS PEOPLE WOULD EXPECT ? _____

Commitment

60. How much do you think EACH WANTS THE RELATIONSHIP TO LAST ? _____

61. How much do you think EACH WANTS THE RELATIONSHIP TO BE CLOSE ? _____

62. How much do you think THEY ARE PREPARED TO STAND BY e/o IN A CRISIS ? _____

63. How much do you think THEY WILL BE THERE FOR e/o COME WHAT MAY ? _____

64. How much of an EFFORT DO THEY MAKE FOR e/o ? _____

* The scores for questions 26,27, 40,41,42,55, should be reversed before adding, i.e. 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1.

Section 2

To what extent do they HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS AND PASTIMES ? _____

DO THE SAME THINGS ? _____

GO TO THE SAME PLACES ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FRIENDS OR CIRCLE OR RELATIVES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR BACKGROUND ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR MEMORIES ? _____

HAVE A SHARED IDENTITY ? _____

HAVE AN ORDEAL OR BAD EXPERIENCE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE AGE IN COMMON ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES ? _____

OWN SIMILAR THINGS ? _____

SHARE SIMILAR ACHIEVEMENTS OR FAILURES ? _____

LIKE THE SAME PEOPLE ? _____

HAVE SIMILAR VIEWS AND OPINIONS ? _____

HAVE THE SAME NEEDS ? _____

BELIEVE IN THE SAME THINGS ? _____

KNOW THE SAME THINGS ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY ? _____

HAVE THE SAME HOPES ? _____

HAVE A SIMILAR PERSONALITY ? _____

LOOK ALIKE ? _____

HAVE THE SAME FEELING FOR EACH OTHER ? _____

ACT THE SAME WAY TO EACH OTHER ? _____

TOTAL SCORE FOR SECTION 2 = _____

Section 3

1. (if you answered section 1 and 2) Are there any particular differences between his/her relationship with this person and his/her other personal relationships, past as well as present ?

2. What are the client's most notable relationship difficulties or weaknesses ? (It may help to use the items in 1 and 2 as a checklist)

3. In what specific ways, if any, is the client working towards improvement of his/her personal relationships ?
