

Operant Subjectivity

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From the Editor

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This issue contains three articles that admirably exemplify the range and scope of *Operant Subjectivity*: an applied research article from Frode Moen and Ragnvald Kvalsund; the 2013 Brenner Award article by Gustavo Said and Mike Stricklin; and a previously unpublished conference paper by William Stephenson.

Moen and Kvalsund's study employs two conditions of instruction to examine the subjective beliefs among elite sport coaches about effective communication in two different coaching contexts, namely, during training and practice, and during performance appraisals with their athletes. The use of two conditions of instruction provides a timely reminder of their important role in Q methodology studies acting as experimental probes that can reveal distinctive modes of subjectivity. Their study also illustrates the importance of carrying out an overall analysis of the Q sorts from the two sorting exercises and the necessity for both close-grained and holistic factor interpretation. Frode Moen is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Ragnvald Kvalsund is a Professor in the Department of Adult Learning and Counselling.

The Said and Stricklin article was the winner of the 2013 Don Brenner Award. It was presented at the ISSSS meeting in Amsterdam in September 2013. Although William Stephenson's notions of subjectivity and concourse theory have affinities with several notions in the humanities and the human sciences, there have been few explorations of the connections between Stephenson's ideas and those of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin.¹ In their attempt to relate the thought of the Russian philosopher with the methodology developed by William Stephenson, their article raises an important question: Does subjectivity conform to dialogue, and is it expressed in dialogue with and confrontation between different voices, as Bakhtin thinks? A possible answer to this question leads them to a new question: if the answer is affirmative, do the factors of a Q study represent, in methodological terms, this dialogue between voices, being the common point where subjective thought can be intuited from contact with the thoughts of others, embodied in the expressive relationship with other thoughts? In the course of their article, Said and Stricklin amply justify their belief "that an appreciation of Bakhtin's dialogism and Stephenson's communicability can refine a Q researcher's practice". Gustavo Said is a Professor at the Federal University of Piaui, Brazil; Mike Stricklin is Emeritus Professor, University of Nebraska Lincoln and a Collaborating Professor at the Federal University of Piaui, Brazil.

An earlier version of the Stephenson article was presented in November 1978 at a symposium in Amsterdam on mass communication. A reply by H. J. C. Duijker to Stephenson's symposium paper was published in *Operant Subjectivity* in 1979 (H. J. C. Duijker, "Mind and Meaning", 3(1):15-31). Stephenson's article can be seen as a precursor of his "Consciring" chapter published in the *Communication Yearbook 4* in

1980. There are also affinities with his (1978) “Concourse” article. This article merits our attention as it very effectively brings together in a compact and accessible form some of the central themes in Stephenson’s approach to a science of subjectivity – the attention to meaning, the operantcy of factors, the study of single cases, concourse and communication theory, and the centrality of self.

The publication of the Stephenson article continues the journal’s policy of making available to its readers some of William Stephenson’s many unpublished writings. In future issues we hope to include excerpts from some of the longer unpublished manuscripts such as *Psychoanalysis and Q-Method: A Scientific Model for Psychoanalytic Doctrine* and *Quiddity College: Thomas Jefferson’s Legacy*.

¹ A recent exception is Tim Deignan’s article “A Novel Way to Develop Policy and Practice” (*Operant Subjectivity*, 35(2): 102-128).