

Guest Editor's Foreword

Twenty-five Years and Still Counting!‡

Operant Subjectivity thrives today in a form somewhat different from the first “newsletter” edition published by its founding editor, Dr. Steven R. Brown, in 1977. Yet, the journal has remained true to its mission: “. . . a communication link among persons with an interest in the scientific study of subjectivity, specifically as it has been advanced by William Stephenson under the rubric of ‘Q methodology’.”

A quarter century later, *Operant Subjectivity* remains the repository for an interdisciplinary community of scholars who advance the science of subjectivity by means of their technical, methodological, theoretical, and substantive interests. The journal retains and reinforces the standards and operant procedures of Q methodology for an expanding international community of scholars.

Three volunteer editors have guided the journal through its first 25 years. Founding editor Dr. Steven R. Brown, professor of political science at Kent State University and a leading proponent of Stephenson’s work, produced 16 volumes of the journal from 1977 to 1993. Dr. Dan B. Thomas, professor of political science at Wartburg College, edited the journal from 1993 to 1998. The present editor, Dr. Robert G. Mrtek, professor of medical education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has been at the helm since 1998.

Bolstered by the philosophy and writings of Dr. William Stephenson, the innovator of Q methodology, approximately 150 authors have published more than 200 articles in the first 25 volumes of *Operant Subjectivity*. These volumes have contained Stephenson’s rich and thoroughly documented theoretical work (43 articles), and many examples of the application and practice of Q methodology in a wide variety of academic disciplines, ranging from advertising to psychology to quantum theory. The single thread of continuity has been the use of Q methodology to seek answers for subjective research questions. The breadth of topics that appear within its pages is a prominent feature of this index. This dramatically illustrates the adaptability of Q methodology to a myriad of academic and professional topics.

Seven theme issues devoted to a unified topic were produced during the journal’s first 25 years. Guest editors and topics for the theme issues were:

- Dennis Kinsey, *Communication Theory and Research*, 17(3–4)
- Keith Sanders, *Subjectivity and the O.J. Simpson Trial*, 19(3–4)
- Won Ho Chang, *Korean Q Studies*, 20(1–2)

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- Larry Baas, Subjectivity and Politics, 20(3-4)
- Wendy Stainton Rogers, Discourse Analysis, 21(1-2)
- James Rhoads, Public Reaction to Leadership Crises: The Clinton/Lewinsky Affair, 25(2)
- Bryan Midgley, Q Methodology and Behaviorism: A Symposium, 25(3-4)

Besides providing a repository for intellectual endeavor, *Operant Subjectivity* has been the chronicle for its sponsoring organization, the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity. The society was founded and nurtured by the faculty at the School of Journalism, University of Missouri. The pages of this journal report on the creation of the ISSSS in 1989, its founders and its charter members. Even the By-laws of the organization appear in its pages. The sad events of the organization have been recorded along with the joyous ones. A memorial issue for Dr. William Stephenson was produced, and obituaries for him and for some of his contemporaries and colleagues have appeared in the journal. Sadly, this index issue contains a *memoriam* for Stephenson's devoted wife, Maimie, a productive and creative woman in her own right.

It was my intent as indexer to categorize each article under at least two subject headings. Certainly each article published here could have appeared under the heading "Q methodology," because one of the unusual aspects of this journal is that every author makes a contribution to the understanding and interpretation of Q methodology. Indexing everything under the letter Q would not have been useful to the academics and professionals who use *Operant Subjectivity* as a resource. Only those articles that focused directly on some aspect of Q methodology practice or provided insight into its value as a behavioral research technique were included under the topic heading. Numerous book reviews appeared in the 25 volumes of *Operant Subjectivity*, and they have been grouped under a single subject heading. Obituaries also are listed under one heading.

The bulk of contributions to the journal was concerned with research questions emanating from various academic disciplines and professional topics, many of which cited literature from more than one academic discipline. Hence, you will find more than 60 subject headings in the index. Welcome assistance came from colleagues Steven Brown and first ISSSS president Donald Brenner who provided timely and relevant comments and suggestions.

Although the focus of this index was on the authors and the subjects of their articles, there is much more to be mined from *Operant Subjectivity*. Editor Brown, especially, provided a running commentary for 16 years on the progress and acceptance of Q methodology in

behavioral research circles. His “News, Notes and Comments” sections were brimming with editorial analysis of book chapters and book excerpts that explained or introduced Q methodology to various academic disciplines; abstracts of academic convention papers, grants and grant proposals utilizing Q; lists of Q dissertations in progress or accepted in universities; anecdotes on Stephenson’s colleagues and Stephenson’s activities in academic circles; computer programs (e.g., QUANAL, PCQ, and PQMethod) created to analyze Q-sort data or facilitate various aspects of Q methodology; notification of, and later progress about, the Q Listserv; and periodically he even slipped in a bit of humor to vary the pace of his writings. Historians will find his News, Notes and Comments contributions invaluable as they chronicle the development and dissemination of Q methodology in academia.

If as you peruse this index you are encouraged to seek out a specific title and cannot locate the appropriate issue of the journal, a CD-ROM has been prepared for the first 23 volumes. For a nominal fee, interested readers and researchers can obtain the CD-ROM by writing to the ISSSS treasurer. Notice will appear in the journal and on the ISSSS website (www.qmethod.org) when a new CD-ROM is available that includes a volume update.

Finally, I must confess that as I began to index all 25 volumes of the journal I thought the job would be tedious. Instead, it became a voyage of discovery. I finally just snatched the time from my office work and family to immerse myself in the pages of the journal. And you can imagine what I found. The work of William Stephenson is luxuriously filled with allusion, references, and inductive thinking. His work leaves a snapshot of the breadth and depth of his inquisitive and restless mind. Sound logic and meticulous documentation of his ideas, and those of his contemporaries, permeate his writings, and all of them in *Operant Subjectivity* provide the structure and rationale for the legacy he left us—the scientific study of subjectivity. We are indeed fortunate that he passed through our lifetimes. Those who experienced his teachings firsthand knew they were learning at the foot of the master. For the rest of us, including myself, we are left to experience the mind of this mental giant by way of his writings. This index was organized to help you enjoy that experience.

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