

A Note of Introduction

Lennise J. C. Baptiste

Kent State University

In 2003 I moved from my home country of Trinidad and Tobago to Barbados, to be employed at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) as a Measurement and Testing Officer. While at CXC, my portfolio comprised the musical, visual and performing arts subjects. As I worked with examination teams to make the marking schemes less subjective, my interest in learning more about subjectivity and the assessment of “soft subjects” grew. In 2006, in my second year of doctoral studies at Kent State, I began to change my focus from educational testing and measurement to program evaluation. Also in that year I took a course in Q methodology from Dr. Steven Brown. I was “blown away” when I thought about the possibilities I could explore. In 2007, the journal *New Directions in Evaluation* devoted an entire issue to the topic of process use, and there were calls by many authors for more empirical work on the concept. At a 2008 evaluation conference, I met Michael Patton, the author of the concept, and mentioned that I was going to explore the concept in my research.

Q was my research methodology of choice because I was going to ask participants about their viewpoints on a still ambiguous concept for persons in the evaluation field. My doctoral study focused on what participants learn from being involved in evaluation activities. I had four sets of participants: educators, student nurses, personnel from a social program, and persons trained in program evaluation. The paper in this issue of *Operant Subjectivity* focuses on only the educators’ responses. It is an edited version of the paper that I submitted for the Brenner Award and presented at the 2010 ISSSS conference in Akron, Ohio.

The news that I had received both the Michael Scriven and Brenner awards came within two weeks of each other. I am extremely honored that my work is considered valuable to the field of evaluation. Being honored for a Q study, which incorporates subjectivity, is very meaningful since this was my research interest prior to the start of the doctoral program.

On March 1, 2011, I began working as a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist with the Caribbean Health Research Council back in my home

country. I hope to pursue some Q studies in this position, learning from applications of this methodology to health research in the United Kingdom.

I wish to acknowledge my committee members: Dr. Tricia Niesz and Dr. Rafa Kasim of the School of Foundations, Leadership and Administration in the College and Graduate School of Education, Health and Human Services at Kent State; Dr. Steven Brown of the Political Science Department at Kent State; and Dr. David Fetterman, Director of Evaluation at Stanford University in California and past president of the American Evaluation Association. I was a resident at Kent from August 2005 to February 2011.

Editor's Note: Two days before I was informed that Lennise Baptiste was the inaugural Don Brenner Outstanding Paper awardee, a notice was posted on the Q listserv that Dr. Baptiste's Ph.D. had also won the Michael Scriven Dissertation Award for Outstanding Contribution to Evaluation Theory, Methodology, or Practice. As I saw it, two such awards in close succession cried out for some insight into how Lennise came to Q. I invited her to write the brief profile here, to introduce her award-winning paper, which follows.