

From the Editor

Of masters, journeymen and apprentices

Classroom teachers learn that each class has its own personality or style, for reasons that usually remain obscure but have little to do with content or other intentions of the teacher. Some classes gel quickly and engage with the material in an easy-going manner. Other classes, unfortunately, develop a stodgy character and one is relieved at the end of the term. Seasoned journal editors perhaps have a similar view of each issue shepherded to press: the good ones easy-going and bristling with new ideas or gems of finely tuned scholarship.

This editor is hardly seasoned. Nevertheless, I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the character of this issue emerge. The various contributions fit together well. The results lead me to reflect on the International Society for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity as a modern-day guild. Our scholarship is our craft. Many I4S associates, of course, learned their "craft" from William Stephenson, a master's master: trained in both physics and psychology, creator of Q methodology. A further number of Q scholars apprenticed to these Stephenson-taught masters, gained their journeymen salaried jobs, produced masterpieces. And so it goes on, our walled city now truly international.

However, a good many others have found Q less directly, and the ranks of apprentices have swelled with intrepid seekers studying the literature, attending conferences, running a small study or two. Like good guild masters, as the field widens senior Q scholars know that the health of the craft requires the careful training and encouragement of apprentices and journeymen, the careful maintenance of standards, and an ability to move with the times. This journal carries a good portion of that responsibility.

In that light, this issue includes a "lecture" from the master's master; some masterly exhibits of the craft, and a new feature in which experienced Q scholars reflect on their "craft". I commend it especially to journeymen and apprentices, and encourage you to study and savour the contents.

This issue starts with a paper by Stephenson, probably completed in 1989 just months before his death. Two research articles exemplify themes central to Stephenson's own thinking. The issue finishes with three short pieces by long-established masters.

Let me start with these latter articles. Noel Smith, Mike Knight, and Michael Stricklin are the first authors of "Stephenson scholarly appreciations", which I hope will be a regular feature of *Operant Subjectivity*. These appreciations are responses to my invitation to Q scholars to identify a Stephenson "gem" – a chapter or article – that has made an impression on them and their scholarship, and to tell readers about it. My aim

is to encourage Q scholars, particularly journeymen and apprentices, to look, or look again, at the Stephenson oeuvre. (A complete Stephenson biography, compiled by Steven Brown, is available from me or online at the Q method site, www.qmethod.org/People/william_stephenson_bibliography.htm.) I welcome proposals for new appreciations. As are all articles in *Operant Subjectivity*, these appreciations are peer reviewed.

Stephenson's article, "A sentence from B. F. Skinner" can be read as a restatement of some of his ideas: he is writing, it seems, and as he says at one point (p. 103) to "everyone with knowledge of Q-methodology" to remind us what lies behind the "science for subjectivity".

Having read and reflected on "A sentence" readers are invited to move to the two research articles in this issue. Ragnvald Kvalsund and Eleanor Allgood have, both in this article and in earlier work, done a great deal to keep alive and extend Stephenson's particular interest in intensive Q studies. Readers will note a model research design which led to the exposure and investigation of very rich veins of subjectivity among three pairs of co-leaders. Then on to Michael Stricklin's study of quantum realities. This piece further helps us to appreciate the relationship of Q methodology to quantum science, picking up additional themes canvassed in "A sentence from B. F. Skinner". As a bonus, Stricklin provides an illustrated tutorial tracking his judgemental rotation.

So prepared, readers will reach the "appreciations" that round off this issue. Enjoy.

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