

FOREWORD

In "Principles for the Study of Subjectivity," William Stephenson rejects "consciousness" in favor of "subjectivity" as the basis for scientific consideration, the former being categorical only, a preliminary designation that takes concrete form in talk expressed in functional-interactional situations. Conversational possibilities are manifested in concourses, each idea being expressible in large numbers of self-referent statements. Concern is not with language per se (semantics), or in the abstract, but with its *use* in lived settings by ordinary individuals. Q sorts are therefore technical devices for representing one's mind in action ("focalizing attention"), with meaning arising in the Q sortings and the operant factors to which they lead, all grounded in the self of the Q sorter.

In his study of the 1980 election, Steven Brown shows in Q-technique terms how political competition tends to bias perceptions along dyadic lines, rendering third candidates relatively "invisible" so far as major segments of the public are concerned.