

## PREFACE

Since 1962 I have been writing a column for *Current Contents*. At first the column appeared only rarely, but thereafter with increasing frequency, until in 1972 it appeared weekly without interruption, as it has since.

The idea of putting the columns—I have called them essays, editorials, studies, etc.—together in book form appealed to me very early. If for no other reason, it seemed the only way possible of maintaining a complete set for my own use. My colleagues and staff at ISI too frequently fall back on the fact that “EG must have a copy of it;” having borrowed, they forget to return.

By this time anyone who has reason to refer to the earlier essays will no doubt find it difficult to do so. I doubt that many libraries offer ready access to fifteen years of *Current Contents*.

Two or three years ago my constant mentor, Chauncey Leake, began to urge me almost weekly to put the book together. I sought the opinion of several people I respect highly and they agreed with Professor Leake that such a collection would serve a useful purpose. I did not realize that my own mental reservations would be the least obstacle to the publication. It seemed always to be postponed; some other writing, research, or administrative project claimed priority.

Once undertaken, there were seemingly endless discussions as to how best to present the collection. After considering many alternatives regarding format, typography, style, editing, I decided to reprint the

essays just as they first appeared in *Current Contents*. The decision disappointed some of my colleagues, but I have decided to live with the fact that the book will win no prize for design. The irregularity of types and formats is considerable. But I ask readers to accept it, as I do. The look of the book preserves some of the history of the development of *Current Contents* and of ISI.

Because the essays are reprinted here just as they appeared, they contain in their texts page references that refer to the particular issue of *Current Contents*. Those page references, of course, have nothing to do with the two volumes in which the essays now appear. The material referred to, however, whether illustration, table, figure, or reprint, will always be found with the essay concerned.

I thought of arranging the essays in categories of related subject matter, but gave up the attempt. They are reprinted in chronological order. The contents pages and the indexes will, I hope, permit readers to be as selective as they wish if browsing seems inefficient or unrewarding.

Much that I've written has not been subject to any formal refereeing. Those who know me will know as well, however, that very few of my essays are published without consulting others for opinion and advice. Most often those to whom I've turned have been members of ISI's staff. Some of them have done a great deal more than give opinion and advice. It would be difficult to acknowledge everyone who has contributed to these essays in one way or another. These names are an incomplete list (the order is alphabetic only): A. E. Cawkell, Samuel Lazerow, Chauncey D. Leake, Joshua Lederberg, Morton V. Malin, Robert K. Merton, Derek deSolla Price, Gabrielle Revesz, Irving H. Sher, Henry Small, Melvin Weinstock. Though I take full responsibility for everything I publish, I owe a great deal to the knowledge and help of these colleagues and friends.

I hope to supplement these volumes with others in the years to come, since I plan to continue my weekly column. In addition, such volumes will offer a convenient place to print or reprint papers that may not be suitable for *Current Contents*, but may nevertheless be of interest and use to students and coworkers in the field of science information.

*Preface*

I should like to acknowledge here the work of Ms. Sarah Downes, who has over the years composed most of these essays for publication. She is mainly responsible for their gradually improved appearance. I should like also to thank my old friend and colleague, Mr. Robert Hayne, ISI's chief editor, who supervised the production of this collection and supplied the indexes.

**Eugene Garfield**

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