

## Preface

IT'S EARLY in the twenty-first century, and that means that these words will mostly be read by nonpersons—automatons or numb mobs composed of people who are no longer acting as individuals. The words will be minced into atomized search-engine keywords within industrial cloud computing facilities located in remote, often secret locations around the world. They will be copied millions of times by algorithms designed to send an advertisement to some person somewhere who happens to resonate with some fragment of what I say. They will be scanned, rehashed, and misrepresented by crowds of quick and sloppy readers into wikis and automatically aggregated wireless text message streams.

Reactions will repeatedly degenerate into mindless chains of anonymous insults and inarticulate controversies. Algorithms will find correlations between those who read my words and their purchases, their romantic adventures, their debts, and, soon, their genes. Ultimately these words will contribute to the fortunes of those few who have been able to position themselves as lords of the computing clouds.

The vast fanning out of the fates of these words will take place almost entirely in the lifeless world of pure information. Real human eyes will read these words in only a tiny minority of the cases.

And yet it is you, the person, the rarity among my readers, I hope to reach.

The words in this book are written for people, not computers.

I want to say: You have to be somebody before you can share yourself.