FOREWORD

Incognito Cogito Sum

Unity without diversity is blind, diversity without unity is empty. And/or vice versa. I am wedded to the past, but I cannot worship it, lest the future end. Hence, my obsession with history, including the history of ahistory. As Alice knew, nothing is quite what it seems, least of all a literary classic or a philosophical idea. Over the years I have learned to take nothing at face value—not even that! My interpretations reflect and reinforce this point. So does my life. For we are never more serious than when we are being facetious. And vice versa. So keep your eyes open, your wits about you, and a smile on your lips, lest your face freeze into a dogma or a corpse. As Mirabeau said of Robespierre, “he will go far, for he believes everything he says.” God help me if I’m guilty of sincerity. God help you if you think that’s no sin. (But read my Epilogue, which is the saving disgrace).

Many fine but foolish people have helped me to think, write, and pray over this ol’ book. They are all guilty of crimethink, the penalty for which is to repeat the same course of mental torture in Room 101 until the year 2050. For their insights, expertise, and personal friendship, I am indebted to Dorothy Berger, Richard Carter, Don Cress, Larry Hinman, Ralph Johnson, Sam Labson, Bill Lutz, Mitch Malachowski, Saul Morson, Virginia Muller, Dorothea Olkowski, Sandra Robertson, Bart Thurber, Stephen Toulmin, Stephen Voss, Terry Whitcomb, Larry Williamson, and Langdon Winner. Generations of students at the University of San Diego have educated me for life, though I know I have yet to return the compliment. I am grateful to a series of academic audiences for listening to me even when they disagree. Every heretic knows that to be is to be heard, and every scholar is a heretic at heart.

I could not have written this book, much less finished it, without the dedication and professionalism of my manuscript secretary, Vivian Holland. Whatever is graceful or astute in these pages is entirely hers. The rest is all my fault.

Dennis Rohatyn