

P R E F A C E

A book like this has more origins than authors. For me it grew out of the experience of teaching advanced undergraduate-graduate seminars on the sociology of scientific knowledge. During the second half of the 1980s, it dawned on me that while a growing number of studies were commonly discussed under this rubric, there were important and fascinating differences between them. Especially my own interests moved further away from traditional studies that could properly be labeled as studies of scientific knowledge and toward a newer genre that took scientific practice as its organizing theme. And this created a problem for teaching. Which texts should I choose to represent the differing approaches to science-as-practice pursued by the leading authors? And how could I bring the tension between studies of science-as-knowledge and science-as-practice into focus when, as it happened, the two schools chose to concentrate upon what they held in common, at least in print?

The solution I came up with was to invite the authors that I was already discussing in class to contribute to a volume of original essays, with the suggestion that they write either to exemplify their own understandings of scientific practice or, by confronting other authors or positions, to bring out what is at stake in a focus on knowledge or practice. Not all were in a position or wanted to comply, of course; conversely, new contributors joined in, and taxing choices had to be made as the project took shape. But at any rate, the stars seem to have been in an appropriate alignment, and the present volume is the result. Part 1 maps out a range of key positions in the analysis of practice, and part 2 lays out key debates across its edges, especially, though not exclusively, with studies of science-as-knowledge.

For the depth, coherence, balance, and range which I judge this book to possess, I offer my profound thanks to all of the contributors. Mike Lynch, Harry Collins, and Steven Yearley deserve particular thanks for opening up new debates which will, I suspect, be of central concern in science studies for some time to come. I might add that seeing one of these debates into print has called forth dip-

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lomatic skills that have not hitherto been a feature of my own practice: perhaps one day I will use them again. For their advice and support and their encouragement in seeing the project through its darker hours, I thank Mary Wallace and especially Susan Abrams of the University of Chicago Press. I thank the History and Philosophy of Science Program of the National Science Foundation for a grant (DIR-8912095) which supported in part my editorial work and substantive contributions to the volume. And finally, I thank Thomas for keeping me awake while all this was going on.

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