

**ZMATH 1999f.03847**

**Lang, Serge**

**Challenges.**

Springer, New York, NY (ISBN 0-387-94861-9). 825 p. (1998).

The collection, based on several of Lang's "Files", deals with the area where science and academia meet the worlds of journalism and politics: social organization, government, and the roles that education and journalism play in shaping opinions leading to policy decisions. In discussing specific cases in which he became involved, the author addresses general questions of standards: standards of journalism, standards of discourse, and standards of science. Recurring questions concern: How people process information and how misinformation is spread and accepted; Inhibition of critical thinking and the role of education - teaching students to think clearly and independently, or conditioning them to accept dominant modes of perception uncritically; How to make corrections, and how attempts at corrections are sometimes obstructed; The extent to which we submit to the authority of those higher up, and whether one can keep the higher ups accountable, possibly in the face of evasions, stonewalling, and intimidation; The competence of so-called experts; Our responsibility for what we say or write; The use of editorial and academic power to suppress or marginalize ideas, evidence, or data that do not fit the tenets of certain establishments. By dealing with case studies and providing documentation, the author challenges some individuals and establishments, at the same time that he challenges us to reconsider the ways they exercise their official or professional responsibilities, and challenges us to form our own judgement.

*Classification:* C60