PREFACE

In preparing this volume, the following intentions have been principally in mind: to provide a text which covers the standard topics treated in a course in epistemology and at the same time to present these as living questions; to provide a generous amount of historical information on what representative thinkers have held on these questions; to provide extensive reference to those aspects of the problem of knowledge which have emerged in contemporary philosophy; to provide a book which actually deals in a directly reflective philosophical manner with both classical and contemporary problems.

The aim, then, is both informational and philosophical, and a central philosophical point, conveyed both directly and obliquely, is that reflection in the philosophy of knowledge is still *going on*. Therefore, an attempt has been made to give a more open and unfinished air to the discussions than is customary with a textbook. Footnotes are deliberately more frequent than is usual, with the aim of convincing the student of the current and continually dialectical character of the issues, and also with the sheer informational intention of acquainting him with the literature; they are meant as an integral pedagogical part of the course.

Although the book has been written from a definite philosophical standpoint, every effort has been made to render it easily utilizable by those who do not share this standpoint. As indicated, all standard topics in the customary epistemological course are treated in a relatively straightforward manner, and it is hoped that an instructor who prefers to confine himself to these topics, with-

out bothering about less familiar matters, will be able to do so simply by selecting the proper sections. Conversely, one who wants to roam farther afield should find ample material from which to choose. It is unlikely that every topic in the book could be covered in a course of normal length.

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