

## EDITORIAL PREFACE

I think I did it! I'm going to tell you what it is, how I did it, and even why I did it. (As I hold my third glass of champagne on this festive occasion, I'm overpowered by this urge to come clean with you.)

Michael Dummett once wrote that

[a] preface is personal, the body of the book impersonal: the preface tells you the author's feelings about his book, or some of them. A reader who wishes to remain aloof can skip the preface without loss; but one who wants to be personally introduced has, I feel, the right to be.

It's a conception of what a preface should be like that serves me well – especially here at *Veritas*, where the authors, themselves, introduce you to their papers in the abstract that accompanies each paper.

I begin with motive. Well, there is, of course, the *obvious* one. The intellectual mayhem in the wake of Gettier's precious paper, the tightly woven tissue of arguments extending from paper to paper, from book to book, all based on essentially the same small set of irresistible assumptions from ordinary experience, that the best practitioners of this art we call "epistemology" have managed to offer us, apprentices, has so occupied my imagination that it would be an understatement if I said that, like many, I've become profoundly and happily *enamored* of it. To be honest, I've long secretly believed that anyone who ever lays eyes on one of their books or papers inevitably finds himself in one of two states vis-à-vis their works: either the person doesn't "get it" at all or she just can't get enough of it. I think I get it. Like me, a growing number of philosophers in the Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking communities get it too. And I'm yet to see a refutation of that belief. So much for the obvious motivation for this volume.

But there is also the part that I have to get off my chest. We're all familiar with the very best collective volumes in epistemology. Think of the power that the editors of such volumes wield. Think of how valuable they are to those lucky publishing houses. (The sales figures for those must-own volumes must be staggering.) In fact, I've always suspected that those thankful publishers must have rewarded their indispensable editors with their own exclusive editors' club. Ah, it's a safe bet that there is such a club, with its strict code of silence. Only members know about the incessant adulation from publishers, the perks, the gifts, the golfing, the gourmet luncheons at the country club, the stretch limo rides, the reserved boxes at the opera house, Ernie Sosa's secret cell phone number... It's the high life in this profession!

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I was daydreaming about membership in the editors' club the other day when I got a call from Draiton de Souza, the managing editor for *Veritas*: Would I carry the journal's banner to its fiftieth year mark with a special issue devoted to contemporary epistemology? Suddenly, that elusive membership seemed within reach. *Veritas* means a lot to us. Anyone who has a clue about how hard it is to keep a professional philosophy journal going for fifty years at a private university in southern Brazil knows exactly what I mean. (Check out Professor Clemente's report on the saga of *Veritas*.) Now, I needed an airtight plan for the volume. And I just could not afford to fail in my choice of contributors. Here's how things unfolded.

A paper on an exciting approach to Cartesian skepticism is obligatory. And, when I think Cartesian skepticism, I go west. I go to Santa Barbara, California. That's where Tony Brueckner has been examining that conundrum from every conceivable angle. Tony can't be beaten at his game. Can I have his latest thoughts on a Putnamian approach to the problem? "You got it", came the answer.

Epistemic paradoxes: If you don't know the lessons they afford, how they connect with some of the most challenging problems in epistemology, take my advice: go north. Toronto: that's where Doris Olin will show you the way in that maze. So, the phone rang at York University's Glendon College. Doris must have noticed that the guy on the other end would not both take "no" for an answer and remain in good health.

Now, if you know anything at all about recent developments in epistemology, you must know that social epistemology is growing by leaps and bounds. Jonathan Adler's office in New York is where much of that vast territory is being charted. The news that he would join us gave me the assurance: The volume was going to be *huge*.

"Huge" is one of the words you can use to describe Peter Klein's contribution to the field. By any reasonable standard, just having the most sophisticated version of the defeasibility theory on your CV must suffice to make you the subject of a chapter in the history of epistemology. But how much acreage do you get in that book if you *also* have single-handedly turned infinitism into a view worth talking about? Those are dizzying heights, folks!

With authors like Brueckner, Olin, Adler and Klein on board, I'm thinking: Who measures up to that kind of company? It must have taken me a fraction of a millisecond to think of Jonathan Kvanvig, Fred Adams and Stephen Hetherington. Jon, as you know, is a walking encyclopedia. In addition to the impressive amount of ink that he regularly dispenses for the best publishers, his supply of epistemological ideas is plentiful enough to sustain our favorite hangout on the web, Certain Doubts, his own creation. Fred is fearless. He's on a mission to restore the reputation of the truth-tracking theories and *everybody* who has any sense is listening. (Check out his paper and let me know what's left of Kripke's much publicized red barn objection against Nozick.) And Stephen seems to be the

undisputed emperor of Australasian epistemology. For this volume, we get what is so far the most ambitious version of his gradualism about propositional knowledge.

There is only one thing missing: I need some top-notch meta-epistemology. But who... Rochester! Rich and Earl, of course! They've been churning out some of the best meta-epistemology anywhere for decades now. Their case for evidentialism has been the nightmare of externalists for twenty years. They are tightening the screws in this *Veritas* paper.

There is one more key element to my plan. To be worthy of that coveted membership, an editor must show *vision*. He must know the best among the up-and-coming and give them the platform they deserve. I wish I could brag about being a visionary. But I really can't. In Brazil, it's easy to see that Julio César Burdzinski, Tito Flores, Alexandre Meyer Luz, Felipe Müller and Roberto Hofmeister Pich must be on any list of major new talent in epistemology. Well, maybe the vision thing is not that important after all.

With my dream team ready to go, it would be nice if I showed a little strategy. Can we have a few papers providing entry points to some of the major topics in epistemology for upper level undergraduate students? Adams, Brueckner, Burdzinski, Meyer Luz and Müller all volunteered the kind of material that is guaranteed to make us, teachers, more popular in the classroom. But there is much friendly material in the other papers as well.

The plan was complete. The beauty of it, if I may say so myself, is that, with such a group of authors in hand, even a relentless nitpicker like me who fancies himself the editor from hell would have next to nothing to do. And the invaluable help from my tireless assistant, Lionara Fusari, further ensured that I could safely devote my time to those golf lessons while the volume put itself together.

As I hold my fourth glass of champagne and look at the finished volume, the conclusion seems inevitable: I have a mortal lock on that club membership. The phone call will surely come any minute now.

My guests are all elegant academics. They can't brag about the philosophical triumph in their papers. But I can. I can brag *for them*. I'm just a satisfied reader with a bully pulpit. I brag. I brag and I boast – with a bullhorn, off rooftops. I approach strangers on the street and tell them about it. I knock on their doors. I tap them on the shoulder in the dark of the movie theater, as they choke on their popcorn. I call radio shows under false pretenses and slip a reference to this volume. I go to churches where they allow testimonials. I go to karaoke bars. I even called my uncle Morty the other day. People have to know about it! That's how I feel about this volume.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to practice my swing for all that arduous golfing ahead.

