

PREFACE

My big book's Preface will begin with rehearsing just the very first paragraph of the Preface to another big book, that one written by a philosopher with far more knowledge than I'll ever have, and with far more intellectual power, too:

The following pages are addressed not only or primarily to professional philosophers but to that much larger public which is interested in philosophical questions without being willing or able to devote more than a limited amount of time to considering them. Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume wrote for a public of this sort, and I think that it is unfortunate that during the last hundred and sixty years or so or philosophy has come to be regarded as almost as technical as mathematics. Logic, it must be admitted, is technical in the same way as mathematics is, but, logic, I maintain, is not part of philosophy. Philosophy proper deals with matters of interest to the general educated public, and loses much of its value if only a few professionals can understand what is said.

There it is, folks. That's the start of Bertrand Russell's Preface to his last sustained, serious and systematic philosophical work, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, published right here, in my native New York, by Simon and Schuster, way back in 1948. Heck, that was just half a dozen years after I arrived here, fresh from my mother's womb.

Right off the bat, I'll say this about Russell's prime paragraph. With almost all of it, I couldn't agree more - and with none do I disagree. (There's one bit on which I must suspend

judgment: Is logic not part of philosophy proper? The suggestion seems a tad extravagant. But, then, what do I know? I'm no Bertrand Russell.) Anyway, with the *general sense* of Russell's paragraph, well, I couldn't agree more.

As I blush to confess, I think much the same good thoughts apply to this present work, about as well as they did to Russell's own book. Well, sort of. Look, I realize that my prospects for reaching anything like as large a public as Russell did are, roughly and triply speaking, slim, dim, and none. But, still, I'm certainly *interested* in addressing the general educated public, and not just some few professional philosophers. Accordingly, I've tried hard, mighty hard, I'll tell you, to make this big book a pretty pleasantly accessible work - especially pleasant, I think, for those willing to follow a little *Public Readers' Guide* that I'll right here provide.

Many people find big books daunting, especially when the tomes are works in first philosophy, or substantive metaphysics, as this one certainly aims to be. I know I do. But, if you follow my *Public Readers' Guide*, that shouldn't bother you much, as you'll only be reading about half the book, and maybe even less than that. What's more, you'll be reading all the parts you're likely to find a most enjoyable read.

So, for almost anyone who's not a professor of philosophy, and for many philosophy professors, too, I strongly recommend you follow this:

PUBLIC READERS' GUIDE

1. Read the book's first three Chapters, though you needn't bother about the notes. (In fact, you needn't bother about the notes to *any* of the book's Chapters.) As my experience with undergraduates indicates, most will enjoy over three-fourths of this stuff. And, heck, you

can do a *bit* of work toward clearly grasping, and greatly enjoying, the truly juicy meat that's yet to come.

2. Skip Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, proceeding directly to Chapter 6.
3. Do read Chapter 6 - it's on Real Choice; it's on Free Will - and you'll enjoy a lot of it.
4. Read some of, but only some of, Chapter 7. Though it's all supporting the exciting idea that you're an immaterial soul, I recommend that you read only about half this long Chapter. Besides skipping its many notes and its Appendix, folks innocent of recent philosophy should skip, as well, all these listed Sections: 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 20 and 23.
5. Read Chapter 8; it's fun. It's got stuff on how, very possibly, we may someday become disembodied souls, outlasting our bodies for billions of years. It's got stuff on the main questions about God. Heck; it's even got stuff about reincarnation!
6. Read just a bit of Chapter 9. In fact, read only its Sections 3 and 4, skipping the rest.
7. Read Chapter 10, the book's last Chapter. Sure, it's long. But, it's packed with all sorts of interesting speculations, none of them, I think, very terribly implausible. Far beyond just encountering new ideas about space and time, you'll find Hypotheses about *additional Dimensional Aspects of Concrete Reality*. Most fun of all - I'll bet you a nickel - there you'll find my most favored form of Substantial Dualism, *Quasi-Platonic Substantial Dualism*. On this surprisingly palatable metaphysic, not only will you outlast your body for billions of years, but, what's much more, you'll also precede it by billions of years.

There it is folks, your handy reader's guide, all up front and, so, all in one place.

And, that's not all. For those of you who, like me, usually forget what you read in a Preface,

if you bother to read a book's Preface, at all, do not worry. Separately, and serially, all this good guiding advice will be provided yet again, in the body of the book itself. Rather than all in one piece, each part of this Guide will be provided just right where, or just right before, it will be most useful - to those most wanting to use it. For example, the advice just listed as piece number 2 - about skipping over Chapters 4 and 5 - that will be provided right near the end of Chapter 3, right before it's most needed. And, the advice just listed as piece number 4 - about skipping all those Sections in Chapter 7 - that will appear quite near the beginning of that very Chapter, well before you've already plunged into any skippable Section of Chapter 7. Don't worry, I'll take good care of you on this score. Very well, do I know what it's like to read page after page of humdrum boring philosophy.

Even much more than Russell did, leastways much more than he did in *Human Knowledge*, I avoid extensive use of any highly technical terminology. And, well I should do. For, if anything, in the sixty or so years since Russell wrote the displayed words, matters have become even worse - well, even more extreme, anyway - than they were in the previous hundred and sixty years. At all events, what technical terms I do introduce are happily chosen and colorfully presented. So, they're easily grasped, and they're readily remembered, as I've found with very many beginning undergraduates, and not just the brightest beginning students. Believe me: If you follow my Reader's Guide, everything you read will be pretty easy to understand.

(And, even if you *don't* follow the guide, most of what you'll read - most, by far - will be pretty easy. It's just that, unless you're inclined toward enjoying philosophy, much of it won't strike you as very *interesting* material. Some will; but much won't. Most of it, you'll understand it, all right; of that I'm sure. It's just that your reaction often may be more like "So What" than "Holy

Cow.”)

To show the Public Reader how serious I am about treating her well, and about treating her to an enjoyable philosophic reading experience, I'll provide some helpful advice right here and now, very useful for most folks, who certainly aren't philosophy professors.

DON'T READ ANY MORE OF THIS PREFACE. GO DIRECTLY TO THE START OF CHAPTER 1, AND PICK THINGS UP RIGHT FROM THERE.

All right, with that done, I'll now offer more words, in the rest of this Preface, for folks who aren't very innocent of much recent philosophy. Though much of it might not be very new, nor very interesting, either, still, a lot of it should be said, I think, in the Preface to a book like this one. (And, I'd rather produce some unnecessary words than leave out something even moderately important for me to say here.) So, even if there should be a shaggy dog story or two, mixed in with the right stuff, I'll press on with what remains to be said.

Almost all contemporary philosophers, leastways almost all with any aspiration toward clear thinking and writing, well, they're almost all greatly influenced by many other contemporary professors of philosophy, both by reading the writing of many others and by conversing orally with quite a few of their philosophical contemporaries. Everybody knows this, of course, leastways anyone who's anybody in mainstream academic philosophy. But, still, it's useful, I think, for it to be articulated, and even for it to be expressed saliently, in published print. Well, so there it is now, plain as day for all the world to see - well, anyway, almost all the tiny world of mainstream academic philosophy. (As I well realize, it's very unlikely that more than a few thousand people

will ever read more than ten sentences of this book.) In these little learned circles, what's a central consequence of this well-known social fact? Well, as everyone also knows, that is, everyone who's in the circles, but as also bears articulation and public printing, a singularly salient upshot is nothing less sadly boring than this: Especially in substantial matters of first philosophy, or on ground-level philosophical issues, there's almost no diversity among contemporary philosophers or, at the very least, there's almost none evidenced in the philosophical publications that, over the last three or so decades, have been emanating from these academic thinkers.

(When I speak of contemporary philosophers, I confine my remarks, leastways almost entirely, to philosophical academics in the English-speaking world. About what's considered philosophy in most European continental circles, I really haven't a clue. And, similarly, with what may be, in various Asian circles, considered profoundly philosophical thinking. Heck, for all I know, there may be a multitude of South Americans - way down there, down below the equator - who're all absolute masters of deeply intriguing substantive metaphysical speculation. Keep hope alive! But, right here and now, that's neither here nor there. Realistically, for anyone likely to have read this far in my Preface, no such self-consciously ignorant cock-eyed optimism really matters. So, all too soberly, perhaps, I return to discuss the folks, and their works, in our relevant reference class.)

For just one saliently stultifying example of the almost perfect uniformity to which I've alluded - and with which I've so long been bored beyond belief - I'll offer this obvious observation: During the last thirty-some years - or, by now, maybe even yet more years - almost everyone who's anyone, in academic philosophical circles, has subscribed to a materialist metaphysic. Or, if not *quite* that, then, among the just fairly few who haven't been materialists, almost all of *them* have

subscribed to a view - to one view or another - that's only most marginally different from unadulterated materialism. These *Marginally Different Views*, as I'll call the terribly similar medium-rare positions - which are also, I suspect, just some several similarly half-baked positions - well, they're all so enormously like flat-out physicalism that there's scarcely any difference, between the former and the latter, as concerns almost all philosophically central matters. (As far as I've been able to discern, there's no more difference here, or just precious little more, than there was between, say, flat-out materialism and, on the other side, the epiphenomenalist sort of mind-body dualism that, a century or so ago, wasn't any horribly unfashionable view.)

Of course, that's just one salient example. And, of course, it's hardly the most stultifying example. That label goes, as all our tiny world knows, to the almost universal endorsement, in prestigious philosophical publications, of almost all of commonsense belief - well, almost all of what's been *called* "commonsense belief" by so many of its aforementioned endorsers. It's only a slight exaggeration to say that, right next upcoming, here's the first commandment of, or the first working principle of, contemporary core philosophy: "Thou shalt not contradict the man in the street" or, maybe better, "Thou shalt not contradict the atheist in the street." Well, it's something like that. So, as must then be expected, not only has this philosophy been a terribly uniform enterprise, doctrinally reckoned, but - what may be still worse - it's been just such a self-consciously modest endeavor as will be, in almost every case, quite utterly tame. But, enough about such surpassing stultification. Now, toward presenting a smoothly flowing Preface, I segue back to my just previous point of focus.

Well, for at least the last several decades, as I was saying, this has been the situation in core academic philosophy: Rather than any substantial diversity of worldview, there's been, instead, just

so much mutually reinforcing similarity of viewpoint that even the most picayune family squabble may appear, to the properly initiated participants, to concern questions of great philosophic consequence. Or, so it's been among those intellectually ambitious enough to bother about first philosophy, at all, and among those professionally ambitious enough to make available, in their philosophical publications, the favored fruits of their merely marginally different philosophical thinking.

How is it that so very many highly similar thinkers all manage to stay interested in their inordinately similar projects, for much more than a decade or so?

Maybe the answer lies in this happy state of affairs: Like so many of those in so many of the real sciences, they are greatly excited by, and quite rightly excited by, their taking part in the discovery of, or the production of, an ever-increasing body of knowledge. Or, if it's not quite that, well, then, maybe it's something very like that. Unfortunately, there's not even a snowball's chance in heck that such a suggestion is even roughly right. At least tacitly, anyone who's not innocent of philosophy knows this full well, even unto their heart of hearts. And, upon any even half-way serious reflection, almost all contemporary philosophers consciously realize it, if only for some fleeting moments. So, as everyone who's anyone knows, and knows full well, that's not the answer.

Why is there so much uniformity, then, among contemporary philosophical academics, leastways among those who work mostly on questions central to the subject's time-honored core? Is there, perhaps, something of a mystery here? Is there, perhaps, an actual miracle here, the almost inscrutable upshot, perhaps, of a Divine Presence at work in the world?

Now, it all might seem quite miraculous, I suppose, but for the utterly obvious fact, easily recalled by anyone who's awake, that people often find great enjoyment in the discernment of tiny

differences, almost any old tiny differences, in objects of their mutual interest. For an example of this - I admit, it may be a rather extreme case - think of all the many rich folks, most of them quite as smart as they're rich, who delight in the little differences they discern among the gold coins they collect. So, really, there's scarcely any mystery found when what's confronted is just so much enthusiastic conformity among human beings, whether the object of their extremely similar thinking, and their highly uniform interest, and their almost identical thoughtful behavior - well, whether it's this thing, or whether it's that one, or, yet again, whether it's some yet different thing, quite entirely.

As you'll recall, if only because I'll simply repeat it, I just lately said this: Almost all contemporary philosophers, leastways almost all with any aspiration toward clear thinking, and even toward intelligible argumentation, well, they're greatly influenced by other contemporary professors of philosophy, both by reading the writing of the others and by conversing orally with their philosophical contemporaries. Well, almost all isn't quite all. And, as I'm sure you've already guessed - those of you who don't know me - I'm one of the few exceptions. (Few, certainly; unique, certainly not.) Just so, with only a few exceptions, I've been far more influenced, in my working on this book, by material I've read written by Rene Descartes, and by George Berkeley, and by David Hume, and, maybe, by Bertrand Russell, too - far more than I've been influenced by the writing of almost all latish twentieth century authors, or by any writing still more recently. And, with only a very few exceptions, I've been influenced hardly at all by conversations with contemporary philosophers, leastways not by discourse with those already old enough to have established themselves in the circles of academic philosophy. But, then, of course, almost all isn't the same as all. Just so, there are the few exceptions.

In a plainly positive fashion, I've been greatly influenced, in writing much that you'll find in

this book, by very many phone-conversations with C. B. “Charlie” Martin, initiated by Charlie, to my great benefit, from his home in Western Canada. Unfortunately for most folks, Charlie is, on the whole, a very unclear writer of philosophical prose, as was also his great hero, John Locke. Fortunately for me, as turgid as Charlie is in his philosophical writing, so marvelously lucid is he, hardly always but plenty often enough, in his philosophical talking. Well, wending my way through quite a bit of his writing, some of it lucid, but much of it turgid, I was helped, by this reading, to prompt Charlie into ever more philosophical talking. Most of this conversation was very enlightening philosophically, at least to me, who had previously learned relatively little from my (painfully tedious) reading of Locke. While I’ve now learned a lot from Charlie - much accepted, and much ultimately left behind - I haven’t any idea how much of this is actually just so much updated Locke and how much is mostly the product of Charlie’s own distinctive thinking. (At least from time to time, Charlie has said that a very great deal of it is right there in Locke. But, being no historical scholar, what do I know?) Anyhow, whatever the exact proportions, a lot of this book was positively influenced by just Charlie Martin himself, I believe, and, through Charlie, a lot was positively influenced, too, by John Locke.

Next to Charlie Martin, and maybe running a pretty close second, the greatest plainly positive influence on this work, among contemporary philosophers, is the late Roderick M. Chisholm. Oftentimes, Chisholm’s writing is technically dense and, to the likes of me, it’s nearly unreadable. But, oftentimes, too, he writes just some fine straightforward English prose, full of stimulating philosophy. This may occur side-by-side, even, in the course of a single work, as certainly happens in his important metaphysical book, *Person and Object*. At any rate, there’s no question but that, through his most available passages, which are as numerous as they are widely

scattered, Chisholm has greatly influenced my thinking, in this work, and often in a very positive way.

While these two contemporary thinkers, Martin and Chisholm, greatly influenced me in a plainly positive manner, just one contemporary of mine influenced me, perhaps quite equally, in a most useful negative way. On almost every substantive issue I address in this book, I offer a position that's diametrically opposed to the view of my Swarthmore College classmate, and my nearly life-long friend, the late David Lewis. In fact, it's only a slight exaggeration to say that, as concerns all the main matters of first philosophy, the only one where I tend to accept the same view as does David is the one issue on which he holds his most famously distinctive view, perhaps the only issue on which almost all other contemporary philosophers disagree with David. Just so, I'm very friendly to the idea, which is really his idea, of an infinite plurality of mutually quite isolated concrete worlds - each isolated from all the others spatially, and temporally, and causally, and so on. (Well, I'm not so sure about the temporal isolation business - but, no matter.) In this present work, I don't try to argue in support of that view, as there's so very much else that I do take on here - almost all of which will be, no doubt, quite as unpopular as David's view of infinitely many mutually isolated concrete worlds, and much of which is, as well, about as robustly speculative as David's visionary metaphysical proposal.

That said, this should be more firmly born in mind: As all the world knows, the great mentalistic philosopher, David Hume, has been an enormously great challenging influence on so many who temporally followed him, almost all of whom have tried to oppose so much of what he offered, even including many who've agreed with much else that he said. No surprise, I'm one of those many temporal followers of Hume, opposing very much of what he offered, while also

agreeing with a (different) fair lot of it, too. Much as my Humean inspired opposition to Hume has been one of the great influences on this book, so my Lewisean inspired opposition to the later David has been another great influence.

Unlike with David Hume, whom I never met, of course, David Lewis was also a great personal influence on me, and on my intellectual work. His passion for clarity has influenced me greatly, of course, as it has so many of our contemporaries. Even more important, in my case, is his inspired, and his inspiring, development of his Multi-Worldly Metaphysical Vision, one of the terribly few truly visionary philosophic ideas - so far as I can tell - in all of twentieth century philosophy. While possessing only a modest fraction of David's inordinate intellectual power, I still take him as a model, in that absolutely central regard. So, it is that, with what lesser power I myself can muster, I do try, in these pages, to offer some very unusual metaphysical ideas, most of them bound to be quite unpopular, while always caring far more about what intellectual elegance a speculative thought may have, and about how clearly we humans can grasp the conjecture, than about - well, than about how palatable, or how unpalatable, it may seem to most of my philosophical contemporaries. For just one salient example, so it is with the Quasi-Platonic Dualism that I offer in the book's last Chapter, as noted in this Preface's compact Public Readers' Guide.

Though it's not only to him that I dedicate this book, I do dedicate this work, in loving memory, to the greatest philosopher whom I've ever actually met, my dearly departed friend, David Lewis.

Both as concerns the historically great figures, from Descartes through Russell, and as concerns rather more contemporary figures, I've now mentioned all the philosophers who, as far as I can tell, have most greatly influenced this book, whether in one way or whether in another.

Through their philosophical writing, some several others have also significantly influenced my long labor on this book, over the course of some eight very full years, to quite a considerable degree, even if not as greatly as those I've already mentioned as influences. For the most part, that should be pretty plain from mentions made in the book itself. Anyway, I won't try to make it any plainer right here, in this Preface, as I'd be much more likely to just make a mess of things than to do some deserving folks some decent justice.

That said, it's now time to mention quite a few folks, right here in this Preface, all of whom have been very helpful to me, in my progress toward producing this big exploratory philosophical story - a story that, as I hope for it to be, might be a roughly true story. (That's just a hope, of course, nothing nearly so affirmative as a belief. Look, on almost all the most central philosophic matters, pretty much all of my greatest philosophic predecessors each contradicted many of the others. With that obvious over-arching truth, how can any seriously systematic thinker, at this quite late date, offer his own distinctive main ideas with more than just a hope for their truth, or even for their being so much as just roughly correct. Much more than that will be, I think, a sort of philosophic lunacy that's owing, in no small measure, to a sort of philosophic myopia.)

A few of my NYU Philosophy colleagues, past, present and partial, showed some interest in this work, leastways after my badgering each a bit, and, once interested in reading some of the material, they offered helpful suggestions for improvements. Especially concerning what I was up to in very early stages of the work, among my past colleagues John Carroll and Keith DeRose were more than helpful enough to deserve mention. Though they'd already left NYU when this book was started, they continued to take an interest in some of my thoughts, and continued to offer helpful suggestions as to how I might improve the ideas.

Concerning pretty early work, and work at medium stages, too, Gordon Belot was much more than helpful enough. Way back when, Gordon read each of what were, way back then, the six chapters of an early draft, making helpful typed comments on all six. Among many other helpful things he did for me, he told me where to make a few alterations - and how each should be made - so that everything I then said would comport, plenty well enough, with anything really established in, or by, contemporary physics and, more generally, recent science. (Well, as that was some several years ago, and the present text is more than twice the length of what Gordon read, right now I can only hope that, at least for the most part, there's still quite enough of that sort of comportment. But, if not, I'm still quite open to making several more changes, in most parts of this work, at least in my own mind - and, even in print, should there ever be a second edition of this book.)

Among my present colleagues, Kit Fine read early versions of a couple of the book's Chapters and, with his famously laser-like mind, made penetrating corrective suggestions, all of which I assiduously tried to follow. As I believe, I pretty well succeeded in doing that.

At a very much later stage, about five years later, Elizabeth Harman read, and persistently raised questions about, the material of three presently important Chapters: 1, 3 and 7. At least one Section of Chapter 7 was written in response to Liz's persistent questioning. And, for her persistent treatment of Chapter 1, that Chapter is now far clearer, and rather better, too, I think, than before it encountered her. Imperfect as these three Chapters remain, they have been improved - pretty substantially, I think - by my being spurred to respond to Liz's questions, corrections and suggestions.

During the last year and a half, Don Garrett read, in one version or another, all ten of this big book's Chapters. With most of the Chapters, I made some improvements in response to questions,

corrections and suggestions proposed by Don. With some I was prompted to, and even encouraged to, write entire new sections. And, much as Gordon Belot vetted an early draft, to see that I shouldn't badly misrepresent contemporary physical science, or run badly afoul of it, so, Don Garrett vetted a much later draft, to see that I shouldn't badly misrepresent the thoughts of the historically great philosophers that, on my work in this book, have all been such an important influence. (Since I can scarcely stop adding more to a work, at almost any time right up to the moment I actually submit it - so as to meet my contractual obligations - not everything's been vetted, on both of these matters and, of course, on other matters, too. But, as we all know, nobody's perfect.) As with Liz Harman, at least one (other) of Chapter 7's Sections was written in response to persistent questioning from Don Garrett.

Among my partial colleagues - that is, among NYU's four (or five) Regular Visiting Professors, one merits mention here. Sydney Shoemaker read pretty recent versions of at least five of this book's ten Chapters - 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7, and made very useful comments about, at the least, the longest of these, Chapter 7, now the longest in the whole book. A couple of that Chapter's sections comprise my responses to points raised by Sydney.

Well that's it for the help from NYU philosophy professors, past, present, and partial. Next, I'll mention some other helpful philosophy professors, leastways those I remember to have been helpful here and, after that, I'll mention some of my helpful students, whether past or present.

When acknowledging help from other contemporary philosophers, perhaps I should first mention John Heil, Charlie Martin's great friend, for Heil is often as lucid a philosophical writer as Charlie himself is often opaque. Especially from their jointly authored papers, but also from some of Heil's solo Neo-Lockean writing - if that's what it is - I've been much influenced, and greatly

helped, in producing my own metaphysical work. In addition to everything else, John read drafts of several of this book's Chapters, and made helpful comments on them.

Dean Zimmerman was a source of judicious council and criticism throughout, and also a source of great encouragement, particularly when I most needed it. Dean read drafts of at least three Chapters, 3, 6 and 7, and he made very many helpful comments on that material. As well, he read thoughtfully, and he critiqued wisely, an early ancestor of what's now Chapter 10, the book's last Chapter.

Through many timely emails, David Chalmers gave me many helpful comments on, at the least, Chapters 3, 4, 6, and 7. In response to his sharp and stimulating comments, I wrote extra sections for Chapters 3, 4 and 7. His helpful impact on this book greatly exceeded the number of words I'm using to thank him.

Over the last summer that I worked on this book, the summer of 2004, David Robb read email drafts of Chapters 1 through 5, and he sent me helpful commentary on all those five Chapters. In quite a few cases, my responses to his comments meant more material for the book you now hold in your hands, almost all of it beneficial, I like to imagine.

My dear friend Jonathan Adler read the book's first 3 Chapters, at various stages of their development. And, near the book's completion, he read its last 3 Chapters. As always, his helpful comments made me make my writing clearer, and more clearly pertinent to the questions I mean to address. For what's now more than a quarter-century of his wonderful friendship - and with hopes for more than another quarter-century, as well - Jon is the only living philosopher to whom I dedicate this book. (Long though this book may be, it is, I trust, only a small tribute to our long and lengthening friendship.)

I exposed a draft of Chapter 6 to three able authors on questions of free will: Richard Double, John Martin Fischer, and Carl Ginet. Their email replies convinced me that I have something worth saying on that perplexing subject. I am happy to thank them.

Many are the students who've I've enjoyed teaching, over these past eight years, here at NYU. Curiously, the one who's impacted this work most greatly, Neil Williams, was never enrolled at New York University, but, rather, was enrolled uptown, for a Ph.D., at Columbia. This fact becomes much less surprising, I imagine, when it's observed that, as an undergraduate in Canada, some several years ago, Neil was a student of Charlie Martin. Twice over, Neil participated in a graduate seminar I gave that was organized around this book's typescript - one year for credit, another year just as an auditor. Chapter 5 of this book owes a very great deal to Neil's thinking.

Some six students enrolled in our own Ph.D. program, here at NYU, had an outstandingly beneficial impact on the book's development.

Alexander "Alex" Guerrero made helpful comments on almost all the book's Chapters. His criticisms of an early version of Chapter 4, led to my revising considerably, and to my expanding substantially, that Chapter, as will be obvious to any who read it.

Yuval Avnir also made useful comments on a great deal of the book. In connection with an early draft of the book's last Chapter, he devised some strikingly original ideas. Adapted somewhat, to better fit my own metaphysical inclinations, Yuval's thoughts led to a significant revision of, and to a substantial expansion of, that Chapter, as will be obvious to any who read it.

Matthew Kotzen read most of a draft of the book - neither a very early draft nor a very late one- and made more than a few comments that were truly penetrating. Among his intellectual offspring are the Yellow-Attractors, introduced in Chapter 3, but observed in many Chapters. The

fairly few mentions of Matt in my notes don't begin to do justice to the many benefits he bestowed.

Michael "Mike" Raven read, by my rough estimate, all of one draft of the book and, in addition, about half of the penultimate draft. Mike made trenchant comments on many Chapters, only partially reflected in notes to the book. With Chapter 7, his comments were truly special. At least one section of Chapter 7 was written in response to trenchant questioning from Mike Raven.

Two other NYU Ph.D. students were also very helpful to me in their persistent questioning, and in a variety of positive suggestions, too, but not in ways that can be as specifically identified. Anyhow, both Peter "Pete" Graham and Jonathan "Jon" Simon also deserve my thanks, and here they get that.

Especially over the last three years, I have greatly enjoyed teaching metaphysics to some very responsive NYU undergraduate philosophy majors. Collectively, they have been enormously helpful in getting me to write this book in the way that Bertrand Russell intended his last great work to be written. In other words, they made sure that this wouldn't be any work, nor even remotely like any work, written so technically that "only a few professionals can understand what is said." In this very important connection - very important to me, anyhow - I'd like to thank Marcello Antosh, Lyndsey Butler, Erin Byram, Ellen Parks, and Arthur Schipper.

At least nine-tenths of what's in this book, by my reckoning, hasn't been published anywhere before. But nearly a tenth, I figure, has been. So, some thanks for permissions to reprint are in order.

A fair bit of Chapter 1, as well as just a tad of Chapter 3, originally appeared as part of my paper "The Mystery of the Physical and the Matter of Qualities," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. XXII, 1999, pages 75-99. According to my letter from Howard Wettstein, who edits that fine

series, “Authors who publish articles in Midwest Studies automatically have permission to use materials from their papers in their own subsequent publications.” But, I thank Howie, anyway, as well as the publisher of the series, Blackwell Publishing.

Almost half of Chapter 6, I reckon, originally appeared in another previously published paper of mine, “Free Will and Scientificalism,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 65, 2002, pages 1-25. For permission to reprint that material, I thank the editor of that journal, Ernest “Ernie” Sosa, and its managing editor, Suzanne Bertrand, as well as its publishing home, Brown University.

Finally, a fair swatch of Chapter 7 first appeared in a third published paper, “The Mental Problems of the Many,” in Dean W. Zimmerman (ed.) *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Volume I, 2004, pages 195-222. For permission to reprint from there, I thank that Volume’s editor, Dean Zimmerman - already thanked for much else, right above. And, even if it may be quite gratuitous, I thank the Volume’s publisher, the Oxford University Press, the very same outfit that’s publishing this present book, the one you hold in your hands.

Along with some thirteen published papers I refer to rather later in this book - and along with a few other previously published essays - these three aforementioned essays will appear, in their original versions, in a collection of my selected published papers that, like the present volume itself, will come forth from the Oxford University Press. By my best reckoning, this should be most happily convenient for quite a few of those who’ll read *All the Power in the World*, or who’ll read any goodly part of this big book. As I’m making every effort to ensure, this two-volume collection of philosophical papers, *An American Skeptic Collects His Wits*, will come forth simultaneously with the initial appearance of *All the Power in the World*. (And, as I’m also trying hard to ensure, not

only will each of *An American Skeptic's* two beautiful Volumes visually match the other quite perfectly, but, just as well, each will also be a visually perfect match for this present work, that is, for a massive but beautifully produced *All the Power in the World*.)

If this is crass and blatant advertising, then so be it. And, heck, when's the last time you saw such a *witty* title, triple-pun much intended, for a collection of philosophical papers? Heck, when's the last time you've read anything so happily written in any philosophy book's Preface, Acknowledgments, or Introduction? So, even if this Preface should be, in almost every other way, a fairly boring read, well, at least with its penultimate paragraph, you should have gotten a nice little chuckle.

New York

P. K. U.

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