The first two editions of this book contained a long introductory chapter on philosophy and language. I believed then, and believe still, that philosophical problems can best be clarified, and some of them solved or dissolved, by first discussing the influence of language on the problems we employ language to discuss, and that, far from being an irrelevance or a delay in the philosophical process, such a discussion is a shortcut to the comprehension of philosophical issues. It is my impression that nonstudents who read the book began with that opening chapter. But most readers were students for whom the book was assigned reading, and apparently very few teachers assigned that opening chapter, with the result that the third edition did not contain it. There were enough complaints about this exclusion, however, that in the present edition the chapter has been restored, in a simplified and abbreviated form. Many introductory books begin with the topics in which students are already assumed to have an interest, such as religion and ethics. It was tempting to begin with these topics, but in the end this option was rejected. It was essential, I decided, to present basic epistemology first. I have therefore left the structure of the book much the same as it was, although most of the actual words are new. It is hoped that the new treatment is more accessible to introductory readers, and that the use of numerous examples and illustrative dialogues in nontechnical, conversational English will induce the student to read on. Often readers have remembered certain examples long after they have forgotten what points they were designed to illustrate. I hope that what the reader remembers in the present edition will be an admixture of both. I would like to thank my reviewers: Michael Burke, Indiana University; John Beversluis, Butler University; and Mark Bernstein, University of Texas, San Antonio. I would also like to express my appreciation to several persons who commented on the previous edition in preparation for the present one: Professor John Dupre of Stanford University; Professor Edward Johnson of the University of New Orleans; Professor Joseph Grcic, Utah Valley State College; and most of all, my colleague and friend, the late Professor Martin Lean.

Those who approach philosophy for the first time do so from a variety of motives. Some are drawn into philosophy from their interest in the sciences, some from the arts, some from religion; others come to philosophy without any academic background, motivated by an uneasiness about "the meaning of things" or "what the world is all about"; still others have no motivation more specific than that of wanting to know what people are talking about when they use the word "philosophy. " Accordingly, the demands that different people make of philosophy and the questions that they expect it to answer are as diverse as the motives leading them to it; as a result, the books that are written to satisfy these demands are similarly diverse. Often two books professing to introduce readers to philosophy contain little or none of the same material. For these reasons it is impossible to write a book that will satisfy all or perhaps even a majority of readers. One might try to overcome this difficulty by writing a book so comprehensive that all the problems that anyone considered philosophical would be treated in it, and the readers would have only to select portions in which they are most interested. This, however, is hardly possible in practice: a book of a thousand pages would not begin to suffice. Nor would it be feasible to devote just a few pages to each problem: this would leave only outline summaries of the various issues, which would mean little to the readers; they might learn the meanings of some terms and absorb a few "general trends" from such a presentation, but they would not have been given enough material to make the problems come alive for them. The capsule method is even less successful in philosophy than it is elsewhere. The only apparent solution, then, would be to include not all but only some of the issues in the field. This method has its drawbacks, however, for no matter which problems

are included and which are excluded, many readers are bound to object both to some of the inclusions and to some of the exclusions. Yet this is the policy that has been followed in this book, as the one with the fewest all-round disadvantages.

There was a description of some facts about a car accident, but certain words were introduced that are typically "philosophical" words, such as "cause," "purpose," "reason," and "meaning." They all need to be clarified. We use these words in daily conversation, but most people don't use them very carefully or very clearly. In philosophy, we have to use them more carefully; if we do not we often just "talk past" one another and engage in pointless back-andforth arguments that with some care could easily have been avoided