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## Preface

The purpose of this collection is to bring together important yet widely separated materials published over the last thirty-five years that provide a background for understanding ongoing philosophical discussion of central problems of metaphysics and epistemology. At issue are such contrasts as realism versus idealism, absolutism versus relativism, and monism versus pluralism. The focus is on the relation between world-versions and the world, or worlds, answering to them.

What distinguishes this collection is its very sharp focus on the evolution in the understanding of these difficult matters since 1960 among four of the most important participants in this continuing reflection—the initiator of the discussion, Nelson Goodman, his two Harvard colleagues, Hilary Putnam and Israel Scheffler, and his long-time friend and philosophical associate, Carl Hempel. Although others continue to write on the central issues here, this collection brings together the central figures in the debate since its beginnings and follows closely its still developing form and substance.

Part I, “Backgrounds,” provides one of Goodman’s early statements, from 1960, of his still developing reflection on pluralism: what he referred to as “the ways the world is.” Putnam relates some contemporary reflections on these issues to the early modern period, and Scheffler provides a close look at the Neurath–Schlick debate about a dilemma between coherence and certainty.

In part II, “Worldmaking,” two of Goodman’s most important elaborations of his earlier views, both taken from his 1978 book, *Ways of Worldmaking*, are reprinted. A very detailed set of reactions to these

formulations can then be found in part III, “Reactions,” which brings together in one place the papers from an American Philosophical Association Symposium on *Ways of Worldmaking*. Included here as well is Goodman’s set of replies to each of the papers by Putnam, Hempel, and Scheffler.

Part IV, “Elaborations,” provides a sharper focus on just one of various issues left outstanding at the end of the symposium, specifically on the difference between what can properly be said to make worlds and what can properly be said to make versions of worlds right. Goodman provides here a short set of comments to which Scheffler replies. Goodman then offers a rejoinder to Scheffler.

This sharp focus is now opened up in part V, “Responses,” where Scheffler contributes a previously unpublished paper with a view to highlighting his continuing concerns not so much with pluralism or relativism as with what he calls a certain “voluntarism” with respect to the making of worlds. Next Putnam, in a wide-ranging recent paper taken from his Gifford Lectures contrasts several of the key issues in these ongoing debates with some work in recent continental philosophy. Goodman closes the collection in part VI, “Beyond Realism and Anti-Realism,” with a new set of replies and comments.