Stephen Hetherington, ed., *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012)

Reviewed by Cătălina-Daniela Răducu

Which is the most proper way for a student to get familiar with the content of a philosophical domain? One possible answer is offered by the *Key Thinkers* series published by the Continuum International: it provides clear, concise and accesible guides to the key thinkers in each of the central topics in philosophy. The volumes edited so far in this series: *Aesthetics* (edited by Alessandro Giovanelli), *Ethics* (edited by Tom Angier), *Philosophy of Mind* (edited by Andrew Bailey), *Philosophy of Language* (edited by Barry Lee), *Philosophy of Religion* (edited by Jeffrey J. Jordan) and *Philosophy of Science* (edited by James Robert Brown) are all offering comprehensive overviews of the major thinkers who have contributed to the historical development of the philosphical areas they are concerned with.

It is also the case of the volume I intend to review here. *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers*, edited by Stephen Hetherington, provides a survey of the major contributions in the evolution of epistemology, answering the question formulated by the editor in the first chapter of the book: since the history of epistemology is one of its thinkers, which thinkers have mattered most? And if we study their ideas, concepts, theses, will we be able to unlock the past (or future, I might add) of epistemology? I think Stephen Hetherington has found not only the right question but also the right answer that could help not only students but also specialists in epistemology and the general public make a clear image of the evolution of epistemology, presenting its past and making predictions about its future.

The volume includes ten studies, all of them written by well-known specialists in the field: "Plato`s Epistemology," by Nicholas D. Smith (James F. Miller Professor of Humanities, Lewis and Clark College, USA); "Aristotle on Knowledge," by Robert Bolton (Professor of Philosophy, Rutgers University, USA) and Alan Code (Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University, USA); "Ancient Scepticism," by Gisela Striker (Walter C. Klein Professor (Emerita) of Philosophy and of the Classics, Harvard University, USA); "The Epistemology of Descartes," by Desmond M. Clarke (Member of the Royal Irish Academy, and Professor (Emeritus) of Philosophy, University College, Cork, Ireland); "Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Epistemology," by P. J. E. Kail (University Lecturer in the History of Modern Philosophy, St. Peter's College, University of Oxford, UK); "Kant and Kantian Epistemology," by Melissa McBay Merritt (Lecturer in Philosophy,

University of New South Wales, Australia) and Markos Valaris (Lecturer in Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Australia); "American Pragmatism: Fallibilism and Cognitive Progress," by Christopher Hookway (Professor of Philosophy, University of Sheffield, UK); "Wittgenstein on Knowledge," by Paul Snowdon (Grote Professor of Mind and Logic, University College London, UK); "Quine, Goldman and Two Ways of Naturalizing Epistemology," by Ram Neta (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA) and "In Gettier's Wake," by John Turri (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Waterloo, Canada).

The studies are intended to, and they do provide, in my opinion, good, accesible and comprehensive presentations of the main themes approached by the thinkers that have contributed to the development of epistemology in its three main stages over the past two-and-a-half millenia, as they were viewed by the editor: Ancient epistemology – Plato: first epistemology (Chapter 2), Aristotle: empiricism and science (Chapter 3), Sceptical doubts (Chapter 4); Modern epistemology – Descartes: metaphysics and science (Chapter 5), Locke, Berkeley, Hume: observation and its limits (Chapter 6), Kant: experience and categories of thought (Chapter 7); and recent epistemology – American pragmatism: inquiry and fallibilism (Chapter 8), Wittgenstein: sense and certainty (Chapter 9), Quine and Goldman: naturalism and science (Chapter 10), Gettier: fallibility and defining knowledge (Chapter 11).

As Stephen Hetherington says, although the volume does not intend to exhaust all the potentially significant ideas in epistemology, its chapters offer „a solid philosophical base from which to explore whatever else within epistemology likewise deserves further attention" (p. 25).

But the volume does not limit to that. In the final chapter, "Epistemology`s Future Here and Now," Stephen Hetherington attempts to take a glimpse into the future of epistemology by investigating its present and retaining a few ideas that are presently being proposed within epistemology and that might have the potential to influence its future and be included in an update of his own book two hundred years hence: proper functioning, virtue epistemology, knowledge and practice, contextualism, and the idea of knowledge-first. These are all new approaches in epistemology that might be a part of its future.

Hetherington admits, at the same time, that „when pondering various epistemological ideas which could, for all we yet know to the contrary, become influential in later years, we may have been reminded of a few older philosophical thoughts" (p. 253). He mentions, in this respect, Linda Zagzebsky`s version of virtue epistemology, practicalism or Timothy Williamson`s conception of

knowledge, each of them linking epistemology with some ancient ideas of philosophy. This is another way of thinking about the future of epistemology: I agree with Stephen Hetherington that some philosophical ideas may deserve to be repeated; also, refining and reinvigorating of them could be a part of epistemology`s future.

And I agree with Stephen Hetherington in another important respect: that there could never be a Final or Complete epistemology, that epistemology could not run out of ideas, because, as he says in the final lines of his book: „Epistemology clarifies *and* puzzles. It enlightens *and* darkens. It confirms *and* challenges. Even outstanding epistemology might do any of this. Epistemology's most mind-catching thinkers calm us *and* surprise us" (p. 237).

And, finally, I do agree with Stephen Hetherington that his volume is evidence of that. Good evidence, indeed.