

Introduction 1

The systematic philosophy presented in this book has arisen from two insights, formulable as two theses, resulting from a long and intensive occupation with the fundamental philosophical conceptions from history and of the present. The first thesis is that, in terms of its intention, self-understanding, and accomplishments, the theoretical enterprise that for over two thousand years has been designated “philosophy” is fundamentally a form of knowledge with a comprehensive or universal character. The second thesis is that contemporary philosophy—and quite particularly so-called analytic philosophy—today does scarcely any justice to this universal character of philosophy, in that it exhibits, virtually exclusively, a fragmentary character that is conditioned by various distinct factors.

[1] To designate the comprehensive character of philosophy, modernity introduces the term “system,” which then develops a significant history. For reasons presented at the end of this Introduction, this term is used in this book, if at all, only marginally, and certainly not as the proper designation of the philosophy here presented. That designation is instead “systematic philosophy” (and, more specifically, “the structural-systematic philosophy”).

To be emphasized at the outset is that contemporary philosophy uses the term “systematic” in two distinct senses—or, more precisely, that the term currently has both a central signification and a secondary one. In its central philosophical signification, “systematic” designates a conception of philosophy distinguished by two characteristics: the completeness of its scope, in terms of its subject matter, and its concern with articulating the interconnections among all its various thematic components. Neither this completeness nor this interconnectedness is, as a rule, taken in an absolute sense. Thus, it is not meant that all the details relevant to a philosophical subject matter or domain and all of the interconnections among those details are explicitly presented. What is meant is instead that what this book calls the *unrestricted universe of discourse* is understood and articulated at least in its global structuration.

According to the secondary signification of “systematic” in contemporary philosophy, the term is the counterpart to “(purely) historical”: a “systematic” treatment of a topic, a “systematic” view, etc., is one that is not historically oriented.

2 Introduction

This secondary signification is *not* of primary importance for this book; here, the chief signification is intended except in cases where either the context or explicit notation indicates the relevance of the secondary signification.

Throughout most of its long history, philosophy has attributed to itself a comprehensive character, even if that character has taken various distinct forms. In the golden age of antiquity, for example, philosophy is more or less identified with scientific knowledge as a whole,¹ in the Middle Ages it is primarily understood as taking the form of a *Summa*, and in modernity it develops, increasingly, as a *system*; this development leads to the duality of Rationalism and Empiricism, which itself then leads to Kant's historical attempt to overcome the duality between these two schools of thought by developing a new form of philosophical system, albeit a radically limited one. Kant's critical enterprise has, as a consequence that only appears to be paradoxical, the development of the highest and most daring variants of philosophy as comprehensive; these are the philosophical systems that come to be grouped under the designation "German Idealism." It is not a historical accident that the collapse of these systems, particularly Hegel's, coincides, in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the impressively self-conscious rise, in the arenas both of theory and of experimentation, of the natural sciences and with the beginnings both of contemporary mathematical logic and of what later becomes known as analytic philosophy.

An additional, later line of separation is to be noted; this is between analytic philosophy and various other schools of thought that have developed, some of which persist, with varying degrees of vivacity, into the present. Those other schools of thought include Husserlian phenomenology, the philosophy of life, hermeneutics, and
3 Heidegger's philosophy of being. The comprehensive character of philosophy—earlier brought into question only rarely and never fundamentally—remains present in these schools of thought, albeit only in a somewhat paradoxical manner. It is present explicitly in a manner that is virtually exclusively negative (i.e., as rejection), but implicitly in one that is astonishingly positive: the attempt has been and continues to be made to relativize precisely this (traditionally) comprehensive character in various ways, by means of the development of some kind of metaconception of it. This is exemplarily the case in the hermeneutic philosophy developed especially by Hans-Georg Gadamer: of central importance to this school of thought is the comprehensive context of the history of interpretation, within which attempts are made to situate the various philosophies that claim to be comprehensive. Heidegger, above all, presses such a metaconception to the greatest extreme in that he attempts to develop a thinking that understands itself as explicitly superior to all preceding philosophies, and thereby claims to have a character yet more radically comprehensive than any of those others.²

¹ More precisely, the borders between "philosophy" and what is currently termed "empirical science" were, in antiquity, largely undetermined. Aristotle's *Physics* (more precisely: *lectures on physics*, ΦΥΣΙΚΗ ΑΚΡΟΑΣΙΣ) serves as a characteristic example. Throughout the history of philosophy, this work is understood and interpreted as a work of philosophy. On the basis of an understanding of the relationship between philosophy and the empirical or natural sciences that is clarified by modern and contemporary insights, this historical classification can scarcely be maintained.

² For a presentation and critique of Heidegger's position, see Puntel (1997).

Philosophy cannot simply ignore or abstract from the tradition because that would be tantamount to a kind of self-denial and thus to self-destruction. But attendance to its own history can be and in fact is concretized in various ways. Thus, philosophy can simply restrict its concern to the history of philosophy or indeed identify itself with this concern. But it can also go to the opposite extreme; it does so if it turns completely and explicitly *against* the entire history of philosophy. Even a simple ignoring of the history of philosophy is a particular way of denying that history any positive significance, and indeed, in a certain respect, the most radical way of doing so. The spectrum of possibilities between these two extremes is quite extensive. It can, however, be established that the most productive new initiatives in philosophy are those that develop on the basis of appropriately balanced attention to the history of philosophy.

In opposition to the schools of thought just introduced, analytic philosophy develops along significantly more modest lines. Fundamentally (and almost exclusively), it has always been *systematic* in the *secondary* sense; as is shown below, it continues to be so. Whether it has been or is systematic in the chief sense is a completely separate question that is addressed shortly below. The “systematic”—in the sense of “not (purely) historical”—character of analytic philosophy, starting from its beginnings, has as one of its consequences the fact that it has neglected and often indeed simply ignored the grand philosophical tradition. Much could be said about this neglect, but a general remark suffices here: analytic philosophers are at present increasingly concerned not only with the history of analytic philosophy, but also with the entire history of philosophy. 4

[2] The question whether contemporary philosophy is systematic in the chief sense is answered in the negative by the second thesis articulated in the opening paragraph of this Introduction. This thesis has a global character and cannot be defended in detail here; nevertheless, some further specifications are possible and also requisite. For this, it is necessary to distinguish between non-analytic (so-called “continental”) and analytic philosophy. As far as non-analytic philosophy since the end of World War II is concerned, the following may be noted globally: to the extent that this philosophy has a distinctly theoretical character, it is concerned essentially with ever new interpretations and reinterpretations of traditional philosophical texts, and not with systematic philosophy in the second of the senses introduced above (“systematic” as “non-historically oriented”).³ Works that are systematic in the chief sense of “systematic” and thus in continuity with the continental tradition of philosophy are scarcely to be found.

The thesis introduced above that analytic philosophy has a solely fragmentary character requires more extensive explanation and specification. In a lecture presented in 1975 (1977/1978), Michael Dummett treats the question posed in his title: “Can Analytic Philosophy Be Systematic, and Ought It to Be?” His answer is illuminating in some respects but not in all. Dummett does not directly pose the question whether analytic philosophy up to and including 1975 is systematic; he does, however, treat this

³ With respect to German philosophy (since 1945), this thesis is formulated and defended in Puntel (1994). To be emphasized however, is that the situation in German philosophy has changed significantly since 1994.

4 Introduction

question indirectly, although even then not comprehensively. He distinguishes between two meanings of “systematic”:

In one sense, a philosophical investigation is systematic if it is intended to issue in an articulated theory, such as is constituted by any of the great philosophical ‘systems’ advanced in the past by philosophers like Spinoza or Kant. In the other sense, a philosophical investigation is systematic if it proceeds according to generally agreed methods of enquiry, and its results are generally accepted or rejected according to commonly agreed criteria. These two senses . . . are independent of one another. (455)

- 5 Dummett contends that to the extent that the philosophy of the past—pre-Fregean philosophy—is systematic, it is systematic only in the first sense, not in the second. As far as analytic philosophy is concerned, Dummett appears to hold that to the extent that it is systematic up to 1975, it is so only in the second sense. Dummett restricts this “to the extent” in two ways. He deems such philosophers as Gilbert Ryle, John Austin, and the later Wittgenstein to be explicitly non-systematic in both of his senses. With respect to other analytic philosophers, above all Rudolf Carnap, W. V. O. Quine, and Nelson Goodman, he maintains that it would be absurd to pose to them the question whether analytic philosophy can be systematic; he appears to consider these thinkers to be systematic in both of his senses.

Dummett defends the thesis that “at least in the philosophy of language, philosophy ought henceforward to be systematic in both senses” (455). In part for this reason, he deems Frege to be “the fountain-head of analytical philosophy” (440) and to be the central figure in the entire history of this now-dominant philosophical movement. He maintains “that philosophy failed, throughout most of its long history, to achieve a systematic methodology” (456–57). An explanation is required, he contends, for “how it comes about that philosophy, although as ancient as any other subject and a great deal more ancient than most, should have remained for so long ‘in its early stages’” (457), but he provides no such explanation in the essay under consideration. Instead of offering one, he reasons as follows: “The ‘early stages’ of any discipline are, presumably, to be characterised as those in which its practitioners have not yet attained a clear view of its subject-matter and its goals.” He adds that philosophy has “only just very recently struggled out of its early stage into maturity: the turning-point was the work of Frege, but the widespread realisation of the significance of that work has had to wait for half a century after his death, and, at that, is still confined only to the analytical school.”

- Dummett takes an additional step by contending, “Only with Frege was the proper object of philosophy finally established” (458); to explain this development, he introduces three factors. First, the goal of philosophy is the analysis of the structure of thought, second, this thought is to be distinguished strictly from the *thinking* studied by psychology, and third, the only correct method for the analysis of thought is that of the analysis of language.
- 6 On this basis, Dummett provides his clearest determination of analytic philosophy: “We may characterise analytical philosophy as that which follows Frege in accepting that the philosophy of language is the foundation of the rest of the subject” (441).

Dummett’s reflections well reveal the difficulty encountered with any attempt to describe, generally, what specifically characterizes analytic philosophy; the difficulty is yet clearer if one attempts to answer the question whether analytic philosophy is systematic. As accurate as Dummett’s remarks are in mutual isolation, viewed as a whole they are quite one-sided, short-sighted, and in part even incorrect. His distinction between his

two senses in which a given philosophical investigation can be “systematic”—on the one hand, “if it is intended to issue in an articulated theory,” and, on the other, “if it proceeds according to generally accepted methods of enquiry, and its results are generally accepted or rejected according to commonly agreed criteria” (455)—is both one-sided and artificial. As indicated above, however, Dummett identifies such a method in the philosophical legacy of Frege; he deems this method, which involves the analysis of language, the “only proper” one (458).

These contentions are problematic in several respects. A method determined by the sociology of knowledge (“generally accepted, . . . commonly agreed . . .” [455]) cannot raise the claim of being the “only proper” one; factors of the sociology of knowledge are subject to a volatility far too great to qualify them as a firm basis for evaluating systematic philosophical methods. It cannot, for example, (or can no longer) be said that the method of the analysis of language is currently widely accepted. Dummett says that it is “amazing that, in all its long history, [philosophy] should not yet have established a generally accepted methodology, generally accepted criteria of success, and, therefore, a body of definitively achieved results” (455), and it follows from various of his own theses that *his* method, the analysis of language, should not only be generally accepted but should (or would) also establish a “body of definitively achieved results.” Talk in philosophy of “definitive results” is, however, extraordinarily problematic. In any case, Dummett’s method has not produced any such results, and again, it cannot be said that his philosophical methodology is generally accepted.

Does it then follow that Dummett’s philosophy lacks a “systematic method”? That would be strange, but then it is likewise strange and even incoherent to ascribe to thinkers of the past “articulated theories” (and in this sense *systematicity*) while simultaneously denying that they had systematic philosophical methodologies. In addition, if one attributes to the criteria of general agreement and acceptance as central a significance as does Dummett, then it would be only consequent to apply the criteria not only to systematicity as requiring a universal methodology but also to systematicity as “intending to issue in articulated theor[ies].” But then one could no longer contend, as does Dummett, that Spinoza, Kant, and other philosophers develop “articulated theories” and are in this sense “systematic philosophers,” because it is simply a fact that there are no “commonly agreed criteria” in accordance with which their results are “generally accepted or rejected.”

From this arises the more general question: to which philosophies and/or philosophers could one, on the basis of Dummett’s criteria, ascribe *systematicity*? Dummett appears not to have been aware of this problem that emerges from his thesis. At the end of his essay, he maintains that many philosophers have suffered from the illusion that they have succeeded in overcoming the scandal caused by the lack of a systematic philosophical methodology, explicitly naming such philosophers as Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, and Husserl. He also maintains that the era of systematic philosophy (in both of his senses) begins with Frege. But then he writes (458),

I have mentioned only a few of many examples of this illusion; for any outsider to philosophy, by far the safest bet would be that I was suffering from a similar illusion in making the claim for Frege. To this I can offer only the banal reply which any prophet has to make to any sceptic: time will tell.

One should perhaps instead say that the philosopher does well to avoid acting like a prophet. This of course presupposes that the philosopher develops a conception of

systematic philosophy that does not simply do away with the history of philosophy and that wholly and coherently makes possible an open future for philosophy.

- The systematic conception presented in this book shares the view that philosophy must ascribe to language a role that is not only important but even indeed fundamental. This view remains, however, relatively uninformative until the senses of “language,” “analysis of language,” and “philosophy of language” are clarified. The two great deficiencies in Dummett’s philosophy of language (which he understands as a “theory of meaning”) are the following: first, he does not consider the question of which language is adequate and therefore requisite for the development of philosophical (or scientific) theories. He contends that the philosophy of language is concerned “with the fundamental outlines of an account of how language functions” (442). But which language? Ordinary (natural) language, or a philosophical language, perhaps yet to be developed?
- 8 The primary matter at hand is not pure “functionality,” important though that is; of primary importance is instead clarification of the implications of a given language for the treatment of complexes of philosophical problems. Second, Dummett considers the fundamental domain of ontology, if at all, only quite inadequately. Among the most important implications of language however, are its *ontological* implications.

The conception presented in this book avoids or overcomes these two deficiencies in that it explicitly develops both the concept of a philosophical language and of its basic features and an innovative ontology fundamentally in relation to its semantics. These developments reveal that the semantics and the ontology of philosophical language are fundamentally two sides of the same coin. As far as the method of systematic philosophy is concerned, it is in no way reduced to the “analysis of language” or to anything that could be formulated so simply. Instead, it presents a completely thorough philosophical method consisting of four methodological stages (or, for sake of simplicity, four methods). These are the identification of structures and constitution of minimal or informal theories, the constitution of genuine theories (theories presented in the form appropriate to them as theories), the systematization of the component theories, and the evaluation of the theories with respect to theoretical adequacy and truth status. In philosophical practice, the four methods are virtually never applied *comprehensively*; they therefore represent an ideal case of a philosophical theory, one that is not an insignificant abstraction, but instead serves as an important regulative idea with respect to the development of philosophical theories. Taking the complexity of a completely developed philosophical method into consideration, it is possible to gain clarity about the current status of philosophical theories that are either under development or already available.

As far as the fragmentary character of analytic philosophy is concerned, Dummett himself makes clear that from Frege’s “fundamental achievement”—that he managed to “alter our perspective in philosophy” (441)—no developed theory has yet emerged. Frege’s thus remains what can be termed a fragmentary philosophy. The fragmentary character of contemporary analytic philosophy mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction is, however, a different sort of fragmentarity, and one that is far more radical and therefore significantly more important. This is now to be shown with respect to the “analytic method” and to analytically “articulated theories.”

Even the philosophical method known as “generally analytic” can adequately be described only as a fragmentary method, not as a systematic one, because the factors

introduced to characterize it are at most necessary, and certainly not sufficient for the systematic characterization of a method. These factors include the following: logical correctness, conceptual clarity, intelligibility, argumentative strength, etc. The listing of such factors in no way provides a systematic understanding and articulation of the factors required by a complete or integrally determined method. In this sense, analytic philosophy *on the whole* is, as far as methodology is concerned, fragmentary. Only in isolated cases can one find attempts to identify a comprehensive and thus systematic method for philosophy. 9

An incomparably more important fragmentarity concerns what Dummett terms “articulated theories.” Beyond question, analytic philosophy contains such theories in significant numbers. As a rule, however, these theories treat quite specific topics; articulated, *comprehensive* theories are not developed, so the relations between the individual theories remain unthematized. A few examples well illustrate this phenomenon. Works on topics in the domain of the philosophy of mind have directly ontological components and implications, but what ontology is presupposed or used by a given theory in the philosophy of mind remains, as a rule, unsaid. If ontological concepts such as “object,” “properties,” etc., are used, it remains wholly unexplained how the corresponding ontology is more precisely to be understood, and there is no consideration of whether that ontology is intelligible and thus acceptable. Something wholly analogous happens with most works concerning theories of truth. Theories of truth that are developed or defended virtually always have implications or presuppositions with respect to “the world,” to “things,” to “facts,” etc., but these ontological factors, at least in the majority of cases, remain utterly unexplained. As a rule, these theories simply presuppose some form of the substance ontology that dates to Aristotle; according to such ontologies, “the world” is the totality of substances (for which analytic works almost always use the term “objects”) that have properties and stand in relations to one another. If a sentence qualifies as true and if thereby some form of “correspondence” to something in the world is assumed, how is this “something” understood? Analytic works do not pose this question and therefore do not answer it. That they do not makes questionable the coherence of the conceptions they present.

By far the most important evidence of the theoretical fragmentarity of analytic philosophy is the lack of comprehensive theories concerning actuality as a whole—in the terminology of this book, theories of being. For the most part, some comprehensive conception of actuality (of the world, of the universe) is presupposed; in the overwhelming majority of cases, this is a diffusely materialistic view of the whole, but this view is scarcely explained, much less subjected to serious theoretical examination. 10 To be sure, there are some moves in the direction of the development of comprehensive theories, but those theories themselves are nowhere to be found.⁴ In sum: the systematic

⁴ This is the case, for example, with David Lewis, above all in his *On the Plurality of Worlds* (1986). His position is treated and criticized extensively in Section 5.2.3.

Two other contemporary philosophers must be mentioned, ones who are significant exceptions in the domain of analytic philosophy in that both have produced systematic philosophical works. Nicholas Rescher, an extraordinarily productive philosopher, has collected in systematic form the philosophical conception developed in many individual works over the course of many years; the result is the imposing, three-volume *A System of Pragmatic Idealism* (1992–94). In its goals and many of its central methodological aspects, Rescher’s

conception presented in this book arises from the insight that the deficiencies in contemporary philosophy just described ought to be overcome, and that they can effectively be overcome. Only if they are can philosophy do justice to its primordial task and fully develop its potential.

[3] Along with the preceding critical remarks on Dummett's position, some of the central thoughts and theses presented in this book are introduced and preliminarily explained. In what follows, the comprehensive architectonic of the book is briefly presented and preliminarily clarified. The presentation is of course quite general and summary; for more precise orientation with respect to details, the quite detailed Table of Contents is available.

In this book, philosophy is understood uncompromisingly and consequently as *theory*. For this reason, wholly *excluded* are such conceptions as philosophy as therapy or therapeutics, particularly as therapeutic criticism of language, all forms of philosophy that have practical aims (philosophy as wisdom, as practical reflection, as educational technique, as a way of life, as a way of shaping one's life or orienting oneself

systematic work is similar to what is presented in this book. Distinctions consist particularly with respect to three points. First, the interconnection ("systematic interrelatedness," according to his Preface) presented by Rescher in the domain of philosophical topics and theories is only quite general and loose. Second, the generally *pragmatic-idealistic* perspective (in this book's terminology, the pragmatic-idealistic theoretical framework) is far too narrow to be appropriate for the immense task of systematic philosophy. Third, Rescher's theory lacks central components of a comprehensive theory of actuality as a whole, quite particularly an ontology and a metaphysics. Nevertheless, the significance of his works can scarcely be valued sufficiently highly.

The second exception is the German philosopher Franz von Kutschera, who has published an impressive number of treatments in many philosophical disciplines (philosophy of language, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, etc.). The first and third points of difference between this book and Rescher's position hold as well, in analogous fashion, between this book and the works of Kutschera. Above all, the utter absence of a comprehensive theory is all too evident in the book designated by its title as treating just this topic, *The Parts of Philosophy and the Whole of Actuality* (1998). In all brevity: according to Kutschera, "the entirety of actuality" is treated in the distinct parts of philosophy, among which he includes neither ontology nor metaphysics as a comprehensive theory. He writes,

One can . . . well say that, at the center of Aristotle's and of later conceptions, there stands a conception of metaphysics that concerns the totality of actuality in its most general and fundamental features—its ontological structures along with their effective interconnections, be they causal or teleological. Within our contemporary understanding, a so-understood metaphysics is not a subdiscipline of philosophy, because its themes appear in all disciplines. Formal ontology is often ascribed nowadays to logic, the problem of universals is treated in the philosophy of mathematics, rational theology in the philosophy of religion, the mind-body problem in the philosophy of mind. The entirety of actuality is thus a topic for philosophy as a whole. (15–16)

Despite the closing sentence in this quotation, that the topics of ontology/metaphysics, in the sense of a comprehensive theory of actuality, *appear* in all philosophical disciplines does not in any way entail that these topics are or can be also *treated* in these disciplines in any manner that is at all appropriate. To the contrary, they are presupposed by these other disciplines and, therefore, if they are not explicitly treated, they are a background that is left in the dark.

with respect to life, as educational, etc.). A significant amount of the book is devoted to the clarification of the dimension of theoreticity in general and of the concept *philosophical theory* in particular.

Central to that clarification is the concept of the *theoretical framework*, which is presented in connection with and as a modification of the concept, introduced by Rudolf Carnap, of the linguistic framework. The account proceeds from the fundamental insight that every theoretical questioning, every theoretical sentence, argument, every theory, etc., is intelligible and evaluable only if understood as situated within a theoretical framework. If this presupposition is not made, then everything remains undetermined: the meaning of a given sentence, its evaluation, etc. To every theoretical framework belong, among other things, the following constitutive moments: a language (with its syntax and its semantics), a logic, and a conceptuality, along with all of the components that constitute a theoretical apparatus. Failure to attend to this fundamental fact—or, as is most common, failure even to recognize it—is the source of countless catastrophic mistakes from which philosophy has suffered throughout its history and into the present.

It suffices here to introduce a single example: the question raised in modernity and particularly in classical German philosophy concerning the grounding or self-grounding, and indeed the ultimate grounding of philosophy, is one that for the most part has floated in empty space, that is, utterly independently of any theoretical framework. Without the explication of a language, a logic, a conceptuality, fundamental assumptions, etc., the procedure has been one of immediately requesting and indeed demanding that any contention or thesis put forth be grounded (or, often, “justified”) immediately. The presuppositions for meaningful questions concerning grounding are not clarified to the slightest degree. In opposition to this way of proceeding, this book treats philosophical grounding in a manner that stringently attends to the insight, introduced above, concerning the central importance of the theoretical framework. 12

As its subtitle indicates, this book develops a theoretical framework—which it defends as the best currently available—for a systematic philosophy. The basic thesis that theories require theoretical frameworks, which provides the fundamental architectonic for the systematic philosophy presented here, is made more precise by the additional thesis that a *plurality* of theoretical frameworks is potentially and indeed even actually available.

This second thesis brings with it a cluster of serious problems, such as the following: How are these various theoretical frameworks to be evaluated? Can philosophical sentences be true only in *one* theoretical framework, the “absolute” one? Are all theoretical sentences that do not arise within this absolute theoretical framework false? But is there such an absolute theoretical framework, and if so, is it at all accessible to us human beings? The conception defended in this book is a systematically well-balanced one: true sentences emerge within every theoretical framework, but not all the true sentences are on the same level. Sentences are true only relative to their theoretical frameworks. This relativity is a specific form of a moderate, non-contradictory relativism.

Any philosophical theoretical framework is highly complex; taken as a whole, each consists of numerous particular theoretical frameworks that are to be understood

as stages in the process of the development of the complete systematic theoretical framework. At the outset, the philosophical theoretical framework is only quite globally determined, as including quite general elements (concepts, etc.). In the course of the systematic determination and concretization of the theoretical framework, new elements are added in such a way that, step by step, broader, more determinate, more powerful subframeworks emerge *as* more concrete forms of the general theoretical framework. The comprehensive presentation in this book traces this process of the increasingly precise determination and concretization of the (general) systematic-theoretical framework; this matter is explained more precisely and in more detail in Chapter 1.

On the basis of the concept of the theoretical framework, *systematic philosophy*—specifically, the *structural-systematic philosophy* developed in this book—is understood as the universal science or—more precisely, with the aid of a preliminary quasi-definition—as a *theory of the most general and universal structures of the unrestricted universe of discourse*. This is an ambitious formulation whose worth is determined only by the degree of success achieved in clarifying the concepts on which it relies and demonstrating its relevance for philosophy. A better preliminary evaluation of this quasi-definition is provided by its comparison with a similar and well-known formulation of a philosopher who undertakes a strikingly similar philosophical project: Alfred North Whitehead. He calls the systematic philosophy presented in his monumental work *Process and Reality* “speculative philosophy,” and characterizes it as follows:

Speculative philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of ‘interpretation’ I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. (1928/1978: 3)

This “definition” (Whitehead’s term!) contains a number of concepts that are quite problematic because they are ambiguous; these include “general ideas,” “interpretation,” “experience,” “particular instance of the general scheme,” etc. Nevertheless, the “definition” does provide a generally intuitive insight into the project termed “speculative philosophy.” Magnificent though Whitehead’s comprehensive presentation of that philosophy is, this book proceeds quite differently: methodically—indeed, strictly methodically—rather than intuitively. It proceeds patiently and step-by-step rather than immediately holistically (in the sense of somehow communicating a great deal at once), introducing strict and detailed distinctions.

The two most important concepts in the quasi-definition presented above are *structure* and *unrestricted universe of discourse*. Methodically, the latter term or concept is utterly neutral in that it contains no more precise contentual determinations; it designates that “dimension” (this too an intentionally chosen neutral term and concept) that represents the subject matter of systematic philosophy (Heidegger speaks, famously, of the “subject matter [*Sache*] of thinking”). The dimension of the universe of discourse is the *comprehensive datum* in the literal sense: what is *given to philosophy to be conceptualized and/or explained* (i.e., everything with which philosophical theorization can and must be concerned). The term “datum” is thus here a kind of

technical term that must be strictly distinguished from the various alternative notions of data to be found in philosophy, including sense data, what is given by the senses, etc. In addition, the topic much discussed at present of the “myth of the given”⁵ is related only indirectly to the datum in the sense intended here.

“Datum” here can be understood as a *candidate* for inclusion in a theory or for truth.⁶ The dimension of the so-understood datum is not simply empty; the datum, thus the particular data, is/are available as prestructured, at the fundamental or zero-level of theorization, within everyday theoretical frameworks relying on ordinary language, and on higher levels of theorization within the theoretical frameworks of the various sciences, including philosophy. They include all the “somethings” that emerge as articulated theoretically in the universe of ordinary discourse when there is talk of “things,” “the world,” “the universe,” etc. Systematic philosophy must attend 14 to these and to relevant higher-level articulations and attempt to bring all these data into a comprehensive theory. Doing so does not involve accepting such data as in any important sense “ready-made” components of the theory; quite to the contrary, they are precisely candidates for restructuration within the theory, items that must be conceptualized and explained, a process that involves radical corrections and transformations.

This state of affairs is visible in the relation between ordinary language and the philosophical language briefly described above. The latter connects to ordinary language and indeed begins from it, but then fundamentally corrects it, semantically if not necessarily syntactically. On the basis of the criterion of intelligibility, this book develops an alternative semantics that has, as an implication, an alternative ontology.

In the course of the presentation, the dimension termed the *universe of discourse* is determined step by step in that additional designations are introduced: “world,” “universe,” ultimately “being” (at first in the sense of the objective counterpole to “structure”). Up to the beginning of Chapter 4, these terms are used more or less synonymously, because differentiating among them is not important before that point. In Chapter 4 and thereafter, however, “world” is used in a sense that is there delimited and explained. The term/concept that emerges in Chapter 5 as the most adequate counterpole to “structure” is “being” (in the sense explained there).

The other crucial concept in the quasi-definition and in the main title of this book is *structure*. In brief, this concept designates everything a theory makes explicit. Conceptualizing and explaining are characterized most concisely as the discovery and presentation, respectively, of the structure(s) of what is conceptualized or explained (i.e., of the data). The term “structure” is attached to a concept central to this book not because of but despite the fact that the term has become popular. Its use in this book is justified by the fact that here, “structure” is scrupulously introduced, defined, and applied. Because of the centrality of this concept, the systematic philosophy presented here is termed the *structural-systematic philosophy*. How the dimension of structure and the dimension of the universe of discourse or of being fit together is articulated in detail in Chapter 1; moreover, the entire book is nothing other than the thematization

⁵ The term is used by Wilfrid Sellars (1956) to designate a philosophical error he strongly criticizes.

⁶ Nicholas Rescher uses “datum” as a technical term for “truth-candidate” (1973, esp. 53ff).

of this fitting together, developed step by step. Central to the endeavor are three sorts of fundamental structures that are introduced and investigated separately and in their interrelationships: formal, semantic, and ontological structures. These form the heart of the theoretical framework of the structural-systematic philosophy.

- 15 [4] At this point, the question presses concerning the relationship between the structural-systematic philosophy and the sciences.⁷ Careful clarification of this question, so central precisely at present, is a task undertaken in this book in various places. To evaluate accurately the precise sense and significance of this question, one must consider a significant phenomenon in the history of philosophy. As indicated above, at the beginning of the history of philosophy, in Greece, the word “philosophy” designated a corpus of knowledge that was quite comprehensive, one that indeed was, in a certain respect, virtually coextensive with scientific knowledge as a whole. In the course of the history of philosophy, many branches of knowledge have developed, ones that earlier had been, in one way or another, parts of the philosophical corpus, but then came no longer to be understood as such parts. On the whole, one can speak of the gradual development of the sciences as we know them today as a process of their emancipation from philosophy.

Many authors interpret this process—a historical one in the truest sense of the word—as an utterly negative development for philosophy, maintaining that philosophy is, increasingly, deprived of its subject matter. Some go so far as to contend that by now philosophy no longer has any subject matter of its own. This book maintains the opposing thesis that this process can have an eminently positive effect in that it can clarify the theoretical undertaking that, from its very beginning, has borne the name “philosophy,” making possible the identification of that undertaking’s specific status. In light of this thesis, the history of philosophy, viewed as a whole, appears as philosophy’s theoretical self-explication. This process has now reached the point at which, more than ever before, philosophy has the possibility of avoiding confusions, unclarities, hypertrophies of its status and its tasks, etc. Recognition of this process makes clear that it is a waste of time to speak about or to discuss philosophy, its subject matter, its tasks, etc., purely abstractly or *a priori*; only the concrete demonstration that philosophy does have its own subject matter, distinct from the subject matters of any of the sciences, can be meaningful and persuasive, and this demonstration can be provided only by the identification of that subject matter. This book provides that identification and with it the demonstration.

- 16 The relation between philosophy and the sciences with respect to subject matter comes to expression in the quasi-definition of philosophy introduced above: “the most general and universal structures of the unrestricted universe of discourse.” To be sure, it must be precisely determined *both* what distinguishes the most general and universal structures from the particular structures that constitute the subject matters of the sciences *and* why the (nonphilosophical) sciences, even in conjunction, cannot investigate the *unrestricted* universe of discourse. One of the theses of this book relevant to these

⁷ As is indicated above and explained more fully in Chapter 1, systematic philosophy, as understood in this book, is itself a genuine science. Nevertheless, throughout this section, and in various contexts in the book, “science” (or, usually, “sciences”) is used in a narrower sense: to refer only to the empirical or natural sciences. Contexts make clear which signification is intended.

determinations is that certain structures have an indisputably universal character, with the consequence that they are not and cannot be thematized in the sciences. These are, most importantly, the structures that are treated in the theory of being presented in Sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Another thesis that, understandably, is highly topical and quite controversial concerns the structures in those domains that, taken globally and without differentiation, are thematized both by philosophy and by the sciences. Among these are several of the domains that are treated in part and quite summarily in Chapter 4 under the title “World-Systematics.” With respect to the issue under current discussion, the most important and interesting of these domains is presumably that of the “human world,” one aspect of which contemporary philosophy studies under the designation “philosophy of mind.” In the cases of this and of similar domains, this book defends the thesis that the borders between philosophy and the sciences cannot be determined at the outset or once and for all; instead, the borders are flexible. The precise determination of the status of structures lying on or near such borders can be articulated only at specific stages of the historical developments of the sciences and of philosophy.

Methodologically, the criterion for the clarification of the relationships between philosophy and the sciences both in general and in concrete cases is the concept, introduced and fundamentally explained above, of the *theoretical framework*. It is utterly nonproductive and therefore senseless to discuss these relationships without making clear just what theoretical frameworks philosophy and the sciences presuppose and employ. Whether one should ascribe a specific question to philosophy or to the sciences can be rationally decided only on the basis of what the question asks about, what concepts are present in it or are presupposed or implied by it, what possibilities are available or requisite for its clarification, etc. A quite illustrative example is treated extensively in Section 4.5.1: when natural-scientific (physical) cosmology speaks 17 of the “beginning” of the world (or the cosmos), making scientific claims about it, it presupposes a specific natural-scientific framework, within which the concept “beginning (of the cosmos)” has a wholly determinate signification. Philosophy cannot question those natural-scientific theses that appear in models arising within such a theoretical framework. But an example of a question that does arise for philosophy is whether the concept *beginning* that appears within the physical-cosmological theoretical framework is identical to the *philosophical* (more specifically, *metaphysical*) concept *beginning*. As the considerations in that section reveal, the two concepts are quite different, so it is deeply regrettable that both are associated with a single term: the physical-cosmological and the philosophical concepts of beginning are fundamentally different concepts, which shows that there is a fundamental difference between the two theoretical frameworks. The tasks that result for philosophy are to explain carefully *its* concept of beginning—the genuinely metaphysical one—and to distinguish this concept clearly from the natural-scientific concept.

[5] A few introductory clarifications of the book’s individual chapters are appropriate at this point. The six chapters present the stages of development of the complete theoretical framework of the structural-systematic philosophy; differently stated, each articulates a more determinate form of the theoretical framework, in that each adds significant new components.

Under the title “Global Systematics: Determination of the Standpoint of the Structural-Systematic Philosophy,” Chapter 1 thematizes the factors or perspectives that distinguish the structural-systematic philosophy, both from non-theoretical and non-philosophical undertakings and from other philosophical ones, by articulating its initial, global determinations. This involves the formulation of the quasi-definition of this philosophy and the detailed explanations of the concepts found in it, as well as extensive treatment of the four-staged philosophical method and finally of the complex question of the grounding and self-grounding of the structural-philosophical theory (or theories). The most general form of the theoretical framework of this philosophy is thereby presented. In essence, these aspects are introductorily considered in [2] and [3] above.

18 Chapter 2 is devoted to the Systematics of Theoreticity; it thematizes the dimension of theoreticity as the philosophical dimension of presentation. The most important topics here are philosophical language, the domain of knowledge, the concept of theory in the narrower sense, and finally an initial account of the concept of truth based on the thesis that this concept articulates the fully determined status of the dimension of theoreticity. This chapter shows that and how philosophy must develop its own language, a language that is connected to ordinary language but then must diverge decisively from it. It also thematizes the linguistic criterion for theoreticity, which identifies as theoretical only sentences of a specific form that Wittgenstein makes explicit, in his *Tractatus*, in a different context; these are sentences beginning with the operator, “It is the case that . . .”⁸ The domain of knowledge, or the epistemic dimension, is analyzed as a dimension that must be taken into consideration, but its analysis shows that—and why—the decisive status accorded to it by modern philosophy is to be denied. The standpoint of the knowing subject is in no way adequate for the development of theories. The necessity of freeing theories from the standpoint of the subject is one of this book’s most important theses. Genuinely theoretical sentences do not have the (explicit or implicit) form, “Subject S believes/knows that *p*”; they have instead the form, “It is the case that *p*.” Edmund Gettier’s famous definition of knowledge is subjected to critical analysis and rejected; a different definition of knowledge is then provided.

Chapter 2 thoroughly treats the dimension of theory in the narrower sense by examining the most important theory-concepts defended at present. On the basis of this examination, a theory-concept suitable for philosophical purposes is developed. Finally, at the end of this chapter, the truth-concept is clarified on the basis of the thesis that it articulates the fully determined status of every theoretical sentence and of every theory, and thus of the entire dimension of theoreticity. Precise clarification of this understanding of truth is undertaken only at the end of Chapter 3, because fully unfolding the truth-theory presupposes the three sorts of fundamental structures.

⁸ In *Struktur und Sein*, this footnote makes a point about the book’s usage of commas that is not relevant to the English edition; this note is added only to make the footnote numbers of the editions agree in a way that avoids any mystery about the lack of an English footnote with the number “8.” As is noted in the Preface, footnotes designated by letters have no counterparts in the German version.

The latter task is undertaken in Chapter 3 under the title “Systematics of Structure: The Fundamental Structures.” This chapter presents the core of the structural-systematic philosophy. Beginning with its initial, basal mathematical definition, the concept of structure is expanded and made fully applicable philosophically. It is shown that on the basis of this concept, as it is understood and applied in this book, both an enormous simplification of philosophical terminology as a whole and clarifications of philosophical conceptuality and philosophical entities can be attained: such terms as “concept,” “meaning,” “semantic value,” “category,” “proposition,” “state of affairs,” “object,” “fact,” “(logical) rule,” etc., are reduced to and/or clarified as structures. 19

The fundamental formal structures are logical and mathematical structures, and this book must adequately characterize these structures. At the same time, it is of course not a work in the discipline either of logic or of mathematics; its concern is therefore with philosophically clarifying the kinds of entities with which logic and mathematics are concerned, and showing their significance for philosophical theories.

The section on semantic structures, opposing the “compositional” semantics based upon the principle of compositionality, develops an alternative semantics that is based upon a strong version of the Fregean context principle: “Only in the context of a sentence do words have meanings.” One of its central theses is that sentences of the subject-predicate form are not acceptable for any philosophical language equipped with an appropriate semantics; what makes them unacceptable are their ontological consequences (if, as in this book, sentences with the subject-predicate syntactic form are nevertheless used, they must—as is explained particularly in Sections 2.5.1.3 and 3.2.2.4.1.3—be semantically interpreted and understood as convenient abbreviations of sentences without subjects and predicates.) The ontology that corresponds to subject-predicate sentences is one that this book calls “substance ontology”; the book shows this ontology to be unintelligible and therefore unacceptable. Sentences without subjects and predicates, like “It’s raining,” are termed “primary sentences”; they express “primary propositions” that are more precisely interpreted as “primary semantic structures.” The qualifier “primary” is not a counterpart to anything like “secondary,” and is not to be understood as synonymous with “simple” (or “atomistic,” as in “atomistic sentence”). The term “primary” is instead employed, given the lack of any more appropriate alternative, to designate sentences that do not have the subject-predicate form. It is therefore wholly consequent to speak of “simple primary sentences and propositions” and of “complex primary sentences and propositions” (i.e., sentences or propositions that consist of more than one and indeed often of a great many simple primary sentences or propositions).

The ontological structures emerge directly from the semantic ones in that, as is noted above, semantics and ontology are two sides of the same coin. The fundamental ontological “category” (according to traditional terminology) is the “primary fact”; all “things” (in philosophical terms, all “beings” or “entities”) are configurations of primary facts. The term “fact” is taken in a comprehensive sense, corresponding to the way this term is normally used at present (e.g., “semantic fact,” “logical fact,” etc.). It therefore does not necessarily connote, as it does in ordinary terminology, the perspective of empiricism. What is said above concerning the qualifier “primary” holds correspondingly for the term as used in “primary facts.” The concept *configuration of primary facts* or *complex primary facts* (thus also, correspondingly, *configurations of* 20

primary sentences/propositions or *complex primary sentences/propositions*) emerges as one that is central within the structural-systematic philosophy.

As noted above, Chapter 3 completes the development of the theory of truth that begins at the end of Chapter 2. *Truth* is understood more precisely as the concept that articulates the interconnections among the three types of fundamental structures. Formally, it is explained as a composite function that consists of three individual functions. The third function articulates the connection between a true primary proposition (or primary semantic structure) and a primary fact (or primary ontological structure). The connection is simply an identity: the true primary proposition *is* (in the sense of identity) a primary fact. This identity thesis traces back to a famous passage from Frege's essay "The Thought," which reads, "What is a fact? A fact is a thought [at present, one would generally say: a proposition] that is true" (1918: 343). On the basis of this thesis, the ontology briefly sketched above proves to be completely and thoroughly consistent with contextual semantics. Its briefest characterization may be found in the second sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "The world is the totality of facts [for Wittgenstein: of existing states of affairs], not of things" (*Tractatus* 1.1).⁹

Chapter 4, "World-Systematics," opens a decisively distinct phase in the presentation of the structural-systematic theoretical framework. Chapters 1–3 present all the essential elements of this theoretical framework. Chapter 4 begins the application or the specification of this theoretical framework. From a globally architectonic perspective, one can say that this specification is the explicit thematization of the grand datum (i.e., of being). This thematization requires that the world (the datum, being) be determined more precisely. Its more precise determination in this book involves the introduction of a distinction fundamental with respect to these concepts; the distinction is between a restricted and an unrestricted dimension. Chapter 4 terms the former "the (actual) world," the latter, "the dimension of being." Not until Chapter 5
21 is it possible to provide more precise determination of these two dimensions. That chapter presents the restricted dimension as the totality of *contingent entities* and the unrestricted dimension as the *absolute dimension of being*.

Simply put, the world treated in Chapter 4 is *actuality* as the totality of the things and domains of things with which we are familiar and to which we relate in various ways. These are, globally viewed, (inorganic) nature, the domain of life, the human world—with all that belongs to it in one way or another, including human beings as minded persons, the domain of action (ethics), the social domain, etc.—the world of aesthetics, and finally the world as a whole: the cosmos, religion, and world history. From a book that intends to present only a theoretical framework for a systematic philosophy, one should neither expect nor demand that all these domains be treated in detail, because that would be the *comprehensive* presentation of the *fully developed* structural-systematic philosophy. The goal of Chapter 4 can be described as follows: in

⁹ To be sure, Wittgenstein's understanding of this sentence differs fundamentally from the interpretation the sentence attains within the contextual semantics and ontology developed here. But the formulation as such, as a succinct formula, is appropriate as characterization of this semantics and ontology. Moreover, it is doubtful whether Wittgenstein's own formulation can be brought into harmony, without misunderstanding, with other passages found at the beginning of the *Tractatus*.

Chapters 1 through 3, the grand dimension of *structure* (or *structurality*) is developed in the form of the complete but still *abstract* theoretical framework for the structural-systematic philosophy; Chapter 4 begins to “apply,” to concretize, or—to use a Fregean term—to “saturate” this abstract theoretical framework with respect to the central aspects of the grand datum. This can, however, be done in this book only incompletely, by means of treating some of the central questions from the grand domain of the world from the perspective of this philosophy. Other aspects, no matter how important they may be within the relevant philosophical domains, are not relevant to attaining this goal. Chapter 4 thus serves as an extensive *example* for the concretization or saturation of the theoretical framework presented in Chapters 1 through 3. For the most part, its account remains general, although in some cases important paradigmatic questions are treated in detail.

Chapter 5 is devoted to *comprehensive systematics*. As a *theory of the interconnection of all of the structures and all of the dimensions of being*, it is appropriately characterized as a *theory of being as such and as a whole*. In traditional terms, one would say that this chapter treats (general) metaphysics. But this designation must be used with care because this terminology is often connected to misunderstandings and prejudices of many sorts.

The extensive Section 5.1 clarifies the status of comprehensive systematics. That section analyzes the problem that is the root of all of the important critiques of the possibility of metaphysics to be found in the history of philosophy and into the present; Section 5.1 articulates this problem in a new form. The problem is the one that Hilary Putnam, with specific reference to Kant, locates at the center of philosophical inquiry; it is based in the thesis that there is a gap or cut between subject(ivity), thinking, mind, language, theories, etc., on the one hand, and the “system” (actuality, the world, the universe, being, etc.), on the other. The Kantian tradition takes this gap to be absolutely unbridgeable. In Putnam’s words, “what it means to have a cut between the observer and the system is . . . that a great dream is given up—the dream of a description of physical reality as it is apart from observers, a description which is objective in the sense of being ‘from no particular point of view’ ” (1990: 11). This passage describes the cut or gap in the domain of the physical world (of physics), but according to Putnam the problem also—and indeed especially—arises in the domain of philosophy as the putatively universal science. Instead of “observer,” therefore, it would be better to say “theoretician,” and instead of “physical reality,” “actuality” or “being” (in the sense of the counterpole to “theoretician”).

In opposition to the Kantian tradition and to all similar philosophical positions, this book establishes the thesis that the putative gap is one that is not only bridgeable, but indeed must be presupposed already to have been bridged by every serious and sensible science and philosophy. The central insight grounding this thesis is that science and philosophy, even on a minimal level, can be sensible (or, speaking loosely, can function) only on the basis of the presupposition that the segments of actuality with which they are concerned, and ultimately, thought through to the end, actuality or being as a whole, are *expressible*. In this book, “expressibility” is used as a technical term to designate the entire palette of our “accesses” to actuality or to being, or the modes of articulating (conceiving, understanding, explaining, etc.) actuality or being as a whole. What sense would it make to produce a scientific or philosophical statement about

something if that something or indeed the whole were not expressible (in this sense)? That would be complete nonsense. If, however, absolutely everything—the entire universe of discourse—is expressible, then every form of fundamental gap in Putnam’s sense must be viewed as already bridged, because both “poles” or sides of the gap or cut are only secondary or relative levels of a relationship in that each refers to the other, and in that the two are always already united. All the “gaps” that have appeared within the history of philosophy are based on the distinction, to be recognized but not to be interpreted as a dichotomy, between the dimension of structure and the dimension of being (understood as “objective” counterpole). But they are intelligible only as two different poles within one domain, i.e., only as within a primordial relationship; this primordial relationship appears for its part as the primordial dimension that first makes possible and therefore at once suspends the distinction between structure and being. This book terms this primordial and comprehensive dimension the *dimension of being*, and thematizes it in Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 5.

23 This view, which literally *encompasses* both described dimensions, is expressed by means of sentences satisfying the linguistic criterion for theoreticity, i.e., sentences that (implicitly or explicitly) begin, “It is the case that . . .” This phrase is thematized in this book as the *theoretical operator*. In a daring but philosophically well-grounded interpretation of the particle “it” in this formulation, the “it” can ultimately be understood as referring to what is here termed the primordial dimension of being. From this it follows that every theoretical sentence is a kind of *self-articulation* of this primordial dimension of being. Indeed, the result of the dispute with those who affirm the existence of a gap in Putnam’s sense can in part be formulated as follows: every sort of exclusive restriction to one side of such a gap or dichotomy is excluded from the theoretical domain. Quite particularly excluded is any form of relativization of science and philosophy to the subject (or to subjectivity). Also excluded are explicitly formulated or even implicitly presupposed forms of presentation such as “From the transcendental perspective of the subject it is the case that . . .” Such forms express a restriction to one side of the rejected dichotomy. The alternative is the “absolute” form of presentation, “It is the case that . . .” which precedes sentences expressing the just-named self-articulation of the primordial dimension of being.

24 The relativization of science and philosophy to factors such as the subject is excluded, but not every form of relativization. As indicated above, all scientific and philosophical sentences presuppose the theoretical frameworks within which they arise, and within which alone they attain their determinate form or their determinate status. But it is also indicated above that there is a plurality of theoretical frameworks; the consequence is that every theoretical (scientific or philosophical) sentence has its determinate status only *relative* to its theoretical framework. But this relativity has nothing to do with any relativity to *one side* of the rejected gap or dichotomy, e.g., to a subject, to a time, to a social situation, or to any such factor. The relativity that holds here is only this: it designates a determinate *degree* of the self-articulation that is manifest in the form of expression, “It is the case that . . .” How this degree of the self-articulation of the entirety of the primordial dimension of being is to be interpreted presents one of the deepest and most difficult problems that the structural-systematic philosophy must consider.

To develop coherently the conception briefly sketched here, the thematic of philosophical language must be considered anew. To this topic is devoted a significant part of Chapter 5. From the semantics developed in outline in Chapter 3 and from various additional assumptions there results the necessity of developing a concept of philosophical language that is quite unusual. A philosophical language as a *semiotic system with uncountably infinitely many expressions* must be postulated in order to do justice to the basic thesis, formulated above, of universal expressibility. It is obvious that such a semiotic system does not correspond to the normal conception of language. The reasons for its postulation are strictly philosophical. Moreover, a plurality of such languages must be assumed, because of the plurality of theoretical frameworks. The many logical, semantic, and ontological aspects of this complex problematic are treated thoroughly in Chapter 5.

Sections 5.2 and 5.3 present a genuinely *comprehensive systematics*, which consists of the explication of the primordial dimension of being. Section 5.2 presents the basic features of a theory of being as such and as a whole. Here is clarified for the first time the difficult and highly timely semantic, logical, and mathematical problematic of talk about “the whole” or “(the) totality”; the account is developed in opposition to that presented by Patrick Grim in his book *The Incomplete Universe*. There follows an attempt to clarify the currently popular theory of the plurality of possible worlds in their relation to the actual world. Finally, the core of a structural-systematic theory of being is presented: under the title “the inner structurality of the dimension of being” and in fundamental harmony with the basic insights of the grand metaphysical tradition, the immanent characteristics of being and beings are presented: the universal intelligibility, universal coherence, universal expressibility, universal goodness, and universal beauty of the dimension of being.

Section 5.3, the last one in the chapter, presents the starting points for a theory of absolutely necessary being. This involves the extension and expansion of the theoretical framework applied here by means of the ontologically interpreted *modalities*. The result is that the primordial dimension of being is to be conceived of as two-²⁵ dimensional, consisting of both an absolutely necessary and a contingent dimension. The task of determining more precisely how these dimensions relate to each other leads to determining the absolutely necessary dimension as free, minded, absolutely necessary being.

Chapter 6, the last chapter, treats *metasystematics* as the *theory of the relatively maximal self-determination of systematic philosophy*. This brings the presentation of the theoretical framework of the structural-systematic philosophy to its conclusion. This last topic is of ultimately decisive importance for the understanding and self-understanding of the conception presented in the book. As universal science, philosophy cannot rely upon any metascience that could determine its status. This fact brings with it a difficult and fundamental problem. Chapter 6 introduces various considerations that are indispensable to the solution of this problem, particularly the distinctions between immanent and external metasystematics, between external intratheoretical and external extratheoretical metasystematics, and between external intratheoretical interphilosophical and external intratheoretical philosophical-non-philosophical metasystematics.

Immanent metasyystematics is what can be termed, to use a Kantian expression, the “architectonic” of the structural-systematic philosophy. In the complex expression “immanent (or internal) metasyystematics,” the term “systematics” designates the individual, specific systematics that are the components of the comprehensive philosophical conception: global systematics, systematics of theoreticity, systematics of structure, world-systematics, and comprehensive systematics.

The basic insight or thesis concerning *external metasyystematics* results from two fundamental assumptions: the assumption introduced above of a plurality of theoretical frameworks, and the assumption that even if there is an ultimate or absolute theoretical framework, it is not one that is attainable by human beings. This means, among other things, that the structural-systematic philosophy is an open system (i.e., that it is essentially *incomplete*). One can think here of Gödel’s famous incompleteness theorem, which is considered in this book in various passages. The situating or self-situating or self-determination of the structural-systematic philosophy always develops on a level of consideration that presupposes a more extensive and higher theoretical framework. This higher theoretical framework is, however, itself always a philosophical theoretical framework.

[6] Is the structural-systematic philosophy presented in this book a philosophical system? The answer to this question depends upon how one understands the formulation “philosophical system.” The problem presses because this is a formulation that is heavily burdened by its history. One thinks of the “philosophical systems” that were regularly superseded by newer ones, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries; all of these systems, despite the extravagant claims made for them by their authors, have been and are now judged by most philosophers to be untenable, and are therefore largely abandoned. Such systems, still admired by some philosophers and studied and commented upon in never-ending chains of interpretations and reinterpretations, have not only benefited philosophy, they have also damaged it. The excessiveness of their claims and the poverty of their results have brought the term “philosophical system” into presumably irremediable discredit. For this reason, this formulation is avoided in this book or at most used only marginally; the term used instead is “systematic philosophy.” That the conception of the systematic philosophy briefly sketched in this Introduction is far from those of the “philosophical systems” of the past should be obvious.

Worth emphasizing once again is that this book attempts *only* to present the *theoretical framework for a systematic philosophy*. Even this task is an extremely challenging one, but the completion of the structural-systematic philosophy itself would be immensely more so. It can be seriously undertaken only as a communal enterprise to which many philosophers must contribute. At the same time, however, one should not undervalue the significance of the development of the theoretical framework, because only insight into the necessity of treating every single philosophical question not in splendid isolation, but within a systematic framework, can overcome the fragmentation that is one of the chief defects of contemporary philosophy.

[7] In conclusion, it is appropriate to mention some specific aspects of the presentation that follows.

The book contains numerous cross-references to parts, chapters, sections, passages, etc., of the book; this could be irritating. It is, however, unavoidable because of the

network character of the conception and consequently also of the presentation. Also, certain passages that are in part repetitious are so for just this reason.

Many topics are treated in this book in quite different ways at different places: some such treatments may appear quite brief, others disproportionately long. An example of the latter is the extensive treatment given to the topic of language in Chapter 5, particularly to the problematic of language as a semiotic system with uncountably many expressions (Sections 5.1.4 and especially 5.1.4.3). There are two reasons for these inequities in treatments: on the one hand, different topics or subject matters vary greatly in complexity; on the other, some are more central and some peripheral to the structural-systematic philosophy. The topic just mentioned is both highly complex and quite central. It is central because it concerns the basic thesis of the universal expressibility of being, which, without recourse to a language with uncountably many expressions, can be neither made intelligible nor grounded.^a

^a At this point in *Struktur und Sein*, there are four paragraphs concerning the book's divergence, in specific cases, from normal German usage of commas and quotation marks; these are not relevant to the English edition. As is noted in footnote 1 to the Key to Abbreviations and Logical/Mathematical Symbols, footnotes designated by letters appear only in this book; they have no counterparts in *Struktur und Sein*.