Structure and Being

A Theoretical Framework for a Systematic Philosophy

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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.

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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 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]

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[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, ΦΨΣΙΚΗ 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.

[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

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[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.

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 7 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? 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.

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. 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

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[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

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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.

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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.

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 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

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[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

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[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.

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.

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[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.

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*

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

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[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 22 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.

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.

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-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 metasystematics is what can be termed, to use a Kantian expression, the "architectonic" of the structural-systematic philosophy. In the complex expression "immanent (or internal) metasystematics," 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 metasystematics* 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.

26   [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 disproportionally long. An example of the latter is the extensive treatment given to the topic of language in Chapter 5, 27 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]

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[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*.

dimension, all individual domains of being and all individual entities can be articulated in accordance with their own specific ontological characters.

In force throughout is the basic assumption that can be designated the fundamental axiom of comprehensive systematics: comprehensive systematics is concerned throughout with the self-presentation of the primordial and all-encompassing dimension— no matter what it is called—announced by the "it" in all "It is the case that such and such" formulations.

At this point the *second* central consideration making possible the specification of comprehensive systematics as universal philosophical theory can be presented and characterized: this primordial and all-encompassing dimension must *itself* be clarified. Its clarification is the task of the next section.

5.2 Basic Features of a Theory of Being as Such and as a Whole

To what extent, why, and how can or indeed must the primordial and comprehensive dimension identified in the preceding section be a topic for a systematic philosophy? One might think that the philosophical task was sufficiently and even completely accomplished when the problem of the cut or gap is solved, as it is in Section 5.1. The solution lies in understanding the difference between thinking and being, subject and object, concept and actuality, structure and the ontological dimension, or whatever terms are used to designate the duality that leads to the problem of the gap or cut, not as a dichotomy, but instead as always already contained within a more fundamental unity, one that reveals itself in every instance of knowledge, even the simplest and most modest, and in every sentence that qualifies as true. Can philosophy go further than this? What would going further involve?

5.2.1 *What Is Being as Such and as a Whole?*

[1] Throughout the history of philosophy, whenever the point described in the preceding paragraph has in one way or another been reached, there is always the impetus to go further. The impetus of philosophical questioning and of the striving for intelligibility presses further. With the indication of the need to overcome the putative dichotomy and even with the recognition of a comprehensive and more fundamental unity, the philosophical task has not been accomplished fully. This is clear from the simple fact that human beings in general, and especially philosophers, have questions that push them further. As long as such questions in the theoretical domain continue to arise and remain unanswered, the human potential for intelligibility is not yet exhausted. This of course presupposes that such questions are clear, coherent, and thus sensible. If there are questions of this sort, what sense would it make, at some specific point, to forbid additional questioning, to enact something like a prohibition of thinking? The human mind strives for universal questioning and maximal intelligibility.

The question that presses here is the following: can this primordial, comprehensive unity or dimension be made the explicit theme of philosophical theorization? Given the fundamental characteristics of the project pursued in this book, the only answer that can be given here is the following: its thematization is not only possible; it is indispensable.

553   [2] In the history of philosophy, the dimension identified above as primordial and all-encompassing has been given various designations. To be sure, this dimension is not understood there in exactly the way that it is understood here. For the most part, the dimension is taken there to be "objective" in the sense of having no relation, or at best an unspecified relation, to the theoretical dimension. The approach taken here is far more radical and comprehensive in that it recognizes and *explicitly* thematizes the entire "perspectival" (hence linguistic-logical-conceptual-semantic or—most succinctly—theoretical) dimension as one of the subdimensions that co-constitute the primordial and most comprehensive unity. If this is not kept in mind, the following discussions of the primordial, all-encompassing dimension will be misunderstood.

The most famous and probably also the most philosophically neutral (in the positive sense of being the most open to interpretations of all sorts), as well as the most comprehensive designation for the dimension in question, is "being." This book also uses that term, above as well as below. Because of the term's neutrality, however, further specification is required.

[i] The terms "being" and "existence" have lengthy histories and continue today to be used in different ways and to be accorded various meanings. In the history of metaphysics, "being" and "existence" are sometimes clearly distinguished and sometimes simply identified; that history is not considered here (see, e.g., Gilson 1948 and Keller 1968). Heidegger draws a strict distinction between them, whereas Quine (1969: 100) identifies the two this way:

> It has been fairly common in philosophy early and late to distinguish between being, as the broadest concept, and existence, as narrower. This is no distinction of mine; I mean "exists" to cover all there is, and such of course is the force of the quantifier.

Quine's well-known position is highly instructive with respect to what happens to the traditional question concerning being in extensive parts of contemporary analytic philosophy. Of "existence" (and thus, for him, also of "being"), he writes (97),

> Existence is what existential quantification expresses. There are things of kind *F* if and only if $(\exists x)Fx$. This is as unhelpful as it is undebatable, since it is how one explains the symbolic notation of quantification to begin with. *The fact is that it is unreasonable to ask for an explication of existence in simpler terms.* We found an explication of singular existence, "*a* exists," as "$(\exists x)(x = a)$"; but explication in turn of the existential quantifier itself, "there is," "there are," explication of general existence, *is a forlorn cause.* (Emphasis added)

554   Quine's "explication" is clearly circular: "existence" is explained by means of the existential quantifier, but the quantifier is itself understood or interpreted by means of "existence." Moreover, Quine simply maintains that it is a *fact* (!) that it would be "unreasonable to ask for an explication of existence in simpler terms." This may be the case, but even if it is, it is also the case that explications need not involve simpler terms; they can instead involve situating terms or concepts to be explained within one or more of the broader semantic-ontological fields within which they belong. Quine fails even to consider such fields. The claim that asking about "general existence" is a "forlorn cause" is thus arbitrary and dogmatic.

A second, less comprehensive and less open designation for the primordial, all-encompassing dimension is "nature." Since the beginning of philosophy, both "being" and "nature" have been fundamental terminological and conceptual resources for philosophy, but their meanings and uses of course have changed over time. Whereas "being" has, for the most part—unaffected by historical developments—retained its maximally open and maximally comprehensive signification, indeed at times becoming more radical (e.g., with Heidegger's attempt to pose "the question of being" anew and more radically, *Being and Time* §1, of which more below), the conceptual content of "nature" has changed significantly and fundamentally. Currently, "nature" is used comprehensively only in conjunction with a specific metaphysical position (i.e., materialist or physicalist metaphysics).

In certain movements and traditions other designations and concepts are used, including "spirit," "idea," "God," "the absolute," etc. But these more often articulate some contentually quite determinate aspect of actuality as a whole, generally on the basis of central contentual presuppositions.

It is thus clear that all of these terms save "being" fail to designate the primordial and comprehensive dimension with appropriate openness. Here, in terminological harmony with the tradition of philosophies of being but within a radically different theoretical framework, it is designated "being," or "the dimension of being."

[ii] In this book "being" and "existence" are distinguished in contexts that present the structural conception (when other positions are discussed, ones in which the terms are identified, the terms are also identified here). The reason for the distinction   555
is that in ordinary language, in most of the languages used in the history of philosophy, and indeed in contemporary philosophy, the signification and connotations of "existence" are for the most part significantly narrower than are those of "being." Because this is simply a terminological clarification, this issue need not be considered further here.

"Being" must, however, be specified more precisely on the basis of what is done in the preceding sections of this chapter. The two most important specifications are now to be presented. The first concerns a strong distinction that plays an important role in many passages in this book (see esp. Section 1.3): the distinction is between "being" in a purely objective sense, thus as designating only the "objective" pole in distinction from the dimension of theory, and "being" as designating the primordial dimension encompassing both poles. This point is clarified by a passage from a letter from Heidegger to Husserl dated October 22, 1927. Heidegger opposes Husserl's procedure of *epoché* and thereby his absolute privileging of transcendental subjectivity, arguing as follows:

> What constitutes is not nothing, thus something that is—although not in the sense of the positive. Universally, the problem of being thus relates both to what constitutes and to what is constituted. (Heidegger 1927b/1967: 602)

Here, "being" is clearly not used to designate the objective counterpole to subjectivity, to the theoretical dimension, etc., but instead to designate the dimension that is primordial and all-encompassing.

The second specification appears in the title of this chapter: "Theory of Being as Such and as a Whole." This specification introduces a differentiation *within* being

as the primordial and comprehensive dimension, as well as designating being as the primordial and comprehensive dimension, and not as the objective counterpole to subjectivity.

So that the two significations of "being" not be confused, this book relies upon two terminological conventions. First, the term "dimension of being" is generally used to designate being as the primordial, all-encompassing dimension, thus for being as such *and* being as a whole. Second, "being" is often used, for sake of simplicity, as an abbreviation for "dimension of being." For the counterpole to the dimension of subjectivity and/or the theoretical dimension *within* the distinction "subject(ivity)/ theoretical dimension—being," the qualifier "in the purely objective sense" is added to "being."

556   The distinction between *being as such* and *being as a whole*—to be explained at this point only programmatically—announces the two grand perspectives that are determinative for the theory of being sketched here: being must be conceived *both* with respect to what constitutes it itself, *and* in its totality, as encompassing anything and everything, thus all entities of any sort whatsoever. The latter specification, understood wholly generally, should be adequately clear immediately and intuitively; not so with the former, despite the fact that it recurs, in various forms, in the history of metaphysics. The task of this section is to make precise both of these two qualifications or perspectives, and to raise and address the questions that thereby arise.

[3] How then should the dimension of being be understood? The following sections answer this question step by step. To begin, four traditional ways of conceiving this dimension—ways to be found in the history of philosophy and in recent and current works—are introduced briefly.

The first form can be termed the "non-reductive objectivistic" conception. It is characteristic of classical metaphysics, particularly in its Christian forms. Perhaps the most important of its advocates is Thomas Aquinas. This conception attempts to grasp the dimension of being *itself*, but in such a way that the conceiving subject (with all that belongs to it) is understood as *remaining external to* the dimension of being. In this sense, the dimension of being is understood objectivistically. Only subsequently is the conceiving subject related to the dimension of being, and in such a way that it is not reduced to any other of the entities constituting this dimension; this is the basis for the qualifier, "non-reductive." On the explicit level, the relation between the dimension of being and the dimension of the subject is conceived purely externally, but implicitly or in intention it is envisaged as an internal relation. Aquinas's assumption of an absolute (God) as being subsisting of itself [*esse per se subsistens*] gives this form of conceptualizing the dimension of being an imposing culmination, at least to a degree, but one that must be characterized only as a subsequently contrived global coherence.

557   A second option can be termed the "transcendental-dualistic" view. Here, the dimension of being itself (in the sense explained above) is missed altogether thanks to the distinction between the world "in itself" (or "things in themselves") and the world as the totality of appearances. The dimension of the in-itself is supposed to be unattainable by the cognitive subject; this is not a negation of the dimension of being, but an exiling of it into inaccessibility. This position is the typical manner of affirming the gap or cut; it is thoroughly criticized in Section 5.1.

The third option can be designated the "reductivist-objectivist" view: the dimension of the cognitive subject (with everything belonging to it) is utterly reduced to entities and domains of nature that constitute the dimension of being understood purely objectively. This is radically materialist metaphysics. It claims completely to grasp and to explain the so-understood dimension of being. The dimension of being is then simply matter, in an all-encompassing sense.

The fourth option is the one taken by this book. For the sake of simplicity, it can be termed the "comprehensively systematic" view of the dimension of being.*

[4] Closer explication of the dimension of being is introduced through reference to Heidegger, who on the one hand saw as no other philosopher had the questions and tasks posed to philosophical thinking by thematization of the primordial and comprehensive dimension of being, but who, on the other hand, did not succeed with his own thematizations of this dimension. His failure results chiefly from his attempts, particularly in his later years, to follow paths irreconcilable with rationality, clarity, theorization, etc. (see Puntel 1997). Here, two particularly relevant aspects of Heidegger's later thought are introduced.

The first aspect directly concerns the clarification of the question raised above: what is being as such, and what is being as a whole? In the programmatic essay "Time and Being," Heidegger attempts to surpass all prior attempts to "think being" as such (being as being, being itself). His attempt is instructive in that it shows both what the sense of this question is and what it cannot be. He writes (1969, 1972: 2/2) as follows:

> We want to say something about the attempt to think Being without regard to its being grounded in terms of beings. The attempt to think Being without beings becomes necessary because otherwise, it seems to me, there is no longer any possibility of explicitly bringing into view the Being of what *is* today all over the earth, let alone of adequately determining the relation of man to what has been called "Being" up to now.

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At the end of the lecture Heidegger summarizes, in a manner typical of him, by bringing into play metaphysics *as he understands it* (24/25):

> The task of our thinking has been to trace Being to its own from Appropriation—by way of looking through true time without regard to the relation of Being to beings.
>   To think Being without beings means: to think Being without regard to metaphysics.

The summary published with the lecture characteristically stresses that such phrases, taken together, are "the abbreviated formulation of 'to think being without regard to grounding Being in terms of beings'" (33/35–36). In further clarification, he writes,

> "To think Being without beings" thus does not mean that the relation to beings is inessential to Being, that we should disregard this relation. Rather, it means that Being is not to be thought in the manner of metaphysics.

As is well known, Heidegger has a quite idiosyncratic and demonstrably wholly inaccurate interpretation of the philosophical tradition he sweepingly designates as "metaphysics"; that is not considered further here. But the following may be said of the passages cited above: if Heidegger is concerned with the feature of classical metaphysics referred to above as the "purely external relation," he is correct, although it must

be added that the problematic externality involves not only the relation between the dimension of being and that of humans (as cognitive subjects) but also that of being itself to every (particular) being and to beings generally. But Heidegger thinks along quite different lines, as shown shortly below.

To be emphasized at the outset is the significant fact that Heidegger, correcting himself or his own misleading formulations, at least in part explicitly recognizes the two distinct aspects of the being-question introduced above: adequately thematizing the dimension of being involves thematizing both being as such and being as a whole. Being as a whole is to be understood as being-in-its-relation-to-beings or being-together-with-beings, or, yet more explicitly, being-as-the-interconnection-of-(or: among-)beings. Nevertheless, Heidegger fails virtually completely to attend explicitly to the second aspect; he appears even to acknowledge this topic only extremely unwillingly. The reason for this is presumably that he is inclined to view all talk of any relation of beings to being or of being to beings as "metaphysics," in a pejorative sense. This however places in question his entire approach to the thematization of the primordial dimension of being. It suffices here to cite a highly symptomatic passage from his *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning* [Vom Ereignis]), written from 1936–38:

§135. The Essencing [*Die Wesung*]^b of Being as Occurring [*Ereignis*]
 (The Relation of Dasein and Being)
 [This relation] includes the occurring of Dasein. Accordingly, and strictly speaking, talk of a relation of Dasein *to* being is misleading, insofar as this suggests that being essences "for itself" and that Dasein takes up the relating to being.
 The relation of Dasein *to* being belongs in the essencing of being itself. This can also be said as follows: being needs Dasein and does not essence at all without this occurring.
 Occurring is so strange that it seems to be complemented primarily *by* this relation to the other, whereas from the ground up occurring does not essence in any other way.
 Talk of a relation of Dasein to being obscures being and turns being into something over-against [*ein Gegenüber*]—which being is not, because being itself is what first occurs [*er-eignet*] *that to which* it is supposed to essence as over-against. For this reason also this relation is entirely incomparable to the subject-object relation. (1936–38/1999: 179–80/*GA* 65: 254; translation altered)

This text shows, first, that Heidegger himself claims to do precisely what he does not allow Western metaphysics to do: to use formulations that are often inappropriate and often misleading. It is moreover clear that Heidegger—at least on the basis of this text and others like it—views the "relation of being and beings" as a central

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^b Heidegger's peculiar use of *Ereignis* is briefly considered in Section 2.2.2(6). *Dasein*, as is widely known, is an ordinary-language German term usually translated by "existence," but one that Heidegger uses to designate the mode of being specifically of *human* beings. A brief explanation of *Wesung*, etc.: the German past participle for *sein* ("being"), *gewesen*, is irregular, but it would be the regular past participle of the verb *wesen*, which did not occur in the ordinary (colloquial) German of Heidegger's day, although it was used frequently in German poetry (especially by Goethe). As a noun, *Wesen* is also the German counterpart to "essence." Words that appear to be forms of the verb *wesen* thus suggest, to those conversant in German, both *being* and *essence*. In the English version of Heidegger (1936–38/1999), Emad and Maly render *Wesung* "essential swaying" (and *Ereignis*, "enowning").

aspect of his philosophy of the primordial dimension of being. Unfortunately, his contribution is minimal because he focuses almost exclusively on being as such. Being as such, in this text, is called "occurring" (*Ereignis*; in other translations, "appropriation" or "enowning"). Heidegger speaks of this "occurring," without exception, in general and often strange, indeed cryptic, formulations. Here is an additional example:

Occurring occurs [*Das Ereignis ereignet*, "appropriating appropriates," "enowning enowns"]. Saying this, we say the Same in terms of the Same about the Same. . . .
 If overcoming [metaphysics] remains necessary, it concerns that thinking that explicitly [*eigens*] enters occurring [*Ereignis*] in order to say It in terms of It about It. (1969/1972: 24/24–25; translation altered)

This mode of proceeding and of speaking is the result of a problem that concerns the second aspect of Heidegger's thinking to be considered here: the form of thought and thus the means of presentation he uses to thematize the dimension of being. Here, too, it is relevant that, particularly in his later works, these means are irreconcilable with rationality, clarity, theoreticity, etc. In the summary published with the lecture "Time and Being," this is fully clear. The following expresses one issue decisive for him:

A few grammatical discussions about the It in "It gives,"^c about the kind of sentences characterized by grammar as impersonal or subjectless sentences, and also a short reminder about the Greek metaphysical foundations of the interpretation of the sentence as a relation of subject and predicate, today a matter of course, hinted at the possibility of understanding the saying of "It gives Being," "It gives time" other than as sentences [*Aussagen*]. (1969/1972: 40/43; translation altered)

Apparently, Heidegger here understands "sentences" as "subject-predicate sentences," and he apparently would like to express himself without using such sentences.³¹ Heidegger thus simply identifies (indicative) "sentence" with "subject-predicate sentence." It is presumably quite rare that a thinker's error is so obvious; to show that Heidegger's identification *is* an error, it suffices to refer to the philosophy of language—and particularly to the semantics—whose basic features are presented in this book, along with the corresponding ontological consequences. Moreover, Heidegger's radical rejection of what he terms "logic," "formal thinking," "theory," etc., testifies to an astonishing ignorance of the essence of logic, of the immensely broad possibilities for philosophical language, etc. To develop a conception that is a radical alternative to a purely externally conceived philosophy of being and to a substantialist ontology, one need by no means get rid of the dimensions of logic, of semantics, etc.

[5] The preceding considerations make possible first versions of comprehensive and programmatically more precise characterizations of *being as such* and *being as a whole*. Negatively, being as a whole is not the totality of all beings in the sense either of

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^c "It gives" literally translates "*es gibt*," which is however the idiomatic German counterpart to the English "there is" or "there are," the French "*il y a*," etc.

³¹ See the detailed analysis of the relevant Heideggerian texts in Puntel (1996, esp. pp. 319ff).

the set of all beings or the sum of all parts or any other *purely extensional* determination.[32]
Still negatively, this means that it is not to be conceived of by means of the relations of universal and particular, set and elements, sum and parts, or anything similar; instead, the relation of being as a whole to beings is absolutely *sui generis*. The decisive point is the fact that any and every specific being is *a determinate or specific configuration of all and only of all of what is termed "being."* To avoid any confusion with the contemporary purely extensional (mis)understanding of the term "totality" in such formulations as "the totality of (or of all) beings," in this book the formulation "being as a whole"[d] is preferred, and is used throughout. This formulation encompasses and articulates precisely the just-articulated relationship between *being* and *beings*. As a synonym for "being as a whole," one can also use "totality of being" (in strict distinction from "totality of (or of all) beings").

A formulation of Wittgenstein's, from a journal entry from 1916, helps make this basic thought more intuitive:

> Whatever is the case is God.
> God is whatever is the case (1914–16/1961: 79e; translation altered)

If one replaces "God" with "being," one gets the following:

> Whatever is the case is being. Being is whatever is the case.

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[32] The formulation, "totality of beings," is not to be rejected in every respect. Whether or not it is acceptable within the framework of the structural-systematic philosophy defended here depends upon how "totality" is understood. If it is not understood as anything like a set or sum or fusion, etc., but instead (for example) as the interconnection of all beings, then that already indicates that "totality as interconnection" has a higher or more comprehensive status than does totality as determined *purely extensionally*. The term "whole (totality)" is at least often understood, traditionally, on the basis of the axiom, dating to Euclid and Aristotle, "The whole is more than the sum of its parts (see Euclid, *Elements* 1 and Aristotle, *Politica* I, 2, 1253a19ff). The question then is that of how this "more" is to be determined in the case of being. Currently, however, the term "totality" (especially in the literature of logic and semantics) is almost always understood purely extensionally, which amounts to a reduction of the whole to the extension of its parts. Given this understanding, the question is, what after all *is* the "extension itself" of the parts in relation to the parts themselves? This question is rarely raised at present. For this reason, the formulations "totality of all beings" and "totality of beings" are better avoided. The quite extensive following section, in its entirety, is devoted to the problematic of talk about "totality" and "totalities."

A different problem concerns the designations "being(s)" and "entity/entities." The German language makes the fundamental distinction between *Sein* (being) and *Seiendem/n* (being(s)). Some languages, such as English, make no comparable distinction. The term "entity" has become an utterly general designation in contemporary philosophy.

[d] "Being as a whole" is less satisfactory, with respect to resisting purely extensionalist interpretations, than is its German counterpart, *Sein im Ganzen* (with its "*im*," literally "in the," rather than "*als*," "as"). "*Im Ganzen*" could be rendered, "taking all aspects into consideration" and, although that phrase is too bulky to be used regularly, it is introduced here to supplement the clarification in the passage to which this note is appended. The central point is, however, the one emphasized in the main text: the "as a whole" must be understood *as it is explained and used in this book*, and *not* as it may be used or understood anywhere else.

Section 5.3 shows that the two formulations, using "God" and "being," are not in contradiction; on the contrary, the formulation with "being" is the initial and fundamental characterization of the primordial and all-encompassing dimension, whereas the formulation with "God" is, in a specific fundamental respect, the *ultimate* (fully determined, fully explicated) characterization of the primordial dimension.

Decisive is the following: the distinction between being as a whole and being as such is, from a perspective that is both contentual and heuristic, not only useful but also indispensable. Talk of being as such serves as a programmatic indication of the absolute uniqueness of this topic. If one is not attentive to this uniqueness from the outset, one develops superficial "theories of being" that miss what is decisive about being. But it must likewise be emphasized that being itself or as such would also be missed if one were to understand the "as such" in an abstract, hypostatizing manner. That is precisely the position that Heidegger, in passages cited above, characterizes as "thinking being without beings" or "without the relation of being to beings." This position or attempt fails because it makes of being some sort of abstract Platonic entity that one then attempts in vain to apprehend "in and as itself." This leads to peculiar formulations like the following:

> But being—what is being? It "is" Itself. The thinking of the future must learn to experience this and to say it. (Heidegger 1946/1998: 252/*GA9*:331; translation altered)

In the course of analysis of the two lines of questioning traced above, it soon becomes clear that a point comes at which they are no longer to be separated: they condition each other reciprocally, indeed they ultimately fuse together. To name these two perspectives on what is thus ultimately one subject matter, the account that follows uses—as noted above—the unusual expression "dimension of being"; it is meant to indicate that within both perspectives, being is understood not in the purely objective sense, but instead in the primordial sense.

5.2.2 Talk of "the Whole (the Totality)": Semantics, Logic/ Mathematics, and Philosophy

From the beginning, philosophers have always spoken of "the whole (of the world, of being, of reality, of nature, etc.)." Their talk about it has been questioned regularly, but fundamentally only in a specific respect, i.e., with respect to the possibility of such talk about the whole, insofar as such talk claims to be meaningful or contentual. Section 5.1 treats in detail the form of this fundamental questioning most characteristic of modernity (i.e., the problem of the cut or gap). The preceding section provides initial explanations of how being as a whole and being as such are to be understood. Before however a more extensive treatment of this comprehensive topic can be undertaken, consideration must be taken of a problem that—in part—is an utterly different form of questioning the possibility of talk about "the whole." The problem arises on the one hand from a specific analysis, in semantics, philosophy of science, and critiques of metaphysics, of the term/concept "world" (and other, similar terms and concepts), and on the other hand from specific formal-logical and mathematical states of affairs.

[1] From the first (semantic) perspective, many objections can be raised against the thesis that there is a world as the totality of all that is. As a sort of collection of many and presumably the most important objections from this perspective, one can consider the

thesis formulated as the title of the well-known essay by Bas van Fraassen, "'World' Is Not a Count Noun" (1995). Van Fraassen analyzes the uses of the term "world" and the meanings associated with them in ordinary language, as they are provided, for example, by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It is clear that the result of such an analysis yields no unitary meaning. Van Fraassen next devotes himself to philosophical uses of "world" in connection with the sciences, particularly physical cosmology. This leads him to the following:

> To conclude then: whether or not the world exists is not settled by the success or acceptance of physical cosmology, *except* relative to certain philosophical points of view. The disturbing corollary for analytic ontology is then that it is never a simple bringing to light of existential commitments in our theories. At best it does so relative to some more basic philosophical stance which is taken for granted. (145)

Van Fraassen's "conclusion" is no surprise, given that it is the result of his own highly controversial theory of science, constructive empiricism, which he characterizes briefly as follows: "According to *constructive empiricism*, the aim is only to construct models in which the observable phenomena can be isomorphically embedded (empirical adequacy)" (143). If no ontology in the genuine sense is possible or can be accepted, then it indeed makes no sense to speak of an "existing world." Such an interpretation of science is, however, highly problematic, as current discussion shows.

Positively, van Fraassen suggests making a "schematic use" of "world." He summarizes what he thereby means as follows:

> [H]ere is my suggested alternative to the idea that world is a count noun. It is instead a context-dependent term which indicates the domain of discourse of the sentence in which it occurs, on the occasion of utterance. It plays this role sometimes by denoting the domain (a set), and sometimes by purporting to denote an entity of which the members of the domain are parts. In the latter case we need not take that very seriously (it may be metaphor, colorful language, rhetorical extravagance); important is only the indicated domain of discourse. (153)

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This "clarification" of the world "concept" is vaguer and indeed more confused than the putatively vague and confused ordinary concept of the world. The distinction between "domain of discourse" and "an entity of which the members of the domain are parts" is scarcely meaningful or clarificatory, because in the first case it is not said exactly how "domain" is to be understood, and in the second case the concept *entity* is characterized purely mereologically, but without making explicit the mereological determination of the world itself (i.e., the world as "sum"). Here, a fundamental factor of every theoretical undertaking is ignored: the question concerning the *interconnection* of the "elements" that constitute a domain (however these elements may be designated: as things, beings, entities, elements of a region, etc.). In the first case, the "domain of discourse" is identified by van Fraassen, in passing, with a set, but this provides a merely extensional determination of the domain, not a characterization of the interconnections of the elements of the domain *qua* set. As far as the second case is concerned, the simple identification of the "world" with an implicitly mereologically characterized "entity" comes close to a wholly unreflective and superficial notion of a "concept of the world": the "world" would be a "sum" (others would say "a fusion"). But what exactly is that; what sort of interconnections would it involve? The normal mereological determination

of "sum/fusion" is philosophically unsatisfactory. In addition, it must be emphasized that an explicitly mereological determination of "world" is only *one* way of understanding the world as a complex whole—more precisely, as a *grand, complex interconnection* of elements that are, as a rule, extremely heterogeneous. Van Fraassen implicitly rejects *any and every* way of understanding the world as a grand, complex nexus.

Clearly, van Fraassen simply shoves aside the task here posed for philosophy. The task is to bring to clarity the intuitive idea of "world as complex interconnection or configuration." This task is a theoretical undertaking that arises from the fact that human beings can fully utilize their irrepressible capacities for intelligibility. Van Fraassen fundamentally misrepresents this undertaking when, at the end of his essay, he writes,

> We can sit in our closets and in a perfectly meaningful way, kneading and manipulating language, create new theories of everything and, thereby, important contributions to ontology. In other words, to put it a little more bluntly, this "world play" we engaged in here is but idle word play, though shown to be meaningful, just idle word play nevertheless.... [O]ntology is not what it purports to be. (156)

Such contentions are basically nothing more than purely rhetorical formulations that illuminate nothing and justify nothing.

[2] Much more important are objections from the logical and mathematical perspective raised against the possibility of talk of totalities. The *specifically logical* objections are not objections in the genuine sense, but instead are to be understood as problems and difficulties that arise from logically formulated talk about totalities. They concern the precise interpretation of quantified sentences in first-order predicate languages. If a quantification is presented as concerning absolutely everything possible, the question presses of how the "domain" is to be understood within which the values of the bound variables of the quantified sentences are supposed to be situated. That such a domain is to be taken *in some sense or other* appears scarcely contestable, given that we formulate sentences that relate in one way or another to everything. But the question that then presses is the following: in what sense is the relevant domain *absolutely all-encompassing*? Formulated yet more precisely, how or as what is such a domain to be understood? As an entity that would be in some sense the only entity, at least on its—the highest—level (such as a set, a class, a collection, etc.)?

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Here lies the genuine problem under current discussion.[33] Philosophically, the problem is extraordinarily interesting and important, because a *positive answer* that would not be won from decisively philosophical considerations appears scarcely possible. The perhaps most neutral interpretation available is the so-called plural interpretation of quantification or of the presupposed domain. According to this interpretation, formulations of the form "there is a domain D_i such that... (such and such)," are to be interpreted as "there are things—the D_is—such that... (such and such)," and formulations of the form "x is a member of the domain D_i," as "x is one of the D_is." Thereby, nothing specific is said about the domain D_i; the logical quantification leaves everything open, and yet such a quantification succeeds in speaking "of everything" (although only if one ignores the presupposed or fundamental ontology). Philosophically, one can understand this problem such that it is not a task for logic

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[33] See, e.g., Cartwright (1994), McGee (2000), and Rayo (2003).

somehow to determine domain D_i further. That is a task for philosophy. And this philosophical task is unavoidable, because it arises from a thesis that is philosophically compelling: if there are things that are D_is, then it is presupposed that they are somehow interconnected, because otherwise it would be senseless and arbitrary to speak of things in such a way that they are designated as D_is. If, as usually happens, this interconnection of D_is is designated a "domain," this term appears misleading. It is therefore understandable that at present the "plural" interpretation of "domain" is preferred, because it is neutral in a strong sense. But that does nothing at all to clarify the philosophical question.

[3] The entire problem changes if mathematical (set-theoretical) means are applied, when the "domain" is understood as a set, class, collection, etc., because there then arises, for meaningful talk about totalities, a wholly new problem. In his book *The Incomplete Universe: Totality, Knowledge, and Truth*, Patrick Grim attempts to show that talk about totalities is inconsistent and therefore impossible. He draws this conclusion from a treatment of the truth-paradox (the so-called liar paradox), from the paradox of the knower, and from results of Gödel's incompleteness theorem for the concept of universal knowledge or of a totality of all truths. He understands all these problems as different forms of one and the same fundamental problem. He writes, at the beginning of his Chapter 4,

> [W]hat follows may be the cleanest and most concise form in which we have yet seen [the problem]. By a simple Cantorian argument, it appears, there can be no set of all truths. (1991: 91)

The example of the totality of truths is only one case; the same conclusion arises in all other cases of totalities: the totality of all propositions, the totality of all facts, and—of particular importance for this chapter—the totality of all beings. In the following, the basic idea of the proof is first sketched briefly for the example of the totality of all truths (see 91ff). Details and more exact clarifications of the mathematical terms and structures cannot be provided here.

Grim understands totalities as sets; his thesis with respect to the totality of all truths is that "there can be no set of all truths" (91). The following brief sketch of the proof follows Grim. Let $T = \{t_1, t_2, t_3 \ldots\}$ be the set of all truths. Then consider the subsets of T, thus the elements of the power set $\wp(T)$:

$$\varnothing$$
$$\{t_1\}$$
$$\{t_2\}$$
$$\{t_3\}$$
$$\vdots$$
$$\{t_1, t_2\}$$
$$\{t_1, t_3\}$$
$$\vdots$$

Note that to every element in this power set there corresponds its own truth. With respect to every set within the power set, it then holds (for example) that t_1 either does or does not belong to the set:

$$t_1 \notin \varnothing$$
$$t_1 \in \{t_1\}$$
$$t_1 \notin \{t_2\}$$
$$t_1 \notin \{t_3\}$$
$$\vdots$$
$$t_1 \in \{t_1, t_2\}$$
$$t_1 \in \{t_1, t_3\}$$
$$\vdots$$

It results that there are at least as many truths as there are elements in the power set $\wp$. Cantor's famous procedure of diagonalization, however, shows that the power set of every set is *greater* than the set itself. From this it follows that there are *more* truths than there are elements of T: T does not encompass all truths.

[4] Grim's thesis is of great significance for philosophy. A thorough response to it is a significant task that cannot be undertaken in this book.[34] The following account introduces only four brief remarks on the subject.

[i] Grim considers alternative set theories in order to support the thesis that none of them makes possible the avoidance of the Cantorian diagonalization argument, but in this matter he appears to have overlooked something important. Although he does consider the set theory of Kelley-Morse (KM)—albeit quite briefly—he appears not to have noticed that, in this set theory, the Cantorian argument is ineffective. In all brevity: KM[35] distinguishes between sets and classes. The universal class (not set) is defined as: $\mathfrak{U} = \{x : x = x\}$. Theorem 37 of KM is the following: $\mathfrak{U} = \wp \mathfrak{U}$: the universal class $\mathfrak{U}$ is not smaller than its own power class, but identical to it. This is not so with the power set of any set; there, the power set is larger than the set itself. Applied to the example of the totality of all truths, this means that the power class of the universal class does not contain more truths than does the universal class itself. To be sure, this state of affairs must be clarified precisely with respect to all of the aspects belonging to the formation of a consistent *and efficient* set theory (or class theory). Here it suffices to indicate the fundamental and presumably decisive factor that makes possible a solution of the problem.[36]

[ii] A second remark concerns a peculiar incoherence or, if one will, paradox in Grim's argumentation. His argument presupposes that we grasp and articulate both

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[34] The extensive exchange between Grim and Alvin Plantinga leads to interesting philosophical clarifications. See Plantinga and Grim (1993).
[35] For details on KM, see the appendix to Kelley (1955), titled "Elementary Set Theory."
[36] Schneider (2006b) contains a detailed critique of Grim that, in essence, thoroughly presents and grounds the thesis presented in the main text.

truths that are contained within the set of all truths, and truths that are not contained in this set. We thus indeed grasp and articulate a totality that has a higher character (i.e., a genuinely comprehensive character), such that no truths remain outside this higher totality. This is a consequence of an informal philosophical analysis. But this conclusion results as well from a detailed analysis of the more precise form or formulation of the argument itself: Grim can formulate his thesis that there is no totality of truths only by using premises *that involve quantification over just such a (comprehensive!) totality*. This shows that Grim relies (and must rely) precisely upon what he wants to prove to be impossible.[37]

[iii] The third remark is a purely philosophical one. It concerns a presupposition that Grim simply makes, apparently assuming it to be non-problematic—that recourse to set-theoretical means for philosophical theorization is not only possible and meaningful but also indispensable. The assumption underlying this presupposition is presumably the following: set-theoretical (and logical) means are the only theoretical means that make possible precise formulations; only they bring clarity to scientific and/or philosophical theories.[38] Both the presupposition and the assumption on which it is based are, however, quite problematic, and not only philosophically. Already within the frameworks of the formal sciences, the long-privileged position of set theory is increasingly being questioned, specifically by the mathematical theory of categories.[39] With respect to philosophy, it is quite questionable whether set-theoretical means, used either alone or in a manner that is decisive (rather than merely helpful), are means that are adequate for the articulation of philosophical issues. Section 4.3.1.2.1 examines this problem as it relates to the configuration that this book understands the human individual to be. Ultimately, all depends upon the concept of the set that is "defined" by means of the concept of the relation of being an element ($\in$). Different items (of whatsoever sort) can be collected together into wholes on the basis of their having a common property. To say that the items, with respect to this common factor, "belong together" means that they form a set or belong to a set. What this common factor, this *interconnection*, is to be understood as remains unexplained. It is considered only, so to speak, as a purely abstract, contentless belonging-to or belonging-together. How such a common factor binds the items together and of what, precisely, this

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[37] For details see Plantinga and Grim (1993, especially sections 9 (291–97) and 11 (301–05), both "Plantinga to Grim").

[38] Another author who accepts Grim's basic thesis, John Bigelow, explicitly formulates this presupposition and this assumption as follows in his essay "God and the New Math":

> If we need to abandon minimal pantheism [in a quite unusual and misleading terminology, Bigelow understands by "minimal pantheism," "the doctrine that there is such a thing as the totality of all that there is" (130–31)] in order to make space for set theory—then we should abandon minimal pantheism. That is a small price to pay for the peace of mind which can flow, for any scientific realist, from the freedom to take set theory at face value as literally true. (1996: 145–46)

Such a contention may be a self-description of Bigelow's own unquestioned theoretical preferences, but it is not an argument.

[39] On this topic, see Section 3.2.1.2, section 5 of Corry (1992: 332ff), Goldblatt (1979/1984), and MacLane and Moerdijk (1992).

binding consists are not explained. It is obvious that such a conceptuality or structure is not suitable for explaining the complex contentual interconnections with which philosophy is concerned.

It is revealing that the authors who accept Grim's thesis always understand "totality" as "one big thing" (see Bigelow 1996: 127 and passim). If totality is thought of in this manner, then it must indeed be rejected: it is not an "additional thing," so to speak, on the same level as all the other "things" that it is supposed to contain. Tom Richards provides an accurate formulation of this state of affairs:

> I do not see how the Universe can be said to be a thing of any *sort* at all, or even a *thing*, since it encompasses everything. If the Universe were a thing, then in contradiction to the Axiom of Regularity it would be self-membered, since everything is a member of the Universe. (1975: 107; quoted in Bigelow 1996: 127–28)

Richards, however, appears to assume that there is no alternative to the determination or characterization of the universe as a set. In addition, he appears to hold that only one ontological category, "thing," comes into question or is thinkable for articulating the totality, such that it is immediately obvious that totality is impossible as an all-encompassing great thing. He thus says: "The way things are is not a thing of any sort at all," and "By using the phrase, 'the way things are,' one does not refer to anything" (106; cited by Bigelow 1996: 127). Such contentions raise the question of what kind of ontology Richards, Grim, and others maintain. If the basic category of ontology is the category "thing" or "object" (and thus, ultimately, "substance as substratum"), then one can understand the totality only as a thing/object. Chapter 3 not only presents an alternative ontology that is defensible but also reveals substance ontology to be untenable.

[iv] The fourth remark concerns a partial aspect of a central thesis of the structural-systematic philosophy presented in this book. This is the thesis that every theoretical sentence and every theory always already presuppose some determinate theoretical framework and are situated within such a framework. This thesis has two specific aspects: that there is in fact a plurality of theoretical frameworks and that the structural-systematic framework presented here is by no means the highest or the absolute theoretical framework. This latter aspect is decisively relevant to the question under consideration concerning the possibility of talk of totality (or totalities).

This book presents and defends the position that the structural-systematic theoretical framework is not the highest, but is only superior to or more adequate than other currently available theoretical frameworks. As Chapter 6 shows, this is a *metasystematic* thesis, a thesis that is located methodologically and scientifically within a more comprehensive theoretical framework. What does this mean with respect to the question concerning totalities? The theoretical situation here is to a certain point analogous to the situation that results for formal systems from Gödel's incompleteness theorem, i.e., that no complete deductive system is possible even for so small a fragment of mathematics as elementary number theory. Differently stated: for every axiomatizable, non-contradictory system for arithmetic, it is the case that there are true arithmetic sentences that are not provable as true within the system. Gödel's proof is based on

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so-called Gödelization—a procedure of encoding by means of which linguistic entities can be assigned to numbers. In a broader, more comprehensive system, or with the means of such a system, it is possible to prove as true sentences not provable as true within the first system.

In a certain analogy to this situation, the following holds with respect to the structural-systematic philosophy: within a broader, more comprehensive theoretical framework, it is possible to overcome the limitations of the structural-systematic theoretical framework, but not in an absolute manner, because it cannot be assumed that the broader, more comprehensive theoretical framework is the one that is simply ultimate or absolute (at least, this assumption is not made in this book). Thus, one must also assume an *incompleteness* of the structural-systematic philosophy. With respect to the topic of truth, one can characterize this incompleteness as follows: the higher or indeed ultimate truth *about* the system of the structural-systematic philosophy cannot be established *within this system*. Such a truth is a *metasystematic* (more precisely, meta-structural-systematic) truth; in the terminology of Chapter 6, it is an *external* meta-structural-systematic truth (see Section 6.3). The structural-systematic philosophy is *incomplete* in the sense that it is an *open system*: it is open to broader, higher, more adequate theoretical frameworks. Such a characterization must, however, be understood correctly. This is shown in what follows to counter certain philosophical lines of argument that are drawn from Grim's theses.

[5] The strongest conclusion drawn thus far is the following: there is no universe; there is no totality of all that there is (see Bigelow 1996, which cites various authors). This is a gravely imprecise thesis that depends upon a point of confusion and results in a misunderstanding. What can be meant is only the following: the universe *as a set* does not exist. As shown above, however, those who defend this thesis tacitly assume that if there were a universe, it could be conceived of only as a set (the comprehensive set). As also shown above, such an assumption is neither established nor in any way whatsoever even plausible.[40] If the understanding of the universe as a set always leaves something *outside the universe understood as a set* (because the power set of this set has a larger cardinality), what follows is only that the *so understood universe* does not also contain whatever remains outside the universe-as-set. In the casual formulation, "a or the universe does not exist," the term "universe" is used *equivocally*, first in the sense of "totality of everything that there is, understood as a set" (=universe₁), and then in the sense of "totality of everything that there is *simpliciter*, i.e., as including *both* everything that is in contained in the totality understood as a set *and* everything that remains outside the totality understood as a set" (=universe₂). With respect to the equivocal formulation, "a or the universe does not exist," what results is the following: what is proven or provable is only the sentence, "a or the universe₁ does not exist," not however, "a or the universe₂ does not exist." The criticized formulation, however, itself establishes that the non-existence of the universe *simpliciter*, of universe₂, is not in question.

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[40] In this respect, Grim is on the whole more cautious (and also more precise) than other authors. The title of his book speaks only of "the *incomplete* universe."

Various authors attempt to save talk about totality, but they pay a high price. They assume only what may be termed a "halved totality"; that is, they understand the assumed totality in an extremely restricted sense, in that they speak of a *submaximal* world or a *submaximal* universe. These submaximal "totalities" are characterized in various ways (see Bigelow 1996: 144ff). It is said, for example, that "although there is no aggregate of all the things there are, there may yet be an aggregate of all things which are contingent in the sense that it is logically possible that they might not have existed (in the widest-open sense of 'existed')" (152). Such attempts fail because of the argument that is presented above under [4][iii]. It is astonishing how, without reflection, these authors speak about *absolutely everything*—and thus, in their arguments, quantify over absolutely everything—precisely when they attempt to prove the impossibility of talk about the unrestricted totality. The proper conclusion to be drawn is that the genuine question is not and should not be whether such a totality is possible or exists, but *how it is to be understood*.

[6] For the structural-systematic philosophy presented in this book, the preceding considerations lead to the following important question: is it not the case that what is presented above in [4][iii] as solving the problem posed by Grim—that the structural-systematic philosophy is based on a *non-absolute theoretical framework*—actually poses a serious problem for this philosophy itself? The reason would be that within a non-absolute framework, it would appear that only a non-absolute and thus only a limited, a "submaximal" totality, could be thematized. This is an issue that indeed arises and must therefore be addressed.

Resolving this issue is not difficult. Its resolution emerges from a distinction that is strictly to be attended to here and elsewhere: it is one thing to speak of a non-absolute, (i.e., not absolutely adequate) *articulation* of a whole (in this book: of being as a whole), and it is something wholly different to acknowledge or take into consideration only a "submaximal totality" (a "submaximal being as a whole" or a "submaximal universe"). The thesis that the theoretical framework introduced, developed, and used in this book is not the absolute, the highest theoretical framework, in no way entails that the totality articulated on its basis is only a limited or submaximal totality *in the sense in which there is talk of "submaximality"* in the conception referred to above. On the contrary, a non-absolute articulation of a maximal totality always remains an articulation of the maximal totality (i.e., a so-and-so determined articulation in distinction to other (more or less adequate) articulations that arise within other (more or less adequate) theoretical frameworks). There is a distinction between non-absolutely adequate articulations of the *maximal totality* and the absolutely adequate articulation of one and the same totality; this distinction is by no means to be equated with that between the maximal totality and submaximal (forms of) the totality or of totalities, nor does it entail any such distinction. If, purely terminologically, one wanted to *call* a not absolutely adequately articulated totality a "submaximal totality," that would be a matter only of terminology, not affecting the subject matter. But such a terminological convention would be the result of the confusion, noted above, of articulation with what is articulated—of the distinction between, on the one hand, an absolutely adequate articulation and a not absolutely adequate articulation of totality with, on the other hand, the distinction between the maximal totality and one or more submaximal totalities. A maximal totality that is not an absolutely adequately articulated totality remains

a maximal totality: this (and not any sort of subtotality) is in such a case what is not absolutely adequately articulated.

To be sure, it is correct to say that by means of a more adequate articulation *more* structural moments of being as a whole and thereby *more* truths concerning being as a whole are brought to light, but, for many reasons, that does not introduce any new problem that is relevant here. First, it is here assumed and maintained that a totality absolutely adequately articulated *in every respect* would be attainable *only* on the level of the *absolute* theoretical framework, and this book makes no claim to rely on that framework. This is a *meta-structural-systematic* thesis that acknowledges explicitly that within the absolutely adequate theoretical framework *or already in any superior theoretical framework, more* structural moments and *more* truths are explainable. This is, however, wholly consistent with the structural-systematic philosophy, which explicitly accepts so-understood superior levels, but designates them, too, as *non-absolute.*

Second, it is to be noted that the talk of *more* structural moments or of *more* truths can be misleading. Strictly speaking, it is not a matter of quantitatively more structural moments or truths, but instead of a more finely grained presentation of structural moments or a more precise form of truths.

Third, if, in a purely formal respect, one wanted to consider the unrestricted or absolute totality (being as a whole) as a *universal class,* one would, in the light of what is noted in [4][i] above concerning the universal class, have no problem arising from the fact that a distinction is drawn between the structural-systematically non-absolutely adequately articulated totality—being as a whole, non-absolutely adequately articulated—and the (here neither attempted nor attained) absolutely adequately articulated totality—being as a whole, absolutely adequately articulated. There would be no problem because one would understand the non-absolutely adequately articulated totalities as *partial classes* of the absolutely adequately articulated totality, the latter understood as a universal class. And the result of this would be the following: the universal class would be *identical* to its power class, in accordance with the abovementioned theorem of Kelley-Morse: $U = \wp U$.

[7] As a consequence of the refutation of the logical and mathematical objections to the possibility of talk about totalities, the intelligibility of the concept *being as a whole,* explained in Section 5.2.1, is solidly grounded. Being as a whole, as here understood, is not the purely extensionally understood totality of all beings. If "totality (of being)" is understood differently, for example in the sense of "the being (of all beings)," then its intelligibility depends upon how, precisely, one determines the relationship between being and beings. In this case and in this sense, as indicated above, one can and should speak not of the "totality of beings" (or "of all beings"), but instead, avoiding misunderstanding, of the "totality of being" (on this point, see Section 5.2.1, particularly [5], pp. 419–21). The ontological difference between being and beings thus reveals itself to be absolutely decisive for the development of the structural-systematic philosophy.[41]

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[41] In a specific stage of his development, Heidegger puts the term "ontological difference" between being (*Sein,* often translated as "Being") and beings (*Seienden*) at the center of his philosophizing. As the considerations in previous sections of this chapter show, and the later sections continue to show, Heidegger's specific understanding of this difference is not here presupposed or indeed accepted.

5.2.3 The Primordial Dimension of Being, the Actual World, and the Plurality of Possible Worlds

Scarcely any issue is likely to be of more current importance for the program of a comprehensive systematics than the issue of *possible worlds.* Clarification of this issue and of some basic aspects of current discussions of it can contribute significantly to the clarification and sharpening of this program. There can of course be no question of here doing anything approaching full justice to the complete array of current treatments of the topic; the following account aims exclusively at clarifying the goal pursued in this book.

[1] The central concept in the theory of possible worlds, the one around which all reflections orbit, is the concept *actuality* in such formulations as "the actual world." Despite possible appearances to the contrary, this concept is anything other than clear and unambiguous. For the classification of different conceptions of possible worlds, of central significance is the distinction between two opposed and mutually exclusive perspectives that open paths leading in different directions. The two perspectives are generally termed "actualism" and "possibilism."

According to actualism, the fundamental and indeed exclusive starting point for all considerations of possible worlds is the so-called *actual world:* anything that can be designated a possible world is understood and determined on the basis of the actual world (i.e., as a *possible variant* of it). Possibilism, on the other hand, starts with a plurality of possible worlds as the primary dimension and on its basis determines the so-called actual world as one possible world among the many possible worlds. There are various species of both actualism and possibilism, but the species are not centrally relevant to present purposes.

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With respect to the comprehensive systematics under current consideration, an important question is how these two positions relate to the primordial dimension of being. More generally formulated: in theories of possible worlds, in either or both of the variants introduced above, are the questions concerning being as a whole and being as such posed and treated? Does either variant or do both variants thematize a dimension of being in the sense introduced above? As can be shown in exemplary fashion, the answer to these questions is no, particularly in the case of possibilism. For this reason, the following account does not treat this issue only in general, but instead examines in some detail the specific position that is presumably the most important of those that are available; this is the theory of David Lewis (1986).

[2] Lewis defends a *possibilistic* conception, but one sufficiently peculiar that he terms it "modal realism." His reason for assuming a plurality of possible worlds is that he deems this hypothesis "serviceable" (3) with respect to clarifying various central questions in the realms of logic, language, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and metaphysics. Lewis's starting point is the analysis of modalities on the basis of the concept of possible worlds. Formulations like "It could have been that there were blue swans" are analyzed by means of quantification over possible worlds and thereby translated into the language of the theory of possible worlds: "It could have been that there were blue swans if and only if there is a world W such that in W there are blue swans." From this is easily derived, "There is a (non-actual) possible world in which there are blue swans."

The first question that presses is whether this is anything more than a convenient but *purely intuitive illustration* of the modality "It could have been." Lewis thinks that it is, insisting that his conception of possible worlds is genuinely ontological. The chief points, in the formulation of Gideon Rosen (1990: 333; numbering altered), are the following:

1. Reality consists in a plurality of *universes* or 'worlds.'

2. One of these is what we ordinarily call *the* universe: the largest connected spatiotemporal system of which we are parts.

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3. The others are things of roughly the same kind: systems of objects, many of them concrete, connected by a network of external relations like the spatiotemporal distances that connect objects in our universe (Lewis 1986: 2, 74–76).

4. Each universe is isolated from the others; that is, particulars in distinct universes are not spatiotemporally related. (It follows that universes do not overlap; no particular inhabits two universes; 78.)

5. The totality of universes is closed under a principle of recombination. Roughly: for any collection of objects from any number of universes, there is a single universe containing any number of duplicates of each, provided there is a space-time large enough to hold them (87–90).

6. There are no arbitrary limits on the plenitude of universes (103).

7. Our universe is not special. That is, there is nothing remarkable about it from the point of view of the system of universes.

A question that is decisive, given present purposes, is how Lewis deals with the concepts *existence, being, actuality, possibility*, etc. That question is posed with a view to the additional question concerning what conditions his talk about a plurality and indeed a system of possible worlds must satisfy in order to be meaningful and intelligible. Is it not the case that a universal dimension must be presupposed? Is it not the case that the designation "world," used for all the worlds, presupposes that they all have something in common?

[3] To assume a plurality of possible worlds is to speak of them. That involves the use of such concepts as *world, possible, plural*, etc. Are these concepts to be understood as universals having the individual possible worlds as instantiations? Strangely, this is a question that is not only not answered but indeed not even raised explicitly in current theories of possible worlds. Nevertheless, it is unavoidable, because unless it is answered the talk of "worlds," "possible," "plural," etc., remains ultimately unintelligible. The problem becomes sharper when one considers more carefully the concept *plural*. This concept directly designates entities considered in mutual isolation. But the concept itself relates the entities to each other, thus either presupposing or establishing (in usual terms: analytically) an interrelation, a unity. In Kantian terms: talk of the plurality of possible worlds entails as a condition of its possibility the assumption of a comprehensive collection containing the distinct items and thus also of a unity that makes the plurality of items possible. But how is the collection or unity to be thought?

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Lewis knows and uses a specific concept to which he accords an unambiguous ontological priority and for whose designation he uses two terms that he appears

to consider, albeit not always and in all contexts, generally interchangeable and thus synonymous: the two are "actuality" and "existence." In his view, every possible world is actual and existent:

> [E]very world is *actual at* itself, and thereby all worlds are on a par. This is *not* to say that all worlds are actual—there's no world at which that is true, any more than there's ever a time when all times are present. The "actual at" relation between worlds is simply identity. (93)

This passage can be understood only if one notes that Lewis understands "actual" and "existent" quite idiosyncratically: Lewis understands these words on the basis of an "indexical analysis" yielding the simple meaning, "this-worldly" (92). This shows how his easily misunderstood formulations are to be interpreted. He often says, for example, that *only our world* is a or the *actual world*, whereas the other worlds are to be conceived of as *unactualized worlds*. This means that we, as inhabitants of *this* (i.e., *our*) world, consider this world to be *the actual* world; inhabitants of other worlds would proceed in the same manner with respect to their worlds, viewing those worlds as actual.

Lewis stresses that *actuality* (and thus also *existence*) is, for him, a fundamentally *relative* concept. In part to support this thesis and in part to elaborate its far-reaching consequences, he argues as follows:

> Given my acceptance of the plurality of worlds, the relativity is unavoidable. I have no tenable alternative. For suppose instead that one world alone is *absolutely* actual. There is some special distinction which that one world alone possesses, not relative to its inhabitants or to anything else but *simpliciter*. I have no idea how this supposed absolute distinction might be understood. (93)

This formulation, in conjunction with the passage previously cited—"[T]his is *not* to say that all worlds are actual—there's no world at which that is true"—articulates Lewis's strongest and indeed only argument against the assumption of a primordial and all-encompassing dimension of being in the sense explained in this chapter. It therefore requires careful analysis.

In his denial that "all worlds are actual," Lewis appears not to use "actual" as an
578   indexical term. The "actuality" he is denying must therefore be something putatively absolute, something taken to hold *simpliciter*, something that would characterize not a specific world but instead *all worlds*, and thus something common to all worlds. Against such an actuality Lewis raises two objections: first, he reports having "no idea" how the relevant absoluteness could be understood; second, he asserts that "there's no world at which that is true." The first objection is countered by the adequate explication of the relevant absoluteness. The second, however, is obviously circular in that it presupposes the conclusion it purports to establish—the contention "there's no world at which that is true" presupposes that "actual" is understood purely indexically. To make explicit the argument that Lewis formulates only elliptically: if "actual" were an absolute characteristic (i.e., one that would hold non-indexically for every possible world), then there would have to be some specific world having this characteristic, but there is no such world, so there is no such characteristic.

This argument can be countered in at least two ways. The first notes the circularity identified in the preceding paragraph. This circularity can also be exposed in a different way: Lewis simply presupposes a plurality of worlds that are "on a par." Only on the basis of *this* presupposition can he consequently argue that if one wanted to understand actuality (existence, being) *absolutely* or *simpliciter* (i.e., for Lewis, non-indexically), one would have to say, "one world alone is *absolutely* actual." This, however, is a *petitio principii* because it presupposes that *absolute actuality* can be conceived of only as a characteristic of *one* (single) world, a world selected from the plurality of worlds presupposed somehow to be "on a par." This presupposition is, however, exactly what was to have been proved. In other words, what Lewis would have to prove, but does not even argue, is that "absolute" actuality or existence *cannot be thought and conceived of other* than as a characteristic of a single one of the plural possible worlds.

The second counterargument is based on the fact that Lewis overlooks, indeed utterly ignores, a simply fundamental point: the one raised by the question, to what world (even in some highly restricted sense) does the theoretician (Lewis, or any theoretician) *who talks about* all these infinitely many worlds and makes significant asser-
579 tions about them, etc., belong? If the theoretician were an inhabitant of only a single, wholly specific one of the worlds, *in Lewis's sense,* how could the theoretical dimension of this theoretician extend to all the other worlds; how could the theoretician have access to them? Such access or such an extension *must be assumed,* because sentences taken to be true are made about all the worlds, and true sentences are ontologically revelatory.

A condition of possibility for a theoretician's presenting a theory that, like Lewis's, is about *all* the worlds reveals Lewis's contention that there is no world at which the thesis that all worlds are actual is true to be vulnerable to a *reductio ad absurdum.* Not only must it be the case that there is at least one world at which this thesis is true, and with it the thesis that the theoretical dimension is all-encompassing; it must also be the case that these theses are true in *all* worlds (no matter how these worlds are understood more precisely, given only that a plurality of them is assumed). The reason for this is that the theoretical sentences are true for *all worlds.* Lewis simply fails to raise the question of the location or status of the theoretician or of the theoretical dimension, and thus also that of the status of theoretical theses.

This failure has, in principle, two fully opposed consequences; which of the two emerges depends upon which of the following two opposed assumptions one makes. Either one considers all the theoretician's activity—more precisely, the theoretical dimension, with everything it contains—as something that is fully *external* to *all* of worlds—*or* one considers the theoretician's activity—the theoretical dimension—to belong to the totality that is the subject matter of the theory itself. In the first case, one accepts an absolutely unbridgeable gap between theory and actuality or "system"; in the second, one assumes that the theoretical dimension is integrated into the whole to which it relates. If, on the basis of the reasons presented in detail in Section 5.1, one rejects the former alternative, then one must accept the latter. But this latter alternative entails the thesis that the so-called plurality of worlds is to be conceived of *on the basis of a primordial and all-encompassing dimension of being.* This is now to be shown briefly.

Within the theoretical dimension, the worlds about which the theory speaks are bound to one another in such a way that they form a grand nexus, no matter how this is designated and explained more precisely. In Lewis's language, the theoretical dimension "is" or "exists" in or at all worlds because it relates to or encompasses all worlds; it must, because true statements about all worlds can be made. The theoretical dimension, with respect to its objective content, thus belongs unrestrictedly and in the genuine sense to the inner constitution of the totality of worlds. With this, one of the major theses 58c expressed in this book in various contexts attains full force: the mind, particularly with respect to the theoretical dimension that characterizes it, is intentionally *coextensive* with anything and everything, with the universe, with being as a whole. The fact—obviously not to be ignored when there is theoretical activity—that there is a theoretical dimension and that this dimension (in the language of theories of possible worlds) exists in or belongs to all worlds reveals a fundamentally primordial and all-encompassing *unity of all worlds.* But this unity is not only conceptual, it is in the strictest sense *ontological,* because the theoretical dimension is the integrating part of the unity of that totality that Lewis calls the "plurality of worlds."

[4] How can—indeed, how must—this unity be conceived? If one wants to continue to speak of a plurality of "worlds," then this plurality will clearly be a *secondary phenomenon* in comparison with the primordial and all-encompassing unity, secondary in the sense of presupposing it and being conceivable only in terms of it. In principle, this unity can be designated in various ways but, for reasons given in Section 5.2.1, the most appropriate designations are "being" and "dimension of being."

The thesis that the plurality of possible worlds is the fundamental point of reference with respect to which all statements about actuality/existence/being must be situated, with the consequence that our world is "actual" only "for us," is untenable. It results from ignoring fundamental questions and interrelations and is itself incoherent. One cannot avoid acknowledging a primordial and comprehensive dimension of being that is in every respect a dimension one cannot get around and cannot go beyond. It provides the basis for addressing questions concerning the metaphysical or comprehensively systematic concept of the possibility of a plurality of (possible) worlds, etc. The following paragraphs provide, on the basis of conclusions already drawn, some indications of the manner in which the structural-systematic philosophy responds to these questions.

In the first place, the concept *world* must be subjected to critical analysis. Is the dimension of being, as explained above, a "world"? Here, two questions must be addressed separately; one is terminological, the other is substantive. Terminologically, one could certainly choose to use the term "world" (and/or "universe") to designate the dimension of being. But that opens the substantive question: are there *in addition to* or *outside of* the world-as-dimension-of-being *other* (possible or actual) worlds-as-dimensions-of-being? There cannot be, because it is unthinkable that in addition to the dimension of being there could be a "dimension-of-being₁," a "dimension-of-being₂," . . . a "dimension-of-beingₙ," etc. Even this brief reflection reveals that it is not 581 illuminating to designate this primordial, comprehensive dimension as "world." This further supports this book's practice of ascribing to the term "world" (when it is used strictly rather than quite generally and even loosely) a restricted signification (i.e., the one specified in Chapter 4).

As shown above, the terms "actuality," "actual," etc., are far from clear. If this terminology is retained, then it follows from what is said above that there is *only one* actual dimension of being = actual world. Better, however, is to distinguish between being *in the primary sense* and being in a *secondary* or *derivative* sense. Being in this secondary sense would be the entire dimension of the possible. Possible or derivative being can be conceived of only on the basis of actual being, of being in the primary sense.

If one wants to continue to use the formulation "possible world," preceding considerations establish that a *plurality of possible worlds* is indeed to be assumed. *These* possible worlds, however, unlike those introduced by Lewis, are in no sense "on a par" with the dimension of being (= the only actual "world"); they "are" or "exist" *only* in the secondary and derivative sense.

This conception, at whose center is the thesis of the absolute uniqueness of the dimension of being, can be made fully clear only by closer investigation of the dimension of being. This is an extensive and difficult topic that is barely considered, much less adequately treated, by theories of possible worlds. To it, Section 5.2.4 and all of Section 5.3 are devoted.

5.2.4 *The Inner Structurality of the Primordial Dimension of Being: The Most Universal Immanent Characteristics*

[1] Philosophical treatment of the dimension of being presupposes a positive answer to the question whether it makes any sense whatsoever to raise such questions as, "What is being itself or as such?" If philosophy is to achieve anything at all in this domain, then that will require further thought about the status of some questions that at first glance appear illuminating and obvious. Among these belong particularly questions beginning and "What is/are. . .?"[42] No doubt, many questions that so begin are reasonable, such as "What are atoms?" "What is knowledge?" But questions that so begin are generally reasonable only when they seek answers articulating something or other that is distinguished from other "things" that can be explicitly identified. But from what is *being* to be distinguished? The obvious answer is *nothing*. But *nothing*, or *the nothing*, is a limiting concept, a defective—because totally negative—"concept." The question, "What is (the dimension of) being," taken literally, is therefore not a reasonable one.

What questions, then, can or should be raised about the dimension of being? Only ones that concern perspectives from or within which the dimension of being can be thematized. But the identification of such perspectives is a part of the thematization itself and thus of its problematic. What are the relevant perspectives? Here it is particularly difficult to find and use appropriate language. If one spoke of "properties" of the dimension of being, then one would introduce an immense and unquestioned ontological ballast, in that properties require substrata within which they are supposed to subsist or reside. Even the word "perspective" is fundamentally problematic in that it suggests the particular viewpoint of a somehow external observer. The thematization of the dimension of being needs, however, to allow the dimension of being to—so to speak—bespeak itself, to achieve a self-presentation.

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[42] See the idiosyncratic and obstinate but nonetheless noteworthy reflections in Heidegger (1956/1958).

The word "thematize," in its various forms, is of course itself problematic, because it has the explicit connotation of being the act of a subject (i.e., the theoretician). Of course, one cannot contest that there is such an act, but a strong or exclusive emphasis on the thematizing act suggests that it is somehow outside the dimension of being: the theoretician makes the dimension of being a topic of theorization. This formulation, however, distorts the relevant state of affairs. For this reason, "explication" or even "self-explication" of the dimension of being is preferable. It is no accident that "*ex-plicatio*" has long been used in the Western metaphysical tradition. To be sure, "explication" is also generally understood as connoting the act of a subject, but this connotation can at least be kept in the background, particularly when the passive voice is used along with the operator, "it is the case that"—hence "it is the case that (it is explicated that. . .)." In what follows, this is the preferred formulation.

What does an explication or self-explication of the dimension of being bring to expression? Given the state of affairs just described, the designation chosen here as less inappropriate (because less heavily burdened) is "immanent structural features or characteristics of being as such or of the dimension of being." The explication or self-explication of being thus articulates immanent structural characteristics of being. But can immanent characteristics of being be identified? This question is to be answered in the positive, as shown by the following account. To begin, it presents the most universal immanent characteristics of being. They are designated appropriately as immanent characteristics *of being as such* (and indeed as *the most universal or most fundamental* immanent characteristics of the dimension of being), in distinction from the characteristics of being as a whole further determined in one way or another (thus, characteristics of regions of being).

The following account aims only to formulate a first analysis and explanation of the most universal immanent structural moments or characteristics. Developing a genuine theory of the dimension of being would require, among other things, presenting the most universal immanent structural characteristics in the form of the *most universal comprehensively systematic sentences* having strictly theoretical status. Such presentation is, however, relatively straightforward; it would result from the accomplishment of a diligent but routine task.

[2] The most universal immanent characteristics of being emerge from or as a (self-)explication of the dimension of being. This dimension itself emerges above as the constellation including the interconnection of thinking/mind/language on the one hand and world/universe/being-in-the-objective-sense on the other, such that the constellation itself is the primordial dimension that encompasses the two.

More detailed explication of this constellation makes explicit the characteristics that are presented in what follows: the (better: some of the) most universal immanent characteristics of the dimension of being. Always to be kept in mind is that "dimension of being" is not here understood as anything like a Platonic entity from which—in some incomprehensible manner—certain "immanent characteristics" could be derived. Instead, the dimension of being appears as the constellation that includes within itself the nexus of thinking/mind/language and world/universe/being-in-the-objective-sense. It is the constellation-character of the dimension of being that makes the explication of the dimension of being both possible and requisite.

584 [i] The first most universal, immanent structural feature or characteristic is the absolutely universal *intelligibility* of the dimension of being, the intelligibility coextensive with the dimension of being. Because the dimension of being *appears as* a complex network or a constellation in the sense explained above, it is simply unthinkable that the dimension of being could be outside the sphere of thinking/mind/language. Only because the dimension of being appears essentially *as* this network or constellation is it accessible to thinking/mind and to language. Such accessibility is precisely what its intelligibility involves: it is conceivable, understandable, articulable, knowable, etc. It should be clear that the universal intelligibility of the dimension of being does not mean that we, as finite knowers, are in a position to articulate it fully; to the contrary, we can grasp, in a determinate fashion, only segments of the vast and total intelligibility of the dimension of being.

This fundamental, most universal immanent structural characteristic of the dimension of being is envisaged in various ways in the history of philosophy, and often explicitly articulated in a variety of terminologies. Beginning from the famous sentence of Parmenides, "τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι" ["for thinking and being are the same"],[43] through the central tenet of the grand metaphysical tradition, "*Ens et verum convertuntur*" ["being and truth are interchangeable"], through Hegel's equation of the idea (in his sense) and actuality, to Heidegger's equation of being and truth (in his sense): throughout, there is a central intuition that is, however, often expressed by means of exaggerated and/or cryptic formulations. This history is particularly instructive because it makes clear how differently the same terms are used by different philosophers. This holds particularly for "thinking/idea" in Hegel and "truth" in Heidegger. Highly revealing is the way Heidegger conceives of "truth" as an explication of "being." He interprets "truth" on the basis of what he understands to be the ancient or original sense of the Greek word ἀλήθεια as "unconcealment," or the manifestness of being.[44] There is a philosophical tradition that uses the term "ontological truth," but this tradition differs from Heidegger in not simply equating "truth" with "ontological truth"; it relies instead on the thesis that truth in the genuine sense
585 is in the judgment (*veritas est in iudicio*).[45] Heidegger misses the phenomenon of truth precisely because he does not directly consider the relation of language and being.

The theory of truth sketched in Chapter 3 shows in all clarity that there can be talk of truth only when the dimension of language is introduced explicitly and radically into

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[43] Gallop (1984: 56–57; translation altered). Heidegger, characteristically, provides an idiosyncratic translation: "For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being" (1969/1972: 27/18).

[44] As is indicated in Section 2.5.1.1[2][iii] (p. 143), Heidegger himself comes to revise this interpretation.

[45] In exemplary fashion, Thomas Aquinas introduces a threefold distinction concerning the word and concept " truth":

> [T]ruth or the true has been defined in three ways. First of all, it is defined according to that which precedes truth and is the basis of truth. This is why Augustine writes: "The truth is that which is. . . ."
>
> Truth is also defined in another way—according to that in which its intelligible determination is formally completed. Thus, Isaac writes: "Truth is the conformity of thing and intellect [*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*]. . . .
>
> The third way of defining truth is according to the effect following upon it. Thus, Hilary says that the true is that which manifests and proclaims existence. (*Truth*: 6 [I Q 1 A 1])

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the determination of the truth-concept. According to that theory, a true sentence is one that expresses a true proposition; the true proposition, as fully determined proposition, is *identical* to a fact in the world, and the fact itself is thus an entity identical to the true proposition. This theory clearly accords to truth a radically ontological import. It would, however, be inappropriate, indeed strictly speaking incorrect, to speak of "true facts." "True" is an operator that can take as its arguments only sentences, propositions, and utterances—not facts.

[ii] From *intelligibility* as the fundamental immanent structural characteristic of the dimension of being, two other immanent characteristics can be derived. One can be termed the *universal coherence* of the dimension of being. This designation is here given a specific and comprehensive signification. Coherence in this sense is not simply identical with consistency; in addition to the absence of contradictions, it involves *positive interconnections*. The genitive, "universal coherence *of* the dimension of being" is understood as the subjective genitive: the dimension of being *as* universal coherence, thus *as* universal network or nexus.[46] This characteristic derives from that of intelligibility because to conceive of, understand, explain, etc., anything involves, among other things, grasping or articulating the context within which it exists. Coherence is, in short, systematicity. Determined more precisely and more explicitly, universal coherence is *universal structuration*. Being itself is thus conceived of as *the structure of all structures*, the absolutely primordial and comprehensive structure.

With this point, the systematic location is finally reached from which one of the 586 absolutely fundamental theses from which the conception of systematic philosophy developed here emerges can be brought to complete (i.e., comprehensively systematic) clarity; this is the thesis that everything centers upon or revolves around the fundamental structures. Three major types of such structures are distinguished: the fundamental formal, semantic, and ontological structures. It is now clear that these structures simply exhibit the intelligibility and the coherence (in the sense explained above) of anything and everything, of all domains of being, and indeed of the dimension of being itself. To conceive of anything at all, no matter how trivial, is to relate it to or situate it within the comprehensive structuration of the dimension of being. This makes fully clear what the fundamental structures actually are: they are structures *of being as such and as a whole*.

[iii] An additional fundamental and immanent structural characteristic derivable from the characteristic of intelligibility is the *universal expressibility* of the dimension of being. This book considers this characteristic in detail, particularly in Section 5.1.

[iv] A fourth most universal and immanent structural characteristic differs significantly from the first three. Those three emerge from the explication of the dimension of being *with respect to the intellect*; in the terminology common since Aristotle (although problematic in the context of this book), they would be termed "theoretical characteristics." This designation can be used if it is correctly understood. Given this reservation, one

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[46] The genitive or possessive in "Hegel's book," or "the book of Hegel," is *objective* if the book in question *belongs* to Hegel, and *subjective* if the book was *written by* Hegel, thus, if Hegel (as subject) is responsible for its existence. The universal coherence is, so to speak, accomplished by the dimension of being, rather than somehow happening to be true of it, or something that comes to be true of it because of something somehow outside of it.

could say that the fourth immanent characteristic is "practical," in that it characterizes the dimension of being *with respect to another human capacity equiprimordial with the intellect*: i.e., *the will*. Just as the dimension of being must be understood as being the "object" of the intellect, the will has the dimension of being as its definitively absolute point of reference (i.e., it is that by which willing must take its bearings), but *not in the same respect*. The dimension of being is the absolutely unrestricted and complete point of reference for the intellect with respect to its first three immanent characteristics, termed above the "theoretical" ones. What is its counterpart with respect to the will?

Within the metaphysical tradition, this fourth characteristic is termed *the good*. For this reason, an axiom of this metaphysics is *omne ens est bonum* [every entity is good], or *ens et bonum convertuntur* [being and good are interchangeable]. The "idea of the good" standing at the center of Plato's philosophy has been understood, in the course of the history of philosophy, in various ways, usually without the connection to "ideas" as Plato understands them. In traditional metaphysics, attempts to determine the good are made in two ways. The first begins with the will and treats the good as its "formal object," as that which guides the will in its relating to any "material object" ("*sub ratione boni*," "with respect to the conceptual content of 'good'"). The second traditional metaphysical determination of the good is based on being: the good is the immanent characteristic of being that the will appeals or corresponds to: whatever the will does in any specific case, it always does with a view to: the good, because that is the defining characteristic of the will. The fourth (the "practical") most universal immanent characteristic of being itself is therefore the characteristic of *goodness*.

The perspective of being relevant to a characterization of the good or of goodness has a long history within the framework of the tradition of Christian metaphysics, particularly in the works of Thomas Aquinas, who (following Aristotle) articulates it as the thought of perfection (*perfectio*).[47]

[v] Sometimes, in the metaphysical tradition, *beauty* is also presented as an immanent structural characteristic of being. It is determined by means of the thought of the harmony or consonance (*consonantia*) of the previously introduced immanent structural moments of being. It is indeed a determination that emerges consequently from the question of how the unity or interconnection of these immanent structural moments is to be understood. The essential clarifications are provided in Chapter 4, in conjunction with the presentation of the *aesthetic world* (see Section 4.4.2[2][i], pp. 315–16).

[3] These five most universal immanent characteristics of the dimension of being essentially (but only in part) correspond to the thesis expressed in the traditional metaphysical axiom as *omne ens est unum, verum, bonum (et pulchrum)*. It is important to note, however, that the axiom speaks only of individual entities, of every individual entity, whereas the concern here is with the dimension of being. The characteristic of the *unum* is, in the explication sketched here, contained in the characteristic of universal *coherence*: the *unum* articulates the character of the concrete coherences or configurations that form so-called individual beings.

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[47] Consider formulations like the following: "the goodness of a thing is its perfection" (*ScG*: 86 [I 40]); "the goodness of a thing consists in its being well disposed according to the mode of its nature" (*STh* FS Q 71 A 1 Obj 3).