

Structural-Systematic Philosophy in the Realism-Antirealism Debate

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Abstract: This paper presents some contributions of Structural-Systematic Philosophy (SSP) to the realism-antirealism debate. The debate seems to have come to a dead end in recent decades, with nothing new to spur progress or any synthesis between the two positions. The purpose of this paper is to present a well-elaborated theoretical framework that helps us to rethink the foundations of the debate and our conception of language, which should be understood not just as a concrete semiotic system, but also as a dimension of reality itself. After we present some features of the realism-antirealism debate, we introduce the essential factor in overcoming the impasse between realists and antirealists, that is: the ultimate dimension, beyond which there is absolutely nothing and through which the gap between mind/language and the world is overcome. According to SSP, the ultimate dimension cannot be other than the “unrestricted universe of discourse,” namely, the all-embracing dimension of Being as Such and as a Whole. This conception implies the thesis that mind/language is intentionally coextensive with Being. The conclusion will show how the theoretical framework can assure that Being as Such and as a Whole is intelligible and expressible in itself, and how the very structure of the world/Being can be captured by mind/languages.

Keywords: Realism-Antirealism, Linguistic Framework, Being, Truth, Systematic Philosophy

1. Introduction

The realism-antirealism debate is a miscellaneous debate with very different ways of understanding what it means to be a realist or an antirealist [6]. In the realism-antirealism debate of this paper, we are referring to the relation between mind/language and the world¹. Metaphysical realists claim there is a mind-independent world that makes our beliefs about the world true or false. In contrast, antirealists claim a dependence of the world on our language and the

impossibility of having something like a “tribunal of our statements” that is not also a statement. Of course, the antirealist position does not say that trees, stones, and rivers exist only if we think about them, but just that our perception of trees, stones, and rivers always occurs inside of a *linguistic schema* – which would call into question any pretense of apprehending the intrinsic structure of the world. Antirealists accuse metaphysical realists of claiming a “myth of the given” that affirms a world outside of our linguistic framework, as if we could access a non-linguistically structured world that can approve or disapprove our beliefs. Metaphysical realists accuse antirealists of coherentism, with which they would be incapable of distinguishing between reality and fiction.

The debate seems to have come to a dead end in recent decades, with nothing new to spur progress or any synthesis between the two positions [2]. Any kind of synthesis would need to answer the following question: how can we affirm a mind-independent reality without denying the world-dependence of language? [3]. We intend to show that the essential factor in resolving this impasse constitutes an

¹ I use here the term “world” to signify reality, but this use is not strict enough. Therefore, let “world” signify just the actual world, while “reality” also embraces possible worlds and the necessary Being. SSP makes a strict distinction between these dimensions of “Being as Such and as a Whole.” See PUNTEL, 2008, p. 247. The expression, “Being as Such and as a Whole” is a technical expression in SSP, to designate its Theory of Being, also called *Primordial Metaphysics*, or *Einaiology* (from εἶναι = Being), to distinguish its position from the traditional *onto-theo-logical* metaphysics, which has beings (ὄν = being) in the center, and not Being itself. For now, we continue to use the terms “world” and “reality,” but in the full sense given by SSP.

ultimate dimension, beyond which there is absolutely nothing, and with which the gap between mind/language and world is overcome. According to the concepts of this paper, the ultimate dimension cannot be other than the all-embracing dimension of *Being*. To explain this thesis, it is crucial to construct an adequate *theoretical-linguistic framework* that helps us to also rethink our conception of language. The conception of language assumed for metaphysical purposes is almost always that of natural language [5]². Indeed, the realism-antirealism debate is not transparent about what language is and what language we are talking about. What does it mean, for example, that the objective world *depends on our* language/conceptual scheme? What does it mean that there is a world *outside of our* language?

In the following pages, we will present some contributions of *structural-systematic philosophy* (SSP) to the debate. The foundations of this new framework are to be found in the book, “*Structure and Being: A theoretical framework for a systematic philosophy*” by L. B. Puntel³. We will proceed as follows: first, we present some features of the realism-antirealism debate (I), to understand what is the main contribution of SSP (II), namely, its conception of *Being as Such and as a Whole*, and the thesis that *mind/language is intentionally coextensive with Being*; after that (III), it is essential to grasp what the *theoretical dimension* of language means and how this is crucial for revealing the universal dimension of Being. Lastly (IV), we show how the theoretical framework can assure that Being as Such and as a Whole is intelligible and expressible in itself, and how the very structure of the world/Being can be captured by mind/languages.

2. Some Features of the Debate

John McDowell, in his book *Mind and World*, portrays two positions about the relation between mind and world, against which he attempts to present an alternative. The two positions are, on the one hand, empiricism, and on the other, coherentism. Empiricism presupposes an *ontological gap* between mind/language and the world, as if there were a non-linguistically structured world capable of making our statements true. This position was defended by Quine, who considered in *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* that “our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience” [12]. In this sense, for most philosophers of this position, the truth would be a *correspondence* relation of a statement or mind with an unstructured or mind-independent

world. W. Sellars showed the big problem with this conception of empirical data, in his *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, with the idea of the “Myth of the given” [13]⁴; and Davidson elucidated the difficulty with his “third Dogma of empiricism,” namely, the dualism between a conceptual scheme and empirical content [1]. Davidson claims:

Nothing, however, no *thing*, makes sentences and theories true: not experience, not surface irritations, not the world, can make a sentence true. *That* experience takes a certain course, that our skin is warmed or punctured, that the universe is finite; these facts, if we like to talk that way, make sentences and theories true [1].

Davidson calls attention to a fundamental error of empiricism concerning a theory of truth, namely, a categorial inadequacy that puts two kinds of different entities in correspondence: on the one hand, mind; on the other, world/empirical data. To overcome this gap, Davidson proposes to face the problem from the side of language. Because all our experience of the empirical world already presupposes a conceptual scheme, there could be no correspondence between sense data and statements. He tried to fix up the correspondence theory of truth with a coherentism theory that speaks about *facts* (indeed, for Davidson *events*), instead of things or sense data. That means, what makes the sentence “my skin is warmed” true is not an unstructured brute perception of warming in my skin, but the linguistically structured fact “that my skin is warmed.”

Coherentism claims that the world is just something understood by our conceptual scheme, and so belongs to the realm of mind/language, and not to something outside of it. In this sense, a sentence is true if it is non-contradictory with the set of sentences that comprise a conceptual scheme. Indeed, there are at least two kinds of coherentism regarding the relation between mind and world. One of them is ontological coherentism, which claims that the world is ontologically made up of the same stuff of the mind, and so a true statement about the world is nothing more than coherence, understood as non-contradiction, with the ensemble of all truths. Hegel is the best example of this position, for whom there is no world outside of the mind and no objectivity outside of subjectivity. Another kind of coherentism would be an epistemological one that does not intend to speak about the nature of the world, although an objective world can be presupposed. Truth does not affirm anything about the world, but just about the realm of mind, where a sentence should harmonize with the set of sentences to be true. This last position posits an *epistemological gap* between mind and world that cannot be overcome. The truths that we produce with our categorial scheme and language say nothing about the world itself, but only about *our* world of comprehension and interest. Here we find most of the antirealists, from Kant to Rorty.

Empiricism and coherentism bring to light an essential

² As we shall see, SSP opposes this conception of language for strictly theoretical purposes.

³ *Struktur und Sein: ein Theorierahmen für eine systematische Philosophie* (2006). We quote the English version, translated by Alan White. The book is a work of broad scope, drawn up in great detail with regard to several philosophical disciplines. It is not possible to treat all the long and well-founded discussions that the author undertakes in the book. Here we examine just certain theses of the book that can be applied to the realism-antirealism debate. For a more comprehensive understanding of SSP, we invite the reader to access Puntel's own works, especially *Struktur und Sein* (2006) and *Sein und Gott* (2010). See also VIANA, 2019.

⁴ Originally, Sellars's lectures were delivered under the title “The Myth of the Given. Three Lectures on Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.”

intuition about the relationship between mind and world. On the one hand, empiricism and the correspondence theory of truth emphasize the ontological or worldly import of truth. On the other, coherentism emphasizes the impossibility of going beyond our conceptual scheme to experience an unstructured world. How can this tension be resolved without one pole destroying the other, namely, without denying either ontological or linguistic import in the discussion? Or, how can experience *of* the world be possible *through* our mind/language?

McDowell's alternative solution goes in the right direction, but without saying much. McDowell argues that the world cannot be reduced to the mind (the way coherentism imagines it could be), in the same way that mind and world cannot be two opposite things (as empiricism affirms). McDowell even affirms an "unboundedness of the conceptual," faintly indicating an all-embracing theoretical space for mind and world; but he is not able to develop this insight adequately in a linguistic framework and theory of truth⁵.

Finally, we could not fail to mention the attempt of Putnam to overcome the impasse between realists and antirealists. Putnam defended various positions during his career. He began affirming a metaphysical realism that believes there is a world already structured beyond our conceptual framework, and also a correct theory about this independent world. This conception presupposes that human reason can reach a divine perspective (*God's Eye View*), which compares theory and the world, to decide whether there is a correspondence between the two dimensions. He abandoned this view in his *Dewey Lectures* (1994) [4], and began to defend an "internal realism," which claims there is no ready-made world, and reality only exists as formed by human conceptual schemes.

However, from his "internal realism," Putnam continues to believe (against Rorty) that there exist better and worse theories for talking about reality; and not even the relativist can go against this thesis without falling into contradiction [11]. Indeed, Putnam's "internal realism" is correct in asserting that we really cannot have reality without mind/language, but he is unable to show how language relates to the world. To be sure, he is unable to defend two fundamental theses [8]: 1) reality has an *immanent structurality* that is completely expressible (or intelligible, apprehensible, articulable); 2) immanent expressibility presupposes an *expressive instance somehow coextensive with reality*, which can be understood as language in a broader sense. Both theses are included in the main contribution of SSP to resolving the realism-antirealism debate.

3. The Main Theses of SSP for Resolving the Dispute

The main contribution of SSP to the resolution of the realism-antirealism dispute is its conception of an "unrestricted universe of discourse," or, more specifically, of

(completely expressible) *Being as Such and as a Whole*, which designates the domain of inquiry of SSP, and is able to be expressed in an inchoative way under this topic. Let us call this conception (B). The expression, "unrestricted universe of discourse," contains two aspects. The first can be clarified using the expression, "unrestricted universe," which implies that the domain of inquiry of philosophy is not a specific domain or set of objects, but any real and possible subject matter. The "unrestricted universe" refers to the *ultimate dimension* that includes all beings, and also itself, in the inquiry. The history of philosophy indicated various candidates for the determination of the "unrestricted universe of discourse," e.g., Physis (pre-Socratics), Idea (Plato), Unum (Plato, Plotinus), Spirit (German Idealism). Indeed, all these candidates showed themselves to have certain restrictions. They all presuppose the unique concept of *Being*, since they *are* first of all some kind of Being, i.e., they *are* not nothing. So, for SSP, the "unrestricted universe of discourse" and the all-embracing theoretical concept is the dimension of Being [14]⁶.

The second aspect deals with the term "discourse," which refers to the dimension of mind/language, and says that all inquiry into the unrestricted universe must be brokered through language. In specific terms, the conception of "unrestricted universe of discourse" implies a thesis that *mind/language is intentionally coextensive with Being as Such and as a Whole*. Let us call this thesis (T). How does SSP explain these aspects of conception (B), and why is this concept crucial for the debate on realism-antirealism? Indeed, from conception (B) and thesis (T), the entire dispute between realists and antirealists loses its *status quaestionis*, as we shall see.

Thesis (T) of conception (B) emphasizes the core of antirealism, but in a very different way. The great insight of the antirealists is that we cannot speak about things that are *outside* of language. The antirealists' problem is that they do not consider all the consequences of this insight; they comprehend language just as *our* concrete languages, corroborating Wittgenstein's affirmation that "the limits of my language are the limits of my world." [15] How can an antirealist speak of a "limit" here? This way of speaking makes sense only if we understand language as our specific languages, like Portuguese or English; for, in point of fact, there may be (parts of the) world that one language does not express in the same way other languages do; so one language may be a limit for another language. Nonetheless, if a concrete language can thematize its own limit, this means that this language rises to a level of metalanguage, and always does remain within the sphere of language.

However, what about language in general? Could we

⁵ We cannot develop this criticism on McDowell here. For that, see PUNTEL, 2008, p. 369.

⁶ SSP makes an essential distinction between ontology and the Theory of Being. Ontology has to do with *beings* (we use the English word "being" with "b" in lower case to indicate the traditional terms *ὄν*, *ens* and the modern terms *Seiendes*, *ente*, *étant* etc.), while a theory of *Being as Such and as a Whole* or *Einology* has to do with the all-embracing dimension of beings (we use the English word "Being" with "B" in uppercase to refer to the traditional terms *εἶναι*, *esse* and to the German term *Sein*).

speak meaningfully of a “limit” here? Indeed not, for to speak about a limit of language as such, we would have had to have already overcome the limit to *say* it was a limit. As Puntel says, “to identify a limit to language is also to enter the linguistic space making it possible to speak of what is beyond the limit, and thus to negate the identification of the ‘limit’ as a limit of the language that bespeaks it *as a limit*” [8]. In other words, *if* there were a limit for language as such, we simply could not thematize it. “Language as such” means here not a specific semiotic system, but the *condition of possibility* of all concrete semiotic systems, that is, the universal dimension from which we thematize everything. In this sense, it is impossible to speak about a “limit” of language (or *linguisticity*), since this dimension comes with the same reality (world/Being), i.e., we are dealing with an unlimited dimension⁷. Before we continue to explain this great thesis, we will attempt to confront certain objections from both antirealists and metaphysical realists.

If language is to be understood as an unlimited dimension, could the antirealist argue that he is right in saying that there is a world just *for us* and not *in itself*? Not at all. The antirealist differentiation between the world *for us* and the world *in itself* is inconsistent, if we understand language/linguisticity to have a universal and unlimited dimension. Let us suppose that the antirealist understands “the world in itself” as the intrinsic features of the things in the world (like trees, stones) that we have in front of us. Is what we understand of this tree just a projection of our mind/language? Is it just *for us*? The antirealist would say that we understand just that there *is* (*exists*) something objective in front of us, but what this thing *is*, we cannot know. Here, we may recall a traditional distinction between being=*existence* and being=*essence*. The antirealist claims to see that something *exists*, but cannot say what this thing *is*. The inconsistency of this position is patent, for being=*existence* always implies something of the being=*essence*.

The contrary is not the case, i.e., the being=*essence* of something does not imply its being=*existence*. If I see that “X *exists*,” I can also see that “X *is* something and not nothing.” “X” has (at least a minimal) content; otherwise, I could not grasp its existence. So, the distinction between the world *for us* and the world *in itself* makes no sense when we understand language in its unlimited dimension and not just as concrete and limited semiotic systems. What thesis (T) means is that there is absolutely *nothing* outside of language/linguisticity, that an unlimited language is coextensive with the unrestricted universe of discourse, with Being as Such and as a Whole.

Nevertheless, now we seem to create a problem with metaphysical realists, who might say that in thesis (T), the objective world would *depend totally* on the human mind/language. However, they continue, this is false, since there was an objective world *before* humans appeared.

Indeed, no one can deny that there was an objective world before humans appeared. Therefore, thesis (T) should be understood as proof of a central point of the metaphysical realists, namely that *the world itself is intelligible and can be expressed by mind/languages*. This great insight is not worked out by the metaphysical realists, for they presuppose that languages can express the world, but do not explain how this is possible! How could the world be expressed if it were unintelligible and could not be expressed? The fact that before human languages there was an objective world proves nothing more than that the world itself was intelligible and expressible, but not *actually* expressed by our specific mind/languages. In other words, the intelligibility and expressibility of the world (before humans) were just *potential*, and were actualized by languages when humans appeared. So, if the metaphysical realist understands language here as *our* languages, he is right: the world itself does not depend on *our* concrete languages. However, if we understand language as linguisticity or as a universal dimension of the world, we must conclude that there is no world without that dimension, i.e., without the possibility of being expressed or understood.

The aspect of the “unrestricted universe” of conception (B) emphasizes the core concept of metaphysical realists, but in a very different way. Indeed, metaphysical realists think that *the* world is always wider than *my* world, understood by *my* language. However, how can *the* world be wider than *my* world, if we do not concede that the world itself has an intelligible structure, which our languages can express? Indeed, metaphysical realists emphasize the objective pole of the knowledge of the world, but do not know how to include language as a *sine qua non* universal medium. Antirealists, on the other hand, emphasize the subjective pole of knowledge of the world, as if the world were reduced to our expressed world. For SSP, neither pole is the *starting point* to close the traditional gap between subject and object, but the *all-embracing space* that includes the subjective and objective poles, called by SSP the “unrestricted universe of discourse” or *Being as Such and as a Whole*. How can we retrieve and better clarify this ultimate dimension?

The first step toward understanding what SSP means by the all-embracing space is to comprehend the meaning of a *theoretical dimension of language* which constitutes the overcoming of the modern subjectivity paradigm in philosophy. SSP articulates theoretical sentences that express a content, not from the particularistic and partial viewpoint and perspective of the subject, but from the all-embracing theoretical dimension. For SSP, a theoretical sentence (e.g. *p*) does not contain any restrictive factor like “I mean that” or “I believe that,” but it is anticipated by the theoretical operator “It is the case that” (*p*) to describe how something is localized in the all-embracing dimension. The subject plays only a secondary role here, since a theoretical sentence expresses the world from a universal perspective and not from a particularistic one. In the next topic, we explain the importance of the theoretical dimension capturing the ultimate dimension of Being.

⁷ This affirmation supposes that there are countless entities, and this is indeed the position of SSP. Being as Such and as a Whole encompasses actual facts (and not only physical facts), possible facts, and the absolute necessary Being. For the argumentation of this thesis, see PUNTEL, 2008, p. 392ff.

4. The Theoretical Dimension and Being

The ultimate dimension of Being is a kind of *ontological stage*, where all kinds of beings play a role and on which we can observe our dispute. That means we need to do a new “Copernican turn,” but this time not from objectivity to subjectivity, as Kant told us, but from subjectivity to the ultimate dimension, one that embraces both subjectivity and objectivity. In “Sein und Nichts” Puntel strives to overcome the great transcendental-idealistic-phenomenological tradition of the philosophy of subjectivity [10]⁸. Of course, the ultimate dimension is thematized by subjects/mind/language, but the particularistic perspective of subjectivity is not the determinant factor here. Instead, the starting point and determining factor for knowledge should be a universal perspective of subjectivity that puts something on the ontological stage. Subjects do this by using a conceptual scheme or linguistic framework, and that is why SSP is so careful and diligent in establishing a *linguistic-theoretical framework* that should be as universal as possible, to appropriately locate the systematic place where things are situated in the ultimate dimension of Being and beings⁹. In other words, the linguistic-theoretical framework must be thoroughly worked out to reveal, as much as possible, the universal perspective of subjectivity. What does SSP mean by “universal perspective of subjectivity” or “theoretical dimension of language”?

If we ask what language is and what it is for, the first answer can be this: language is a semiotic system used for communication between humans. Nevertheless, language has not just a communicative function, but also at least two others: self-expression and exposition. We use language to convey our subjectivity, and also to describe things, situations, or relations in the world. When we use language to expose/express/describe the world/reality, we use the *theoretical* dimension of language, which is the most crucial dimension for science and philosophy. Both these disciplines aim to expose reality in its features, trying to be as objective as possible, i.e., without permitting that prejudices, subjective interests and the subjective perspective interfere in its analysis. Of course, we cannot access reality without *our* linguistic-theoretical framework; and, because of that, the question arises as whether *our* language can apprehend any objective feature of the world. The realism-antirealism debate

boils down to this question, and if the answer were no, that would have tragic consequences for theoretical disciplines like science and philosophy.

Let us cut to the chase! We may say that the relation between language and reality can be conceived according to three positions [7]: Either 1) language cannot expose reality and so can provide statements only about the inner world of subjectivity, or 2) language deforms reality and again shows just a subjective caricature of the world, or 3) language can expose reality. The first position is incoherent, because if language cannot expose reality, how could we trust in this statement “that language cannot expose reality”? It pretends to describe *the* reality that our language cannot expose reality, and so falls into a contradiction. The second position suffers from the same shortcoming; indeed, if language caricatures reality, how can we trust in this very position? The only coherent position is the third one; for, if language exposes reality, there is no contradiction with the statement “that language exposes reality.”

However, this argumentation to defend the third position is still very coarse, because a real relation between language and the world has different levels of clarity and articulation. The exposition of science and philosophy should not have the same level of clarity and accuracy that common sense has with its ordinary language. Clearly, the rejection of ordinary language for theoretical purposes is not a consensus in contemporary philosophy. With the pragmatic turn, most philosophers take for granted that ordinary language is the only option for science and philosophy, arguing that there is no way to construct meaning without a pragmatic context. However, with a pragmatic context, ambiguities and opacities pop up, since we use ordinary language mainly to communicate and not to describe things; which means that some ambiguities of pragmatical context can be eliminated just through an infinite dialogue. Because of that, some philosophers prefer to incorporate in science and philosophy a kind of artificial theoretical language or linguistic framework, that aims not to communicate in the first instance, but to expose reality as precisely and objectively as possible. Among these philosophies is SSP.

For SSP, only a *theoretical language* can overcome the long tradition that goes from Descartes through German Idealism to today’s analytical philosophy, which takes the category of subjectivity as its philosophical point of departure. These philosophies always begin from the perspective of the subject, and a signal for that is the use of ordinary language as a *medium* to do philosophy. What is the problem with ordinary languages like German, English, or Italian, for engaging in science and philosophy? Indeed, the main problem with these languages is the inconsistency of their semantics and ontology, namely the compositional principle and substance ontology¹⁰.

⁸ See chapters 5 to 7.

⁹ The basic elements of a theoretical linguistic framework are *sentences*, *propositions*, and *facts*. To summarize, SSP uses the term “primary” to refer to these elements, to distinguish them from other conceptions on the market. Theoretical sentences are called *primary sentences*, because SSP rejects the composition of singular terms and predicates, working only with the operator “It is the case that” (e.g., *p*). Primary sentences are understood as the *carrier* for *primary propositions*. In this sense, a primary sentence is true only if it *expresses* a true primary proposition. The most important feature of the primary proposition is that it is not composed of a singular term and predicate, but constitutes a whole informative semantic value of a declarative primary sentence. Finally, a *primary fact* constitutes the ontological face of a true primary proposition. Accordingly, the primary sentence has a full determinate *status* iff it expresses a true primary proposition; a primary proposition is true iff it is identical to a primary fact (in the world) (PUNTEL, 2008, p. 232ff).

¹⁰ The central difficulty with this ontology is the presupposition of an unintelligible entity “*x*” that has an attribute “*F*.” Indeed, we can never comprehend “*x*” without any “*F*.” SSP rejects substance ontology and develops an ontology comprising just the intelligible part of the expression “*Fx*,” i.e., discarding the “*x*” and keeping the “*F*,” to transform it into one primary

Although the subjective perspective on knowledge constitutes an unavoidable dimension, it is a secondary dimension for theoretical disciplines like science and philosophy. SSP formulates an adequate definition of knowledge, as follows: *S* knows that *p*, iff: 1) *S* believes that *p* is true, and 2) *S* believes that *S*'s belief that *p* is true is justified [8]. The definition considers the truth of *p* from the perspective of *S*, but this does not imply that an objective or universal perspective is impossible. When we are inclined to think there is no objective perspective from a subjective perspective, it is because we are confusing subjective with a *particularistic* perspective, and this is wrong. When we say "*S* believes that..." this can also be said through a *universal* perspective, insofar as the subject neutralizes his prejudices and private and partial vision of the facts and tries to focus attention on the things themselves (*die Sachen selbst*). Of course, one simple question arises: how can we be sure that *S* knows something from a universal and not just particularistic perspective, or better, if the thing we know was indeed placed into the all-embracing dimension?

It all boils down to a theoretical investigation and justification that culminates in the acquisition of truth¹¹. SSP considers the universal perspective of knowledge as a full determination of the theoretical dimension of language, realized in the concept of truth. So, if the knowledge of *p* reached a universal perspective, we could say that *p* achieved a full theoretical determination (let us use the operator 'Ⓣ' to identify a theoretical sentence *p*). 'Ⓣ*p*' can be well translated with the criterion theoreticity formulated by Wittgenstein [15]: "It is the case that *p*" ("*Es verhält sich so dass p*"), and this signifies that sentence *p* has captured and expressed the reality of *p*; this means that *p* was localized in the ultimate dimension of Being and beings. How can a theoretical sentence indicate the ultimate dimension?

The central idea is that in the operator "It is the case that..." the "It" points to the ultimate dimension of Being, presupposed in the theoretical sentence. This interpretation can be made explicit with the example of the sentence, "it rains." In this sentence, the "it" indicates that there is an action of raining at a specific point in space-time, also indirectly pointing to the action of raining in general, that is, for the entire "rain dimension" [9]. However, the action of raining also presupposes other dimensions of reality that limit

it; that is: "there *is* raining" and not "there *is* snowing." This procedure can be further extended by observing that a comprehensive dimension is presupposed by all dimensions that are "occurring" or "being," that is to say, the ultimate dimension apprehends the meaning of that "being" of all dimensions that a simple theoretical sentence like "It is the case that *p*" indicates.

Moreover, if a sentence *p* has achieved a universal perspective and a full theoretical *status*, *p* is true. If the truth of a sentence *p* localizes some 'object'/situation/fact in the ontological stage of Being as Such and as a Whole, sentence *p* really does capture what happens in the world/Being; i.e., there is no gap between language and world, and also there is no incarceration of knowledge in the world of a concrete language and subjectivity. We need to show why a "primary proposition" expressed by a *theoretical sentence* has ontological import (i.e., is placed at the ontological stage of the world/Being itself and not just in the sphere of language) if the semantic status of this sentence is fully determined, that is, if the theoretical sentence is true. So, the question now becomes the following: how is it possible for true primary propositions or primary facts to *express* the world/Being?

5. The Expressibility of World/Being and Language

SSP affirms that primary propositions (at least implicitly) *express* the world/Being. This thesis implies that reality (world/unrestricted universe of discourse/Being) itself is intelligible and can therefore be expressed¹². Of course, we already know that language can express/explain something, even if it is the language itself, as antirealists think. Like antirealists, let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is a world outside of language, and we have intelligible access just to the realm of language. In this case, there would be something outside. We know about its existence, but do not know about its essence or intrinsic nature (see above the refutation of this thesis). Also, in this case, we would have two dimensions or realms, one intelligible for us and another unintelligible. What can we conclude from this duality? It is straightforward to show that the antirealist does not reflect on the very *difference* between the two realms. The poles of the difference could be expressed with terms like mind and world, language and world, propositions and facts. However, how is it possible to see the difference? We should conclude that one cannot think about a difference without presupposing a common dimension between the poles. If this is so, what can we say about this common dimension?

Heidegger's critique of the metaphysical tradition from Aristotle to Husserl focused precisely on this point: the metaphysical tradition, says Heidegger, would have always

theoretical sentence: "It is the case that *F*," which expresses the primary proposition, < It is the case that *F*. > SSP defends a sort of *bundle theory*, but the resemblance is merely superficial, mainly because SSP also throws out the principle of compositionality, which hides a substance ontology and is embraced by most of the bundle theories. SSP extracts its conception of primary proposition from a strong version of the context principle, which is incompatible with the principle of compositionality (see PUNTEL, 2008, p. 199ff).

11 In a word, SSP sustains a *semantic-ontological theory of truth*, where "truth" is not understood as a predicate, but as a determination of the *status* of a sentence by the operator, "It is true that..." In this sense, the primary sentence *p* (which expresses a primary proposition) goes through different phases of a semantic determination, according to the operator before it. The primary sentence is a kind of *PERsentence* (PER from Latin *perficere*= to perfect, to complete), that should be perfected, completed through theoretical investigation, namely, a '*sententia perficienda*' (see PUNTEL, 2008, p. 228).

12 As we see, one of the most significant theses of SSP constitutes the intrinsic connection between semantics and ontology, from which the concept of *truth* emerges as a full determination of a primary proposition revealing itself to be a primary fact.

thematized the beings (ὄν, *ens*), but not Being (εἶναι, *esse*), which should be understood as the dimension that embraces all beings, but that is not itself a being. If this criticism is applied to our subject here, it is easy to see that the difference between mind and world presupposes a meta-dimension that includes both mind and world. In order to embrace the difference, the Being's dimension must be a principle of the intelligibility of both poles. If the antirealist contraposes that the intelligibility cannot belong to both poles, but just to the pole of mind/language, he would incur in incoherence, for he can indeed *see* that world is something different from mind/language, since he grants that there is a world outside of our language, of which we can say nothing. How could he understand this difference vis-à-vis the mind without affirming this non-mind characteristic of the world? So, he has to admit that there is something intelligible on the opposite side of language, and this, we would say, is because of the all-embracing dimension of Being. In a word, this meta-dimension is the condition of the possibility to see any (even a minimal) difference between the poles.

The all-embracing dimension of Being cannot guarantee the intelligibility of the non-intelligibility of the world, which is contradictory. If the poles of mind and world are different manifestations of the Being dimension, then the intelligibility of Being as Such reaches not only the pole of mind but also the pole of the world. That implies that the world is as intelligible as the mind, and so is also as expressible as the mind. *Expressibility* is a consequence of intelligibility, for something is intelligible at the moment it can be expressed, and there is an instance that expresses it. Mind/language is nothing more than an instance of the all-embracing Being that can express the same Being, while the world is one dimension of the all-embracing Being that can be expressed by mind/language. In sum, if mind/language can express Being, or, better, if mind/language is *intentionally coextensive with Being as Such and as a Whole* (thesis T), then we need to affirm the intelligibility and expressibility of *Being as Such and as a Whole* (conception B), and also broaden our understanding of language as a medium of expression by the mind.

Indeed, one substantial consequence of that is that language cannot be reduced to *our* languages and *our* semiotic systems of communication, as we saw above; for all our semiotic systems have a limited number of expressions. Instead of that, if Being itself is intelligible and expressible, we must understand language as a *Semiotic System with Countless Signs/Expressions*, i.e., as a dimension of Being itself at the moment that Being as Such and as a Whole can be expressed by mind/languages. With this new comprehension of Being and Language, SSP tries to overcome the *dead end* at which the realism-antirealism debate has arrived in recent decades.

SSP's comprehension of language as a *Semiotic System with Countless Signs/Expressions* is widely discussed and defended in *Structure and Being* [8]. We cannot reproduce all the argumentation in this paper, but three points are essential to restate. The first is that the number of possible linguistic expressions of a given language should be as great as the

number of actual and possible entities of Being as Such and as a Whole. In the SSP's theoretical framework, this implies the following: the relation between primary propositions and primary facts must be *bijective* and not just injective or surjective; to wit, there should be a primary sentence and primary proposition for every single primary fact. The second point refers to the actualization of this kind of language: an *actual* or immediate concretization at one and the same time of all expressions of the linguisticity of Being as Such and as a Whole is impossible; this being the case, any concrete theoretical framework must always be understood only as a *segment* of this language, which already happens with an ordinary language. The last point is that a linguistic framework, namely a segment of this language, is, in fact, a human product, not the linguistic dimension of Being; this dimension arises together with the world itself.

6. Conclusion

We began by affirming that SSP's theoretical framework, with its conception (B) and thesis (T), permits a kind of synthesis between metaphysical realism and antirealism. Indeed, SSP endorses both the ontological import of metaphysical realism and the crucial role of the linguistic framework of the antirealists. However, in opposition to the former, it should be said that there is no world independent of language, where we understand language as a dimension of Being as Such and as a Whole. In disagreement with the latter, it should be said that since world/Being cannot be reduced to *our* language, then our language is just one segment of the linguistic dimension of Being. To achieve a synthesis, SSP had to elaborate a new *theoretical framework* in its logical, epistemological, semantic and ontological aspects. In this linguistic framework, conception (B) affirms that there is nothing outside of the ultimate dimension of Being, while thesis (T) affirms that language corresponds, on the one hand, to the instance capable of expressing Being, but also to the very expressibility of Being. In this sense, it makes no sense to talk about "outside" of world/Being or language – which constitutes the core of the discussion between realists and antirealists. The final result is the filling of any gap between language and world/Being, for mind/languages is understood as the instance of Being that can *express* reality; while world/Being reveals a *linguistic dimension* or an *immanent structurality* and *expressibility*, which means that the very structure of the world/Being can be captured by our specific languages.

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