

Contents

Preface	x
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	1
1 The Task of Philosophy	3
1.1 The Erotetic Nature of Philosophy: Philosophy as a Cognitive Enterprise	3
1.2 The Need for Philosophy: Humans as Homo Quaerens	6
1.3 Rationality is the Instrument of Philosophy	10
1.4 Philosophy as Truth Estimation	13
1.5 The Data of Philosophy	15
1.6 Metaphilosophical Issues	17
2 Philosophizing as an Erotetic Enterprise: The Dialectic of Question and Answer	21
2.1 Questions and their Presuppositions: Issues Regarding the Legitimacy of Questions	21
2.2 Question Dynamics: Kant's Principle of Question Propagation and the Dialectical Exfoliation of Questions	23
2.3 Philosophy as a Venture in Erotetic Dialectic	27
2.4 Philosophical Assessment	29

Contents

3	What's on the Agenda?	33
3.1	Unexamined Issues and Agenda Formation	33
3.2	The Recent Scene	36
3.3	Metaphilosophy a Part of Philosophy Itself	39
3.4	The Political Dimension: A Struggle for Ownership	41
3.5	The Systemic Dimension	43
4	Philosophical Discourse	45
4.1	The Narrative Dimension of Philosophy	45
4.2	The Method of Philosophy: Truth-estimative Conjecture	48
4.3	Ongoing Explanation	50
4.4	Historical Unity of Philosophy	52
5	Interpreting Philosophical Texts	57
5.1	Setting the Stage: Deconstructionism	57
5.2	Exegetical Interpretation	60
5.3	Why Philosophical Texts Need Interpretation	62
5.4	The Principle of Contextuality: Context Coherence as an Interpretative Standard	65
5.5	The First Law	71
5.6	The Second Law	73
5.7	The Third Law	74
5.8	The Fourth Law	75
6	Rhetoric and Rational Argumentation	77
6.1	Rhetoric vs. Argumentation: The General Situation	77
6.2	An Uneasy Union	78
6.3	The Special Case of Philosophy	80
6.4	Philosophy's Data: The Sources of Plausibility	86
7	Philosophical Aporetics	93
7.1	The Pervasiveness of Apories	93
7.2	Aporetic Antinomies Structure the Issues	99
8	The Economic Dimension of Philosophical Inquiry	103
8.1	Plausibility as a Guide to Issues of Precedence and Priority	103

8.2	Cost-effectiveness as a Salient Aspect of Rationality	107
8.3	Unacceptable Price Argumentation in Philosophy	110
9	The Impact of Distinctions	116
9.1	The Role of Distinctions	116
9.2	Dialectic Development via Distinctions	120
9.3	Developmental Dialectics	125
10	Inference to the Best Explanation and its Problems	132
10.1	Difficulties with Inference to the Best Explanation	132
10.2	Best Systematization as a Viable Alternative	138
11	The Coherentist Criteriology of Truth as a Philosophical Method	142
11.1	Coherentism in Philosophy	142
11.2	How Context Helps via Local Appropriateness	144
11.3	Philosophical Coherentism is Self-sustaining	149
12	Why Philosophizing Must be Systematic: The Holistic Nature of Philosophy	151
12.1	Externalities and Negative Side Effects	151
12.2	Systematic Interconnectedness as a Consequence of Aporetic Complexity	156
12.3	Local Minimalism vs. Global Optimatism	158
12.4	Why Not Simply "Live with Inconsistency?" The Imperative of Cognitive Rationality	161
12.5	The Methodological Rationale of Systematicity in Philosophy	164
13	Systematization as an Instrument of Inquiry	170
13.1	Hierarchical Systematization: The Euclidean Model of Knowledge	171
13.2	Systematicity and the Impetus To Coherence: The Network Model	173
13.3	The Advantages of a Network Model	179
13.4	The Pivotal Role of Data for a Coherentist Truth Criteriology	185
13.5	Coherentism's Exploitation of the Parameters of Systematicity	191

Contents

13.6	Systematization as Truth Criterion: The Hegelian Inversion	192
14	Developmental Dialectics and Complexity	197
14.1	Spencer's Law: The Dynamics of Cognitive Complexity	197
14.2	The Methodological Status of Simplicity Preference: Systematicity, Economy, and the Principle of Least Effort	199
14.3	Perennial Philosophy	205
14.4	Rational Dialectic in Philosophy	210
15	Counterfactual Reasoning as a Philosophical Instrument	217
15.1	Historical Stage Setting	218
15.2	Belief-contravening Supposition: How Apories Arise in Hypothetical Contexts	221
15.3	The Centrality of Precedence (Right of Way)	226
15.4	Logic as Such Does Not Resolve Matters	228
15.5	Reductio ad Absurdum Argumentation	230
15.6	Evidential Contexts	231
15.7	The Situation in Philosophy	231
15.8	An Overview	232
15.9	Dispensing with "Possible Worlds"	234
16	Validating First Principles	241
16.1	First Principles	241
16.2	Historical Postscript	244
17	God's Place in Philosophy (Non in Philosophia Recurrere est ad Deum)	246
17.1	Two Opposed Intuitions	246
17.2	Theistic vs. Naturalistic Questions	247
17.3	The Closure of the Secular Realm	248
17.4	Internal vs. External	250
17.5	Philosophy and Theology	250
17.6	Explanatory Economy in Philosophy	252
17.7	Conclusion	253

18 Philosophy at The Turn of the Century: A Return to Systems?	257
18.1 The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century	257
18.2 The Revolt Against System (System-dismissive Antisystems)	259
18.3 The Shipwreck of Interbellum Negativism	260
18.4 The Burned Bridges	262
18.5 The Rise of Particularism	264
18.6 A Vision of Wholeness	266
18.7 The New Order: A Revival of Systematic Philosophy	267
18.8 The Contemporary Situation	269
 Bibliography	 275
Name Index	280