

While the term “theory of everything” is usually associated with contemporary physics, this book shows that such a theory properly pertains to philosophy. Indeed, the author convincingly argues that no theory presented by contemporary physics could really be a “theory of everything” since contemporary physics has as its subject matter a restricted universe of discourse. Conversely, philosophy is a strictly theoretical endeavor whose subject matter is the unrestricted universe of discourse. And since the unrestricted universe of discourse includes everything, a philosophical theory whose subject matter is the unrestricted universe of discourse is a philosophical theory of everything.

This sharply distinguishes this book from most contemporary philosophy works, which tend to adopt the divide-and-conquer strategy of the natural sciences. They deal with some area of specialization in philosophy – ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophy of language etc. – making few attempts to determine how all these areas might fit together.

In this regard the author shows that one may present a theory about how all the restricted universes of discourse of the various restricted philosophical or scientific inquiries may fit together only if one thematizes the unrestricted universe of discourse. And the latter is a subject matter that natural sciences must leave to philosophy, a philosophy not restricted to any area of specialization but dealing with everything. This view is similar to that of several classical philosophers, such as Descartes, who stated that philosophy aims at “a perfect knowledge of all things that man can know, both for the conduct of his life, and for the preservation of his health, and for the invention of all the arts.” It differs importantly, however, in rejecting the very idea of a “perfect knowledge of all things that man can know,” aiming instead toward a philosophical theory of everything that is the best that is currently available, but one that may in the future give way to superior alternatives.

Of course, no single book could actually deal with everything, but the range of philosophical topics the author addresses in this book is impressive: truth, knowledge, three essential ways that the mind relates to the world (theoreticity, practicality, and affectivity), human freedom, beauty, being and God – topics which are both of great philosophical importance and of deep human concern.