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Preface

Information and Control Revisited

“Les systèmes ne sont pas dans la nature, mais dans l’esprit des hommes.”

C. Bernard, *Introduction à L’Étude de la Médecine Expérimentale* (1865)

“Was wir liefern sind eigentlich Bemerkungen zur Naturgeschichte des Menschen; aber keine kuriose Beiträge, sondern Feststellungen von Fakten, an denen niemand gezweifelt hat, und die dem Bemerkwerden nur entgehen, weil sie sich ständig vor unsern Augen herumtreiben.”

L. Wittgenstein, *Bemerkungen über die Grundlagen de Mathematik* (1956)

Two themes, in counterpoint, are the motif of this book. The first one is the autonomy exhibited by systems in nature. The second one is their cognitive, informational abilities.

These two themes stand in relation to one another as the inside and the outside of a circle drawn in a plane, inseparably distinct, yet bridged by the hand that draws them.

Autonomy means, literally, self-law. To see what this entails, it is easier to contrast it with its mirror image, allonomy or external law. This is, of course, what we call *control*. These two images, autonomy and