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# The Contribution and Philosophical Development of the Reformational Philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd: An Historical Overview

## ABSTRACT

Herman Dooyeweerd and Dirk H. Th. Vollenhoven played complementary roles in the development of Reformational philosophy. This paper examines the role that Dooyeweerd had to play and examines the development of his philosophy.

**Keywords:** Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven, Reformational Philosophy

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## 1. Introduction

Vollenhoven's slightly younger contemporary and brother-in-law, Herman Dooyeweerd (7 October 1894-12 to February 1977), achieved much greater prominence than he did; so much so that 'Reformational' and 'Dooyeweerdian' came almost to be seen as interchangeable terms. However, as has been seen already (Ive, 2015), and as will be argued below, the relationship can be better understood as a complementary partnership.

## 2. Early life and education

Dooyeweerd's background through his father was Kuyperian, while his mother had been influenced strongly by the tradition represented by Herman Frederik Kohlbrügge (1803-1875), who emphasised the grace of God to the sinful believer. This combination of a Christian vision of God's universal sovereignty combined with an intense personal piety remained a continuing element in his upbringing. Like Vollenhoven, he went to the Eben Haëzer primary school in the Gereformeerde 'pillar', and then to the Gereformeerde Gymnasium in Amsterdam. Dooyeweerd also enrolled in the VU in 1912. He was initially disappointed by the lack of a thoroughgoing working out of a full Calvinistic worldview at the university (Verburg 2015, 5; Dooyeweerd 1977; Henderson 1994, 17-21).

At the same time, his mystical tendency can be seen in the articles that he wrote for the student almanac of the VU in 1915 on his own religious orientation, and on the poet and thinker, Frederik van Eeden, (Dooyeweerd 1915 a,b; Henderson 1994, 22; Friesen 2015, 128-31) an interest he shared with Vollenhoven (Friesen 2003, Friesen 2015, 137-8).

Friesen sees a link between Dooyeweerd's mysticism and that of Kuyper to Franz von Baader (1765-1841), the German Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian (Friesen 2003, 2015, 34-49, 82-3, 214). He argues that Kuyper came to a knowledge of Baader via the Dutch theologians J.H. Gunning and De la Saussaye at least with respect to the notion of the supra-temporal heart which come to the fore in Dooyeweerd's thought during the 1920s (Friesen, 2015, 50-95). However, Strauss argues that the mysticism of Baader and the other thinkers mentioned by Friesen was of an organic character, rather than one of 'sphere sovereignty' in the Reformational sense, and moreover, denies that Dooyeweerd can be characterised as a mystical thinker since he wants to deny both rationalism and irrationalism (Strauss 2004).<sup>1</sup>

Dooyeweerd's doctoral thesis, a technical examination of the constitutional role of the Dutch cabinet (Dooyeweerd 1917),<sup>2</sup> brought home to him the chaotic state of contemporary theory in the field of jurisprudence. After completing his thesis, Dooyeweerd found himself in critical dialogue with the Marburg and 'Baden' schools of neo-Kantians, both greatly influential in the Netherlands at the time. This accentuated his desire to find a satisfactory philosophical approach, along Calvinist lines, for the study of law (Dooyeweerd 1922).

### 3. Dooyeweerd's role in the making of Reformational Philosophy

Dooyeweerd's concern to develop a fully-fledged Calvinistic philosophy was advanced through his relationship with Vollenhoven, especially from the time when they were both living in The Hague. In December 1920, Dooyeweerd wrote to Vollenhoven expressing his interest in deepening his own philosophical understanding. He mentioned his interest especially in the way in which Vollenhoven was starting to identify the diversity of forms of knowledge, reflecting the diversity of reality, an insight which Vollenhoven was developing through his reading of the Baden school of neo-Kantians (Ive 2012, § 2.1, 47-8; 2015, 164; see Dooyeweerd's letter in Stellingwerf 1992, 47-48).<sup>3</sup>

The conversations between the two brothers-in-law rapidly bore fruit. In mid-1922, there was the 'discovery' of the modalities during a walk on the dunes near The Hague (Dooyeweerd 1977 cited in Verburg 1989, 20; cf Henderson 1994, 37-38; Ive 2012, § 2.1, 48-9; 2015, 166). They undertook to work out Kuyper's principle of 'sphere sovereignty' ('souvereiniteit in eigen kring') in a systematic way. Whereas for Kuyper this was primarily a social vision, for Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven it extended to a philosophical account of the whole of created reality and introduced an intensive philosophical rigour into Kuyper's somewhat unsystematic conception (Dooyeweerd 1973, 8-13; Dooyeweerd 1977, 48-51; Vollenhoven [1950n] 1992, 45; 2005, §112, 71-73; Wolters 1985, 5-8).

In October 1922, Dooyeweerd became deputy director of the Kuyper Foundation, the research institute of the A.R.P. He indicated later that on taking up his post at the Kuyper Foundation that he had already come to a 'still very rudimentary' conception of his philosophy (Dooyeweerd *W.d.W.*, 1. v; *N.C.* 1. v; Verburg 2015, 33, n. 53), i.e. by October 1922 (see Dooyeweerd 1961a, 47-49; 1925a, and *W.d.W.*, 1.vii; *N.C.* 1.vii Henderson 1994, 30-50). This conception was set out in the document called 'Kosmos en Logos', which Dooyeweerd incorporated this wholesale early the following year into a critique of Roman Catholic political theory, which he prepared for the A.R.P. The conception outlined in 'Kosmos en Logos' was to be the keystone of a radical new Calvinist epistemology which Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven intended to work on together. Later, in September 1925, Dooyeweerd wrote of a plan made 'two years' (in fact, three years) earlier which had to be temporally abandoned because of Vollenhoven's illness (Dooyeweerd 1923a; Henderson 1994, 34-35; Stellingwerff 1990, 118; Ive 2012, § 2.1, 50 n. 152; 2015, 167).

1 See Friesen's reply (2005a).

2 Quoted in Henderson (1994, 24-25); see also Verburg (1989, 25-26).

3 Dooyeweerd, '[Letter of 17 December 1920 to Vollenhoven]' in *Vollenhoven Archive* (1920).

In this text we see a close alignment with the sort of position to which Vollenhoven was also moving (Against the Marburg neo-Kantian subsumption of all ontology and epistemology under the logical act of appropriation, Dooyeweerd affirms the pre-logical status of the world as 'cosmos'. He argues against the neo-Kantians, those of the Marburg and Baden schools alike, that the ontic (the range of what is 'out there') is irreducible to the noetic (one's intra-mental representations). Before one can make sense of the world logically (the point from where the Marburg neo-Kantians start), one is already presented with several other 'fields of vision' ('gezichtsvelden'): numerical, spatial, temporal and physical. For Dooyeweerd, there is a diversity of different epistemic constructions (*Gegenstände*), each formed by the knowing subject, appropriate to a particular 'field of vision' or 'modality'. Each of those aspects is governed by its own laws or norms and so forms a distinctive and irreducible law-sphere. Therefore, considerations of logic can only be taken into account *after* these other (mind-independent) aspects of the world have first been accounted for (Dooyeweerd 1923b passim; 1997, 17-18; Verburg 2015, 54ff; Henderson 1994, 102-113; Ive 2012, § 2.1, 50 n. 152; 2015, 167). Much later, Dooyeweerd himself distinguishes the 'intentional' and the 'ontic' in this sense (Dooyeweerd 1953, 1, 39).

There are some reservations about the extent of Vollenhoven's influence in this work which largely concern Dooyeweerd's references to the need to see the world '*sub specie aeternitatis*' – a different emphasis, *prima facie*, from Vollenhoven's emphasis on human embodiment (Tol 2010, 341, 367). However, the notion of different ways of knowing, and by implication of being, reflected closely the character of the intensive conversations between the two philosophers (Dooyeweerd 1923a; Tol 2010, 320-341, 361).

Like Vollenhoven, Dooyeweerd came to a deeper understanding of the religious roots of both his ontology and his epistemology. During his time at the Kuyper Foundation, Dooyeweerd came to see the heart as the keystone of a reformed epistemology. He recounts an incident shortly after he began working at the Kuyper Foundation in 1922 when he picked up a collection of Christian reflections by Kuyper (1923 – first published in 1888). He was gripped by Kuyper's account of the 'heart' as the centre of human existence and the root of true knowledge flowing from one's underlying relationship with God. He saw this as a radical break from the medieval 'scholastic' conception, in which the heart was regarded as being the seat of the emotions, distinct from the intellect and the other human faculties, rather than central to the whole human person in his or her relation to God and the world (Henderson 1994, 113-115; Stellingwerff 2006, 37-38).<sup>4</sup>

Dooyeweerd had two alternative conceptions of law and of the political order to respond to, namely those of the Christian Democrats (Roman Catholic) and the Christian Historical Party. Although these parties were political allies, Dooyeweerd had the task of ensuring that the A.R.P. developed its thinking along distinctively Calvinistic (or 'Reformational') lines. Thus, Dooyeweerd developed his account of a distinctive Calvinistic political philosophy (informed by its own comprehensive epistemology and ontology) in dialogue with two opposing but equally powerful intellectual traditions in Christian thought.

The first was the tradition of Thomism (which informed the thinking of the Christian Democrats) as the classical representative of Roman Catholic political thought, a tradition which had been revived in the Roman Catholic Church at the end of the nineteenth century, encouraged by the publication of the papal encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879). The second was that of historicism, informed by the writings of Lutheran political thinkers of the nineteenth century (characteristic of the Christian Historical Party).

Dooyeweerd attempted to steer the A.R.P.'s philosophy between the Scylla of the unchanging complex of natural law and the Charybdis of historical relativism (or conversely,

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4 Henderson refers to I.K.O.R. '1973 television interview'; see also Kuyper (1976, 25). Dooyeweerd's account of the 'heart' is discussed in Ive (2012, 136-147).

uncritical acceptance of the *status quo*) represented by historicism. Both these traditions would remain his discussion partners throughout his life. However, merely to state the problems he faced in these terms is misleading. He did not merely wish to navigate a middle course – he wished to find a distinctively Calvinistic basis upon which to critique these two positions and provide a systematic alternative. While Dooyeweerd's ostensible aim was to produce responses to the natural law and Christian historical positions of the parties in coalition with the A.R.P., his deepest concern was to address the issues with which he had been wrestling prior to his appointment at the Kuyper Foundation, and which had been the subject of intense and extensive discussion with Vollenhoven in the two years preceding his appointment.

Dooyeweerd's concerns were wider than merely the dialogue with the A.R.P.'s Christian political partners. His overarching concern lay in the question of epistemology. Here, as we have seen above, his main discussion partners (figuratively speaking) were the Marburg and Baden neo-Kantians. It was this discussion which raised for him the deepest questions of epistemology (Dooyeweerd 1961b; 1926a).

At this point, Dooyeweerd characterises his position as a '*transcendental realism*' (Dooyeweerd's italics) which he describes as 'a middle ground between the Thomistic-Aristotelian speculative epistemology, on the one hand, which presupposes a rational community of being between God and the rational creature, and the critical idealism of Kant, on the other'. This is also called 'critical realism' and characterizes both Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd's thinking at the time (Verberg 1989, 33; Tol 2010, 9, 290-299). Both Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd see critical realism as the proper Christian position *vis à vis* the 'critical idealism' which characterises the different schools of Kantian thought.

Critical realism emphasises the mind-independency of that which comes to be known, as opposed to critical idealism, which sees the elements and constitution of the world in basically mind-dependent terms. As we have seen, this contrast is heightened with respect to the Marburg neo-Kantians who not only see the world in thoroughly mind-dependent terms, but also see that mind-dependency in terms of a specific form of knowledge: the logical or analytical (Ive 2012, 79-80). Henderson (1994, 19-20) sees Dooyeweerd's espousal of critical realism to be influenced by Anne Anema, who taught him at the VU and to whom, of all his teachers there, Dooyeweerd seems to have felt the greatest affinity.

During the course of 1923, Dooyeweerd came to characterise his philosophy as the 'philosophy of the cosmonomic Idea' or '... law-Idea' ('wijsbegeerte der wetsidee') (Dooyeweerd 1923c, 6, 65, 116; 1924-1925, 9-10; 1997, 15-19; 1926b, 64; 1926c, 14-20, 60-73; 1928a, 23-35).<sup>5</sup> In fact, Dooyeweerd had been moving towards this the previous year (Henderson 1994, 123-124, 144-155, 160). Dooyeweerd claims that he found the notion of the 'law-Idea' ('wetsidee') through reading the German Lutheran theologian, Matthias Schneckenberger where it is set out schematically as a characterisation of Calvin's Christology and ethics (Dooyeweerd 1923c, 6; 1924-1925, Stellingwerff 2006, 9 (n.1), 35; Verburg 63). He later replaces the term 'wetsidee' with that of the 'transcendental ground-Idea' (cf Dooyeweerd's *W.d.W.*: 1.114, 115 with *N.C.*, 1.147, 148). For Dooyeweerd this 'cosmonomic Idea' plays an architectonic role similar to that which Vollenhoven, by 1921, had come to accord to the 'metalogical' role of intuition (Dooyeweerd 1924-1925, 9-10; 1926c, 14,64; Kraay 1980, 2,7; Kok, 292). The role that the 'cosmonomic Idea' plays in binding the modalities together 'systatically' (on the ontic side) and 'synthetically' (on the noetic side) owes much to the prior thinking of Vollenhoven.

With the help of this framework, Dooyeweerd embarked on an extensive programme, publishing a Calvinist overview of philosophical development through the centuries. This culminated in the enunciation of a Calvinist worldview in the Kuyperian tradition: that of the Lordship of Christ over every sphere of life (Dooyeweerd 1926d; 1926e, 66; see Strauss 1971,

5 See Kraay (1979, 137, 146); Verburg (1989, 62-76); Henderson (1994, 123, 132, 157-159, 162).

71), a position he developed further upon his appointment as Professor of the Philosophy of Law at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) at Amsterdam.

In his inaugural address at the VU, Dooyeweerd articulates a vision of God's providential world plan combined with the affirmation of God's sovereignty over every sphere of creation – a re-articulation of Kuyper's vision of the unfolding of God's sovereign purposes in the context of human history. He sets out the foundations of all Christian thought according to the principle of divine creation. This combines the confession of God's sovereign providence and the coherence of the law-spheres under his sovereignty (Dooyeweerd 1926c, 61; Kraay 1980, 3).

This position is developed in his article on juridical causality of 1928, where he sees the Logos as having an ordering role within the overall coherence (Dooyeweerd 1926f, 423-425; 1926g, 68; 1926c, 67-69). Dooyeweerd had already pointed to the 'root of this vitality' ('wortel van deze vitaliteit') as the 'the divine sovereignty ... over the whole of creation' ('de goddelijke souvereiniteit ... over de gehele schepping') in his *Calvinism and Natural Law* ('*Calvinisme en Natuurrecht*') originally written in 1923 (Dooyeweerd 1925b, 3; Verburg 2015, 69-70; Henderson 1994, 117 (n. 209); Tol 2010, 361). In this article he sees the modalities as ordered by the 'Logos', which he identified with the logical modality (Dooyeweerd 1928a, 16-42).

However, by 1930, Dooyeweerd sees the 'logos' (now lower case) as one sphere among many and no longer the basis on which the other law spheres cohere (Dooyeweerd 1930a, 231-232; Henderson 1994, 149). Marcel Verburg comments that this two-fold characterisation of the Christian cosmological Idea (i.e., of modal order and divine providence) will be sought for in vain in Dooyeweerd's later work (Verburg 2015, 102 n. 31; Steen 1983, 207; Henderson 1994, 130, 134, 149, 150, 154-156, 159-160, 177; Kraay 1980, 2; Tol 2010, 355-358).

More generally, Dooyeweerd's thinking in about the late 1920s from an *organic* analogy as the dominant organising feature (an analogy he inherited from Kuyper) to a *semantic* one (drawing on the symbolic modality). In this he was certainly influenced by Husserl and Heidegger. Dooyeweerd sees his own 'linguistic turn' as an alternative to historicism and relativism. In an article of 1928 on juridical causality, Dooyeweerd makes use of 'meaning' ('zin') in a number of contexts: 'meaning-individuality' ('zin-individualiteit'), 'meaning-consummation' ('zin-voleinding'), 'meaning-analogies' ('zin-analogieën'), 'meaning-substrate' ('zin-substraat') and 'meaning-constant' ('zin-constant') (Dooyeweerd 1928a, 14-16). Strauss argues that this 'linguistic turn' is a form of what he calls 'quasi-monism' which excessively privileges the discourse of the kinematic modality with its meaning kernel of constancy providing the focus for the characterisation of God, while the characterisation of the world as 'meaning' focuses on the lingual symbolic modality (Strauss 2009).

#### 4. Religious ground-motifs

In the 1930s, the foundational emphasis on God's providential purposes (that of the divine world-plan) seems to have been relegated to the theological store-cupboard, rather than continuing to guide and shape his philosophical thinking. Dooyeweerd speaks of the 'religious ground-structure' ('de religieuze grondstructuur') of the confession of God's providential world plan (Dooyeweerd *W.d.W.*: 1.144-145); but in this is superseded by his statement of the Christian ground-motive of creation, fall and redemption – which (as we shall see later) is more about what both Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd call the 'Direction' of the 'heart' than about what actually happens in history (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.173-177; see Ive 2012, §4.1.2, 128-133 and §4.2.2, 138-147).

The Idea of Providence never quite disappears from his writing but takes a much more structural form as the 'opening-process' (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 2.336-337; 1958, 214, 219-226; Seerveld 1996, 41-61; McIntire 1985). While in his personal piety Dooyeweerd continued

to believe in God's providence, it ceased to play the key systematic and foundational role it had done when he set out his philosophical vision in 1926. This shift, from the vision of God's active providential role in the world towards an emphasis on supra-temporality, was precipitated by two key catalysts – although it also drew together a number of concerns which had occupied him for much longer.

One catalyst was his reading of Heidegger (1962). Dooyeweerd made an intensive study of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* after its publication in 1927. For Heidegger, 'Being' is not something which belongs to the 'Da' – the thatness of the world in which one finds oneself – it is not given. Rather, one is to understand *oneself* as 'Being-in-the-world' (*Da-sein*) as the constitutive basis of who and what one is; and it is thus (in the face of one's death and finitude) that one is to take full account of oneself and that which is presented to one for one's (self-determinately) appropriate attention and concern. Dooyeweerd's position is exactly the reverse of Heidegger's.

While Heidegger denies being close to God, Dooyeweerd asserts that only God has 'Being', and that it is from this 'Being' that the world has 'meaning' (i.e., creaturely dependence). Whereas Heidegger sees the human person bounded by temporal existence in their 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*), Dooyeweerd seeks for a basis on which that temporal existence can be transcended, and the elements of the temporal order seen in true relation to one another. Dooyeweerd argues, *pace* Heidegger, that true authenticity can only be found in the sense of dependence upon the Origin (Dooyeweerd 1931, 93-95; 2010, 78-81; *N.C.*, 53-59, 111).

Another catalyst in the shift in Dooyeweerd's thinking away from the Idea of Providence was the rise of Fascist and National Socialist ideology in Italy and Germany. In the early 1920s he had argued that the German romantics, notably Schelling and Fichte, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had influenced Stahl and other Christian thinkers, including the Christian Historical Party, to think of the historical process as intrinsically authoritative (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.489 (n. 1); 1923c).

This did not only affect the Christian Historical Party, but in the Anti Revolutionary Party as well there was a move away from the notion of 'creation ordinances' which Kuyper had enunciated so powerfully, partly in reaction to the misuse of the idea by theologians during the Nazi period (Van Egmond & Van der Kooi 1993). In the later 1920s and 1930s, this concern was intensified, and he saw historicism, with its organic conception of society, leading to the rise of Fascism and Nazism (Dooyeweerd 1963, 45-83; 1979, 46-87; *N.C.*, 2.180-365).

The extreme emphasis on history as the self-attesting basis of norms and values, such as was held by the different forms of historicism, seems to have led Dooyeweerd in reaction to seek a non-historical, supra-temporal vantage point, free of the relativising tendencies of the historicistic approach (Steen 1983, 262-265).

In response to these considerations, Dooyeweerd came to seek a point of reference that is not located within time. As early as 1924, Dooyeweerd writes of the cosmomic-Idea as a central lookout tower, but this thought is not yet developed systematically (Dooyeweerd 1924-1925).<sup>6</sup> By 1928, he raises the question of the need for an Archimedean point, which is not itself located in any of the modalities. Finding the Archimedean point involves the recognition that the 'totality of meaning' ('zin-totaliteit') of the world depends upon the 'Being' ('Zijn') of God. By 1931, this 'totality-Idea' (as Dooyeweerd called this recognition) had come to dominate and structure Dooyeweerd's thinking (Dooyeweerd 1931, 91-95; 2010, 77-79; *N.C.*, 3.97-98; Kraay 1980, 37-38; Stellingwerff, 160-166; Verburg 2015, 153-172; Brümmer 1961, 150-151; Ouweneel 1993, 213). From this supra-temporal creaturely root

6 See Kraay (1980, 1). Tol points out that this goes back to his view in 'Cosmos en Logos' in 1923 about faith enabling a view '*Sub specie aeternitatis*' (Tol 2010, 359).

('boven-tijdelijke creatuurlijke wortel') one can have a 'view of totality' ('blik der totaliteit'), whereby the diversity of the temporal order can be unified with temporal diversity 'below' and supra-temporal unity 'above' (Dooyeweerd 1932, 6-8; 1963, 123, 226, 257-258 ;1979, 127-128).<sup>7</sup>

Friesen argues that Dooyeweerd draws on the totality theme in German Idealism – a theme which comes to the fore in the lectures by Wilhelm Max Wundt in 1930 at Breslau including one entitled 'Ganzheit und Form in der Geschichte der Philosophie' (Friesen 2005c, 1-9).<sup>8</sup> Dooyeweerd might also have been influenced by developments in the philosophy of science, such as Hans Driesch and the biological school of Holists, who substitute the concept of the *whole* for that of purposiveness. Driesch's inaugural lecture of 1921 distinguishes totality from mere addition ((Driesch, *Das Ganze und die Summe*) – a copy of which Dooyeweerd owned (Cited by Friesen 2005c, 5 (n. 15); and Weyl (1963, 214).<sup>9</sup>

Previously, Dooyeweerd did not seem to have seen totality quite in this architectonic role but more as the universal functioning ('sphere-universality') of each of the modalities (Dooyeweerd 1930b, 229-233). In 1940 Vollenhoven speaks of the 'personalist theme of Totality' ('het personalistische thema der Ganzheit') although he does not relate it to Dooyeweerd explicitly (Vollenhoven 1940, 73).

Thus, despite certain modifications in the way he expresses his new conception, from the end of the 1920s on, there is a general shift in Dooyeweerd's thought towards a somewhat hierarchical ontology and epistemology. He briefly adopts the notion of an '*aevum*' between the eternity of God and the full diversity of temporal reality, although he quietly drops the use of this term later (Dooyeweerd 1936a, 69; 1939, 1-2, 5; 1940, 180-181).

Steen sees Dooyeweerd's adoption of this scholastic notion as a reflection of a certain grace/ nature dichotomy in this thinking (Steen 1983, 132-154).<sup>10</sup> This new emphasis on the Archimedean point and the view of totality eclipses the central role which God's providence had played in Dooyeweerd's thought in the mid-1920s. Instead, there is a universal ordering structure, which (from 1930 on), he confusingly came to call 'cosmic time'.

Setting aside the question of whether 'cosmic time' is properly *time* (in the sense of eventfulness) at all, we shall note that for Dooyeweerd, this *a priori* structure is, as he puts it, 'the functional structure of reality' (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 2:554). He speaks of an 'all-sided cosmic coherence of the different aspects of meaning ... in a cosmic order of time'(Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1:101). This 'cosmic order of time' is not so much time (i.e., *actual* time) as the ordering of the modalities combined with the duration of individuals. It is the way in which the different modalities are harmonised without being reduced to one another.

Accordingly, the coherence of all things is located in the concentration of the human consciousness, albeit the redeemed human consciousness, as the concentration point which unifies the diversity of human experience (Ive 2012, 108-112). Thus, Dooyeweerd's thought takes on an ahistorical character and a hierarchical structure, with totality being the supra-temporal mediating link between the eternal Origin and full-blown temporal diversity.

7 Friesen (2005b) argues that Dooyeweerd was influenced in this regard by Othmar Spann. Dooyeweerd sees Spann as the 'most consistent universalist' (Dooyeweerd 1962).

8 See the critique of the notion of totality by Vollenhoven's intellectual associate, Antheunis Janse (1938, 20-21) The Idea of totality bears a close relation to the linguistic turn, such as found, for example, in the thought of Karl Jaspers (Strauss 2009, 321).

9 Dooyeweerd interacts extensively but critically with Driesch (Dooyeweerd, *N.C.*, 1.546, 564-565; 3.730-771).

10 This 'totality-Idea' is discussed further in Ive (2012, §5.2.3, 179-178).

This hierarchical structure, with the Archimedean point situated between God and the rest of the created order, is reflected in his magnum opus, *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*. Seeing the modalities from the standpoint of the supra-temporal heart as the Archimedean point represented what Dooyeweerd later called the 'First Way' – a forerunner of what he came to call his 'transcendental critique' (Kraay 1980, 9-22).

Critics suggested that the argument of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* rests on a *petitio principii* in that it depends on the prior acceptance of a conception of the heart as the supra-temporal Archimedean point – a point from which the order and diversity of the modalities can be discerned (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.34 (not in *W.d.W.*)). H. Robbers, S.J., from the Roman Catholic side, argued against Dooyeweerd's rejection of the autonomy of philosophy (Robbers 1935; Dooyeweerd 1936b; Choi 2000, 50-51). Another critic was J.C. Franken, who argued against what he considered the dogmatic basis of Dooyeweerd's argument (Franken 1938; Dooyeweerd 1938; Choi 2000, 51-52).

## 5. The 'Transcendental Critique'

To meet the criticisms levelled against the 'First Way', Dooyeweerd began to develop what he called his 'Second Way', where his aim is to start not with the fully-fledged outline of the modalities in relation to the Archimedean point, but with the character of theoretical thought itself (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.22-69; 1940; 1941a; 1947; 1948a,b; 1972; 1962; 1996; Brümmer 1961; Choi 2000, 52-55). He argues that his 'second Way' can properly be called a 'transcendental critique': it is 'transcendental' because it appeals to structures common to all human experience and reflection, not just specifically Christian ways of thinking; and it is a 'critique' because it suggests that the contradictions one encounters when one tries to understand the world cannot be resolved by theoretical thought alone, but are based on foundational principles or 'Ideas' (Dooyeweerd 1939b; 1941a; 1972, 52-54; 1962b; 1996, 4; Clouser 1972, 5; 2009). Vincent Brümmer argues that there are in fact three stages in the development of Dooyeweerd's thinking in this regard: the first being a mere statement of the antithesis; the second, the 'view of totality' argued for in *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*; and the third, the transcendental critique proper as contained eventually in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Dooyeweerd 1927; 1925; Brümmer 1961, 198-200).

Dooyeweerd's concern in his 'transcendental critique' is to show that theoretical thought cannot itself have a religiously neutral foundation. The term 'transcendental' has resonances with the approach of Immanuel Kant (Pereboom 1990), although Dooyeweerd is critical of what he sees as Kant's own claims to religious neutrality and the theoretical assumptions implicit in his own procedure. The presupposita are those of 'Origin', 'totality' (or 'unity'), and 'coherence'. Dooyeweerd argues that these three presupposita or Ideas are revealed by critical self-reflection to be interdependent. These presupposita cannot themselves be theoretical, nor the conclusion of theoretically based argument, since they provide the basis upon which theoretical analysis is subsequently to be done (Dooyeweerd *W.d.W.*, 1.4; *N.C.*, 1.69; 1972; 1996, 35-37).

Dooyeweerd's shift in the presentation of the starting point for his philosophy from that presented in *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* to *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* brought a sharp reaction from Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia. Van Til claims that Dooyeweerd is attempting to speak of religion, not in terms of God's revelation, but in terms of a category of human experience, albeit a basic, universal, and definitive one. Van Til accuses Dooyeweerd of compromising the project of a philosophy worked out on a distinctively Christian basis. Van Til sees Dooyeweerd now engaged in the philosophical sphere in a project analogous to that of natural theology and criticizes him for drawing conclusions about the nature of a Christian philosophy from supposedly neutral premises (Van Til 1997a,b; 1971; 1970, 47). Van Til's charge is that Dooyeweerd's 'second Way' is inconsistent with Dooyeweerd's own basic philosophical position that any philosophical analysis cannot be neutral.

Indeed, Dooyeweerd's basic philosophical position is that theoretical thought needs to have pre-theoretical foundations of a religious character (be that a religious character grounded in dependence upon a transcendent Origin, or one grounded upon an apostate alternative constructed from one or other aspect of the world). In the first volume of his *W.d.W./ NC*, he looks critically at what he calls 'humanistic immanence philosophy' and provides a cumulative case for this position.

He argues that the 'dogmatic exclusion' of the need for presupposita and their religious foundation results in different kinds of reductionism, with one or other aspect of the world being made the presupposita of the system of thought, or alternatively, with the resort to different kinds of irrationalism (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.70-82, 501-506). He is deeply critical of the secular Western Enlightenment view of the thinking subject, to which the material of cognition (which he calls the '*Gegenstand*') is presented (Dooyeweerd 1926c, 64,66; 1928b, 25-26; 1931, 102-104; 2010, 88-89; *N.C.*, 2.367-369, 434b-435, 466-472; 1977, 47).

'*Gegenstand*' is a term which is essentially untranslatable but means literally 'that which stands against' the conscious of the human subject. For Dooyeweerd, it is a theoretical construct focused on one modality, or combination of modalities, to the heuristic exclusion of considerations not germane to the specified description or explanation so arrived at. The *Gegenstand* needs to be distinguished from the modal subject-subject and subject-object relations, which are not theoretical constructs but factual realities bound together in a concrete continuity in an already structured way, which Dooyeweerd calls the 'ontic systasis' (Dooyeweerd 1926, 64, 66; 1931, 102-104; 2010, 88-89; *N.C.*, 2.367-369, 434b-435, 466-472; 1977, 47).

However, problematically, Dooyeweerd also describes the *Gegenstand* as the opposing of the logical modality to the other modalities of one's experience and then the synthesising of the logical with that other modality (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.39-57, 153; 2.467-469; 1931, 103; 2010, 88; 1941a, 6-18; 1948a, 29-55; 1962b, 19-48; 1996, 6-25; 1966, 11-12; 1967, 10-24; 2002, 26-48; 1975, 88; 1976.). This is a storm centre of fierce debate, initially between Hendrik Van Riessen and Dooyeweerd (Van Riessen 1970) later taken up by Strauss. Strauss argues that an account of the *Gegenstand* as the setting against and then the synthesising of the logical modality with another modality is at best contradictory and at worst incoherent (Strauss 1973, 106-129; 1984, 35-36; 2009, 361-367; Dooyeweerd 1975, 83-101; 1976, 1-8.).<sup>11</sup>

A way through, or around, this discussion is, as hinted at initially, to see the *Gegenstand* as an analytically qualified artefact, produced as a provisional hypothesis by a specific community within a specific context (see Stafleu 1981/ 1982).<sup>12</sup> Not only can there be *Gegenstände* created by the modal abstraction of the different kinds of relations, a *Gegenstand* can also be created with respect to individuality functions (with theoretical notions of physical entities, plants, animals, social entities etc), making a typical structure of individuality into a (individuality) *structural Gegenstand*.

Marking out the different areas of analysis is unavoidable in theoretical thought. However, even there the divide between the thinking subject and the subject matter of analytical investigation is misleading and distorting. For Dooyeweerd (and Vollenhoven), the human 'subject' is not to be seen as divorced from his or her situation and the diversity of relationships of which he or she is part (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 2.466-472; 3.65; Hart 1985, 143-149).

Like Vollenhoven, he understands 'subject' in two senses (Ive 2012, §1.1, 22). The first

11 See also Geertsema (2000, 83-91) and Friesen (2006a, 2008).

12 The *Gegenstand* can take different forms, as Dooyeweerd himself indicates, according to the specific modality concerned (Dooyeweerd, *N.C.*: 2.469; 1967, 12-14; 2002, 28-32).

(Vollenhoven's 'subjèct') is about the subjection of the individual to God – the opposite of the Western Enlightenment view of the human thinking subject to which all the matter of analysis is subjected. The second sense of 'subject' (Vollenhoven's 'súbject') is understood in terms of its relationship to the object, but not as thinking subject to the *Gegenstand* but as the active polarity in a law or norm governed relationship. In other words, in both senses of 'subject', it is not a question of knowledge by a detached observer, but all knowledge involves the practical engagement of the knower within the context of a relationship within which that knower is engaged through the process of knowing. Human beings are inescapably in the world and part of it. Any attempt to conceive of oneself as a thinking subject remote from the context in which one is engaged, is misconceived.

Dooyeweerd thus seeks to demonstrate that theoretical thought necessarily depends on prior religious beliefs – be they Christian or an alternative religious starting point – even if this does not seem 'religious'. Basic religious belief (that is, the fundamental orientation of one's world and life view) is expressed in what he calls 'ground-motives'. The term 'ground-motive' is used by Dooyeweerd to designate the basic 'religious' beliefs (i.e., basic to one's personal life-stance) that shape a worldview and are foundational to any philosophical system. Dooyeweerd originally used the term 'ground theme' (Dooyeweerd 1941a).<sup>13</sup> He identifies four ground-motives which have shaped Western thought and culture (Dooyeweerd 1941b, 163-164; 1948a, 59-77; 1962b 46-63; 1996, 24-35; 2002, 48-50).

The Christian ground-motive, as Dooyeweerd states it, is that of creation, fall and redemption by Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God in the communion of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup> (Dooyeweerd does not mention the 'Biblical motive of creation, fall into sin and redemption . . . ' in *W.d.W.* ( as in *N.C.*), but elsewhere he speaks of 'the Christian confession of Creation, fall into sin and redemption'.)<sup>15</sup>

Dooyeweerd contrasts this Christian ground-motif with a number of 'apostate' ground-motives. First, there is the form/matter motif that he takes to characterise the religious foundation of Greek thought.<sup>16</sup> Second, there is the grace/nature ground-motive characteristic of what Dooyeweerd calls 'scholasticism', produced by the synthesis of the Greek ground-motive with Christian revelation. The grace/ nature ground-motive differs from the form/ matter ground-motive in that it allows for the genuine sinfulness of humanity – this sinfulness is seen to work in a realm somehow over and above the original constitution of the world (for example, Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.65-66). Finally, there is the Enlightenment freedom/ nature ground-motive characterised by a dichotomy between the 'personality ideal' ('freedom'), and that of the rational and empirical analysis of the physical order ('nature').

It has been pointed out that Dooyeweerd's four ground-motives are similar to those identified by Abraham Kuyper in his *Lectures on Calvinism*, namely Paganism, Romanism, Modernism and Calvinism, leaving out Islamism (Kuyper 1976, 9-40; Dooyeweerd 2004; 1963; 1979).<sup>17</sup> While the 'ground-motives' feature as such only from the late 1930s and are

13 For background see Geertsema (1970); Wolters (1983, 1-2); Vunderink (2000).

14 See, for example: Dooyeweerd *W.d.W.*, 1.472 *N.C.*, 1.60-61,

15 Dooyeweerd, *W.d.W.*, 2.27-28 ('de belijdenis van Schepping, zondeval en verlossing'); *N.C.*, 2.30 (see also 3.147, 448, 469, 520).

16 Full references in Ivo (2012). Dooyeweerd tends to write the ground-motives as 'form-matter' etc. However, I am using the form 'form/ matter' etc. in order to indicate that they involve two dialectically opposed principles, one set over the other.

17 See Klapwijk (1987, 109).

not in the *W.d.W.*, yet they can be traced back to Dooyeweerd's earliest thinking.<sup>18</sup>

In *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, there is an extensive discussion of the rise of the 'the ground-antinomy in the humanistic cosmonomic Idea'.<sup>19</sup> However, while this is paralleled in *A New Critique* (1.187-506) there are subtle differences in presentation with specific mention of what is now a freedom/ nature 'ground-motive' (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.36, 62-63, 187, 190, 193, 499, 501; 1941b, 170-171; 2004, 17-19; 1948a, 73-77; 1954, 16-24; 1972, 45-51; 1963, 143-180; 1979, 148-188; 1962b, 56-63; 1996, 31-35; 2002, 63-67). Bril argues that Dooyeweerd is heavily influenced by the analyses of Nietzsche, and Francis Macdonald Cornford (Bril 1995, 124).<sup>20</sup> Vollenhoven objects to Dooyeweerd's characterisation of Greek philosophy predominantly in terms of the form and matter themes.<sup>21</sup> He himself later provided a somewhat different account (Bril 1995; Ive 2012, 151-163).

The relation of the ground-motives/motifs to the totality-Idea and the notion of the Archimedean point remains unclear, and indeed after the publication of *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, it has been observed that Dooyeweerd did not mention the Archimedean point again (Kraay 1980, 31). Kraay argues that *A New Critique* is an awkward hybrid between the Archimedean point conception found in *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, and the ground-motive conception, which was developed after the publication of the *W.d.W.* He points out that apart from the later, hybrid mention of it in *A New Critique*, Dooyeweerd's last serious exposition of the Archimedean point conception was in 1948 (Dooyeweerd 1948a).

Dooyeweerd writes in the preface to *A New Critique*, that while he added in new conceptions, 'I had to restrict any changes to what was absolutely necessary, if I did not want to write a new work' (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 1.x; Kraay 1980, 31, 39). There is some evidence that from the late 1950s he either modified or clarified the position that he had seemed to hold since 1930.<sup>22</sup> In public, he expressed the view that he felt like 'tearing out his hair' at the way his statement of the 'supra-temporal heart' had been misunderstood. The incident in question was after a lecture in 1964, but it has been variously interpreted (Strauss 2006, 4; Friesen 2006b, 12-21).<sup>23</sup>

In his later systematic thinking, Dooyeweerd developed the notion of 'enkapsis': a specific coming together of diverse individuality-structures, not least in the case of the human person (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 3.696 (not in *W.d.W.*); 2011, 1-2). Dooyeweerd describes the process of 'enkapsis' as that whereby individuals retain their structural individuality within the greater whole (or alternatively by assimilation, where they do not), and their going out of being (Dooyeweerd 2013, 1-2; *N.C.*, 3.696). Dooyeweerd took up the terminology developed by the anatomist Martin Heidenhain and taken up by Theodor L. Häring in his book, *Über Individualität in Natur und Geisteswelt* (1926). Heidenhain used the term to describe the relation between the separate organs and the whole organism, whereas Häring gave it more

18 See Dooyeweerd (1923f, 4-6, 48-49).

19 Dooyeweerd (*W.d.W.*, 1.171 = *N.C.*, 1.216) marked by the antinomic tension between the science ideal and the ideal of personality (*N.C.*, 1.151-471).

20 Full references and discussion in Choi (2000, 77-82).

21 *C.V.C.W.*, 33 (Dec 1945); quoted in Bril (1995, 124).

22 '[D]e religieuze concentratie juist een centrale relatie tussen het menselijk ik en de eeuwige God impliceert die nooit in de tijd kan opgaan' ('just because [the heart as] the religious concentration is the central relation between the human I and the eternal God does not mean that it rises above time') (Dooyeweerd 1960, 103).

23 This remains an unresolved and controversial element in his philosophical system, although, it is possible to read Dooyeweerd in such a way that the difficulties raised by his notion of the 'supra-temporal heart' – and his divergence in this regard with Vollenhoven – can be resolved. (See Ive 2012, §4.2.2, 138-147.)

general use to explain the whole and its parts. Dooyeweerd rejects both these applications and re-conceives the term (Dooyeweerd *N.C.*, 3.634-636, 696; 2013, 3-4). Unlike Häring's conception, as we shall see, for Dooyeweerd, 'enkapsis' is not a relation between a whole and its parts, but links two or more individuals, each bound with the other or others but retaining its own distinctive individuality (Dooyeweerd *W.d.W.*, 3.561-564; *N.C.*, 3. 637-639).

Dooyeweerd retired in 1965, although he continued to be active until his death in 1977. The verdict on Dooyeweerd's philosophical achievement, given on Dooyeweerd's seventieth birthday by G.E. Langemeijer, then Chair of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, was that he was 'the most original philosopher which the Netherlands has ever produced, not excluding Spinoza'.<sup>24</sup> Through the whole of his time as Professor of Philosophy, as well as in the years preceding their joint appointments to the VU, he worked in close co-operation with Vollenhoven, using this time and stability of tenure to elaborate a rigorously systematic and comprehensive Christian philosophy. The closest comparison might be that of the 'transcendental Thomist' philosopher, Bernard Lonergan (1958).

## Conclusion

Overall, the partnership between the Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven was long and fruitful, and over the course of their long joint tenure at the VU, and before and after that, their combined achievement was both significant and remarkable.

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24 Commemoration editorial in *Trouw*, 6 October, 1964, on the occasion of Dooyeweerd's seventyeth birthday.

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