Current Reformational Philosophy and the
“95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd”

By
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How does current reformational philosophy differ from the “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd?” Most reformational philosophers today do not follow the philosophy of Dooyeweerd, but rather of Vollenhoven. Their philosophy is often an echo of objections against Dooyeweerd made by Vollenhoven. Over time, despite the lip service that is given to Dooyeweerd people seem to have forgotten what he actually said. They have interpreted him in terms of these echoes of other philosophers. In my article “Dooyeweerd versus Vollenhoven: The religious dialectic within reformational philosophy,” Philosophia Reformata 70 (2005) 102-132, I showed the differences between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. These differences are often obscured because the two philosophers use similar terminology in very different ways. The “95 Theses” attempts to describe Dooyeweerd’s philosophy on its own, when not interpreted by Vollenhoven. And of course, the very title calls for a reformation of reformational philosophy to return to Dooyeweerd’s original vision. In my article “The Religious Dialectic Revisited” (2006) [http://www.members.shaw.ca/aevum/Revisited.html], I tried to show that because reformational philosophy is really immanence philosophy, there is a religious dialectic within it and a synthesis with modernism. I looked at several reformational philosophers, and I suggested a path forwards.

In this summary, I will begin with Vollenhoven, and then list some other reformational philosophers who have echoed his ideas in opposition to Dooyeweerd. After that, I will show the differences in the philosophy of some analytic reformational philosophers, as well as some postmodern reformationals. I will conclude by listing ideas of Dooyeweerd that seem to have been ignored by reformationals, but which are included in the “95 Theses.” Of course, this summary does not include or even list all reformational philosophers. It is incomplete. But I think it is sufficient to show that almost every one of the 95 Theses has either been rejected by reformational philosophy, or has been ignored by it. I hope that the interrelatedness of the Theses will also show that reformational philosophers who believe that they are rejecting only one part of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy have often ended up rejecting most or all of it, since one idea depends on the others.

D. H. Th. Vollenhoven

Vollenhoven’s philosophy is contrary to the following theses:

Theses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 53 to 56, 67 to 71, 73-74, 81-83, 90-93 all rely on the idea of the supratemporal selfhood. Vollenhoven denied the reality of the supratemporal selfhood, and so his ideas are contrary to these Theses. This affects not just his philosophical anthropology, but also his epistemology.
In fact, Vollenhoven, not only objects to supratemporality, but to any idea of the selfhood! He objects to speaking at all about “the self” and “the I” (Problemen 185). Vollenhoven’s rejection of “the self” and “the I” seems to show the influence of Antheunis Janse, who also objected to any idea of a directing higher selfhood. See A. Janse: Rondom de Reformatie (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre N.V., 1939).

**Theses 43, 47, 74 to 80.** Because Vollenhoven rejected the reality of the supratemporal selfhood, he interpreted creation, fall and redemption in a very different way from Dooyeweerd, who understood these ideas as necessarily occurring in relation to the supratemporal heart as religious root of temporal reality.

**Theses 1, 5, 10.** Vollenhoven denied the validity of immediate experience. For him, our experience is always mediated. In this, as well as many other ideas, he followed Antheunis Janse’s mistrust of “mystical” unmediated experience. And Vollenhoven specifically denied Kuyper’s view of regeneration of a “seed” [kiem] that is coupled with a witness of the Spirit. For Vollenhoven, Scripture itself is more trustworthy than any such testimony of the Spirit. His emphasis on Scripture over the testimony of the Spirit seems to oppose any experiential or mystical view of regeneration in favour of a more mediated view. Vollenhoven says that one’s belief is awakened through the Word that is preached by the office bearers of the church (Isagoogè par. 123, note 2). But Dooyeweerd particularly praised Kuyper’s works of a devotional or meditative nature. See Herman Dooyeweerd: “Na vijf en dertig jaren,” 36 Philosophia Reformata (1971) 1-10. And this emphasis on our immediate relationship with God should not be characterized as merely pietism or subjectivism. Note that Vollenhoven says that he was never interested in Kuyper’s devotional writings: “…de Kuyper van de meditaties heeft me nooit zo erg geboeid” (“Kring,” 205).

**Theses 1, 42.** Vollenhoven thought Christian philosophy could begin with propositions derived from Scripture.

**Theses 1, 44, 93.** Because Vollenhoven viewed man in totally temporal terms, his philosophy is immanence philosophy as Dooyeweerd defines the term. For Vollenhoven, our experience is limited to our temporal functions of consciousness, contrary to what Dooyeweerd says.

**Theses 3, 11, 14, 16, 18, 36, 39.** Totality. Vollenhoven’s philosophy begins with individual things. He does not have an idea of supratemporal totality. His philosophy is therefore, within the meaning of Dooyeweerd’s use of the term, ‘immanence philosophy.’ Vollenhoven does not have an idea comparable to Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuation from out of totality.

**Theses 4 to 7, 14 to 16, 24, 26, 39, 40, 53, 55-57, 60, 62, 73, 88, 91.** Cosmic time. Since Vollenhoven does not have an idea of supratemporal totality, he also does not share the idea of cosmic time as the means to differentiate that totality. In the 1964 Discussion, Vollenhoven says that he has a very broad understanding of time. In fact, he also had a different understanding of cosmos, since for Dooyeweerd, the cosmos is entirely temporal (The supratemporal aevum is not in the cosmos). Vollenhoven says that by ‘cosmos’ Dooyeweerd means “that part of creation that finds its center in man” (Divergentierapport 113). For Vollenhoven, created reality is unitary, and angels, man and world are all within the same time. Dooyeweerd says that Vollenhoven had raised
objections to his understanding of time, but that Vollenhoven had not completely thought through his critique (M. Verburg, 89).

**Thesis 53.** Eternity. It seems that Vollenhoven has a different view of eternity, sharing Oscar Cullman’s view of eternity as extended time. (That was certainly Peter Steen’s view).

**Theses 6, 67.** Contrary to Dooyeweerd, Vollenhoven saw man’s heart as merely a temporal pre-functional unity.

**Thesis 7.** For Vollenhoven, our experience is limited to what is given in time.

**Theses 8, 9, 49, 94, 95.** Vollenhoven denied the idea that creation is restless or that it refers beyond itself. Vollenhoven opposes speaking of temporal reality as “insufficient” or of God as “all-sufficient.”

**Thesis 15.** Vollenhoven denied that the modal aspects are given in an order of succession, of before and after. He also denied that this was expressed in the internal modal structure of every aspect.

**Theses 19, 21.** Abstraction. In *De VU na Kuyper*, J. Stellingwerff refers (p. 257) to differences here between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. For Dooyeweerd, theoretical analysis presupposes the full selfhood, from which this activity of abstraction proceeds.

**Thesis 24.** Because Vollenhoven denied the order of before and after of the modal aspects, he also denied that the subject-object relation occurs within the aspects. In the 1964 Discussion, he says he has differences regarding the theory of the object, that this is “rather mixed up” in Dooyeweerd. Since Vollenhoven denies the temporal succession of aspects, he cannot have the same idea of the subject-object relation. For him, the subject-object relation occurs only in things; it is a “horizontal” relation between two things (*Problemen* 191, 193). Vollenhoven’s view of perception is thus much closer to naïve realism than that of Dooyeweerd.

**Theses 17, 86.** Because Vollenhoven denied the order of before and after of the modal aspects, he did not understand anticipation and retrocipation in this way. For Vollenhoven, these are merely logical terms whereby “later” modality is more complicated because it includes the meaning of the former. According to Vollenhoven, the aspects are ordered by increasing complexity and not by time (*Isagoogè* par. 55). Vollenhoven sees Dooyeweerd’s view as a “substantialization of time.” He also did not understand naïve experience as related to such retrocipatory moments. In the 1964 Discussion, Vollenhoven says that retrocipation and anticipation have been rather mixed up by Dooyeweerd [*door elkaar geslagen*].

**Thesis 16.** Because Vollenhoven rejected the supratemporal selfhood, he would have rejected Dooyeweerd’s comment that the irreducibility of each modal aspect cannot be understood apart from the supratemporal selfhood.

**Theses 19, 21.** Vollenhoven’s (Aristotelian) epistemology views the aspects as abstracted properties of things. Dooyeweerd says this is a serious error in reformational philosophy.

**Theses 21 to 29.** Vollenhoven rejected the idea of individuality structures. In the 1964 Discussion, he says he did not need that word.
Thesis 27. Vollenhoven does not acknowledge the difference between function and aspect.

Theses 30 to 33. Enkapsis. Since Vollenhoven does not accept the idea of individuality structures, the idea of enkapsis also plays no role in his philosophy. For him, only things are related to each other, and not individuality structures. Because reformational philosophers reject the ideas of individuality structures and of enkapsis, and concentrate on abstracting properties from things, they tend towards a substance view of reality. In some cases, this is explicit, as in the case of Stoker, who argued for substance. See my article, “Individuality Structures and Enkapsis” (2005), online at http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Enkapsis.html

Theses 33, 56. Because Vollenhoven rejected the idea of individuality structures, he also did not accept the idea of the body as an enkaptic interlacement. For Vollenhoven, man is no more than a temporal body, with functions centering in a temporal heart. But at the end of the New Critique, Dooyeweerd says that whoever understands philosophical anthropology in that way has not understood him.

Thesis 38. Vollenhoven does not speak of Ground-Motives. This is not surprising, since Ground-Motives are temporal theoretical approximations of motivations in our religious, supratemporal selfhood.

Theses 42, 43. Scriptures speaking to our heart. Vollenhoven rejects Dooyeweerd's idea of a supratemporal conversion of the heart in Christians who are regenerated (Divergentierapport 116).

Thesis 44. Synthesis. Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd seem to have a different view of synthesis. For Vollenhoven, synthesis involves any connection with ideas of philosophers who do not rely on the Bible. Dooyeweerd seems much more willing to acknowledge the connectedness with other philosophers. For him, synthesis has primarily to do with whether our philosophy proceeds from the radical unity of the supratemporal selfhood, or whether we seek to find that unity within temporal reality, by absolutizing some part of temporal reality like rationality. And so, for example, Dooyeweerd can express appreciation for Kant, but then say that the problem is that Kant sought the transcendental selfhood and acts of that selfhood in terms of purely temporal events (NC I, 50).

Thesis 45. Dualism. Both Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven correctly saw that this scholastic anthropology contained the scholastic concept of substance: a material substance for the body and an eternal immortal substance for the soul. Vollenhoven’s solution was to relativize everything that scholasticism had supposed was eternal in man. He proposed a purely temporal model of the selfhood, where the heart is pre-functional but not supratemporal. Dooyeweerd did the reverse. He relativized everything temporal by the idea of the supratemporal selfhood (See Thesis 93). The supratemporal selfhood is the Totality from which temporal reality individuates. It expresses itself within temporal reality.

Thesis 48. Vollenhoven denies that God is Being. This is why he objected to the term ‘theism.” (Although he did not yet object to the term in the title of his dissertation). (See Stellingwerff, Geschiedenis, 27, 41.) For Vollenhoven, “…ontology relates only to the cosmos” (Problemen 173).
Thesis 49. Vollenhoven denies that creation is meaning, or that it has a referring nature. For Vollenhoven, ‘transcendence’ means “reaching out” to God and not a “pointing-beyond.” Vollenhoven objects to the idea that temporal reality is a refraction of meaning (Divergentierapport 113; also Stellingwerff 249). Vollenhoven's rejection of cosmic time as the basis of temporal differentiation means that he also rejects this analogy of the prism (Problemen 179). For him, time does not determine the cosmic order, but rather stands in relations to things. For Vollenhoven, things have meaning, but he denies that they are meaning.

Thesis 54. Heavens and earth. For Vollenhoven, even heaven belongs to created reality in time [not the aevum] For Vollenhoven, all creation is in time, and there is only a question of direction. See Stellingwerff, De VU na Kuyper, p. 267.

Thesis 56. Although Vollenhoven also uses the term ‘functiemantel,’ he does not use it in this sense of differentiated from a supratemporal selfhood.

Thesis 57. Vollenhoven’s tripartite view of God/Law/Cosmos would involve a rejection of the idea of a central, supratemporal law, which is differentiated in time. For Vollenhoven, the law, like Aristotle’s universals, stands outside of creation. “Now the law is supratemporal; the law […] [is related to] temporality, but then [only] insofar as it affects subjects in that which is subjected [to law].” (Problemen 179). For Dooyeweerd, the law is not to be seen in terms of universals.

Thesis 61. Vollenhoven has a different view of law as boundary.

Thesis 63. Vollenhoven cannot understand why this is not monism. See my article, “Monism, Dualism, Nondualism: A Problem with Vollenhoven’s Problem-Historical Method,” online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Method.html]

Theses 64-66. Image of God. Vollenhoven specifically rejects the idea that man is the image of God (Kring 201, 202; Problemen 186). Vollenhoven thought that to say that man is the image is too ontological an interpretation, and that it results in a static passivity. Instead, Vollenhoven says that we are called to become the image of God. By this he means that we are called to live in accordance with God’s commandments. And since Vollenhoven denies that man has a supratemporal selfhood, he cannot accept that the image of God relates to this, or in how temporal things have no reality apart from man’s supratemporal selfhood.

Theses 75, 77. The fall. Since Vollenhoven rejects the idea of the supratemporal selfhood, he also rejects Dooyeweerd’s view that the cosmos is concentrated in humanity. This affects Vollenhoven’s view of the fall into sin. For Vollenhoven, temporal creation is not itself fallen. What is fallen is humanity’s “direction” in relation to it (Isagoogè 83). Vollenhoven says that “direction” makes sense only for creatures with a heart (by which he means his idea of a wholly temporal, pre-functional heart) (Problemen 191).

Thesis 73. Vollenhoven rejects the idea that our supratemporal selfhood remains after death. But Vollenhoven cannot account for continued existence after death. It was Vollenhoven’s views of immortality that caused the greatest objection by Valentijn Hepp in the long investigation into the philosophical views of Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd by the Curators of the Vrije Universiteit.
**Thesis 78:** Christ as new Root. In *De VU na Kuyper*, (p. 207), Stellingwerff says that the constitution of the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy refers in Article 2 to Christ as the new Root, also for scientific thought. Vollenhoven objected to this word 'root.'

**Thesis 78.** Redemption. It seems that for Vollenhoven, there is a different Word for salvation than for creation. There are different revelations before and after the fall, before and after the flood and before and after the revelation in Christ. The Logos revelation is not the revelation of grace or restoration of the creation (*Isagoogê*, par. 118ff.). But Dooyeweerd expressly opposes any idea of a creation law for temporal reality that is separate from salvation for temporal reality.

**Thesis 86.** Vollenhoven denied the existence of the historical aspect.

**Theses 88-89.** Vollenhoven rejected the Gegenstand-relation. This is not surprising, since the Gegenstand-relation relies on the supratemporal selfhood, an idea that Vollenhoven also rejected.

**Theses 10, 12, 25, 83, 90-91.** Intuition and Imagination. Vollenhoven cannot accept such a view of intuition, since he rejects the idea of a supratemporal selfhood. Vollenhoven objects to the idea of beholding [aanschouwen] except for fantasy. For Vollenhoven, fantasy and imagination are useful in science only in forming a “working hypothesis” (*Problemen* 193).

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**G.C. Berkouwer**

**Thesis 1, etc.** Supratemporal selfhood. In *De VU na Kuyper* (p. 223), Stellingwerff says that in 1937, Berkouwer wrote an article in "De Standaard." He finds the last chapter, the place of man in the cosmos as the real basic theme of the *WdW*, to be very puzzling. In that short concluding chapter, Dooyeweerd refers to the supratemporal religious center, the soul or heart of man. Berkouwer thinks that although Dooyeweerd claimed to follow Kuyper, he in fact ends up with a different anthropology. Page 26. Partly as a result, Dooyeweerd was asked by the Curators of the VU to comment on the last chapter from the *WdW* that Berkouwer had referred to.

**H. van Riessen**

Van Riessen was a student of Vollenhoven, so many of the same deviations from the 95 Theses can be observed in his thought.

**Theses 2, 88.** Gegenstand-relation. In his last article (1975), Dooyeweerd refers to van Riessen’s criticism:

This argumentation distinguishes Strauss’s thought processes from that of Prof. van Riessen, who in his books *Wijsbegeerte* and *Op wijsgerige wegen* had asserted, without further argumentation, that the Gegenstand-relation simply does not exist and that it had never been proposed or understood by anyone other than myself. This bold assertion deserves, above all, to be critically investigated by a brief summary of the history of
the origin of the antithetical Gegenstand-relation in ancient Greek epistemology.

**Theses 4, 86.** Plastic horizon, historical dimension of forming. Dooyeweerd’s idea of historical forming must also be distinguished from the idea of technique introduced by Hendrik van Riessen and his student Egbert Schuurman. Dooyeweerd disagreed with van Riessen's view of technique and technology, as is shown by a 1961 letter from van Riessen to Dooyeweerd. Dooyeweerd had reviewed a draft article by van Riessen. Dooyeweerd criticized van Riessen’s views regarding technology, but van Riessen rejected Dooyeweerd's criticism, and published his article anyway. See my discussion at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Imagination5.html]

**Thesis 86.** Historical aspect and events. It is evident that Dooyeweerd replaced van Riessen’s references to ‘facts’ with the word ‘events.’ Dooyeweerd seems to have questioned van Riessen’s very conception of the nature of facts. I suggest it has to do with van Riessen’s rejection of Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuality structures, his consequent rejection of the idea of enkapsis, and his view of aspects as properties of things. Van Riessen says,

> Dat neem ik niet over. Reeds in myn dissertatie heb ik de onderscheiding dingen en feiten ingevoerd en daarbij omdat het om techniek gaat aan “factum” boven het meer algemene gebeuren de voorkeur gegeven. Aan deze onderscheiding, die zich overal voordoet en dan wel als “ding en gebeurtenis” beschreven kan worden, heb ik al lang geleden wat meer aandacht willen geven, omdat zy my zeer belangryk lykt, maar de tyd ontbrak tot nu toe.

In proposing the technical as an aspect, van Riessen (and Schuurman) seem to have incorrectly identified the historical aspect with technical acts (which function in all aspects). For Dooyeweerd, the historical aspect is different from events that participate in all the aspects. We can see in the 1961 letter that Dooyeweerd’s view is that technique is an event (not an aspect, and not a fact). Acts and events function in all aspects. Dooyeweerd says that technical industry is an act:

> Technical industry, as a historical phenomenon, is itself ruled by principles which, as such, refer to subjective formative activity (NC II, 258; WdW II, 190).

And on the same page

> [Technical industry] always means a historical expansion of formative power both in subjective and in objective directions. [...] Progress in technical industry is impossible without the basis of historical power over persons, manifesting itself in the general acceptance of new technical ideas: the deepened technical principles must find sufficient support in a cultural community and cultural area.

Dooyeweerd sees the kernel moment of the historical sphere as free formative power. It is true that Dooyeweerd also uses the word ‘techne’ to refer to the positivized form of such
formative control (*NC II*, 257; *WdW II*, 189). But there is a distinction. We can exercise technical formative control which nevertheless does not have historical force:

An individual discovery or invention that has no historical consequences because it is not generally accepted, and consequently lacks the character of a formative factor in human society, cannot form history (*NC II*, 259; *WdW II*, 191).

The formation of history is therefore different from an individual discovery or invention. Furthermore, for Dooyeweerd, technique is an act, not a modal aspect.

**Theses 21 to 23.** Like Vollenhoven, Van Riessen rejected the idea of individuality structures.

**Thesis 25.** Imagination. There is the act of productive fantasy. Although van Riessen refers to productive fantasy (*Struktuur*, 126), he does not use it in Dooyeweerd's sense, which involves Dooyeweerd's view of intentionality and enkapsis. Since van Riessen rejected both individuality structures and enkapsis, and had only an outwardly-directed view of intentionality (as in phenomenology), he cannot share Dooyeweerd's ideas. For Dooyeweerd, the fantasy is only productive when the productive fantasy becomes enkaptically interwoven with another individuality structure.

A review of van Riessen's article shows other differences that need to be explored, such as: (1) van Riessen’s distinction between science as unfolding of the order of creation laws, and technique as the unfolding of creation according to its subject-side (2) his rejection of technique as a division of labour between God and man (for Dooyeweerd, man assists God in recovering sparks of God's goodness). (3) his distinction between technical things and facts (4) his view of science as the way of abstraction, always seeking a more universal formulation of the problem and a more universal application of the solution this is of course in contrast to Dooyeweerd's Gegenstand-relation (5) his corresponding view of individuation (6) his view of the three characteristics of all things- uniqueness, coherence and mutability (7) his view of technique as overcoming a resistance in the natural aspects. That is not Dooyeweerd's view of resistance, which is related to the Gegenstand-relation and the splitting apart of reality, (8) his view of laws for technical things or facts (as opposed to Dooyeweerd's view of law as one side of an individuality structure).

In his recent history of the reformational movement, Stellingwerff has sharply criticized both van Riessen and Schuurman for their “stagnated” philosophy.” Stellingwerff correctly says that van Riessen spoke of entities and not aspects, and that he saw reality as only individual, and the law as universal. Stellingwerff says that van Riessen had too little historical and philosophical depth, he did not distinguish his views enough from current philosophy, and he improperly sought a compromise between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven—he had “the voice of Dooyeweerd, but the spirit of Vollenhoven” (Stellingwerff 133, 136-138, 158).

**Johan Stellingwerff**

Stellingwerff was a student of Vollenhoven. In his history of reformational thought (*Geschiedenis van de Reformatorische Wijsbegeerte*, (Stichting voor Reformatorische
Stellingwerff refers to disagreements between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. But he consciously tones down those same disagreements by trying to "harmonize" the two philosophers. It is questionable whether that is a valid approach to a history of reformational philosophy. In attempting this synthesis, Stellingwerff consistently attempts to resolve the differences by taking Vollenhoven’s point of view. See my review of this book in *Philosophia Reformata* 71 (2006) 193-195.

**Thesis 1, etc.** Supratemporal selfhood. Stellingwerff follows Vollenhoven in rejecting this central idea. Stellingwerff refers to Dooyeweerd’s “metaphors” of prism, root, and supratemporal selfhood in relation to eternal and temporal (pp. 72-75, 90). Stellingwerff rejects supratemporality as being either dualistic or monistic (it cannot be both, and in my view is neither). And Stellingwerff adopts the debatable view that eternity is extended time (pp. 74, 90, 115-116, 120, 142). That is of course the view of Oscar Cullman. A recent book on time challenges Cullman’s view of time as insufficient. See Antje Jackelen: *Time & Eternity* (Templeton Foundation, 2005). In *De VU na Kuyper*, (p. 162) Stellingwerff says that the heart as supratemporal concentration point is a leftover of the idea of substance and the belief in an immortal soul. And in Kuyper, it contained both Gnostic and mystical elements. Janse immediately objected to what he saw as Dooyeweerd's hypothetical wisdom and mystification with respect to religion.

**Theses 4, 6.** Stellingwerff says that Dooyeweerd’s idea of cosmic time arose after reading of Heidegger (*Gescheidenis*, p. 114). But Stellingwerff does not investigate the important historical issue of where Dooyeweerd obtained this key idea of cosmic time. In *De VU na Kuyper*, p. 160, Stellingwerff says that Dooyeweerd got the idea of cosmic time from Heidegger. That is certainly incorrect, since Dooyeweerd criticizes Heidegger’s view of time. *NC* II, 527: “For Heidegger also eliminates the cosmic order of time and even merges the selfhood into time.” *NC* II, 530: “I pass by the internal contradiction into which Heidegger gets involved by first calling the selfhood the origin of time and then identifying it with time.” *NC* II, 531: “Even Heidegger’s "existential time" is not cosmic time guaranteeing the continuous coherence between the modal aspects of experience. If he [Heidegger] had had real insight into cosmic time, he would never have sought the transcendence of the selfhood of the inner experience of the 'ex-sistere', in the historical time-aspect with its anticipatory future.”

And then Dooyeweerd gives his own view: “In time our selfhood only expresses itself in the refraction of meaning and the coherence of its modal functions. Time cannot be the deeper identity of the modal functions, not even in its cosmic continuity. It cannot contain the totality of meaning but refracts it in the modal and typical meaning-diversity.”

This emphasis on Totality, which is related to the supratemporal, is not found in Heidegger. Dooyeweerd also criticizes Heidegger’s view of reality as “*Vorhandenes*” (*NC* I, 112, *NC* II, 525).

There is no doubt that Dooyeweerd read Heidegger. But his ideas of time are not derived from Heidegger, but placed in opposition to Heidegger. I have a photocopy of Dooyeweerd's own copy of *Sein und Zeit* (6th ed. 1949). Dooyeweerd’s marginal notes make it clear that Dooyeweerd is critical of Heidegger. e.g., p. 381 "gebrek aan modale analyse der tijdservaring." There are many exclamations in the margin opposite passages.
such as 384 of Sein und Zeit, where Heidegger says “Nur das Freisein für den Tod gibt dem Dasein das Ziel schlechthin und stößt die Existenz in ihre Endlichkeit.” or on p. 410, “so bleibt es die Auszeichnung der Zeitlichkeit eigentlicher Existenz, dass sie in der Entschlossenheit nie Zeit verliert und immer Zeit hat.” There are enough questions and exclamation marks to make it clear that Dooyeweerd disagrees with Heidegger's ideas. Page 263 of Sein und Zeit has the notation “anti-Christelijk” and “antinomie” in the margin. But there are many more such notations.

A comparison of Baader with Heidegger leaves no doubt as to which view of time was more influential for Dooyeweerd. Dooyeweerd distinguishes eternity, aevum and cosmic time. That threefold division is not in Heidegger. But it is in Baader, who speaks of the temporal and the supratemporal, the überzeitlich. And this is different from God’s eternity. See my translations of two of Baader's articles on time:

—Concerning the Concept of Time (1818) [Über den Begriff der Zeit].
http://www.members.shaw.ca/baader/Zeit.html
—Elementary concepts concerning Time: As Introduction to the Philosophy of Society and History (1831) [Elementarbegriffe über die Zeit: als Einleitung zur Philosophie der Sozialität und Geschichte].
http://www.members.shaw.ca/baader/Elementar.html

These articles are significant, because there was a renaissance of interest in Baader in the 1920’s, just when Dooyeweerd was formulating his ideas of cosmic time and supratemporality. And these articles on time were made available again. Some of this was in the Herdflamme series of books edited by Othmar Spann, of which Dooyeweerd owned some copies, and had access to others. And as I showed in my Philosophy Reformata article on Dooyeweerd and Spann, Dooyeweerd cross-referenced notes to Baader in his copies of Spann's books. See "Dooyeweerd, Spann and the Philosophy of Totality":
http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Totality.html

There were other ways that Dooyeweerd was influenced by Baader’s ideas on time. One is indirectly, through Kuyper, who had also been influenced by Baader. See "The Mystical Dooyeweerd Once Again: Kuyper's Use of Franz von Baader." Online at [http://www.arsdisputandi.org/publish/articles/000130/index.html].

Kuyper had discussions with J.H. Gunning, Jr., who introduced Baader’s ideas into Dutch Protestantism. And there was also a revival of interest in Gunning’s theology in the 1920’s. There were articles about Gunning in Stemmen des Tijds, a journal to which Vollenhoven contributed, and of which both he and Dooyeweerd must have been aware. And Gunning’s main theosophical work, Blikken in de Openbaring, was also republished in the 1920’s in a new edition. See Lieuwe Mietus’s recent doctoral thesis on Gunning and theosophy: Gunning en de theosofie. Een onderzoek naar de receptie van de christelijke theosofie in het werk van J. H. Gunning jr. van 1863-1876, (Amsterdam: Narratio, 2006). Mietus refers to discussions between Gunning and Kuyper. And see my review of Mietus in Philosophy Reformata 72 (2007) 86-91. It was in fact Dooyeweerd’s
idea of time that resulted in my writing the article “The Mystical Dooyeweerd: The relation of his thought to Franz von Baader.” I explained this in that article and on my website at the following link on ‘cosmic time’:
http://www.members.shaw.ca/jgfriesen/Definitions/Cosmictime.html

At the beginning of my research, I had not ruled out an influence by Heidegger on Dooyeweerd. It was Mike Sandbothe’s book: *The Temporalization of Time*, tr. Andrew Inkpin (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001; originally published in German, 1998), which showed me that Heidegger had a totally temporalized view of time. And it was Sandbothe’s book that referred me to Baader as a contrast to Heidegger’s views. Sandbothe refers to Baader’s idea of time as “a new Archimedean point, unifying our everyday experience of self” and of “time as a substantial and subject-independent basic structure.” Sandbothe himself opts for seeing time in a de-centered or temporalized way. He shows how this temporalization of time is related to Rorty, Levinas, Heidegger, and to Ricoeur’s idea of narrative. All of those ideas fit with current reformational philosophy’s fascination with postmodernism. They do not fit with Dooyeweerd’s emphasis on the supratemporal. And when I then read Baader, I found so many other similarities to Dooyeweerd that I knew there had to be a connection in their philosophies. Other philosophers view time in a similar way to Baader—as a uniform universal base structure. See Griffin’s discussion of David Bohm and Ilya Prigogine in *Physics and the Ultimate Significance of Time* (SUNY, 1986).

A further source of ideas on time for Dooyeweerd was the book J. Alexander Gunn: *The Problem of Time: An Historical & Critical Study* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929). Dooyeweerd owned a copy of that book, and I have a photocopy. I discuss it in my entry for ‘aevum,’ for it refers to the idea:
http://www.members.shaw.ca/jgfriesen/Definitions/Aevum.html
In that entry, I refer to some of Dooyeweerd's marginal notes in his copy of Gunn's book, including the idea of *aevum*, as well as some references to Plotinus.

**Theses 11, 14, 16, 18, 36 to 39, 44.** Totality as the second of the transcendental ideas. Stellingwerff says that the key issue in reformational philosophy is the substitution of pluralism for both monism and dualism (pp. 15, 34, 38, 74, 81, 88-89, 93), and that philosophy should analyze created diversity in its order and coherence (p. 9), and direct its attention to the qualities and functions of created reality (pp. 19, 27). But Dooyeweerd is not a pluralist in Stellingwerff’s sense! Dooyeweerd begins not with diversity, but with the transcendental ideas of Origin and supratemporal totality; only then does he consider the third idea of temporal coherence. For him, the separation of the aspects is not ontical, but only intentional. And Dooyeweerd criticizes the “serious misunderstanding” that aspects are abstracted properties of things. Is Stellingwerff anachronistically reading in ideas of pluralism from later conferences (pp. 219-223)?

**Theses 36ff.** Ground Motives. Stellingwerff is right that religious ground-motives are not theoretical presuppositions; they work in our supratemporal heart (p. 94). But Stellingwerff improperly compares them to Vollenhoven’s philosophical types and time currents (pp. 57, 58, 67, 108).
**Thesis 42.** Scriptures speak to the heart. Stellingwerff believes that some statements in Kuyper’s *Stone Lectures* are Gnostic and mystical, including Kuyper’s idea of the regenerated heart (pp. 64, 65, 90). But Stellingwerff omits mentioning that Dooyeweerd praises these very statements! As for mysticism, Stellingwerff regards it as a *striving* to transcend (p. 37). But for Dooyeweerd, we *already* transcend time in our heart! Dooyeweerd’s mysticism is the experience of our present supratemporal heart reality, out of which proceed or “issue” our temporal acts, including theoretical thought. And Dooyeweerd’s mysticism is not a mysticism of identity between God and creation. We are “from, through and to” God, and yet distinct. Dooyeweerd speaks of the beatific vision when we will behold God “face to face” (*NC* II, 298). This is not a pantheistic identification with God. Stellingwerff makes similar statements in his book *De VU na Kuyper*. See pages 45, 50. Stellingwerff sees certain Gnostic elements in Kuyper. Gnostic elements are the descent of the divine into creation. He also finds mystical elements, which he defines as the ascent of man to the divine. In other words, he doesn't like any mixture. This is the old pantheism issue. Stellingwerff sees the restlessness of the heart as an example of mysticism. page 54, 56: An example of Gnosticism is the idea of the divine spark in each person. Page 57: Rebirth is the igniting of the spark of eternal life by the Holy Spirit--has a Gnostic element in it. Stellingwerff says this is because there is a direct and immediate affect on us by God the Holy Spirit. But it is interesting that Stellingwerff also links the immediate work of the Holy Spirit with the idea of “principles.” At page 53, he says that the word 'principle' [*beginsel*] is one of the most disputed words, since the Free University was based on reformational principles that were not defined. But Stellingwerff says that *beginsel* stands in direct relation with the work of the Holy Spirit in the hidden root of all existence. (That supports what Dooyeweerd says in the 1964 lecture.)

**Thesis 71.** Dooyeweerd's article “Kuiper's Wetenschapsleer.” Stellingwerff (p. 264) finds a dualism in the thought of the two-unity [*twee(-een)heid*] of body and soul. (I think it is nondual).

**D. F. M. Strauss**

Marcel Verburg reports that Dooyeweerd’s copies of Strauss’s thesis contain many marginal notations expressing his vigorous disagreement with Strauss. The notes contain exclamations like “serious misunderstanding,” “sophistic reasoning,” “this *cannot* be maintained,” and “this is also never asserted by me!” (Verburg, 401). And it was his disagreement with Strauss that led Dooyeweerd to write his last article, “De Kentheoretische Gegenstandsrelatie en de Logische Subject-Objectrelatie.” It is clear from this article that Strauss’s philosophy is not in accord with Dooyeweerd’s. Dooyeweerd refers to “logicism” “insoluble antinomies” and an epistemology not different from that of modernism. I have discussed Strauss’s divergences from Dooyeweerd in these three articles:


Let me summarize some of Strauss’s disagreements with the “95 Theses”.

**Theses 1, etc.** The supratemporal. Strauss refers to Dooyeweerd’s discussion of the *aevum*, but Strauss misinterprets the *aevum* as only supra-functional and thus within time. In his article “Intellectual influences upon the reformational philosophy of Dooyeweerd,” *Philosophia Reformata* 69 (2004), 151-181, Strauss cites Dooyeweerd’s remark that in our actual condition, our experience of the *aevum* is “nothing but the concentration of the temporal on the eternal” (176). But Dooyeweerd’s emphasis is on our current condition [*actueele toestand*]. At the present time, our supratemporal heart is bound to our temporal body, or what Dooyeweerd calls our “mantle of functions” [*functiemantel*]. Contrary to Strauss’s view that we merely have an eternal destination (Strauss 175), Dooyeweerd is speaking of our condition in this life [*in dit leven*]. Already in this life we transcend time. Dooyeweerd refuses to speculate on what it will be like when our soul [heart] is separated from our body.

It is true that Dooyeweerd views the *aevum* is trans-functional, as is shown by the above quotation. But it is fallacious reasoning to argue that the converse is necessary. “A implies B” does not necessarily entail “B implies A.” Not all ideas of the trans-functional are supratemporal.

Strauss seems to be trying to reinterpret Dooyeweerd so that Dooyeweerd’s idea of supratemporality is itself understood in temporal terms. See, for example, Strauss’s article *Intellectual Influences*, where he says,

Dooyeweerd first gained the biblical insight that the human self-hood (*heart*) is supra-modal and supra structural, and then developed his theory of cosmic time— as that cosmic dimension underlying and embracing both the modal aspects and individuality-structures. By conceiving cosmic time as a unique cosmic dimension embracing the modal and typical dimensions of creation, and by viewing the human self-hood is [*sic*] supra-modal and supra-structural, it follows that the human heart ought to be seen as “supra-temporal.”

Strauss’s intentions in this passage are clear from an almost identical passage in Strauss’s public email of April 3, 2003, where he claimed that Dooyeweerd “unfortunately” equated supra-modal with supratemporal. In saying that the distinction between temporal and supratemporal coincides with modal and supra-modal, Strauss is trying to reduce the supratemporal to temporal terms, or what I call ‘temporalizing the supratemporal.’

In April, 2006, Strauss gave a lecture in which he argued that Dooyeweerd had given up the idea of the supratemporal selfhood. Strauss relied on an excerpt from Dooyeweerd’s 1964 Discussion. But Strauss failed to interpret that remark in the context of the rest of the 1964 Talk and Discussion, and in the context of the rest of Dooyeweerd's work. Dooyeweerd continued to believe in the necessity of the supratemporal selfhood, and it is clear that other participants at the 1964 Talk and Discussion did not understand Dooyeweerd to have given up this idea. Indeed, in his later lectures, Vollenhoven, who
was at the Discussion, continued to oppose Dooyeweerd's idea of the supratemporal selfhood. I have discussed Strauss's misinterpretation in my article, “Why did Dooyeweerd want to tear out his hair?” (2006), online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/aevum/Hair.html]. Nevertheless, Strauss has persisted in misinterpreting Dooyeweerd in this way, since he repeats the same erroneous ideas in his revised version of the lecture, “Appropriating the legacy of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven,” *Journal for Christian Scholarship*, 2006: 42(4):23-56.

**Thesis 2**: Dooyeweerd says that Strauss confuses the ontical with the epistemological.

**Theses 2, 3.** Although Strauss refers to a distinction between concept and Idea (see his thesis *Begrip en Idee*), he does not use these terms as Dooyeweerd does. He cannot, since he does not agree with the supratemporal selfhood.

**Thesis 4.** Although Strauss refers to the horizons of our experience, he does not identify the religious horizon as supratemporal. But for Dooyeweerd, the religious is always supratemporal.

**Thesis 7.** Strauss merely allows for the eternal as a destination following death, but not that we have a present experience of the supratemporal. He says,

> Since it could hardly be denied that humanity has an *eternal* destination and that being human therefore hinges on the boundary-line of *time* and *eternity*, I think it is biblically justified to affirm the *time-transcending* nature of the *core meaning of being human*. (p. 178).

But that is not at all what Dooyeweerd says. Rather our being the image of God involves being simultaneously in possession of a supratemporal root of life and being subjected to time in its earthly expressions.

**Thesis 12.** Contrary to Dooyeweerd, Strauss says that we distinguish the modes in pre-theoretical thought. Strauss also asserts that we have implied knowledge of the aspects in our naïve experience, and that theoretical thought merely makes explicit what was implied. Dooyeweerd says he confuses the nature of naïve versus theoretical experience.

**Theses 15, 21, 57, 62.** Individuality from supratemporal fullness. Strauss begins with an idea of individuality that is contrary to Dooyeweerd. Strauss says that the notion of individuality

> …represents therefore an idea-use of the modal meaning of number which transcends the limits of this aspect in its reference to the *uniqueness* of entities. The term universality, on the other hand, is only accessible on the basis of our understanding of the irreducible meaning of the spatial mode, because it refers to the spatial notion of *location*—whatever is considered to be universal is supposed to apply *everywhere*. i.e. universally (Strauss 2004, 37).

And Strauss refers to an Idea use of the modal meaning of number:

> …represents therefore an idea-use of the modal meaning of number which transcends the limits of this aspect in its reference to the *uniqueness* of entities. (Strauss 2004, 37).
Dooyeweerd does not relate individuality to the numerical aspect. For Dooyeweerd, individuality is a result of the refraction from supratemporal totality, and it is in supratemporal totality that the fullness of individuality is found.

**Thesis 16.** Dooyeweerd’s comment that the irreducibility of each modal aspect cannot be understood apart from the supratemporal selfhood was a comment that he directed specifically at Strauss.

**Thesis 17.** Strauss confuses the temporal aspect of faith with the religious and supratemporal religious horizon. See my review of *In the Phyrgian Mode* in *Philosophia Reformata* 72 (2007) 184-188, at 186.

**Theses 19, 21.** Strauss follows Vollenhoven’s (Aristotelian) epistemology in viewing the aspects as abstracted from things. Strauss regards abstraction as occurring intra-modally within the logical subject-object relation. This is the view of abstraction that Dooyeweerd denies as the proper way to obtain theoretical insight into either the law-spheres or individuality structures. And Dooyeweerd does not view the aspects as properties of entities.

**Thesis 21.** Strauss denies that the aspects have an ontical priority to the individuality structures. This is evident from Dooyeweerd’s comment at *Gegenstandsrelatie*, 90:

> Therefore it seems to me that Strauss’s remark is incorrect, when he says in the note on page 118 of his thesis, that it is *only in a methodological sense* that an analysis of the modal structures precedes an explicit analysis of typical structures of totality of naïve experience.

**Thesis 34.** Sweetman points out that Vollenhoven accepted much of Aristotle, despite Vollenhoven’s use of antithetical language. (*In the Phyrgian Mode*). And Strauss follows Vollenhoven in accepting Aristotle’s idea of a universal side to factual reality (*In the Phyrgian Mode*). See my review in *Philosophia Reformata* 72 (2007) 184-188.

**Theses 37, 39-41.** The transcendental critique. Strauss says that Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique has a rationalistic tendency (Strauss, 2004, p. 45). It need hardly be stated that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is directed against rationalism. You need only look at the *Encyclopedia* for Dooyeweerd’s opposition to rationalism. Dooyeweerd had already responded to this accusation in *Gegenstandsrelatie*, 96, where Dooyeweerd says that Strauss’s argument of rationalism contains an “obvious logical contradiction” which Strauss does not himself seem to be aware of. Dooyeweerd says that Strauss’s criticism of the transcendental critique was based on Strauss’s “penchant” for formal logic. Strauss compounds his criticism of Dooyeweerd, saying that not only is Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique contradictory, but that it involves antinomies that lead to contradictions (Strauss 2004, 45).

**Thesis 45.** Antinomies and polar dialectic. In discussions with Strauss on Thinknet, he denied that antinomies cause a polar dialectic. Strauss apparently does not agree with Dooyeweerd. In his last article, Dooyeweerd remarks that Strauss "improperly reduces antinomies to logical contradictions" (*Gegenstandsrelatie*, 95). Strauss is therefore wrong in trying to restrict Dooyeweerd’s idea of antinomy to where one aspect is reduced to another (Strauss, 173). It is true that this “special use” of antinomy helps us to differentiate aspects (*NC* II, 37). But in its general sense, antinomy occurs when we
absolutize any part of temporal reality, overstepping the limit of the order of cosmic time (NC II, 38). There is then a religious dialectic between the first absolutized aspect, and its *correlata*, driving human action and thought “from one pole to another” (NC I, 64). This religious dialectic has the character of a polar tension (NC I, 123), revealed in antinomies (WdW I, 467: “Polaire spanningen, zich in de stelsels openbarende in bepaalde typen van antinomieën”). Dooyeweerd finds such “insoluble genuine antinomies” in Strauss’s own thought. Strauss's rejection of the *Gegenstand*-relation, in favour of an intra-modal logical basis for the epistemological antithesis, leads to a logicism that threatens the irreducibility of the other aspects.¹ In Dooyeweerd’s opinion, Strauss’s own thought therefore shows this kind of polar tension between an absolutized aspect (the logical) and the other aspects, the *correlata* of the absolutized aspect. Dooyeweerd says, “Strauss’s argument is not only *contradictory in a formal-logical sense*. It also contains a *genuine antinomy*, as I shall demonstrate.” (Gegenstandsrelatie, 98).

Because Strauss tries to interpret in an *intra-modal logical sense* the *inter-modal antithesis* that he himself maintains between the logically objectified modal aspects, he falls not only into an obvious logical contradiction, but also into *insoluble* genuine antinomies. In order for him to simultaneously maintain the mutual irreducibility of the theoretically abstracted modal aspects and his supposed intra-modal logical character of the epistemological antithesis, he is obliged to let their distinguished modal nuclear moments also function in an *intra-modal logical sense, excluding any inter-modal theoretical synthesis*. A necessary antinomy then arises between the modal law-sphere of the logical aspect and those of the other aspects, *whose meaning-kernels cannot be interpreted in an intra-modal logical sense without canceling their irreducibility*. Strauss tries in vain to save himself from this impasse, which threatens to lead him directly in a logicist pitfall that he himself recognizes…[Dooyeweerd’s italics].

**Thesis 44.** Immanence philosophy. Since Strauss denies the supratemporal selfhood in Dooyeweerd’s meaning as really transcending time, he has become involved in immanence philosophy. This is not just my conclusion. In his last article, Dooyeweerd accuses him of logicism, that his philosophy end up with insoluble antinomies, and says that his epistemology does not differ form that of modernism.

**Thesis 47.** Creation, fall and redemption. Strauss has also downplayed my comparison of Baader and Dooyeweerd as to the motive of creation, fall and redemption. Strauss says that of course any Christian thinker believes in this doctrine. But Strauss misses the important point. Dooyeweerd expressly says that not every philosophy that uses the

¹ Dooyeweerd says that logicism identifies cosmic diversity with logical diversity (NC I, 19). In his last article Dooyeweerd says that Strauss’s use of an intra-modal logical relation to differentiate the aspects must lead to the elimination of irreducibility of modal aspects (Gegenstandsrelatie, 100). Such irreducibility of the modal aspects is the basis of cosmic diversity.
words “creation, fall and redemption” comes within the Christian Ground-Motive *(Twilight*, 145). The doctrine must be interpreted in relation to the supratemporal heart as religious root. Strauss denies that interpretation, but it is found in Baader.

**Theses 65, 92-93.** Center and periphery. In discussions with Strauss on Thinknet, he denied that Dooyeweerd spoke of a supratemporal center and a temporal periphery. Perhaps he has just not read Dooyeweerd closely enough. He repeated this in his article against Baader (2004). Strauss says,

> The center-periphery *root metaphor* used by Von Baader is simply equated with Dooyeweerd’s idea of an inter-modal meaning-coherence – Dooyeweerd would never – in the context of his theory of inter-modal connections (anticipations and retrocipations) – speak about “embodiment” or ordering of the periphery (Strauss 170)

And

> Dooyeweerd does not operate with an anonymous idea of a cosmic “Center” which, “as essence”, is supposed to “stand … over” the so-called “peripheral points.”

and again,

> Dooyeweerd does not know anything of “peripheral points” where the “Center” stands over them.”

and again,

> … Dooyeweerd would never, in respect of the central religious dimension of reality, operate with a whole-parts (or: center-periphery) scheme in a purely conceptual manner – as it is done by Von Baader.

There are many errors in this analysis by Strauss. The center-periphery is not merely a metaphor, but an ontological statement of the relation of our temporal world to the supratemporal. The center is the supratemporal Totality that is refracted by cosmic time into the aspects of our temporal experience. Nor is the center to be in any way equated with merely an “inter-modal meaning-coherence.” Dooyeweerd is clear about this: in our selfhood we transcend any temporal coherence (*NC I*, 24). Temporal coherence is “the expression of a deeper identity” (*NC I*, 79). In the fulness of meaning of the religious root, the modal spheres coincide in a radical unity (*NC I*, 106). In the religious root of our existence we experience this transcendent identity of the modal functions. See Thesis 93.

**Theses 51, 56, 60, 62, 65.** The body as organ, instrument, means of expression of the selfhood. Strauss denies the idea of “embodiment” in the periphery (Strauss 170). Here it must be recalled that Kuyper specifically praised Baader for his idea of embodiment (See “The Mystical Dooyeweerd Once Again: Kuyper’s Use of Franz von Baader,” online at [http://www.arsdisputandi.org/publish/articles/000130/index.html]). Dooyeweerd has a similar view of our temporal body as being the temporal mantle of functions [*functiemantel*]. Dooyeweerd believes that our embodiment in this mantle of functions occurred after the creation of our supratemporal selfhood. Man's temporal embodiment was a second stage after his supratemporal creation.
Thesis 79. Strauss has denied (Thinknet discussion) that Dooyeweerd speaks of participation. Strauss is clearly incorrect. Dooyeweerd does speak of it, and it is key to understanding our relation to Christ the New Root.

Theses 88-89. Strauss rejected the Gegenstand-relation. This is not surprising, since the Gegenstand-relation relies on the supratemporal selfhood, and idea that Strauss also rejected. Dooyeweerd’s last article is directed against Strauss’s attempted substitution of the logical subject-object relation for the Gegenstand-relation. Dooyeweerd says that this results in logicism, and an epistemology no different form that of modernism.

Theses 90-91. Strauss denies that synthesis is related to the supratemporal selfhood. He seems to have a totally different view of synthesis. Strauss says, “Abstraction and synthesis are opposed to each other” (Strauss 2004, 55, fn37). Strauss does not seem to understand either term correctly. Strauss sees analysis as distinguishing and synthesis as identifying (Strauss 2004, 55). That ignores the Dooyeweerd’s whole idea of relating what has been analyzed to the supratemporal selfhood.

Thesis 91. Strauss also denies that theory can impair our experience (Thinknet discussion).

Theses 90-92. As is evident from Dooyeweerd’s last article, Strauss and Dooyeweerd disagreed as to the meaning of intuition. Strauss criticizes Dooyeweerd’s idea of intuition, but that is because Strauss fails to see it relating to the supratemporal selfhood. Dooyeweerd describes Strauss’s view:

The blurring of the difference in principle between the pre-theoretical and the theoretical attitudes of thought and experience also appears clearly in Strauss’s critique of the role that I have ascribed to theoretical intuition in the process of the inter-modal epistemological concept formation…

Thesis 93. Circularity. Strauss says that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is circular. He even uses the phrase ‘vicious circle.’ But Dooyeweerd had already dealt with this in Gegenstandsrelatie. He says that Strauss’s conclusion is based on an incorrect [foutieve] use of formal logic. He cites Strauss and then says,

This extensive quotation throws a sharp light on the short-circuiting that arises in Strauss’s argument as a result of his losing sight of the fact that, what he calls a “vicious circle” in my train of thought is in reality a necessary consequence of the transcendental ideas—which he himself accepts—of the mutual irreducibility and unbreakable reciprocal meaning-coherence of the modal aspects.

Roy Clouser

Thesis 1, etc. Supratemporal selfhood. In The Myth of Religious Neutrality (Notre Dame, 1991) Clouser downplays the supratemporal heart. He cites Dooyeweerd’s view that the ego is “central” (p. 163), but he uses Vollenhoven’s terminology in referring to the heart as ‘prefunctional’ (314, fn8). This is an idea that Dooyeweerd rejects at NC I, 31 fn1. In Myth, Clouser continues to speak of aspects as properties, he modifies Dooyeweerd’s subject-object relation to refer to active and passive properties (214), he continues to
view theory as abstraction, and he blurs the distinction between pre-theoretical and theoretical experience by speaking of degrees or intensity of abstraction (53-54). These are all ideas that Dooyeweerd rejected. I have problems with Clouser’s formulation, in that he sees the heart as partly in and partly out of time, whereas for Dooyeweerd, the heart is totally supratemporal. It is man who exists both supratemporally (in his heart) and in cosmic time (in the body or mantle of functions). And Clouser’s use of the term ‘supranomic’ is confusing. The heart is subjected to the central law, so it is never above God’s law, but only above the temporally refracted law. Clouser gives a stronger appreciation for Dooyeweerd’s idea of the supratemporal heart, at least for the afterlife, in his review of John W. Cooper’s very interesting book, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). [www.freewebs.com/royclouser/ClouserReviewofCooperWTJ53.pdf].

**Thesis 12.** In naïve experience, we do not distinguish the aspects. Like Strauss, Clouser disagrees with Dooyeweerd here. In “Dooyeweerd’s Metathetical Critique and its Application to Descartes and Heisenberg” Clouser says at p. 6 that there is an implicit distinguish of the aspects in naïve experience. In *Myth of Religious Neutrality*, he says that the difference between naïve experience and theory is one of degree. Theory is “high abstraction.” See page 54, where he says that in theory, we intensify the focus of attention to such a degree that we isolate a property from something, and focus on the property itself; he calls this “high abstraction.” An example is given at p. 294 fn 4--It does not take high abstraction to wonder whether water always puts out fire, but it does to ask how heat is transferred from one object to another. This idea of a gradation of abstraction between naïve experience and theory is definitely contrary to Dooyeweerd. See Dooyeweerd’s last article, ‘Gegenstandserelatie.’

**Thesis 19.** Clouser follows Strauss and Vollenhoven’s (Aristotelian) epistemology in viewing the aspects as abstracted from things. For more details on Clouser’s Aristotelianism, and the difficulties this caused for him in the defense of his dissertation at the university of Pennsylvania, see the correspondence between Dooyeweerd and Clouser in the Dooyeweerd Archives. Clouser does not seem to appreciate how radically different Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuality structures is from the idea of substance. In a letter from Clouser to Dooyeweerd dated March 4, 1968 (in Dooyeweerd Archives). Clouser refers to Book VII, chap. 17 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Clouser asks,

> Doesn’t it parallel the line of argument of the *New Critique* in which things and events may be explained from the standpoint of many aspects by the special sciences but the things are more than the sum of their aspects?

Clouser met with Dooyeweerd for many weeks. Yet a month before his thesis defence, Clouser was still not sure of many points, and it was his views of theory as abstraction and of aspects as properties that were causing the problem. His thesis supervisor did not agree with describing theory in terms of abstraction, and said that this was just the old realist position. Clouser wrote Dooyeweerd on April 26, 1972:

> Isn't it your point that the immediate data of pretheoretical thought are analyzed in the theoretical attitude whether or not we suppose that what
we are analyzing are properties in the old sense or resemblances and kinds of resemblances (aspects)? I'm not sure about this point.

Clouser asked Dooyeweerd how he could be sure about the list of aspects, and said that maybe Dooyeweerd was suggesting there are “some aspectual distinctions” or at least two, “the logical and the non-logical.” He asked Dooyeweerd, “wouldn't it be better for me to say just this than to undertake to defend a particular list of aspects even if I see that list as the correct one?”

In a letter to Dooyeweerd dated June 21, 1972 (after his thesis defence), Clouser says that he is still having difficulty answering why Dooyeweerd’s list of aspects is correct, although he finds that list “very appealing.” His letter goes on to show that he is still having difficulties understanding the very idea of modes, since Dooyeweerd clearly does not agree that they are properties:

If all this sounds objectionable on the grounds that I am talking of aspects as kinds of properties and laws rather than as modes of experience (as you suggested in your last letter), then I'm afraid I don't see the crucial meaning of "mode" which avoids the difficulties I just mentioned. […] With respect to my proposed theory of concepts, I want to be sure that I correctly understand your reservations.

Thus, even after Clouser had completed his dissertation, Dooyeweerd had reservations about his view of concept formation, which as his letters show, is based on a theory of abstraction of properties. This was an especially difficult issue for Clouser because even his supervisor was questioning why you viewed theory in terms of abstraction. Of course, since Dooyeweerd disagreed with his view of property-kinds, he also disagreed with his view of concept formation as being based on the abstraction of properties and kinds of properties. Although Dooyeweerd speaks of abstraction, he does not do so in terms of abstraction of properties or kinds. His idea of “the given” is not that of “things” with properties. Dooyeweerd emphasized that aspects are modes of experience [45]. Dooyeweerd confirmed this a few years later in his last article “Gegenstandsrelatie.” Although the article was directed against Strauss, Dooyeweerd says that the idea of abstracting aspects from things is a “serious misunderstanding” among some reformational philosophers.

Clouser even extends this idea of properties to God. At Myth p. 178, he argues for properties in God. Unless God shares certain qualities with creatures, there is no way for our language to apply to him Prov. 8:22-31 speaks of a property possessed by God [wisdom].

**Theses 19, 89.** Abstraction. As already mentioned, Clouser disagrees with Dooyeweerd in his view that aspects are abstractions of properties. But his very idea of abstraction is different. In his article : “Dooyeweerd’s Metathetical Critique and its Application to Descartes and Heisenberg,” Clouser says at p. 18 fn 2 that Dooyeweerd’s idea of abstraction corresponds to Descartes idea of ‘distinction.’ That is totally incorrect!

**Theses 26, 35.** I am not aware of other reformational philosophers who take Dooyeweerd seriously that temporal individuality structures have no reality except in relation to man, their religious root. Roy Clouser questioned Dooyeweerd on this, saying
Doomeweerd must be mistaken. Clouser thought this was too much like Berkeley’s idealism. In a letter October 1, 1971 he says,

In vol. III, pp 52-53 [of the New Critique], and again on 305 there are assertions that the existence of the world depends on man, and on human faith. This cannot help but sound very Berkeleyian. Is it a mistranslation or what?

**Thesis 33.** Body as enkaptic interlacement. Clouser correctly says “The ego is not to be determined by any aspect of our temporal experience since it is the central reference point of all of them.” (Myth, p. 163, citing Twilight, 179-80). Clouser then says: “Then, by taking this point about human nature as microcosm, Dooyeweerd was able to expand and apply the same insight to the rest of created reality as macrocosm.” But Dooyeweerd expressly repudiates the microcosm/macrocosm distinction.

**Thesis 86.** Subject-object relation. Clouser does not agree with Dooyeweerd. Instead of subject-object functions, he substitutes the idea of active and passive properties. (Myth, 214). He says this is not subjective; but unlike the objectivist we do not locate these potentialities in the objects, but see them as the result of the ways objects conform to the distinct law side of creation. I suggest that this is more evidence of Aristotelianism in Clouser. It is not Dooyeweerd.

**Theses 89, 90.** Clouser says he has made “just one change” in Dooyeweerd by rejecting the Gegenstand-relation. But that was of course the change that Strauss made, and which Dooyeweerd reacts so strongly against in his last article “Gegenstandsrelatie” (1975). This is not one change, as Clouser suggests, but is an idea that prevents the understanding of other key ideas in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. See “ Clouser on Dooyeweerd’s Transcendental Critique,” online at [http://www.dooy.salford.ac.uk/ctc.html].

**Jacob Klapwijk**

**Theses 11, 13, 16, 35, 91.** Similar to van Woudenberg, Klapwijk sees the romantic origin of Kuyper’s organicism, and his idea of principles. See “Honderd Jaar Filosofie aan de Vrije Universiteit,” in Wetenschap en Rekenschap 1880-1980 (Een eeuw weenschapsbeofening en wetenschasbeschouwing aan de Vrije Universiteit (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1980), pages 540-541. Klapwijk sees this in Kuyper’s organic view of Scripture, of history, of rebirth (as new seed) and epistemology (organic coherence of subject and object). Again, this is a worthwhile observation, but more needs to be said, particularly in view of the distinction between romanticism and theosophy.

**Thesis 9.** Law. Klapwijk says (p. 544) the WdW followed Geesink in the relation of God-law-cosmos. That may be true of Vollenhoven, but it is not true of Dooyeweerd. Dooyeweerd’s idea of law is that it is a law of religious concentration.

**Theses 38, 46.** Klapwijk has rejected the idea of religious antithesis in favour of religious transformation. He has been followed in this by others (See Sweetman’s book Phrygian Mode). For Dooyeweerd, the primary antithesis is one of principle: whether or not one accepts that man is simultaneously supratemporal and temporal. If man is restricted to a purely temporal being, then that is immanence philosophy.
Theses 44-46. Synthesis, antithesis and immanence philosophy. Some reformational philosophers have given up talk of antithesis and synthesis, if Stellingwerff's account is correct. People like Klapwijk now speak of "reinterpretation and transformation." (Stellingwerff, p. 176). Although 'transformation' can mean synthesis, he says that it can also mean further reformation. (p. 165) But further reformation in that sense just means continued change. See Stellingwerff's discussion of the conference 'Vrede met de Rede' and the view that Christians can take the gold of the Egyptians and transform it (p. 165). That is a classic text justifying synthesis! See my review of In the Phrygian Mode in Philosophia Reformata 72 (2007) 184-188, at 187.

Gerritt Glas

Theses 4 to 7,14 to 16, 24, 26, 39, 40, 53, 55-57, 60, 62, 73, 87, 89, 91. Cosmic time. In his lecture, “Time, the body and psychopathology,” Glas says (p.2) that for Dooyeweerd everything exists in time. “There exists nothing which escapes from time.” That is not so, since Dooyeweerd also stresses the created aevum. Our supratemporal selfhood and the angels exist outside of time in the aevum. Man also exists simultaneously within time.

Theses 1, etc. Selfhood. For Glas (p. 4), the core self “is the anchoring point form which one departs.” But he relates it not to supratemporality, but to the core values,” early memories and associated feelings and attitudes.” Glas’s view of the self thus appears to be totally temporal.

Henk Geertsema

Theses 51-52. Geertsema correctly points out that Dooyeweerd refers to temporal reality as being an expression of God. But Geertsema then rejects this as contrary to the theological idea he has of boundary between God and creation. See the reference to Geertsema in In the Phrygian Mode, p. 282.

Thesis 57. Religious root. Geertsema has also analyzed the similarities and differences between Marlet and Dooyeweerd. Although much of Geertsema’s analysis is very helpful, I believe that he misses the real agreement between Dooyeweerd and Marlet. For Geertsema criticizes Dooyeweerd’s idea of the religious root. Geertsema thus criticizes the very point that Dooyeweerd sees as central to his agreement with Marlet and the new Catholic theologians.

Thesis 61. God’s law as boundary. Geertsema correctly emphasizes Dooyeweerd’s ideas of the concentric nature of the heart, of the heart as a unity that is expressed in the diversity of time, and Dooyeweerd’s comparison of this unity (as image of God) with God’s own unity as Origin. And Geertsema correctly distinguishes Dooyeweerd’s use of religion from theology. And yet Geertsema himself seems to take an overly theological

view of Dooyeweerd. But he criticizes Dooyeweerd for speaking of a relation of being between God’s being as unity of Origin and created being in the unity and the diversity that is expressed from the Origin (Geertsema, 247). Geertsema thinks that this brings in an idea of sharing in the being of God that goes counter to the idea of the law as boundary between God and creation:

Wel kan de vraag gesteld worden of in de structuur van de Wetsidee bij Dooyeweerd, voorzover daarin de relatie van de Oorsprong tot de creatuurlijke werkelijkheid in termen van eenheid en verscheidenheid en als een relatie van uitdrukking wordt getypeerd, de wet als grens tussen God en het geschapene voldoende blijft gehonoreerd. (Geertsema 248)

[In Dooyeweerd’s structure of the Law-Idea, the question can certainly be asked whether it sufficiently continues to honour the law as boundary between God and creation. insofar as it typifies the relation of the Origin to creaturely reality in terms of unity and diversity, and as a relation of expression].

But although Dooyeweerd does speak of God’s law as boundary, he does not do so in Vollenhoven’s sense, but in the sense of our dependence on God. It therefore seems to me that Geertsema misses the real connection between Dooyeweerd and Marlet, between Dooyeweerd and the new Catholic theology.

J.M. Spier

Thesis 56. Spier rejected Dooyeweerd’s idea of the aevum, which distinguishes man’s supratemporality (as a created eternity) from God’s uncreated eternity. See J.M. Spier: Tijd en Eeuwigheid, (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1953), 151, 163. In his 1970 doctoral dissertation, Steen extensively cites Spier in his own arguments against supratemporality. See Peter J. Steen: The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd’s Thought (Toronto: Wedge, 1983). That Steen continued to battle the idea of supratemporality in his 1970 thesis shows that Dooyeweerd did not retract the idea of supratemporality in answer to Steen’s question. On the contrary, the whole 1964 lecture and discussion continue to affirm the supratemporal selfhood.

Peter J. Steen

Theses 4 to 7, 14 to 16, 24, 26, 39, 40, 53, 55-57, 60, 62, 73, 87, 89, 91. Cosmic time. In his The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd’s Thought, Steen says at p. 170 that “Somewhere between the years 1928-1930 he discovered his idea of the concentration point and cosmic time.” That may be so, but the necessary historical research has not been done as to where he obtained the idea of time. It was not from Heidegger. My view is that only Baader’s view of time fits.

Thesis 56. Steen rejected Dooyeweerd’s idea of the aevum.
Thesis 60. Steen discusses Dooyeweerd’s idea of a completed creation, and dismisses this as supralapsarianism. He does not adequately discuss Dooyeweerd’s view that Genesis 1 and 2 do not describe the same creation event.

Thesis 65. Steen discusses these ideas, but rejects them.

Theses 81 to 83. Steen rejects the idea of the act-structure as a duplication of the selfhood.

Henk Hart

Thesis 1, etc. Hart denies the supratemporality of the selfhood.

Thesis 27. Functions are not the same as aspects. Hart speaks of the aspects as functions in relation to 'functors' (Understanding our World, p. 1, note 1)

Calvin Seerveld

Thesis 1. Seerveld misuses the term ‘Hineinleben’ in a purely temporal way. He translates it as "a living-into-it attitude." See the article by Gregory Baus at http://www.dooy.salford.ac.uk/ideas/baus.seerveld.hin.html

If Seerveld is purporting to follow Dooyeweerd here, he is wrong.

a) Dooyeweerd allows for no Gegenstand-relation except the theoretical. There is no third option for a relation to naive experience. For example, see NC I, 52 (feeling cannot have an intentional relation to a Gegenstand).

b) In any event, Dooyeweerd's idea of 'Hineinleben' cannot be understood apart from the supratemporal self, for that is why he distinguishes 'Hineinleben' from merely temporal experience or 'Erlebnis.'

c) Hineinleben is not an attitude towards naive experience; it is rather our naive experience itself, which is our experience of the enstatic relation between our supratemporal selfhood and our temporal functions, in which we make our temporal experience "our own."

d) Seerveld's view of the attitude is of a purely temporal attitude: some kind of temporal empathy, or as some temporal attempt to grasp all the multiple meanings of reality. But Dooyeweerd rejects any attempt to view totality apart from the supratemporal Archimedean point of the human selfhood. Dooyeweerd rejects as modernistic any view of immediate insight in temporal terms such as empathy. See his article ‘Tijdsprobleem’ at http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Tijdsprobleem.html

Look especially at p. 161, where he says that insight “remains rooted in a final foundation of experience which oversteps the boundaries of the theoretical attitude.” The sense of making reality our own is the first condition for real knowledge. But he objects to any idea that this is to be understood in terms of empathy [invoeling]. Throughout the article,
he emphasizes that we can only have this experience because of the supratemporal transcendent character of our selfhood. See for example pages 179, 197.

You will find lots of discussion about “empathetic sensitivity” in Seerveld's article “Imaginativity,” *Faith and Philosophy* 4 (January 1987), 43-58. See especially p. 50. But this is very different from Dooyeweerd's idea of ‘*Hineinleben.*’ It is also very different from Dooyeweerd's aesthetics and his idea of imagination. See my article “Dooyeweerd's Philosophy of Aesthetics: A Response to Zuidervaart's Critique” at http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Aesthetics.html


Seerveld says,

“A tin can (cylinder) also has the graphic, humbling connotations that may stop us women and men from thinking more highly of ourselves, as earthen vessels, than we ought to think. …

If we could but begin to see woman or man as a tin can for whom Christ died – “

But we are more than earthen vessels! We have a heavenly, supratemporal selfhood. We image God in the way that we express that selfhood in a lower ontical realm, the temporal.

In Dooyeweerd's terms, such a purely temporal view of man amounts to immanence philosophy.

Seerveld is totally wrong in his anthropology. He says,

“I should like to disarm the man on the street or the woman in the home with the fact that woman or man is a creature, and as creature woman or man is a temporal, identifiable, individuality-structured thing.”

Dooyeweerd denies that man is temporal, or that man is an individuality structure. Only man's body (mantle of functions) is temporal, and it is an enkaptic intertwining of four individuality structures. But man himself is not qualified by any structure.

And it seems to me that Seerveld's views here are very similar to those of Antheunis Janse, who so influenced Vollenhoven. Janse denied that there is any higher self in an inner and central sense as distinct from the temporal living soul. See his *Idolen en Schepselen* (Kampen:Kok, 1938). Janse even rejects any attempt to look behind "the tin can":

…toch zit daar een addertje onder ‘t gras. Want met “Ganzheit” bedoelt de vitalistische en teleologische natuurfilosofie een mystisch geheimzinnig verborgen “wezen” van het ding, dat al het andere beheerscht en bij elkaar houdt. Er zou dan “in” de levende ziel, zooals die daar vóór ons gegeven is, een geheimzinnig kracht (entelechie, of “persoon”, of “Ik”, of “Doel”, of “Plan”) werken en heerschen. En dat kan

Theses 4, 21 to 35. Individuality Structures. Seerveld, unlike Vollenhoven, uses the term ‘individuality structure.’ But the ideas expressed are wholly Vollenhoven, and not Dooyeweerd.

Thesis 25. Imagination. In his article “Imaginativity,” Faith and Philosophy 4 (January 1987), 43-58, Seerveld distinguishes imagination from sense-perception, from retinal imaging, and from conceptual knowledge. In this way, Seerveld misses the role that Dooyeweerd says is played by our imagination in those acts. Instead, Seerveld regards the role of imagination as restricted to fantasy and as “making-believe.” Seerveld’s use of the “as-if” here is reminiscent of Wolterstorff’s misunderstanding of Ideas in terms of “as-if” (see below). Seerveld refers to the entities that result from our imagination as ‘fictions’ (p. 54). In contrast, Dooyeweerd has a much higher view of imagination. It is not making believe; rather, our imagination is the way that we make the temporal world fully real.

Thesis 73. Survival of supratemporal heart after death. Seerveld says,

However, all that concerns me now regarding man and woman is this: it does not make good sense to theorize backwards from a supposedly known post mortem condition of man (about which Scripture tells us passing little), extrapolate logically back from existence-after-death to the now for determining how man must be found constituted.

But Dooyeweerd does exactly that in his responses to the Curators! Dooyeweerd argues for the supratemporal selfhood based on the fact that we survive death.

Seerveld himself is inconsistent here. Although he fully temporalizes man, he tries to leave something over at death:

Once God pulls that physico-organic rug out from underneath you, so to speak, your natural given time is up and that human one goes to be with the Lord or to hell, says Scripture.

For Dooyeweerd, it is not just the physico-organic rug that is pulled out. It is the entire mantle of functions that disappears at death. But the problem is, for Seerveld, what is it that is left that goes on to "be with the Lord?"

Seerveld says,
The crux of my position is that the selfhood, the concentrated heart-specialness of a woman or man is not a separable from the body.

Dooyeweerd is very clear that our selfhood is separable from the body. Our selfhood separates from the mantle of functions at death.

**Thesis 33.** Temporal body as enkaptic interlacement. Seerveld says,

A woman or man is a single, full-bodied, tin-can functioning unit, a prime individual thing grounded with physico-organic functionings and qualified by selfhood.

What does “qualified by selfhood” mean? For Dooyeweerd, 'qualified' relates to that which is a temporal individuality structure. It makes no sense to speak of qualified by selfhood. Unless, and I think that this is what is happening, Seerveld's idea of selfhood is totally temporal. He speaks of a 'self-dimensional structure':

Every constitutive factor of this configuration, including its bloody-fleshly base, is human only as and because of the integrally constituted, inseparably bound-together nature of the whole self-dimensional structure.

What is a self-dimensional structure?

And he says,

The normal features, as well as the selfhooded peculiarity, deserve emphasis. Man has a this-one nature and an unbroken fabric of concrete corporeal existence simply by being a created individuality-structured creature.

Again, this is confusing. Dooyeweerd says that we have four individuality structures, but we are not ourselves an individuality structure.

Seerveld confuses the issue by speaking of our being 'selfhooded':

Man is not an animated corpse anymore than he is an embodied spirit: woman or man is a selfhooded thing with physico-organic base.

Why would we not say that our body is an expression of the selfhood instead of man being a selfhooded thing? There is a big difference. And it relates to the temporal/supratemporal distinction.

He says,

A woman or man is not incarnate, as if like Christ once was not yet human there is a human substance possibly not yet fleshed out concretely.

And yet that view of incarnation appears to be Dooyeweerd's view, with a separate supratemporal creation and a temporal becoming (wording) and being "fitted into" temporal reality. At death, we put off that temporal mantle, and become supratemporally incarnated, in a supratemporal nature.

**Thesis 64.** Image of God. Seerveld wants to define the selfhood in terms of direction (ignoring the ontical status of the supratemporal selfhood):
What defines man is not an entity inside man but is the structured thrust of the whole, as invisible yet as all-determining and as inseparable as the axis of a cylinder.

This relates to Vollenhoven's view of man, with a propensity for two directions, but fully temporal. This is confirmed when Seerveld says that we are moved either by sarx or the Spirit:

...selfhood independent from being the lever-window focal point of woman or man moved by sarx or the Holy Spirit. Selfhood or "heart" or "soul" is the unconscious structural opening-gateway thrust of man's inescapable relation to God under the Word-command,

Peculiar to a woman or man's existence is that the whole richly concrete corporeality a human is has a thrusted bent to it. That man's existence is thrusted, innerly focused and intrinsically referential of all one does and means toward the true or some pretended Absolute Origin: that is woman or man's being in the image of God.

For Seerveld, the thrusting is from the temporal to the supratemporal. He does not consider the expression from the supratemporal, as a present reality—the supratemporal expressing itself in the temporal. It is because of that initial expression from the supratemporal that there is a referring back (or ‘thrusting’ in his words).

*Wolters, Al*

**Thesis 77.** The fall of creation. Unlike Vollenhoven, who seems to restrict the fall to man’s direction of heart, Wolters (at least in current writings), seems to appreciate that the structure/direction distinction that is all so common in reformational thought is too simplistic. See his article "What is to be done…toward a neoCalvinist agenda?" in *Comment*, at

[http://wrf.ca/comment/article.cfm?ID=142](http://wrf.ca/comment/article.cfm?ID=142)

More than twenty years ago, in a lecture at Leiden University, I once launched the bold thesis that the central insight of reformational philosophy could be said to be captured in the distinction between "structure" and "direction," meaning by those terms the creational design and the spiritual orientation of things. I think I would still defend that thesis, provided we understand that this is a distinction which in principle applies to all creational entities, whether they be physical, societal, cultural, or what have you. There is a creational shape to a crystal, to a state, to a method of instruction, or one's use of language. And each of these "entities" may or may not conform to its God-intended shape, and may therefore be in need of being reshaped and redirected in order to fit more perfectly its creational design.

This view of structure and direction seems to me to be not quite as rigid as that of Vollenhoven. In other words, structure is not statically good, but is also fallen. Vollenhoven seems to have a more static view of structure, leaving direction as a matter
that merely concerns what is for him a fully temporalized heart. I cannot understand Vollenhoven's emphasis on direction except as a merely moral change, as in his example of an alcoholic choosing to walk past a bar instead of going inside. Wolters’ redefinition of Vollenhoven's view of direction is much more compatible with Dooyeweerd's view that creation is fallen with mankind, and that humanity needs to help to recover the sparks of God's goodness within temporal reality, and to restore creation to its original position. I say “more compatible,” because full compatibility with Dooyeweerd would need an emphasis on the supratemporal heart and religious root, in which temporal reality has its existence. And so his reference to “The Centre and the Circumference” achieves even more meaning when the Centre is seen as supratemporal, expressing itself within the temporal, and holding together the existence of the temporal. Although originally the supratemporal heart was the religious root, since the fall, Christ is the New Root, in whom our supratemporal heart participates. This then gives a Christocentric focus, which he rightly emphasizes. This is also of importance when we recall that Stoker criticized Dooyeweerd for being too Christocentric.

I am less comfortable about Wolters’ argument contrasting creation and cross. Dooyeweerd did not divide common grace from special grace, but saw both as being as related to the religious root, in its still undivided state. Creation, fall and redemption are for him all in the supratemporal religious root. This may imply a different view of the atonement.


The analytical reformationals

Nicholas Wolterstorff

Perhaps Wolterstorff and the analytical tradition (Alvin Plantinga et al.) are not reformational philosophers. But let me briefly look at them anyway. I want to examine an early article by Wolterstorff: “Herman Dooyeweerd: an appreciation.” This is an article from the 1960’s. You can find it online at Theo Plantinga’s Reading Room:

http://alpha.redeemer.ca/~tplant/rr/

As might be expected from Wolterstorff, his entire article is very analytical, with its discussions of predicative language and systems of thought.

Thesis 1 (experience, supratemporal selfhood), Thesis 3 (Idea and Concept), Thesis 90 (Ideas exceed knowledge only because of the self). Wolterstorff assumes that our knowledge is conceptual, whereas for Dooyeweerd it is only our restrictive knowledge that is conceptual. And, contrary to what Wolterstorff says, we can have knowledge of God, for true knowledge of God, self and cosmos are interrelated. It seems to me that a lot of questions are answered by the Idea of the supratemporal selfhood, which allows our theoretical thought to transcend time (See Thesis 90). Although there is a kind of negative theology in the sense that even our Ideas are inadequate (see Thesis 94), our intuitive, religiously reflective knowledge is a knowledge that is greater than conceptual knowledge to which Wolterstorff’s philosophy seems to be restricted. Wolterstorff in his analytical sophistication has more or less fallen into the Kantian trap which restricts
'knowing' to space-time concepts, thus ruling out the possibility of knowing God because of his overly narrow conception of what knowledge is or can be.

The fundamental mistake in Wolterstorff's article is the way he explains Ideas as limiting concepts. The explanation of limiting concept is a translator's footnote to the *New Critique* (*NC* I, 8 fn). In any event, Dooyeweerd's use of 'Idea' certainly does not mean "as-if" in Kant's sense. That is a regulative use of Ideas. And as I stated in my article "Mystical Dooyeweerd," Dooyeweerd specifically rejects that view. He says that the transcendental ideas must have more than the merely regulative sense given to them by Kant (*NC* I, 89). He says that Kant failed to see that these Ideas must have a real content which necessarily depends upon supra-theoretic pre-suppositions. To see Ideas as mere regulatory 'as ifs' without any real content is clearly not the Dooyweerdian conception. [It may even be questioned whether Kant's use was "as-if"; I think that is Vaihinger's interpretation, but my Kant class was a long time ago].

**Thesis 1, etc.** Knowledge of the supratemporal. Wolterstorff misunderstands Dooyeweerd when he says,

In the first place, Dooyeweerd held that every concept possessed by a human being is limited in its applicability to what he often called "the temporal horizon." That is to say, every concept is limited in its applicability to things in time. By this he did not mean to say that we cannot know whether our concepts do or do not apply to whatever lies outside of time. He meant to say that we know that they do not apply, and can not apply.

and

So though Dooyeweerd insists that we have a theoretical intuition of entities not found within time, that we have limiting concepts of entities not found within time, and that there is central religious knowledge of God who is not within time, none of these insistences does anything whatsoever to impair the thorough consistency with which he holds that none of our concepts apply to God, and that we know that none of them do.

Contrast this to Dooyeweerd’s statement that we are limited by but not to time. Because of his error, Wolterstorff says we cannot even make statements about God. That is definitely not what Dooyeweerd believes. It is because of our supratemporal selfhood that we can have ideas of what goes beyond theoretical concepts.

**Thesis 42.** Scripture. “Scripture is norm for Christian confession. But notice. It is not norm in the sense that we are to regard the words which in our confession we apply to God as expressing concepts which in fact apply to God. For remember, none of our concepts apply to God. To allow the Scriptures to function as norm for one’s confession is to think and speak about God as they do, but not to think that the concepts one thereby uses apply to God. It is, for example, to think and speak of God as loving, without believing that the concept of love applies to God.” And “but in fidelity to Scripture we must think and speak of temporal reality as if it were the expression of an Absolute Origin who loves.”
But Dooyeweerd does not use his ideas in this sense of “as if.”

**Thesis 50.** Expression by God. Wolterstorff probably correctly interprets Dooyeweerd when he says,

> Well, Dooyeweerd was of the view, using now his own words, that the plenitude and unity of God’s Being is expressed in the unity of man and the coherence of temporal reality’s diversity. This cosmic self-expression of God is what constitutes God’s natural revelation.

But then Wolterstorff’s view of Ideas makes him interpret Dooyeweerd in a self-contradictory manner. He says: “But notice: Dooyeweerd also holds that it is not true of God that he reveals. The concept of reveal no more applies to God than any other.” That is not so. This is a conceptual view of revelation. Wolterstorff’s statements about us not being able to say that God expresses or reveals Himself in creation are certainly not Dooyeweerd's views. What is true is that Dooyeweerd uses the word 'reveal' in a way very different than we are accustomed to. It is in the sense of expression from a higher ontical level to a lower level. This cannot be understood without the Idea of the supratemporal selfhood.

**Theses 29, 36, 92.** Totality. Wolterstorff, like most reformationals, starts from below, from concepts and immanence. Dooyeweerd starts with God's Eternity, man's selfhood in its supratemporality and participation in Totality, and only then deals with the coherence of the temporal cosmos. Those are his three transcendental Ideas, corresponding to Eternity, aevum and cosmic time.

**Thesis 93.** Autonomy of thought. Wolterstorff misunderstands this as the distinction between pure and applied theory. He says “The West has not, as a whole, asserted the autonomy of theoretical thought. For in the history of the West there have been powerful traditions which repudiated “pure theory” and insisted that theorizing is of worth only when placed in the service of some human interest outside itself.” And “Dooyeweerd denies autonomy in the second sense. He insists that a scholar’s decisions as to which theories to accept and which to reject are not all autonomously arrived at, and cannot be.”

What is odd is that, after calling Dooyeweerd incoherent, Wolterstorff still ends on a note praising Dooyeweerd's greatness. Why do reformational philosophers who disagree with Dooyeweerd still want to praise him?

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**Alvin Plantinga**

I refer to his article “Dooyeweerd on Meaning and Being,” from the October 1958 issue of the *Reformed Journal*. You can find it online at

[http://alpha.redeemer.ca/~tplant/rr/](http://alpha.redeemer.ca/~tplant/rr/)

**Theses 48-49.** Only God is Being. Creation is meaning. Plantinga discusses this. He says it is a “puzzling assertion” to say that creation is only meaning. The traditional view is that creation is being and that it has meaning. He analyzes Dooyeweerd in terms of dependence and non-self-sufficiency of creation and that it points to its Creator. But he
says that Christians have always said that creation depends on God, so what is new here? Plantinga says that if creation would be the bearer of meaning, then we might abstract meaning from reality [and Dooyeweerd denies that view of abstraction]. If so, then being and reality would be separate; only meaning would have reference to God. But Plantinga says that this is “a specious difficulty”—“the contingency of a created being is not like the paint on a table, such that we can remove it in thought and examine the remainder.” He concludes, “The proper way to skirt that pitfall is not to deny that created reality has being, but instead to avoid thinking of the meaning of a thing as another thing somehow joined to it.”

Plantinga says that the idea that creation is meaning must relate to the rejection of substance. And he then analyzes Dooyeweerd’s reasons for rejecting substance.

**Thesis 27.** Aspects are not functions. Plantinga confuses the two. He says that Dooyeweerd “apparently holds that in some sense a creature is a combination of functions (or of functionings) which are themselves sometimes referred to as aspects or levels of meaning.”

**Thesis 85.** Subject object relation. Plantinga has difficulty with this. He says that Dooyeweerd rejects substance because it would exclude things from the subject-object relationship. He thinks that Dooyeweerd’s view here means that the existence of things is not disconnected from our knowing them. But Plantinga says, “Indeed, I should regard it as a virtue of the substance view that it allows us to hold that what is known does not derive its character from being known.” He regards Dooyeweerd’s view as due to “strong idealistic propensities.” In my view, it is not idealism, but it is related to the way that Dooyeweerd sees created reality concentrated in man, and man as concentrated in God as Origin.

**Thesis 8.** Restlessness. Plantinga says that Dooyeweerd objects to substance because otherwise it would set up a resting point for theoretical thought within the created cosmos. But Plantinga says, “The self-sufficiency of a created substance is not self-sufficiency over against God, but over against other created beings.” And “substances have a relative independence as contrasted with attributes and relations.” Plantinga here shows a tendency towards substance thinking, and certainly a preference for speaking of things with attributes and relations. But this view is contrary to his idea of self-sufficiency over against God which he sees as essential to defend his view of evil (see below).

Plantinga gives a third argument by Dooyeweerd against substance—that it is tied up with Greek ideas of form and matter and so compromises one’s Christianity. He finds that argument unconvincing. He doubts that all doctrines of substance necessarily involve the notions of matter and form. Furthermore, Plantinga doubts that this would be necessarily connected to Greek religion. Plantinga says that “some of the world’s treasures must be appropriated.”

**Thesis 49.** Plantinga criticizes the view that meaning could be causally active in the world. He says it makes no sense to say that a meaning remembers, or that it judges. And a meaning cannot sin. Plantinga suggests that to say that creation is meaning, and to deny being to creation, may make God the author of evil, and deny the ontological distinction between God and creation. I do not think that this conclusion follows, although I admit
that the problem of evil may have a different theodicy in Dooyeweerd and the tradition that he follows. Dooyeweerd himself was very careful when he speaks of evil in the New Critique.

**Thesis 49.** Finally, Plantinga says that the doctrine that created reality is meaning jeopardizes the doctrine of creation. “For it suggests that the relation between God and creation is like the relation between a mind and the meanings it entertains.” “For then created reality becomes constitutive of God’s mind and thus of God. And this is clearly to controvert the Christian conception of creation with its ontological chasm between God and created reality.” This last sentence does not make sense. If creation is like a thought of God, then God constitutes creation. But the converse is not true, that God is constituted by creation.

**Rene van Woudenberg**

**Theses 11, 13, 16, 35, 91** Sphere sovereignty, temporal coherence, deeper unity. Van Woudenberg calls these ideas ‘romantic’ or ‘holistic’ tendencies in Dooyeweerd. See his article on Herman Dooyeweerd, p. 6. I do not think that these ideas are romantic, but rather Christian theosophical. Of course, theosophy was itself an important influence on romanticism, but the two need to be kept distinct. So although there is something of importance here in Van Woudenberg’s observation, it needs to be worked out with reference to historical sources other than Kuyper. Kuyper himself obtained many of these ideas from J.H. Gunning, Jr., who obtained them from Baader’s theosophy.

**Thesis 61.** In his *Gelovend denken, Inleiding tot een christelijk filosoof*, (Buijten & Schipperheijin, Amsterdam, 1992), van Woudenberg states (p. 43): ‘De grens tussen God en kosmos wordt volgens Vollenhoven en Dooyeweerd dus gevormd door de wet.’ But Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven did not share this idea, at least not in the same way.

**Theses 4 to 7, 14 to 16, 24, 26, 39, 40, 53, 55-57, 60, 62, 73, 88, 91.** Cosmic time. And **Thesis 56.** Cosmos. At p. 164, van Woudenberg says, ‘Ondertussen is nog niet duidelijk geworden waarom Dooyeweerd het woord ‘tijd’ voorziet van het adjectief ‘kosmische’. Hoewel hij dat nergens met zoveel woorden zegt, mag aangenomen worden dat hij daarmee een onderscheid met ‘modale tijd’ heeft willen aanduiden. ‘Kosmisch’ heet de tijd omdat hij de gehele werkelijkheid in al haar aspecten en structuren doortrekt en omsluit, doorschrijdt en transcendeert.’ Van Woudenberg does not seem to see how cosmic time relates to the temporal cosmos, whereas the cosmos does not include all of created reality. In addition to the cosmos, there is the *aevum*, which is also created.

**The postmodern reformationals**

If, as Dooyeweerd says, reformational philosophy is really no different from the epistemology of modernism, then it is very vulnerable to the criticisms of postmodernism.

I refer here to the work edited by James K.A. Smith and Henry Isaac Venema: *The Hermeneutics of Charity: Interpretation, Selfhood, and Postmodern Faith* (Brazos,
2004). I know that there are others working from out of the postmodern tradition, but this will suffice to show the disagreement with the 95 Theses.

**Theses 1-3.** The postmodern reformationals reject the idea of beginning without theoretical presuppositions. E.g. at p. 16, it says, “Because the reformational tradition already recognized the inescapable role of presuppositions in knowing—and thus was not frightened by the mediation of interpretation—Olthuis was in a position to critically appropriate the insights of Heidegger and Gadamer regarding the conditions of interpretation.” But that statement ignores Dooyeweerd’s distinction between subjective presuppositions and ontical conditions.

**Thesis 7:** Why do so many reformational philosophers say that our experience is limited to what is given in time? That is not what Dooyeweerd says. And yet so many reformational philosophers speak of any ideas of what is beyond time as “speculation.” But for Dooyeweerd, that is not speculation, it is our experience. Speculation is when we apply temporal categories to that supratemporal experience.

**Thesis 10:** Postmoderns reject the idea of immediate experience. All experience is mediated. Whereas for Dooyeweerd, mediation is always upwards, pointing towards Being, for postmoderns, the mediation is always downwards, through the temporal and its interpretations.

**Thesis 48.** For postmoderns, to speak of God as Being is to become involved in onto-theology, which for them is a bad thing. At p. 25, Olthuis cites Heidegger’s rejection of God as “The Being of beings.” He speaks of God beings “chained in the ontotheological abode of being.” If onto-theology means that we seek our meaning outside of temporal reality, then Dooyeweerd’s theology is definitely onto-theological. That may explain why a recent student at the Institute for Christian Studies reported that she was taught there that Dooyeweerd was part of the problem, not part of the solution.

**Theses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 54 to 57, 68 to 71.** Postmoderns reject the idea of man’s supratemporality. They prefer Heidegger’s totally temporalized view of man, which of course for Dooyeweerd is immanence philosophy. E.g. the emphasis on “human finitude” at page 16.

**Thesis 20.** Postmodern reformational philosophers do not take seriously this idea of the law, as guaranteeing a correspondence between inner and outer experience. Dooyeweerd says that inner acts can be theoretically studied. But postmodern theory, followed by reformational philosophers, concentrates on the inaccessibility and “alterity” of “the other.” For example, at p. 140, referring to Levinas: the other can never be present within my discourse, my theory, my thought, my ontology. Postmoderns deny that inner acts can be theoretically studied. Even the idea of our own selfhood is a concept that is foreign to postmoderns. The idea of autobiography is impossible for Derrida (p. 30). And to study the inner acts of others is impossible because that would go against the postmodern idea of the “other” who cannot be known. I have analyzed James Olthuis’s view of the selfhood in detail at

http://www.members.shaw.ca/jgfriesen/Definitions/Selfhood.html
Thesis 37. Postmodernism denies the idea of totality. That is itself an answer to Dooyeweerd’s second transcendental question, but it is an idea that cannot be reconciled with Dooyeweerd.

Thesis 75. Postmoderns link ontotheology with domination and power-over (see Olthuis, p. 26). They therefore would have difficulty with Dooyeweerd’s positive idea of unfolding powers, and the historical power of forming.

Here are some comments based on James K. A. Smith’s book *The Fall of Interpretation*

Thesis 1, etc. supratemporality. Smith says if time is created, why would the creature seek to overcome its temporality? Is this not a desire to overcome creaturehood? (p. 144). Smith here fails to appreciate that creatures also exist in the supratemporal *aevum* (at least in Dooyeweerd’s view). Thus, overcoming cosmic time does not mean overcoming creaturehood. Nor does overcoming time mean that creation and original sin coincide (as Smith argues on p. 146).

Thesis 27. Individuality structures have no reality apart from man, their religious root. Smith gives a very different view, and wrongly refers to Dooyeweerd in support. At p. 169, he refers to “empirical transcendentals” or states of affairs: the world as given and experienced. The tree is outside of me and not mine to be manipulated. It imposes on me limits for its interpretations. At p. 215, he refers to these empirical transcendentals in terms of Dooyeweerd’s idea of the *a priori*. But for Dooyeweerd, the “givenness” of reality includes our supratemporal relation to the temporal, and the “containedness” of the world in man, without whom the world has no existence.

Thesis 84. Immediate enstatic experience. But Smith wants to “deconstruct” “the monologic of both a notion of immediacy and a correspondence theory of truth.” (p. 216). Contrast Dooyeweerd’s idea of immediacy. And for Dooyeweerd, mediation is upwards, not downwards to the temporal.

Lambert Zuidervaart

In general, see my article, “Dooyeweerd’s Philosophy of Aesthetics: A response to Zuidervaart’s critique,” online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Aesthetics.html].

Theses 37, 38, 93. Zuidervaart rejects Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique. Zuidervaart says that the critique is circular. See “The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd's Transcendental Critique,” *Faith and Philosophy* (January, 2004). Zuidervaart speaks of “circularity” and “logical slippage” in Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique, and that it seems

…self-referentially incoherent. That is to say, his critique does precisely what it declares impossible: it provides a theoretical account of that which surpasses the limits of theoretical thought.

Zuidervaart here seems, like Strauss, to confuse ontology and epistemology. Dooyeweerd is not opposed to a certain kind of circularity, although he denies that it is a vicious circularity. See Thesis 93. I admire Zuidervaart’s honesty here, although I believe that he might have come to different conclusions had he not interpreted
Dooyeweerd through Vollenhoven’s ideas. To give just one example, he might have come to different conclusions regarding Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique if he had discussed it in terms of the supratemporal selfhood, and the movement from supratemporal center to temporal periphery. Dooyeweerd makes it clear that is only because of our supratemporal selfhood that we can form Ideas of that which exceeds theoretical thought. I was therefore disappointed that Zuidervaart did not really explore these differences.

**Theses 26-30. Individuality Structures.** In his article “Fantastic Things: Critical Notes Toward a Social Ontology of the Arts,” 60 Philosophia Reformata 60 (1995), 37-54 Zuidervaart refers to Kent Zigterman’s study of Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuality structures, and he concludes that Dooyeweerd reduces structure to law. Zigterman, like Hendrik Stoker, argued for an idea of substance. In my view, any rejection of Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuality structures must lead to Zigterman’s view that there is some substance that is at the basis of a structure. Furthermore, Zuidervaart mischaracterizes Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuality structures in terms of Heidegger’s idea of Vorhandenes. But that is not Dooyeweerd’s view. Individuality structures, even those that are qualified by the ‘natural’ aspects, are inert only in the sense that their potential normative aspects have not yet been opened in the cultural opening process. And Dooyeweerd’s idea of ‘expression’ is related to the idea of revelation, of our acting from out of the supratemporal and expressing ourselves in the temporal. That is very different from using inert material for technical purposes.

**Theses 14, 18, 58, 63.** Totality. In “Fantastic Things,” Zuidervaart does not seem to understand Dooyeweerd’s idea of individuation from out of Totality. Zuidervaart does acknowledge (p. 41) Dooyeweerd’s distinction between modal structures and structures of individuality, but he does not follow up on this distinction—how it relates to the process of individuation from out of Totality, and how it results in a distinction between aspects and the functioning of individuality structures in these aspects.

**Theses 12, 27 to 29, 57, 58.** Aspects. Zuidervaart is also wrong in characterizing Dooyeweerd’s view of the modal aspects as conformity to law (p. 40). He says that for Dooyeweerd, the dynamic realization of structural principles in things is synonymous with a conforming to law or a being determined by law. Explaining the nature of things in relation to their conformity to law is characteristic of Vollenhoven’s philosophy. But for Dooyeweerd, the objectivity of individuality structures is explained not by conformity to law, but by the intra-modal subject-object relation. He specifically says that objectivity is not the same as universally valid law-conformity (NC II, 370). And he specifically denies that the Gegenstand of our theoretical knowledge is to be understood in terms of what is generally valid, with law-conformity. (Encyclopedia I, 187).

**Thesis 20.** Identity of inner and outer. Zuidervaart is concerned with the problem of subjectivism. Dooyeweerd emphasizes the correspondence between inner and outer, between our subjective imaginative fantasy and the outer world. This is given by God’s law or Wisdom, which is the basis for the modal aspects in both the inner and outer world, and for the creative and imaginative opening process of reality. This breaks the problem of subjectivism.
Thesis 25. Imagination. Zuidervaart confuses the reproduction of the artist’s aesthetic fantasy with the functioning of an individuality structure in the aesthetic aspect.

Thesis 27. Function is not the same as aspect. In Dooyeweerd’s view, the artist’s aesthetic conception is an expression of the opened individuality structure, which then functions in the aesthetic aspect. And yet Zuidervaart interprets the aspects in a functionalistic way. One example of this confusion is Zuidervaart’s statement that Dooyeweerd “inserts an intentional object between the artist’s aesthetic conception and the artwork’s aesthetic object-function.” This comment fails to understand the nature of the subject-object relation, and the difference between aspects and functions. Dooyeweerd distinguishes between the internal structural totality of a thing, and its expression in the sensory image. Dooyeweerd says,

The internal structural totality of a thing, this structural whole only finds expression in the sensory image, without being identical with it (NC III, 136).

Theses 40-42. Because Zuidervaart does not make a distinction between temporal and supratemporal, he does not see how these transcendental questions relate to the three levels of eternity, aevum and cosmic time. I think this is also why we do not find a transcendental critique in Vollenhoven.

Thesis 62. Differentiation of both law and subject. Dooyeweerd says that cosmic time differentiates both the central law and the central subject. Thus, both the law-side and the subject-side of temporal reality are individuations! This is in sharp contrast to the view of reality supposed by Zuidervaart, where individual things are subjected to universal laws. For Dooyeweerd, the law-side of reality is differentiated into the aspects, and the subject-side is individuated into modal structures and individuality structures. Modal structures have an a-typical individuality, whereas individuality structures have a typical individuality. By viewing objects or things in terms of conformity to law, Zuidervaart also misunderstands Dooyeweerd’s idea of law-types. Zuidervaart understands types in terms of universals that require a particular. He says (p. 41, fn13) that all radical types, geno-types and their sub-types belong to the creation order. They are all “types for which there are no tokens.” But although that kind of reasoning fits with Vollenhoven’s philosophy, where the law as creation order is outside of the cosmos that it determines, it does not fit with Dooyeweerd’s view, where the temporal cosmos has both a law-side and a subject-side. Zuidervaart confuses Dooyeweerd’s subject-object relation, which occurs intra-modally, with sociohistorical context. Zuidervaart says that Dooyeweerd never gets around to discussing artworks in the context of the subject-subject relation. But ‘subject-subject’ is a term of Vollenhoven’s. And Vollenhoven denied the intra-modal subject-

3 Dooyeweerd says,

A modal aspect thus individualizes itself only within its structure, which is fitted into the inter-modal meaning-coherence of cosmic time. It is not exhausted by this structure. The pole reached by modal individualization in the full temporal reality on its subject side, is the complete or a-typical individuality of the modal meaning (NC II, 424).
object relation, so that type of thinking can only lead to a wrong interpretation of Dooyeweerd.

**Thesis 81** (inner activities) and **Thesis 88** (intentionality). Zuidervaart says,

> From a Heideggerian vantage point, Dooyeweerd reduces artworks to mere things, **even while he mistakenly privileges the intentionality** of the artist in the origin of the work of art (p. 38, my emphasis).

Zuidervaart cannot have it both ways—arguing that Dooyeweerd reduces art to a thing and then inconsistently arguing that Dooyeweerd gives priority to the inner conception. For Dooyeweerd, the inner (intentional) conception has priority. That artistic individuality structure may be performed or enacted, it may be symbolically represented in scores and symbols, or it may be reproduced in an enkaptically intertwined new work.

**Thesis 86.** Historical Aspect. Zuidervaart says (p. 53 fn 40) that he objects to the notion of an historical modality, which de-historicizes history and historiography.

**Thesis 93.** Immanence and autonomy of thought. In his lecture “Reformational Philosophy after Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven,” (April 7, 2006), online, Zuidervaart says that we must neither follow nor reject, but that we must “critically retrieve” parts of both Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. But this solution avoids asking the tough questions. For how can we critically retrieve ideas from two philosophers who contradict each other? It is not sufficient to say that we only need to look for the areas where they agree. For the whole point of this discussion is that Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven disagree on the key ideas! Furthermore, Dooyeweerd’s philosophy must be viewed as a whole; his ideas just cannot be understood in isolation from the central Idea of the supratemporal heart. More importantly, what is the philosophic basis for such critical retrieval? How is such critique possible at all? What are its basic presuppositions? This is really what Dooyeweerd is asking when he investigates the ontical foundations of theoretical thought. Dooyeweerd says that a true foundation for theoretical thought depends on the existence of our supratemporal selfhood. So what is the philosophical anthropology that is presupposed in Zuidervaart’s proposal of critical retrieval? Does it acknowledge the idea of the supratemporal heart? I don’t think so. On the contrary, it seems to be associated with a temporalizing of our experience, and a temporalizing of all philosophical anthropology. And does not the emphasis on ‘critical’ betray that same autonomy of thought that Dooyeweerd opposed? The term ‘critical retrieval’ is often associated with the ideas of Paul Ricoeur. But Ricoeur’s idea presupposes that we first go through the process of a hermeneutics of suspicion before we get to this stage of critical retrieval. That idea cannot be squared with Dooyeweerd’s views of the transcendental critique. Zuidervaart says that we must neither follow nor reject, and that we must also not strike out in a new direction, for then we would no longer be reformational. But it seems to me that his advocacy of “critical retrieval” is itself based on a new direction that undercuts reformational philosophy, or at least Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.

**Theses 22 71, 85.** Subject-object relation, In Zuidervaart’s book *Artistic Truth*, he says (235 fn 18)

> Readers familiar with the ontology developed by the Dutch philosophers Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven will recognize the term


“predicative availability” as a modification of their notion of a “logical” (or “analytic”) “object-function.” I avoid their particular terminology for two reasons: it presupposes a subject-object paradigm, which both Heidegger and I want to challenge, and the terms “logical” and “analytic” are less precise than “predicative.” I recognize, however, that the account of subject-object relations given by Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven breaks with the epistemological emphasis of the modern subject-object paradigm. For a concise and updated version of this account, see Hendrik Hart, *Understanding Our World*.

This comment is wrong in several ways. It fails to distinguish the ontology of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. And Hart’s book does not properly describe Dooyeweerd’s subject-object relation. And Zuidervaart wrongly describes Dooyeweerd’s subject-object relation in terms of predicative availability. Perhaps that is correct of Vollenhoven’s epistemology, which is restricted to relations among things. But it is not correct for Dooyeweerd. Dooyeweerd says that even Aristotelian logic betrays the substance idea. Zuidervaart’s allegiance to Heidegger is evident...

Zuidervaart also uses ‘systasis’ in a different way:

> the adjective ‘systatic’ derives from Herman Dooyeweerd’s discussion of the “intermodal systasis of meaning” that grounds any “theoretical synthesis” In Dooyeweerd’s account, “systasis” refers to the wholeness or integrality with which the “modal aspects” of reality present themselves in ordinary or “pre-theoretical” experience. [NC 2:427 ff] My term systatic availability refers to the multidimensional “handiness,” both predicative and nonpredicative, of the entities with which human beings have dealings.” (p. 236 fn 27)

**Ideas ignored or not adequately explored by reformational philosophy**

**Theses 1, 10, 72, 87:** The idea of *enstasis*. I am aware of no one who has written on this important idea, which expresses the relation between our supratemporal selfhood and our temporal functions, and how this differs from theoretical dis-sstasis. Dooyeweerd continued to emphasize the idea even in his last article (“Gegenstandsrelatie,” 86, 92, 94). Pete Steen did discuss enstasis, but got the idea backwards, saying we were enstatically lost in time (*Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd’s Thought*, 79). But Dooyeweerd says it is animals who are ec-statically lost in time, as opposed to humans who by means of *enstasis* are able to enter into time. Dooyeweerd’s use of ec-stasis was derived from Max Scheler, although he did not acknowledge this reference in the *WdW*. But it is clear from his later writings that Dooyeweerd obtained this idea from Max Scheler’s *Man’s Place in Nature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1962, originally published as *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, 1928). For in his 1961 article, “De Taak ener Wijsgerige Anthropologie” (*Philosophia Reformata* 26), Dooyeweerd explicitly refers (at p. 48) to this work by Scheler in support of temporal beings being exstatically absorbed by their temporal existence.
Scheler was influenced by Baader. And Baader also uses the words 'ek-stasis' and 'true stasis.' Like Dooyeweerd and Scheler, Baader says that humans have a supratemporal center, but animals do not. Because of this, an animal does not perceive time like we do; this also means that animals do not become bored (Elementarbegriffe 553; Zeit 27 ft.7). We share with the animals what Baader calls ‘purely outer seeing.’ Animals do not share with us the inner seeing related to our central being (Zeit 56).

It is unfortunate that Dooyeweerd’s use of ‘enstasis’ has not been fully explored, since Mircea Eliade is wrongly given credit for introducing the term in his book on yoga in 1954. But Dooyeweerd used the term much earlier. I believe he obtained it from Baader, who speaks of “true stasis.”

**Thesis 1:** The distinction between subjective ‘Erlebnis’ and ‘Hineinleben’ has not been adequately discussed. As I have shown, Seerveld gets the idea of ‘Hineinleben’ wrong.

**Thesis 2:** The idea of “giving an account of” has not been adequately discussed in relation to how our Ideas approximate and try to give an account of that which cannot be grasped theoretically. The idea of “giving an account” derives from J.H. Gunning’s use of the term (See his Blikken in de Openbaring, where he uses “rekenschap geven” (I, 23, 230). And he in turn relied on Franz von Baader.

**Theses 3, 9, 20.** The concentric identity of our temporal and supratemporal experience has not been sufficiently explored. Prof. Michael J. Marlet did refer to Dooyeweerd’s idea of the law of religious concentration. Dooyeweerd very much appreciated Marlet’s analysis (see Dooyeweerd’s 1964 Talk), but Marlet’s analysis has not been taken up by other reformational philosophers. The concentric identity of our inner and outer experience gives rise to the law Idea. This is in some ways comparable to Descartes’ reliance on God’s law to maintain a harmony of inner and outer, but of course Dooyeweerd rejects Descartes’ rationalism, and also rejects his ideas of what is subjective and what is objective.

**Thesis 5.** No one has looked at the importance of “religious self-reflection.” How does this differ form meditation? The reference to “cosmic consciousness” and its distinction from “cosmological consciousness” is also crucial. Dooyeweerd must have been aware of the fact that the term “cosmic consciousness” arose from an account of a mystical experience by Maurice Bucke in a book of the same name from 1901.

**Theses 12, 19, 20.** The aspects as modes of consciousness.

**Theses 14, 18, 58, 63.** Reformational philosophers have neglected Dooyeweerd’s idea of the supratemporal Totality. See my article, “Dooyeweerd, Spann, and the Philosophy of Totality,” Philosophia Reformata 70 (2005) 2-22. Corresponding to this idea of Totality is the idea of individuation in time. Both the law and the subject are individuated in time.

Theses 28, 32. Because reformational philosophers reject the ideas of individuality structures and of enkapsis, they fail to understand the distinctions between qualifying and foundational functions.

Thesis 46. I am not aware of anyone who has contrasted anastasis and apostasis, as Dooyeweerd does in the *WdW*.

Theses 40-42, 48. Because most reformational philosophers do not distinguish between temporal and supratemporal, they do not see how these three transcendental questions relate to the three levels of eternity, aevum and cosmic time. I think this is also why we do not find a transcendental critique in Vollenhoven. And people fail to see why our ideas of God, man and cosmos are all related.

Theses 60-62, 65. Dooyeweerd’s idea of a completed creation, and of the distinction between Genesis 1 and 2, has not been adequately discussed by reformational philosophy. Nor has the [theosophical] source of these ideas been adequately investigated.

Theses 53, 62 have not been adequately examined as to Dooyeweerd’s panentheism, and its historical roots. Dooyeweerd has a different idea of law as a boundary than does Vollenhoven.

Thesis 94. The religious nature of philosophy. I don’t think that this has been really seen, except in an abstract sense of using theological presuppositions (something that is not Dooyeweerd’s view). Instead, Dooyeweerd has a very dynamic view of his philosophy as itself religious. This is brought out in his 1964 lecture, p. 14:

> The core [*kern*] of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is not of a philosophic nature. The core of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is of a central religious nature. And I believe that its strength is there, and that is also where its meaning for the future will lie. As long as one continues to see this, as long as one continues to see that in the final analysis it comes down to the driving force of God’s Word, which is active in the religious center of our existence, through the power of Christ Jesus, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. As long as one continues to see this, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea will not become meager, it will not become irrelevant to a rapidly changing world, but it will retain its full relevance.

Finally, I think reformational philosophy has tended to see Dooyeweerd’s thought as original, and not influenced by other historical sources. That is not what he says. In the 1964 Discussion, he says,

> …I have never been afraid to acknowledge that there has been influence from non-Christian thought upon the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. It would be completely dishonest and also impossible to have denied it.

And see *WdW* III, vii-viii, part of the Foreword to Volume III of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, not included in the *New Critique*:

> In its point of departure, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is not at all “new,” but rather it builds on the foundation of all ages. What it fights against is the falling away from this fixed foundation, a falling away that
appeals to the autonomy of thought, or depends on a completely misplaced appeal to the teaching of “common grace.”

So whoever reproaches this philosophy with “the desire for originality” does not know what he is talking about. Its characteristic is not a desire for originality, but a desire for the Origin, in the sense that it restlessly drives thought out above its supposed resting points, and points towards its true Origin in Jesus Christ.

Revised Jan 14/08