Standing in the Truth: A Response to Lambert Zuidervaart

by

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Introduction

This article is a response to Lambert Zuidervaart’s recent article “After Dooyeweerd: Truth in Reformational Philosophy.” Zuidervaart says that he wants to transform the idea of truth by “critically retrieving” Dooyeweerd’s conception of truth. He explicitly abandons Dooyeweerd’s ideas of transcendent truth, the supratemporal selfhood, and numerous other ideas. He claims (p. 12) to be a “loyal critic” of Dooyeweerd, and says he wants to preserve the holism and normativity of Dooyeweerd’s conception, and that he is introducing the idea of “authentication” to appropriate insights from Dooyeweerd’s emphasis on “standing in the truth.”

Although Zuidervaart’s article is an interesting example of what reformational philosophy might be like if it continues to reject Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, Zuidervaart’s suggestions cannot be said to be in any way a continuation of or an appropriation of Dooyeweerd’s ideas. In fact, Zuidervaart sets out exactly the kind of philosophy that Dooyeweerd opposed: a temporalized view of our experience and existence, or what Dooyeweerd calls “immanence philosophy.”

This article will examine how Zuidervaart’s article (1) is itself based on immanence philosophy, which Dooyeweerd opposed; (2) is itself based on the self-sufficiency of thought; (3) misinterprets Dooyeweerd’s view of “standing in the truth”; (4) makes simplistic and misleading comparisons of Dooyeweerd to other philosophers such as

1 Lambert Zuidervaart: “After Dooyeweerd: Truth in Reformational Philosophy,” (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 2008), online at [http://records.icscanada.edu/ir/articles/20081007-1.shtml]. A portion of this article has since been published as “Dooyeweerd’s Conception of Truth: Exposition and Critique,” Philosophia Reformata 73 (2008) 170-189. But Zuidervaart says at p. 179 fn 3 that the online article is the "more extensive exposition and critique" of Dooyeweerd.
Husserl and Heidegger, and fails to address recent research regarding the history of Dooyeweerd’s ideas; (5) makes other fundamental errors of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.

I. Immanence philosophy

Dooyeweerd mentions the term ‘immanence philosophy’ on 169 pages of De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee, sometimes several times on the same page, and he mentions the term ‘immanence standpoint’ on 107 pages. So Zuidervaart is correct that a central goal of Dooyeweerd’s reformational philosophy is to free scholarship from immanence philosophy. However, within Dooyeweerd’s meaning of the term, Zuidervaart’s philosophy is itself immanence philosophy!

Many reformational philosophers understand ‘immanence philosophy’ to mean a philosophy that finds its Origin within (immanent to) created reality, and that therefore denies God as creator. But that is only part of what Dooyeweerd means by the term.

Certainly, Dooyeweerd believes that Christian philosophy must affirm God as Creator and Origin. But for Dooyeweerd, a philosopher may be a Christian, and affirm that God is the Creator, and yet still be engaged in immanence philosophy. To understand this, we need to look at Dooyeweerd’s three transcendental Ideas: God as eternal Origin, man as supratemporal Totality (participating in Christ the New Root), and the Idea of temporal coherence (NC I, 69; 501-508). These three transcendental Ideas also correspond to Dooyeweerd’s three transcendental problems:

The three transcendental Ideas correspond to the three transcendental basic problems of the theoretical attitude of thought. Theoretical thought hereby gains successively its concentric direction to the presupposita which alone make it possible…(NC I, 69).

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2 Herman Dooyeweerd: De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1935) [‘WdW’], translated and revised as A New Critique of Theoretical Thought (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969; first published 1953) [‘New Critique’ or ‘NC’].

But the way that Zuidervaart formulates the three transcendental problems (p.6) loses sight of their connection to the three transcendental Ideas and their distinctions of eternity, supratemporality and cosmic time.

The meaning of ‘immanence philosophy’ does not just relate to whether philosophy accepts the Idea of God as Origin. We also need to accept the second transcendental Idea of the deeper, supratemporal unity, which is our central and supratemporal selfhood. Anyone who does not accept such a supratemporal selfhood as the starting point, or Archimedean point, of theoretical thought is practicing immanence philosophy, since such a person must then seek for an Archimedean point within or immanent to time. Zuidervaart rejects supratemporality, and adopts a thoroughly temporalized view of man, and so he is promoting the kind of immanence philosophy that Dooyeweerd opposed.

In his first response to the curators of the Vrije Universiteit (April 27, 1937), in response to Valentijn Hepp's complaints about his philosophy, Dooyeweerd states that it is his view of the supratemporal heart that distinguishes his philosophy from immanence philosophy. His philosophy makes a radical [from ‘radix,’ ‘root’] break with immanence philosophy in its idea that our whole temporal human existence (including our act of thought) proceeds from out of the religious root, the heart:

As is extensively argued in the Prolegomena [to the WdW], the radical break that the Philosophy of the Law-Idea makes with immanence philosophy consists in the fact that the former by the light of Scripture penetrates to the religious root of thought, and that it understands the whole of temporal human existence in its issuance [uitgang] from this religious root, its heart in the Scriptural sense. Then it is stated how the fall into sin consists in the falling away of man’s heart from his Creator. This is the cause of spiritual death, which may not be confused with either bodily death or with eternal death. The acknowledgement of spiritual death as the consequence of the fall into sin is so central in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea that if it is negated, one can understand no part of this philosophy.4

Immanence philosophy does not penetrate to the religious root of thought, our full supratemporal selfhood. Immanence philosophy is therefore obliged to find its starting

4 Dooyeweerd’s First response to the Curators, April 27, 1937. Translation online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Response1.html].
point not within the selfhood, but within philosophic thought itself. But in doing this, immanence philosophy is uncritical, for “Only in the religious center of his existence does man transcend time.”

The ‘religious root of thought’ is our supratemporal selfhood:

All absolutizing of time rests on a lack of critical self-reflection. But we cannot learn to know of the true concentration point, the supratemporal root of our existence, from a self-empowered philosophy, which necessarily remains closed up within the horizon of time. We can only learn it from the divine Word revelation. Only this Revelation discovers us to our selves. As Calvin remarks in his Institutio, we can only come to true self-knowledge through true knowledge of God. I call this the religious law of concentration of human existence.

The “soul” of human existence, which according to the testimony of Scripture is not affected by temporal death, but which continues to exist even after the putting off of the “body,” i.e. of all of the temporal forms of existence closed up in individuality structures, is the religious root of human existence. Scripture also calls it the “inward man” or the “heart” of man, “out of which proceed the issues of life” and “in which eternity is laid.” It is, as Kuyper expresses in his Stone Lectures, “that point in our consciousness in which our life is still undivided and lies comprehended in its unity…”

A real Christian philosophy of time is then also not possible whenever theoretical thought is not directed to the true supratemporal concentration point of the temporal cosmos. Theoretical thought is never self-sufficient in philosophy, but, because of the structure of creation itself, it is necessarily religiously determined, whether in an apostate direction, or in the direction to the true Origin of all things, as revealed itself in Jesus Christ (‘Tijdsprobleem,’ 181-82).

This supratemporal selfhood must be the presupposition of any truly Christian view of society, in contrast to immanence philosophy:

But according to our view, the Christian understanding of a person, the ‘individual I’ can no more be sought within time. And we thereby stand in principle against the position of sociology in the humanities, which seeks to do just this in its immanence philosophy. The individual selfhood is through and through religious, supratemporal. In the cosmic temporal...

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order, selfhood or I-ness cannot be reached by [sociological conceptions of] either individual man, or of societal structures. This is the principal point of departure for any truly Christian view of temporal society. The Archimedean point of immanence philosophy rejects any basis for thought that transcends the immanent functions of consciousness (WdW I, 15; NC I, 12). The selfhood as the religious root of existence is invisible from the immanence standpoint (WdW I, 25; NC I, 21). Immanence philosophy fails to recognize religious transcendence, and this is because it lacks a radical-critical self-consciousness (WdW I, 29). Christian philosophy chooses its Archimedean point differently than immanence philosophy (WdW I, 466-73; II, 28; NC I, 501-8; II, 31).

The immanence standpoint involves a wrong view of the soul (WdW II, 82; III, 628; NC III, 782). The religious root of existence, as concentration point of all of temporal existence, is the boundary [grens] of all immanence philosophy. For as soon as the thinker can cross that boundary, he will see the immanence standpoint as a falling away from his full selfhood ("afval van de volle zelfheid," WdW I, 466; NC I, 500).

Dooyeweerd’s philosophical anthropology, which emphasizes the supratemporal selfhood, is the basic theme of his philosophy. All of his philosophical investigations are “nothing but a necessary preparation” for this philosophical anthropology (WdW III, 627-630; NC III, 781). The central question, “Who is man?” is “the beginning and end of philosophical reflection,” but it remains insoluble on the immanence standpoint (WdW III, 630; NC III, 783). Because Zuidervaart denies the supratemporal selfhood, he is caught within immanence philosophy, even though he believes in God as Creator and

6 Herman Dooyeweerd: De Crisis der Humanistische Staatsleer (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1931) [‘Crisis,’] p. 113:

   Maar naar onze beschouwing, de Christelijke opvatting der persoonlijkheid, kan evenmin het 'individuele ik' in den tijd worden gezocht en daarmede nemen wij principieel tegen de 'geesteswetenschappelijke sociologie' positie, die zulks met de geheele immanentie filosofie juist wel doet. De individueele zelfheid is door en door religieus, boventijdelijk. In de kosmische tijdsorde kan nôch aan den individueelen mensch, nôch aan het verband zelfheid, ikheid toekomen. Dit is het cardinale uitgangspunt voor iedere wezenlijk Christelijke beschouwing der tijdelijke samenleving.
II. The dogma of the autonomy of thought

Zuidervaart is correct (p. 1) that opposition to immanence philosophy depends on a view of truth that does not regard theoretical thought as being self-sufficient. But Zuidervaart does not recognize that his own philosophy is based on this assumption of the self-sufficiency or autonomy of thought.

Many reformational philosophers understand the autonomy of thought as the denial that we are subject to any law of God. In autonomy, we don’t accept God’s law, but set out our own law—we are auto-nomos. That is certainly part of what Dooyeweerd means by the idea of the self-sufficiency of thought. Even here, it is doubtful that Zuidervaart agrees with Dooyeweerd, since Zuidervaart rejects any absolute transcendent horizon of our experience, and rejects the idea of any principles that are given to us, which we then positivize in time.

But just like the idea of immanence philosophy, the idea of the autonomy of thought does not only relate to God as Origin and law-giver. The idea of the autonomy of thought is also related to the second transcendental Idea—the supratemporal selfhood as religious root. Autonomy is the way of thinking we express when we suppose that our act of thought is independent of our supratemporal selfhood.

Dooyeweerd makes this clear in the first two pages of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, where he contrasts his radical revolution in philosophy with Kant’s supposed Copernican revolution. Dooyeweerd philosophy is radical because it makes the distinction of a supratemporal center and a merely temporal periphery. Whereas Kant relativized all things to a supposed transcendental subject of thought, such a revolution still remained on the temporal periphery in comparison to Dooyeweerd’s revolution, which relativizes “the whole temporal cosmos” in relation to the supratemporal selfhood as the religious root of creation.” This leads to the realization that temporal reality cannot be neutral with respect to its religious root. ‘Religiously neutral’ does not just mean the attempt to be

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7 *WdW* I, v-vi; This is badly translated in at *NC* I, v-vi, and the contrast with Kant is not made clear.
neutral from God; it means the attempt to make temporal reality neutral with respect to its religious root, our supratemporal selfhood. There is no temporal reality “an sich” [no things in themselves], unrelated to our selfhood. The idea of the self-sufficiency of thought is thus not only a denial of God’s law, but represents “a fall from our true human selfhood” (“afval van de ware menselijke zelfheid”). If the central religious root relativizes peripheral temporal reality, then we can no longer believe in the religious neutrality of theoretical thought, since theoretical thought is part of temporal reality (NC I, vi). In other words, the rejection of the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought is related to the supra-theoretical a priori of the heart as religious root. Conversely, to reject the idea of the supratemporal heart is to necessarily become involved in immanence philosophy.

Because it denies the supratemporal selfhood, immanence philosophy seeks its starting point in a temporal function—the function of thinking. It “seeks its Archimedean point in philosophic thought itself” and it regards that function as self-sufficient over against the other immanent functions of consciousness (WdW I, 16; NC I, 14).

The idea of the autonomy of thought in immanence philosophy is therefore related to the denial of the selfhood as the religious center which expresses itself in the temporal act of thought:

Why is this presupposition of the “self-sufficiency of theoretical thought in its own area” uncritical and dogmatic? Because theoretical thought in its modal-logical aspect (and that is what is here intended) cannot by its own power [eigenmachtig] determine its relation over against the remaining modal aspects of reality. In the “cogito” [Descartes’ “I think”], the thinking selfhood is active, which as such functions not only in the logical-analytical aspect, but equally in all aspects of reality. At the same time, this selfhood is the concentration point of temporal human existence. If all aspects are equally enclosed by cosmic time and thus have an intrinsically temporal character, then the concentration point of human existence, in which all temporal aspects come together in one focus [brandpunt], cannot itself be of a temporal, but must be of a supratemporal, transcendent character. The theoretical synthesis is determined both by cosmic time as well as by the supratemporal transcendent selfhood.

The immanence standpoint can only seemingly be maintained, by – following the so-called critical philosophy – unexpectedly identifying the thinking selfhood with the so-called transcendental-logical subject of
thought (in Kant, “the transcendental-logical unity of apperception”).
(‘Tijdsprobleem,’ 178).

Immanence philosophy does not give an adequate account of the conditions that make philosophic thought possible. It does not distinguish between the selfhood and its act of theoretical thought. Thus, the whole thrust of immanence philosophy is related to its denial of the supratemporal selfhood as concentration point of man’s temporal functions. Immanence philosophy denies the transcendent horizon of our experience; this transcendent horizon plays no acknowledged role in its cosmology or epistemology (WdW II, 482; NC II, 552).

The idea of the autonomy of thought necessarily arises when we restrict ourselves to the temporal periphery. And for Zuidervaart, there is no other horizon than this temporal periphery. For him, there is no transcendent center, no transcendent horizon. And so, despite his objections to the contrary, his philosophy is also based in the self-sufficiency of thought.

Zuidervaart also does not understand the source of Dooyeweerd’s critique of the self-sufficiency or autonomy of thought. He seems to assume that the idea was original to Dooyeweerd. But Dooyeweerd denies that his philosophy is original (WdW III, vii-viii; not in NC). And the opposition to the autonomy of thought was certainly not original to Dooyeweerd. More than forty years before the WdW, Abraham Kuyper had already recognized and praised Franz von Baader’s even earlier opposition to the modern idea of the autonomy of thought:

In spite of his Praktisches Vernunft it was this desire which actuated Kant, of whom Baader correctly wrote, ‘The fundamental error of his philosophy is that man is autonomous and spontaneous, as if he possessed reason of himself; for it transforms man to a God, and so becomes pantheistic.’

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Zuidervaart has ignored these historical sources in his interpretation of Dooyeweerd.

Zuidervaart’s idea of “critical retrieval” of what he finds to be useful in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is a further example of the autonomy of thought and of immanence philosophy. 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.

The very idea of eclectically choosing only bits of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is troubling. It runs counter to what Dooyeweerd himself says about the ideas that are fundamental to his philosophy—ideas like cosmic time and the supratemporal heart. Dooyeweerd says that his philosophical anthropology is the basic idea in his philosophy, its beginning and its end point. In his 1964 lecture, Dooyeweerd indicates that he wanted to continue with the third volume of his Reformation and Scholasticism. That volume was to be devoted to philosophical anthropology. It has never been published, but the draft of this second volume was exhaustively analyzed in W.J. Ouweneel’s doctoral thesis.

A part of Ouweneel’s thesis was summarized in an article in Philosophia Reformata. Ouweneel correctly emphasizes the key nature of this idea of the supratemporal heart for Dooyeweerd:

From around 1930 onward, this view of the Supratemporality of the heart or the religious root-unity of the cosmos becomes the essential, unchangeable, and indissoluble cornerstone of his thought. The pivotal place of this view in Dooyeweerd’s thought must be emphasised over against all those who have expressed objections to this view. They suppose that it is possible to drop this idea but to maintain the “rest” of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. They fail to see that the very core of his thought – the metaphor of the prism with its law of refraction, the law of

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11 W.J. Ouweneel: De Leer van de mens (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1986). Ouweneel’s own summary of this work is available in English, online at [http://www.reddmer.ca/~tplant/cp/SA-MO-HTM].
concentration, the idea of the unity, fullness and totality of the religious root, the theory of time, the transcendental critique of thought – as well as the whole theory of the modalities, according to which the modalities are seen as “temporal aspects,” stand or fall with the idea of the supratemporality of the heart.¹²

Dooyeweerd’s philosophy must be read as a whole. Zuidervaart’s attempted solution of a critical retrieval of only parts of the philosophy cannot work. For as Dooyeweerd himself says in the 1964 lecture, problems arise when people accept the philosophy “only up to a certain point.”¹³

III. Standing in the Truth

Citing NC II, 564 Zuidervaart correctly says (p. 10) that for Dooyeweerd, standing in the Truth means sharing in the fullness of meaning of the cosmos in Christ. In the New Critique, the heading of this paragraph states that this standing in the truth is freedom in the transcendent horizon of experience. But Zuidervaart denies any transcendent horizon of experience! (p. 27: “all horizons are historical…Strictly speaking, and contrary to Dooyeweerd’s problematic notion of a “transcendent horizon,” there is no ultimate horizon.”) He therefore cannot possibly share Dooyeweerd’s idea of standing in the truth.

When we temporalize our experience, we necessarily end up absolutizing or hypostatizing part of the temporal horizon. From Dooyeweerd’s point of view, all temporalizing of human existence involves apo-stasis [apostasy]¹⁴, the standing away from truth. Temporalizing of our experience is therefore the opposite of standing in the truth. The same page of the NC II, 564 refers to the fall into sin, which made the human selfhood “fall away into the temporal horizon.” Such a temporalized horizon is not standing in the truth, but rather “apostasy from the fulness of meaning of the Truth that alone makes all temporal truth possible” (NC II, 564). The WdW (II, 496) uses the word


¹⁴ Sometimes Dooyeweerd hyphenates the word. (WdW I, 75 ‘apo-statische,’ 80).
‘afval’ or “falling away” from the fullness of meaning of truth. This state of falling away is the lie at the foundation of the whole epistemology of immanence philosophy. According to this lie, our experience is limited to a temporal complex of functions. When we are governed by this lie and not by the truth, we do not experience the fullness of truth (WdW II, 493; NC II, 561). Sin turns man’s power away from its religious fulness; instantly the striving after its absolutization came into existence, the disregard for its temporal meaning-coherence, root and Origin. (WdW II, 186; NC II, 248). Immanence philosophy lacks a fixed basis of truth because it does not come from out of the truth and does not stand in the truth (WdW II, 512; NC II, 578). At the end of the WdW, Dooyeweerd explicitly rejects any view of the heart as merely temporal (WdW III, 629; NC III, 784; also NC I, 31 fn1).

Note the contrast between fullness of truth and temporal truth. The fullness of truth cannot be given in time. All temporal meaning refers beyond itself to its supratemporal fulfillment (WdW I, 71; NC I, 106). Fullness is supratemporal and central, just like our selfhood:

This whole diversity of modal aspects of our experience makes sense only within the order of time. It refers to a supra-temporal, central unity and fulness of meaning in our experiential world, which is refracted in the order of time […] this diversity is related to the central unity of the human selfhood, which, as such, surpasses all modal diversity of our temporal experience.15

Our selfhood participates in the meaning totality; as fullness of meaning, this totality transcends all specialty of meaning (WdW I, 9; NC I, 8). But in our falling away, we have lost the Archimedean point of our religious root of existence (WdW I, 25). Apostatic man has lost his concentration in the central focus of his existence and has become dispersed in the diversity of meaning of our temporal cosmos (WdW I, 26). Apostasis is the superficial supposition that we are restricted to the temporal horizon, but this is in conflict with the structure of our selfhood (WdW II, 505; NC II, 572).

To find our way again, we now have to participate (WdW II, 496 says “deelnemen”) in Christ, the New Root, in order to stand in the truth. And when we do that, our state is no longer fallen away (apo-static) but resurrected and restored (ana-static, “to stand again”), even in this life (WdW I, 80). Zuidervaart denies any such present fullness. For him, fullness is something only eschatological, in the future (p. 27, and fn lxii).

Doooyeweerd makes it clear that we can participate the New Root in this way only because of our supratemporal selfhood:

Man, in his full selfhood, transcends the temporal ‘earthly’ cosmos in all its aspects, and partakes in the transcendent root of this cosmos (NC II, 593; Cf. WdW II, 597).

It is interesting that when the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy was founded, Vollenhoven objected to Christ being referred to as the New Root. But the phrase remained in Article 2 of the constitution of the Association. And in his 1964 Lecture, given the year before his retirement, Doooyeweerd said that we cannot even understand Christ’s incarnation apart from the idea of our selfhood as being able to transcend time. For the incarnation of the Word is “an event that simultaneously reaches into the central sphere of our life as well as the temporal sphere of our bodily existence.” The central sphere is our supratemporal existence, and the temporal sphere is our bodily existence, or the temporal periphery. This idea of supratemporal center and temporal periphery is essential to Doooyeweerd’s understanding of our selfhood, of standing in the Truth, and of Christ the New Root in whom we participate.

And this standing in the Truth is “the indispensable prerequisite for the insight into the full horizon of our experience” (WdW II, 496; NC II, 564).

We have seen how the idea of ‘standing’ (‘stasis,’ root ‘sta-’) plays a role in the idea of standing in the truth, of apo-stasis, and of ana-stasis. There are other words that Doooyeweerd uses that also build on this same root ‘sta-.’ These terms are enstasis, systasis, and dis-stasis. Let us look at each of these briefly, for Zuidervaart has failed to understand these terms, too.

Enstasis

We will first look at *enstasis*. At *NC* II, 562 (two pages before the “standing in the truth” passage), Dooyeweerd says

In the limitation and weakness of the flesh, we grasp the absolute truth in our knowledge of God derived from His revelation, in prayer and worship. This knowledge in the full sense of the word contains the religious principle and foundation of all true knowledge, and primarily has a religious *enstatic* character. It no more rests primarily on a theoretical meaning-synthesis than does the cosmic self-consciousness.

We must first understand that by ‘revelation,’ Dooyeweerd does not just mean Scripture. For Dooyeweerd, revelation is the revealing [*openbaring*] from a higher ontical level to a lower level. In his 1964 Lecture, given a year before his retirement, he says we cannot understand revelation apart from the idea of the supratemporal selfhood. And indeed, Dooyeweerd uses the same term ‘*openbaren*’ to describe the way that our supratemporal selfhood expresses itself within the temporal.

*Enstasis* is the relation of our supratemporal selfhood into temporal reality. Man’s selfhood is able to *enter enstatically* into the coherence of cosmic time. Only humans can have this relation, for only humans have a supratemporal selfhood. In contrast to man’s entering into [*in-gaan*] of temporal reality, animals are absorbed within [*opgaan*] temporal reality, in the relation of *ek-stasis* (*WdW* II, 415; *NC* II, 480). This idea of *ek-stasis* as purely temporal comes from Scheler, whom Dooyeweerd does not footnote here, but whom he many years later acknowledged as the source. In this idea (although not in his phenomenology), Scheler was influenced by Franz von Baader, and we find the same

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17 The word ‘*enstasis*’ is usually attributed to Mircea Eliade, who used it in his 1954 book on yoga. The original term he used was ‘*l’entase*.’ See *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 37. But Dooyeweerd’s usage was far earlier, and so we need to look at his sources for the idea. I find them in Franz von Baader.

idea of *ekstasis* in Baader, as well as how animals and humans are differentiated by their supratemporal selfhood. Because he denies the supratemporal selfhood, Zuidervaart cannot understand what Dooyeweerd means by ‘*enstasis*,’ and so we find that Zuidervaart confuses this term with the purely temporal coherence, or ‘*systasis*.’ He refers to enstatic knowing as the experience of full temporal reality (p. 7).

And the true idea of ‘*enstasis*’ is the relation of our supratemporal selfhood into the temporal world. Dooyeweerd refers to this as ‘cosmic consciousness,’ where our supratemporal selfhood recognizes temporal reality as “its own.” Zuidervaart does not adequately distinguish between cosmic consciousness and cosmological consciousness, and between pre-theoretical intuition and theoretical intuition. He merely says that he “leaves aside Dooyeweerd’s parallel discussion of “pre-theoretical intuition” and “cosmic self-consciousness.” (p. 37 fn xii). But the result is to misunderstand what Dooyeweerd means by “our own.” He also fails to distinguish pre-theoretical intuition and theoretical intuition, a distinction that Dooyeweerd says is crucial.

*Systasis*

‘*Systasis*’ is a word that Dooyeweerd uses to describe the coherence of temporal reality. It therefore corresponds to the third of Dooyeweerd’s three transcendental Ideas, the Idea of temporal coherence. Zuidervaart speaks of *systasis* in terms of holism and temporal coherence. But because Zuidervaart denies any transcendent horizon, he cannot understand even the temporal horizon.

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19 See the references in Thesis 83 of my “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd,” online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/95Theses.html].
21 The use of the word in the sense of an integral whole is sometimes attributed to Jean Gebser (1905-1973), who used it to mean “the conjoining or fitting together of parts into integrality” in his book *The Ever Present Origin* (1986, first published in German as *Ursprung und Gegenwart* in 1949). But Dooyeweerd used the term at least fifteen years earlier. In a footnote (*NC* III, 36 ft. 1), he says that 'systasis' is an obsolete word, but he does not indicate from where he obtained it.
Now it is indeed correct that we could have no true sense of time unless we did not go above time in the deepest part of our being. All merely temporal creatures lack a sense of time. [...] A real sense of time supposes a transcendent centre of experience of time.” (‘Tijdsprobleem,’ 179, 181; Cf NC I, 32).

In his last article, Dooyeweerd confirms that the idea of temporal coherence cannot be understood except in relation to the supratemporal selfhood: the mutual irreducibility and unbreakable reciprocal meaning-coherence of the modal aspects are “not to be separated from the transcendental idea of the root-unity of the modal aspects in the religious center of human existence.” (‘Gegenstandsrelatie,’ 100) The universality in its own sphere of the modalities can only be understood from the Christian transcendence viewpoint; but this universality always puts immanence philosophy on the wrong track because its Archimedean point hides an absolutizing of meaning (WdW II, 263; NC II, 333). And a recently discovered letter dated October 27, 1929 from Dooyeweerd to A. Janse says that even the law-Idea itself cannot be understood apart from this supratemporal convergence of the differentiated modal laws:

Het komt mij niet geheel juist voor, de wetsidee in het bijzonder aan de natuurwet te orienteren. De wetsidee, dat is voor mij, de terugvoering van alle differentiering in de goddelijke wetten (en daaronder vallen zowel natuurwetten als normen) op de eeuwige religieuze zin der wet, de onderworpenheid aan Gods souvereiniteit. Ik gebruik daarvoor steeds het symbool van de straalbreking van het licht in de regenboog.

De wetsidee is de idee van de diepste oorsprong en onderlinge samenhang van alle wetsgebieden, waarin onze tijdelijke kosmos besloten is. [...] De wetsidee moet immers oorsprong en samenhang der wetskringen uitdrukken.22

Therefore, from Dooyeweerd’s perspective, Zuidervaart has not understood what is meant by systasis or temporal coherence. Nor does he understand the whole law-Idea in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. Dooyeweerd does not mean a purely temporal holism. Furthermore, in his book Artistic Truth, Zuidervaart also redefines ‘systasis’ as follows:

…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

22 In Dooyeweerd Archives, Amsterdam.
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.\(^23\)

But Dooyeweerd does not speak in terms of predicative availability, nor is Zuidervaart correct in understanding the subject-object relation in this way.\(^{24}\) Indeed, Dooyeweerd says that the entire Aristotelian system of logic with its idea of properties or predicates carries with it the danger of substance thinking.\(^{25}\) So not only does Zuidervaart fail to understand temporal coherence in its relatedness to the supratemporal root unity, he has also redefined the term in a way that leads to substance thinking.

**Dis-stasis**

Finally, ‘dis-stasis’ is the merely intentional (i.e. non-ontical\(^{26}\)) splitting apart of temporal reality by means of our theoretical thought. This is done in the theoretical Gegenstand-relation, which is possible only because our supratemporal selfhood is able to enter into its temporal functions.\(^{27}\) Zuidervaart, like many other reformational philosophers, misunderstands the Gegenstand-relation as the opposing of the logical aspect to the other aspects. But Dooyeweerd specifically rejected that view in his last article, directed against D.F.M. Strauss (‘Gegenstandsrelatie’).

**Synthesis**

Because of Zuidervaart’s rejection of the supratemporal selfhood, and of the distinction between concepts and Ideas, he does not understand Dooyeweerd’s view of theoretical


\(^{24}\) Zuidervaart: *Artistic Truth*, 235 fn 18.


\(^{26}\) See references in Thesis 88 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”

\(^{27}\) See references in Thesis 89 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”
synthesis, which relies on the unity of our supratemporal selfhood to unite that which has been merely intentionally and not ontically split apart in theoretical dis-stasis. Synthesis of meaning can only be accomplished by a selfhood that transcends all diversity (WdW I, 26). It is only because we both transcend time and are immanently fitted into temporal reality that we can perform the theoretical act of synthesis of meaning.28 “The meaning synthesis of scientific thought is first made possible when our self-consciousness, which as our selfhood is elevated above time, enters into its temporal meaning functions.”29

While Zuidervaart’s views are interesting in their own right, they are in no way a representation of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.

IV. Historical Comparisons

It is important to look for the historical sources of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, for as already noted, he denies that his philosophy is original.

A. Phenomenology

1. Horizons and the Perspectival Nature of Truth

It is entirely superficial for Zuidervaart to argue that Dooyeweerd’s idea of “horizons” comes from the perspectivalism of phenomenology (p. 15: “He appears to have adopted it from phenomenology and then wed it to a revised Kantian notion of the a priori”; p. 29: Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven agree with Husserl’s notion of “self-givenness”). Zuidervaart is wrong on both counts. Dooyeweerd relies neither on phenomenology nor on Kant. He is also wrong in attributing Dooyeweerd’s idea of “givenness” to phenomenology. Let us begin by looking at the idea of an experiential horizon.

Dooyeweerd’s idea of “horizon” goes back to a much earlier tradition than phenomenology. The idea of a horizon [Horizont] is already in Kant.30 Kant’s limited

28 Herman Dooyeweerd: De Crisis der Humanistische Staatsleer, in het licht eener Calvinistische kosmologie en kennistheorie (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1931), 103.
29 Herman Dooyeweerd: Encyclopedia of Legal Science (1946), p. 12, online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Encyclopedia.html]
30 For example, Kant speaks of the “horizon of science” [Horizont der Wissenschaft] as well as various private horizons with their standpoints.
idea of our experiential horizon (related to his idea of the autonomy of thought) was refuted by Franz von Baader. The issue is whether our experience includes that which goes beyond the temporal or not. Kant’s view is that our horizon is limited to the temporal. Baader and Dooyeweerd say we are not so restricted, and that Kant’s view is the result of his adherence to the dogma of the autonomy, or self-sufficiency, of theoretical thought. Dooyeweerd says that although our knowledge of God is bound to the temporal function of faith, it “transcends the temporal horizon in our selfhood” (NC II, 564). We are limited by but not at all to the temporal horizon (NC I, 24; II, 561). This is because we are, even now, both supratemporal and temporal beings; we have a supratemporal selfhood and a temporal body in which that selfhood expresses itself.

According to my modest opinion, and in the light of the whole Scriptural revelation concerning human nature it is just this possession of a supratemporal root of life, with the simultaneous subjectedness to time of all its earthly expressions, that together belong to the essence [wezen] of man, to the image of God in him by means of which he is able to not only relatively but radically go out [uitgaan] above all temporal things. And that is how I also understand Ecclesiastes 3:11.  

In his farewell lecture [afsheidscollege] on Oct 16, 1965, Dooyeweerd refers to the horizon of our experience, our ‘ervaringshorizon’:

En onder ‘ervaringshorizon’, een term die ge in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee herhaaldelijk zult tegenkomen, verstand ik het begrenzende apriorisch (in de zin van voorafbepaald) kader, waarbinnen zich alle mogelijke menselijke ervaring beweegt, maar welks onuitputtelijk gecompleteerde structuur, die in het wijsgerig onderzoek slechts stuksgewijs en op altijd feilbare wijze te benaderen valt, in de goddelijke scheppingsorde gegrond is, die all creatuurlijk bestaan en eerst mogelijk maakt, zodat de ervaringshorizon tegelijk de bestaanshorizon is van de mens en van de wereld, waarin hij zich geplaatst vindt.  

[And by ‘horizon of experience,’ a term which you will repeatedly come across in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, I understood the limiting framework, which is a priori (in the sense of fixed in advance), and within]


which all possible human experience takes place. But its inexhaustibly complicated structure, which philosophical research can only approximate in a partial and always fallible way, is grounded in the divine order of creation, which first makes all creaturely existence possible. So the horizon of experience is at the same time the horizon of existence for man and for the world in which he finds himself placed.]

Our horizon of experience is therefore an ontical framework which is given in advance, and not constructed by our rational thought. And Dooyeweerd emphasizes that this horizon goes beyond the temporal:

But if our experience were limited to our temporal functions of consciousness, or rather to an abstractum taken from our temporal complex of experiential functions, as is taught by the critical and the positivistic epistemologies, it would be impossible to have true knowledge of God, or of ourselves, or of the cosmos (NC II, 561).

According to Dooyeweerd, our horizon of experience has four ontical levels or dimensions: the religious or supratemporal, the dimension of cosmic time, the dimension of the modal aspects, and the dimension of individuality structures (NC II, 552-53, 560-61). Zuidervaart misunderstands each of these dimensions of our horizon of experience.

The transcendent religious horizon

Zuidervaart correctly points out that Dooyeweerd describes religion as the root of self-consciousness in which human experience transcends time (p. 13). This root of self-consciousness is supratemporal, and ontical. But Zuidervaart contrasts these ontological conditions in the transcendent religious horizon of experience with the idea that religion is the all-pervasive direction in which human life is oriented (p. 13). Zuidervaart refers to Vollenhoven’s ideas in support of this rejection of the ontical in favour of the directional (p. 14, fn xlii). But it is clear that Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd disagreed! For Dooyeweerd, the religious or transcendent dimension is ontical: it is based on our supratemporal selfhood, which really transcends time even now. It is the transcendent horizon of the selfhood that radiates through all human experience perspectively (WdW II, 492; NC II, 560). Zuidervaart accepts Vollenhoven’s idea of a pre-functional, fully temporal heart (p. 20). So, although Zuidervaart would like to follow Vollenhoven, who denied the supratemporal selfhood, and who believed religion to be merely the direction of a fully temporal heart, that is certainly not Dooyeweerd’s view. It is especially
surprising that Zuidervaart makes this mistake, since he acknowledges “Insofar as the religious horizon encompasses all others, the distinction between structure and direction is not so clear in Dooyeweerd as subsequent reformational thinkers, perhaps influenced by H. Evan Runner’s reading of Vollenhoven, sometimes suggest” (p. 38, endnote xxi).

Zuidervaart makes a further mistake with respect to the religious horizon. He says that Dooyeweerd’s view of our experience of the religious experience is “rather rarified” (p. 38 endnote xxiii). But he misunderstands the quotation that he refers to. The religious horizon belongs implicitly to our experience. It is only made explicit in our theoretical thought. The distinction implicit/explicit corresponds to naïve/theoretical. It does not at all mean that our religious experience is rarified, or that it is the least accessible to ordinary experience. And Zuidervaart’s statement (p. 15) that religious truth cannot be unique and all-pervasive is also wrong. Of course religious truth can be unique and all-pervasive. It is human sin that prevents us seeing it.

The horizon of cosmic time

From Dooyeweerd’s standpoint, Zuidervaart cannot understand the horizon of cosmic time, because we can only understand what time is because we are supratemporal. Without the experience of our transcendent selfhood, the perspectival structure of our experience is not properly understood:

Naarmate het transcendentebesef van den mensch verzwakt, verzwakt ook zijn zelf-bewustzijn en zijn vermogen de perspectivische structuur van de tijd te ervaren. (‘Tijdsprobleem,’ 209).

[To the degree that man's understanding of the transcendent is weakened, so also is weakened his self-consciousness and his ability to experience the perspectival structure of time].

The modal horizon

In his 1964 Lecture, given the year before his retirement, Dooyeweerd says that the modal aspects and individuality structures are one of the least understood ideas in his philosophy. I suggest that this is still the case.

From Dooyeweerd’s perspective, Zuidervaart cannot understand the modal horizon without the idea of supratemporality, or the transcendent religious horizon. Zuidervaart correctly says that the nucleus or kernel of an aspect is not something alongside of its
anticipations and retrocipations, but rather that which permeates all of these. But he does not explain why this is so—that the kernel is supratemporal and the analogies are temporal. In his last article, Dooyeweerd says that the irreducibility of the modal aspects cannot be understood apart from their coinciding outside of time in our supratemporal selfhood, the religious root unity in which they coincide (‘Gegenstandsrelatie’).

Zuidervaart asks how it is that aspects can determine individuality of meaning (NC II, 553). The answer is related to how individuality structures differ from the idea of substance, which I have discussed elsewhere.

It should be noted that for Dooyeweerd, in the modal horizon of our experience, we do not experience the modes as distinct from each other. The temporal horizon is not time in a specific (theoretically isolated) meaning-modality, but time in its cosmic all-sidedness, time which maintains all law-spheres in coherence of meaning (WdW II, 482; NC II, 552). A distinguishing of the modes occurs only in the theoretical attitude, which is not ontical, but merely intentional (‘Gegenstandsrelatie’).

The plastic horizon of individuality structures

Here Zuidervaart does a curious thing. He inserts the theoretical attitude as a fifth horizon, between the modal horizon and the plastic horizon of individuality structures. Now it is true that Dooyeweerd does speak of “the horizon of all true theoretical knowledge” (NC II, 554). But it is not theoretical thought that forms that horizon. Theoretical thought is bound to the ontical structural horizon of inter-modal meaning synthesis. And as we have seen, for Dooyeweerd, that inter-modal synthesis relies on the ontical horizons already mentioned, and in particular on the religious horizon of our supratemporal selfhood.

33 See references for Thesis 16, “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”
34 J. Glenn Friesen: “Individuality Structures and Enkapsis: Individuation from Totality in Dooyeweerd and German Idealism,” (2005), online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/hermandooyeweerd/Enkapsis.html].
In contrast to the four ontical horizons, the theoretical attitude is merely intentional. We can, for example, experience the modal aspects both in the pre-theoretical attitude and in the theoretical attitude (NC II, 553) And whereas a higher ontical horizon “encompasses and determines” all lower horizons (NC II, 560), that certainly cannot be said of the theoretical attitude. It does not contain and determine the final horizon of individuality structures.

How does Zuidervaart make this mistake? I suggest it is because he fails to understand the plastic horizon of individuality structures. He sees this horizon as “the entire latticework of “structural principles” that govern different types of entities” (p. 9). This distinction between individuality structure and entities that they govern is incorrect; individuality structures are the entities themselves. They are what we experience in pre-theoretical experience. Dooyeweerd denies that individuality structures are universals that can be abstracted, or that objectivity means universally valid law-conformity (NC II: 370-73). The horizon is called the ‘plastic’ horizon not for the reason given by Zuidervaart—that structural principles are more concrete — but because individuality structures themselves show this plasticity in that they are formed, with both a law-side and a subject-side. To assume that individuality structures are merely a law obtaining for entities leads to the idea of substance. Zuidervaart’s lack of understanding of things as individuality structures, and the relation of enkapsis of one individuality structure within another, also leads to difficulties in his theory of art.

2. The “Givenness” of reality

Zuidervaart says (p. 37 endnote xv) that Dooyeweerd’s idea of the givenness of our
experience ("het wezenlijk zelf-gegevene") reflects a phenomenological influence. That is not so. Dooyeweerd’s idea of the given has nothing to do with phenomenology. Dooyeweerd said that phenomenology is one of the most dangerous forms of immanence philosophy (WdW II, 422; NC II, 478-90). There are several key differences between Dooyeweerd and phenomenology with respect to the idea of the “given.”

a) For Dooyeweerd, the “given” is pre-theoretical whereas for phenomenology it is a product of theory. Dooyeweerd opposes what is “given” in pre-theoretical experience with the product of theoretical analysis in the Gegenstand-relation. The given is contrasted with what we make into a theoretical “problem” (Dilemma 7, Crisis 89). Because immanence philosophy must seek its starting point within temporal reality, it necessarily absolutizes the function of thought and theory, and therefore falsifies this givenness of reality—it falsifies it by turning the givenness into the product of theory, and then elevates this theoretical, merely intentional abstraction as if it were reality.39 Phenomenology recognizes this problem, but Dooyeweerd does not accept the solution offered by phenomenology—to go beyond the merely symbolical by penetrating to the thing’s “essence.” But in searching for the essence, aspects are torn apart into noumenon and phenomenon (WdW I, 68). Naive experience is falsified by a theoretical interpretation (WdW I, 140; NC I, 171).

In his last article, Dooyeweerd indicates that Strauss confused this distinction between the given and the theoretical, and that therefore his philosophy does not differ from current epistemologies:

…we also find in [D.F.M.] Strauss a continual confusion between the “ontical” and the epistemological states of affairs. In the Prolegomena of the transcendental critique of the theoretical attitude of thought and experience, I have remarked that in the subject-object relations of naïve attitude of thought and experience, empirical reality is understood as it gives itself, that is to say in the continuous systatic coherence and

relatedness of its modal aspects within cosmic time. But in the Gegenstand- relation, these modal aspects are epistemologically (not “ontically”) split apart and set over against each other, with the intention of bringing them into view in their general modality, and thereby making them available for theoretical concepts (Gegenstandsrelatie, 91).

By relating Dooyeweerd’s idea of givenness to phenomenology’s theoretical standpoint, Zuidervaart is making a similar confusion between the ontically given and the epistemological. As we shall see, as a result of the priority he gives to the epistemological, Zuidervaart also tries to undermine the ontically given (the structural \textit{a priori}) in favour of a purely subjective and historical \textit{a priori}. But that is also an indication of Zuidervaart’s belief in the self-sufficiency of thought. As Dooyeweerd says, “In autonomy, man thought he could create his own horizon of experience” (\textit{WdW} II, 496; \textit{NC} II, 563). This is a misuse of religious freedom and results in the slavery of darkness.

b) Dooyeweerd's use of the word ‘intentional’ must also be distinguished from Husserl's idea of intentionality. He does not mean it in the sense of “directed towards the object,” because Dooyeweerd does not share the same view of objects. For Dooyeweerd, intentionality involves a willed movement of the selfhood into the temporal by means of the Gegenstand-relation. The \textit{Gegenstand} that is set over-against our temporal logical function is then merely intentional and not ontical. Dooyeweerd says that by "intentional" \textit{bedoelend} he means that we direct ourselves to states of affairs in [temporal] reality or in our imagination. We relate these states of affairs to our [supratemporal] I-ness in order to “make them our own.” But the phenomenologist presumes that there is no problem of a \textit{Gegenstand}, since he supposed that he discovers it by his intentional consciousness in the “strict givenness” of that which is purified by the phenomenological reduction. According to phenomenology, the world is only given to us as an “intended Gegenstand!” (\textit{WdW} II, 399; \textit{NC} II, 466).

c) Dooyeweerd's use of the word ‘\textit{epoché}’ is carefully distinguished from Husserl's usage. He does not mean it in the sense of the "bracketing" of our assumptions, but in the sense of a “refraining” from the coherence of cosmic time, an abstraction from full temporal reality (\textit{WdW} II, 402 fn1; \textit{NC} II, 468 fn1).
d) The whole view of things and events as “phenomena” reflects a view that these things and events exist in themselves, apart from us. But for Dooyeweerd, temporal things do not exist except in their supratemporal root. Dooyeweerd objects to the view that our pre-theoretical experience is of separate entities. Such a view was held by Scheler, who said, “There is nothing more certain than the fact that all the objects given in natural observation, are given as singular and individual objects.” Dooyeweerd responds:

It is of great methodological importance to point out that by limiting my theoretical attention to this concrete natural thing, I am actually engaged in a theoretical abstraction. In veritable naive experience, things are not experienced as completely separate entities. This point is ignored or rather denied by Scheler. It must be emphasized, however, if we are to understand the plastic horizon of reality, and if we are to avoid a naturalistic and atomistic interpretation of the latter (NC III, 54; Cf. WdW III, 34-5).

It may be objected that surely Dooyeweerd is wrong, for don’t we experience separate entities when we perceive them by our senses? Dooyeweerd rejects that kind of empiricism:

One should not be led astray by the fact that physiology and empirical psychology tell us that separated impressions come from the outer world into our sensory organs, or, through them, into our sub-consciousness. For our real experience as Erlebnis always has structure and embraces reality within structures of individual totality. These latter cannot have the character of a pure subjective synthesis. Rather they are the transcendental frameworks both of experience and reality.40

e) Dooyeweerd says that phenomenology’s view of consciousness is still based on an abstraction. It lacks true self-consciousness (WdW II, 422; NC II, 489). And for Dooyeweerd, true self-consciousness requires the supratemporal selfhood.

f) Dooyeweerd's use of the term 'aspect' must also not be understood in terms of the perspectivalism of phenomenology, where we view a reality that exists apart from us from different angles or perspectives. Dooyeweerd's perspectivalism is a horizon of experience with different levels or dimensions. And aspects are meaning-sides of reality.

40 Herman Dooyeweerd: Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought (Eerdmans, 1948), 32-33, fn 2).
D). Dooyeweerd has a different view of “actuality.” The kernel of each subject function is the actuality that is referred to in phenomenology. (*WdW* I, 78; *NC* I, 101).

Zuidervaart acknowledges that Dooyeweerd opposed phenomenology, and yet he fails to ask what Dooyeweerd’s true source for the idea of givenness might be. For Dooyeweerd, what is given, what is ontical, is opposed to that which is merely theoretical. And we find that idea of givenness in Baader, who opposed Kant’s constructive view of reality. Already in his early writings, Baader says that there must be a givenness that we ourselves do not give:

Überall um den Menschen wird allen alle Augenblicke gegeben und alle empfangen. Sie selbst geben sich es nicht, darum muß wohl etwas außer ihnen sein...\(^{41}\)

Our experience is a discovery and not an invention (‘*finden*’ not ‘*erfinden*’). The knowledge that we find derives from a source that ‘dominates’ and founds this knowledge. But that our experience is given does not mean that it is a static structure. For Baader, what is given (*gegeben*) is also given as task (*Aufgebung*) to be returned (as *Rückgabe*) to the Giver. Even our act of prayer is not something we construct, but we give back what has already been given to us (*Werke* 1, 346, 397; 5, 347; 7, 182; 8, 37; 9, 110; 12, 163).

And similarly for Dooyeweerd, the givenness of our experience, even of the supratemporal, does not mean any kind of static being (*NC* I, 31 fn1). Nor are principles given in a static and unchanging way; for this reason he opposed Groen van Prinsterer’s idea of revelation:

Dit is een wijze van schriftgebruik, die men nog steeds onder gelovige christenen kan aantreffen, die Gods Woord als laatste richtsnoer ook voor het tijdelijk leven erkennen. Waar een schijnbaar ondubbelzinnige uitspraak in de Bijbel over bepaalde tijdelijke levensverhoudingen is aan te wijzen, buigt men zich onvoorwaardelijk voor de Goddelijke autoriteit en spreekt dan gaarne van een ‘eeuwig beginnig.’\(^{42}\)

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\(^{42}\) Herman Dooyeweerd: *Vernieuwing en Bezinning*, (Zutphen: J.B. van den Brink, 1959), 242.
[This is a manner of using Scripture that we still find used by believing Christians. They use God’s Word as a final guide for temporal life. Where an apparently unambiguous expression can be shown in the Bible about certain temporal relations in our life, man bows unconditionally before the Divine authority and speaks readily about an ‘eternal principle.’]  

Already in his first lecture at the Free University (1926) Dooyeweerd says that principles are what give direction to our thought.\(^{43}\) God’s revelation is the principle that is the foundation for our knowledge (\textit{WdW} II, 494; \textit{NC} II, 562). Dooyeweerd praised Kuyper for not specifying the content of the “reformational principles” referred to in the constitution of the Free University (1964 Discussion, 16). Principles need to be positivized. But as already noted, Zuidervaart rejects that idea of a positivization of something that is given (p. 40 fn lix). For Zuidervaart, everything is purely historically conditioned, and he says that he “revises” Dooyeweerd’s ontology of principles (p. 25).

**Kant’s a priori versus the structural a priori**

Dooyeweerd says there is a \textit{structural a priori} that we experience – and this \textit{structural a priori} is prior to any thinking whatsoever, including thinking of those truths that Kant believed were analytical truths. The idea of a \textit{structural a priori} is therefore not a revised Kantian idea–as Zuidervaart supposes–but an idea that Dooyeweerd, like Baader before him, uses to oppose Kant’s ideas.

Baader says that the first work of philosophy must be to seek out the mediations and limitations under which humans attain to the free use of their faculty of knowledge (\textit{Werke} 1, 324). This sounds like Kant’s transcendental critique, but in fact Baader is turning Kant’s critique against itself. Baader says that these limitations of thought are given by God’s law to which creation is subject. The law must always precede the finite being as its true \textit{a priori} (\textit{Zeit} 32, 33 fn. 14).

Dooyeweerd also applies Kant’s transcendental critique against Kant (\textit{NC} I, 118; not in \textit{WdW}). This is why Dooyeweerd’s work is called \textit{A New Critique of Theoretical Thought}. Kant sought to show the conditions under which thought is at all possible. But Kant takes

\(^{43}\) Cited in Marcel Verburg: \textit{Herman Dooyeweerd: Leven en werk van een Nederlands christen-wijsgeer} (Baarn: Ten Have, 1989), 105.
for granted the conditions required by thinking itself. The structure of our thinking experience has an *a priori* character. This is why he says, “Critical theory must lead to the genetic relativity of meaning” (*WdW* I, 11; *NC* I, 9).

For Dooyeweerd, we know the *a priori* structure of reality only by experience. But this experience is not the merely temporal ‘*ervaring*’ or ‘*erleben*’ known by immanence philosophy. It is rather a ‘*Hineinleben,*’ an entering into of temporal reality by our supratemporal selfhood. (*WdW* II, 8 fn1; *NC* II, 7 fn2). Zuidervaart (p. 37 fn xiv) correctly refers to the Dutch “een enstatisch wetend beleven of in-leven” (*WdW* II, 41), but does not go into what that means in relation to the supratemporal selfhood which “lives into” the temporal world.

This structural *a priori* comes before all thought whatsoever. It is therefore not a subjective truth. Dooyeweerd refers to it as something that is prior to our suppositions, or *pre*-suppositional (*vóór-onderstelling*). There is also a subjective sense of the *a priori*, where we attempt to discover this previously existing structure (*NC* II, 552). Dooyeweerd refers to these attempts as our theoretical presuppositions (*vooronderstellingen*). But our theoretical presuppositions are not themselves the *pre*-suppositions, the ontical conditions that make possible our thought.

Theoretical thought hereby gains successively its concentric direction to the *presupposita* which alone make it possible…(*NC* I, 69).

Zuidervaart acknowledges that Dooyeweerd distinguishes between a structural and a subjective sense of the *a priori*, and that our subjective insight does not determine the structure of theoretical truth, but only discovers the structure (p. 11). And Zuidervaart acknowledges that for Dooyeweerd the supratemporal selfhood and its transcendent religious horizon is for Dooyeweerd one of those structural conditions.

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44 “Cornelius van Til and the Transcendental Critique of Theoretical Thought,” *Jerusalem and Athens* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1971), 75. Also, *Encyclopedia of the Science of Law*, (original 1967 Dutch SRVU version; the distinction between ‘*vooronderstellingen*’ and ‘*de vooronderstelde*’ is improperly translated in the 2002 edition). See also “De transcendentale critiek van het wijsgeerig denken,” *Philosophia Reformata* 6 (1941), 1-20 [‘Transcendentale Critiek’], at 5 for the distinction between theoretical and supra-theoretical presuppositions [*voor-oordeelen*].
But then Zuidervaart tries to undermine this structural *a priori* by arguing that it is inconsistent with Dooyeweerd’s own thought. He says that it is inconsistent with Dooyeweerd’s idea of a religious direction, and that to speak of a religious horizon with an ontical structure confuses direction and structure. And yet Zuidervaart acknowledges that this idea of direction is much more prominent in Vollenhoven than it is in Dooyeweerd. Vollenhoven needed the idea of heart direction *towards* the transcendent because he did not have the idea of a supratemporal selfhood, where man’s heart is even now actually supratemporal and transcendent. Dooyeweerd sometimes mentions direction of the heart, but for him, a religious direction is not a direction from out of the temporal towards the supratemporal. Direction is the willed act of our supratemporal heart where we deny God as Origin, and also deny our true ontical status as the supratemporal root of creation. We either acknowledge and participate in our true status as supratemporal beings, or we substitute the lie of immanence philosophy, and pretend that we are merely temporal beings. The lie is a falling away [*af-val*] from our true ontical position, and the truth is an acknowledgment and participation in our true state. Thus, Dooyeweerd’s idea of direction is in no way in conflict with his idea of the supratemporal selfhood as one of the ontical conditions that make our thought possible. Indeed, even the falling away, and consequent idolization of the temporal, is itself possible only because of our supratemporal selfhood (*NC* I, 31). Without the law of religious concentration in human existence, idolatry would be impossible.\(^{45}\)

Zuidervaart finds a “near-conflation” in Dooyeweerd’s account of the ontical and the subjective *a priori* (p. 38 fn xxviii). This is similar to Michael DeMoor’s view that even the religious *a priori* has a subjective character because we can direct it towards God or away from God.\(^{46}\) But the fact that we can subjectively misunderstand the ontological givenness does not make that givenness subjective! We subjectively “give an account” of those ontical conditions Dooyeweerd keeps the ontical and the subjective very distinct. It


is only because of the ontical presuppositions (vóór-onderstellingen) that we can have any subjective presuppositions at all, including analytical truths.\footnote{47 J. Glenn Friesen: “Principles and Positivization: Dooyeweerd and Rational Autonomy; A Response to Michael J. DeMoor,” (2008), online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/aevum/DeMoor.html].}

Why does Zuidervaart try so hard to undermine the structural \textit{a priori}? He has to, if he is to maintain his temporalized view of man, with no transcendent horizon. Zuidervaart’s immanence philosophy does not allow him to appreciate Dooyeweerd’s transcendence philosophy.

\textbf{B. Heidegger}

Zuidervaart’s own philosophy is heavily indebted to Heidegger, as he acknowledges. He wants to find similarities with Dooyeweerd. He says, “This probably indicates that Dooyeweerd recognized significant affinities between Heidegger’s critique of Kant and his own.” (p. 37 fn xix).

But Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is not at all like Heidegger’s, nor of Heidegger’s critique of Kant. The best evidence for this is Dooyeweerd himself. He says that Heidegger seeks the selfhood in the temporal (historically understood) ‘Dasein,’ and that we therefore cannot seek any break from immanence philosophy in his thought (\textit{WdW} II, 458; \textit{NC} II, 526). “For Heidegger also eliminates the cosmic order of time and even merges the selfhood into time” (\textit{NC} II, 527). By rejecting the supratemporal selfhood, Zuidervaart is also merging the selfhood into time in his immanence philosophy.

Despite what some reformational philosopher’s have claimed, Dooyeweerd’s view of cosmic time was not derived from Heidegger, but is in opposition to Heidegger:

\begin{quote}
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. (\textit{NC} II, 531).
\end{quote}

Dooyeweerd's own copy of \textit{Sein und Zeit} (6th ed. 1949) contains marginal notes that make it clear that Dooyeweerd is critical of Heidegger. For example, p. 381 “gebrek aan
modale analyse der tijdservaring.” There are many exclamations in the margin opposite such as p. 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. And there are many more such notations.

Instead of looking to Heidegger’s temporalized view of reality as a source for Dooyeweerd’s views on time, we need to look for a source that distinguishes eternity, supratemporality, and cosmic time. A comparison of Baader with Heidegger leaves no doubt as to which view of time was more influential for Dooyeweerd.48 Baader’s ideas on time were undergoing a renaissance at the same time that Heidegger was writing, and at the same time that Dooyeweerd was formulating his philosophy. And both Baader and Dooyeweerd share the idea that man, who has a supratemporal selfhood, is (with respect to his temporal body), “fitted into” cosmic time along with that part of created reality that does not have a supratemporal selfhood.

In his article on art,49 Zuidervaart makes other comparisons of Heidegger and Dooyeweerd. He says that Dooyeweerd’s view of “things” is what Heidegger referred to as inert ‘Vorhandenes.’ But Dooyeweerd never refers to art works in this way. He says, “The thing presented here is the work of art. A natural thing is not given at all in this structure” (*NC* III, 115). More importantly, Dooyeweerd specifically rejects any view of reality as inert ‘Vorhandenes’! He says that Heidegger’s view of temporal reality as Vorhandenes rests on a failure to appreciate the dynamic character of reality, a failure to

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48 See Franz von Baader: *Concerning the Concept of Time* (1818) [Über den Begriff der Zeit], translation at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/baader/Zeit.html]. And *Elementary concepts concerning Time: As Introduction to the Philosophy of Society and History* (1831) [Elementarbegriffe über die Zeit: als Einleitung zur Philosophie der Sozietät und Geschichte], translation online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/baader/Elementar.html].

appreciate the ex-sistence of all created things as meaning, with no rest in themselves (WdW I, 79; NC I, 112). Dooyeweerd criticizes Heidegger’s view of Vorhandenes as a blind and meaningless nature into which human existence (Dasein) is thrown (WdW II, 24; NC II, 22). And Dooyeweerd says that Heidegger knows only the transcendence of the temporal finite human “Dasein” above what Heidegger calls the ‘Vorhandene” (the sensible things that are given), but that this is not an ideal transcendence above time itself (WdW II, 456; NC II, 525). In other words, Dooyeweerd rejects Heidegger’s temporalized view of the selfhood. Instead, Dooyeweerd emphasizes the supratemporal nature of the heart.

V. Other misunderstandings of Dooyeweerd

1. Dialogue with other Philosophers

Zuidervaart complains that if Dooyeweerd is right that we cannot truly experience the world unless our heart is directed to God, then we cannot communicate with other philosophers. This is the old problem of the point of contact for apologetics, which Dooyeweerd addressed in his debate with Cornelius Van Til. But whereas Van Til argued for no point of contact at all, Zuidervaart is arguing for contact to such an extent that there is no longer any ultimate or transcendent horizon of truth. This is the other extreme, where all distinctiveness of Christian philosophy is gone. Dooyeweerd’s position is a middle course, where he acknowledges partial or relative truths to other philosophers. These states of affairs are truths in the temporal periphery. These relative truths remain unrelated to their true supratemporal center and central Truth. Our central selfhood relativizes all such partial truths (WdW I, vi and II, 240). The full significance of these truths cannot be seen unless they are related to the center. The supratemporal center relativizes all previous thought. Dooyeweerd’s New Critique is therefore not just describing how philosophers think, but he is prescribing how they ought to think. He is trying to change their thought.

Zuidervaart is also wrong (p. 15) that Dooyeweerd only added this reference to states of affairs in the *New Critique*. The idea of states of affairs (‘standen van zaken’) is already found on at least 120 pages of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*. The *New Critique* is merely “a sharpening of the method of transcendental criticism” that was already set out in *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.51

Zuidervaart says that to grant only partial truths to others privileges the Christian position (pp. 9, 14, 17). Well, yes, it does, but Dooyeweerd also says that his philosophy has links and connections in a thousand ways to other philosophy and to the perennial tradition (*WdW* I, 82; *NC* I, 118). He specifically denies that his philosophy is original (*WdW* III, vii-viii; not included in the *NC*). What is privileged is a way of experiencing that is dependent on acknowledging more than just a temporal horizon. The Christian position says it best, but other philosophers (like Plato) have attempted to say it; their problem is that they have absolutized the temporal in attempting to express this truth. Plato’s mistake (which caused his dualism) was not that he acknowledged both a temporal and a supratemporal horizon. His mistake was to limit the soul to the rational aspect.

In Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysical psychology, only the “reasonable,” the thinking part of the soul (*logistikon*) possesses immortality... (*WdW* I, 29)

Dualism for Dooyeweerd relates to absolutizing the temporal. It is never related to the expression of a center into a periphery. The supratemporal selfhood and the mantle of functions constitute the only fundamental dichotomy, a dichotomy that is really a nonduality [*twee(een)heid*].52

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51 In his 1974 interview by his son-in-law Magnus Verbrugge, Dooyeweerd emphasized again that he had merely a sharpened the transcendental critique. His critics are wrong in supposing that this was a fundamental revision. The interview is online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/aevum/1974Interview.html].

Like other reformational philosophers, Zuidervaart waffles as to whether his objection to Dooyeweerd’s supratemporality is because it is monistic or because it is dualistic (p.39 fn xlv). It is neither.\(^{53}\)

Zuidervaart refers to Dooyeweerd’s statement that his philosophy does not end with a sermon, but that we cannot do away with the scandal of the cross. Zuidervaart comments:

> Because Dooyeweerd construes religious responses in an antithetical manner, the absurd consequence follows that only Christians, or perhaps even only authentic Christians, would subjectively be capable of experience. In other words, religion would trump experience rather than direct and sustain it. We would not have an epistemology but rather a denial of epistemology. The “problem of knowledge” would be “solved” by taking it off the table. This solution would be philosophically scandalous, I admit, but hardly the “scandal of the cross.” Nor do I think it is the result that Dooyeweerd actually had in view. (p.16)

But Zuidervaart has framed the problem incorrectly. He is here not using ‘religion’ in Dooyeweerd’s sense of our religious, i.e. supratemporal horizon of experience. He is using ‘religion’ in the sense of a set of beliefs. For Dooyeweerd, the religious is not a set of beliefs, nor does it trump our experience. Rather, it is experience. It is in fact the most inclusive of our experiential horizons. This might be better understood today if Dooyeweerd had used the word ‘spiritual’ instead of ‘religious.’

And Zuidervaart has failed to recognize what Dooyeweerd means by the cross. The cross is not some kind of theological knowledge. *The cross is the intersection of the temporal and the supratemporal.* It is the insistence on such an intersection between the temporal and the supratemporal that gives offence to those people who attempt to temporalize our experience. Dooyeweerd speaks of the importance of meditation or concentration on the cross of Christ as a symbol of the coincidence of meaning in the supratemporal fullness of meaning (*WdW* I, 71; *NC* I, 106). This use of the image of the cross to express coincidence of meaning, the intersection of the vertical and the horizontal, is also one that

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is used by C.G. Jung. Jung uses the cross as a symbol of wholeness, and as the intersection of four elements of a mandala.

A late letter shows that Dooyeweerd continued to think of the cross in terms of the necessity of coming to terms with the boundaries and limits of our thinking. Prof. Dr. JJ. Duyvené de Wit of Bloemfontein, South Africa. De Wit had written to Dooyeweerd about creation science and evolution. Dooyeweerd says in a letter Feb. 11, 1964:

> Whether we say that science can show that there is a phylogenetic relation from the first cell to man, or whether we deny such a relation—both arguments will lead to a falsification of science, to speculative philosophy and to false prophecy.

Dooyeweerd says that it is hard for a scientific person to acknowledge that he stands here before a boundary [grens]. Remarkably, Dooyeweerd places this boundary question in the context of the cross of Golgotha:

> Aan het Kruis van Golgotha heeft onze Heiland Zèlf het “Mijn God, Mijn God, waaròm?” uitgeroepen vóór Hij de Geest gaf met het “In Uwe handen beveel ik Mijn Geest.” Maar dan staan we ook bij het Kruis dat de Joden een ergernis en de Grieken een dwaasheid was.

[On the Cross of Golgotha, our Saviour Himself called out "My God, My God, why?" before He gave up the Spirit with “In your hands I commend My Spirit.” But then we stand by the Cross which was a hindrance to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks.]

Dooyeweerd says that Teilhard de Chardin, who as a Christian wants to say that there is evolution from alpha to Omega, does not want to accept that hindrance of the Cross. Whether or not Dooyeweerd is correct in his assessment of de Chardin, the point about the Cross is that there is a boundary between temporal and supratemporal. And Dooyeweerd opposes the kind of creation science that tries to interpret God’s supratemporal acts in temporal terms. On the cross, this boundary of temporal and supratemporal was overcome, as Christ gave up his Spirit into the hands of the Father. The spiritual continues across the boundary.

Zuidervaart says that for his view of theoretical intuition, Dooyeweerd can only appeal to religious self-consciousness. That is true. But religious self-consciousness is experiential. It is something that must be tried. We must “taste” the Truth. The idea that we need to experience something in order to know it is not unique to Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. We
can see this in other mystical philosophers, such as Ken Wilber, who emphasizes the experiential nature of knowledge. The inadequacy of dualistic knowledge can be realized only by recognizing another mode of knowing. And that mode can be experienced, or tasted. Wilber differentiates this kind of experiential knowledge from empirical experience, which reduces the meaning of experience to sensibilia. Similarly, Dooyeweerd distinguishes his idea of experience from its meaning in immanence philosophy. Instead of ‘erleben,’ Dooyeweerd speaks of ‘Hineinleben’—the entering into of temporal reality by our supratemporal selfhood, which is also what he means by ‘enstasis’ (NC II, 474-79; WdW II, 410: “wetend beleven of in-leven in de volle tijdelijke werkelijkheid”). And Dooyeweerd speaks of the importance of “religious self-reflection” as a way of discovering our supratemporal selfhood. I am not suggesting that Wilber and Dooyeweerd are identical, but perhaps there is more commonality with Wilber, who does not limit our horizon to the temporal, than with Zuidervaart’s temporalized view of man, which Wilber would characterize as a “flatland” view of reality. In contrast to such a temporalized flatland, Dooyeweerd affirms our immediate and supratemporal religious experience.

We cannot oppose heart direction to ontical structures. A wrong, apo-static heart direction is the denial of the true ontical structure of our experience. When our heart acknowledges the ontical conditions that make our temporal experience possible—including our supratemporal selfhood—we then experience the world as it really is. This does away with the lie of immanence philosophy, which tries to hide the true nature of reality. We can again see and experience correctly. Without the experience of our selfhood as the religious root, we do not experience the world as it really is—as meaning (NC III, 30; WdW III, 12). Even Christians do not always see the world aright, for the line

56 See references in Theses 5 and 95 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”
57 Wilber’s Buddhist view of the selfhood (or non-self, anatman), and Dooyeweerd’s view of the self as supratemporal image of the eternal God are quite different ideas.
of antithesis runs through the hearts of Christians, and does not divide Christians from non-Christians (\textit{WdW} I, 497; \textit{NC} I, 523-4).

Nor is Zuidervaart correct that Dooyeweerd’s view leaves him with a static view of reality. He mischaracterizes Dooyeweerd as saying that truth becomes never changing in changed circumstances. (p. 14). This ignores Dooyeweerd’s distinction between principles and their positivization in history. Such positivization in no way means that Dooyeweerd accepts a limited view of the autonomy of thought.\textsuperscript{58} Although Zuidervaart has abandoned the idea of positivization, he needs to assess Dooyeweerd on his own terms, and those terms include that idea of principles and positivization.

\textbf{The Allegation ofCircularity}

Zuidervaart complains that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy involves a “vicious circle” and “self-referential incoherence” (p.16) in presupposing that which it wants to prove. Zuidervaart has made this accusation before.\textsuperscript{59} Dooyeweerd responded to this allegation of a vicious circle in his last article, written in 1975 against D.F.M. Strauss. From Dooyeweerd’s point of view, the allegation of circularity is based on Strauss’s logicism. I have shown how Strauss’s arguments are themselves based on a fallacious use of logic.\textsuperscript{60} I suggest that a similar problem exists with Zuidervaart’s critique. A certain circularity is inevitable, but it is the circularity of a center to the periphery, the relation of Idea to concept. Dooyeweerd already spoke of this in his \textit{Encyclopedia of Legal Science} (1946,

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\textsuperscript{58} See my response to DeMoor referred to above.

\textsuperscript{59} See Lambert Zuidervaart: “The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd's Transcendental Critique,” \textit{Faith and Philosophy} (January, 2004). Zuidervaart speaks of “circularity” and “logical slippage” in Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique, and that it seems “self-referentially incoherent.” But as Dooyeweerd emphasized in his 1974 Interview, there was no fundamental revision, or great turning point.

\textsuperscript{60} J. Glenn Friesen: “Did Dooyeweerd Contradict Himself? A Response to D.F.M. Strauss,” (2008), online at [http://www.members.shaw.ca/aevum/Strauss.html]. The article was written in response to a challenge by Strauss to show that his analysis of Dooyeweerd was wrong. Strauss has not responded to my detailed analysis.
where he refers to the very idea of encyclopedia as “learning in a circle.” But this is not a vicious circle.

I would point out that although Zuidervaart complains of the circularity in Dooyeweerd’s view of theory, Zuidervaart acknowledges that his own ideas of theory and truth have “an unavoidable circularity” (p. 24). But unlike Heidegger’s view, to whom Zuidervaart appeals (“the key is to enter the circle in the right way”), Dooyeweerd’s circularity depends on the relation of supratemporal center and temporal periphery. Our concepts are restricted to the periphery, but our Ideas point towards the center. Zuidervaart misunderstands Dooyeweerd’s use of ‘Idea’ in terms of Kant’s view of a regulative idea that goes beyond the boundaries of theoretical concepts (p. 24). But that is an interpretation that Dooyeweerd specifically denies (1964 Discussion). Zuidervaart himself abandons the distinction between Idea and concept. For Zuidervaart, “whatever can be discussed can be conceived.” (p. 24).

**Philosophy of Art**

Zuidervaart presents his philosophy of art as an instance of his view of truth. But as already discussed, he has misunderstood Dooyeweerd because he has not properly understood individuality structures, *enkapsis*, and the act of imagination. Furthermore, he incorrectly compares Dooyeweerd’s ideas to those of Heidegger, when in fact Dooyeweerd expressly opposed such ideas. In the present article, Zuidervaart continues his misunderstanding of imagination. He does not accept Dooyeweerd’s view that this is an act (p. 22). For Dooyeweerd, imagination is one of the three directions that our acts take as they issue from our supratemporal selfhood. And Zuidervaart continues his incorrect comparison with Heidegger’s temporalized view of humanity.

**Gegenstand-relation**

Zuidervaart misunderstands the *Gegenstand*-relation as being the opposition of the logical aspect to the other aspects. But Dooyeweerd specifically denies that this is the case. He says that it is the *act* of thought opposed to one of the aspects that have been

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intentionally (i.e. not really) split apart. The *Gegenstand* may include the logical aspect itself. This act is made possible only because of our supratemporal selfhood, which can enter into our own temporal functions.\(^ {62} \) Zuidervaart’s mistake is the same as that of D.F.M. Strauss, against whom Dooyeweerd directed his last article (‘*Gegenstandsrelatie*’).

### Scripture, Revelation and Truth

Zuidervaart refers to the “hearted” character of truth (p. 10). He says that this is an acceptance of Scriptural truths. But he says (p. 19) that it does not mean that living the truth requires transcendent insight into God’s revelation. All of our living and learning occurs within the “temporal horizon.”

But for Dooyeweerd, the working of God’s word in our heart is not a temporal phenomenon. Indeed, it cannot be understood apart from our supratemporal heart (1964 Lecture and Discussion).

Zuidervaart incorrectly says that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is derived from biblical interpretation (p. 10). Although Dooyeweerd’s philosophy “accords with” Scripture, he emphatically denies that ideas of heart or creation, fall and redemption can be determined by religious exegesis.\(^ {63} \)

### Center and Periphery

Zuidervaart complains that Dooyeweerd “never fully explains how what is transcendent and supratemporal can encompass and determine that which is immanent and temporal.” (p. 14). But D. does explain. The supratemporal is a totality that *expresses* itself in the temporal, just as God’s eternity expresses itself in the supratemporal and the temporal. Both are revelation, *openbaring*. And the temporal in turn refers back to the supratemporal and the eternal. It may be that Zuidervaart cannot accept this kind of ontology, or this view of revelation as the expression of a higher ontical realm in a lower

\(^ {62} \) See references for Thesis 89 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”

\(^ {63} \) See references for Thesis 42 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”
realm, which lower realm then refers back to the higher for its meaning. But the explanation is there in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.64

Life and Death.

Zuidervaart correctly says (pp. 26, 32) that the right philosophy is life-giving. But Dooyeweerd goes beyond that: he says that the acceptance or rejection of his philosophy is a matter of spiritual life or death (NC I, vii; Twilight, 94, 146). And here it seems to me that reformational philosophy has been held back by an impoverished theology from understanding what Dooyeweerd means. Dooyeweerd refers to the dynamis of the Holy Spirit in our lives, our participation in Christ, which we can only do because of our supratemporal selfhood, and of our being brought into the relationship of sonship with God (NC I, 61; not in WdW). Dooyeweerd says, “In Christ’s human nature our heavenly Father has revealed the fullness of meaning of all creation” (NC II, 563). Reformational philosophy has not followed these ideas, but they are already in Kuyper, who in his Pro Rege, says that the miracles of Christ are demonstrations not of his divinity (which he does not deny), but demonstrations of what redeemed humanity can do.

It is important in this context that we do not turn the miracles of the Son of man into miracles of the Son of God. It would be easy to do so. God is almighty. It is easy to attribute Christ’s signs and miracles to His divine powers and to regard these miracles as proof of His divinity. To so regard these miracles would be to misunderstand them completely. Jesus never referred to His miracles as proof of his divinity. Their purpose was to show that the Father had sent Him, that He had a task to perform on earth. He never made a sharp distinction between His own miracles and those of His disciples. He made the remarkable promise to the disciples that whoever believed in Him would do even greater works than His (John 14:12) […] While on earth, He neither ruled as the Son of God nor did He display the majesty of His divinity, but He appeared among us as a human being, as one of us, and He did not reveal any power other than that potentially available to all humanity.65

64 See references for Theses 50-52, 65 and 66 of “95 Theses on Herman Dooyeweerd.”

65 Abraham Kuyper: You Can Do Greater Things Than These, tr. Jan H. Boer (Nigeria, 1991), 17. This is a partial translation of Pro Rege of het koningschap van Christus (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1911), pp. 143-246.
I do not see this kind of spiritual life in today’s reformational philosophy. Perhaps it comes down to the difference between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. Dooyeweerd praised the meditational and devotional side of Kuyper; Vollenhoven said it did not much interest him. And Vollenhoven chose the vision of a merely mediated spirituality.66

VI. Conclusion

While Zuidervaart’s article is interesting insofar as it presents his own conception of truth, he has not at all followed Dooyeweerd’s ideas, and his article can only lead to further misunderstandings of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy.

Dooyeweerd said that many of his ideas can be developed further, but that the central ideas of his philosophy must be accepted or else the development is no longer within the same tradition (1964 Lecture and Discussion). It is not that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is beyond criticism. But as he said in that 1964 Lecture, one must first understand what one is criticizing. His philosophy must be interpreted in terms of the ideas that he says are central, such as the Idea of the supratemporal selfhood. And surely Dooyeweerd was the most knowledgeable about which ideas are central to his own philosophy. Zuidervaart’s idea of “critical retrieval” seems to be serving as a way to avoid grappling with the meaning of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy as a whole.

By abandoning Dooyeweerd’s idea of the religious horizon as ontical, and rejecting the idea of the supratemporal selfhood, Zuidervaart has ended up with exactly the kind of philosophy that Dooyeweerd opposed: immanence philosophy, which seeks its starting point within time, and which therefore relies on the self-sufficiency of theoretical thought.

Zuidervaart’s article “After Dooyeweerd” is an expression not only of a rejection of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, but an attempted substitution of the kind of philosophy he opposed. I hope that this discussion will encourage readers to look at what Dooyeweerd himself says. For Dooyeweerd’s philosophy gives spiritual life, and not the kind of

immanence philosophy proposed by Zuidervaart, with no ultimate or transcendent horizon. If Zuidervaart’s recommendations are followed, it will mean not only the rejection of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, but also the end of reformational philosophy as distinct from immanence philosophy.