

RECONNOITERING DOOYEWEERD'S THEORY OF MAN*

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The legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd, that colossus of reformational thinking, presents us not only with the gifts of his systematic genius, but also with the riddles of his unperfected work, which now have become a part of our own unfinished work. Not the least of these riddles and not the least of our unfinished work confront us in the legacy of Dooyeweerd's anthropological reflections. As he indicates in the conclusion of his monumental *New Critique*, all of his previous investigations are nothing but preliminaries that implicitly converge upon the ultimate problems of philosophical anthropology.¹ The question of man, in effect, constitutes the fundamental implicit theme of Dooyeweerd's philosophy.²

In this paper I examine a few features of Dooyeweerd's anthropology that persist to present problems. In doing so, more than anything I am seeking answers to questions that I am personally wrestling with in Dooyeweerd's philosophy. Very generally, these questions concern the horizon of time as it marks the relation between body and soul, establishes the limits of theoretical thought in its anthropological reflections, and determines the ways in which Dooyeweerd describes the temporal body and supra-temporal soul. I proceed by sketching a brief outline of Dooyeweerd's anthropology as a background for the discussion of two problems - the problem of the restriction of anthropology to the temporal body, and the problem of possibly conflicting ways of referring to the body-soul relation. Throughout I draw on the work of the late Peter Steen, which relies heavily on the scholarship of D.H.Th.

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¹ *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4 vols. trans. W.S. Young, D.H. Freeman, and H. de Jongste (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, and Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953-58; repr. Jordan Station, Ont.: Paideia Press, 1984), III, 781: hereafter cited as "NC," followed by volume number and page number.

² Cr. John N. Kraay, "Successive Conceptions in the Development of the Christian Philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd (II)," *Philosophia reformata* 45,(1980), p. 16, where, citing the *WdW* III, p. 627, Kraay says: "In fact, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* is really *the* fundamental theme (*het eigenlijke gl'Ondthema*) of the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea."

Vollenhoven and K.J. Popma.³ Furthermore, I remain very much aware of the tentative nature of my observations.⁴

[193] In the history of reformational thinking, Dooyeweerd is a ground-breaking, radical thinker. He confronted the anthropological riddles he faced by completely redefining the body-soul relation so as to restore functional unity to the person - previously ruptured by the dualization of Greek and Scholastic thinking - and unite the functions, previously ruptured, *within* the temporal bodily existence of man. But with radically new, ground-breaking reformulations come radically new, puzzling problems.

The problems posed by Dooyeweerd's anthropology, as it bears on the questions of the temporality, unity and self-knowledge of man, are formidably complicated, as anyone who has examined them knows. The centrality of these problems means also that they are intrinsically connected with, and have controlled the development of his views of religion, the nature and task of theology, the institutional church, law, history, meaning, the "heart," transcendental critique and method, and other equally fundamental matters. Furthermore, if Steen is right, the Reformational school of Philosophy - if one can realistically refer to such a "school" today - has apparently reached a point of diminishing returns in its reflections on these latter issues precisely because of its failure to achieve a clear resolution of the former, more basic, problems.⁵ This is not due to a lack of awareness that these problems exist. On the contrary, one senses a climate of collective mental exhaustion and a growing aversion from systematic work on these problems that stems from the sheer number and diversity of critics on these very issues - one thinks of Vollenhoven, Spier, Popma, Brümmer, Albers, Velema, Stoker, Madet, F. Kuijper, Van Peursen, Young, Conradie, Nash, Steen, Hart, Zigterman, Fernhout, Cooper, and North, among others.⁶ This presents a real difficulty. For

³ Peter Steen, *The Structure of Dooyeweerd's Thought* (Toronto: Wedge, 1983). This book is an unrevised doctoral dissertation defended in 1970 at Westminster Theological Seminary under the title, "The Idea of Religious Transcendence in the Philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd, with reference to its significance for Reformed Theology"; hereafter referred to as "*Structure*."

⁴ In the research I did for this paper, I was repeatedly amazed at the number of times I found myself mentally reversing myself in some criticism of Dooyeweerd when I discovered that his rationale resulted from a much deeper penetration of an issue that I at first could *possibly* suspect. I am therefore very conscious of the possibility that I could be entirely mistaken on certain points.

⁵ Steen, *Structure*, p. 281.

⁶ For Vollenhoven, see especially "College systematiek - het probleem van de tijd,"

[194] the past two decades or so the chief momentum within the “school” has at times appeared to be, at best, one of fragmentary development of *facets* of the Philosophy of the Law Idea, Steen suggests. Even the best efforts at reconstruction have been largely achieved individually and independently of any collective self-identity as a school.⁷ Consequently despite its unsurpassed reformational rethinking of the tradition, this philosophy *as a system* sometimes appears to be on the verge of being disregarded as passé except by a devoted few. For this reason it is especially noteworthy that this symposium addresses the fundamental issue of *anthropology*. The *basic* significance of this issue in its implications for reformational thinking in any area cannot be overestimated.

1. Dooyeweerd's Theory of Man

How, then, does Dooyeweerd define the task of philosophical anthropology? He defines it as “an analysis of human bodily existence as an enkaptic structural whole, directed by the

aantekeningen J.C. Vander Stelt (Amsterdam: mimeo, 1963); for K.J. Popma, *Levensbeschouwing*, 7 vol. (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1958-65) and numerous articles and works on the problems of time and anthropology; for Vincent Brümmer, *Transcendental Criticism and Christian Philosophy* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1961); for O.T.L. Albers, *Het natuurrecht volgens de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee* (Nijmegen: Gebr. Janssen, 1955); for W.H. Velema, *De leer van de Heilige Geest bij Abraham Kuyper* ('s-Gravenhage: Van Keulen, 1957); for H.G. Stoker, *Die wijsbegeerte van de skeppingsidee* (Pretoria: De Bussy, 1933), esp. pp. 1-64; for M.Fr. J. Marlet, *Grundlinien der Calvinistischen “Philosophie der Gesetzesidee” als Christlicher Transzendentalphilosophie* (Munche: Karl Zink, 1954), pp. 116-124; for F. Kuijper, “Een nadere bezinning over de transcendentale critiek in de W.d.W.,” *Philosophia reformata* 27 (1962), 6-27; for C. A. van Peursen, “Enkele critische vragen in margine bij *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*,” *Philosophia reformata* 24 (1959), 166; for William Young, *Toward a Reformed Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953); for A.L. Conradie, *The Neo-Calvinistic Concept of Philosophy* (Natal: University Press, 1960), pp. 126 - 94; for Ronald H. Nash, *Dooyeweerd and the Amsterdam Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), pp. 91-94; for Steen, *op.cit.*; for Hendrik Hart, “The Problems of Time: An Essay” in *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy* (Toronto: Wedge, 1973), pp. 30-42; for Kent Zigterman, “Dooyeweerd’s Theory of Individuality Structures as an Alternative to a Substance Position, Especially that of Aristotle,” Master’s Thesis, ICS 1977 (Toronto: AACS, 1977), ch. IV; for Harry Fernhout, “Man, Faith, and Religion in Bavinck, Kuyper, and Dooyeweerd,” Master’s Thesis, ICS 1975 (Toronto: AACS, 1977); for John Cooper “Dualism and the biblical view of human beings.” *Reformed Journal* 32, Issue 9 (Sept., 1982), 13-16, and Issue 10 (Oct., 1982), 16-18; and for Gary North, *The Sinai Strategy* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1986).

⁷ Steen, *Structure*, p. 280.

central ground motive of Word revelation.”⁸ Already in this definition the distinctives of his view emerge. They appear in the focus on human *bodily* existence, in the typical emphasis on structural *wholeness*, and in the centrality of God’s *Word* as a directing ground motive. But what does it mean for our reflections on the nature of man to be directed by the ground motive of God’s Word revelation? And what does structural wholeness precisely entail? And just what is the point of this anthropological focus on *bodily* existence?

“Every philosophical anthropology,” says Dooyeweerd, “has, by virtue of the radical religious determination of theoretical thought, an idea of the human soul as its basis.”⁹ Accordingly, his own anthropology has as its basis what he calls the “Scriptural Idea of the human soul” (*TM*, IX). What is this idea? It is the idea, he says, of the soul “as the *integral religious root of the whole of man’s temporal existence*’ (*TM*, IX). According to this idea, then, how is the relation between soul and body to be understood? Dooyeweerd answers this in what may be the *locus classicus* of his philosophical anthropology - a passage that, as we shall see, is both charged with insight and fraught with difficulties. He writes: “Nowhere does Scripture teach a dichotomy between a ‘rational soul’ and a ‘material body’ within *temporal* existence. Rather, it views this *total temporal existence* as the *body*, which is to be laid down at death. The human soul or spirit, as the religious root of the body, in contrast, is, according to Scriptural revelation, not subject to *temporal* death because it transcends temporal life” (*TM*, V).

In the first place, then; according to Dooyeweerd, for anthropology to be directed by the central ground motive of Word revelation means the radical exclusion of any kind of dualism or dichotomy in the temporal bodily [195] existence of man. In some sense, being human means being an undivided *whole*, being functionally *integrated* in our existence. This intuition is reflected in the genius of Dooyeweerd’s critique of all forms of anthropological reductionism and his critique of the dualistic formulations of Platonic and Thomistic views of human nature. This emphasis on the unity of human nature, it seems to me, is one of the outstanding positive features of Dooyeweerd’s anthropology - a feature stemming from the strong biblical impetus of his thinking and expressed in his language about “structural

⁸ H. Dooyeweerd, “De. taak ener wijsgerige antropologie en de doodlopende wegen tot wijsgerige zeltkennis,” *Philosophia reformata* 26, No. 1 (1961), 57.

⁹ H. Dooyeweerd, “De leer van de mens in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee,” *Sola fide* 7, No. 2 (1954); English trans., “The Theory of Man: Thirty-two Propositions on Anthropology” (Toronto: ICS mimeo, n.d.), Proposition No. VIII; henceforth cited as “*TM*,” followed by the Roman numeral indicating the proposition.

wholeness.” Accordingly, even the conservative biblical theologian, John Murray, quotes Dooyeweerd with approval when he says: “The human body is *man himself* in the structural whole of his temporal appearance.”¹⁰

In the second place, however, when Dooyeweerd proceeds to elaborate upon what he understands by the Scriptural idea of the soul by calling it the “radical unity of [man’s] spiritual existence, which *transcends all temporal structures*,” a certain puzzlement is provoked.¹¹ With this idea of the soul at its basis, his anthropological theory - as theory - is restricted in its analysis to man’s temporal existence. It is restricted, in other words, to that which is subject to temporal death. Anthropology, for Dooyeweerd, becomes the Word-directed theoretical study of *mortal* man. More radically, it becomes the study of the mortal human *body*, understood as the whole of man’s temporal existence, and *excludes* as subject matter anything pertaining to the human *soul*. “The actual scientific knowledge about man,” he says, “remains *limited* to the *structure of the human body* taken in the broad sense of the temporal form of human existence” (*TM*, VII). Dooyeweerd’s anthropology, then, seems to present itself in the ironic position of theoretically excluding from its purview the radical concentration of the human selfhood that defines the essence of human nature as human.

2. *The First Problem: The Restriction of Anthropology to the Temporal Body*

Why is it that the subject matter of anthropology is thus restricted? A provisional answer might run as follows. For Dooyeweerd *time* is the transcendental horizon of scientific or theoretical thought. Philosophical anthropology involves theoretical thought and is therefore limited to the temporal horizon. But the soul transcends time and by virtue of this fact is precluded from being an object of theoretical investigation. Furthermore, as Dooyeweerd says, “the human soul in the religious, Scriptural sense of the word, transcends every scientific conception, because it is the *presupposition* of every conception” (*TM*, VI). The extension of theoretical thought beyond the transcendental horizon of time therefore would mean, for Dooyeweerd, an immediate lapse into groundless and unjustifiable metaphysical speculation.

Dooyeweerd’s motives here are unimpeachable. In the face of the relentless attempts of

¹⁰ *NC*, III, 89 (emphasis added); quoted by John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. II: *Select Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), p. 22, n. 1.

¹¹ *NC*, III, 89 (emphasis added).

scholasticism to penetrate the secret things of God, Dooyeweerd's humbling restriction of theoretical thought to the modest [196] proportions of a humanly accessible horizon is not only realistic but refreshing. The "secret things," as Calvin was in practice of pointing out, "belong to God" (Deut. 29: 29).

But if the intentions behind this restriction are irreproachable, what about its effects? Is there not a difficulty here? For as Steen suggests, if transcendental critical thinking of the kind employed by Dooyeweerd may serve the reformational cause of *exposing* the religious ground motives behind the pretended autonomy of secular theorizing, might it not also serve to *conceal* possible speculative moments at the basis of its particular formulations in Dooyeweerd? Steen writes: "Dooyeweerd, like Kant, wants to demand that theoretical thought be modest. This modesty in Kant, as Dooyeweerd has repeatedly emphasized, is a mask. It seems that there is a masking of a deeper problem via the transcendental critique which can also be found in Dooyeweerd."¹² And what might this be? By carefully restricting the horizon of theoretical thought to the temporal horizon, Dooyeweerd endeavors to protect himself from metaphysical speculation. But the effect of this restriction is to preclude theoretical analysis and critique of his own view of the temporal horizon and, *ipso facto*, of whatever in his view transcends it. If *his own distinctive view of time* - and whatever transcends it - were *itself* an expression of metaphysical speculation, it could never be discovered by theoretical thought since theoretical thought itself is strictly limited to the temporal horizon as Dooyeweerd conceives it.¹³ In other words, we confront here something that resembles what a novelist once called "Catch 22."

The question that I would like to raise at this point is this: Why should the human soul be conceived as supra-temporal? What possible reasons could warrant conceiving of human beings in any sense - whether one speaks of "souls" or "hearts" - as transcending time? There are, of course, a number of rationales that suggest themselves rather straightforwardly from Dooyeweerd's writings. From among these I select three to mention in the following. In addition to these, I suggest another possible motive, not found directly in Dooyeweerd's texts but possibly embedded in the margins of his philosophy - a motive that requires a more reflective, perhaps hermeneutical,

¹² Steen, *Structure*, p. 127: pp. 126-130.

¹³ *Ibid*

development. Each of these is briefly examined in following.

(1) According to Dooyeweerd, human beings have no temporal qualifying function. Their corporeal act-structure is not typically qualified by any normative modal aspect (*TM*, XXI). As Dooyeweerd says, “this act-structure, though it functions in all of the modal aspects, lacks, as such, a typical qualifying function within a temporal sphere” (*NC*, III, 88). Why? Dooyeweerd answers: “The reason is that all human existence is not restricted to the temporal world, and does not find its ultimate internal destination in the [cosmic temporal order].” The act-structure of the human body, he says, “is the immediate temporal expression of the human I-ness, which transcends the cosmic temporal order” (*NC*, III, 88). Hence, the fact that human beings have no temporal qualifying function serves as a rationale for conceiving them in their radical religious root as supra-temporal. [197]

Certainly human existence is inexplicable in terms of any of its functional aspects or even all of them taken together, and in this sense it is functionally irreducible. Certainly also human existence does not find its ultimate purpose or fulfillment in the temporal world, but, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, in glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. In this sense it is also true that the human ego cannot be understood in terms of itself, but only in its *relations* to the world, other people, and (preeminently) God.¹⁴

But what does it mean to say that human existence does not find its ultimate internal *destination* in the cosmic temporal order? Does it mean that man’s ultimate destiny lies in a supra-temporal, supra-functional, spiritual existence? Does it mean that time and history and man’s whole functional, corporeal existence have no part in his ultimate destiny?¹⁵ If so, this seems to me not only unnecessary for making Dooyeweerd’s point

¹⁴ H. Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, University Series, edited with Introduction by R. J. Rushdoony (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1960), p. 181f. Whether the human I is “nothing *in itself*,” as Dooyeweerd suggests here, is a question we shall address later in this paper.

¹⁵ Indeed, Dooyeweerd in some contexts seems to suggest this, which would conflict fundamentally with the implications of his belief in the resurrection of the body. Reporting on a conversation with Dooyeweerd in Amsterdam in June, 1964, Steen says that he asked Dooyeweerd “whether he thought that the fact that Paul speaks of faith abiding in I Cor, 13 after the judgment day, had any bearing on whether the function of faith would abide after

of the preceding paragraph, but biblically unwarranted. Why does the fact that human beings have no temporal qualifying function in -any way require the supra-temporality of the soul or “heart”?

(2) Another incentive for conceiving the soul as a supra-temporal concentration point was doubtless, as Steen suggests, the threat of historicism.¹⁶ Dooyeweerd met this threat, under the influence of Kuyper’s concept of the “heart,” with a transcendental move granting theoretical thought an “Archimedian point” in the supra-temporally conceived selfhood or “heart.” This became the means whereby the modal antithesis of the *Gegenstand* relation was to be overcome in a theoretical synthesis. Variations of this transcendental move can be found also in the kinds of immanence philosophies (e.g., neo-Kantianism, phenomenology) whose groundless pretense of autonomy Dooyeweerd made a practice of exposing; and it was taken by him to reflect the inner structure of theoretical thought itself.

But why does the need for a transcendental Archimedian point in any way require *man himself*, in the radical “religious root” of his human nature, *to be above time (boventijdelijk)*?¹⁷ Why is transcendence not possible *within* the [198] temporal horizon through hearing and responding to the testimony of divine revelation? If, as Popma says, man is a “listening, Word-receiving being,” and if, as Geertsema says, man is a responding being (*homo respondens*), why cannot such listening and responding be understood as involving a transcendence of time *within* time?¹⁸ Steen speaks of man’s

judgment. Dooyeweerd gave an interesting reply. First he said, ‘faith turns into sight and therefore faith passes away.’ When I mentioned the fact that Paul emphasizes that faith abides, he stressed the fact that we really know nothing about the future after the judgment. When I then asked how it would be possible to conceive of a resurrected man without all the functions and the law spheres holding, he seemed to reconsider his previous statement and agree that I was laying my finger on an important point.” (Steen, *Structure*, p. 85)

¹⁶ Steen, *Structure*, pp. 266-269, esp. p. 268f.

¹⁷ Steen indicates that the term “above time” (*boventijdelijk*) was abandoned by Dooyeweerd in his later years under intense criticism, in favor of the expression “religious transcendence.” Yet, according to Steen, this substitution by no means represented a change in Dooyeweerd’s own understanding of the whole structure to which the former term applied, but rather a concession to what he regarded as a misunderstanding that had arisen concerning the whole complex of ideas involved (*Structure* p. 6 n. 6).

¹⁸ Popma’s views are expressed throughout his writings; see especially *Levensbeschouwing*, 7 vols. (see above, n. 6), cited by Steen, *Structure*, p. 302, n. 37. Geertsema’s views were expressed in his paper by the title of “Homo respondens,” see above.

reaching out to God beyond the cosmos in response to revelation as a “religious transcending” that in no sense entails supra-temporality, but, rather, a “standing above himself as limited to his present existence”; he calls it “a transcendence of time, history, and creation *within* time, history and creation.”¹⁹ Zuidema, in fact, is reported to have spoken in this connection of a “*transcendence in immanence, or in time.*”²⁰ Here transcendence is understood as an attribute of human *consciousness*, not human *being*; and it is made possible only through responding to the temporally manifested testimony of divine revelation.²¹ So, again, why does the necessity of human self-transcendence in any way require the super-temporality of the *human being himself*?

(3) Yet another rationale for regarding the soul as supra-temporal is found in Dooyeweerd’s understanding of “creation” in the first two chapters of Genesis. This particular understanding requires that the creation of all human souls, individually and collectively, be regarded as completed, on the basis of Genesis 2:1 where the creation is said to have been finished.²² This understanding is related to the view that God’s act of creating is non-temporal “becoming” of what has been created. Accordingly, the temporal incarnation of individuals in their respective corporeal histories must be distinguished from their pre-existence as souls in a temporally unrealized condition of created eternity.²³ Furthermore, since all the functions to be temporally differentiated are implicitly present in the heart or soul before their refraction in time (*NC*, III, 88), the

¹⁹ Steen, *Structure*, pp. 305-307.

²⁰ Steen reports that Zuidema described transcendence in this fashion to him in a personal conversation in Amsterdam (*Structure*, p. 308, n. 44).

²¹ I am assuming here the correlativity of what Steen calls “Word-revelation” and “creational revelation” (*Structure*, p. 304), or what has been traditionally called “special revelation” and “general revelation.” One of the best accounts of this correlation I know of is found in G.C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation*, Studies in Dogmatics, trans. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955).

²² *TM*, XXIX, XXXII. Steen says “it appears that Dooyeweerd is saying that the human race as a totality represented in Adam and Eve (*stamvader en stammoeder*) was created by God in the beginning. All that will unfold and be subject to the temporal process of becoming is present here as finished creation. There would seem to be a root community of hearts represented in the heart of the first representative root, Adam.” (*Structure*, p. 65).

²³ Steen observes; “Dooyeweerd intimates that reality as it exists through temporal becoming and supra-temporal generation had a pre-existence in the Spirit of God; it exists as created, as finished creation. It is this finished existing creation that now becomes in the great becoming process.” (*Structure*, p. 66f., cf. p. 52f.) One might wish to ask, then: *What is* the supra-temporal existence of the soul? (On the concept of *aevum*, or created eternity, in Dooyeweerd, see his “Het tijdsprobleem en zijn antinomieën op het immanentie-standpunt,” *Philosophia reformata* 4 (939), 4-5; cited by Steen, *Structure*, p. 132, n. 9).

finished, supra-temporal creation is seen as embracing the *whole man* - both body and soul (*TM*, XXXII). This [199] means, as Steen writes, that the “whole man becomes both body and heart since both are subject to generation, the body to a temporal generation and the heart or soul to a supra-temporal generation process From the created whole man, that is, the heart, the whole man becomes.”²⁴ In this way, Dooyeweerd’s interpretation of the biblical account of creation requires the soul to be conceived as inherently supra-temporal.

While I am not altogether confident about my theological competence to judge these matters, the chief impression I receive from them is that a simple exegesis of Genesis 1 and 2 could not possibly have produced so complicated scenario. Much more could be said about this; but as some of the implications of Dooyeweerd’s view will be seen in more detail later, this must suffice here. So, again, why does the biblical account of creation require in any way the conception of the supra-temporality of the human soul?

3. The Demarcation of the Temporal in Dooyeweerd

Before turning to the fourth, quite different, motive for conceiving the soul as supra-temporal, it may be helpful to take a closer look at Dooyeweerd’s precise *demarcation* of the temporal horizon. In the scholastic tradition, the distinction between eternity and time has always marked in some sense the biblical distinction between Creator and creation. This is true also, in some sense, in Dooyeweerd. There have been historical problems, of course, in how eternity has been conceived in marking this distinction. Since the time of Boethius, and possibly since the pre-Socratics, one line of thinking has conceived of God’s eternity as an “eternal present” (*nunc aeternum*), whereas under the influence of Oscar Cullmann a more recent line of thinking has conceived of it in a linear fashion.²⁵ But whatever the problems in conceiving of eternity or time, the

²⁴ The fact that the generation of both soul (supra-temporally) and body (temporally) *derive* from the pre-existence of the already created whole man, understood as entirely contained in the heart or soul as the radical religious root of personality, underscores the claims of those who, following Vollenhoven’s problem-historical method, find some sort of “priority theme” or “monarchian” element in Dooyeweerd’s thinking, along with some variety of “instrumentalism” and “impetus theory” (see, e.g., Vollenhoven’s “De consequent probleem-historische methode,” *Philosophia reformata* 26 (1961), 19-22, cited in Steen, *Structure*, p. 43, n. 5; cf. Steen, *Ibid.*, pp. 57-74, 102-104, and Fernhout, *op.cit.* (see above n. 7), pp. 7, 72-109).

²⁵ On Boethius, see KJ. Popma, “De eeuwigheid Gods volgens Boethius,” *Philosophia*

distinction marked here - between Creator and creation - is fundamental. It announces: God is not subject to the conditions of his creation.

However, the demarcation between time and eternity in *Dooyeweerd's* thought would not be understood accurately if it were thought simply to [200] coincide with this distinction. For it seems, rather, to follow another established tradition of scholastic reflection in conceiving of time and eternity as marking the boundary between the natural and the supernatural, where these are understood as referring to the *seen and unseen creation*. As such, the distinction between time and eternity marks a boundary *within* creation - between the visible and the invisible. This invisible side of creation, of course, includes not only angels, such as Gabriel; and archangels, such as Michael; and cherubim; and seraphim; and fallen angels, such as Lucifer; and the departed saints mentioned in Scripture; but also the soul as Dooyeweerd understands it - the soul in its created pre-existence, its supra-temporal generation, and its character as supra-temporal "root" and "concentration point" of the individual person incarnate in time.

(4) In this context it becomes meaningful to ask whether another possible motive of Dooyeweerd's for conceiving the soul as supra-temporal is because, in some sense, it is *invisible*. I grant that he does not use this perceptual terminology, but I wonder whether the issue is not lodged somewhere in the margins of his philosophy. Along with the angels and the souls of departed saints, the "heart" or "soul" of the live, flesh-and-blood individual, for Dooyeweerd, is in some sense inaccessible. It lies beyond the horizon of theoretical thought. "As soon as we try to grasp it in a concept or definition," he says, "it recedes as a phantom and resolves itself into nothingness."²⁶ Accordingly, "not any science whatever can make it into its '*Gegenstand*'" (*NC*, 11, 115). Instead, therefore, he thinks of it as "the hidden player on 'the instrument of theoretical thought,'" thus making

reformata 22 (1957), 21-51, and *Nadenken over de tijd* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1965), cited in Steen, *Structure*, p. 109, n. 101; on the pre-Socratics, see P.A. Meyer, *Socratisch schimmenspel. Socrates' plaats in de griekse wijsbegeerte*, Christelijk perspectief, 22 (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1974), cited by Peter J. Steen, "The Problem of Time and Eternity in its Relation to the Nature-Grace Ground-motive" in *Hearing and Doing. Philosophical Essays Dedicated to H. Evan Runner*, ed. John Kraay and Anthony Tol (Toronto: Wedge, 1979), p. 143, n. 4: on Oscar Cullmann, see Steen, *Structure*, p. 110, and "Time and Eternity" (in *Hearing and Doing*), p. 136, and O. Cullmann, *Christus und die Zeit* (Zurich: A.G. Sollikon, 1948).

²⁶ *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, p. 181.

it the *presupposition* of theoretical thought.²⁷ Thus, one must not presume to speculate about the soul, because in the literal sense of the word “speculate” (Latin: *specere*), it cannot be *seen*.

But the notion that we cannot see the souls of living, flesh-and-blood individuals seems, at least, debatable. For one thing, it seems to presuppose that the soul differs from the visible human body in being some other sort of entity - a view that Dooyeweerd himself struggles to avoid. For another, it conflicts with the view implicit in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, [201] which suggests that what we see is precisely flesh-and-blood “souls.”²⁸ Moreover, just as certain phenomenologists such as Scheler and Merleau-Ponty have shown that what we *see* in one another is not “bodies” but “persons,” so it might be argued that what we see and interact with in our daily lives is nothing less than one another’s “souls” themselves.

Further, however, even if we address the issue of souls that are incontestably *unseen* and *inaccessible*, as in the case of departed saints in paradise, this does not mean that such souls cannot in *any* sense be objects of knowledge for us. This is the case simply because *seeing* is not the only way we know. We know also by *hearing*.²⁹ We learn

²⁷ H. Dooyeweerd, “Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte,” *Scientia* 1 (1956), 144; quoted in G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, Studies in Dogmatics, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 258; henceforth cited as “*Man*.” See Dooyeweerd’s comparable statement in *NC*, I, 21, where he uses “philosophical” instead of “theoretical” thought; and cf. *TM*, VI, on the *presuppositional* nature of the soul in human theorizing.

The parallels with Scheler’s view of the “person” are remarkable here. Much as in Dooyeweerd’s view the “soul” or “heart” can never be objectified, so for Scheler the “person” can never become an object of analysis; much as in Dooyeweerd’s view “acts” come forth out of the soul but only function within the temporal structure of the human body, so for Scheler the person acts *into* time without himself being *in* time. For Scheler’s distinction between “acts” and “functions,” and significant differences in his view of the act-structure, see Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik, Gesammelte Werke*, Vol II ed. Maria Scheler (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1954), pp. 395ff.; translated as *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 385ff. For the comparable views of Dooyeweerd, see *TM* XIV and XX, for example. It is possible that both Dooyeweerd’s and Scheler’s view of the non-objectifiability of the essential selfhood of the person is the result of a residual Kantianism.

²⁸ Cf. Tory Hoff, “*Nephesh* and the Fulfillment it Receives as *Psuche*” in A.H. De Graaff and J.H. Olthuis, eds. *Toward a Biblical View of Man* (Toronto: AACS, 1978), pp. 71-131, esp. p. 106f.

²⁹ Cf. above, n. 18, for Popma’s view of man as a *listening*, Word-receiving being. Popma

things by hearing the testimony of others; and - especially relevant here - we learn things by hearing the testimony of Scripture. It is from this testimony that we learn that the whole visible world is the creation of God. And - of special interest to us here - it is from this testimony that we learn *something* about the whole realm of *unseen* creation, including something not only about the departed saints but also about ourselves as souls in covenant with the living God.

Dooyeweerd, of course, knows this. And his own work exhibits a continual listening to God's Word for direction and authority.³⁰ Accordingly, he can write: "Knowledge about the human soul is *religious self-knowledge*, and *true self-knowledge* is only possible by way of *true knowledge of God* through the divine Word Revelation" (*TM*, vI). Nevertheless, Dooyeweerd seems to place the soul and everything concerning the unseen creation decisively beyond the horizon of theoretical thought and, thereby, to preclude the testimony of Scripture concerning these matters from furnishing objective content for theoretical reflection. And he seems to do this in two ways: first, by regarding knowledge about such matters at some level as supra-theoretical, religiously concentrated "heart" knowledge, belonging to the radically time-transcending soul; and second, by regarding knowledge about such matters as the *presupposition* of every theoretical conception (cf. *TM*, VI).

At some level, certainly, the knowledge about the soul and the unseen creation that is spiritually discerned by hearing the testimony of Scripture is pre-theoretical knowledge. As such it furnishes the presuppositions that constitute the ground motive of Christian theorizing. But at another level, such knowledge also furnishes some of the basic objective contents of knowledge about which we theoretically reflect. As such, it provides both [201] the key presuppositions and the key conceptual constituents in our

contrasts this emphasis with that of man as a *seeing* being in the theo-ontological tradition, and with man as a *questioning* being in Heideggerian philosophy (cf. Steen, *Structure*, p. 302, n. 37).

³⁰ Steen, despite noting Dooyeweerd's development of "a unique aversion towards citing proof-texts in his works" as a result of his early confrontations with Reformed theologians, and despite noting Dooyeweerd's consequent failure to appreciate the rich discovery of Scripture in recent developments within the exegetical branches of theology, and despite noting that this may be (ironically) part of the reason for a residuum of nature-grace influence in his philosophy, nevertheless speaks of "the rich biblical emphasis", always present in Dooyeweerd." (*Structure*, pp. 20, 272; cf. p. 127, n. 2).

theoretical reflection about man, The hermeneutical circularity involved in the relation between these two levels poses a problem no greater than that involved in any attempt to explain understanding and interpretation,³¹ Much rather, the attempt to preclude the understanding derived from Scripture from functioning on both levels, and thus also on the level of theoretical knowledge, seems not only unwarranted and arbitrary; it seems to conflict fundamentally with Dooyeweerd's own practice, in which we see him grounding his theory of man at many critical points in a painstaking, intricate *theoretical* reflection on the Scripture's testimony about the "heart" and "soul."

It is another question altogether whether Dooyeweerd's theoretical reflections faithfully reflect this testimony. His view that the soul exists supra-temporally in a created eternity, or "aevum," appears to conflict with Scripture at decisive points. Steen, for example, after examining two passages (Rev. 10: 6 and 6: 10), insists that they show "unmistakably that Scripture does not hesitate in the least to think of the heavenly angels and departed saints as subject to cosmic time and historical events and of these creatures as having a strong time consciousness in this state,"³² Further, if an implication of Dooyeweerd's view is that "outside of the body no acts are possible," as he states (*TM*, XX), this would also appear to conflict with biblical testimony, in which such acts are not only possible but part and parcel of redemptive history.³³

It may be objected that such recourse to the testimony of Scripture is nothing more than a naive lapse into "biblicism"; that divine Word revelation is a matter ultimately of integral, religious "heart" knowledge that transcends the temporal horizon of theoretical analysis; that the act-structure is by definition one of the individuality-structures of the temporal body and cannot properly refer to anything beyond cosmic time or to anything

³¹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 194f., where Heidegger rejects the view that this hermeneutical circle is a *circulus vitiosus*.

³² Steen, *Structure*, p. 139: Steen's incisive objections against a scholastic reading of Rev. 10: 6 are particularly noteworthy (p. 138).

³³ A few examples of "acts" performed by incorporeal creatures are: Satan speaking with God (Job 1: 6-12); his act of rebellion against God (Is. 14: 12-15); the rich man in Hades speaking with Abraham (Lk. 16: 23-24); Moses, who was buried by the Lord (Deut. 34: 6), speaking with Elijah and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt, 17: 3); and creatures in the heavenly throne room praising God (Rev. 4: 8).

incorporeal as such.³⁴ I would point out, however, that it is precisely the demarcation of this temporal horizon of cosmic time that we are calling into question, and, along with it, everything in Dooyeweerd's theory that decisively hangs on it - including his view of the act-structure.

Doubtless, Dooyeweerd wishes to guard against the danger of metaphysical speculation about the *unseen* creation. That the extension of theo-[203]retical analysis to Scriptural testimony concerning the unseen creation may lead to such speculation is, of course, a possibility and a genuine danger; but it is not a forgone conclusion. As I understand it, illicit metaphysical speculation consists not in the extension of theoretical reflection to the pre-theoretical contents of Scriptural testimony, but precisely in transgressing the limits of what is revealed in such testimony. It may well be, in light of this, that what the reformational enterprise requires is a reworking of its hermeneutics of testimony, to borrow an expression of Paul Ricoeur.³⁵

Somewhat ironically, however, I cannot help wondering whether, in Dooyeweerd's intricate conception of "creation" and "becoming" there is not a hint of the kind of metaphysical speculation that he so carefully tries to avoid. His view of supra-temporally created souls becomes precariously close, at points, to the ideal pre-existence of hypostatized personal essences constituted by the creative intentionality of a divine mind.³⁶ The fact that the individual "root" or "concentration point" participates in the cosmic supra-individual "root" or "concentration point" of the creation at least suggests, as Steen notes, a "macro-microcosm theme in Dooyeweerd."³⁷ There is a pronounced quasi-supralapsarian, quasi-Christomonistic tendency to conflate creation, fall, and redemption in the "eternal now" of Christ as root of the new creation, much as in

³⁴ Although Dooyeweerd says that "all human acts have their origin in the soul," and therefore beyond time, he holds that they *function* only within the temporal structure of the human body (*TM*, XX: cf XIV). For this reason he opposes the phenomenology of Husserl and Scheler, which regards acts as "incorporeal (*onlichamelijk*), (pure 'psychonomic') intentional experiences" (*TM*, XV).

³⁵ Paul Ricoeur, "The hermeneutics of Testimony," *Anglican Theological Review* 61, No. 4 (1979); rpt. in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), pp. 119-154.

³⁶ See above, n. 24.

³⁷ Steen, *Structure*, p. 257. The fact that Dooyeweerd overtly rejects this theme, as Steen notes, does not of itself cease to make it a problem.

Diemer or Kuyper.³⁸ In the transcendently directed concentration of temporal meaning upon its supra-temporal fulfillment there is not only the hint of a neo-realistic “participation idea,” but at least the slight threat of “structure” being collapsed into “direction.”³⁹ Finally, as a consequence of this, there is a tendency to verticalize the *eschaton*; to lose sight of the abiding’ significance and eternal validity of the creation ordinances on the’ new earth beyond the judgment; to block off the future, linear character of cosmic time so that “structure comes to an end.”⁴⁰

What are we to make of this? What are we to make of Dooyeweerd’s apparently innocuous desire, like Kant, to keep theoretical thought modest, to restrict it to the temporal horizon in order to avoid metaphysical speculation? What shall we say of the particular way in which that horizon is construed, as in Kant, so as to exclude the possibility of theoretical reflection on the human soul? What of the tension within his formulation between [204] human selfhood conceived, on the one hand, in its temporal bodily existence where it is subject to conceptual understanding, and, on the other, in its supra-temporal spiritual concentration where it is said to transcend conceptual understanding altogether? Is this acceptable? Is it true that, in order to avoid the dangers of metaphysical speculation, we must, in typical Kantian fashion, adopt a definition of the temporal horizon that excludes from the subject matter of our anthropology, as off limits, that which is most basic in man - his heart and soul? Is it true that the Scripture reveals nothing of the essence of human existence about which we may theoretically reflect, but only something that can be pre-theoretically presupposed?

Here it seems we are faced with problems that are not wholly unlike those we encounter in Kant. At the very point where Kant is most promising - in his richly nuanced

³⁸ Steen, *Structure*, pp. 193-206: esp. p. 202. On Diemer, see an abridged translation of his work under the title of *Nature and Miracle* by Wilma Bouma (Toronto: Wedge, 1977), which is Part I of his *Natuur en wonder*. On Kuyper, see p. 206 of *Structure*, where Steen says the “speculative lust for a totality view or a unity view was embodied among supra lapsarian scholastic Reformed theologians of which Kuyper reigned supreme.”

³⁹ On the “participation idea” see Steen, *Structure*, p. 209: on the collapse of structure into direction see *Ibi.*, p. 83, where Steen writes: “It might be said that structure tends to be reduced to direction .. , *Structure* is transcendently-directed meaning. Meaninglessness, nothing, and meaning loss tend to occur when this direction is lost. The structure is almost its pointing character.” Steen finds in this state of affairs what he calls the “semi-contradictory theme” in Dooyeweerd’s thought.

⁴⁰ Steen, *Structure*, p. 83f.

discussions of “moral feeling,” “respect” and “duty,” where we find man described in the familiar language of moral experience - at that very point, we find him revisited by all the devils of metaphysics of purism and its dualizations of the rational and the sensible, the formal and the material, the noumenal and the phenomenal. Man as man - in the preeminent sense of moral agent, as responsible personality, as *personalitas moralis*, as the seat of personal dignity and moral worth embodied in the rational will - is effectively cut off from the world of human experience. The *personalitas moralis* is also *homo noumenon*, inscrutable, unknowable, inaccessible - not only to others, but even to himself.

Likewise, it seems, at the very point where Dooyeweerd seems most promising - in his stalwart defense of the integral unity of human existence that we find confirmed by our own experience - at that very point we find him revisited by the very legacy of dualizations that he strove to overcome. Alongside the freshly conceived functional unity of man we find another rift mysteriously opening between the temporal and the supra-temporal, between the structural unity and the spiritual unity, between what is theoretically analyzable and what is beyond all analysis.⁴¹

4. *The Second Problem: Opposed Ways of Referring to Body and Soul*

This brings us to our second problem. Dooyeweerd appears to refer to the relation between the body and soul in two, quite different ways. On the one-hand, he seems to say that the two are inseparable, that they are two ways of referring to the same individual, that they are identical to “man.” On the other hand, he seems to say that they are separable (if not from “man,” then at least from each other), that they refer to two quite different dimensions of man (if not to distinct entities), that they are different from one another (if not from “man”),

Hence, on the one hand, Dooyeweerd can write: “The human body *is man himself* in the structural whole of his temporal appearance. And the human soul ... *is man himself* in the

⁴¹ On Dooyeweerd and Kant, see, e.g., V. Brümmer, *op. cit.* (see above, n. 6), pp. 13-39, and Jong Doo Kim, “Wissen und Glauben bei I. Kant und H. Dooyeweerd: Der Kantische Dualismus und Dooyeweerds Versuch zu seiner Überwindung,” *Philosophia reformata* 48, no. 2 (1983) (special issue devoted to Kim’s work),

radical unity of his spiritual existence” (NC, III, [205] 89, emphasis added). By “soul,” Berkouwer points out, Dooyeweerd “does not mean to refer to a deeper ‘part’ of man, but rather to the whole man with all his temporal functions in his religious concentration; Le., in his relation to God.”⁴² Expanding on Dooyeweerd’s view, he writes:

The heart is not a *part* of man, but his full ‘self,’ or, as he says, ‘our egoicity as the radical unity of our existence,’ ‘the religious center of our existence,’ which should not be confused with ‘anyone of the modal aspects of the temporal horizon.’⁴³

Continuing, he notes that for Dooyeweerd

the heart is not a reduction of man to some core, from which the periphery - the body - can easily be removed, The ‘prefunctional heart’ is not something which should be placed outside its functions, as a new substance which then is joined to the body’s function-complex and which can be separated from it at death⁴⁴

On the other hand, Dooyeweerd can say that the soul or spirit is “not subject to *temporal* death,” whereas “the body can never be thought of as ‘self-contained’ or as a ‘substance,’ since the body will *disintegrate* when its tie to the soul is severed” (TM, V, IX). Berkouwer represents Dooyeweerd’s position as conforming to the scriptural view that the soul “is not affected by temporal death, but after the end of the body (i.e., of all the temporal aspects of man), it continues as a form of existence with an individuality structure.”⁴⁵ In fact, in an early article, Dooyeweerd refers to the “religious kernel of our personality” (*de religieuze kern onzer persoonlijkheid*) as “the eternal, immortal in man” (*eeuwige, ontsteifelijke in den mensch*).⁴⁶ And as Steen points out, after the death of his friend, Ph. Kohnstamm, Dooyeweerd wrote of his having been taken away by God “in an almost imperceptible movement from temporal life to eternal life” (*in een haast*

⁴² Berkouwer, *Man*, p. 263.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 257; Berkouwer is quoting Dooyeweerd, “Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte,” *Scientia* 1 (1956), 144.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 258; as will be seen, this appears to flatly contradict Dooyeweerd’s own words below.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 257, n. 33; Berkouwer refers here to the article by Dooyeweerd, “Het tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee,” *Philosophia reformata* 5 (1940), 181.

⁴⁶ H. Dooyeweerd, “Beroepsmisdaad en strafvergoeding in ‘t licht der wetsidee,” *Anti-revolutionaire staatkunde* 2 (1928), 430; cited by Steen, *Structure*, p. 160, cf. p. 159.

onmerkbare overglijding uit het tijdelijk naar het eeuwig leven).⁴⁷

Now the reason Dooyeweerd can speak in these two, quite different, ways is that his reformational perspective requires two, quite different, things. On the one hand, it requires the rejection of both any ultimate functional dualism and any self-sufficient substance in human nature. The testimony of Scripture “radically excludes any dualism in either God’s self-revelation as Origin of all things, or *in the revelation of man to himself*” (*TM*, IV). Accordingly, Dooyeweerd emphatically insists on the integral unity of man, that the soul and body are not alienable “parts” but are identical to the man, and that the soul is not a self-sufficient, separable substance. On the other hand, his reformational perspective demands fidelity to the testimony of Scripture and [206] the creeds concerning the reality of unbroken communion of the departed saints with Christ after bodily death.⁴⁸ Accordingly, he insists that the soul is not subject to temporal death; in fact, that it transcends time altogether.

What Dooyeweerd appears to be seeking is a course between the Scylla of “substantialist” theories that locate the being of man in an independent essence that underlies and subsists through his acts, and the Charybdis of “actualistic” theories that locate the being of man in his acts. At this point his position resembles that of Scheler.⁴⁹

Berkouwer describes it as follows: “Dooyeweerd holds that besides functionalism and substantialism there is a third alternative; namely, that we cannot view man’s essence in itself and then place it in a relation to God ... Anyone who is attracted to the philosophy of substance will see in the idea that man’s relation to God is essential to his essence, a

⁴⁷ H. Dooyeweerd, “Ter nagedachtenis van mijn vriend Prof. dr, Ph. Kohnstamm,” *Mededelingen van de Vereniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* (Sept., 1952), p. 11; cited in Steen, “Time and Eternity,” p. 144, n. 16, and in *Structure*, p. 115, n. 129, and p. 130.

⁴⁸ See Berkouwer’s discussion of relevant biblical passages in *Man*, pp. 264ff., and cf. Heidelberg Catechism (Lord’s Day 22).

⁴⁹ Scheler’s position is precariously subtle: the “person” is neither exhausted in his “acts” nor something subsisting through their temporal succession, but, rather, a supra-temporal being who acts *into* time and who “*is* and experiences himself only as a being that *executes acts*”; the “*whole person* is contained in *every* fully concrete act, and the whole person ‘*varies*’ in and through every act - without being exhausted in his being in any of these acts, and without ‘changing’ like a thing in time” (*Formalism us*, p. 395f, [English translation, p. 385]; see above, n. 27, for full references).

sort of actualism which does away with man's independent existence in a relational emphasis. But this criticism is nothing else than a reaction to the dangers of real actualism and functionalism, which stress relation to the extent of ignoring *reality*. There is also the possibility that stressing man's relation to God does not at all threaten or obscure or dissolve *reality*, but rather helps us to understand the nature of this *reality* in its dependence on God."⁵⁰

5. Conclusions

If I have not misrepresented Dooyeweerd in the foregoing, I think there are at least three problem areas that require attention. These concern his views of substance, temporal bodily existence, and the horizon of theoretical thought.

(1) In his unimpeachable effort to avoid de Scylla of substantialism, Dooyeweerd appears to have left his position without a clear language for speaking of individuals - people, bodies, souls, or even things. Zigterman offers a brief discussion of this problem in his critical assessment of Dooyeweerd's theory of individuality structures.⁵¹ The problem surfaces overtly in the equivocal statements we have seen concerning the "heart" and "soul." What does Berkouwer mean, for instance, when he speaks of man's "*reality*" in the foregoing quotation? What does he mean when he says that the heart is not a "core, from which the periphery - the body - can *easily* be removed"?⁵² Does this mean that with difficulty it *might be removed*? And what does Dooyeweerd mean when he says, that Scripture nowhere teaches "a dichotomy between a 'rational soul' and a 'material body' within *temporal* [207] existence" (*TM*, V)? Does this mean that it teaches a dichotomy between a temporal body and a supra-temporal soul? Berkouwer says that Dooyeweerd "does not mean to place eternity, *aevum*, and time neatly next to each other"; but, as Steen argues, this is precisely what Dooyeweerd seems to do, even though the word "neatly" prejudices the matter somewhat.⁵³ Certainly it would not be fair to Dooyeweerd to read into this idea of the heart the scholastic notion of self-sufficient substance. But, as Steen observes, neither would it be "fair to Dooyeweerd to

⁵⁰ Berkouwer, *Man*, p. 259; emphasis added.

⁵¹ Zigterman, *op.cit.* (see above, n. 6), ch. 4, esp, 119-36.

⁵² Berkouwer, *Man*, p. 258; emphasis added (cf, above, n, 44).

⁵³ Berkouwer, *Man*, p.263; Steen, *Structure*, p.150; in another connection, Berkouwer significantly points out that "merely positing ... a duality-in-unity does not mean that we actually have a real unity" (*Ibid.*, p, 212).

stress simply the idea of relation or the act of transcendence”; “it is true, as Berkouwer stresses, that Dooyeweerd views the heart of man only in its three central relations, but as a converging center of all the functions it is not identical with its body, for otherwise the distinction of heart and body would have no meaning.”⁵⁴

Does this mean that we must return to a modified concept of substance as C. Stephen Evans suggests?⁵⁵ Certainly we must seek to find some way of expressing in clear philosophical language our ordinary experience of things and people as having relatively stable identities that subsist through changes. And certainly much can be learned from Aristotelian and Thomistic discussions of the concept of substance. Yet the hazards of reappropriating this concept in any form remain bountiful, if only because the grounding presuppositions of the Greek concepts of form and matter and the Scholastic concepts of nature and grace that historically accompany it are fundamentally inimical to a biblical understanding of redemption as renewal of creation, and of the *eschaton* as the temporal realization of God’s kingdom on the new earth.

Nevertheless, as we have seen in Dooyeweerd’s concept of created eternity, the rejection of the substance doctrine of itself is apparently no guarantee that *these* dangers will be avoided entirely. Moreover, there are others from within the reformational tradition who have advocated a reconsideration or reformation of the concept of substance, such as Stoker, or who have at least raised the question whether some such conception might not remedy alleged deficiencies in Dooyeweerd’s formulations, such as Zigterman.⁵⁶ Berkouwer, too, seems to leave the door ajar when he writes: “We might ask why the concept of substance could not also be used, freed from its scholastic contexts,” and Dooyeweerd himself insists that it was never his intention to “quibble” over the *word* “substance.”⁵⁷ In fact, Zigterman ironically finds in Dooyeweerd’s concept of *heart* a number of features that typically characterizes the concept of *substance* according to Dooyeweerd’s own view.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Steen, *Structure*, p. 150.

⁵⁵ See in this volume, Stephen Evans’ paper.

⁵⁶ For full references to the relevant works of H.G. Stoker and K. Zigterman, see above, n.6.

⁵⁷ Berkouwer, *Man*, p. 262, n. 44; Dooyeweerd, *NC*, III, 67.

⁵⁸ Zigterman, *op.cit.*, (see above, n. 6), p. 125f. The *special irony* here is that Dooyeweerd’s concept of heart contains features of the kind that Dooyeweerd himself *rejects* as belonging

There is apparently no inherent necessity, then, that links the notion of substance to the self-sufficient essentialism of Plato's concept of the soul, to the notion that the body is an expendable "prison house," to functional dichotomy, to cosmogonic dualism, or to Aristotelian hylomorphism.⁵⁹ There is no inherent reason, on this ground, why things and people could not be spoken of in the language of substance, although one might wish to insist on the cautionary qualification of "created substance," "dependent substance," or, with an eye to the unique status of man as the image of God, "image substance." The language of substance would permit a way of overcoming the equivocity of Dooyeweerd's language about things and people by permitting clear references to them as having relatively stable identities that subsist through change, while yet avoiding the classic and scholastic view that substance is self-sufficient being. It would permit one to overcome speaking of things in such a way that there is nothing *of which* their functions are functions, as if all that existed were a coherent *between, inter-* functions, which are never functions *of* anything. It would permit one to overcome the equivocity of speaking of persons as though they had supra-temporal, supra-functional souls that survive bodily death and, at the same time, as if their souls were not separable "parts" of their integral being. Finally, when properly understood, it would give clearer expression to the significance of God's creative act and the reality of creation without in any way compromising the creaturely dependence of that reality.⁶⁰

(2) As may be gathered from our earlier discussion, there is an implicit tendency in Dooyeweerd's anthropology to identify the essence of the person with the soul, not the body. It is the *whole man* in his supra-temporal concentration that survives the death of the body. This is also the position, for example, of John Cooper in his *Reformed Journal*

only to a metaphysics of substance when they are applied to created *things*, which have no supra-temporal unity.

⁵⁹ In this connection, Berkouwer's comment is significant that "anti-dualism as such is not a guarantee of a true insight into human nature" (*Man*, p. 222).

⁶⁰ In this context, Dooyeweerd's reading of Stoker seems misleading. When Stoker suggests that his concept of substance gives a better expression to "the autonomous being and value of the cosmos with respect to God" (*die eien ziJn en die eienwaarde van die kosmos teenover God*), Dooyeweerd fears that the radical biblical view of the dependence of all creation upon God is somehow being threatened (*NC*, III, 71). But this overlooks precisely the point Stoker is affirming: namely, the *real difference* instituted between the Creator and His creation by the very act of creating. Accordingly, creation is not self-sufficient; but it is not nothing; it is something. (Cf. Zigterman, *op.cit.*, pp. 129, 132, 136.)

article, where he uses the term “soul” and “person” interchangeably in contrast to “body.”⁶¹ A possible danger of such a position is that it may lead to a consideration of the body as somehow secondary, if not altogether dispensable. This seems quite clearly to be what happens in the case of Dooyeweerd, who compounds matters by identifying the soul with the supra-temporal *aevum*. The result is an unintentional and uncharacteristic devaluation of all that is corporeal, earthly and temporal, and a verticalized eschatology that all but loses sight of the import of the bodily resurrection - a fact underlined by the striking observation of Steen that “Dooyeweerd never mentions the new earth in all his works,” which, to say the least, is “a striking omission in the light of his mammoth corpus.”⁶² [209]

This state of affairs is embedded in a complex of relations in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy involving, as we have seen, quasi-supralapsarian and quasi-Christomonistic tendencies, as well as what some, following Vollenhoven, have referred to as his “dichotomistic Monarchianism” or “priority theme,” and tendency toward “instrumentalism” or “impetus theory” (see above, n. 24). Short of attempting to sort through this, perhaps the simplest steps towards a resolution of the most aggravating problems would include the following: first, an extension of the horizon of temporality to encompass both the seen and the unseen creation, and, accordingly, the soul; and second, an acknowledgment that death in some sense sunders the unity of man, such that the soul of the departed is not *fully* “man” in the full-bodied, incarnate sense he was created to be and will again be in the resurrection. These steps should help to restore the horizontal, historical dimension of the *eschaton* and enable a more biblically consistent discussion of the body in light of the nobility and dignity assigned to it within the scriptural scope of creation and redemption. As Berkouwer says, “this affirmation of the body’s worth has always been a *skandalon* to every dualistic theory of gradation between higher and lower elements in man.”⁶³ We must recover the centrality of this *skandalon* in our thinking about man.

(3) As we have seen, Dooyeweerd regards the soul as incapable of becoming an object of theoretical analysis. As supra-temporal, it *transcends* the horizon and conditions of theoretical thought; and, as a matter of religious “heart” knowledge, it can only serve as

⁶¹ John Cooper, *op.cit.* (see above, n. 6), Issue 9 (Sept., 1982), p. 13.

⁶² Steen, *Structure*, p. 122f., n. 144; p. 221.

⁶³ Berkouwer, *Man*, p. 230.

the *presupposition* of conceptual knowledge. This leaves Dooyeweerd, for all intents and purposes, in a position of conceptual agnosticism regarding the human soul. But, as we tried to show earlier in our discussion of the hermeneutical interrelation of the pre-theoretical and theoretical levels of knowledge, this state of affairs seems somewhat short of satisfactory. One possible motive for Dooyeweerd's position here, we said, might be that the soul is simply regarded as part of the unseen creation, which is theoretically inaccessible.

Now I can find no problem, in principle, with the view that the theoretical horizon coincides with the horizon of the visible creation - with one proviso: that we rethink the hermeneutics of biblical testimony as a fully warranted means of extending the jurisdiction of theoretical reflection to those matters of the unseen creation about which Scripture offers testimony. It is within the rethinking of this, admittedly difficult, issue that the answer lies to the otherwise unavoidable conceptual agnosticism concerning the souls of the departed, among other things. If Steen is right, furthermore, it is through the rich rediscovery of Scripture that could come from such a rethinking of this issue that steps can ultimately be taken to correct the residual influence of the nature-grace ground motive in respect of the conception of time, eschatology, creation, and man's eternity in Dooyeweerd's thought.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Steen, *Structure*, p. 272; cf. above, n. 30.