

**THE COLLECTED WORKS
OF HERMAN DOOYEWEERD**

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GENERAL EDITOR: D.F.M. Strauss

*Reformation and Scholasticism
in Philosophy*



VOLUME II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE COSMONOMIC IDEA
AND THE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION IN
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Herman Dooyeweerd

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in
Philosophy

Herman Dooyeweerd

Volume II
THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE COSMONOMIC IDEA
AND THE SCHOLASTIC TRADITION IN
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

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Magnus Verbrugge

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This is Volume II of a three-volume work. Volume I first appeared in 1949 under the title: *Reformatie en Scholastiek in de Wijsbegeerte* (Franeker, Neth.: Wever). It is now available in an English translation from Paideia Press. Parts of Volumes II and III appeared between 1943 and 1950 in the journal *Philosophia Reformata*. Revised versions of several chapters, kept in the Dooyeweerd Archives, have been included, according to the author's express wishes.

Foreword

The chief translator of the present work was Magnus Verbrugge. The translation was polished by Lyn Boliek and Ralph Vunderink several years ago. Harry Van Dyke checked the entire text against the Dutch original and edited the subsequent text. The text also benefited from a timely proofreading by Chris Gousmett. As with all volumes in this series, the task of the *General Editor* was to ensure philosophical accuracy, particularly in connection with the intricacies of Dooyeweerd's philosophical distinctions. Our annotation appears in brackets; all other footnotes are by the author.

Also note:

- This second volume in the trilogy on *Reformation and Scholasticism* in Philosophy elaborates on significant aspects of the Philosophy of the Law idea. The original text of Chapter IV was first intended for this volume but was later published in *Philosophia Reformata* 17 (1952): 151–82. We have consulted the galley proof of the former in the Dooyeweerd Archive, but we took the latter, published version as our source text.
- The text of Chapter VII first appeared in four instalments in *Philosophia Reformata*, namely in vol. 8 (1943): 65–99; 9 (1944): 1–41; 10 (1945): 25–48; and 11 (1946): 22–52. A book-length treatise in itself, the author wished to see it incorporated as the closing chapter in Volume II of the present work. The first two instalments in the journal were later revised by him, and he left explicit instructions to have these considered his definitive versions. These are the versions that appear in translation here; they thus supersede the original Dutch versions in *Philosophia Reformata*. Of the last two instalments no revised versions were found in the author's literary estate.
- We have left most Latin and Greek quotations in the footnotes untranslated, except in cases where the author himself saw fit to provide a (Dutch) translation.
- I have provided numbers and letters before subheadings.
- Two frequently used abbreviations are *WdW* for Dooyeweerd's major work *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* and *NC* for his

A New Critique of Theoretical Thought.

- Since this work was written before the publication of *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, we have translated “wetsidee” with *law-idea*, not *cosmonomic idea*.

The first three chapters describe the rise of the idea of a reformational philosophy, draw attention to some essential preliminary questions, and present a fresh statement of the transcendental critique of theoretical thought.

In Chapter IV the author subjects Thomism's *theologia naturalis* and its doctrine of the *analogia entis* to a penetrating critical analysis against the background of Greek metaphysics. In preparation of his subsequent critical discussion of the Thomist substance-concept, Chapter VI first explains the new theory of the basic structures of reality as developed within the *Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea*. This analysis provides the basic systematic distinctions employed in his equally extensive critical comparison in Chapter VII of the idea of individuality-structures and the Thomist substance-concept as applied in anthropology.

In a recent study on the deconstruction of substance and of the principles of form and matter in the ontology and epistemology of Thomas Aquinas (2008), Ter Horst by and large confirms the basic thrust of Dooyeweerd's analysis and at the same time underscores the fact that contemporary scholarship may benefit from studying this work. (G. J. ter Horst, *De ontbinding van de substantie; een deconstructie van de beginselen van vorm en materie in de ontologie en de kenleer van Thomas van Aquino*. Delft: Eburon, 2008.)

D.F.M. Strauss
December 2013

REFORMATION AND SCHOLASTICISM IN PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER I

THE CALVINIST REVIVAL AND THE RISE OF THE IDEA OF AN INTRINSICALLY REFORMATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

1. The reformation of philosophy and its relation to the reformation of one's view of life and the world¹

The rise of a philosophy that is re-formed² from within by the Christian religion is a phenomenon of very recent date. It is directly related to the Calvinist revival that occurred under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This spiritual movement had to become conscious of its own life-embracing character before it could press on to the fields of philosophy and science in general. It first had to develop into a real worldview. This worldview, having been born of a new Christian attitude toward engaging life, would draw its unique impulse and its spiritual power exclusively from its own Scriptural Christian ground-motive.³

1 Dutch: *levens- en wereldbeschouwing*. Hereafter translated by the single term *worldview*.

2 [Dooyeweerd eventually gave preference to the term *reformational*. Therefore, the later term will sometimes be used as the translational equivalent of "gereformeerd." However, where it occurs as an expression used by someone else (Kuyper, for example) the translational equivalent "Reformed" will be used.]

3 ["Ground-motive," though admittedly not a felicitous expression, has become the standard translation for the Dutch word *grondmotief* and has no ready substitute. Its meaning, as a religious, historically formative driving force that underlies both concrete life and theoretical thought, will become plainer from its use in a variety of contexts.]

a. The relation between worldview and philosophy

A worldview as such is not yet a philosophy in a scientific sense. It lacks the specific theoretic-scientific attitude of thought, which I will subject to a separate examination later on.

Not only is one's worldview situated squarely in real life; as long as it is genuine, it remains fully embedded in real life even in its attitude of thinking. It speaks the concrete language of pretheoretical experience, and it expresses a common conviction regarding the relation between religion and the temporal spheres of life. Thus it binds together all its adherents, both trained scientists and people outside the world of scholarship.

A worldview can also draw science into its purview, and it will indeed do so as soon as science has gained an important position in life. In this case the worldview will pronounce upon the starting point of scientific activity, about the value of science for human life, and the relation of science to the other areas of life.

It will not do this from a scientific point of view; that is, it will not undertake a critical, philosophical inquiry into the intrinsic nature of scientific knowledge and its relation to prescientific knowledge. Rather, it will do so from the viewpoint of real life and its demands, illuminated by the basic religious theme on which the worldview is founded.

A worldview has the following fundamental significance for science in general and for philosophy in particular: it keeps its adherents constantly aware of the religious ground-motive as a genuinely communal driving force that controls not only scientific thought, but also the *entire* attitude to life of its adherents. The worldview therefore prevents science from detaching itself from the fullness of life in splendid isolation, an isolation that can only be bought at the price of sterility. For even science is located not *above*, but *within* temporal life; and it can flourish only through continuous contact with the latter. The same holds for art, for the church, for the school, and so forth.

A worldview that keeps science in contact with the fullness of real life will itself in turn undergo a deepening influence from science. This mutual influence is salutary and necessary for both, on

condition that each maintain its own character. To reduce this worldview to a theory would represent a great danger to the entire community that it binds together spiritually. For then it would lose its concrete and immediate vitality. It would become pseudo-science. It would withdraw into an ivory tower of “intellectuals,” and it would gradually lose touch with its vital religious root and die. As soon as a worldview loses its grip on life in its entirety, its adherents become spiritually uprooted. People then strike out on their own in every sphere of life, and they lose spiritual contact with all other spheres. The fundamental religious driving force of one’s entire life-posture, which demands the full commitment of one’s person, degenerates into a mere dogmatic formula. People might discuss this in a pseudo-scientific manner, but it no longer lives in the religious depth of their hearts.

b. Why relativism is no genuine worldview

If it is to maintain its true character, a worldview must issue from the religious root, the *heart*, of human existence. It also must influence one’s entire perspective on life, not merely one’s theory. Such a worldview demands a strong communal faith in the absolute truth of its religious foundations; and it simply cannot *be united* with a theoretical relativism. A genuine worldview is immediately recognizable by its *radicalism*, a radicalism that issues from the religious root of life.

For this reason relativism can never be a genuine worldview. Relativism is the fruit of a process of decay in which spiritually uprooted theory leads the human being, inwardly set adrift, to the skeptical question of Pilate: “What is truth?”

2. The Calvinist worldview is rooted exclusively in the ground-motive of Scripture. The integral character of this ground-motive

Abraham Kuyper was truly significant because he lifted Calvinism, the most radically biblical movement within the Protestant Reformation, out of the narrow sphere of dogmatic theology where it had languished during centuries of inner decline. He raised it to the level of an all-encompassing worldview.

To accomplish this, Kuyper first had to penetrate to the Scriptural, religious foundations of the Calvinist Reformation. He had to distinguish sharply between the reformational, religious ground-motive of this movement and the historically conditioned opinions of Calvin on the scientific and practical questions of his time.

Calvinism, to be consistent with its essence, has to detach itself from every human authority, even from that of the great reformer who gave his name to this movement of the Reformation. It has to place itself, in its entire attitude toward life, exclusively under the authority of the Word of God, which reveals the absolute sovereignty of God over His creatures.

The Scriptural ground-motive tolerates no compromise with a religious ground-motive that is unscriptural. It is *integral*, and it demands the whole person in body and soul. It lays claim to all of life. In mankind and its religious root, the biblical ground-motive directs, in concentric fashion, the *entire* cosmos with all its forces and potencies toward the service of God, who has revealed Himself in His Word.

a. The dynamic, reformational character of this ground-motive. Palingenesis¹ as the new vital root of Christian scholarship

This fundamental principle is dynamic in the full sense of the word. It drives Christians to an *ongoing reformation* of their entire life-posture and view of life and the world. So long as the religious ground-motive of Scripture operates unabated in a Christian's heart, nothing can remain static. Everything in human existence is set in motion, and life pulsates under the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, life has become "pneumatic" [spiritual] in the pregnant Scriptural sense of this word.

What area of our temporal existence could withdraw from such spiritual workings? The Apostle Paul, by faith, dared to involve even the most "trivial" things in life, such as eating and drinking, in the glorification of God. How then could such an important area as the domain of science shut its doors to the spiritual force of this ground-motive?

1 [Palingenesis is Greek for "rebirth." It denotes something that is transindividual and concerns the whole of creation.]

In his *Stone Lectures on Calvinism*, Kuyper penetrated deeply into the religious root that underlies one's worldview. He did not hesitate for a moment to accept *palingenesis*, "being born again," as the new principle for life, even for reformational Christian science. On this basis he proclaimed that there is a radical antithesis in starting point between Christian and non-Christian science.

b. Does Kuyper's basic religious conception of Christian scholarship need to be corrected by eliminating palingenesis?

At first glance this seems paradoxical. To be born again is a transformation of the heart of a person's existence. It is not open to inspection by one's fellow human beings. Would it not be more correct, therefore, to accept the Scriptures as the only religious foundation for Christian science? After Kuyper's death certain theologians indeed proposed this "correction" for his basic religious notion of Reformed science. Kuyper's view, however, was much deeper than that of those who wished to correct him on this fundamental point. Of course he recognized no other *norm* for our faith life than the divine Word Revelation as articulated by Scripture, and he had no intention to exchange that norm for a subjective guideline, although we must admit that he did not always protect himself from misunderstanding in this area.

The Scripture is the norm for our faith; but that does not make it a system of religious truths, accessible to all, from which science could deduce its ultimate foundations along logical lines. If that were the case, even the devil, in the guise of an orthodox scholar, could carry on Christian science. Scripture is only accessible through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is *spirit* and *power* unto life or unto death. That is the antithesis it poses. This antithesis is not theoretical in nature; it does not oppose one theoretical system to another. Rather, it reaches to the religious root of human existence.

Palingenesis is not a subjective human act. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. It signifies incorporation into the spiritual community of which Christ Jesus is the Head and the reborn are the members. From out of that spiritual community the Spirit of God, and not the

individual person, performs His regenerating and reforming work upon the whole of temporal life.

This is the only possible biblical standpoint over against dialectical theology. Karl Barth and his followers objected fiercely to Kuyper's notion that rebirth ought to have an intrinsic reforming influence on scientific thought. They were motivated, on the one hand, by the misconception, already alluded to, that Kuyper believed that the reborn heart of the human person could have autonomous command over God's Word and Spirit, which indeed would lead to a "Christian humanism." On the other hand, they were motivated by the dialectical, and therefore unscriptural, ground-motive of their theology, which, just as in late medieval scholasticism, led in their thought, too, to the acceptance of a polar antithesis between (sinful) "nature" and "grace."

The demand for a fundamental reformation of all of life, scientific activity included, is contained in the central commandment of love. Christ Himself understood this central commandment as the basic unity of all the laws that God gave His creatures: to serve God in love with all our heart and all our powers. Among the latter, the *mind* is mentioned with special emphasis. It is impossible to accept this central commandment in its radical and integral meaning and at the same time to reject the demand for a reformation of our attitude toward life and thought.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, as a religious *dunamis* and life-giving power, inverts the spiritual root of one's whole worldview. It places the antithesis between the principle of the "old" and that of the "new" man in the center of the life of every Christian. For the "spirit of this world" is at work even in the Christian's life, as long as the final judgment of the world has not yet come and the Christian in his old nature still shares in the apostate root of the human race. Thus the apostate spirit carries on a running battle against the spirit of Christ. And again, this is not the work of an individual person but of a communal spirit, which has sowed the seed of apostasy from God in the human heart. There is solidarity in the Fall.

The reformational Scriptural principle poses a task of ongoing reformation, also for science, a never-ending task while the present dispensation lasts. It means that we can never rest from ridding our

science of concepts that have their source, not in the ground-motive of the Divine Word-revelation, but in idolatrous motives. It guards against the canonization of all human ideas or pronouncements and always submits these to the crucial test – the radical critique of the Word of God. This is the *anti-scholastic* principle in the spirit of the reformation.

Again, this does not mean of course that the individual is elevated to the position of an autonomous judge over the Christian tradition. All such misconceptions testify to a fundamental lack of genuine contact with the spirit of the Reformation. It only means that in the community of Christ this tradition itself is subject to the reformational Scriptural principle. Thus, this tradition must ever more be “cleansed” from the influence of unscriptural motives.

Only God’s spirit brings reformation through His Word. He works by building community, and not individualistically, which would break down the community of Christ.

Scripture is a coherent and unified whole. It cannot be approached from a temporal historical or moral perspective, but only from its own religious ground-motive. In this ground-motive it manifests itself to the human *heart* as the truly divine revelation through the Holy Spirit; and it places itself in radical opposition to all religious conceptions that originate in the apostate heart of humankind.

c. The reversal of the basic religious relation between the Creator and the creature in the humanist ground-motive

What happens when we try to approach the basic theme of creation, fall into sin, and redemption through Christ Jesus from the apostate *human* point of view? In revolutionary fashion, the basic religious relation between God and the human person is immediately turned upside down. Whereas “God created man in His own image,” apostate humankind creates its God after *its* own image. In Adam man fell away from God and thus came under God’s judgment. The apostate human heart, however, summons his God before the bar of human reason. There it seeks for a theodicy, a justification of the divine order that would cancel the consequences of the Fall in temporal life by means of the “harmony of a rational system.”

The great trial between God and apostate humanity, however, is not conducted before the tribunal of human reason. It takes place before the judgment seat of God. God has revealed His love and justice in their divine original unity in Christ Jesus, the Word incarnate. This Word has earned for us radical salvation from sin through His cross and restored true fellowship between God and mankind. However, apostate man, exalting himself in pride and blindness, looks for his salvation in himself, for his life in death, for the incarnation of the divine Word in the deification of the “flesh.”

Thus the ground-motive of the Divine Word-revelation implies a radical antithesis, an antithesis between divine truth and human inversion of truth. This antithesis can only be weakened or veiled by those who fail to do justice to the all-encompassing and central character of the Word of God. Indeed, no “point of contact” can be constructed here; for Truth is absolute and indivisible.

d. The ground-motive of the divine Word-revelation as “dunamis.” The danger of eliminating palingenesis from the foundations of Reformed scholarship. The critical religious character of the reformational principle

This ground-motive is the heart of Scripture. Primarily, it is not a theoretical, theological doctrine, but a *divine dunamis* that transforms all theory at its root. And this *dunamis* operates in this manner only in *palingenesis*, in the rebirth of the heart.

If anyone approaches Scripture from another religious ground-motive, not even the most extensive theological knowledge of Scripture will protect him from using Scripture in an unscriptural manner. For this simple reason, no *intrinsically* Reformed philosophy can ever take its starting point in the science of theology. Indeed, a genuinely Scriptural theology can only arise from the ground-motive of Scripture itself.

To remove *palingenesis* as an *active force* from the foundations of the Reformed worldview and Reformed scholarship spells grave danger. It would cause the ground-motive of Scripture to degenerate into a theoretical “principle” for one’s life and thought—a principle which in essence stems from a rationalistic deification of reason, even though the thinker may not be aware of this. Even *palingenesis* itself would then be turned into something theoretical, that is to say, into a purely theological doctrine. It would, with the-

oretical detachment, be reduced to our logical function of thought, without having transformed our thinking *at its root*.

This degeneration can occur unnoticed even among those who place the greatest emphasis on the Scriptural character of their thought. For this reason, the reformational principle is a *critical religious* principle that becomes active in our thought not through theology, but through the Spirit (*Pneuma*) of the church of Christ by the Word of God itself.

e. Common grace and the Roman Catholic view of nature. Common grace as an antithetic principle

The significance of common grace in the reformational worldview can only be understood in the light of the radical antithesis that exists between the ground-motive of the Divine Word-revelation and the ground-motives of apostate religions. Common grace is the opposite of the Roman Catholic motive of “nature.” In the dialectical ground-motive of nature and grace, human nature remains a relatively autonomous factor over against the grace of Christ Jesus. The realm of nature here is the place where a synthesis is struck between the creation motive of Scripture and the dialectical ground-motive of the Greek world of thought.

The common grace of Scripture, by contrast, is the effect of the antithetical operation of the religious ground-motive of the Divine Word-revelation. Beginning with the promise made in Paradise, which was fulfilled in Christ Jesus in the fullness of time, this ground-motive has been at work in opposition to the principle of apostasy. It has *suspended* the final judgment of our fallen world and held in check the *unhindered effects* of spiritual death that resulted from the fall into sin.

This grace is a common grace (*gratia communis*). It is not individual and not particular. It is not mediated through *palingenesis*, but is a grace that is given to the *whole* human race and to the *whole* temporal cosmos that is religiously concentrated in this human race, without distinction between believers and unbelievers.

This common grace preserves human nature in spite of its apostasy from God. It also preserves individual gifts and talents; and it allows remnants of the original perfection to unfold, even in God’s fallen creation. Above all, it upholds the order of creation itself through the divine Word that created everything. Thus it main-

tains all the structures and ordinances that are founded in this creation order, which stand antithetically opposed to human *hubris* and force it to capitulate again and again.

There is no dualism between the divine Word that created all things and the incarnation of this Word in Christ Jesus, who brought redemption from sin. God's Word remains the Word, even in its incarnation. According to Emil Brunner, as we hope to show momentarily, there is an internal contradiction between God's will as Creator and God's will as Redeemer. In this he is obviously under the influence of the dialectical ground-motive of nature and grace. Although common grace finds its origin in the Word of God, it can never be detached from Christ Jesus, the new life-giving root of the human race. Indeed, it is only in Christ that common grace truly becomes grace for mankind; and outside of Him it becomes judgment and curse. For this reason there can be no thought of a "separate domain of common grace" that stands opposed to a "domain of special grace" in Christ Jesus. The ground-motive of the Divine Word-revelation contains no dualism. It was only because of the influence of the scholastic ground-motive of nature and grace that Reformed Christians detached common grace from the incarnate Word and *denied* it in its religious root.

If the antithetical principle of life is eliminated from the fallen cosmos, nothing remains but the decay and death of human nature. This antithetical life principle has a preserving effect upon humanity as it stands yet undivided in its apostate natural existence; and it regenerates, through *palingenesis*, those creatures reborn and renewed in Christ Jesus. But the church of Christ, as such, can only live out of *palingenesis*, which works all its regenerating wonders even in the fellowship of a common grace shared with fallen mankind.

The life of this church in this fellowship of common grace entails antithesis, incessant struggle, and ongoing reformation. Indeed, it is only in terms of *palingenesis* that we can understand the reformational dynamic, a dynamic which through its radically changed life-posture transforms not only our worldview, but also, and at its core, our scientific endeavor.

Kuyper's grasp of this shows that he truly lived out of the Scriptural religious ground-motive of the Reformation. *This* was the

deepest insight in his entire “weltanschauliche” or “worldview-ish” conception of reformational scholarship.

f. Kuyper’s appreciation of science

This insight also determined Kuyper’s view of the *value* of science in Christian life. So long as the dialectical ground-motive of nature and grace continued to influence the view of science held by Reformed thinkers, there was a constant danger of either overvaluing or undervaluing scientific knowledge. The pole toward which they swung depended on the following alternatives: Science was overvalued if it was seen as an expression of the “rational human nature,” in the sense of the Greek form-matter motive, and brought into connection with the speculative theory of the divine *Logos* (which I will discuss later). It was undervalued if, in an attitude of mystical or sectarian world-flight, it was viewed merely as the “terrain of sin” which Christians must scrupulously avoid.

It is obvious that a similar polarity in the valuation of science had to assert itself when the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom entered the Protestant world of thought. Eventually, however, the Scriptural insight reemerged that science itself arises from the religious root of life and that cognitive activity therefore can never function as the autonomous center of human nature. At that point, this alternating over- or underestimation of science had to make way for a Scriptural view of its value.

Abraham Kuyper, in his well-known observations on “two kinds of science” contained in the second volume of his *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, tried to give such an evaluation from the standpoint of *palingenesis*. He emphatically pointed out that our scientific knowledge is bound to our *temporal form of existence*, and he unambiguously rejected the elevation of science above the Christian life.

He writes as follows:

Mention only the name of Jesus Christ, and you perceive at once how this entire scientific interest must relinquish its claim to occupy the first place in our estimate of life . . . There is a human development and expression of life which does *not* operate within the domain of science, but which, nevertheless, stands much higher. There is an adoration and a self-abasement before God, a love and a self-denial before our neighbours, a growth in what is pure and heroic and formative of character, which far excels all beauty of science.

And then follows this especially remarkable passage:

Bound as it is to *forms of consciousness proper to our* present existence, it is highly improbable that science will be of profit to us in our *eternal* existence; but this we know, that as certainly as there is a spark of holy love aglow in our hearts, this spark cannot be extinguished, and the breath of eternity alone can kindle it into the brightest flame. And experience teaches that the new life which springs from *palingenesis* is much more inclined to move in this nobler direction than to thirst after science. This may become a defect, and has often degenerated into such, and thus has resulted in a dislike or disdain for science.¹

Kuyper opposed such contempt for science sharply, even though his estimation of the value of theoretical thought nevertheless always remained reserved.

g. The danger of an axiological classification of the temporal manifestations of the Christian life

One may well ask whether on Kuyper's reformational standpoint it is correct to place a lower value on science even when it issues from the living root of *palingenesis*, than on other expressions of the Christian life. I see no reason at all for doing so. There is no reason to rank one temporal life sphere in which the new life principle is manifested higher than the others. The only Scriptural criterion of value consists, after all, precisely in the relation of all temporal goods, none excepted, to the eternal fullness of all good that is given to us in Christ Jesus.

An axiological classification of the temporal spheres of life always runs the risk of losing sight of their *coherence*. Christian scientific endeavor cannot be detached from Christian character building, Christian self-sacrifice and self-denial, Christian love of neighbor, and so forth. There is a reciprocal interaction here that resists any abstract valuation; and Christian scientific endeavor cannot even exist without adoration and self-denial before God.

One might remark that to a great extent such things are lacking in the actual practice of Christian scholarship. I agree wholeheartedly, but the same must be said about all other expressions of the Christian life. Christian scholarship derives its right to use this honorable name only from its spiritual, reformational ground-motive. The same, however, is true of every other area where the

¹ *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*, trans. J. Hendrik De Vries (1898; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 164-65 (ital. mine, H.D.).

Christian principle of life becomes manifest. In the dispensation of common grace, the Scriptural ground-motive does not lead to perfection; it only leads to the pursuit of perfection, as we “press on to take hold of that . . .” [Philippians 3:12, NIV].

h. Kuyper’s view of the relation between science and the other spheres of life according to their internal nature

Although I cannot unreservedly endorse the assessment of science that Kuyper gives in his *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, my appreciation is all the greater for the manner in which he delineated the relationship between science and the other spheres of life according to the internal nature of each. The dogma of the autonomy of science had led to a supposed separation between theoretical knowledge and faith. In opposition to this Kuyper posed the critical principle of *sphere-sovereignty*. Precisely because science is tied to its own religious root and is of necessity guided by faith, this principle compels it to reject every interference in its sphere of competence from external influences that are foreign to its nature. Kuyper demands this sphere-sovereignty for science in relation both to the state and to the temporal institution of the church.

The scripturally anchored reformational ground-motive of Kuyper’s worldview immediately bore fruit here; for it led him to reject a dogma that had thwarted science’s inner freedom to unfold according to the nature granted to it by the *creation order*. This dogma had robbed science of its freedom under the dominion of both the scholastic ground-motive of nature and grace and the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom. So long as it was accepted as a scientific axiom, there was no possibility of reformational science.

i. Why the reformational principle failed to affect science

The reformation of scientific thought that Calvin and Luther began in the field of theology did not begin to spread through science as a whole until the Calvinist revival led by Kuyper toward the end of the nineteenth century. What was the reason for this delay? From the very start,¹ Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) had guided the reformational movement in science down the scholastic path of

¹ [Even in his early *Loci communes* (1521), where he explained “pure theology” along Lutheran lines, Melanchthon introduced humanistic elements.]

synthesis with the spirit of antiquity and of humanism. As the *praeceptor Germaniae* ("teacher of Germany"), Melancthon determined the scientific direction of positive, confessional Protestantism for centuries to come, particularly in the realms of philosophy and ethics. It was mainly due to his influence on the Protestant universities that the dialectical ground-motive of nature and grace continued to assert itself so stubbornly, even in *Reformed* scientific thought. The course that Reformed thinkers followed here was Lutheran, and certainly did not stem from Calvin. For despite his pioneering work in the Reformation, Luther never managed to surmount the influence of the dualistic ground-motive of nature and grace.

Luther received his scientific training in the nominalistic school of late scholasticism. Under the leadership of the Franciscan cleric William of Occam this school understood God's sovereignty in the debased sense of an unpredictable, lawless arbitrariness. It depreciated the law as the realm of "sinful nature" and shattered the artful synthesis that Thomas Aquinas had constructed between "nature" and "grace." Moreover, it restricted "natural" science to what the senses can observe and denied it any higher value. Thus, Luther remained a prisoner all his life of the dialectical opposition between the law as the realm of sinful nature and the freedom of the gospel as the realm of grace in Christ Jesus.

A dualism therefore inevitably had to emerge in Luther's thought. On the one side he saw the "profane sciences," which work by "the natural light of reason" and share in the debasement of human nature wrought by the Fall. On the other side he saw Scriptural theology, illumined by the light of the Word of God.

Luther was never influenced by the spirit of modern humanism. In his attitude towards "natural human knowledge" he remained caught in the skeptical medieval spirit of Occamism. We thus indeed find him fulminating against ancient philosophy, particularly the Aristotelian wing, and against the giants of scholastic philosophy, of whom he had no more than a superficial knowledge. He did put up an impassioned resistance against the humanistic Renaissance which, in Germany and the Netherlands, at first tried to establish a new synthesis between Christianity and the spirit of antiquity. Nowhere, however, do we find in him the conviction that

the Reformation demands a radical transformation of philosophic thought itself on the basis of its religious root of life.

It was Melanchthon who took on the gigantic task of bringing together the Reformation movement and modern learning. Educated in humanistic studies, he was initially highly regarded in the circles of Erasmus and of the German humanist Willibald Pirckheimer. Thus he reverted to the standpoint of accommodation and synthesis and sought to adapt “profane” philosophy to Lutheran doctrine.

The golden opportunity to develop a Christian philosophy animated by the spirit of the Reformation was thereby suppressed for centuries. Melanchthon’s enormous influence continued to dominate philosophical instruction and research at Protestant universities. Soon it allied itself there with the restoration of Aristotelian scholasticism, until finally the humanistic Enlightenment appeared on the scene and Protestant theology itself fell victim to synthesis.¹

j. The standpoint of accommodation versus the idea of the sphere-sovereignty of science

The standpoint of accommodation required that the “profane sciences” be constantly kept under the tutelage of dogmatic theology as the queen of the sciences (*regina scientiarum*), which sought support alternately in the church and in the state. Since scientific thought was not *intrinsically* Reformed in this manner, however, it persistently threatened to cast off the yoke of this accommodation and to collide with both dogmatic theology and ecclesiastical dogma. This battle was fought of necessity on *philosophical* territory, since Protestant scholastic theology expressly took Aristotelian metaphysics, logic, and physics under its wing in order to oppose Cartesian and other “newfangled” humanistic ideas. In the final chapter of this volume I will return to this subject.

Humanism, on the other hand, posited the dogma of the autonomy of science as a theoretical axiom. The logic of this dogma demanded that every attempt to arrive at an inner reformation of scientific thought be nipped in the bud by simply banishing it from scientific discussion.

In the light of this whole tradition, Kuyper’s reformational conception, based on his demand that philosophy undergo an inner

¹ More on this in *WdW*, 1:481 ff. [cf. *NC*, 1:513 ff.].

reformation and that science is sovereign in its own sphere, cannot be regarded too highly. Here indeed, the Scriptural ground-motive of the Calvinist Reformation produced a radical reversal in the entire view of science, which in time would make its consequences felt far beyond the boundaries of the Calvinist community.

k. The true significance of Kuyper's conception of the sphere-sovereignty of science versus the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought

Kuyper's conception of the sphere-sovereignty of science is oriented solely and exclusively to the Scriptural ideas of creation and Christian freedom. God, the Sovereign Origin, created everything *after its kind* and with its *own internal law for life*. This created order expresses itself also in the distinct spheres of human society. Each sphere has its own internal vital law and its own material sphere of competence, which derives its origin, not from some other temporal sphere, but directly from God, the Sovereign Creator of heaven and earth. Within temporal society God's sovereignty is expressed in this sovereignty of each sphere, a structure that resists any blurring of the boundaries. It cannot be denied that science, too, has its own internal vital law. Hence, to place it under the guardianship of church or state is to ignore its unique, intrinsic nature and thus debase it.

But how does this idea of "sphere-sovereignty" receive its truly reformational stamp? Only if it is grasped as being inseparably bound up with *freedom in Christ Jesus*, a freedom that is diametrically opposed to the idea of freedom that stems from the humanistic ideal of personality. Science does not follow its own vital law when, in presumed self-sufficiency, it tries to cut itself off from its religious root and ignores the living bond between thought in its logical aspect and *pistis*, the function of faith. It rather does this only when it stands in the freedom with which Christ has made it free from the bondage of sin.

The traditional dogma of the autonomy of science can only lead to violation of sphere-sovereignty. For this dogma tries to pass off a religiously based article of faith as a scientific axiom. Under the guise of science it tries to secure a monopoly position for its own faith regarding the foundations of theoretical thought, an effort that violates the very nature of the scientific enterprise. For, in accordance with the idea of sphere-sovereignty, *scientific judgments*

must be sharply distinguished from their *necessary religious presuppositions*.

From his Scriptural, Christian standpoint Kuyper was fully prepared to accept the consequences of his position. That is, he just as willingly accepted freedom for a science that does not arise from the Christian root of life as he defended that freedom for Christian science. In the field of science the battle between schools of thought can be fought only with scientific weapons.

1. The critical religious turn in Kuyper's view of science

Sphere-sovereignty, thus conceived, introduced a critical religious turn into the philosophy of science that made necessary a new inquiry into the internal structure of scientific thought. The dogma of the autonomy of science was stripped of its scientific disguise and exposed as a presupposition of *faith*. Now it was first of all philosophy's turn to abandon its traditional dogmatic stance regarding its own foundations and to begin a truly *critical theoretical* investigation into the question of whether science in general, and philosophical science in particular, is even *ideally* possible without supra-theoretical presuppositions.

Through this critical religious turn in his understanding of science, Kuyper indeed became the spiritual father of the new reformational philosophy. It is not an overstatement to call his appearance a critical turning point in the history of Western philosophical thought, since here, for the first time, the relation between religion and philosophy was determined *solely on the basis of the reformational ground-motive of the Christian religion itself*.

3. Reformational philosophy and the intellectual-spiritual situation of today

Since the Philosophy of the Law-Idea adopted the critical religious ground-motive of Kuyper's view of science as the basis for its own scientific inquiry, it necessarily had to begin with a radical critique of philosophic thought as such. This critique, which subjected the structure of theoretical thought itself to an investigation, had to disturb the dogmatic self-assurance of traditional philosophy, which remained dominant at least until the outbreak of the First World War.

The terms "dogmatic" and "critical" as applied to method had become popular ever since Kant, who wanted to make a supposedly "pure" scientific epistemology the starting point of every fu-

ture philosophy. Every metaphysical mode of thought that believed its theoretical concepts could grasp the “essence” of things as they are in themselves was thus disqualified as “dogmatic.” In the new critique developed by the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, by contrast, these terms acquired a *novel* and *radical* meaning. With this radical critique, which indeed touched the very foundations of philosophical thought, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea made its debut during a phase of history that I have already described in the introduction to Volume One of this trilogy.

a. *With its radical critique of the foundations of philosophical thought the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is to some extent in tune with the contemporary intellectual-spiritual situation*

The contemporary intellectual-spiritual crisis is fundamentally different from previous critical turning points. Modern man, because of the internal disintegration of the humanistic attitude toward life, has become spiritually uprooted in his existence. This crisis itself calls for renewed reflection on the foundations of philosophic thought. In this regard the new reformational philosophy appears to be in a favorable position. Its radical critique is, to a certain degree, in tune with the spirit of the times.

b. *Whence the emotional bias against this philosophy?*

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea, however, ran into one great difficulty in making its aims understood: even today the idea of a Reformed philosophy provokes an emotional revulsion among the overwhelming majority of philosophers. As history amply shows, such emotional prejudices are extremely hard to overcome.

The first thought that is brought to mind by the idea of a Reformed philosophy is that this is a regression, a relapse into the view of philosophy as the handmaiden of dogmatic theology. And this notion is only strengthened when such a philosophy is called “Calvinist.” This name now strikes me as unfortunate for more than one reason. In the first place, it can give rise to the misconception that this philosophy is intended for Calvinists. In the second place, the word “Calvinist” has long since lost its pregnant reformational meaning, particularly in Hungary, France, and the Anglo-Saxon countries. For despite Kuyper’s argument that Calvinism contains the foundations of an all-encompassing world-view, to the minds of many it remains, in its original sense, nothing

more than a theological system. In their view, therefore, to tie one's philosophical thought to Calvinism is merely to put it in the service of a dogmatic, theological *doctrinal system*.

The second thought that easily comes to mind is that Calvinists, who accept divine revelation as the absolute Truth, will claim that same monopoly on truth for their philosophical views. A new debasement of philosophy would seem to be the inevitable result. For philosophy is the *love* of wisdom, a tireless searching and struggling for truth. But if one imagines that he already possesses the Truth, he or she no longer needs to search for it. And nothing would be easier than for such a person to claim a privileged position in philosophical discussions with other schools of thought and to brand one's adversaries with the stigma of being "un-christian."

Prejudices such as these against the idea of an intrinsically Christian philosophy have a long tradition behind them. The emotional reaction to a reformational Christian philosophy, in particular, is rooted in the memory of the theological disputes that occurred since the advent of the Reformation and of the manner in which theology usually carried on its debate with humanistic philosophy. But there is an even deeper layer of memory nourishing such prejudices, found in the revulsion of the modern humanistic movement against orthodox scholasticism in all its forms. Even the Thomist tradition, which defended the autonomy of natural reason in intrinsically philosophical matters, met with this revulsion. For, like all forms of scholasticism, it still always managed to retain a remarkable, preordained harmony between its philosophical system and the doctrine of the Church. Could a Reformed philosophy, then, produce anything different from scholasticism?

What had so-called Christian philosophy done until now? It had taken its philosophical goods mainly from the Greeks, and in modern times partly from humanism. Philosophers were rightly tired of this scissors-and-paste method with respect to the relationship between the Christian religion and scientific thought. Those Christians who would choose Greek philosophy as their teacher should have considered its history. It came into being as a gradual emancipation of thought from the imagery of popular religion and the cultural mythology of the Olympian pantheon, and even in religious matters it enthroned "reason" as the highest authority.

On this point humanism saw itself as the direct continuation of the classical philosophical tradition. By virtue of its dialectical ground-motive it was indeed able to surmount the rationalistic overextension of the deterministic science ideal during the time of the Enlightenment; but it could never tolerate a dethronement of Reason by divine Revelation. In other words, it could conceive of a “philosophy of Christian revelation” but not of a Christian philosophy. In its search for absolute truth philosophy could not be allowed to grant one inch of ground to the Christian religion based on revelation.

c. *“Philosophy of revelation” and Christian philosophy.*

Schelling’s critique of the idea of a Christian philosophy

In the first half of the nineteenth century Friedrich Schelling ventured to publish a *Philosophy of Revelation*. In it he attempted, among other things, to present a “philosophical justification” of the profoundest doctrines of the Old and New Testaments in a manner that was courageous for his time. Although in doing this he always appeared to stay within the good graces of orthodox opinion, in the introduction to this work he hastened to preclude any misconception that he was taking up the cause of a “religious,” or more precisely, a “Christian” philosophy.

He wrote as follows:

Positive philosophy [i.e., Schelling’s philosophy of revelation] also would have to reject the title of a religious philosophy because it is only through it that the true concept and content of religion may be found. This may not be postulated beforehand, and as soon as one refrains from doing that, any designation becomes wholly indefinite. For although there are no different moralities, there are indeed different religions. Even the heathen has religion, and the modern Christian, who finds edification in devotional materials or other classically soft and shallow works, also believes he has religion. One would have to go further, then, and say “Christian philosophy”; but there are very different persuasions that call themselves Christian. To speak with total precision, therefore, one would have to take yet another step and say, for example, “Catholic philosophy,” as has already been done by a party in France and also in some parts of Germany. One then could contrast this with Protestant science and Protestant philosophy, and believe that the first predicate might be used to advantage in a Catholic, the second in a Protestant country. But a philos-

ophy that has to call Catholicism or Protestantism to its aid either has never been anything or is close to no longer being anything. One therefore will have to leave the general name “religious philosophy” to those who see some profit in using it to insinuate beforehand that any philosophy with which they are, or fear to be, on a collision course, is “irreligious,” thereby securing for themselves, as it were, a privileged philosophy.¹

This statement dates from the previous period, when the philosophical community of the West still seemed to have a solid footing. Faith in the autonomy of reason, in the humanistic sense, still carried the day with hardly any opposition.

d. A description of the intellectual-spiritual climate of today

Since then, the spiritual crisis of Western civilization has resulted in a process of decline that has gradually undermined the faith in reason. One should not assume, however, that this also caused the emotional reaction against the idea of a Christian philosophy to disappear. The violent period of transition in which we are living is unsettling all the dogmas in which an earlier period sought its security.

Dynamics, movement is everything today. Misconstruing the ground-motive of Greek thought, some people think that the pronouncement of the Greek thinker Heraclitus, “all is in flux, nothing abides,” can be used once again to describe the current spiritual-intellectual situation. Humanism thus has fallen into decline precisely in its *dogmatic* attitude.

The phenomenological method that was introduced by Edmund Husserl, and also by the historicist Wilhelm Dilthey in his last period, already testified to an undermining of the earlier self-assurance of thought.

Like a tidal wave, historicism, pragmatism, vitalism and existentialism have inundated the riverbed of modern philosophical thought. They are all characterized by an irrationalistic, antisystematic spirit that regards every “system” as suspect from the start.

1 F. W. J. von Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1858), 1:134-35.

[Schelling’s work on the philosophy of revelation has in part been translated as Schelling’s *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*, by V. C. Hayes (The Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Erskineville, NSW, Australia: 1995), pp. 51-129 (vol. 1), and pp. 131-334 (vol. 2). Cf. also pp. 35-36.]

To ground philosophic thought in an eternal truth, whether this be the divine Word-revelation or a realm of rational ideas or values, has become *unzeitgemäß*, out of step with the times, in the full sense of the word.

Even when some eternal Truth is still recognized in the Christian religion, a “line of death” is drawn between eternity and time following Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish founder of existential philosophy. Philosophical thought, which is subject to the anathema that falls on temporal existence, then is separated by a radical gulf from the Christian religion; and to assume that there is any continuity between time and eternity is regarded as a relapse into the Catholic synthesis standpoint regarding nature and grace.

e. Dialectical theology in contrast to the idea of a Christian philosophy. Barth contra Brunner

Dialectical theology believes that it is the true heir of the theology of the Reformation. Its founder Karl Barth has made the polar opposition between sinful “nature” and “grace” into the alpha and omega of its theological thought, and has denied that there is any point of contact in “nature” for the operation of divine grace. This theology thus appears to be in perfect harmony with the irrationalist and “dynamic” spirit of our contemporary period of crisis.

At the time of its first appearance, dialectical theology announced itself as a “theology of crisis.” It saw the whole relationship between human existence and divine redemption in Christ Jesus as standing under the rubric of radical “contradiction.” According to Emil Brunner there even exists an internal contradiction between God’s will as Creator and His will as Redeemer, as he emphatically argues in his well-known book *The Divine Imperative*.¹

Only like a lightning bolt, i.e., only by acting in a *blitzartig* way and operating in the manner of lightning, can God’s Divine action supposedly and one-sidedly overcome the line of death between

1 [For Brunner, the will of God the Creator and the will of God the Redeemer differ, but God’s act of reconciliation—“the center of time”—unites this twofold divine will, so that the preservation of creation will be perfected by redemption. God’s created ordinances, however, do not express unequivocally the will of the Creator, marred as these are by sin and thus must at times be resisted. See Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative* (1932; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), pp. 123, 128, 210, 214, and 217-18.]

time and eternity by striking into the lost temporal zone; for only in this way can God on His part cross the just mentioned divide. Every attempt to find some continuity between God's revelation in Christ Jesus and human existence and activity is thus radically rejected.

To be sure, Emil Brunner gradually turned away from Karl Barth's radical rejection of the idea of a Christian science. He began to admit that there is room for a distinction between "Christian" and "un-christian" at least in theoretical reflection that focuses on the human person. If one digs to the root of this apparent rapprochement, however, one realizes that Brunner is not offering a truly reformational view of science, but only a more synthetic twist in the scholastic ground-motive of nature and grace. For, with the publication of his book *Nature and Grace*, which was aimed against Barth, Brunner once again began to look toward the divine Word-revelation in Jesus Christ from a "point of contact" in human nature. Barth, of course, responded with a radical "no."

Brunner then developed his notion of a hierarchy of the sciences. In it the natural sciences have an autonomous, purely factual character. On a higher level stands the research of the "sciences of the mind" (*Geisteswissenschaften*), where the human personality itself is at issue, and it is here that Christian ideas can enter the picture. All this, however, is intrinsically scholastic and not reformational; for it is determined by Brunner's conception of the autonomy of the natural orders over against the divine Word-revelation in Christ Jesus and by his dialectical conception of God's will as Creator in contrast to His will as Redeemer. The difference between Barth and Brunner on this point is merely one between a polar antithetic and a more synthetic tendency in the religious dialectic of the scholastic ground-motive that they share.

The true Barthians steadfastly maintain the first standpoint. Although they follow their teacher in denying that theology as a science has necessary philosophical presuppositions, they believe nevertheless that theology can use all possible philosophical theories (except metaphysical theories, particularly the Thomist metaphysics) for its own purposes, without binding itself to any of them. Those who felt called to practice philosophy on their own at first preferred to ally themselves with the "critical" philosophy de-

scended from Kant, and later showed a distinct predilection for irrationalistic existentialism. Finally, some of them (e.g., the late professor J. C. Franken of Utrecht) openly crossed over to the camp of Roman Catholic Augustinian Neo-scholasticism.

This school's view of the relationship between theology and philosophy is indeed determined entirely *e parte theologiae*, from the standpoint of Augustinian scholasticism. Cajetan, one of the most authoritative older Thomas commentators, states that this view can even be found in Thomas Aquinas, although, as we shall see later on, this interpretation of Thomas is rejected today by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Barthians' departure from Augustine began when they acknowledged the autonomy of philosophy over against theology. From this dialectical standpoint, any attempt to Christianize philosophy from within is equivalent to a betrayal of the Christian religion. Members of this circle prefer to ally themselves, in matters philosophical, with existentialism (Kierkegaard and Heidegger), just as they previously had a special liking for Kant's critique of knowledge. Their basic aim is to use philosophy merely for a negative critique of human hubris in science, and both existential philosophy and Kant's epistemology are considered "formally" useful for this purpose. Apparently, these Barthians are unaware that despite all their fulminating resistance to the Thomist system, they too basically remain stuck in a polar scholastic standpoint.

f. The problem of a Christian philosophy in Roman Catholic circles

The problem regarding the relation between Christian religion and philosophy has again recently come up for discussion in Roman Catholic circles, particularly through the work of Maurice Blondel and his followers Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain. The great majority of Catholic thinkers nevertheless continues to reject the possibility of an intrinsically Christian philosophy. At least, the dominant Thomist neoscholasticism, which regards "nature" as an autonomous stepping-stone for grace, offers no point of contact for the idea of a Christian philosophy in the real sense of the word. In general, the autonomy of the natural reason in the field of philoso-

phy remains a dogma that scholars wish to hold fast, and that also fits best with the church's views on the relation between nature and grace.

At least initially, Catholic scholars thought that the Philosophy of the Law-Idea too was based on the scholastic ground-motive. They thus regarded its denial of the autonomy of the natural reason and its demand that philosophic thought be fundamentally reformed through the divine Word-revelation as a voluntaristic "fideism," where "nature is swallowed up by grace" (Ferdinand Sassen).

The traditional spirit of scholasticism stands in fundamental opposition to the contemporary irrationalistic and activist spirit. This, however, has not prevented various Roman Catholic thinkers, particularly those of the Augustinian school, from looking for an accommodation to that spirit, and from trying to make both existentialism and vitalism serviceable to Roman Catholic views.

Under the strong influence of Léon Ollé-Laprune, the French thinker Maurice Blondel sought to refute the dogma of the autonomy of science along immanent philosophical lines and defended the notion of a Catholic Christian philosophy. Nevertheless, in his critique of traditional philosophy he showed that he was strongly influenced by the activist, irrationalistic spirit of the age. This made him an easy target for Thomist critique,¹ particularly in his depreciation of scientific conceptual knowledge. And since Blondel, as a Roman Catholic thinker, obviously could not detach himself from the ground-motive of nature and grace, that critique hit home all the more sharply.

The spiritual kinship that Ferdinand Sassen of Leiden thought he had established between the Philosophy of the Law-Idea and Blondel's thought is a mere illusion. This philosophy's notion of an inner reformation of philosophical thought under the direction of the ground-motive of divine revelation is foreign to Blondel, just as the irrationalism, voluntarism, and fideism that Sassen thought he had discovered in it are foreign to the Philosophy of the Law-Idea.

¹ See E. P. Maes, O.P., *De godsdienstphilosophie van Blondel* (Mechelen: Het Kompas, 1934).

g. *A brief sketch of the spirit of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea in the context of the present intellectual-spiritual situation*

Despite all its efforts, the new reformational movement in philosophy appears to have been forced into isolation in today's intellectual-spiritual climate. Thus it is compelled to do battle on every front. Indeed, this battle must be waged even with Reformed thinkers as they analyze the spiritual legacy of Abraham Kuyper, the father of the Calvinist revival in the nineteenth century.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea has broken radically with traditional notions of a "Christian philosophy." Its demand for a *reformation* of philosophical thought entails the precise opposite of scholastic attempts at *accommodation*. Although it is rooted in the Scriptural starting point of the Calvinist reformation, it does not try to base itself on scientific-theological dogmatics. While openly confessing that it is bound to the ground-motive of the divine Word-revelation, it simultaneously wages a relentless battle against every form of *philosophical* dogmatism that puts all its confidence in philosophical thought and pretends that its religious presuppositions are theoretical axioms.

In this regard the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is the critical exponent of the antidogmatic spirit of our age; but it turns its radical critique of philosophic thought equally against the most recent philosophical currents that reveal the relativistic basis of this spirit. Following Kuyper it champions the sphere-sovereignty of science, while simultaneously denying its independence from faith and religion. It also defends the scientific character of philosophy and therefore remains systematic, since without systematic thought no science is possible. But it combats every closed system, since that would lead to scholastic fossilization and rob philosophical thought of its spiritual *dunamis*.

It unmasks the philosophical dogmatism that is present in the so-called antidogmatic stance of contemporary philosophy insofar as the latter clings to the immanence standpoint. By virtue of its reformational ground-motive it has begun in its philosophical system a *principled* battle against the scholastic tradition, even where this comes to expression in Reformed thought. Nevertheless, it recognizes the scientific value of classic scholasticism, found in its of-

ten profound philosophical insights. In the same manner it also wishes to do full justice to ancient Greek and modern humanistic philosophy. It steadfastly opposes, however, every attempt at synthesis between the Christian ground-motive and the ground-motives of unscriptural philosophy.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea also maintains the *historical continuity* of philosophical thought, but with the express proviso that there is *radical discontinuity* in the religious ground-motives and in the basic philosophical ideas dominated by them. It nourishes itself upon the whole tradition of philosophical thought and thus fully recognizes its own historical conditioning; but in its basic conception it nevertheless sets itself *against* that philosophical tradition. In its philosophical view of temporal reality it is fully dynamic, since it looks for the firm ground of this reality beyond time and does not ascribe self-contained existence to the creaturely realm. Rather, it sees the entire temporal cosmos involved in a process of disclosure which expresses the restless, origin-directed, tendency towards the consummation of all things. In all this movement, however, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea simultaneously recognizes the presence of constant creational structures. It rejects rationalism and intellectualism, but stands equally opposed to irrationalism and voluntarism.

On first consideration, the position of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea might appear to be paradoxical on many of these points. Measured by traditional yardsticks it is out of step and elusive. In order to bring its true meaning to light, I will first have to clear up a series of misconceptions that tradition has attached to the idea of a Christian philosophy.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

1. Theological criticism of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea

In his *Philosophy of Revelation*, Friedrich Schelling already offered a critique of the idea of religious philosophy in general and the idea of Christian philosophy in particular, whether this be Catholic or Protestant. This compels us to examine more closely the following question: what is the only possible meaning of a Reformed philosophy?

It cannot be denied that, even within Reformed scientific circles, Kuyper's basic reformational concept of the sphere-sovereignty of science is still quite foreign to many; and they find his notion of an internal reformation of science through the spiritual *dunamis* of God's Word equally strange. Immediately after the publication of my three-volume *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* a conflict flared up in Reformed circles; and in the attack that was launched by a Reformed theologian it soon became clear where the problem lay. Objections were not raised against the idea of a reformational philosophy as such (that could hardly be expected from these quarters), but against the manner in which this idea had been conceived and elaborated.

a. A brief outline of this theological critique

The train of thought in this theological critique can be briefly summarized as follows. A truly reformational philosophy should be built not only on the foundation of Scripture, but also on the Reformed confessions in the broadest sense of the word. Further, it should take care to preserve continuity with Reformed theological thought of both earlier and later date.

These Reformed confessions were drawn up by scientific theologians, and they contain decisions about disputes among scholars in theology. It would be wrong, therefore, to make a fundamental distinction between doctrines [for everybody] and dogmas [for scholars] and to separate in these confessions what has binding authority and what lacks this authority because of its scientific nature.

If, for example, we find in these writings terms such as “substance,” “human nature,” “rational soul,” “immortal soul,” etc., we must interpret these terms *historically* and try to understand them as they were understood by the theologians who formulated them. In doing this we may find that their theological notions corresponded completely with philosophical concepts based on ground-motives that were unscriptural and un-christian in origin. Nevertheless, we must still recognize these notions as “Reformed principles,” as long as they have not been revised by the church. It is not permissible [I was told] for a “Reformed philosophy” to deviate from these principles on its own; for that would undermine the confessions. This, in brief, was the main thrust of the theological argument.

This argument was “grist for the mill” of traditional philosophers, who taught that the possibility of philosophy as science depends on the recognition of the absolute autonomy of reason over against faith. They could hardly have asked theologians for a more compelling proof that a Reformed philosophy, wishing to retain its claim upon the name of “science,” is impossible on principle.

Thus we see the extremely delicate position in which the adherents of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea found themselves. In arguing for the validity of a Reformed philosophy, they pushed certain Reformed theologians into an involuntary alliance with advocates of the idea of neutral science. For anyone who understands the meaning of Kuyper’s idea of the sphere-sovereignty of science must realize that a conception of “Reformed philosophy,” as proposed here from a theological perspective, is absolutely incompatible with the very *nature* of the scientific enterprise.

b. The implications of this line of thought

What this all amounts to is the granting of binding authority to the church in questions of a scientific nature. It would be futile for this theological critique to try to evade this consequence by leaving the church formally out of the picture, and by giving the Board of Curators of the Free University,¹ for example, the task of judging whether certain intrinsically scientific concepts are consistent with the Reformed confessions. This would be in vain because, as we

1 [The Reformed university that Abraham Kuyper founded in Amsterdam and in whose law faculty Dooyeweerd taught from 1926 to 1965.]

shall see, what is at stake here is not *formal* jurisdiction but *material* competence.

The task of interpreting the written confessions belongs, by its very nature, solely to the church as the instituted community of Christ-believers organized for the ministry of the Word and sacraments. The body of curators of a university is, as such, no more qualified to do this than is the civil government. Let us suppose that the statutes and bylaws of an institution of higher learning implied, on close examination, that instruction in all faculties had to be tested against the confessions of the Reformed churches. Even then, the curators could only have a *formal* competence with regard to the interpretation of the confessional writings themselves. In the *material* exercise of this competence they would have to be guided by the pronouncements of the church, since otherwise the *ecclesiastical character* of the confessions would be ignored, and their interpretation would arbitrarily be left to persons who in themselves have no material competence.

This in itself would not necessarily impair the sphere-sovereignty of such a Reformed university, since we must keep in mind that it is the task of the university, not of the church, to evaluate the Reformed character of the instruction in respect of its internal scientific nature. At most, the question may arise whether it is advisable to incorporate the Reformed confessions themselves into the foundations of Reformed science. For if this were done, science in its very *foundations* would be bound once again to the institutional church; and in the Reformed view the church institution is not infallible. I will not be able to give a final answer to this question until I have dealt with the problem of the point of contact between the Christian religion and philosophy. In any case, however, it is undeniable that the confessions are ecclesiastical in character.

For the reasons given above, the theological critique of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea could not evade the implications of its position without violating the ecclesiastical character of the confessions. These implications, however, equally violate the character of *science*. They would sound the death knell not only for Reformed philosophy that covets the name of science, but also for Kuyper's whole conception of the Free University, which was expressly based on the internal freedom of science over against the church.

For about this there can be no reasonable doubt: genuinely scientific questions can be answered only by scientific means, not by the *authoritative statements* of church bodies.

We can rejoice in the fact that the critique, aimed at the Philosophy of the Law-Idea by the theologians mentioned, has found so little response within the Reformed community at large. Most people have felt intuitively that this criticism arose from a spiritual attitude that was basically at odds with the reformational efforts of Kuyper in the area of science.

This does not mean that I wish to belittle this criticism or to pass it off lightly. Quite the contrary. Although responding to its arguments might, on first consideration, appear to reopen a battle that seemed to have been settled once and for all by Kuyper's work in Reformed circles, in reality things are different. Kuyper did win the struggle for the internal freedom of science vis-à-vis the church and the state, but that only solved the problem *in principle*. In working out the ramifications of his basic idea of the sphere-sovereignty of science, problems have been encountered that are far from solved, both within Reformed circles and *outside of them*.

Regarded in this light, the controversy surrounding the Philosophy of the Law-Idea can command the attention of the entire scientific world. The significance of this philosophy, after all, extends far beyond those who share the Reformed starting point. Through its radical critique of philosophical thought it has also shown that the traditional dogma of science's absolute self-sufficiency in its own domain and its separation from religious faith are in conflict with the very *nature* of science. If this critique is correct, the prevalent view in philosophy regarding the independence of theoretical thought from faith will have to be fundamentally revised.

c. A series of questions

This gives rise to a whole series of extremely difficult problems. In the first place, following Kuyper the Philosophy of the Law-Idea espouses the internal sphere-sovereignty of science, and it simultaneously denies that science is intrinsically self-sufficient in relation to faith and religion. It believes it can demonstrate that philosophic thought depends, on principle, on a religious starting point, and that through faith it is focused back on that starting point. How can these two things be squared without internal contradiction? Does not the first assertion demand that science remain *science* in the full

sense of the word – that it not tolerate any intrusion from the side of faith? And does not the second assertion flatly contradict this by binding philosophy to religion and faith?

In the second place, assuming that the Philosophy of the Law-Idea can demonstrate that there is no real contradiction between these two theses – that on the contrary the very sphere-sovereignty of science demands the connection in question between science and faith – how then does it actually conceive, concretely, the relation between religion, faith, and science from the reformational standpoint?

If this philosophy wishes to base its religious starting point on Scripture, then it must indicate which conception of Scripture it embraces. If it wants to avoid falling into an absolute individualism, it will inevitably have to submit to the confessions of the Reformed church. Even this ecclesiastical submission seems insufficient, however, since the contents of the confessional documents have been thought through in a scientific manner by systematic theology. Only theological dogmatics seems capable, therefore, of defining more precisely the religious presuppositions that a Reformed philosophy needs for scientific use.

Further, Scripture requires exegesis, and scientific exegesis of the Bible clearly belongs to the task of theology. Thus there appears to be no escape from the conclusion that a reformational philosophy can only derive its “Christian foundations” from Reformed theology. Thus it is subject to church authority, bound in principle to the Reformed confessional standards. And again, this church authority can impose on it certain scientific views, under theological guidance, to the extent that such views seem to be crystallized in the confessions.

What this means, therefore, is that all roads seem to lead back to the standpoint of the theological critics of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. Any elaboration of the idea of a reformational philosophy seems of necessity to end in dogmatic theology and church doctrine, which might even have *scientific authority*. And the inevitable logic that here is applied to reformational philosophy will obviously also apply implicitly to the nontheological *special* sciences. In the end, therefore, it will be regarded as valid for the entire scientific enterprise as carried out on a Reformed foundation. Kuyper’s idea of a free science thus seems impossible to salvage.

As we can see, the line of reasoning followed by the theological opponents of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is not without logical acuity. Ironically, their argument coincides completely with the reasoning of those who are committed on principle to the neutrality of science, although the intentions are opposite. If we grant that the *starting point* of their argument is correct, we are then driven with inner necessity in a direction that renders Kuyper's notion of science's sphere-sovereignty illusory.

The argument that I have briefly summarized here deserves our full and earnest attention for this very reason. It is not really refuted if one merely defends himself against it on points of detail and fails to penetrate to its false root. For what is at stake here is whether Christian science is possible in principle.

The relation between church doctrinal authority and philosophical science is not the only question here. Also at issue is the relation between philosophy and dogmatic theology, which has been one of the thorniest problems for Christian thought, present already in Patristic writings. The standpoint of dialectical theology regarding the problem of Christian science also demands our attention in this context. On this standpoint only theology can fulfill the task of a Christian science, at least to the extent that one counts theology as a science; and the notion of a Christian philosophy with its own task and field of inquiry makes as little sense as nontheological Christian special sciences.

It would not be an overstatement to assert that the idea of a reformational Christian philosophy has the full weight of the tradition against it. Even today, this tradition has attracted strong defenders on every intellectual front.

2. Reformed philosophy and the Reformed confessions

The theological critics, in principle, departed from Kuyper's line of thought because they failed altogether to appreciate the problem of a reformational philosophy. Their single-minded intention to uphold the Reformed confessions¹ without compromise is commendable in itself. They sought to combat what they regarded as an individualistic and unhistorical attempt at arbitrarily establishing the religious foundations of a philosophical system, which in their

¹ [The reference is to the Three Forms of Unity long adopted by Reformed denominations: namely, the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dordt (1618/19).]

view ignored both the communal character of Reformed principles and the historical tradition.

a. The formalistic conception of the confessions

The basic mistake of the theological critique was that it thought it could find in the *form* of the church confessions a criterion for determining the Reformed *character* of scientific activity. This formalism led to an untenable consequence: the notion that the church as such has direct, or at least indirect, authority to rule on intrinsically scientific questions, at least if it can be demonstrated in the event that the confessions expressly intended to speak on such questions.

In other words, the critics failed to ask themselves what is the intrinsic *nature* of written confessions as church documents. Instead, from the formal ecclesiastical *origin* of these documents they inferred that the church has an unlimited material competence, at least in principle, to speak on any problem with binding authority whenever it finds this desirable. But one who argues on this basis and thinks that only thus can the confessions of the church be maintained unimpaired loses the right to reassure himself with the added thought that the church authorities will act with the necessary wisdom and be careful not to exceed the limits of their competence.

If one begins from the formalistic standpoint, one cannot later stake out the material limits of his competence. For by its very nature formalism is absolutistic. By virtue of its foundation and starting point it rejects, and *has to* reject, any limit to its material competence that would arise from the nature of the church institution. This is tantamount to a fundamental denial of the sphere-sovereignty of science, and therewith, a denial of the principles on which the Free University of Amsterdam was founded.

b. Can the distinction between doctrine and dogmatics be maintained?

Now one could still try to defend the theological standpoint in dispute against the fundamental criticism that I have formulated above. One could put the matter as follows: the *material* authority of confessional documents depends, to be sure, on the intrinsic nature of the church confession, and as such it cannot, therefore, be *scientific* in character. But in concrete questions concerning boundaries we cannot leave it to individual insight to determine where

exactly the task of science begins and the task of the church's doctrinal authority ends.

History certainly offers sufficient evidence that the confession of the church has been attacked at its very foundations in the name of scientific freedom. In such cases, we surely cannot deny the church its right to issue binding pronouncements against such “scientific” assaults on Christian doctrine; and such pronouncements therefore may have to venture “formally” onto scientific territory. For example, in its confessions the church has often had to oppose errors in the area of theology. It has had to think through its standpoint theologically and to set it down in confessional documents. For this reason, a sharp distinction cannot be maintained between church confession and theological science, between doctrine and dogmatics, without running the risk of violating the authority of the confessions.

In weighing these last arguments in defense of the theological critique, we must begin by acknowledging that they are partly correct. The delimitation of confessional authority indeed cannot be left to individual judgment, for that would undoubtedly be tantamount to abandoning the church confession as a document of faith belonging to the church *community*. And yet, there is a weak spot in this argument. Its thesis itself may be correct, but we must never draw from it a conclusion that implicitly violates the correct starting point of another argument: namely, that ecclesiastical competence, as a matter of principle, does not extend to problems that by their *intrinsic nature* belong to the terrain of science. Neither theology nor any other science can leave the solution of problems that are genuinely scientific by their very nature to the binding pronouncements of an organ that lacks all scientific authority.

To determine what, in principle, belongs to the area of church confession and what belongs to the area of science is not at all a matter for subjective assessment. Such a determination can only be based on the *nature* of the matter at hand. The principle of sphere-sovereignty here offers a criterion that is founded in the divine order of creation itself.

The church has *formal* competence to give doctrinal form to the content of Christian faith, which itself is based solely on Scripture. This formal competence, however, can never be extended beyond

the proper limits of its *material* competence, which is determined exclusively by the nature of the church institution as the temporal community of faith in Jesus Christ, organized for the ministry of the Word and sacraments. If this competence is exceeded even by a single step, as happens in the theological argument disputed here, then one falls necessarily, even if unintentionally, into an ecclesiastical positivism and formalism which allows formal competence to take priority over material competence. The consequences of such formalism invalidate its foundation and starting point. They make human formative activity superior to the authority of the divine ordinances, which actually withdraw the intrinsic nature of the various spheres of life from all human arbitrariness.

The standpoint just rejected also comes into conflict with the best traditions in the Reformed churches, which have always resisted such confessionalistic zealotry. They have always been fully aware of the inadequacy and imperfection of every human attempt at formulating the faith and truth content of the Christian religion. Thus the famous Synod of Dordt already refused to give a scientific-theological exposition of the doctrine of election. In formulating the Canons of Dordt, it explicitly stipulated that these should not be “academic” or “scholastic” and should refrain from dealing with genuinely *scientific* questions.¹ Any other view, it hardly needs saying, is impossible from a Reformed standpoint.

Undoubtedly, the confessions have to be interpreted in the sense intended by those who wrote them; but given the nature of church confessions this sense can never be a scientific one. The so-called historical method of interpretation can only be applied to confessions in matters of *faith*.

c. A formalistic conception of the authority of science

The objection will now be raised that no answer has yet been given to one undeniably strong argument: science has time and again abused its freedom and attacked, at their very foundation, the truths of the Christian faith set down in the positive form of the church confessions. As a matter of fact, however, I have already given that answer implicitly. For science, in making such attacks,

1 See K. Dijk, *De strijd over Infra- en Supralapsarisme in de Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland* (diss. V.U.; Kampen, 1912), pp. 170ff., 185.

exceeded its own intrinsic boundaries founded in the *nature* of the scientific enterprise. And it did so precisely by virtue of a formalistic view regarding the competence of science, a view quite similar to the one held by the theological critics of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea regarding the competence of the confessional documents of the church.

On this formalistic view, everything taught in scientific *form* was passed off as “science,” since the basic premise was the absolute sovereignty and self-sufficiency of “theoretical reason.” In other words, at the foundation of this “scientific” critique of Christian doctrine lay a *faith* in the sovereignty of human reason, a belief that from the Christian standpoint can only be qualified as “unbelief.” And this unbelief led science to a formalistic conception of its competence that inevitably caused it to collide with the sphere of competence of the church.

It is futile, however, to combat such formalism in science with a formalistic conception of the church confession. And it would certainly be unjust to aim the argument that the truths of the Christian religion have been undermined by the abuse of scientific freedom against the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, which has subjected the formalistic conception of competence to such a radical critique in every sphere of life.

Still another objection may yet be raised. One might point out that my argument only applies to transgressions of limits made by unbelieving science; it does not, however, take into account the dangers that threaten Christian doctrine from philosophy or theology which, while intending to base themselves on a Christian standpoint, nevertheless fall into errors that violate the confession of the church at fundamental points. Indeed, the Christian church has always been compelled to formulate and elaborate its dogma ever more sharply precisely in its battle against such heresies, and in this it has always found the help of dogmatic theology indispensable.

Such reasoning, of course, is entirely correct. Nevertheless, it does not warrant the formalistic conclusion that has been drawn from it regarding the church’s doctrinal authority in intrinsically scientific questions. The church does indeed have the inescapable task of preserving its confession from all errors, regardless of the direction from which they try to infiltrate the Christian commu-

nity. Two things have to be assumed here: (1) that the confessional standards always remain subject to the divine Word-revelation; (2) that the errors are such that they indeed violate the confession itself in its *intrinsic character* as the positive formulation of the truths of the Christian religion.

The battle against scientific errors *per se*, however, falls outside of the competence of the church; and I believe that, at least in principle, there has always been complete agreement among Reformed Christians on this point. We shall see later that this also gives us the basic point of contact for rebutting the misconception, which apparently has crept in again of late, that in the final analysis theology will have to furnish the Christian foundations for a Christian philosophy, simply because only theology can properly “explain” Scripture. What applies to the scientific freedom of exegesis naturally applies equally to the scientific freedom of theological dogmatics, provided one keeps in mind the same basic reservation regarding the church’s *competence* in matters pertaining to dogma. How then could one wish to deny scientific freedom to a Reformed philosophy in the area of intrinsically *scientific* questions?

A departure from the confession can, by its very nature, never be anything but a departure from the truths of the Christian religion, truths that are revealed in God’s Word and that must be upheld by the church in its own sphere of doctrinal authority. An unscriptural attack against the confession could be launched in scientific form, and this scientific form naturally should not stop the church from rejecting real errors in matters of faith. For in doing so it remains entirely within its *material* sphere of competence. Since the church then takes up *formal* contact with science, it might not always be able to avoid making a theological formulation both of its own standpoint and of that of the errors it rejects, insofar as this is necessary for a proper understanding of the matter. The church similarly often has to ask scientific theologians for advice on disputed matters. Scientific expressions such as “substance” and “rational soul,” however, can themselves never have the binding authority of the confession, nor may they be interpreted to mean that the church supports a particular scientific view with its doctrinal authority.

To repeat, a real departure from the confession only exists if an article of faith that has been given explicit form in the confession is

violated materially. In other words, in a material sense the confession, on the one hand, and theological and philosophical science, on the other, remain strictly distinct across the board, however closely they might be intertwined in a formal sense.

d. A parallel: The relation between the practice of law and the systematic science of law

Since I am still in the preliminary stage of my inquiry, a comparison with the relation between the actual practice of law and justice and the science of law may shed some provisional light here. For it has often been observed that there is a surprising parallelism between the questions that arose in my discussion of church doctrine and theological dogmatics, and questions concerning the relation between the making and administration of law within the state, on the one hand, and systematic legal science on the other.

In complex, contemporary legal questions, both the making of law and its civil and administrative implementation unquestionably require scientific juridical training and advice. It also cannot be denied that both the legislator and the judiciary give binding form to law, which is studied in a scholarly fashion by the systematic science of law.

*e. Can the science of law be a formal source of law?
Is systematic science of law a real science?*

Does all this mean that the making and administration of law in themselves have scientific authority? Or conversely, that the science of law can be regarded as the juridical genetic form (formal source) of law? Both views have their defenders, the former especially in the naive formalistic and positivistic camp, the latter in the so-called historical school of thought. The notion that genuinely scientific legal questions can actually be “solved” with binding authority by legislation and judicature has led serious jurists, schooled in the philosophy of law, to deny that dogmatic science of law is intrinsically scientific in character. For, on this view, it is not “free” in its investigations, but dogmatically bound to the pronouncements of government bodies. Von Kirchmann’s indictment against dogmatic science of law, “Three words of correction from the legislator, and whole libraries are turned into wastepaper,” has not lost its suggestive power to this day. In the *Rechtsphilosophie* of Gustav Radbruch, the well-known German scholar of criminal

law, this idea is repeated in somewhat attenuated form, and it has found ready acceptance among certain legal historians.

I do not intend to push this parallel between the relation of church doctrinal authority to dogmatic theology on the one hand, and the relation of government authority to dogmatic science of law on the other, any further than the point of comparison allows. Thus I do not in any way deny that the first relationship exhibits a very exceptional character that is inseparably tied to the unique position of faith in human life. Theologians, however, should not think that this exceptional character lies in the dogma-bound nature of their science; for this is not a peculiarity of dogmatic theology but is characteristic, as we shall see, of every *normative* field of inquiry. Dogmatic science of law as well has no unique position in this regard compared to the other normative sciences. Similar states of affairs are found in the sciences of ethics, of the forms of social intercourse, of aesthetics, and of linguistics, just to mention a few examples.

In the present stage of my inquiry I merely call attention to the fundamentally false conclusions that certain legal scholars and theologians have drawn from the “dogmatic commitment” of their special fields of study and from the services that science has rendered in the formation of laws and the formulation of confessions.

f. Legal authority and scientific authority

The matter stands as follows. The formation of law *per se* presupposes juridical competence, “juridical authority” as the jurist calls it, while the science of law as such can never have anything but *scientific* authority.¹ The science of law in itself therefore cannot qualify as a source of law in a juridical sense, however great its historical power and influence might be in the formation of law. For in the juridical concept of the source of law, the formal and the material sides are inseparable.

1 [Dooyeweerd uses the term “rechtsmacht” in the sense of “legal competence over persons” when it concerns a *subject-subject* relation and in the sense of jural control/power when it concerns the jural subject-object relation (power over cultural objects). Note that the term *jural* designates the ontic mode of reality, while the term *juridical* refers to the way in which human subjects give shape to jural principles.]

On the other hand, the binding authority of the makers of law (not only the legislators of the state, but every law-making organ) covers only positive, written law, which is the field of inquiry of the science of law; and it does this only within the boundaries God has *determined* in His creation order in the structural principles of law and the societal spheres of human life. This authority never extends over the science of law as such. This implies that scientific definitions, incorporated in law and judicature, can never in themselves have juridically binding authority, no matter how eminent the legal scholar who formulated them. The so-called authentic interpretation of the law is something entirely different, of course; for this is not at all dogmatic and scientific in character, but by its very nature is part of the process of forming positive law. The authentic interpretation is binding for dogmatic science of law in the same sense as all positive law. It belongs to the juridical field of inquiry, and thus by itself has no scientific claims or authority.

g. The difference between the natural sciences and the normative sciences. Normative principles and human formation

Mathematics, physics, biology, and the other so-called natural sciences are equally bound to their own fields of study. The only difference is that these fields are not normative in character; so there is no need for a formative authority that gives binding positive form to the laws that govern them. The latter is a peculiarity of all those normative aspects that are founded on the historical aspect. In the structures of the temporal world-order, God has given the norms, or rules for what ought to be, only as *principles*, and these principles require positive formation on the basis of historical development.

Scripture is the positive form of God's Word-revelation through which the norms for faith, innate in man, receive a concrete divine content. Aside from this, however, all positive formation is *human* work, in which subjective human judgment plays an important role. Such positive formation is fundamentally different from *creation*, since it can give binding form only to normative principles that are by nature removed from all arbitrary human control, and since it remains bound to the cultural norms that govern historical development.

Thus we see that in the normative fields of study, normative laws require positive formative activity. This, however, is surely no reason to doubt the possibility of genuinely scientific inquiry

within the corresponding aspects of reality. Without that possibility, even the entire historical cultural aspect, which is nothing other than the aspect of *freely exercised formative mastery*, would be fundamentally inaccessible to scientific investigation.

h. The science of history

Both Neokantians and positivistic historicists have asserted that cultural phenomena can be studied by science only as “facts,” and never from a *normative* point of view. This view is very prevalent in modern science, and it is entirely dominated by the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom.

In contrast to this, I believe that the analysis of the modal structure of the historical aspect of reality, which is contained in my *New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, has demonstrated two things: first, that even historical science cannot exist without normative cultural standards that underlie its research, whether or not the historian is conscious of this; second, that cultural development itself can never be grasped in its actual historical character if its normative nature is left out of account.

i. The cultural context of science and its sphere-sovereignty

Science itself, even the natural sciences, always remains *culturally conditioned*. The important point, however, is that it retains its own typical, unique nature. This unique nature cannot be reduced to the modal nature of the cultural aspect, and it guarantees the sphere-sovereignty of science, both in relation to the typical cultural community of the nation or of the whole Western world, and in relation to the institutional church. For sphere-sovereignty, which is grounded in the temporal divine world-order, always implies two things: first, that science (or any other sphere) is *not self-sufficient* and that it is linked on every side, both internally and externally, to all the other spheres of life and to the religious root of reality; second, that it has its *own laws* and fully retains its *own intrinsic nature*, so that any encroachment of one sphere on the internal workings of another is fundamentally ruled out.

All this must be kept in mind when we form a judgment about the so-called dogmatic commitment of the normative sciences. Scientific freedom is never violated when science is bound to a normative field of inquiry.

The juridical genetic form of law, for example, offers the jurist no guarantee that everything dressed in this form will indeed possess the material character of positive law. In its scientific critique, science remains entirely free to search out, in an independent manner, the material criterion for truly binding positive law from the divine structural principles for law and for human society. This is even its imperative duty. The formalistic notion that a sufficient criterion can be found in the law's temporal *genetic form* is intrinsically *unscientific*, and it collapses irrevocably under von Kirchmann's indictment. For if the intrinsically legal character of a statute indeed depended purely on the will of the legislator, the scientific study of positive law would have no criterion for truth; and without a truth criterion science cannot exist. Those who hold this view should be consistent and accept the view of the classic humanistic science ideal that there is no other science than natural science.

One should not wrongly conclude from the foregoing, however, that it is then really *science* that establishes positive law in its binding form. The material competence of science is limited to the *free investigation* of binding positive law, and this implies that positive law is not formed by it, but merely *given* to it in its field of study.

The same consideration applies to the relation between dogmatic theology and Christian doctrine as set down in positive form in the confessions of the church. Theology may never be denied its right to subject the confession to the test of its foundation, Scripture, in free scientific inquiry. It must always be permitted to look behind the confession's formal source in the church and to search out the supra-arbitrary, *material* criterion for the doctrinal statements of Christian truth, the standard that determines whether, *by their very nature*, they indeed have binding authority for the church of Christ.

We have seen that dogmatic science of law cannot maintain its scientific character if it takes a naive formalistic view of positive law. In the same way, dogmatic theology cannot remain scientific if it takes a formalistic view of the confessional documents. Thus, in the final analysis, theology will undermine *itself* if it tries to hold reformational philosophy to such a formalistic view. For the theological critics of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea undoubtedly

would not want to use a double standard here and reserve for themselves a scientific freedom that they deny to others.

j. Scripture is not accessible to science without recognition of its character as divine Word-revelation

On the other hand, humanists have no right to deny the scientific character of dogmatic reformational theology on the ground that its practitioners, by faith, are materially bound to Scripture as the positive, creaturely form of the divine Word-revelation. They assume that a truly scientific study of Scripture is possible only if it is regarded as a purely historical and literary document.

Such a view of the matter is intrinsically *unscientific*, however; for one of the primary requirements for scientific insight is recognition of the peculiar nature of one's field of inquiry. Scripture, in its creaturely temporal form, only allows itself to be approached as *divine Word-revelation*, regardless of the aspect from which one considers it scientifically. As such, it demands faith in its divine Origin. Anyone who attempts to approach Scripture on the basis of humanistic faith in the autonomy of human reason fundamentally distorts its nature and therefore can never gain access to it by means of science.

Scripture is God's Word-revelation in the creaturely form of written documents. These have been composed by human authors who, while inspired by the Holy Spirit, still completely retained their individual human character, their style of writing, and their cultural development. It would not be a revelation of God if it did not enter into this human, creaturely form, but instead remained pure and at rest in the perfect being of God.

This creaturely form of Scripture, however, also necessarily exposes it to misunderstanding and rejection on the part of apostate humanity. Just as, in its incarnation in Christ Jesus, the divine Word became a sign that would be spoken against (Luke 2:34), so from the start, when it entered the creaturely realm of humankind, the divine Word-revelation was subjected to the gainsaying of human hubris. This hubris becomes manifest both in the deification of the human form of Scriptural revelation and in the humanization of its divine character.

Scripture does not reveal its divine character through a miraculous sign from heaven, visible or audible to everyone. Indeed, even

such a sign would be spoken against. Only God's Spirit can reveal God to us in His Word, and not through visible signs, but through its silent work of regeneration in the human heart. Human hubris *wants* no true communion with God. That is why it rejects His Word. This human hubris must first be broken, and the human heart must first be made receptive, if the Word of God is to make its home there. Only then, moreover, is the soil prepared for scientific inquiry that bases itself on God's Word and is transformed by that Word at its root. But in every dimension of this inquiry, the Word of God demands that its ground-motive be accepted completely.

It is a universally valid scientific requirement that one must always be prepared to abandon one's theoretical views, however dearly one holds them, if closer examination reveals that they find no support in one's field of study or are even contradicted by fundamental states of affairs that obtain there. Scientific dogmatism is always unscientific. This is equally true even for systematic theology to the extent that it holds fast to the scholastic philosophical tradition. Theology openly displays such an unscientific dogmatism when it tries to find support for unscriptural philosophical concepts in the terminology of certain foreign confessional documents such as the Westminster Confession or the Second Helvetic Confession [such as "rational and immortal soul" – see p. 346 below]. In this case the threat to the purity of the Reformed confession comes from theology, not from the direction of a philosophy that wishes to take the ground-motive of Scripture seriously, even in the domain of science, by undertaking an inner reformation of philosophic thought.

On the other hand, scholars of humanistic persuasion must never think that the scientific requirement mentioned above ever could entail an abandoning of faith in the absolute Truth of the divine Word-revelation. For this faith is a necessary presupposition of Christian scholarship as such; and in the scientific examination of Scripture it is demanded by the nature of what is investigated.

The guidance of Christian faith provides the most eminent guarantee of the scientific character of scientific inquiry, provided one always remembers that divine revelation and church confession are not themselves scientific in nature, but have to be interpreted in accordance with their own character. When Christian faith does not guide science, then, because of the lack of science's

self-sufficient structure, another faith will take over; and by the standard of God's Word such a faith must be labeled as "unbelief," which in this context means a *false faith*. The control of such a false faith becomes evident when scientific authority is ascribed to religious presuppositions, an act that is tantamount to a fundamental violation of the sphere-sovereignty of science.

3. The point of contact between philosophy and the Christian religion. The standpoint of accommodation – a philosophy based on theological scholasticism

Why have systematic theologians offered so many misconceptions regarding the idea of a Christian philosophy? In the final analysis, these can all be traced back to their lack of insight into the internal point of contact between philosophy and the Christian religion.

Theologians failed to understand that the religious ground-motive, in which philosophical thought is rooted, controls one's entire philosophic view of the *intrinsic structure* of temporal reality. Instead, they started by accepting philosophical conceptions of reality rooted in unscriptural, dualistic ground-motives; and they then sought, in a merely external *theological* fashion, to accommodate these conceptions to Christian doctrine. They therefore also did not see that the Scriptural ground-motive of the Christian religion has a central significance for the internal progress of philosophical inquiry, since it overturns the whole unscriptural view of the structure of temporal reality at its very root. They did not look for inner *reformation* but only for external *accommodation*; and in so doing they never found the way to a genuinely Christian philosophy.

a. *Why philosophy cannot be degraded to a handmaiden of theology*

The method of adapting non-Christian philosophy to the basic truths of the Christian religion caused great harm. Patristic writers and subsequently Augustinian and Protestant scholastics thought they could strip Greek philosophy of its pagan features by depriving it of all independence and turning it into a "handmaiden." Thus it was put to so-called *formal* use in systematic theology and theological ethics. This effort, however, proved to be fatal both for Christian theology and for philosophy.

Philosophy will not allow itself to be degraded to the role of a handmaiden of theological science. Its concepts and ideas are not purely formal in character. They have their own philosophical content and belong in a comprehensive theoretical view of temporal reality, a view that is always determined by a religious ground-motive.

***b. The unique nature of philosophic inquiry.
Philosophy and the special sciences***

As soon as one considers the unique character of philosophy, this must *immediately* become clear. The various special sciences such as mathematics, physics, biology, empirical psychology, history, linguistics, economics, and the science of law, investigate temporal reality only from the point of view of *particular aspects*. Examples of such aspects are those of *quantity, space, motion, organic life, feeling, historical development, symbolic meaning, and economic and jural qualities*.

In the activity of theoretical thought, these aspects are separated from the fullness of temporal reality, analyzed logically, and grasped in scientific concepts. In order to form such concepts, as we shall see later, a theoretical connection (synthesis) must be made in the human mind between the logical aspect of thought and the aspect that, as its field of inquiry, has come to our conscious attention. The research of the special sciences, however, pays no attention to the nature of this theoretical connection. Its aim is to achieve, through a purely matter-of-fact approach, systematic scientific insight into the relationships that present themselves within the non-logical aspect of reality under investigation.

Special science as such also offers no insight into the *relationships between the various aspects*. The physicist and chemist are only interested in phenomena that take place within the physico-chemical aspect of energy. The biologist is only interested in phenomena within the biotic aspect, and he only pays attention to physical and chemical phenomena insofar as they pertain to organic life. The historian only turns his mind to events within the historical aspect, the linguist only to linguistic phenomena within the aspect of symbolic meaning, and the jurist only to legal phenomena that appear within the jural aspect.

Further, the actual structure of the aspect under investigation is beyond the purview of special scientific inquiry. The special scientist is not interested in this structure but only in the phenomena that occur *within* the structure of the aspect under investigation. The problem concerning the mutual relationship between the logical aspect and the field of inquiry (and therefore the relation between the logical aspect and a non-logical aspect), is already contained in a genuine concept of the structure and nature of the field of inquiry as such. The latter concept must be borrowed from that particular discipline which aims at grasping the various aspects in a theoretical view of the totality. This discipline cannot be a special science; it is philosophy. It is only philosophy, moreover, that can give us theoretical insight into the typical structures of *individual totalities* such as things, concrete events, the temporal form of human existence, and the forms of society. All these, too, lie beyond the scope of the special sciences, and as *typical total structures of individuality* they overarch, on principle, *all* the aspects of reality. Philosophy can only offer this insight, however, on the basis of a person's integral experience of reality, not on the basis of an *a priori* metaphysics.

Only later will I be able to examine this whole state of affairs in detail. For the moment, my sole concern is to gain a provisional understanding of the nature of philosophy as the *theoretical science of totality* and of its distinction from the special sciences, which only offer us knowledge of reality within the scope of particular aspects.

Now, the standpoint from which one grasps the structure of temporal reality in this comprehensive theoretical view is of necessity *religiously* determined. Later I will demonstrate this in a detailed examination of the structure of theoretical synthesis. In the introduction to Volume One of the present work, I have already shed light on the all-controlling influence that the religious ground-motives exert upon philosophical conceptions of reality.

In light of all this, how could it be possible to *adapt* to Christian doctrine a philosophic conception of reality that is entirely controlled by the dualistic form-matter motive (for example, the conception of reality offered in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, or the philosophical epistemology developed in his *Logic*)? Such an attempt at accommodation will in reality have consequences that are utterly

different from those intended. Although the philosophical conceptions mentioned above may purportedly be incorporated into theology for merely “formal use,” they will inevitably have a *material* influence on the theological understanding of Christian doctrine. Indeed, they will even end up playing a dangerous role in the theological exegesis of Scripture. I will present various examples of this in my critical examination of the scholastic concept of substance.

The road of accommodation thus leads to a dead end. The concern of truly Christian philosophy is not to accommodate “philosophy” to Christian doctrine, which in actual practice rather proves to be an accommodation of Scripture to unscriptural philosophy. On the contrary, its concern is the inner reformation of philosophic thought while preserving its unique, intrinsic nature.

The point of contact between philosophy and the Christian religion cannot be *external* in nature, as it was conceived in theological scholastic philosophy. Such a view conflicts with the intrinsic nature both of philosophy and of the Christian religion. Philosophy has a different task, a field of inquiry that differs from that of systematic theology. The Christian religion guarantees that we have an internal point of contact with philosophy, for it reaches to the *religious root* of the whole of temporal reality. Philosophy investigates this structure of reality. Christian philosophy therefore can mean one thing only: a radical transformation of philosophy’s root and starting point. Such a radical conversion, such an inner reformation, will fully preserve philosophy’s sphere-sovereignty in relation to both theological science and church doctrinal authority. In addition, philosophical thought will truly be reformed within because its philosophic view of the whole structure of created reality will be transformed.

*c. The implications of the reformation of philosophy
for the use of Scripture in science*

One necessary implication of the foregoing is that Bible texts can no longer be appealed to in intrinsically philosophic inquiry in order to sanction particular scientific views. On the other hand, however, in laying the *Christian foundations* of philosophy the Scriptures, and subordinated to it the confessions, will now indeed become the *only* sources. All philosophical problems must be probed down to their religious root, and at that point only the divine Word-revela-

tion can shed light, a light which illumines the whole philosophic view of the structure of reality but which, in the nature of the case, can never itself provide the solution to an intrinsically scientific problem.

This is, therefore, indeed a radical reversal of the standpoint of accommodation taken by Augustinian and Protestant scholasticism. There, after all, the use of Scripture to address intrinsically philosophical questions was an indispensable requirement for the "Christianization" of philosophy. This was necessary because, in adopting Greek or scholastic philosophy, the Augustinians and Protestants also implicitly adopted the *religious ground-motives* on which they were based. And the more alien the foundations of their philosophy were to the Christian religion, the more copious, on this standpoint of accommodation, became their appeals to Bible texts in order to sanction their philosophic views and concepts. "Profane wisdom," after all, had to be brought into agreement with Scripture; it had to be adapted for "theological use."

If the divine Word-revelation really is used to "solve" scientific problems, however, then it cannot be the *foundation* of science. The foundation must lie at a lower level than the building that will rest on it, and it must be of a different nature.

d. The Christian religion guarantees a point of contact with philosophy. The route to the Christian reformation of philosophy can only be discovered through a transcendental critique of philosophic thought

The Christian religion guarantees that we have an internal point of contact with philosophy, for it reaches to the *religious root* of the whole of temporal reality, whose structure forms the object of philosophic inquiry. From the mere perspective of this *transcendent* standpoint, however, we cannot yet find the route that will lead to an internal reformation of philosophy within its own sphere of competence. Only the demand, the task, has been posed.

As soon as the Christian religion is accepted again in its true, radical, and indeed *all-embracing* significance, it is no longer possible to withdraw even a single area of life from its dominion. This by itself implies an awesome program for Christian philosophy. Philosophy must either be Scriptural in its foundation – or it will not even exist for the Christian!

Now, however, we must find the road that will lead to the accomplishment of this program. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea has attempted to open the gate to this road through its transcendental critique of theoretical thought, a critique that, as we shall see, has radical significance not only for Christian philosophy, but for philosophy of every possible school and standpoint.

4. Reformational versus scholastic tendencies of accommodation in recent Calvinist thought. Reformed science, the Kantian critique of knowledge, and the *logos* theory

From the side of philosophy, the internal point of contact with religion can only be uncovered by way of a truly *critical* investigation into the inner structure and nature of philosophical thought. This structure and nature cannot be dependent on the subjective view that the various philosophical schools have of it. Rather, it contains the internal “law-for-life” of philosophy as such, making philosophy possible to begin with.

The history of philosophy displays a confusing array of schools and movements. Yet, they were all active philosophically. They moved within a universally valid structure of philosophical thought. This alone gave them the right to call themselves *philosophical* schools and movements.

a. The universal validity of the structure of philosophical thought and the premature conclusion drawn from it

The internal structure of philosophical thought, therefore, has to be the same for both Christian and non-Christian philosophy. If it were not, the philosophical character of one of the two would have to be denied. The philosophical character of a system, however, cannot be dependent on the question of whether it rests on a Christian or a non-Christian foundation. A philosophy that is false in its starting point still remains *philosophy*. It retains its philosophical nature, just as unlawful behavior does not lose its jural character just because it violates the legal order.

There is, undeniably, a *universally valid structure* for philosophical thought, which as such is independent of the subjective religious attitude of the thinker. From this fact, however, dogmatic philosophy prematurely concluded that there can be no fundamental contradistinction between Christian and non-Christian

philosophy. In the previous period the absolute autonomy of philosophical thought vis-à-vis faith was posited as an *axiom*, and this axiom was turned into a criterion for judging one's right to call himself a "philosopher." The mere *idea* of a Christian philosophy was dismissed as "unphilosophical" and "unscientific."

This fashionable standpoint, however, was not at all "critical" in the sense, used with such abandon since Immanuel Kant, that was given to this word in order to make a contrast with "dogmatic" or prejudiced standpoints. On the contrary, it was itself "dogmatic" in the true sense of the word. An emphatic appeal was indeed made to the universal validity of the structure of scientific thought, which as such is the same for both Christian and non-Christian; but people thought that their standpoint relieved them of the task of undertaking a truly critical investigation of that structure, a task whose results would establish whether the thesis of the internal self-sufficiency of thought can be maintained as a purely scientific axiom. Instead, they contented themselves with the axiomatic edict: "that is how it is!"

As we have seen, Abraham Kuyper rendered a lasting service toward the foundation of a reformational philosophy by being the first to subject this dogma of mainline philosophy to a fundamental critique. In the face of the thesis, virtually undisputed in his day, that "theoretical reason" is absolutely autonomous over against faith, he asserted that science is necessarily dependent on religious presuppositions. His doctrine, discussed earlier, of the radical antithesis was found particularly offensive. This antithesis arises from the religious root of our existence and makes itself felt in every area of life in the battle for or against Christ; and it even brings about such a division within the domain of science.

b. The connection in Kuyper's Stone Lectures between his antithetical standpoint in science and his Scriptural view of the religious root of human nature

Kuyper's doctrine of the antithesis was intimately related to the great Scriptural insight with which he attacked scholastic anthropology, with its notions of body and soul, at its very foundations. Later I will devote an extensive discussion to this theory of body and soul. As far as I know Kuyper was the first to fathom, in its full depth and riches, the teaching of Scripture concerning the heart as

the religious center of human nature, and to lift this teaching from the overgrowth of Greek philosophy. Even so, in his scientific theological works he continued to use the scholastic constructs of body and soul.

In the year 1898, at Princeton Seminary, Kuyper delivered his famous *Stone Lectures on Calvinism*. There he set forth how Calvinism indeed holds within itself its own worldview. In the very first lecture he asserts, in the most general way possible, that such a worldview must find its starting point in a particular view of humankind's relation to *God*. Then comes the following important passage:

If such an action is to put its stamp upon our *entire* life, it must start from that point in our consciousness in which our life is still undivided and lies *comprehended* in its unity, – not in the spreading vines but in the root from which the vines spring. This point, of course, lies in the contrast between all that is *finite* in our human life and the *infinite* that lies beyond it. Here alone we find the common source from which the different streams of our human life spring and separate themselves. Personally it is our *repeated* experience that in the depths of our hearts, at the point where we disclose ourselves to the Eternal One, all the rays of our life converge as in one *focal point*, and there alone regain that harmony which they so often and so painfully lose in life.¹

This passage, which seems to have been forgotten today even by some Reformed Christians, is so important that it deserves to be learned by heart. And when Kuyper develops further the religious starting point of Calvinism, he writes:

But just as the entire creation reaches its culminating point in man, so also praise finds its fulfillment only in man who is made in the image of God, and this is not because man seeks it, but because God Himself implanted the only genuine religious expression exclusively in the human heart through the “seed of religion” (*semen religionis*). . . . God Himself *makes* man religious through the *sensus divinitatis*, i.e., the sense of the Divine, which He causes to play on the strings of his heart.²

Here, beyond all possible doubt, Kuyper was speaking of the heart of the human person in its Scriptural sense as the *religious root* of

1 Abraham Kuyper, *Het Calvinisme; zes Stone-lezingen* (Amsterdam, 1899), p. 11. [Cf. idem, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), p. 20.]

2 *Het Calvinisme*, p. 39 [cf. *Lectures on Calvinism*, pp. 45-46].

human existence in its entirety. He expressed this in popular fashion elsewhere as follows: “the heart is not to be taken as the seat of emotion, but as the place in you where God works and from which He works also upon your head and your mind.”¹ Only on the basis of this Scriptural conception of the religious center of human nature does it become clear how Kuyper could have dared to ascribe to *palingenesis* or regeneration a radical significance also for science.

By themselves, Kuyper’s basic observations only concerned the religious foundations that the Christian religion demands for scientific thought. He did not yet tread the path of an *immanent* critique of the traditional dogma regarding the absolute independence of scientific thought from faith.

c. The role of faith (pistis) in Kuyper’s theory of science

Nevertheless, in the theory of science developed in his *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, Kuyper did make a start toward such an immanent critique. There already, following Augustine,² he referred to the necessary function of *pistis* (the function of faith) in all scientific endeavor, and he emphatically argued that God has *created* this function of faith inherent in human nature.

This Scriptural notion was diametrically opposed to the scholastic notion of the rational soul, oriented to the ground-motive of nature and grace. There, faith was expressly called a “supra-natural gift of grace” to the intellect, which meant that it could not play a role in the “natural domain” of a theory of science and scholarship.

d. Why official philosophy took so little notice of Kuyper’s critical pistological expositions

Kuyper’s exploration of the role of *pistis* in the natural process of knowing was of fundamental importance. Yet, one cannot say that official philosophy took much notice of his views or felt *affected* by them in an epistemological sense. The cause of this lack of influence, as I see it, was that Kuyper’s theory of science, taken as a whole, remained stuck in the traditional definition of the problems and was not drawn up as a genuine critique of philosophical thought as such. For this reason, his expositions of the role of *pistis*

1 [A. Kuyper, *Honig uit de rotssteen*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1883), pp. 35 ff.]

2 Augustine taught that faith is the way to knowledge (*De trinitate* 15.2).

in the process of knowing, which were demonstrably related to his basic religious understanding of Calvinism, remained more or less suspended in midair, philosophically speaking. In addition, the real core of these expositions is not dealt with in his general theory of science itself, but only in his discussion of the correlation between faith and revelation in theology.

What Kuyper says in the second volume of his *Encyclopaedie*¹ about the *formal* function of faith in the knowing process can, with little trouble, be interpreted as an explication of the role of intuitive evidence in human knowledge. His view of this could easily be accepted by various defenders of the dogma of the absolute autonomy of theoretical thought with respect to faith. Kuyper there gives the following formal definition of *pistis*: it is “that function of our psyche by which it attains, without adducing any discursive proof, direct and immediate certainty.” This definition, however, does not cover the *actual, material* significance of faith in the process of knowing; and because Kuyper did not turn to the latter until he dealt with theology as a science, one could assume that this was of interest at most to systematic theology, but not to philosophy and the theory of science in general. People certainly were not prepared to accept theology, whose scientific character had seemed so dubious since Kant, as the norm for philosophy in this regard.

e. The critical basic question of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea and the dogmatic premise of Kant's critique of knowledge

The only way to deal a mortal blow to the prevalent view that theoretical thought is self-sufficient in the field of philosophy is through a *radical, transcendental* critique of philosophical thought itself. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea opens this critique with the following question: “How is philosophical thought possible as theoretical thought?”

Under the influence of the established dogma, this primary question for philosophy has continually been evaded; even modern exponents of existentialism and vitalism (*Lebensphilosophie*) have ignored it. The Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, did undertake a so-called transcendental critique of human knowledge; but he did not regard the possibility

1 [Cf. *Principles of Sacred Theology, Second Division, Chapter 2, section 46.*]

of this critique itself, in its theoretical philosophical character, as a real problem. Along with all modern humanistic philosophy before him, he rather clung to the dogma that the “theoretical reason” is absolutely self-sufficient in its own terrain and independent of faith. Kant’s critique of knowledge therefore had a *dogmatic* thrust from the very start. It began by accepting the theoretical attitude of thought as an unproblematic datum.

In my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* I have developed this transcendental critique of philosophical thought with increasing sharpness and precision. Before turning to this transcendental critique, however, I must first give a brief summary of Kant’s critique of knowledge.¹ This will be necessary partly in order to shed light on the radical difference between Kant and the Philosophy of the Law-Idea in the way the problem is posed, a difference that apparently has not been grasped well by some of my theological adversaries, and partly because it is precisely the *false basis* of Kant’s posing of the problem that has not been adequately understood by Reformed scholars. They have taken the traditional road of accommodation once again and merely given a new twist to Kant’s manner of posing and solving the problem of knowledge, one that seemed to harmonize with the Scriptural idea of creation. In order to accomplish this they have appealed to the traditional theory of the *logos*, one of the oldest heirlooms of the standpoint of accommodation. I will have to devote special attention to this *logos* theory later on.

Sufficient heed was not given, however, to the question of whether the very *manner* in which Kant’s critique posed the problem of theoretical knowledge can be accepted on the Christian standpoint. Nor was it asked whether the so-called critical method of Kant could rightly lay claim to the name *critical*.

f. A brief summary of Kant’s critique of knowledge

Kant drew up his critique of human knowledge with a particular purpose and design: namely, to determine the degree to which the subject of theoretical knowledge is able to arrive at universally valid, genuinely cognitive judgments that are not based on sense experience, and to find out how such cognitive judgments are pos-

1 A detailed critical analysis of Kant’s critique is found in my *WdW*, 2:425-73 [cf. *NC*, 2:491-541].

sible. He formulated this problem as follows: How and to what extent are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible? By synthetic judgments Kant meant judgments that really extend our knowledge; he contrasted them with purely analytic judgments, which merely dissect the knowledge we already possess.¹ He used the word *a priori* to indicate that these judgments, unlike so-called judgments of experience or *empirical* judgments, are not based on experience and sense impressions, but precede all sense experience as their *condition*.

Kant begins by asserting that such synthetic judgments are thought to be *a priori* in a person's possession in three areas: mathematics, mathematical natural science, and metaphysics, which deals with the *essences* of things, hidden behind the sense phenomena. Without any further examination of the structure of theoretical thought, he then posits axiomatically that there can be only two sources for human knowledge: *understanding* (the logical function of thought) and *sensibility* (the sensory function of experience). Then he separately investigates sensibility and understanding to determine to what extent they contain "*a priori* subjective forms," forms that can be regarded as the universally valid conditions of all knowledge. Because of their *a priori*, universally valid character he calls these conditions *transcendental*, a word that expresses two things: (1) they are immanent to the theoretical mind, not transcendent to it; (2) they nevertheless are the *a priori*, universally valid conditions that alone make knowledge possible.

For the "sensory source of knowledge" Kant thought he could establish two such *a priori* transcendental forms of *consciousness*, namely, *space* and *time*. According to him, all empirical sense impressions are necessarily given order by being subjected to the "forms of intuition" of space and time. These transcendental forms of sensibility, however, are not themselves *given* as empirical sense impressions. On the contrary, they are an *a priori*, *purely formal framework* of the sensory consciousness, a grid within which all empirical *sensations* are absorbed and *ordered*. If all empirical *sensations* were removed from our *understanding*, says Kant, the transcendental forms of intuition, space and time, would remain as the *a priori*

1 For a detailed demonstration that purely analytical judgments are not possible and that Kant's entire distinction is therefore unacceptable, see previous note.

frame of sensory consciousness, which alone makes sense experience possible.

Kant believed he could demonstrate the existence of *a priori* transcendental forms in the understanding, the “logical source of knowledge,” as well. He called these “cognitive forms” or “categories,” and, following the traditional division of logical judgments into four groups, he thought he could distinguish the four categories of *quantity, quality, relation, and modality*. According to Kant, the remarkable feature of these transcendental forms of thought is that they relate *a priori* to our sense experience. They correspond to *Gegenstände der Erfahrung*, “objects of experience,” or, what is the same thing for him, to “objective phenomena.” Because of this relationship, although the cognitive forms are transcendental and logical in nature, their significance is more than purely logical or analytical and they are actual synthetic categories of our knowledge. This simultaneously implies, however, that their knowledge value is limited in principle to possible experience of sense phenomena. They can never, as theoretical metaphysics maintained, provide knowledge about the “essences” of things, concealed *behind* the sense phenomena.

Kant says that *a priori* synthetic judgments are produced by an *a priori* combination or synthesis between the categories of thought and the sensory forms of intuition. That this synthesis is *a priori* means that it precedes all sense experience and alone makes it possible. Time as a sensory form of intuition makes possible the universal application of the thought categories to sense phenomena because, in the transcendental function of our imagination (the transcendental *Einbildungskraft*), we make an *a priori* image or schema of the thought categories in time.

Take, for example, the series of numbers with its arithmetic regularities that are not based on sense experience. This series originates, says Kant, through an *a priori* synthesis between the thought categories of quantity (i.e., unity, multiplicity, and totality) and time as a sensory form of intuition. According to Kant this combination or synthesis between thought-form and sensory form of intuition issues from the logical function of thought itself. It is *transcendental* and *logical* in nature. Thought thus contains, in Kant’s view, an ultimate logical point of unity to which we must credit ev-

ery synthetic act of knowing. He calls this point of unity the “transcendental unity of apperception” or the “transcendental-logical ego.” This transcendental subject of thought clearly has to be distinguished from the empirical, individual selfhood of the thinker. It bears a universally valid character and is merely the subjective correlate of the *Gegenstand* or object of knowledge.

The picture of human knowledge that Kant draws in his critique in the above manner therefore looks as follows. From the outside world as it exists in itself, that is, independently of our minds, we receive nothing but unordered and unconnected sense impressions or perceptions. This is all that is really *given* to us of things. These sense impressions, however, are nothing more than the unordered “material” of knowledge. The human consciousness itself then orders this material in terms of space and time, the *a priori* forms of intuition; and the logical function of thought *imposes law* on the material thus formed by means of its *a priori* synthetic judgments, which are gained through an *a priori* combination made between the forms of thought and the sensory forms of intuition. The synthesis between the thought-forms and the sensuous matter of experience, which is required by the empirical investigation of natural phenomena, is only made possible by the schematizing of the categories of thought in time. This explains how mathematical natural science can formulate causal laws for nature that have universal validity, even though its law of causality cannot be based on sense experience. Science itself imposes the law on nature, but this “nature” is only the *appearance* to our minds of a “reality in itself” that remains inaccessible to theoretical knowledge.

It is evident here that Kant reintroduced the Greek form-matter scheme. As we shall see, however, this was only a *mask* for the modern humanistic religious ground-motive of nature and freedom. Although the great thinker took no account of this ground-motive in his theoretical philosophical investigations, it exercised dogmatic control over his entire critique of knowledge.

Besides the sensory forms of intuition and the forms of the understanding, the human cognitive apparatus also has, according to Kant, a still “higher” faculty at its disposal, namely, real theoretical reason. When the forms of thought are applied to the infinite multiplicity of sensible natural phenomena that function in space and

time, the understanding enters an endless path of definition and further definition. This happens, for example, in the determination of the causes of a particular phenomenon. Within the realm of sense experience the *absolute totality* of the series of causes, which would enable us fully to determine that phenomenon, is never given. This concept of totality is absent in the categories of thought as well. The theoretical reason, however, has at its disposal *a priori ideas of totality*, and by an inner necessity it uses these to relate to a higher totality all the logical determinations that the understanding gives to the sense phenomena of nature. These “ideas” are merely regulative principles, guidelines that direct the use of the thought categories. They bring the understanding’s determinations of individual phenomena into systematic relationship, and they drive theoretical thought ever onward to search for new relationships between natural phenomena, never allowing it to rest in a fixed system. Kant therefore calls these ideas *transcendental limiting concepts*, since they carry theoretical thought concerning the phenomena of nature to a limit that it cannot pass beyond.

Kant calls this first group of ideas *cosmological ideas*. For, according to him, they all are tied to a basic idea of the “universe” as the absolute sum of all the determinations that scientific thought can give to the assumed totality of natural phenomena. Besides these, the theoretical reason also has two other groups of ideas, one of which pertains to the *soul*, as the absolute unity of the thinking subject and the absolute substratum of all purely subjective psychical phenomena, and the other of which pertains to a *Supreme Being* as an absolutely necessary being. For these latter two groups, says Kant, the same thing holds true that applied to the first. Nothing is given in experience that corresponds to them, and, unlike the categories of the understanding, they do not refer to sense experience. They therefore can give us no new knowledge, since for Kant all knowledge is tied to the condition of a synthesis between logical thought and the sensory function of experience.

Metaphysics, however, thought that it could relate these theoretical ideas to reality as it exists *in itself* and in that way acquire real knowledge of *das Ding an sich* (“the thing in itself”). It was divided into three metaphysical “sciences”: the metaphysics of nature or rationalistic cosmology; the metaphysical theory of the soul

or rationalistic psychology; and the metaphysical theory of God or natural theology.

According to Kant, none of these metaphysical theories can rightly lay claim to the name of science. They are no more than *Blendwerk der Vernunft* ("illusions of reason"), speculative thought constructs in a vacuum. In reality theoretical knowledge is restricted to the sense phenomena of nature, and a metaphysical science of "reality in itself" is impossible on principle. But if science is limited on principle to sensible natural phenomena, and if theoretical reason is fundamentally denied access to the "metaphysical essence of things," then neither can science ever be in a position to deny the existence either of God, of an immortal soul, or of a supra-sensible freedom of the human personality. That, too, would be false metaphysics.

g. Kant's chasm between theoretical and practical reason

Nevertheless, says Kant, the metaphysical impulse to rise above the sense phenomena of nature and to penetrate to an absolute "reality in itself" is deeply rooted in our reason, and we therefore cannot disenfranchise it. This impulse cannot be fulfilled, however, by the theoretical reason but only by the so-called *practical reason*, not by theoretical knowledge, but by a necessarily *a priori*, practical rational faith in a supra-sensible rational world. And the key to this world is the practical, normative idea of absolute autonomy, of the free, rational self-determination of the human personality. The true root of the human personality is the idea of the *absolute moral law*, the so-called categorical imperative. This law is not imposed on the personality from without by a divine will or a natural law. On the contrary, the personality gives it to itself. For the true selfhood of a person, his moral human dignity, his character of being an end in himself (*Selbstzweck*), is *identical* to that moral law.

In Kant's thought, however, there is an unbridgeable chasm between the empirical world of sensible natural phenomena and the supra-sensible (*noumenal*) world of normative freedom, between theoretical and practical reason, and between science and faith. He does ascribe to the practical reason, with its idea of freedom, *primacy* over the theoretical reason, but in his system there is no real bridge from the one to the other. In the domain of theory, therefore,

he maintains the absolute autonomy of thought over against (rational) faith.

This Kantian critique of human knowledge, which I obviously have only sketched very roughly here, created no small embarrassment for both humanistic and scholastic Roman Catholic philosophy. It can rightly be called a *critical turning point* in the history of humanistic philosophy, since here, in the dialectical development of the ground-motive that entirely controls this philosophy – namely, the ground-motive of nature and freedom, or of the ideal of science and the ideal of personality – the personality ideal of free, autonomous self-determination gained primacy for the first time. The ideal of science, with its demand for complete theoretical mastery over reality by means of the method of the natural sciences, thus was reduced to second rank.

h. Scholastic philosophy and the Kantian critique of knowledge. A new accommodation in the critical realism of Mercier's Neo-scholasticism

As we saw earlier, the scholastic philosophy of Roman Catholicism was guided by an entirely different religious ground-motive, that of nature and grace. It experienced Kant's critique of knowledge as an assault on its very foundations. Not only its entire metaphysical ontology with its form-matter scheme, but also its metaphysical psychology of the rational soul and its natural theology – all this the devastating critique of the philosopher from Königsberg seemed to have condemned as "speculations in a vacuum." The Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics thus seemed to hang in the balance, and along with it the systematic theology of Roman Catholicism and even the official doctrine of the church, which had found its *doctor angelicus* in Thomas Aquinas.¹

It is not hard to understand, therefore, why the Neo-scholastics devoted so much energy to a critical study of Kant. His frontal assault had to be averted at all cost!

1 The Thomist will deny this, of course, since he maintains that Thomism is based on purely 'natural' principles. In my opinion, however, the church took a more realistic view of the problem. For Thomism has undeniably had great influence on Catholic church doctrine. One need merely consider, for example, how the Council of Vienne (1313) sanctioned the Thomist conception of the *anima rationalis* as the form of the body.

From the outset, however, Thomist scholasticism had blocked its own road to a truly *radical* critique of Kantianism. For its own ground-motive of nature and grace had forced it to make an extremely dangerous concession to the Kantian standpoint – namely, the dogmatic acceptance of the autonomy of the natural reason over against faith – although it understood this autonomy differently than Kant had.

Is it any wonder, then, that Neo-scholasticism, in its initial perplexity, sought refuge in the well-tried method of accommodation? Cardinal Mercier, the well-known head of the Louvain school, pointed the way here. Since the pagan Aristotle had been adapted to the Roman Catholic standpoint, why could not this also be done with the humanist Kant? Kant's system had denied access for the subjective forms of thought to the metaphysical essences of things and had restricted all scientific knowledge to a purely phenomenal world; but this "critical idealism" merely had to be transformed into a "critical realism." This new realism, while enriching Thomist ontology and epistemology with a new, critical method of posing problems, would continue to adhere to Aristotle's and Thomas' realistic criterion of truth: namely, that truth consists in the similarity (*homoiosis*) between thought and being.¹

i. The Calvinist line of thinking initiated by Kuyper in opposition to the Kantian critique of knowledge.
The critical realism of Kuyper, Bavink, and Woltjer

Similarly, in the recent Calvinist movement of thought started by Kuyper, there was a strongly felt need to confront critically the epistemological problems posed by Kant. The Lohman conflict² had raised the question of how "Reformed Principles" could be fundamental for the practice of science, and in this context, the Senate of the Free University of Amsterdam formulated its well-known theses concerning the specific significance of these princi-

1 I should make clear here that other leading Neo-scholastics refused to accept Kant's definition of the problems. Special mention belongs to Jacques Maritain, who joined Blondel in arguing for the idea of a Christian philosophy on Catholic foundations, although within certain limits.

2 [Reference to the dismissal in 1896 of Free University law professor De Savornin Lohman, who insisted that Scripture alone, not a set of Reformed principles, should guide Christian scholarship.]

ples. It was pointed out that the new epistemological problems had to be examined more closely in terms of these Reformed principles, since these new problems were unknown to the 16th century, and thus also to Calvin.

Kuyper, Woltjer, and Bavinck already sought to meet this challenge, the first in his previously mentioned theory of science developed in the second volume of his *Encyclopaedie*.¹ The core of the challenge was to bring to expression, in the problem areas internal to philosophy, the basic religious conception of Calvinism that Kuyper had developed so masterfully. It was precisely here, however, that the scholastic and humanistic traditions proved too strong, and Kuyper was unable to wrestle free of the established ways of posing the problems. He did follow a genuinely reformational line of thought in his previously discussed theory of the fundamental role of *pistis* (“faith”) in the cognitive process; but his theory of science as a whole continued to take the road that Cardinal Mercier had pointed out to Neothomism in order to come to an understanding with the Kantian critique of knowledge. Thus there arose in this new Reformed school of thought a “critical realism,” which initially was welcomed by many Reformed scholars as the dawn of a Calvinist philosophy. Intrinsically, however, this critical realism was as alien to Reformed principles as was the old scholasticism of the days of Gisbertus Voetius.

In his theory of science Kuyper starts out from the customary distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge. He takes this subject to be the “general consciousness of humanity,” conceived as a supra-individual, communal mind in which the individual mind of the researcher participates. The object of our knowledge, then, is the entire cosmos. According to Kuyper, for knowledge to be possible there must be an “organic connection” between subject and object.

Kuyper’s theory of science is also based, however, on the old scholastic view of the soul as *anima rationalis*, the very notion that he had attacked so fundamentally in his conception of the religious root of human existence. This soul has two faculties: that of *knowledge*, which is used in perception and logical thought, and that of the *will* or *rational desire*. He regarded this soul as a subsistence sub-

1 [Cf. *Principles of Sacred Theology*, pp. 59-227.]

stance, something that can exist apart from the material body. Since he also held to the traditional view that knowledge can reach us only through two functions of our consciousness, namely, logical thought and receptive perception, he too was necessarily confronted with the problem of how the object of knowledge can enter into a subjective mind that is opposed to it.

Kuyper's solution to this problem is well-known, and it is identical to that of Jan Woltjer.¹ Within the object of knowledge he makes a distinction between *elements* or simple components and the *relations* between these elements, which in their ideal unity first bring the object into being as a composite whole. The elements then enter our consciousness through receptive perception or affectivity, and they are non-logical in nature. In the experience of material things they have a purely *sensible* character; and in spiritual experience their character is purely *spiritual*. The relations, on the other hand, in their conformity to law, have a *logical* character. Indeed, they are objectively logical, because they are comprehended in the *ideas* that the divine *Logos* has placed in all that is created. As logical relations they can only be grasped by logical thought, but they are not inserted *a priori* into empirical reality by this thought itself. On the contrary, they owe their origin to the divine *Logos*.

This theory was nothing more than an adaptation of the "critical" viewpoint of modern humanistic epistemology to traditional scholastic psychology and ontology. It has not the slightest internal connection with Kuyper's basic religious conception of Calvinism.

j. The origin of the distinction between elements and relations in the object of knowledge

The distinction between elements and relations originated in the modern, psychologically oriented epistemology of the English philosopher John Locke, a theory that was worked out in a skeptical direction during the eighteenth century by the Scottish thinker David Hume. Hume denied all objective character to the so-called "natural relations," that is, relations which connect *successive* psychic impressions (Kuyper's "elements"). One example of such a

1 See Woltjer's rectorial address, *Ideëel en Reëel* (Amsterdam, 1896).

natural relation is the relation of cause and effect. According to Hume, all such relations can be traced back to the operation of psychic laws of association in the perception of the simple sense elements in the object of knowledge. This led to the skeptical result that all of mathematical natural science is purely subjective in character and lacks any objective foundation in reality.

It was at this point that Kant intervened in the epistemological debate. In the face of Hume's attack against the objectivity and universal validity of mathematics and mathematical natural science, Kant wanted to maintain the humanistic science ideal at least for the whole of *experiential* reality, which, as we have seen, for him was limited to the sense phenomena of nature. He began from Locke's and Hume's notion that in our experience of the "outside world" we only receive unconnected sense impressions as elements or moments of the object, as Kuyper called them. For Kant, however, these impressions (*Empfindungen*) are given order in the transcendental forms of intuition and thought that lie at the foundation of experience. Only through this formative action of the transcendental mind upon the sense matter of experience does the world of things, accessible to our experience, become constituted as a *Gegenstand*.

In Kant's view, all *determinacy* in the object (*Gegenstand*) of knowledge is transcendental and logical in character. The lawful relations between the sense elements of experience therefore cannot, as Hume taught, be explained on the basis of psychical association. Their origin is rather subjective, logical, and transcendental. They are not given with the things themselves, but are put there *a priori* by the logical function of our mind. Autonomous thought thus indeed has become the *formal lawgiver* of nature, thereby revealing its own freedom and spontaneity.

Kuyper and Woltjer merely gave to this subjective, critical idealistic train of thought an *objective*, so-called idea-realistic¹ twist. Observing how Kant sought the origin of the lawful relations within the objects of knowledge in the spontaneous activity of the logical

1 [The Dutch reads "ideeën-realistische."]

function of thought, they knew very well that this idea was in flagrant conflict with the Scriptural doctrine of creation.

k. The theory of the Logos in the critical realism of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer

In order to escape Kantian subjectivism, Kuyper, Woltjer, and Bavinck¹ took recourse to the metaphysical theory of the *Logos* rather than placing the epistemological problem on a different foundation by taking the fundamental bearings for their philosophical inquiry from the religious ground-motive of the Reformation.

The Apologists Justin Martyr and Tatian and the Alexandrian church fathers Clement and Origen had already borrowed this *logos* theory from Jewish-Hellenistic philosophy, and they adapted it to some extent to the majestic opening words of the Gospel of John. It was, however, only after the Council of Nicea (325 AD), which formulated the dogma of the *homoousion* or oneness of nature of the Father and Son in the Godhead, and the Council of Constantinople (381 AD), which extended this to the Holy Spirit, that the *logos* theory was shaped in a form externally compatible with trinitarian doctrine. It also was strongly influenced by Stoic and Neoplatonic theories of the *logos*.

The theory of the *logos* thus was indeed one of the oldest heirlooms from the standpoint of accommodation in Christian philosophical thought. Its roots went so deep that even the great pioneers of the acceptance of Aristotelianism in the Middle Ages, Albertus Magnus and his pupil Thomas Aquinas, saw no way to eliminate it from their systems, even though it did not fit with the views of the mature Aristotle. The authority of Augustine and of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (end of the 5th century), in particular, had given it this great influence, and Christian theology

1 See, for example, H. Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* (Kok, Kampen: 1913), pp. 55ff.: "Thus guided, Christian philosophy could also in an altered sense adopt the Platonic-Aristotelian theory of the ideas or forms . . . These forms, however, must not be understood in the Kantian sense of categories that we inject into the matter of perception through our mental activity . . . They must rather be regarded as objective ideas that give order and coherence to a multiplicity of parts . . . Just as a sculptor puts his idea into marble, so God realizes His Word in the world . . ."

seemed unable to do without it. It therefore is no surprise that it continued to play such a large role, even in the philosophical thought of Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer.

If we are to take Kuyper's idea of an intrinsically reformational philosophy seriously, however, then it will not do simply to use the tradition of centuries as a yardstick for the Reformed character of his philosophical and theological conception. Just as this intrinsically Christian character cannot be guaranteed by the centuries-long tradition of the metaphysical theory of the *anima rationalis* ("rational soul") and the material body, so also it cannot be guaranteed by the centuries-old philosophical and theological theory of the *logos*.

l. The origin of the logos theory

Let the theory be examined! Quite early, a tendency became manifest to emphasize to the utmost the transcendence of the deity above the principle of matter. Plutarch and Albinus had already done this in the so-called middle Platonic school, and so, under strong Platonic influence, did the Jewish Alexandrian philosopher Philo. Numenius of Apamea, who was in turn influenced by Philo and also by neo-Pythagorean philosophy, did the same. To maintain this transcendence, any *direct* action of the highest deity upon the cosmos, bound as it is to the matter principle, had to be denied; and intermediate beings were needed in order to ensure divine influence on the material world. This had already happened to some extent in Plato's *Timaeus*, where the demiurge, after "creating" the imperishable celestial deities and the immortal part of the human soul, leaves the formation of mortal beings, subject to the power of the matter principle, to these celestial deities (particularly the sun).

m. The logos theory of Philo

The Jewish thinker Philo (*ca.* 20 BC–*ca.* 50 AD), in attempting to strike a synthesis between Old Testament Jewish doctrine and Platonic and Stoic philosophy, devised a *logos* theory that became more or less the prototype for the later development of this theory in Christian theological and philosophical thought. Philo lived in Alexandria, where Hellenic culture and Greek philosophy blossomed a second time and underwent a synthesis with Eastern religions. He tried to gain a speculative, philosophical understanding of God's absolute transcendence, as this is taught in the Old Testament

(where it is inseparably connected, however, to His *immanence* in the creation), from within the framework of the Greek religious form-matter motive.

Thus he had to deny any direct contact between the deity and “impure matter.” Even the Platonic forms or ideas were still related to the matter principle, since the *being* of material things, the human person included, was based, according to Plato, on their participation (*methexis*) in the ideas. What is more, the world of ideas and its thinking correlate, the *nous* or the *logos*, still contain a *plurality*, whereas the deity has to be conceived as an absolute *unity*, elevated above all plurality. In Philo’s view, therefore, God is elevated even above reason and the ideas. He is the absolute unity (*το ἓν; to en*), utterly simple in nature and sufficient unto Himself, who is omnipresent in His divine power but not in His being.

For the creation of the world God employed incorporeal forces or ideas, since He Himself could not touch “impure matter.” Philo thus imagined the Platonic ideas as animate, active beings, a notion that Plato himself had already embraced in his dialogue *The Sophist* (359 BC), written during the period of crisis in his theory of ideas. These ideal forces supposedly surround God as ministering spirits, like the courtiers of a monarch. Among them two basic forces are predominant: the *creative* force and the *ruling* force. Philo called the first of these the divine goodness (*θεῖον ἀγαθόν*), again following Plato, since Plato had designated the idea of the Good (*ιδέα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*) as the final purpose and cause in the entire formation of the world. To these two main forces Philo added many others as the “law-givers.” He regarded them all not merely as divine attributes but as relatively independent spirits, which can appear to men and even have personal relationships with certain people, such as Abraham.

This entire active world of ideas is seated in the divine *Logos*, which, just like the human *logos*, operates in two inseparable ways: as *thinking reason* and as *word*. The *Logos* is the mediator between God and the creation, and God uses it to create the world. Philo’s acceptance of the Greek motive of form and matter forced him to abandon the Scriptural doctrine of creation. His *Logos* finds itself confronted with an eternal matter, and from this it forms creatures “in the image of the eternal ideas,” as Plato had taught. Philo believed that this theory of ideas was present already in Moses, who taught in the book of Genesis (1:27) that God created humankind in

His own image. According to Philo, what there is said of human-kind has to be applied to the whole visible world.¹

In his exposition of the *logos* and of the ideas in general, Philo vacillates between a purely attributive view, which regards them merely as attributes of the deity, and a substantial view in which they also function as independent beings. One can safely say, however, that the second view, in which the *logos* is hypostatized as a Person, predominates in his thought. For the most part, at least, Philo places the *logos* next to God the Father as a second divine Person, and it therefore cannot be reduced to a mere attribute or function of the first Person. When he speaks explicitly of the second Person he makes him clearly subordinate to the first, just as happened later in the Monarchian movement in Christian dogmatics. An incarnation of the *logos* was out of the question for him, however, merely because of his notion that matter is impure. For this same reason he could not identify his *logos* with the hoped-for Messiah.

n. The logos theory of Plotinus

Philo's *logos* theory exerted tremendous influence on the Apologists and on the church fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Besides this, the *logos* theory of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonic philosophy, became extremely important for Christian philosophical thought based on the accommodation standpoint. The reason was that Augustine derived his philosophical conception of the creation order from it.

Plotinus of Alexandria (*ca.* A.D. 205-270) was a student of Ammonius Saccas, a son of Christian parents who later reverted to pagan Greek religion and tried to achieve a philosophical synthesis between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy.² He developed a *logos* theory³ which arose from the same kind of speculative philo-

1 Philo, *De opificio mundi* 6.25.

2 The possibility of such a synthesis becomes evident if one studies their philosophies genetically, that is, in the way they came into being.

3 [Plotinus pursues the line of the step-wise descent from the One, in connection with the view that every emanation represents a weaker image of the preceding level of being. He then arrives at least once at the view that matter is the *last*

sophical reflections as that of Philo, but which nevertheless differed from the latter fundamentally.

Plotinus agreed with Philo in his notion that the deity is absolutely transcendent to the principle of matter. For him as well, the deity is totally exalted above the active *nous* or reason, since the latter always contains a *duality* between thought and the object of thought. God is not irrational but supra-rational, just as He has no formed being, but a supra- (supreme) being that is the origin of every form of being.

Aristotle's idea of God held that He is the absolute, actualized, perfect Reason, whose thinking has only itself as its object (the *noēsis noēseōs*, "thought thinking itself"). In Plotinus' view, however, this idea (νόησις τῆς νόησεως) still did not do justice to God's transcendence. Like Philo, he assumed that human thought concepts can only be applied to the deity in a negative sense; they can only indicate what God is *not*. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and their followers were to follow him in this, although in working out his theory of the analogy of being, which I will discuss later, Thomas still also granted a positive significance to the metaphysical determination of God's attributes.

For Plotinus, the only positive determinations of God's nature are His *unity* and His *goodness*. God is exalted above all being, thinking, and doing. All forms of being (ideas) spring from the fullness of His being, but God Himself is not confined within a particular form of being. Plotinus then attempted, unsuccessfully however, to derive even the principle of matter from the absolute divine unity as Origin. Thus he tried to surmount the polar dualism in the Greek religious ground-motive, an effort that Philo had not made. To accomplish this, Plotinus devised his *theory of radiation*.

Plotinus asked himself, how did multiplicity spring from the divine unity? This could not have happened through an act of creation or a decree willed by God, for God, according to Plotinus, is

form (ἔιδος τι ἔχον, Enn. V, 8.7.22-23). Plotinus nonetheless equally explicitly maintains that with matter the emanation process terminates into the absolute opposite of the good. For example, he states at once that matter in itself does not contain any principle of reason (ἄλογος παντελῶς Enn. VI, 3.7.8), and that it is the shadow of a principle, an effort in vain to become a principle (σκιὰ λόγου καὶ ἐκπτώσις λόγου Enn. VI, 3.7.8-9). (A similar ambiguity is found in Enn. IV, 8.6).]

exalted above all doing and all activity. He is absolutely unmoved and remains in eternal, silent rest. It also could not have happened through *emanation*, as pantheism maintains, since by emanation the divine being would be diminished. Only through “radiation” (*uitstraling*) could all things issue from God’s fullness of being, while He Himself remains eternally the same, just as the sun produces the brilliance that surrounds it without radiation itself losing any of its light. And this radiation takes place not through an act of God’s *will*, but through a *necessity of His being*.

The fullness of God’s being *must* radiate outward, merely because of His goodness. According to Plotinus this radiation occurs in three stages, each earlier stage calling into being the next one. That which originates from God diminishes in perfection of being in each of the three stages. Thus there are *degrees of reality*, determined by their greater or lesser distance from God and from the world of ideas. Plotinus maintains the dualism of the form-matter motive in his system by drawing, in Platonic fashion, a sharp distinction between the supra-sensible realm, which is entirely ruled by the form principle, and sensible reality, in which the form and matter principles are bound together.

The supra-sensible realm is altogether divine in character. Radiating from the divine One, which is the first and absolute hypostasis, are two lower divine hypostases. The first of these is the divine *mind* or *Logos*, which is “the greatest in perfection of being subsequent to the Supreme Perfection.” This *Logos* is the first reflection or mirror image of the divine unity. Its nature is to contemplate the divine unity. In the intellect or *logos* there is thus already a fundamental duality of subject and object, of the activity of thinking and that which is thought.

In the *Logos* are contained the divine ideas, the ideal ontic forms¹ of everything that is actualized in the sensory world. Plotinus conceived of these ideas as substances and as active mental forces, which secure the operation of the *logos* or *nous* upon the levels of reality below it. They are inseparably tied to the *logos*, since their be-

1 [The terms “form of being” and “ontic form” are equivalent in this work. They both translate the Dutch synonyms *wezensvorm/zijnsvorm*.]

ing is identical with their being *thought*; yet, they are not purely subjective divine thoughts as the middle Platonic school taught, but have a *real* existence. Furthermore, the ideas are not mere *universal* forms (*universalia*) – for instance, forms of *the* animal, *the* human being, *the* plant – but contain in themselves a fullness of *individuality*. Thus there is an idea of the individual man Socrates, of the man Plato, etc.¹ They also have in them a synthesis between form and matter, since how else could sensible things be images of them? (Enn. II, 4, 4). This “matter,” however, is ideal in nature.

The third hypostasis, finally, is the *soul*, which is the reflection of the divine intellect or *logos*. It is the direct fruit of the intellect, and it receives its form from the world of ideas emanating from the *logos* or *nous*. It hovers about the divine intellect as its inseparable reflection, its light, its image inseparably attached to it; on the upper level united with it, filled from it, enjoying it, participant in its nature, intellective with it, but on the lower level in contact with the realm beneath itself, or, rather, generating in turn an offspring which must lie beneath.²

The soul, therefore, is the lowest level in the divine, supra-sensible realm; and simultaneously it is the bridge to the sensible realm, which it in turn creates. Plotinus thus gives it an intermediary role, and he accordingly splits it into a higher, simple and rational part called the *nous*, and a lower part called the *phusis*, which is turned toward the sensible matter of the body. This lower part of the soul is divisible insofar as the material body cannot incorporate the psychical forces undivided. Nevertheless, the soul as a whole remains an indivisible substance.

There is a real multiplicity of substantial souls. The highest among them is the divine world-soul, which gives form to the entire sensible cosmos and pervades and animates it. The individual souls, however, are not parts of this world soul, but independent radiations from the mental ideas in the *logos*. All functions of the

1 As D. H. T. Vollenhoven has shown in his *Richtlijnen ter oriëntatie in de gangbare Wijsbegeerte* (1941), this view of the individuality of the ideas probably goes back to Eudemus, a student of Aristotle who was then still a follower of Plato.

2 *Enneads* V, 1. 7, trans. S. MacKenna (London, 1962), p. 376.

soul, including memory, sense perception, and even the vegetative function that forms the material body, are supra-sensible and rational in nature. They belong to the substance of the soul, are in fact identical with this substance, and are independent of and separable from the body.

The divine realm extends from the One through the soul. The world-soul contains the *logoi*, which correspond to the ideas of the *logos* and are the agents by which the intrinsically indeterminate matter is formed into the things of the sense world. Plotinus borrowed this latter notion from Stoic philosophy and its theory of the *logoi spermatikoi*, “germinal forms,” which supposedly exert a formative influence upon indeterminate matter from within the world soul. As we shall see later, however, he transformed this Stoic idea in a fundamental way.

Finally, matter itself is the product of the soul through radiation. The soul is a light that at the furthest limit of its radiation turns into its opposite, darkness (Enn. IV, 3.9), and this darkness is unformed matter. In this sense Plotinus calls matter the “depth” (*bathos*) or “abyss” of every sensible thing [*βάθος, μὴ ὄν, στερέσις*].

Whereas the *logos* is light, matter is darkness. It is non-being (*mē on*) and an absolute privation of ontic *form*. As the absence of form it is the principle of *evil*, but as receptivity for form it is simultaneously an intermediate state between good and evil.

One can plainly see that the polar dualism of the Greek theme of form and matter has reasserted itself in Plotinus’ whole view of reality. He merely camouflaged it by means of his theory of radiation, but it easily broke through this disguise in the polar opposition between light and darkness.

o. The logos speculation in Christian thought before the Council of Nicea (325).

Christian thought was devastated during its first few centuries by these *logos* speculations. At first, Philo’s idea of the *logos* was followed almost literally. Circa A.D. 150 it was the central idea of religious philosophical thought, and the Apologists simply identified it in its Jewish-Hellenistic form with the “Word” (*Logos*) of the Gospel of John. Thus they regarded the *Logos* as a being that was actu-

ally neither God nor cosmos, but was rather the bridge or mediator between spirit and matter.

According to Berkhof, the main features of the Apologists' theology¹ can be summarized as follows:

For the purpose of creation God called into existence a personal being, the *logos*, through whom He has made all things. The human person, though a participant in the *logos*, was misled by demons and thus ensnared in ignorance, polytheism, and immorality. In order to set humankind right again the *Logos* himself appeared in human form. Thus Christ unmasked the deception of the demons, proclaimed the true doctrine of God and the world and of the coming judgment, and showed the way to a God-pleasing manner of life. This manner of life is practiced in the church; and there are also 'seeds of the *Logos*' outside of it (especially in Plato), but there people remained trapped in error. The human being has a free will and can, with the help of Christ's teaching and example, free himself from the grip of the demons. In Christ, therefore, there has appeared a mere demigod, who is not a Redeemer in the Scriptural sense but only an example and teacher.²

Thus, the acceptance of the Jewish-Hellenistic *logos* theory initially led to a radical undermining of the ground-motive of the divine Word-revelation, that of creation, fall into sin, and redemption through Jesus Christ. Under the influence of the dualistic ground-motive of form and matter, the Christian religion was converted into a moral system with a Christian veneer.

Things did not improve in the theological-philosophical systems of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) and of the great Greek church father Origen (185-254), who only added philosophical

1 Tertullian (160-222), a lawyer in Carthage, elaborated on this theology at length in a materialistic, Stoic manner. In *Apologia* 21 he writes the following: "Apud vestros quoque sapientes λόγον, i.e., sermonem atque rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. Hunc enim Zeno determinat factitatorum, qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit; eundem et fatum vocari et deum et animam Jovis et necessitatem omnium rerum." ("It is abundantly plain that your philosophers, too, regard the *Logos* – that is, the Word and Reason – as the Creator of the universe. For Zeno lays it down that he is the creator, having made all things according to a determinate plan; that his name is Fate and God, and the soul of Jupiter, and the necessity of all things" [*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 3:34].)

2 Hendrikus Berkhof, *De Geschiedenis der Kerk* (Nijkerk, 1967), pp. 52 ff.

depth to the *logos* theory of the Apologists. According to Clement the world is animated by the *logos* as the vehicle of all rational-moral forces, who illuminated the souls from the beginning. The *Logos* instructed the Jews through Moses and the prophets, and among the Greeks he raised up wise men and offered philosophy as a teacher of righteousness.¹ Only in Jesus Christ, however, was this *Logos* fully revealed.

Clement's *Logos* is the archetype of the created world, the sum total of the ideas, the mediator between God and world (in the sense of Philo) and the rational law of the cosmos. Within the divine triad, the Holy Spirit occupies the third position after the Father and the *Logos*.

Clement then connected this *logos* doctrine with a ranking, borrowed from pseudo-Christian Gnosticism, between *pistis* (πίστις) and *gnōsis* (γνώσις). The faith of the simple was contrasted with the Christian knowledge of the Gnostic, which ranks much higher and is able to penetrate to the hidden meaning of the Word-revelation through allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Philosophy is indispensable for arriving at this *gnōsis*. *Pistis* too is a necessary condition for Christian *gnōsis*, but it is only through *gnōsis* that one can freely and fully surrender himself to God.

Only the works of the Christian Gnostic are perfectly good (καλῶς θώματα), because they correspond to the *Logos*, the divine reason. This ideal of the wise Christian person came dangerously close to that of the Stoic sage, for it was carried all the way to the demand of *apatheia*, of freeing oneself of all feelings and emotions. Clement in fact wrote a book called *Παιδαγωγός*, *The Pedagogue*, in which his exposition of the rules for Christian living often literally followed the discourses of the cynically inclined Stoic Musonius Rufus. An obvious connection became manifest here between the *logos* theory and the Greek religious idea of *theoria*, which I will discuss later. The Gnostic, who shares in the *Logos*, already on earth becomes a "God walking in the flesh."² He raises himself above the temporal world and, in the eternal *theoria* he beholds and grasps God – not just in isolated ecstatic moments, as Philo and later the Neoplatonists taught, but in lasting communion.

1 *Stromateis* I, 5; Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, p. 305.

2 *Stromateis* VII, 16; Stählin edition 3, 71: ἐν σαρκὶ περιπολῶν θεός.

Origen was the first to incorporate the Jewish-Hellenistic *logos* theory, in combination with Neoplatonic elements, in a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine, which in his hands was turned into a theological-philosophical system of grand dimensions. Like Clement, he regarded Christian doctrine merely as the perfection and completion of what the *logos* had already disclosed in Greek philosophy. Origen thus saw pagan wisdom as a preparation for Christianity, even though his judgment of it still remained rather reserved.

In complete conformity with the philosophical theology of both Philo and the later Neoplatonists, Origen taught that God, in the truest sense of the word, is the absolute *unity* (ἕνας and μονάς), exalted above both *nous* (the thinking mind) and *being* (ἐπεκείνα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας)¹. This God in the highest sense of the word is the Father, the origin and goal of all created things. The Son or *Logos* has been generated from eternity from God the Father as an emanation of the divine light. The Son does have a commonness of being (ὁμοούσια) with the Father, but this *homoousion* is merely relative in nature and implies nothing more than Plotinus' commonness of being between the divine unity and the *nous*.

Origen's *logos* is an archetype that proceeds from the Father, but it is of lesser divinity. It is a second God (δεύτερος θεός) of lower rank, who has the same relationship to the Father that the Christian has to him. In relation to the cosmos this *logos* is the original type, the image of the invisible God.² By him all things are created, and they are made in his image alone, not in the image of the Father. As the first-born of the Father the *Logos* is the principle of all rationality. Seen from the point of view of the creation he is God, but seen from God's point of view he is a creature.³ As the divine unity unfolds into a multiplicity, the *Logos* is the first member and the Holy Spirit is the second. This Spirit is even less divine than the *logos*, and it stands the closest to the created cosmos.

The Holy Spirit thus begins the series of lower spiritual beings, which along with their divine nature also have a free will of their

1 *Contra Celsum* VII, 38. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 626; "transcending intelligence and existence."

2 *Contra Celsum* VI, 64. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 603.

3 *Contra Celsum* III, 34. Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4, p. 478; "Intermediate between the nature of the uncreated and all created things."

own. Already at this point human souls, as spiritual beings, have the freedom to choose between good and evil. Those who have not chosen the good, God has cast away in punishment for their guilt and encased them in material bodies.

At the end of all things, however, all creatures will be brought back into unity with God (cf. *De principiis* III, 6, 1 ff.).¹ Then will come the destruction of sin, which for Origen, as for the later Neoplatonists, was merely a privation of being; but then also the material bodies will revert to non-being.²

Origen's *logos* theory, too, led to a radical undermining of the ground-motive of the Christian religion. The creation was understood in Neoplatonic fashion as an emanation of the divine light. The radical meaning of the fall into sin was denied. The *Logos*, in its manifestation in Christ Jesus, is not the Redeemer in the true sense but only a moral example. Finally, the Scriptural doctrine of the divine Trinity was undermined by the Hellenistic speculation about the Father as the absolute One.

p. The accommodation of the logos theory to the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and Creation after the Councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD)

At the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea and Constantinople, the Christian church formulated the doctrine of the divine Trinity as a complete oneness of nature (or being) between the three Persons of the Godhead. Following this, thinkers trod further down the road of accommodation between the *logos* theory and this trinitarian dogma, which earlier had been worked out in a Scriptural sense by Irenaeus and Athanasius.

Among the Greek church fathers schooled in Origen's theology, Gregory of Nyssa (335-ca. 395 AD) in particular elaborated on the *logos* theory at length in this new accommodated form. He combined the Jewish conception of the unity of the divine nature with the Neoplatonic conception of the deity's three hypostases, and he interpreted the ideas in the divine *Logos*, which he too understood as the second Person of the divine nature, as "thoughts of God." Eusebius of Caesarea, meanwhile, the famous church historian

1 *De principiis* is Origen's main systematic theological work.

2 [Origen believed in a future resurrection of a spiritual body, which resembles "the splendour of the celestial bodies" but, nevertheless, is a body, not mere spirit (*De principiis* II, 2, 2 (Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 4, p. 270) and 10, 1; (Vol. 4, p. 213) III, 6, 4 Vol. 4, p. 346).]

who was strongly influenced by Platonism, had taken a stand against the Neoplatonic theory of the emanation of the *logos* from the divine One, a notion that had been erroneously ascribed to Plato.

The theory of the *logos* first received its definitive, “orthodox” form in the thought of Aurelius Augustinus (354-430 AD), the grand master of the Latin church fathers. Under the influence of Marius Victorinus, who did not convert to Christianity until 355 AD in his old age, and who himself formulated an elaborate *logos* theory, Augustine made the philosophical-theological speculation of Plotinus, in particular, into an object of accommodation.

He began, however, by upholding the oneness of nature or being of the three Persons of the Godhead against Plotinus’ notion of three divine hypostases whose perfection of being is successively diminished, and by defending the Scriptural doctrine of the incarnation of the Word against the Gnostic theory that Christ’s earthly body was a mere semblance. This latter theory was inseparably tied to the religious dualism between mind or spirit and matter, which both the Gnostics and Origen carried to an extreme. Matter, in the sense of the Greek matter motive, thus was completely deprived of divinity.

Further, Augustine, whose understanding of the ground-motive of the Christian religion was basically pure, forcefully defended creation as an act of God’s sovereign will against the Plotinian theory of radiation. Despite this defense, however, someone like John Scotus Erigena (*ca.* 801-877 AD) clearly reverted to this theory in the ninth century under the influence of Origen. It carried him to dangerous pantheistic consequences, just as did his *logos* speculation, in which the *logos* functioned as the principle by which multiplicity was traced back to the divine unity.

On the other hand, Augustine did adopt the Plotinian theory of degrees of reality, although he restricted it to the created cosmos. He also adopted the Stoic theory of germinal forms (the *logos spermatikos*) in the material world, albeit in a semi-Plotinian accommodation to the Scriptural motive of creation. Most seriously, he adopted both the theory of the *logos* as the seat of the divine creative ideas and the whole theory of the objective actualization of these ideas in the material world. All these speculative philosophical doctrines were inseparably tied to the ground-motive of form

and matter, whose religious nature was intrinsically pagan. Nevertheless, this was realized neither by Augustine and the scholastics who followed him, nor by Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer, who followed Augustine in their *logos* theory.

We can grant that the accommodation of these pagan conceptions to the Scriptural doctrines of the Trinity and of creation changed their original meaning to a certain extent. It is equally true, however, that because of this process of accommodation the Christian ground-motive could no longer make itself felt in philosophical and theological thought in an unadulterated way.

q. The attitude of hellenistic philosophy toward Christianity and the Christian philosophy of accommodation

One must never forget that the *logos* theory of Greek philosophical theology was basically rooted in the rational principle of form, and that its highest standard for cosmic order was a *rational* standard. It is well known that Hellenistic philosophy, in taking its stand against the Christian religion, was repelled by this religion precisely because it dethroned the rational form principle. It could not tolerate Christianity's teaching that the cosmos has to be viewed from the perspective of an infinitely more profound principle, a principle that assigns even to *thought* a proper, limited place within the created order.

Greek philosophy intuitively perceived the depth of this radical antithesis between itself and the Christian religion. It did not grasp this new Christian principle, but rather regarded it, in contrast to its own rational principle of form, as a barbaric reversion to the darkness of the matter principle. The apostle Paul gave a trenchant description of its attitude when he wrote that the gospel is a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:23).

It was not without reason that Christian thinkers attempted to accommodate the Greek theories of the *logos* and the ideas and the Greek view of human nature to the divine Word-revelation. Their primary goal was to win the Greeks over to the Truth of the Christian religion and to counter the accusation that this religion was *irrational*. Their effort was flawed, however. When Greek philosophy was pressed into the service of Christian doctrine, the way to a deep understanding of the central significance of the Christian religion for philosophical thought was cut off. Plotinus rightly pointed

out to the “Christian” Gnostics that they had taken all their real philosophical goods from Greek philosophy, but that they had put this philosophy in barbaric disarray by combining it in a bizarre way with their presumed higher knowledge. They imagined that in doing this they stood far above Plato and the other giants of Greek thought, when in reality they stood far below them in philosophical depth.

This accusation, to be sure, could not be maintained against Christian thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Nevertheless, authentic Hellenistic philosophy realized intuitively that these great church fathers, for all their erudition and knowledge of Greek thought, were trying to use this thought for a goal to which it could not lend itself. The Hellenists perceived that the church fathers had no right to speak of a “*philosophia christiana*” so long as they did nothing more than adapt alien philosophical notions to Christian dogma. The judgment of Porphyry, a pupil of Plotinus, concerning Origen is revealing in this regard.¹

It was because of a false dilemma that the church fathers accepted the philosophical content of the Greek theory of the *logos*. As Augustine reasoned, following Gregory of Nyssa, if God, through the *Logos*, did not create the world in accordance with rational ideas, we then would have to conclude that He performed His work of creation in an “irrational” manner.² Augustine already knew from Plotinus’ theology, however, that the contrast between

1 Porphyry wrote the following about Origen (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* VI, 19): Ὁριγένης δὲ Ἕλληνα ἐν Ἕλλησιν παιδευθεὶς λόγοις, πρὸς τὸ βάρβαρον ἐξώκειλεν τόλμημα ὃ δὴ φέρων αὐτόν τε καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ἔξιν ἐκαπήλευσεν, κατὰ μὲν τὸν βίον Χριστιανῶς ζῶν καὶ παρανόμως, κατὰ δὲ τὰς περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξας ἐλληνίζων τε καὶ τὰ Ἑλλήνων τοῖς ὀθνεῖοις ὑποβαλλόμενος μύθοις. (8) συνῆν τε γὰρ αἰετῶ Πλάτωνι . . . (“But Origen, having been educated as a Greek in Greek literature, went over to the barbarian recklessness. And carrying over the learning, which he had obtained, he hawked it about, in his life conducting himself as a Christian and contrary to the laws, but in his opinions of material things and of the Deity being like a Greek, and mingling Grecian teachings with foreign fables. For he was continually studying Plato . . .”) (*History of the Church* V.19.7-8. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, Volume 1, pp. 265-266).

2 *Retractationes* I, 3, 2. Written close to his death this work contains Augustine's mature view; cf. vol. 60 in *Fathers of the Church* (CUA Press, 1999).

rational and irrational cannot be applied to the Origin of all things, since God's nature is above reason.

Plotinus did not carry this thought through in his *logos* theory, simply because for him the *logos* was not the divine unity itself, but only a product of the first divine radiation. Augustine, by contrast, professed the Scriptural doctrine that the three Persons of the Godhead share the same nature. How, then, could he have accepted a theory of *logos* and ideas that even Plotinus did not venture to apply to his divine One?

r. The basic conflict between the Greek logos theory and the Scriptural doctrine of creation

In Augustine's thought, the theory of the *logos* patently came into conflict with the Christian Scriptural ground-motive of creation, fall, and redemption. He maintained the *absolute sovereignty of God's creative will*, and the *logos* theory simply was not designed with this Scriptural doctrine of creation in view. To the contrary, it fit hand in glove with the rational form principle of the Platonic realistic theory of ideas.

Plato taught in his *Timaeus* that the demiurge forms the cosmos by looking to the eternal ideas, the uncreated ontic forms, which are the patterns and archetypes for transitory things that have form. These ideas were then applied by the demiurge to the eternal matter. Religiously regarded, this was merely an "idealistic" deepening of the cultural principle that had been deified by Greek culture religion. It viewed the formation of the world thus entirely on the analogy of human cultural activity. Now, culture can be defined as free formative mastery in accordance with a rational, purposive design. The one who gives form, however, needs material from nature that itself has no rational form. In this whole conception, reason remains the origin of the teleologically conceived world-order. Nothing here was changed in the least by accommodating the Greek form-matter motive to the Christian doctrine of creation, which derives even matter from God's creative will.

In contrast to this Greek view, the Scriptural doctrine of creation underscores the truth that thought is not the *origin* of the divine creation order, but is rather *subject* and subordinate to that order. Nowhere in Scripture do we find the predicate "divine" attached to logical, as opposed to pre-logical, matters. God's order for the cre-

ation is only disclosed to human thinking when man begins to bow in faith before God's majesty, submitting his thought to God's law instead of trying to logicize that law in accordance with Greek *logos* theory.

s. How the logos theory logicizes the creation order

The Reformed thinkers Kuyper, Woltjer, and Bavinck, contrary to their starting point, indeed *logicized* God's order for the creation. What brought them to this was the "ideal-realistic" twist that they gave to the Kantian critique of knowledge. Taking a stand against Kant's notion that all law-governed relations are subjective and transcendental-logical in origin and nature, they enlisted the services of the traditional scholastic theory of the *logos* in order to escape Kant's subjectivism. In so doing, however, they failed to attack Kant's critique *at its root*. They made no change in Kant's view that all law-governed relations without exception are *logical*. Instead, they located the origin of these relations not in the *human*, but in the *divine Logos*, the divine Reason with its unity of "logical thought" and "word" that had already been spoken of by Philo. Thus they viewed the relationships in knowing things not as *subjectively* logical, but as *objectively* logical; and they thought that this logical nature was what allowed them to be grasped by our logical thought. For these thinkers maintained that in the process of gaining theoretical knowledge, as Aristotle had taught, a union takes place between the subjective logical function of thought and the objective logical ontic forms of knowable things.

t. The basic conflict between Kuyper's logos theory and his theory of sphere-sovereignty

To some extent one can appreciate this attempt to evade Kantian subjectivistic epistemology by appealing to a rational divine plan of creation. Nevertheless, one cannot fail to notice that this entire logicistic view of the divine creation ordinances conflicts flagrantly with Kuyper's religious understanding of God's law, in which he put his finger on the very heart of the Reformed position. This religious understanding, which is worked out particularly in Kuyper's *Stone Lectures on Calvinism*, accepted Augustine's and Calvin's starting point in the absolute sovereignty of God's will as Creator. God stands *above* the laws He has imposed on His creation. Never-

theless, these laws are not a product of arbitrary despotism; for they are in complete harmony with God's holy nature.

It was precisely Kuyper, in fact, who took the first step toward making this religious understanding of the law fruitful for Christian philosophical thought. In the second Stone Lecture, which deals with "Calvinism and Religion," Kuyper's confession of God's sovereignty as Creator is immediately worked out in his theory of the distinct spheres of laws or ordinances.

Everything that has been created [he writes] was, in its creation, furnished by God with an unchangeable law of its existence. And because God has fully ordained such laws and ordinances for *all* life, therefore the Calvinist demands that *all* life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience. A religion confined to the closet, the cell, or the church, therefore, Calvin abhors.¹

These words of Kuyper completely rule out the metaphysical theory of the *logos*. They express an understanding of God's law for His creation that is purely religious and Scriptural. Note how Kuyper developed this thought further:

What now does the Calvinist mean by his faith in the *ordinances of God*? Nothing less than the conviction firmly rooted in man's heart² that *all* life has first been in the thoughts of God, before it came to be realized in Creation. Hence all created life necessarily bears in itself a law for its existence, instituted by God Himself. There is no life outside us in Nature, without such divine ordinances, – ordinances which are called the laws of Nature – a term which we are willing to accept, provided we understand thereby, not laws originating *from* Nature, but laws imposed *upon* Nature. So, there are ordinances of God for the firmament above, and ordinances for the earth below, by means of which this world is maintained, and, as the Psalmist says, *These ordinances are the servants of God*. Consequently there are ordinances of God for our bodies, for the blood that courses through our arteries and veins, and for our lungs as the organs of respiration. Similarly there are ordinances of God for logic, to regulate our thoughts; ordinances of God for our imagination, in the domain of aesthetics; and thus also, strict

1 *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 53.

2 [Dooyeweerd, quoting the Dutch edition of Kuyper's Stone Lectures, inserts: *nota bene*, not in his "reason."]

ordinances of God for the whole of human life in the *domain of morals*.¹

No doubt, this is not yet a truly philosophical and scientific conception of the law-spheres that govern temporal reality. Nevertheless, in its popular form, it is a religiously rooted *guideline* for philosophical inquiry that contains a great, profound thought: the unity of the divine law lies *above logic, in the central religious relation to God's sovereignty as Creator*. Within temporal reality this central religious unity of the law is refracted into a great multiformity of law-spheres, each of which retains its own nature and within which the logical sphere is merely one among many. There is no warrant, therefore, for reducing the other spheres of ordinances to the logical sphere.

Kuyper himself elaborated on this latter thought with great acuity in his Stone Lecture on "Calvinism and Art," where we find the following remarkable passage:

Intellectual art is no art, and the effort put forth by Hegel to draw art out from thoughts, militated against the very nature of art. Our intellectual, ethical, religious² and aesthetic life each commands a sphere of its own. These spheres run parallel and do not allow the derivation of one from the other. It is the central emotion, the central impulse, and the central animation, *in the mystical root of our being*, which seeks to reveal itself in the outer world in these four branches. . . . If, however, it be asked how there can arise a *unity of conception* embracing these four domains, it constantly appears that in the finite this unity is found only at that point where it springs from the fountain of the Infinite. There is no unity in your thinking save by a well-ordered philosophical system, and there is no system of philosophy which does not ascend to the issues of the Infinite. In the same way there is no unity in your moral existence save by the union of your inner existence with the *moral world-order*, and there is no moral world-order conceivable but for the impression of an Infinite power that has ordained order in this moral world. Thus also no unity in the revelation of art is conceivable, except by the art-inspiration of an Eternal Beautiful, which flows to us from the fountain of the Infinite and elevates us to the Infinite.³

1 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

2 Kuyper evidently was speaking of our faith life here.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 150-51 (my italics, HD).

What is most striking in this quotation from Kuyper is his profound emphasis on the religious unity of God's law, both in its Origin and in its central fullness of meaning. Kuyper's understanding of the law here corresponds perfectly to his Scriptural conception of the heart as the religious concentration point of all the temporal functions of human existence. And from this follows, as a matter of course, the idea of *sphere-sovereignty*, that is, the notion that the law-spheres that Kuyper expressly mentions are mutually *irreducible by their very nature*.

The metaphysical *logos* theory, which ultimately reduces all laws to logical relations that originate in the divine *Logos*, thus has been cut off at its religious root. There also is no room in Kuyper's view for the theory that there are greater or lesser degrees of reality, depending on proximity to or distance from the ideas. Woltjer, in particular, had elaborated on this Neoplatonic twist in the *logos* theory at length in his *Ideëel en Reëel*.¹ Kuyper's understanding of the law, however, which he unfolded in his *Stone Lectures* as a direct fruit of the basic Scriptural, religious position of Calvinism, was diametrically opposed to any such theory.

What Kuyper implicitly discovered here is the true point of contact between religion and philosophy, and in this he performed a lasting service for Reformed philosophy. For there can be no doubt that the view of the law that I have set forth briefly above by itself entails a *radical transformation* of philosophy's whole outlook upon the structure of reality.

It is true that Kuyper did not carry this view through consistently in his scientific works. Alongside this purely Scriptural line of thought, he also adhered to traditional scholastic thought patterns. This, however, in no way proves that both viewpoints have an equal right to exist in an intrinsically Reformed philosophy. It only shows that Kuyper lacked the opportunity to carry through his basic Reformed conception in the internal course of scientific inquiry. Kuyper himself, in fact, described this on many occasions as a great shortcoming that held forth a huge task for the next generation.

1 On this, see my essay "Kuyper's Wetenschapsleer" ("Kuyper's Theory of Science") in *Phil. Ref.* 4 (1939): 193-232, at 213 ff. [This article recently appeared in John Kok and Steve Bishop, eds., *On Kuyper: A Collection of Readings on the Life, Work and Legacy of Abraham Kuyper* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 2013), pp. 153-78.

5. The two diverging lines in Kuyper's thought

In the foregoing I have gradually laid bare two diverging lines that run through Kuyper's thought. Since his appearance, these two distinct lines have confronted the development of Reformed science with a true dilemma.

a. The reformational line in Kuyper's thought

The first of these two lines is the purely reformational line. It starts from the living spring of God's revealed Word, and it takes its bearings exclusively from the religious ground-motive of Scripture, the motive of creation, fall into sin, and redemption through Christ Jesus. It is *prescientific*, or rather, *supra-theoretical* in character, which means that it is concerned solely with the *presuppositions* of a genuinely reformational philosophy and does not draw out the implications of these presuppositions within the realm of actual scientific inquiry. The great value of this fundamental Scriptural line, however, is that *it implicitly contains the points of contact needed for a genuine reformation of philosophical thought*. It confronts this thought with a real dilemma, a necessary choice between positions, which it cannot avoid; for it poses a radical antithesis that reaches to the root and starting point of this thought. Moreover, it makes the initial connection between this religious antithesis and the comprehensive view of the structure of temporal reality, which forms philosophy's field of inquiry.

In his *Stone Lectures*, in his address *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring*, and in other non-theological writings, Kuyper unfolded the presuppositions that I have in mind, along with the points of contact that they offer to philosophy, in a surprisingly coherent way. I list them briefly:

1. The confession of God's absolute sovereignty as Creator, as this is revealed in Scripture.
2. The acceptance, in faith, of what God's Word has revealed concerning the religious root, the heart or the soul of the whole of temporal existence.
3. The confession, related to point 2, of the radical significance of the fall into sin and of Christ's work of redemption, which immediately implies that there is a radical antithesis in every sphere of life, even in the sphere of science.

4. Again in connection with the above, the need for a fundamental break with the traditional scholastic conception of a person's "rational" nature. For the center of this "nature" can lie only in the heart, from which spring the issues of life; the function of faith (the *pistis*) is inherent in this nature and thus cannot lie outside the "natural realm."

All these presuppositions contain, in the first place, the point of contact for a genuine reformation of philosophical anthropology. Kuyper went further than that, however. In direct connection with the above presuppositions he unfolded his view of the law; and contained in this view is his notion that there is a central religious unity at the heart of the divine laws for the creation and their rich multiformity in the structures of temporal reality. The temporal law-spheres cannot be reduced to each other. Each has its own irreducible nature, precisely because the underlying unity of all of them is found not *in* time but *above* time, at the central religious concentration point of the whole of temporal reality.

Kuyper thus drew a direct connection between the Scriptural understanding of God's sovereignty as Creator and the doctrine of sphere-sovereignty. He himself already regarded this doctrine as the *foundation* for a theory of reality that is intrinsically orientated to the motive of creation. For him it was a genuinely *cosmological* doctrine, although he himself was not able to develop it philosophically and mainly just applied it practically in the field of politics.

b. The cosmological significance of Kuyper's concept of sphere-sovereignty. His difference with Groen van Prinsterer

In discussing the real meaning of a Calvinist philosophy, it is impossible to overemphasize the fundamental *cosmological* significance of Kuyper's concept of sphere-sovereignty. This teaching played such a pivotal role in his thinking that he staked the founding of the Free University of Amsterdam on it. Yet, after his death, both it and the other reformational principles that I listed above gradually receded into the background in Reformed scientific circles. Any attempt to make Kuyper's basic religious conception of Calvinism fruitful for philosophy, however, will inevitably bring it to the fore once again, in the full light of its radical significance.

As is known, the term "sphere-sovereignty" originated with Groen van Prinsterer. For him, however, it had only a historical

and political meaning. As a student (during his second period) of the German anti-revolutionary author Friedrich Julius Stahl and of the Historical School, he was concerned to maintain historical continuity between the modern political system that had arisen since the French Revolution and the time-honored independence of the various spheres of life that had existed in the political order of the Netherlands before that revolution. These spheres, such as cities, guilds, and neighborhood and communal landholding organizations, had possessed an *autonomy* that gave them the right of self-government.

The political life of these spheres was organized largely, although not exclusively, from the bottom up. Groen wanted to keep this system under the new political regime but was confronted with the centralistic idea of the state, which he opposed vigorously. Within the bounds of the new idea of the state, he wanted to retain the traditional structures of authority for the province, the municipality, and the other spheres. He called this respect for the sovereignty of each sphere.

Groen's principle of sphere-sovereignty, however, was not rooted in a universal cosmological conception of the *internal nature and structure* of the spheres of society. It was based merely on an historical interpretation of the manner in which the political system of the Netherlands had evolved in a national spirit.

Indeed, the ancient autonomy was not sphere-sovereignty in its fundamental sense. Under the *ancien régime*, after all, the spheres of society in many respects were still undifferentiated; that is, they fulfilled various tasks that would be performed by separate organizations in a more differentiated society. In such undifferentiated societal organizations, the independent spheres of authority obviously cannot be delimited in terms of their internal nature and structure, precisely because they do not yet have a differentiated character. The autonomy spoken of back then was only delimited according to a *formal* criterion. Ancient custom and privilege determined which matters the societal spheres could look after autonomously, without interference from higher authority.

This autonomy was regarded as *inviolable* under the *ancien régime*. All efforts to achieve a well-ordered unitary state were shipwrecked by the tenaciously maintained privileges and ancient customs; and the idea of the *salus publica* ("public good") had not yet emerged. Groen, then, merely wanted to adapt this autonomy

that had prevailed under the old regime to the modern idea of the state as the *res publica*, and he called this sphere independence or sovereignty. It was, in essence, the idea of autonomy in the modern sense given to it by the historical school of law, which would be elaborated by Beseler and Gierke.

In the modern world, municipalities and provinces are components of the state, and they therefore cannot have sphere-sovereignty in the true sense. They can only possess a certain *autonomy*, because their internal nature is not fundamentally different from that of the state. Things stand entirely different, however, with respect to the differentiated spheres of life such as the family, the school, the church, business, the state, and the scientific community. These indeed differ radically from one another according to their internal natures. Each has its own internal law, which is based not on human decree, but on God's world-order for temporal life.

This is what motivated Kuyper to raise sphere-sovereignty to the level of a cosmological principle that is directly connected to God's absolute sovereignty as Creator of the universe.¹ For him it stands, as a matter of principle, *above* any merely historical and political point of view and is a *divine structural law* for temporal life. And the great insight in Kuyper's understanding of this is that, at least in principle, he conceived this structural law in two variant forms that are mutually inseparable: 1. as the sphere-sovereignty of the various law-spheres that govern the distinct *aspects* of reality (e.g., the logical, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the pistical); 2. as the sphere-sovereignty of the concrete spheres of life (e.g., family, state, church, business, science), which function in all aspects of reality but are delimited from each other by an internal, typical *totality structure* that expresses the concrete, intrinsic nature of each.

It must again be granted at once that Kuyper formulated this conception only as a *prescientific guideline* for philosophical inquiry and did not yet elaborate it in a scientific, philosophical manner.² Nevertheless, he did state the starting point for such an elaboration with great clarity.

1 Cf. *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring*, p. 13: "For the Royal Child of Bethlehem protects this 'sphere-sovereignty' with His shield, but He did not create it. It existed from of old and lay in the order of creation" (my italics).

2 For example, following Groen he said that the municipality and province are sovereign in their own spheres.

6. The scholastic line of accommodation in Kuyper's thought

The first line in Kuyper's thought was indeed reformational in character. Over against it, however, we can ascertain a second line which, *in his actual scientific theological work*, partly pushed the first line into the background. This second line began from the ancient standpoint of accommodation, and Kuyper's adherence to it made an internal reformation of philosophy fundamentally impossible.

We can follow this line historically through doctrines and theories that are inseparably tied together. It is oriented to the form-matter motive of Greek philosophy in its accommodation to the Christian ground-motive of creation, fall into sin, and redemption. In consequence, it moved within the framework of the Roman Catholic basic theme of *nature and grace*. It took its course through the metaphysical *logos* theory, which debased the Christian idea of creation, and we can discern its presence in many other places: for example, in the scholastic theory of soul and body, understood as "anima rationalis" and "corpus materiale," which was based on the Greek theory of man's rational nature and the Greek concept of substance; and in the traditional scholastic notion of dichotomy as a dualism between "rational form" and "matter" that cuts through temporal human existence. Finally, it led to the accommodation of Reformed thought to the modern Kantian critique of knowledge, which merely was "corrected" by means of the *logos* theory. In later times, just as happened within Catholic scholasticism, it easily lent itself to syntheses with various other schools of humanistic philosophy.

a. *The power of the scholastic tradition lies in its alliance with systematic theology*

This scholastic line was very dangerous because it was linked to systematic theology by ancient tradition, and because it even had an influence on the terminology of certain confessional documents. The illusion therefore could arise that a departure from this line not only would violate the historical continuity of the Reformed tradition, but even would constitute an assault on the church's confession.

Many felt compelled, therefore, to protect this scholastic tradition against the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. They derived their ap-

parent strength both from a formalistic view of the authority of the confessional documents, and from the ancient conception, which arose during the Patristic period and became a fixture in Roman Catholic scholasticism, that dogmatic theology is the *regina scientiarum*, "queen of the sciences." Later we will have to devote special attention to the latter notion. I have shown earlier that the formalistic view of the confessions not only flatly contradicts Kuyper's basic concept of sphere-sovereignty, but also entails the abandonment of the idea upon which the Free University was founded and of any chance for the development of a Calvinist philosophy.

This formalistic view is unquestionably anti-reformational. In his battle against the formalistic view of the doctrinal authority of the counter-reformational Council of Trent, Calvin demonstrated once and for all that this standpoint is Catholic in origin and that it cannot be reconciled with Christian freedom and with the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Professor J. Bohatec has published an interesting and well-documented study on "authority and freedom in Calvin's thought," in which he expounds Calvin's reformational standpoint on this issue at length.¹

It is equally clear, however, that adherence to the scholastic tradition in theology is precisely what causes this continual turn to the formalistic view of church's doctrinal authority. The formalistic position is a necessary counterpart to the accommodation standpoint, whose inner weakness constantly compels it to seek support from the authority of the church, since it cannot accept the sphere-sovereignty of Christian science. For, on the accommodation standpoint, philosophy must be adapted to Christian doctrine, and because of its "profane" character this philosophy constantly threatens to break loose from the harness of accommodation. The church authority must always be on guard, therefore, lest philosophy cast off its yoke of servitude and follow the roads prescribed for it by its unscriptural starting point.

A truly reformational philosophy, by contrast, can only sprout up and grow in the freedom by which Christ has liberated it from any yoke of alien servitude. For such a philosophy does not just wear a Christian mask. Rather, it is nourished by the faith of the

1 See J. Bohatec, "Autorität und Freiheit in der Gedankenwelt Calvins," *Phil. Ref.* 5 (1940): 1-28, 80-100; 6 (1941): 41-56, 87-104, 180-92; 7 (1942): 1-8.

Christian church, which pervades it through and through and which determines its starting point and direction. This, however, does not guarantee that it will not make scientific errors; for philosophy always remains a sin-stained human work.

I will now try to show that Kuyper's basic religious conception of Calvinism, which he developed along the reformational line described above, contains precisely those necessary religious presuppositions for a Reformed philosophy that are demanded by the internal structure of philosophical thought itself. To this end I will proceed with an exposition of my transcendental critique of philosophical thought, which I developed in my *Philosophy of the Law-Idea* as a prolegomenon for any future philosophy. This will show that the presuppositions upon which the *Philosophy of the Law-Idea* bases its positive philosophical system were not chosen arbitrarily from the teachings of the Christian faith, while ignoring other, equally important religious truths. On the contrary, it will be demonstrated that these presuppositions are prescribed by the very nature of philosophical thought itself. In other words, we now will take a closer look at the problem regarding the point of contact where philosophy and the Christian religion are linked.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSCENDENTAL CRITIQUE OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

1. The theoretical *Gegenstand* relation and its transcendental basic problem. The naive and the theoretical attitudes of thought

a. *How is philosophical thought possible as theoretical thought?*

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea opens its transcendental critique with this question, which is directed toward every possible philosophy. The question therefore is not restricted to a Reformed philosophy. Rather, it first of all confronts traditional and modern philosophy with a fundamental problem, since this philosophy starts from the assumption that theoretical thought is autonomous in relation to faith. This problem is transcendental in nature, for it has to do with the *boundaries* of philosophy. It is concerned with the pre-existing structure of theoretical, philosophical thought, which makes this thought possible to begin with.

This pre-existing structure cannot itself be philosophical in character. Rather, it is a law-governed framework that lies at the *foundation* of all the activity of philosophical thought; for if philosophical thought departs from this framework, it will lose its philosophic character. And, as I have already observed, the *a priori* or pre-existing nature of this structure lends it *universal validity*; that is, it is binding for philosophical thought regardless of the subjective starting point of the thinker.

Nevertheless, this universally valid structural law of theoretical, philosophical thought can only be examined in the theoretical, philosophical attitude of thought. One might begin by believing that such a structure exists, but that would not yet disclose its actual character to our scientific insight. And that is precisely what is needed. For if there is to be any discussion on the question of whether philosophical thought can indeed function independently of a faith commitment, one must first render a scientific account of the nature of this thought.

Hence, if philosophy wishes to proceed in a truly *critical* manner, it must begin by directing its inquiry toward its own presuppositions. The dogma that theoretical reason is autonomous may in no way be taken as a self-evident consequence of the structure of philosophic thought. That would amount to a dogmatic elimination of the basic critical problem that I formulated at the beginning of this section. Nor may we demand, however, that the proponents of this dogma begin by abandoning it; that, too, would be tantamount to a circumvention of the transcendental basic problem of philosophy by means of a dogmatic statement. One then would simply be countering the dogma that theoretical reason is autonomous with the dogma that it is determined from a supra-theoretical standpoint by presuppositions of faith. And in that case, our critical insight into the nature and structure of philosophical thought would not be enriched in the least. We would merely end up with a confrontation of dogmatic points of view.

At the start of our critical inquiry we may not demand of any thinker that he abandon any dogmatic conviction. There is only one strict condition that must be laid down for a truly critical attitude of thought: the thinker must be prepared to put aside the dogmatic prejudice that regards the postulate of philosophy's autonomy as purely theoretical and scientific in character. For this prejudice alone bars the way to a critical investigation of the basic problem I have formulated. It simply passes off as a scientific, theoretical judgment what is nothing but a dogma, an unreasoned conviction of faith.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea makes no claim whatsoever that its transcendental critique of philosophical thought could be undertaken independently of a dogmatic conviction of faith. If it did, after all, it would itself have to begin by accepting the autonomy of theoretical reason as a purely theoretical presupposition, which would be held up as a criterion for deciding whether further inquiry is scientific or not. On the contrary, this philosophy openly avows that it launches its transcendental theoretical critique from the Christian religious standpoint. It remains critical in doing this, however, since from the outset it distinguishes sharply between its faith conviction and all judgments that are intrinsically scientific.

In other words, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea does not mask its starting point. It begins rather by making a sharp, critical distinction between theoretical judgment and supra-theoretical pre-

judgment. Because of this, no one can become the victim of an artfully disguised trap as he follows our inquiry into the transcendental basic problems of philosophy. One can be confident that no judgment of faith will here be held up as an intrinsically scientific thesis. Indeed, the precise purpose of our transcendental critique is to compel thinkers to render their own account of the true nature of the prejudgments from which they set out.

b. The theoretical *Gegenstand* relation

It is the very nature of theoretical thought itself, in distinction from the prescientific mode of thinking, that forces the transcendental basic problem upon the critical attitude of thought. The basic problem of philosophy in its above formulation is not an arbitrary construction of mine. On the contrary, it is imposed on us by the nature of the theoretical attitude of thought itself. For wherein lies the distinction between this attitude, which is inherent in all scientific activity as such, and the *pretheoretical* or *non-scientific* attitude? Without question, this distinction lies in its character of *placing itself* in opposition to, or taking distance from, its field of investigation. But what does this mean?

Theoretical thought, insofar as it is placed opposite its fields of inquiry as its logical correlates,¹ is undoubtedly logical in character. In this theoretical function it moves within the logical aspect of reality, an aspect which we can provisionally define as that of *analytical distinction* (or distinctness). There are, however, numerous other aspects of reality. These include the aspects of quantity (number), space, motion,² organic life, and feeling; also the historical aspect, the lingual aspect, the aspect of social intercourse, and the economic, aesthetic, jural, ethical, and faith aspects. None of these remaining aspects is intrinsically logical (analytical) in character.

Now, the theoretical attitude of thought demands above all that these aspects be logically *separated* or *held apart* in logical analysis or dissection. When temporal reality is theoretically pried asunder in

1 I thus do not refer here to theoretical thinking as a *concrete act*; for, as we shall see later, such an act functions in *all* the aspects of reality. Theoretical thought is instead taken in an epistemological, i.e., an abstract sense here. It is the logical thought-correlate of a non-logical *Gegenstand*, and it therefore is considered only as to its logical aspectual function.

2 [Since 1950 Dooyeweerd distinguished the kinematical aspect of uniform motion from the physical aspect of energy-operation.]

this way into the diversity of its aspects, the non-logical aspects are necessarily placed in *opposition* to the logical aspect. As the German language succinctly expresses this, they enter into a *Gegenstand* relation to the logical aspect of thought.¹ In the theoretical attitude, therefore, the logical function of thought is set in opposition to the non-logical aspects, which form its fields of investigation. The latter aspects become its *Gegenstand*; that is, they offer resistance to the endeavor to grasp them logically. It is only within this *Gegenstand* relation that the theoretical problem arises. Indeed, this is the sole place where it *can* arise, for the problem presupposes that there is a theoretical distance, a theoretical hiatus, between the logical aspect of thought and the non-logical aspects of reality. The logical thought aspect *makes* the latter aspects into its *Gegenstand*, and these then manifest their resistance to logical conceptualization.

c. The naive attitude of thought

In the pre-theoretical, non-scientific attitude of thought, the attitude of so-called naive experience, the situation is entirely different. In naive experience, too, we are clearly aware of the distinct aspects of reality. We perceive a quantity or number of branches and leaves on a tree. We notice its spatial shapes and its movements. We observe that it lives. We see its sensible qualities, such as its colors and its sensible shape. We know of the logical features that distinguish it from other things. We also are conscious of its cultural properties, its name, its value in social life, its economic and aesthetic qualities, and so on. Yet the logical function of our thought here does not adopt a theoretical distance in opposition to the non-logical aspects. It does not pry reality *asunder*, but rather takes its stand completely *within* reality. The non-logical aspects are not experienced explicitly here, that is, as discrete functions that stand

1 [Gegenstand, literally, "that which stands opposed," is the standard German word for "object." Dooyeweerd uses this German term in order to bring out the relationship of opposition between the logical aspect of the act of thought and the antithetically opposed nonlogical aspects that are inherent to the theoretical attitude of thought. For him the "Gegenstände" of theoretical thought are fundamentally different from the objects of naive experience (see section *c* below). For Dooyeweerd, therefore, *Gegenstand* always refers to an abstracted aspect, opposed to the logical aspect of the theoretical thought-function. The abstract *Gegenstand* relation between theoretical thought and the antithetically opposed nonlogical aspect (its *Gegenstand*) always must be distinguished from the concrete *subject-object* relation that belongs to naive experience.]

opposed to the logical aspect of thought. On the contrary, our experience of them is implicit, for they are encountered together, in an indissoluble coherence with the logical thought aspect, as inherent factors of individual totalities (concrete things, concrete events, concrete people, concrete acts, concrete societal relationships in state, church, business, school, family, etc.).

There can be no doubt that naive experience alone perceives reality in the structure in which it *presents* itself. Its attitude of thought remains completely immersed in that reality. The theoretical dissection that reality undergoes in the *Gegenstand* relation does not *really* pry it asunder. Reality itself remains intact and *integral*. The logical aspect remains embedded in the unbreakable coherence of the aspects, as one of the many facets displayed by the sparkling crystal of the temporal world. It is only within our theoretical consciousness that we perform the artful trick which may be compared to the slicing apart of a whole fruit into distinct pieces.

Thus, the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation does not show us reality as it *is*; it rather presents it as it has been artificially dissected or pried asunder. For this reason, it can only have existence within the non-dissected structure of temporal reality. This means that the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation is not primary, but only secondary. It is the product of a theoretical analysis, in which something essential is *abstracted* from the structure of reality as this is given in naive experience. In other words, it is produced by theoretical abstraction.

This of necessity gives rise to the following basic problem for the transcendental critique of philosophical thought.

d. The first transcendental basic problem of philosophy

*What does the theoretical attitude of thought, with its *Gegenstand* relation, abstract from the full structure of temporal reality as this is given in naive experience; and how is this theoretical abstraction possible?* This critical question prevents philosophy from starting from the theoretical attitude of thought as a self-sufficient datum. The theoretical attitude turns out to be problematic, while the naive attitude lacks this problematic character. On the basis of its dogma regarding the autonomy of theoretical reason, traditional philosophy *starts out* from the theoretical attitude of thought. Now it will become clear that this of necessity turns what is *given* in experience into some-

thing theoretical and leads to a theoretical distortion of the naive attitude of thought.

- (i) *The consequence of starting out from the theoretical attitude of thought as an unproblematic datum. The theoreticization of the given element in knowledge*

We have already encountered such an overextension of the theoretical attitude of thought in my summary exposition of the modern critique of knowledge given by Immanuel Kant, and of the “corrections” that Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer introduced into this critique in their “critical-realistic” theory of knowledge.

Kant starts out from the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation as if it were an unproblematic datum. This leads him to reduce what is given in our experience of reality to abstract sense impressions, which in themselves are supposedly completely without order. But Kant has first abstracted these sense impressions theoretically and opposed them to the logical function of consciousness; for, as we shall see later, the “impressions” as such function only within the psychical aspect of reality. It is only the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation that allows us actually to isolate these sense impressions from reality as it is given in our experience.¹

Thus we see that Kant has identified what is given in experience with the product of an artificial, theoretical abstraction. That is the dogmatic outcome of starting out from the theoretical attitude of thought. But then, it should also be obvious that when the critique of knowledge starts out from such a false *basis*, one cannot correct the latter by means of a “critical-realistic” interpretation. As we have seen, Kuyper, Bavinck, and Woltjer did not tamper with the starting point of Kant’s epistemology. In their reduction of what is given in experience to unconnected moments, they too began from the *Gegenstand* relation. For, once again, it is only in the abstract *Gegenstand* relation that these moments can be isolated from the concrete totality structures in which reality is present to us. The

1 It is obvious that the physiology of the central nervous system cannot be called upon here to offer a proof that we receive from reality “outside of us” nothing but isolated sensory stimuli, which the brain then converts into sense impressions. For both physiology and so-called empirical psychology only do research as special sciences, and their theoretical mode of thought therefore only allows them to proceed by abstracting. In the specifically anthropological part of this trilogy I will come back to the results of physiological investigation.

conception of these thinkers thus atomizes what is given, and it thereby comes into patent conflict with our pretheoretical experience of reality. Given reality can never be the artificial product of a theoretical abstraction. What is given to us is the whole fruit, not the pieces that have been artificially sliced from it.

The next consequence, then, is that naive experience has to be brushed aside. In its arrogance, the “critical method” turns this experience into something that is itself theoretical, declaring it to be an “untenable, naive theory of reality.” Thus it is designated the theory of “naive realism.”

- (ii) *The senseless battle against the “naive realism” of pre-theoretical experience. The misconception of naive experience as a copy theory*

What then could this naive, “uncritical” theory amount to? Naive experience supposedly imagines human consciousness in its cognant state as a kind of photographic plate that is held over against reality as it exists in itself, that is, apart from consciousness. It then supposedly maintains, in an uncritical manner, that this “reality in itself” leaves its perfectly matching image on the sensory side of the human consciousness. So-called critical philosophy took aim at this “copy theory” by appealing to the deceptiveness of our sensory representations of reality.

Mathematically oriented natural science was summoned before the scientific tribunal as the star witness in a trial that was destined to end with the definitive condemnation of “naive realism.” The entire proceeding, however, was conducted *in absentia*. For the defendant, naive experience, did not appear before its scientific judges. Indeed, the latter were guilty of a gross omission in this regard: they did not even send it a summons! The scientific judges did not deem it necessary to hear the case from naive experience itself. They contented themselves with their own theoretical view of “naive realism.”

When even the naive experience of reality is regarded as a “theory” that needs to be fundamentally refuted by the “critical” theory of experience, then it is obvious that the theoretical attitude of thought has been pushed too far. At this point, “critical idealism” and “critical realism” join hands. Naive experience simply is not a theory. In setting the theoretical mind opposite a “reality in itself”

and assuming that the latter leaves its matching image on the former, the “copy theory” completely fails to come to grips with naive experience.

(iii) *The Aristotelian-Thomist epistemology is not naively realistic in the sense of a copy theory*

The picture theory begins with a *Gegenstand* relation between the human mind in its psychical and logical aspects and a “reality in-itself” in its pre-psychical and pre-logical aspects. Such a theory has also been ascribed to Aristotelian scholasticism – and this already should put us on guard – which supposedly likewise embraced a “naive realism.” There is no warrant for this view, however, since the form-realism of Aristotelian scholasticism did not at all teach that the ontic forms¹ of things are merely *copied* in the cognitive consciousness.

It is true that Thomas, following Aristotle, regarded the sensory representation as such as an immaterial image of the “individual thing in itself.” He maintained that this representation (*phantasma*) already contains in potency the universal, “intellectual” ontic features of the object.² The latter are received in an ideal manner by the so-called passive intellect, and the “active intellect” then abstracts them completely from the sensory representation and elevates them to the rank of purely formal realities. Nevertheless, Thomas emphasized just as much that, throughout this entire receptive activity of the cognitive mind, there is a stepwise transformation of the “physical” reality of the thing in itself. According to him, the active intellect is decidedly active, not merely receptive, in its operation.

1 [The Dutch term here is *wezensvorm*, literally “form of being.” For reasons of syntax the same term (and also its Dutch synonym *zijnsvorm*) is sometimes translated as “ontic form.” The two translations should be regarded as equivalent (see note 1 on page 72 above.)]

2 See Thomas’ Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle, II, 20. One can easily see that this conception ignores the modal aspects of experience. The sensory, perceptual image itself is a theoretical abstraction that, from a modal point of view, apprehends reality only in terms of the sensory aspect of feeling. Logical features as such can never function within *this* aspect. Nothing, however, presents itself to our consciousness in a purely sensory manner. In every concrete cognitive act, the logical function is necessarily also at work.

What Thomas had in view here was a *de-materialization* of things that is carried out in stages in order to rediscover the “idea” (in Aristotle, this was the *eidos*, the intelligible form of being) that has descended from the divine *Logos* and become “embodied” in material things. In this whole Thomist theory of human knowledge, there is no notion that a reality existing in itself passively “migrates” into the cognitive mind. On the contrary, Thomas follows the mature Aristotelian epistemology in holding that the substantial forms – in accordance with the well-known adage: “the thinking soul can become anything” – actually become *one* with the logical concept in their abstraction from sensory representations. The ontic forms, as logical thought-objects, only attain actuality in the logical concept by virtue of the active intellect. This union that scholastic thought envisages between the concept and the ontic forms of things is something fundamentally different from copying, for the latter is a purely passive process.

This scholastic epistemology also could not claim to be equivalent to the attitude of thought that is adopted in naive experience. This is evident from the mere fact that, as a *theory* of knowledge, it actually opposed the logical aspect of thought to the non-logical aspects of reality in a *Gegenstand* relation and conceived the ontic forms as veritable abstractions. Moreover, since the theme of form and matter meant something fundamentally different for Thomas than it did in the humanistic thought of Kant, the Thomist epistemology also could not be adapted as a “critical realism” to the Kantian critique of knowledge without altering its basic nature.

*e. The fundamentally false identification of the theoretical
Gegenstand relation with the subject-object relation
of naive experience*

Neither critical idealism nor critical realism recognizes that the *Gegenstand* cannot be equivalent to experienced reality in its fullness, since it is merely a theoretical *abstraction* from that reality. Both of these positions therefore could not help but fall into the fundamental error of thinking that the *Gegenstand* relation lies at the foundation of naive experience. Their error becomes manifest in their identification of this essentially theoretical relation with the concrete relation between subject and object, a relation that is as familiar to naive experience as the *Gegenstand* relation is foreign to it.

In naive experience and its attitude of thought, everyone knows how to distinguish subjective sense perception from the concrete, objective sensible forms that this perception finds before itself. Further, everyone knows the difference between subjective thought and the objective logical features of a thing, between subjective aesthetic appreciation and the objective beauty of a landscape or a work of art, between the subject and the object of the property rights of such a work, between the subject of cultural activity and the concrete objects of that activity, and so forth.

Naive experience, moreover, is always prepared to correct itself in its subject-object relation, as, for example, when its subjective perception is susceptible to error regarding its object.¹ It is even willing to accept such correction from science, provided that science does not offer it a theoretical abstraction under the pretense that it is equivalent to reality in its fullness.²

f. The structural character of the subject-object relation

Naive experience recognizes the concrete subject-object relation as a *structural* relation. That is to say, it always understands the objective functions of reality within its diverse aspects (e.g., the sensory aspect, the logical aspect, the aesthetic aspect) in unbreakable connection with *possible* (not merely individual) *subjective* perception or activity within those aspects. The objective color of a rose, for example, is not understood in relation to the individual perception by any particular subject, but rather in relation to *all possible* subjective perception.

This implies that the subject-object relation familiar to naive experience is founded in the *structure* of experienced reality itself. For this structure is what determines the possibility of acting on the part of the subject.

The subject-object relation leaves reality intact and integral, just as it presents itself to us in its own structure. Unlike the theoretical

1 The naive attitude of thought therefore is not deceived by the refracted image of a stick in water.

2 The attitude of thought that belongs to naive experience never theorizes. For example, just because naive experience innocently notes that the sun sinks below the horizon, it is still quite wrong to ascribe to it the theory that the sun revolves around the earth. For as soon as one begins to form a theory, one is no longer in the attitude of naive experience.

Gegenstand relation, it does not dissect reality theoretically. Through the subject-object relation, the sensory function of feeling and the logical function of thought are taken into the midst of the structure of reality. Precisely for this reason, the theoretical attitude of thought can never make reality *itself* into a *Gegenstand*. It can do this only to a theoretical abstraction *from* reality.

The opposition between “consciousness in itself” and “reality in itself,” which formed the starting point for both the critical idealism of Kant and critical realism, therefore can in no way be ascribed to naive experience. An objective reality without a structural link to the subjective sensory and logical functions simply does not exist. And these functions are essential parts of full temporal reality as it has been constructed according to God’s order for the creation.

Whenever any kind of structural dualism is posited between consciousness and reality, it is not naive experience but a *theory* of reality that is speaking. Naive experience, however, is not an “uncritical” theory about reality that can be combated, but rather the natural *immersion* of consciousness within reality. It is a *given*, indeed, the great given, for the theory of knowledge. And it is precisely this given that was brushed aside by traditional philosophy when it made the acceptance of the autonomy of theoretical thought a criterion for the scientific attitude of thought. As we have seen, modern humanistic epistemology and Thomist scholasticism joined hands at this point, however deeply their respective conceptions of this autonomy differed. One who takes the theoretical attitude of thought as his starting point is no longer in a position to understand naive experience and its attitude of thought.

g. Scripture is always concerned with naive experience’s concrete view of reality

The concrete view of reality that belongs to naive experience is also the view that is present throughout Scripture. This by itself forbids one to accommodate the autonomous theoretical standpoint to the scriptural view of the creation. From the Christian standpoint, therefore, it is extremely dangerous to introduce abstract metaphysical concepts such as that of substance or that of “matter” and “spirit” (in the sense of scholastic metaphysics) into the exegesis of scriptural texts.

The notion that theoretical thought is autonomous also caused some Christians to lose sight of the basic difference between Christian dogma and dogmatic theology and compelled them to turn scientific theology into a judge over the confession of the church. Although they naturally still had due respect for God's Word-revelation itself, that did not stop them from distorting that revelation theoretically whenever they thought it necessary to enlist the help of the "school philosophy."

In its transcendental critique, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has joined a relentless battle against all such overstretching of the theoretical attitude of thought and against the overestimation of science that this necessarily leads to. In the above-mentioned trial that is conducted *in absentia* between naive experience and its scientific adversary, this philosophy unconditionally takes the side of the former.

h. Did Hume, Kant, and Fichte (in his Third Period) take the side of naive experience?

Some have asserted that the claims of naive experience had already been maintained by Hume, Kant,¹ and Fichte. According to them, this is evident in these thinkers' uncompromising rejection of the arrogant pretense of science that it is able to penetrate behind the sensible, phenomenal world of naive experience and gain knowledge of the "hidden essences" of things. This view, however, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding.

There is no doubt that Hume and Fichte (in his third period) *thought* they were defending naive experience against the arrogance of science.² As I have demonstrated above with respect to Hume and Kant, however, they *started out* from the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation; and in accordance with this dogmatic starting point they drew a completely false picture of non-theorized experience. And Kant, in his so-called critical philosophy, did not really combat the "metaphysical arrogance" of science in order to defend naive experience and its attitude of thought. Indeed, rejecting the latter as "unscientific," he did not even give it a hearing. His aim rather was solely to defend the humanistic personality ideal of au-

1 Incomprehensibly, B. J. H. Ovink has claimed this regarding Kant in his book *Philosophie und Sophistik* (The Hague, 1940).

2 See the extensive discussion of this in my *WdW*, boek I, deel 2 [cf. *NC*, vol. I, part II].

onomous moral freedom, which had been pushed into a corner by the overextension of the humanistic science ideal and its natural-scientific methods of explanation.

What Kant understood by “empirical reality” was really nothing but the abstract, theoretical picture of reality produced by mathematical natural science. Naive experience and its attitude of thought can only be recognized in their true character if one abandons the dogmatic prejudice that regards the theoretical attitude of thought as primary and as determined by nothing beyond itself.

2. The transcendental basic problem of theoretical synthesis. Self-knowledge and the Archimedean point of philosophy

a. The movement from theoretical antithesis to theoretical synthesis

The theoretical *Gegenstand* relation places the logical aspect of thought and the non-logical *Gegenstand* of thought in a true theoretical *antithesis*. In this relation, the logical aspect is set over against the non-logical aspects as their *opposite*. If one wishes to maintain the *Gegenstand* relation – and it must be maintained if the theoretical attitude of thought itself is to be maintained – then one must never attempt to reduce either of the opposed aspects to the other. The *Gegenstand* must be left intact in its irreducible nature. But it is precisely this irreducibility that makes it into a *problem* for theoretical thought.

Nevertheless, science cannot remain in the state of theoretical antithesis. It must arrive at a concept of the *Gegenstand*. In every such concept – e.g., the concepts of number, space, motion, organic life, history, justice, belief – human knowledge has moved beyond the theoretical antithesis to a higher *synthesis*, that is, to a theoretical combination or union of the logical with the non-logical.

b. The structure of human consciousness spans all the aspects of temporal reality

Both theoretical antithesis and theoretical synthesis have an inter-modal structure that involves the mutual relationships between the distinct modal aspects. This implies that the human consciousness, structurally regarded, embraces all the aspects of temporal reality without exception.

For such an aspect can only be placed in a theoretical antithesis to the logical aspect of thought if we have become conscious of it as a *Gegenstand*. In the specifically anthropological part of this work we shall see that this “becoming conscious” is only possible in a concrete act of knowing, and that such an act of knowing, which in principle functions in all the aspects of reality, draws these aspects into a central focus upon the knowing selfhood. This implies at the same time that the actual *subject* of human consciousness cannot be found in one or more of its modal aspects; it can only be found in the selfhood, which in its *self*-consciousness assimilates all its functions in the diverse modal aspects of reality.

It would naturally be foolish to maintain that an aspect such as number, or space, or motion, or life, *has* consciousness. All these are mere aspects of temporal reality; but in man they come concentrically to consciousness. This central coming to consciousness is not itself an aspect or an abstract complex of aspects. Rather, it is a perspective, an illumination of the aspects by which we make them our own.

The aspects of reality thus do not have consciousness. On the contrary, the human consciousness has the modal aspects as *a priori* modal frameworks of reality that do not change their structure when we become conscious of them. In view of this, it is senseless for Neothomist scholasticism to say that the sensory aspect of human consciousness is the “sole window” of the intellect (i.e., the logical function of thought) that is open toward the *Gegenstand* that stands before it (i.e., toward “physical reality in itself”).¹

Human consciousness has pre-sensory aspects that are necessarily intertwined with the sensory, psychical aspect. The abstract sensory aspect of feeling could never make us conscious of the biotic, the physical, the spatial, and the numeric aspects. In the sensory aspect we only become conscious of the sensible.

1 See A. G. Sertillanges, O.P., *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, trans. from the French by Robert Grosche (Hellerau: Hegner, 1928), p. 625. [Cf. A. D. Sertillanges, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas and His Work*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1933).]

c. *The aftereffects of the abstract concept of the “anima rationalis” in the abstract conception of consciousness. The false definition of psychology as the science of conscious phenomena and the discovery of the unconscious*

In consequence of the above, it would be fundamentally wrong to restrict the theoretical consciousness to the psychical aspect of feeling and the logical aspect of thought, a notion that Kant and, with him, traditional psychology took over from scholasticism. This view was still completely determined by the abstract conception of the soul, which defined the complex of biotic, psychical, and post-psychical functions as an independent *anima rationalis* and opposed it to an equally abstract “material body.”

Kant’s rejection of the metaphysical concept of the soul did not prevent that concept from influencing his critique of knowledge.

Modern psychology at first followed exactly the same course when it defined psychic phenomena as *conscious* phenomena in order to distinguish its own field of research from those of the other special sciences.

The inadequacy of this criterion became obvious with the discovery of the unconscious and the preconscious¹ in processes of imagination, thought, and will; for it was demonstrated that this unconscious played an important role in both the psychical aspect of feeling and the logical aspect of thought. The full import of this discovery cannot be realized, however, until one abandons the false hypostatization of the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation, which poses an antithesis between “consciousness” (as a complex of psychical and logical functions) and an unconscious “reality in itself.”

Conscious reality does not lie within aspects different from those of unconscious reality. On the contrary, both of these are identical *in the modal structure of their aspects*. If this were not so, it would be utterly impossible to gain knowledge of the pre-psychical aspects of reality in their own intrinsic nature.

The difference between conscious and unconscious is not a purely psychological problem. The unconscious, like the conscious, cannot be understood purely in psychological terms. From a structural point of view, both of these function in all the aspects of reality without exception.

1 [Dutch: “resp. het vóórbewuste en het zgn. obligaant onbewuste.”]

In the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation it is primarily the aspects of the human consciousness – and with that, of empirical reality – that are separated from and placed in opposition to each other. In theoretical synthesis, then, scientific thought clearly proceeds onward to a unification or “union” that transcends the theoretical antithesis. This synthesis embraces the logical aspect and its non-logical *Gegenstand* in a theoretical totality view that is achieved through *intuitive insight*;¹ and in this totality view the two aspects no longer merely stand opposed to each other, but are simultaneously combined theoretically into a higher unity.

d. The second transcendental basic problem. The Archimedean point of philosophy

At this point there arises the second transcendental basic problem in my critique of theoretical thought, a problem that can be formulated as follows: *From what standpoint can the aspects that have been separated from and opposed to each other in the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation be brought into union in the theoretical view of totality?* In the Philosophy of the Law-Idea this has been called the problem of the Archimedean point or starting point of philosophy.

If there did not exist a deeper unity beyond all the temporal aspects of reality, it would not be possible within the theoretical attitude of thought to proceed to a synthesis or union of the aspects that have been opposed to one another in the *Gegenstand* relation. Within the *Gegenstand* relation itself, however, a truly critical mode of thinking can find no such deeper unity. All that is present there is the antithesis, the theoretical opposition of diverse, distinct aspects.

This antithetical structure of the *Gegenstand* relation, however, is itself determined by the synthetic structure of theoretical, conceptual knowledge. For, as we shall see, the theoretical, logical distinction and separation of the aspects is only possible because of their synthetic relation to their own deeper unity.

Now, it is acceptable for a practitioner of one of the special sciences to engage in theoretical synthesis without having a clear understanding of the internal nature of this synthesis. A philosopher, however, is forbidden to take such a dogmatic stance toward the problem of theoretical synthesis. On the contrary, it is imperative

¹ On the role of intuition in theoretical synthesis, see my *WdW*, 2:407-20 [cf. *NC*, 2:472-85].

that he think through this problem scientifically and bring it to theoretical clarity. For philosophy is compelled by its very nature to take the aspects that have been opposed to each other in the theoretical attitude of thought and to grasp them *critically* in its theoretical view of totality. To do this, it must form a clear idea of the internal nature of theoretical synthesis and of the standpoint from which the thinker is able to bring the opposed aspects together in his view of the totality. In other words, it must render an account of the Archimedean point, the starting point of philosophy.

e. The modal structures of the aspects as constant a priori frameworks for the changing phenomena of reality

The various aspects of reality, such as quantity, spatiality, motion, energy, organic life, sensation, logical distinction, and historical formation, are not themselves real things. On the contrary, they are merely ways or modalities of being within which actual things function. They determine not the concrete *what*, but only the quality, the *how* of things. Thus they are merely facets of reality.

It is clear that these aspects must exhibit a constant structure through time and that, unlike the concrete things, events, people, and so forth that function within them, they do not come into being, change, and pass away in time. For they concern the abiding nature of quantity, spatiality, motion, organic life, and so forth, a nature that cannot be dependent on the coming into being and passing away of the things that have these various qualities. They lie, in fact, at the *foundation* of all possible transitory realities. They are the modal frameworks, the modal structures of temporal reality, *within which* the individual qualities of temporal things come into being, change, and pass away. Indeed, they are what make it possible for these qualities to appear. They are founded in God's order for the temporal world.

We can call these aspects *modal-ontic a priori*: *ontic*, because they are rooted in the structure of reality and not merely in our subjective consciousness;¹ *a priori*, because they are pre-existing frameworks that lie at the foundation of all changing, transitory things and events.

1 [The word *ontic* is a Greek derivative that means "pertaining to the structure of reality."]

f. Why the special sciences require philosophical presuppositions

The special sciences themselves can give us no theoretical insight into the modal structures. Their inquiry focuses only on the phenomena that are manifested *within* these foundational structures. Theoretical investigation of the modal structures themselves is intrinsically philosophical in nature, and that is precisely why the special sciences require philosophical presuppositions; for without a theoretical demarcation of their modal fields of inquiry they could not exist as *special* sciences.

Physicists, for example, must have a prior notion of the modal aspect of energy within which the phenomena that they wish to study present themselves. They also must have a notion of the relation between this aspect and the mathematical aspects of number and space, since they intend to study physics on a mathematical basis. Without these two notions they will always be in danger of confusing and transgressing the boundaries of their discipline, an unforgivable error for specialists.

Special scientists who are not schooled in philosophy may well have a notion of their field of inquiry borrowed from a philosophical theory, which they use as a kind of special-scientific axiom because they are unaware of its philosophical background and nature. This, however, does not alter the fact that the determination of the modal character of a special-scientific field of inquiry, and of the relation of that field to other modal fields of inquiry, can never originate in a special science but is always philosophical in nature.

g. The individuality structures as typical total structures that involve all the aspects

The modal structures of the aspects are not the only structures that are present in temporal reality. Temporal human existence, animals, plants, concrete events, societal spheres such as marriage, the family, the state, the church, the school, the business enterprise – indeed, all things that come into being and pass away in time – possess a typical internal nature which is likewise determined by a constant *a priori* structure. The modal structures alone cannot account for this typical nature of things; in themselves, in fact, the modal aspects say nothing about the latter.

As an example let us take the jural aspect. All possible societal spheres function within this modal aspect, and each has therein its own typical internal legal sphere. Thus there is the sphere of constitutional law, of church law, of business law, and so forth. All these typical legal spheres, however, display the same *modal* legal nature; for constitutional law, civil law, church law, business law, and the rest are all juridical in character. And this juridical character is determined not by the typical structures of the societal spheres, but by the modal structure of the jural aspect itself.

What, then, is the character of these structures that determine the typical natures of concrete things, events, societal spheres, and the like – structures that are the constant frameworks not for their modal qualities, but for their concrete existence as temporal individual wholes? In relation to the modal structures they display a typical character of *totality*; that is, they overarch all the modal aspects without exception and group these in a typical manner within the context of an individual whole. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea therefore calls them the *individuality structures* of temporal reality. That these individuality structures indeed embrace all the aspects of reality without exception can only be realized once one has abandoned the traditional identification of the subject-object relation, familiar to naive experience, with the *Gegenstand* relation of theoretical thought.

In our pretheoretical¹ experience and thought, we would never think of enclosing the reality of a blooming rose within the modal aspects that are studied theoretically by mathematical natural science and biology. Rather, we perceive and understand the rose in terms of the concrete, structural subject-object relation that I have discussed above; and we therefore ascribe to it modal object functions in all those aspects in which the rose cannot function as a subject.² These include especially those aspects in which reality is subject not to laws of nature, but to *norms*, to rules for what ought to be: the logical aspect, the cultural-historical aspect, the lingual aspect, the social aspect, the economic aspect, the aesthetic aspect, and the jural, moral, and faith aspects.

1 [Here the MS has: *onvertheoretiseerd* (untheorized).]

2 [The rose functions as a *subject* only in the aspects of number, space, motion, and organic life.]

The objective logical features and the objective beauty of the rose, its objective cultural properties, its economic scarcity and worth, its possibility of becoming the object of property rights – all these things are regarded in pretheoretical experience as belonging to the full reality of the rose, even though the aspects that contain these objective qualities require the application of normative standards. To the pretheoretical consciousness such things are in no way mere subjective qualities that have been attached to the rose by human value judgments; on the contrary, they belong to it in reality as its *objective* properties. That we apprehend all these modal aspects of things in our naive experience, even if only implicitly, is by itself a decisive argument against Kant's conception of the structure of human experience.

The restriction of human experience to its sensory and logical functions is clearly wrong. It reduces our experience to a theoretical abstraction which in reality cannot exist on its own, but is merely "lifted out" of the full compass of man's horizon of experience by means of the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation. And precisely because Kant turns the structure of human experience into a theoretical abstraction, empirical reality too becomes such an abstraction. In his conception, all that survives from the full empirical reality of the blooming rose is that same theoretical abstraction that mathematical natural science "lifts off" of the whole of reality: objective sense impressions in space and time that can be counted, measured, weighed, and arranged in natural scientific categories. Naive experience itself, however, never could mistake such a theoretical abstraction for reality.

h. Can the Archimedean point of philosophy be found in the individuality structures?

If, as I have argued above, *all* the aspects of reality are in principle comprehended in the individuality structures as the typical structures of individual totalities, the question then arises as to whether the second basic problem of my transcendental critique can find its answer in these structures. For here, all the aspects in their unbreakable coherence, untouched by the *Gegenstand* relation, are brought together into a *totality*. In a later context we shall see that scholastic metaphysics thought its concept of substance grasped the underlying unity of individual natural beings. Now, the second

transcendental basic problem as I formulated it above is concerned precisely with the possibility of bringing together, in a theoretical view of *totality*, the aspects that have been separated from and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation. As I noted, every theoretical synthesis that is made between the logical aspect of thought and a non-logical aspect that forms its *Gegenstand* presupposes an underlying unity of all the aspects, a deeper unity of which they all are mere modalities or particular modes of manifestation. Could then the individuality structure be this deeper unity?

In order to answer this question satisfactorily, we must recall that the second transcendental basic problem really came down to the following question: “*From what standpoint can philosophy bring together the opposed aspects in its theoretical view of the totality?*” Since my previous investigations have established that such a starting point or Archimedean point cannot be found in the *Gegenstand* relation itself, this question poses a truly transcendental problem that pertains to the boundaries of philosophy.

The *Gegenstand* relation must not be eliminated in the theoretical view of totality, lest the thinker abandon the theoretical attitude of thought and philosophy lose its scientific character. Nevertheless, the inescapable task of philosophy is to investigate, in this theoretical attitude of thought, all the aspects of reality according to their modal structure and in their systematic coherence. Yet in the *Gegenstand* relation itself all it finds is an accentuation of the absolute mutual irreducibility of the aspects. The antithesis, the relation of mutual opposition, is maintained with respect to each new aspect that philosophy focuses on as a *Gegenstand* of the logical aspect of thought. Nowhere within the *Gegenstand* relation can the required Archimedean point be found which, standing above the diversity of the modal aspects, brings them together in their deeper unity.

i. The solution to the first formulation of the transcendental basic problem presupposes the solution to the second

The solution to the first transcendental basic problem offers no answer to the second. Even if we have discovered the inner coherence of the aspects that the theoretical attitude of thought abstracts from the fullness of empirical reality, that would not yet show us the standpoint where the diverging lines of the aspects converge in a

deeper root-unity. The reverse is true: the solution to the first basic problem presupposes the solution to the second.

How, after all, are we to gain theoretical insight into the unbreakable inner coherence of the aspects within the temporal world-order if we have not first discovered the Archimedean point from which we can survey the aspects in this coherence? Every attempt to distinguish the modal aspects theoretically presupposes that we can relate them to a common denominator. For, if they had nothing in common we could not compare them to each other; and without such comparison we would not be able to distinguish them theoretically.

If the modal aspects are mutually irreducible, then the common denominator we are looking for cannot be found in any of them, not even in the logical aspect. All that they can have in common, then, is that in which their mutual intrinsic coherence is grounded and which is expressed equally in the modal structure of each.

Such a common denominator, however, is still caught up in diversity, and it therefore cannot serve as a starting point for theoretical synthesis between the logical and non-logical aspects. Even their intrinsic coherence does not bring the modal aspects to a root-unity, for in this coherence they maintain their mutual irreducibility and intrinsic diversity. The coherence of the modal aspects, however, points beyond itself to a root-unity that is expressed in this very coherence; and indeed, if an Archimedean point for philosophical thought is to be found, this unity must be present in human existence and human consciousness itself as the final presupposition of theoretical synthesis.

j. The problem of the common denominator of the modal aspects

Distinguishing the aspects theoretically and to grasp them in their coherence presupposes that we can relate them to a common denominator. This means they must have a root-unity, a unity that makes possible their inner coherence in the temporal world-order. In mathematics, for example, one determines the relationship between a group of prime numbers (e.g., 3, 5, 7, 13, etc.) by relating all these mutually irreducible numbers to a higher number that is the composite of all of them. It is only from the relationship of each of the prime numbers to this higher number that one can determine their mutual relations and coherence. This mathematical proce-

ture can serve to shed some light on the relationship between the Archimedean point of philosophy and the mutual relations and coherence of the modal aspects that are separated from and opposed to each other in the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation.¹

The problem of the Archimedean point, as formulated in my second transcendental basic problem, indeed lies at the very heart of my entire transcendental critique of philosophical thought. It is a problem that, with inner necessity, confronts everyone who tries to render a truly critical account of the nature and possibility of philosophical thought. Indeed, we are faced with this problem as soon as we focus our theoretical thought on the universally valid structure of the *Gegenstand* relation.

k. Why the individuality structures offer us no Archimedean point

When we consider all this, it becomes evident that the Archimedean point of philosophy can no more be found in the individuality structures of temporal reality. In the first place, this is because the same philosophical basic problem that we encountered in the modal structures emerges with respect to the individuality structures. They, too, are mutually irreducible and yet, just like the modal structures, they are inseparably intertwined with one another in the temporal world-order. Every attempt to approach them theoretically and to grasp them in their mutual relations and coherence presupposes that they have first been dissected in the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation of the modal aspects. Here too, therefore, an Archimedean point is required, a standpoint from which we can grasp the individuality structures in our theoretical view of totality. Like the theory of the modal aspects, the philosophical theory of the individuality structures presupposes a common denominator that contains the deeper root-unity of these structures and that allows us to determine their mutual relations and coherence.

In the second place, the individuality structures offer us no Archimedean point because, as we shall see, they do not bring the modal aspects themselves to a root-unity, but merely arrange them within the typical coherences of individual totalities. All they do is group the aspects in a typical manner within a temporal individual

¹ [This paragraph was crossed out in the MS.]

whole. As we shall see, the individuality structures are merely typical *structures of time* which are grounded, like the modal structures, in the temporal world-order. The problem of the Archimedean point of philosophy, by contrast, concerns the *supra-temporal concentration point* of all the modal structures and individuality structures without exception. It is inseparable from the question as to the center and root of temporal reality as a whole.

Where can we find the path that will guide our transcendental critique to this concentration point of the temporal cosmos?

1. The path to the Archimedean point is the path of critical self-reflection

So-called critical philosophy, founded by Kant, has correctly discerned that theoretical thought requires a central starting point above the diversity of its *Gegenstände*, and that the only path to this starting point is the path of critical *self-reflection*. Indeed, outside of this path we shall never find the concentration point of the temporal cosmos as a whole.

So long as we take the approach of the special sciences and direct our attention solely on phenomena within the distinct modal aspects of reality that have been opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation, *our theoretical view remains dispersed in an unresolved multiplicity*. In our thinking *selfhood*, by contrast, we discover the individual concentration point of our entire temporal existence. The selfhood functions in all the aspects of reality, but it simultaneously stands above their diversity. In it all the aspects of a person's temporal individual existence converge, for it is their indivisible center.

Now, the individual selfhood of the thinker naturally still cannot be the Archimedean point of philosophy that we are looking for. For, as we have seen, this Archimedean point has to be the concentration point not only of the individual temporal existence of a particular person, but of the temporal cosmos as a whole. In other words, it must be *supra-individual* in character. The individual selfhood, however, must at least *participate* in this supra-individual center of the temporal cosmos, for it is a member of a supra-individual, *spiritual root-community* of the human race. Philosophical thought, after all, is in the final analysis an activity of the individual selfhood.

The temporal cosmos as a whole, with all of its structures, can indeed find its concentration point only in such a supra-temporal fundamental community. It is clear at the same time that this Archimedean point lies in principle within the boundaries of man's horizon of experience, even though it transcends the boundaries of science. For everything in which the selfhood genuinely participates lies, in principle, inside this horizon. The path of authentic self-knowledge thus leads inevitably to knowledge of the self as a member of the spiritual root-community of the human race.

It is a mistake to think that philosophy did not take the critical turn toward self-knowledge until the arrival of Kant. Socrates, after all, distanced himself from the philosophers of nature who preceded him by placing the saying of the Delphic oracle, "Know thyself" (*γνῶθι σεαυτόν; gnōthi seauton*), above the gateway to philosophy.

m. Can philosophy by itself lead to self-knowledge?

The immanence standpoint and its consequences

The big question remains: How does man attain to genuine self-knowledge? How can he truly search himself and find the deeper point of concentration of all the temporal manifestations of his life in the distinct aspects of the cosmos? Is this self-knowledge an affair of philosophy? Can philosophy, within the fundamental limitations imposed on it by the theoretical attitude of thought, really lead to self-knowledge on its own?

Those who maintain the autonomy of theoretical reason as a scientific postulate are compelled, as a matter of principle, to answer this question affirmatively, although it still is possible for them to restrict theoretical self-reflection to a purely formal definition of the *cogito* that does not reach to the essence of the selfhood. If they were to seek a starting point beyond the boundaries of theoretical thought, they would be abandoning the standpoint they defend so vigorously against all "dogmatic prejudices." They can only seek their Archimedean point immanently, *within* theoretical thought.

What, however, are the implications of such a standpoint? Theoretical thought is antithetic in character; it is always engaged in theoretical analysis and in synthesis between the logical aspect and the non-logical aspects of human consciousness that are opposed to it in the *Gegenstand* relation.

Since these aspects display a great diversity, the syntheses made by theoretical thought will remain caught in this diversity. In consequence, within the *Gegenstand* relation theoretical thought will assume a great variety of special-scientific forms: mathematical thought, physical thought, biological thought, psychological thought, historical thought, linguistic thought, sociological thought, and economic, aesthetic, jurisprudential, ethical, and theological thought. Anyone who looks for his Archimedean point within theoretical thought itself will therefore have to choose between these possible synthetic forms of that thought.

If one chooses historical thought, for example, one will have to look for the deeper, fundamental unity of all the modal aspects in the theoretically isolated historical aspect and try to reduce all the other modal aspects to modalities of the historical aspect. This will necessarily give rise to a *historicist* philosophy, a philosophy that is typified by a theoretical overextension and absolutization of the historical aspect and that finds its starting point in a *historicist conception of the human selfhood*. From such a standpoint, things such as science, language, etiquette, economics, art, justice, morality, and faith would merely be historical phenomena, subject to purely historical laws of development. Outside of the historical aspect they would have no existence, and they therefore would lack a unique nature separate from the latter.

Historicism, however, is not the only possible choice. Indeed, it can be opposed by other “isms” that seemingly have an equal right to exist: mathematicism, natural-scientific materialism (an overextension of the aspect of motion, studied by physics and chemistry), biologism, psychologism, symbolism (an overextension of the lingual aspect), aestheticism, ethicism, fideism (overextension of the faith aspect), and so on.

n. The sphere-universality of the aspects and theoretical absolutization

What is remarkable about all these “isms” is that they seemingly can be worked out consistently and they all possess the same apparent persuasive power. This observation points up something about the modal structures of the aspects that I have examined at length in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. It indicates, namely, that the aspects have, as the counterpart of their *sphere-sovereignty*, also

a *sphere-universality*. What this means is that the structure of each modal aspect displays an *internal* coherence with the structures of all the other aspects, a coherence that reflects the overall coherence of the aspects within each particular modality. I will return to this point later.

It is clear, however, that this sphere-universality never can justify the theoretical overextension and absolutization of a particular modal point of view, as found in each of the “isms” mentioned above. On purely theoretical grounds such absolutization is neither defensible nor comprehensible. Indeed, the internal structure of the *Gegenstand* relation offers no basis for it. What compels thinkers to absolutize a particular special-scientific point of view is rather the necessary internal drive of philosophy to look for its Archimedean point *beyond* the modal diversity of the aspects that are separated from and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation. They are compelled to do this, that is, if they refuse to recognize that theoretical thought is dependent on a supra-theoretical standpoint.

In such absolutization the modal diversity of the aspects indeed seems to be reduced to a deeper root-unity. Moreover, thinkers imagine that in making such an absolutization they are adopting a purely scientific position that lies, in principle, within the boundaries of science. Nevertheless, it is only an uncritical attitude of thought that, because of the dogma regarding the autonomy of theoretical reason, refuses to appreciate the internal nature of the pre-judgment operative in its choice of a starting point or Archimedean point. And such an uncritical attitude of thought naturally cannot change the internal nature of its choice.

A special-scientific point of view can only be absolutized and turned into the *starting point* of philosophy on the basis of a pre-judgment that is not scientific and theoretical, but rather *supra-theoretical* in character. For, in order to find the starting point of philosophy, one must step beyond the boundaries of the philosophical attitude of thought. Indeed, one must choose a standpoint in the supra-temporal center of one’s temporal existence as a human being, a standpoint that governs the entire character of one’s philosophic thought.

Now, the various “isms” that come to expression in philosophy cancel each other out. Within their circle, no impartial judge can be found that could settle the arguments among the various schools. Every absolutization of a theoretically isolated aspect entangles philosophical thought in irresolvable antinomies. For, within the temporal world-order, the modal aspects are inseparably connected to one another. With intrinsic necessity, every attempt to absolutize what is relative calls forth its correlates, and these correlates then assert themselves against what has first been absolutized with the same presumed absoluteness. The actual correlation thereby is transformed into an exclusive opposition, a genuine *antinomy* in which the correlates seemingly cancel each other out.

o. Theoretical absolutization of a modal aspect leads to a dogmatic elimination of the Gegenstand problem. The two paths of the immanence standpoint

The absolutizations spoken of above are only possible within the theoretical attitude of thought. They are based, after all, on the *Gegenstand* relation, in which the modal aspects are set apart from each other in theoretical analysis. As we have seen, however, the true Archimedean point of philosophy has to lie *above* the *Gegenstand* relation, since the latter always contains an opposition between the logical aspect and the non-logical aspects. If one chooses his Archimedean point within theoretical thought itself, the *Gegenstand* relation cannot be left intact. Indeed, absolutizing a modal aspect and making it into the starting point of philosophy entails one of two choices: either one must try to reduce theoretical thought, in its logical aspect, to the *Gegenstand* that confronts it; or, inversely, one must, at least formally, derive the *Gegenstand* from the logical aspect of thought itself.

The first of these two paths is obviously extremely uncritical. For whenever a non-logical aspect such as the biotic, the psychic, or the historical aspect is absolutized, there has first been a *primary* absolutization of the logical aspect of thought. Indeed, apart from logical analysis of such a non-logical aspect, i.e., apart from the theoretical abstraction wrought by logical thought, an aspect could never be stretched beyond its proper bounds and made into the underlying unity of all the other aspects.

The materialism of modern natural science, for example, exists only by the grace of absolutized theoretical thought, which abstracts the concept of matter from reality in its fullness. How, then, can anyone seriously think that thought itself can be explained as a mere function of particles of matter? The same consideration applies to all the other “isms” of philosophy, which likewise try to reduce the logical function of thought to one or another of its modal *Gegenstände*.

p. The “critical” immanence standpoint

Kant realized all this, and he therefore took the second of the two paths described above. He derived all the determinacy in the *Gegenstände* of theoretical thought from the *a priori* formative activity of that thought itself. He believed a central point can be found *within* the theoretical-logical function of thought, a point that really transcends the diversity of all the points of view that are focused on *Gegenstände*. Kantianism correctly calls the absolutization of all such points of view “uncritical,” recognizing that they evince a lack of critical self-reflection on the part of philosophy. For the Archimedean point of philosophy can be found, not in the divergence of its outward points of view upon its objects, but only in the convergence of its inward focus upon the selfhood that thinks.

The special sciences are oriented entirely toward their *Gegenstand* and give no account of their own activity. Indeed, the aim of the special scientist is to eliminate himself as a thinking subject and to immerse himself in the study of his *Gegenstand*. The task of critical philosophy, by contrast, is to turn from the object to the subject, and in critical self-reflection to render an account of what scientific thought actually does. Ever since Fichte, as critical philosophy developed further, it began to distinguish two different modes of theoretical thought:

1. *antithetic* thought, which focuses on its *Gegenstand*;
2. *reflexive* thought, which turns inward upon itself and, in critical self-reflection, makes antithetic thought itself the object of its study.

This contrast held out hopes that critical philosophy would be able to produce a “transcendental critique of philosophy,” in the sense I have given this, by focusing its inquiry on the ground-laying structure of theoretical thought. But our hopes were disappointed, because this “critical” philosophy was not prepared to abandon its

dogmatic premise, namely, that theoretical thought is self-sufficient and unconditioned. It even thought that it was remaining within the bounds of science in postulating this autonomy of thought. The transcendental basic problem that I posed at the start of this chapter, “How is philosophical thought possible as theoretical thought?” is therefore left entirely out of account in this “critical” philosophy, and with it, the two questions in which I formulated this basic problem more precisely (see sections 1.d and 2.d above).

Kant nevertheless intended to follow the route of critical self-reflection in his critique of knowledge. He attempted to do this by concentrating, within the *Gegenstand* relation, all attention on the *subject* of theoretical thought. Thinking is a function of the selfhood, and theoretical philosophy must look for its starting point within this “I think.”

q. *Kant and the Cartesian cogito ergo sum*

René Descartes, the French philosopher who is usually regarded as the founder of modern humanistic philosophy (even though he undoubtedly had forerunners), had already taken this view. Because he sought his starting point in theoretical thought itself, and because he wanted to recognize as “real” only that which can be grasped scientifically, he began his philosophic inquiry with a methodical doubt regarding everything that we experience as really existing.

This methodical doubt, however, had to come to a halt before the indubitable certainty of the “I think.” For it is only in my theoretical thinking that I can be in doubt about the real existence of the world that I experience. From the indubitable certainty of the selfhood’s theoretical thinking, then, Descartes inferred the real existence of this selfhood: *Cogito ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am.” He identified this thinking selfhood with the individual rational soul, conceiving it as a *res cogitans*, a “thinking substance,” which stood in contrast to the “extended, spatial substance” that belongs to all material bodies.

r. *The transcendental-logical subject as the Archimedean point of Kant’s critique of knowledge*

In Kant’s way of thinking it was uncritical for Descartes to deduce, from the concept of the thinking selfhood, the real existence of that

selfhood as a thinking substance.¹ According to him, the understanding offers us no knowledge if it is divorced from sense experience. The understanding rather is restricted to the phenomenal world of sense perception, and it can never penetrate to the “reality in itself” that lies behind this phenomenal world.

For this very reason it is wrong, in Kant’s view, to conceive the *cogito*, the “I think,” as a *Ding an sich* that has real existence. All of reality as we experience it must rather be regarded as a *Gegenstand* of this “I think.” The “I think” therefore is nothing more than the necessary subjective correlate of empirical reality. It is the *subjective pole of thought*,² opposed to which stands all of reality in the counterpole of the *thought-object*; and as such it cannot be a part of temporal empirical reality. We should note here above all how Kant constantly identifies, in an uncritical manner, the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation with the non-theoretical subject-object relation.

1 Descartes’s inference was not really as uncritical as Kant thought. For what he meant by the *cogito* was not the abstract, transcendental-logical subject that Kant had in mind, but the selfhood’s concrete act of thinking. As we shall see, this concrete act of thinking functions in all the aspects of reality, including the sensory, psychical aspect, and therefore it is not an abstract concept but something that really exists. Descartes too, however, finally reduced the *cogito* to a theoretical abstraction. He removed from it the aspects of number, space, and motion, and he granted the resultant theoretical abstraction an independent, substantial existence as the *anima rationalis*. It was utterly uncritical, therefore, for him to identify this “substance” with the selfhood that thinks. If one really understands the *cogito* in its full, concrete sense, then one must recognize that it comprises the concrete act of thinking as it issues from the selfhood. In such an understanding of the *cogito*, however, one encounters the second transcendental basic problem of philosophy, the problem of self-knowledge as the path to the discovery of the Archimedean point. Descartes ignored this basic problem in true dogmatic fashion, but Kant did exactly the same thing. An intrinsically problematic state of affairs cannot serve as a starting point for philosophical thought. Both Descartes and Kant therefore used their pretended purely theoretical judgments as dogmatic screens that concealed the real starting point of their philosophies.

2 Kant speaks in this connection of the “transcendental unity of apperception.” The use of the term *apperception* in contrast to perception originated with Leibniz. According to him, apperception is a conceptual apprehension of the data of experience, whereas perception is devoid of all logical discrimination and can even take place subconsciously. The term *subjective pole of thought* was first used by Theodor Litt, in his *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1933).

The subjective pole of thought can never be made into an object of thought; for over against every object of thought this “I think” maintains its position as the necessary subjective correlate. According to Kant, this subjective pole is a transcendental limiting concept of the selfhood which in no way can be identified with the empirical, individual thinking subject. The “empirical, psychological” selfhood of a thinker, after all, is part of empirical reality, and it therefore can become an object for the transcendental subject of thought. The transcendental subject of thought, by contrast, is not individual, but is rather a *universally valid condition* for all thinking that has empirical reality.¹ It is nothing other than the *formal, logical*, subjective unity of all possible synthetic thought activity, and as such it is elevated above the diversity of Kant’s synthetic categories of thought. Here is where he found his logical concentration point, above the various modal aspects that are set apart from each other in the *Gegenstand* relation.

s. *The transcendental-logical subject of Kant’s critique of knowledge is not identical with the transcendent root of the human personality*

We must ask whether this logical concentration point, this purely logical *form* of the selfhood, coincides with the transcendent root of human existence. The answer is no, for Kant teaches explicitly in his *Critique of Practical Reason* that this hidden root at the heart of the human personality is *ethical* in nature, that it consists in the idea of free, autonomous, moral self-determination. He also teaches, however, that theoretical philosophy can offer us no knowledge of this transcendent essence of the selfhood. Only in practical, rational faith can we grasp this normative idea of the human personality. Indeed, by virtue of the universally valid imperatives of the practical reason, we are even *compelled to believe* in the supra-sensible reality of this idea. But we can have no theoretical knowledge of it.

Does Kant then at least recognize that his conception of the starting point for the theoretical critique of knowledge is *determined*

1 Kant’s view of the subject of thought differs from Descartes’ *cogito* at this point. For Descartes initially conceived the thinking selfhood individually, in accordance with the solipsistic starting point that in modern times was adopted again by Hans Driesch.

by this faith in the autonomous personality and therefore stands and falls with that faith? Here again the answer is no. Fichte was the first who dared to take this truly critical step.

In Kant the theoretical reason and the practical reason are separated by a rigorous dualism. His theoretical critique of knowledge is no less autonomous than his critique of practical reason. Although his theoretical reason, in its theoretical ideas, may point beyond itself toward the practical idea of the freedom of the human personality, it is nevertheless not dependent on judgments of faith. Instead, it remains self-sufficient and autonomous in its presumed theoretical starting point.

Kant really did not depart from the theoretical attitude of thought in his “practical” philosophy. There he absolutized the moral aspect of human existence, but this implies that this modal aspect had first been theoretically abstracted through logical analysis. The moral and the logical aspects thus stood in a *Gegenstand* relation to one another. Kant did not notice this because he dogmatically confined the *Gegenstand* relation to natural-scientific thought. In his philosophy, mathematical natural science is the only possible science of empirical reality. And, as we have seen, he identified empirical reality with the theoretical abstraction that is performed on it by mathematical natural science. There is no room in his system for a science of the normative aspects of temporal reality, the aspects subject to rules for what ought to be.

Kant’s philosophy thus contains a fundamental dualism between the natural-scientific picture of reality, which is tied to sensibility, and the supra-sensory realm where the normative freedom of the autonomous personality resides. This dualism cannot be explained by purely theoretical, philosophical standards, for there are obviously supra-theoretical pre-judgments at work here that control the internal theoretical development of Kant’s whole philosophy. It will be the task of my transcendental critique of philosophical thought to bring these prejudgments to light.

t. Can Kant’s transcendental-logical subject of thought really function as the Archimedean point of his critique of knowledge?

Before proceeding to Kant’s prejudgments, however, I must first clarify the real nature of the Archimedean point of philosophy. I

will begin by undertaking a critical examination of Kant's conception of the transcendental subject of thought as the Archimedean point of theoretical philosophy.

Did Kant really succeed in finding a concentration point *within* theoretical thought that is located above the various aspects that are separated from and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation? By no means. Kant conceived his transcendental subject of thought as the subjective pole of thought and held that all of temporal reality stands *opposite* it in the counterpole of the *Gegenstand*. The fundamental opposition between the logical and the non-logical therefore is not bridged here. On the contrary, the transcendental subject of thought remains, in principle, confined within the *Gegenstand* relation.

Can, then, this transcendental-logical subject really be a logical unity standing above the diversity of the synthetic categories of thought? This possibility, too, is ruled out. For the logical subject function of our theoretical thinking is merely a logical unity located *within* the logical diversity of its structural moments. It is not a unity that stands *above* that diversity, even less so above the diversity of the synthetic viewpoints of the special sciences.

How then did Kant arrive at the notion that this logical subject of thought does possess a kind of logical transcendence to the various special-scientific aspects? He did so because, like Descartes before him, he tried to encompass the thinking *selfhood* in his concept of the transcendental-logical subject of thought.

Now the selfhood, as we have seen, undoubtedly transcends the modal aspects of its temporal existence. It does not do this, however, in its modal function as the logical subject of thought. Indeed, in this logical function it cannot even transcend the various syntheses between the logical aspect and the non-logical aspects; for these syntheses have no *logical* point of concentration. Such a concentration point can only be found in the selfhood as the center of a person's entire temporal existence, but this concentration point is *individual*.

Kant attempted to lift the modal structure of the logical subject of thought out of the temporal order of reality and to secure a place for it *above* that order. We have seen, however, that the modal structure of logical thought can exist only within the unbreakable coher-

ence of *all* the modal structures, and that this coherence is given only within the temporal order of reality itself.

u. Kant's epistemology dogmatically eliminates the first two basic problems in the transcendental critique of philosophic thought

In his critique of knowledge, as we have seen, Kant looked for an Archimedean point *within* the theoretical-logical function of thought, and he logicized the concentration point for this thought-function. As a result, he was compelled to dismiss the transcendental basic problem contained in theoretical synthesis by means of a dogmatic edict.

According to him, every *a priori* theoretical synthesis issues from the transcendental-logical subject of thought. But then, these syntheses themselves must also be transcendental and logical in nature. This, however, utterly prevents Kant's critique of knowledge from recognizing the *structure* of the *Gegenstand* relation grounded in the temporal order of reality, a structure that gave rise to my second formulation of the transcendental basic problem of philosophical thought.

By means of a dogmatic decree Kant did away with the theoretical hiatus and antithesis between the logical aspect of thought and the non-logical aspects of the *Gegenstand* relation. He reduced the actual modal structures of the pre-logical aspects that stand opposed to thought – with the exception of the sensory, psychical aspect – to a system of logical thought-categories. And he therefore had to conceive even the mutual unbreakable coherence of these aspects as transcendental and logical in nature. Along with all this, he eliminated the first transcendental basic problem by means of his dogmatic prejudice concerning the autonomy of theoretical thought.

The lack of critical seriousness in Kant's critique of knowledge thus becomes more and more evident. By constantly allowing supra-theoretical prejudgments to take the place of a genuinely critical theoretical investigation, his critique remains dogmatic through and through, in the negative sense of that word.

v. *Kant recognizes the Gegenstand relation only in the theoretical hiatus between the logical and the psychical aspects of experience*

Did the great thinker from Königsberg then disregard the problem of the *Gegenstand* relation across the board? No, there is one place in his epistemology where this problem plays an important role: namely, in the theoretical relation between the sensory aspect and the logical aspect. One can even say that he reduces the entire problem of the *Gegenstand* to this particular relation, and that he finds therein the basic problem of mathematical natural science.

Kant's categories of thought are synthetic in character only because they are related in an *a priori* manner to possible sensory experience. The sensory aspect of empirical reality is the only aspect whose non-logical character he recognizes. He regards space and time, the two forms of intuition, as *a priori* forms of sensibility that cannot be reduced to the logical forms (categories) of thought.

One therefore might think that Kant at least posed and answered the question as to how a synthesis can be made between logical category and sensory form of intuition. Here, at least, the need for a starting point that stands above both the logical and the sensory aspect seems to assert itself in his epistemology. And indeed, Kant introduced the so-called transcendental faculty of imagination at this point, which supposedly provides the logical categories with an *a priori* (i.e., not given in sense experience) "image" in sensory intuition by schematizing them in time.

Did Kant conceive this faculty of imagination as something that is supra-sensory and supra-logical? Again the answer is no. For him it was merely an *a priori* connection between logical thought and sensory intuition, a connection that is established entirely by synthetic activity issuing from the transcendental-logical subject of thought.

Kant therefore remained faithful to the dogma that the theoretical, logical function of thought is autonomous; he was a true captive of the prejudice that this thought-function offers the only possible starting point for a critique of knowledge. For this very reason he had to leave unsolved the problem of how it is possible to establish a connection between the logical categories of thought and the sensory forms of intuition, a problem that inevitably had to raise its

head in his philosophy. Indeed, he did not even address the question of how the transcendental faculty of the imagination could combine understanding and sensibility.

On one more occasion he does indeed appear to raise this problem of the connection between sensory intuition and the logical function of thinking, namely when he addresses the question of how we can relate our logical thought category to the sensory “matter” of our experience (the still unorganized sensory impressions of the world around us). But his “solution” of this problem is no real solution. For he assigns the role of mediator to “time” as a “form of sensibility.” Hence time is merely taken in its sensory aspect here. But the real question is how Kant thinks it possible to connect time as a “sensory form of intuition” with the thought-category. *Here* lay the critical problem in *Kant’s system*, which he only managed to eliminate through a dogmatic *dictat*.¹

Kant *had* to eliminate it because he did not give a critical account to himself of his real Archimedean point. In truth, his starting point was *not* located in theoretical thinking but in the central religious sphere on which all expressions of our temporal life are based.

3. The third basic transcendental problem

a. *The Origin as absolute ground of theoretic truth*

At this point we must demonstrate that the starting point of philosophy is always of a religious nature, regardless of the question whether the thinker is critically aware of this.

We noted earlier that the Archimedean point can only be discovered through critical self-reflection; and there we asked: *How does man gain true self-knowledge; and is this self-knowledge a matter for philosophy to decide?*

This brings us to formulate the third transcendental problem of all possible philosophy as follows: *How are we to choose the Archimedean point of philosophy from which our theoretical synthesis can be performed, and what is its nature?*

On our Christian standpoint we know that true self-knowledge fully depends upon the true knowledge of God. Of course, this insight is not itself of a philosophic nature, and knowledge of God and ourselves decidedly *transcends* the boundaries of philosophy.

1 For a more elaborate treatment see my *WdW*, 2:425-51 [cf. *NC*, 2:496-520].

But if it is to attain internal significance for the actual philosophical field of enquiry, it must be demonstrated that the inner structure of philosophic thought itself is determined by the central religious relationship between man and his Creator. We already established that the universally valid structure of theoretic thought ties every possible philosophical investigation to an Archimedean point, in which the aspects, as separated and put in opposition to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation, find their deeper root-unity. In addition, we already found that this Archimedean point or starting point for philosophy itself is necessarily of a supra-theoretical nature. What then is its only possible character?

This question *cannot* and *may not* be avoided in a transcendental critique of philosophic thought, once it has been established that the Archimedean point is demanded as a *necessary presupposition* by the very structure of philosophic thinking.

The Archimedean point is not another modal aspect to be added to temporal reality. If it were, it would not lead us *beyond* the diversity of the aspects and would then not be a real Archimedean point. Rather, it is the *supra-temporal concentration point* of all aspects and individuality structures contained in the temporal order of reality. In this concentration point these are all drawn together in a deeper unity to a *fullness of meaning* which they cannot possess in their temporal sphere-sovereignty.

In all the diversity of all its structures temporal reality reaches this fullness of meaning only in the concentration upon its *Origin*. And this concentration upon its supra-temporal Origin of all that is temporal is the *essence of religion*.

It is in its inherent structure that theoretic philosophical thinking reveals its necessary and inevitable dependence on this Origin, for it always demands an *absolute foundation* for its activity. Without choosing an absolute foundation philosophic thinking is *impossible*.

b. The tendency of the creature to seek its Origin

Every attempt at *absolutization*, as encountered in modern philosophic thinking, is ultimately founded on a *search for an origin*. The tendency to do so is characteristic for theoretic thinking in keeping with its meaning. But because creation is not self-sufficient, this is a tendency that is intrinsic to all of created reality. Every effort to ab-

solutize something means that thinkers need an absolute ground for their thought, and that they are forced to seek it by the very *nature* of theoretic thinking.

We remarked earlier that we can never explain the absolutization of a modal aspect on purely theoretical grounds. We can now establish that it must be of a *religious* character, and, as such, is inseparably tied to the choice of the *Archimedean point*.

For if the choice of our Archimedean point means that we choose our religious position in the *root*, in the *heart* of our temporal existence, it means, given the nature of religion, that we choose our position in relation to the Origin of all creation.

The concept of origin is both the oldest and the most fundamental concept in the history of philosophy. Greek thought began with a search for the *Archē*, the origin of all things.

In modern humanistic thinking Descartes thought he chose his *starting point* in the subjective theoretic thinking of the individual selfhood, but from that he immediately proceeded to his concept of God. *For only there could he find an absolute foundation for his subsequent theoretical deductions.* Truth in philosophy depends first of all on this absolute basis, acknowledged as the origin of all that is relative.

c. The idea of Origin and the absolute ground of truth.

The criterion of truth is of a religious nature

Philosophical thinking is impossible without acknowledging the absolute ground of Truth. As soon as one abandons this absoluteness, he ends up in a theoretical relativism that undermines its own foundation. He may then not even posit the thesis that truth is *relative*, for this judgment too lays claim to absolute truth.

The *criterion* for truth itself is of a *religious* character. Scholasticism adopted the ancient metaphysical criterion of truth from Greek philosophy, which held that truth consists of correspondence, or rather of the *becoming alike* (*homoiōsis*) of *thinking* and *being*. This was essentially based on an idea of Origin in which divinity was identified with absolute, pure, theoretical thought, not tied to “matter” (the divine “*nous*” as rational origin of all “*form*”).

As soon as the relationship between theoretic thinking and divine thought as the absolute ground for truth is abandoned, restricting truth to theoretic thinking can no longer cover up its relativistic character.

Of course, one can avoid the deification of theoretic thought in a *terminological sense* by, for instance, calling the absolute ground of theoretic truth, not deified thought, but the absolute *idea* of truth (or the absolute “value of truth”). But as soon as one then places other “absolute” ideas or values besides that of absolute truth —e.g., those of beauty, goodness or holiness — one will be forced from inner necessity to relate all these ideas or “values” to some absolute, divine unity, if one wishes to avoid falling again into a self-defeating relativism. For all such “ideas” cannot be understood without some mutual *relationship*.

As soon as I utter the aesthetic judgment: “The Nightwatch by Rembrandt is beautiful,” this judgment implies its claim to *objective truth*: this work of art is *in truth* beautiful. The same holds for a moral judgment such as “Neighborly love is good,” etc. In other words, these “ideas,” these “values” cannot have an absolute character because they are *mutually related*.

If, on the other hand, one assumes that they are *not* mutually related, one falls back on a new absurdity: that, by virtue of their completely self-sufficient character, these ideas or values *exclude* each other, and in their pretended absoluteness *cancel each other out*.

In the strict sense of the word only the Origin of all things can be absolute. Truth can only be absolute *in its Origin*, and detached from this Origin no truth is possible. By virtue of its inner structure, theoretical thinking necessarily depends on its Origin, by which it is bound to an absolute ground of truth. This holds, no matter how one sees this Origin subjectively in a religious sense.

d. The origin of the dialectic ground-motives in philosophy

If the relative is absolutized, an inner dualism in the religious center of theoretic thought cannot be avoided. For, as we saw, every absolutization of the relative calls forth its *correlates*, which press their claim to supposed absoluteness with equal validity in the face of the first.

In this manner the dialectical ground-motives arose in philosophy, insofar as they took their orientation from a false idea of Origin. In our introduction¹ we identified a trio: those of *form and matter*, of *nature and grace*, and of *nature and freedom*.

¹ See my *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, 1:1-19.

e. The fundamental difference between religious and theoretical dialectics. The confusion of these two in Hegelianism

We cannot state the matter too sharply: we are dealing here with a *religious*, not a merely *theoretical* dialectic. Every attempt to resolve the inner conflicts, called forth by a false idea of Origin, into a higher “synthesis” by purely theoretical means, shows a lack of critical self-reflection in one's thinking.

Especially *Hegel* and his school imagined they could in this way relativize the “one-sidedness” of earlier philosophic systems by means of a theoretical dialectic and then bring them to an absolute synthesis.

However, he who has taken the road of the transcendental critique of philosophic thinking cannot fall back into such an uncritical overextension of theoretical dialectics. The *religious antithesis* allows of no *theoretical* synthesis. Indeed, it *controls* and *governs* the theoretical dialectics, even when the thinker shows no critical awareness of this fact.¹

The idolatrous direction of theoretical thought, in its search for the origin, is rooted in the *heart* of a person's existence. And that person can never *theoretically* resolve the religious conflicts which this direction calls forth in the ground-motive of philosophic thinking. These conflicts *must* be of an absolute character because they originate in a false religious stance over against the absolute Origin.

f. The central place of the religious ground-motive as brought to light by the transcendental critique of philosophic thought

The preceding argumentation now fully highlights the Archimedean point of philosophy.

We remarked in the previous section that the real Archimedean point can not yet be found in the human selfhood (in the transcendent sense of the individual religious root of man's entire temporal existence). For the real starting point must comprise not merely the meaning of the individual existence of a person, but that of *the entire temporal cosmos*.

1 Cf. my essay on the relation between theoretical and religious dialectics, “De vier religieuze grondthema's in den ontwikkelingsgang van het wijsgeerig denken van het Avondland” [The four basic religious themes in the development of Western philosophy], *Phil. Ref.* 6 (1941): 161-79, at 173.

In their religious root the aspects and individuality structures of temporal reality, set apart in our theory, are not merely particular to the *individual* person. Rather, they form the founding structural framework that encloses *all* temporal creatures, relationships and events, including the kingdoms of animals, plants and inorganic matter. For that reason we pointed out that true self-knowledge is merely the *necessary way* in which the Archimedean point of philosophy can be discovered.

This point must have a *supra-individual* character, but at the same time it must enfold the *human ego sharing* in it. For it is the human *ego* that thinks philosophically. If the ego did not *share* in the Archimedean point in which the total meaning of our temporal cosmos is centered, then the starting point of its thinking would remain *outside* of this point. But that would be an impossible situation. The starting point we choose must give *religious direction* to all of our immanent theoretical activity of thought. How would this be possible if we ourselves did not *share* in this starting point?

In his epistemology Kant definitely saw that the *individual* thinking ego cannot be the starting point for theoretic synthesis (as *Descartes* had thought). But for the sake of his doctrine of the *autonomy* of science versus faith he expected to find a starting point of universal validity in a theoretical abstraction: his *transcendental-logical* thought-subject – from which he *subtracted all individual reality*. As we have seen, this was an uncritical conception.

The *structure* of theoretical thinking is *immanent*, and exactly for that reason its Archimedean point has to be of a *transcendent-religious nature*. Once we have seen this, we are left with only one possibility for a *supra-individual* starting point in which the *full individual ego can share*. This is the religious root-community of the human race. Every individual human being indeed is a member of this community, though as such it has a supra-individual character.

God has revealed in His Word that He indeed created human-kind in such a religious root-community; thus, through the first Head, Adam, *all* of mankind turned away from God in sin. And He has also revealed to man that the *total meaning* of the entire temporal cosmos was centered in this religious root-community: because of man's fall the *entire* temporal cosmos was cursed.

The other creatures, enclosed in the same temporal world-order with humankind, have no *religious root*. Man's task was to *disclose* the entire temporal creation *onto the service of God*. When man became unfaithful to this task in his radical fall into disobedience, the entire temporal world was dragged along through his fall. Apart from man the world cannot direct itself towards God and disclose the forces placed in it unto God's service.

In the fall into sin, the radical (i.e., root-affecting) rejection of God, man raised his heart against its Divine Origin. Humankind believed it was *something in itself*, and thus *like God*, and began to seek *itself* and with that its god in what is *temporal*. This was the idolatry attendant upon the turning away from the true God as He had revealed Himself to man's heart in His Word.

This religious root-community of the human race can only reveal itself in a religious communal spirit, which as a *dunamis*, a "spiritual force," drives all temporal human activity and *shows it its direction*, even if the individual is not conscious of this. We can call this "*dunamis*" the *religious communal motive*, if we take the word "motive" in its original, succinct sense ("*movere*" means to move, to propel).

A twofold *dunamis* has operated in the religious root-community of man since the Fall and the promise in Paradise of the coming redemption in Christ Jesus. These two ground-motives oppose each other in an irreconcilable *antithesis*. It is a *religious*, not a mere theoretical antithesis. The first ground-motive is idolatrous; the second is the *dunamis* of God's revealed Word, which works through God's Spirit in the heart of mankind when restored through re-birth in Christ.

The first ground-motive can express itself in various shapes, because the idolatrous spirit of a religious community directs itself in an absolutizing sense to what is *temporal*, with its intrinsic creaturely *diversity*.

The second ground-motive can ultimately have only one integral shape, since it can be none other than the radical ground-motive of God's revealed Word.

Still, when the latter begins to take on various shapes in the history of mankind, that can only be due to the tendency of the human heart – even after it has been opened to the radical *dunamis* of God's

Word – to seek an impossible *religious synthesis* between the ground-motive of the revealed Word and the ground-motives of apostate religions that are opposed to the former in a *radical antithesis*.

With this, our transcendental critique has brought to light the central place of the four religious ground-motives of Western thinking.

Thinkers may allow their philosophic investigation to be directed by a non-scriptural ground-motive, but we may never presume to pass judgment on their personal relationship with God. Such a judgment is not up to a human being to give. The religious antithesis also goes right through the life of the Christian, since his old nature will always offer an entry gate for the spirit of apostasy.

g. There is solidarity in the fall

For a reformational philosophy this confession means a radical rejection of any Pharisaic *hubris* towards immanence philosophy. The ground-motive of the revealed Word can only help to *reform* philosophy by waging a never-ending battle against the apostate motives that penetrate its own scientific investigations.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSCENDENTAL CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT AND THE THOMIST *THEOLOGIA NATURALIS*

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea raised three basic problems in its transcendental critique of philosophic thinking when it subjected the structure of theoretical thought to a critical investigation. Thomist scholasticism tried to solve these three problems within the framework of its metaphysics, starting out with the dogma of the autonomy of natural reason (*ratio naturalis*). This metaphysics is then differentiated into three interconnected basic disciplines:

1. metaphysical ontology or the doctrine of being;
2. metaphysical psychology, or the doctrine of *anima rationalis* as a substance;
3. *theologia naturalis*, or the doctrine of the natural knowledge of God as the crowning science of metaphysics.

It will be clear at first sight that this trio must be closely related to the three stages of the transcendental critique which we traced in our enquiry.

One may expect that the ontology or the metaphysical doctrine of being must be related to the first fundamental problem we formulated, which in essence concerns the mutual relationship between and coherence of the aspects of reality as separated and placed in opposition to each other in the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation.

Next, the transcendental problem of self-knowledge that opened the way to the discovery of the Archimedean point of philosophy at the second stage of our critical enquiry must be involved in the metaphysical psychology.

Finally, *theologia naturalis* will have to contain an attempt to arrive at a metaphysical conception of the Origin, starting with the autonomy of theoretical thought.

Meanwhile the three fundamental problems mentioned are not formulated critically in this scholastic metaphysics. They cannot be born here of a critical investigation into the intentional structure of

the theoretical attitude of thought, for as we have seen earlier, focusing philosophic thinking on the investigation of its own intentional structure already implies abandoning the dogma of the autonomy of science as a purely theoretical axiom.

In this metaphysics the three basic questions will have to be detached from the structure of the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation which involves that the modal aspects of reality are separated and placed in opposition to one another theoretically. Instead, however, this metaphysics will assume the prejudice that theoretic thinking is directed towards reality itself, or better still, towards a reality in itself, which purportedly exists independent of the theoretical-logical aspect of thought.

Granted, Thomist scholasticism, guided by the Greek form-matter motive, will admit that human knowledge is limited, insofar as it is by nature dependent upon “material reality” – in which the essential forms only realize themselves in matter. It will admit that human knowledge must therefore start with sensory perception, because “material things” presumably can only present themselves directly to the sensory function of our experience and that theoretical thinking can grasp the pure, essential forms of things only through a theoretical abstraction from this sensory material. And it will admit that in this theoretical abstraction “material reality” is transformed into a higher, “purely spiritual” mode of being, which is supposed to be a characteristic of the theoretic-logical function of thought.

However, scholasticism will never accept that theoretical thinking subtracts from reality exactly that which makes theoretical thinking itself possible in the first place, namely, the unbreakable coherence of the logical aspect and all other aspects of reality without any exception. This metaphysics is contingent upon the dogma that the theoretical function of thought is a pure form-function, entirely separated and independent of those aspects of temporal reality which it assigns only to “matter,” i.e., the aspects of number, of space and of physical-chemical energy. It is thus contingent upon the view that the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation between the logical function of thought and the aspects of “matter” corresponds with reality itself.

In this connection Thomist metaphysics will never be able to admit that there is a fundamental difference between the naive and the scientific or theoretic attitude of thought, and that it will have to ascribe the theoretical hiatus between the logical function of thought and the so-called material reality in itself also to the naive attitude.

We will submit this Thomist metaphysics containing the concept of substance and metaphysical psychology to a critical examination below (chapter VII). In the present context we will only dwell on the metaphysical *theologia naturalis*, because it must prove whether the doctrine of the autonomy of “theoretical reason” in Thomist scholasticism can indeed hold its ground against the transcendental critique of philosophic thinking. What is at stake here is the question whether theoretical thinking can indeed arrive at an idea of the Origin, entirely independently of a basic religious motive and the faith dominated by this motive.

In order to do so we must examine the Thomist-Aristotelian doctrine of being and involve the doctrine of *analogia entis* in our investigation, because without that the Thomist *theologia naturalis* cannot be understood.

This natural theology intends to provide a purely philosophic knowledge of God, claiming that we can obtain this knowledge independently of the light of the revealed Word,¹ by the light of “natural reason” alone.

1. The religious determination of the Greek idea of “theoria”

The idea of a philosophical theology, in which it is contended that *pistis* [opinion] is entirely replaced by *epistēmē* [knowledge], the metaphysical knowledge of concepts, originated in Greek philosophy.

Aristotle viewed theology as the crowning science of his metaphysics. This can only be understood from the Greek view of “theoria,” in which theoretic philosophic thinking indeed was seen as the real religious organ that provides knowledge, through which the philosopher enters into contact with the deity in contemplation.

1 [. . . the revealed Word: for *Woord-openbaring*, elsewhere translated as “Word-revelation.”]

2. The axioms of Greek metaphysics

Closely related to this is the fact that *theoria*, insofar as it is directed towards real being and towards the first principles of being, is seen as infallible. The theorems concerning these matters are axioms, they are infallible cornerstones for all argumentation, in which theoretical thinking cannot err. The theoretical function of thought (the *nous*) is the origin of the primary foundations of science (*ἀρχὴ τῶν ἀρχῶν*; *archē tōn archōn*).¹

Therefore the *theoria* contains absolute truth; it possesses absolute certainty in its first principles (*archai*) which metaphysics elaborates on as first philosophy (*πρωτὴ φιλοσοφία*); *protē philosophia*).

This apodictic certainty, which Aristotle accords his metaphysical principles, and which Thomist scholasticism accepts faithfully from its Greek teacher, is inseparably related to the view that in *theoria* thinking and being become one. And beginning at least with Parmenides, Greek metaphysics ascribed divinity to being in its actuality as pure form.

Aristotle identifies the deity with absolute theoretical thinking as inclusive of all true, actual being. This idea of Origin governs the choice of the Archimedean point of philosophy in active theoretical reason, which in turn is credited with divinity. In the human person theoretic thinking is in immediate religious contact with the deity, because according to the Aristotelian view, the religious concentration point of man's nature must be located in the theoretical function of thought.

3. The religious law of concentration in human nature

Here again self-knowledge appeared to be entirely dependent upon knowledge of God, according to the generally valid law of

1 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 2.19 (100b 8-12) (Random House, McKeon edition): "... scientific knowledge and intuition are always true: further, no other kind of thought except intuition is more accurate than scientific knowledge, whereas primary premisses are more knowable than demonstrations, and all scientific knowledge is discursive. From these considerations it follows that there will be no scientific knowledge of the first premisses, and since nothing except intuition can be truer than scientific knowledge, it will be intuition that apprehends the primary premisses. . . ." Cf. *Metaphysics* 9.10 (1051b 31-33): "Therefore, about the things which are essences and actualities one cannot err; one simply knows it or knows it not." Read the entire 10th chapter of Book 9 in context.

human nature, which in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is called the religious law of concentration.

4. The adaptation of the Greek idea of “theoria” to the ground-motive of nature and grace causes a shift in meaning

The Greek idea of “theoria” necessarily had to undergo a shift of meaning in Thomist scholasticism, because it had to be adapted to the new religious ground-motive of “nature and grace.”

The view that active theoretical thought is the organ for religious knowledge had to be pushed entirely into the background, because in the scholastic framework of the Thomist synthesis-motive revealed religion was entirely transferred to the sphere of grace.

That is how the typically scholastic idea of *theologia naturalis* as the philosophical crowning science arose. In itself it does not reach into the sphere of religion, but as the natural stepping stone for revealed knowledge of God it lays the rational foundation for receiving the supernatural revelation of God. In this process natural intelligence rises to a higher form of perfection through the supernatural gift of faith.

It is easy to see, however, that the view of faith as a supernatural addition to the intellect still betrays the influence of the Greek view of our theoretical function of thought as the organ that gives us religious knowledge.

Thomas merely divided the theoretical-logical function of thought, as it were, into two levels: a natural and a supernatural, and only the supernatural one is then accepted as the organ through which we receive religious knowledge.

Theologia naturalis seems to be independent of religion here, although Thomas emphasizes that a hidden yearning after higher, supernatural knowledge of God reveals itself in it. In spite of that, however, it becomes adapted to Roman Catholic church doctrine, for otherwise it could not be a suitable substructure for the theology of revelation. In this way the autonomy of “natural reason” acquires its typical scholastic sense, which is fundamentally different from the Aristotelian-Greek conception.

Our transcendental critique attacks this natural theology in its dogmatic attitude by forcing it to give account of the structure of the theoretical attitude of thought. We believe we have demon-

strated that theoretical thinking by virtue of its universally valid structure is not self-sufficient, and that the choice of the Archimedean point is necessarily of a supra-theoretic, religious character. If this is correct, then natural theology can never exist as a purely theoretical, philosophical science. To the contrary, it appears to depend entirely on a religious choice of position vis-à-vis the Origin of all things, a choice which governs the whole approach of this metaphysical theology as its necessary supra-theoretical presupposition.

Our knowledge of God is primarily a spiritual knowledge of the heart in the religious contact of the supra-functional¹ center of our existence either with the Origin, or else with a pseudo-Origin (although the latter can only be recognized in the light of the revealed Word).

5. The theory of the *analogia entis* in Thomist scholasticism

In contrast to Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas has certainly seen that “natural reason” cannot give us real, direct knowledge of God, independently of the revealed Word of God. Thomas speaks merely of a natural knowledge of God from the divine workings in creation. It is an indirect knowledge which concludes from the functioning of creatures that are accessible to our thinking, that they must have an absolute Origin or “First Cause.” This is founded on the metaphysical principle of Aristotle that all that moves must be made to move by something else, a principle to which Thomas assigns infallible certainty.

Positive knowledge of God’s Being is not acquired in this manner. We have knowledge of material creatures, and when we assign the attributes thus gained to God, they are of an analogical character. We can only understand what is meant by this by taking notice of the famous theory of the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), which in its basic outline can already be found in the logic and metaphysics of Aristotle, which, as Stenzel has demonstrated, Ar-

¹ [Originally the MS had *supra-temporeel* (supra-temporal) but Dooyeweerd replaced it with *boven-funtioneel* (supra-functional).]

istotle himself took over from Plato.¹ Starting with the early Church Fathers, this *analogia entis* played a central role in Christian thinking in connection with so-called negative theology.

As is customary in Aristotelian logic, the figure of analogy is treated in connection with the linguistic meaning of the words, to which one then tries to link a logical concept. Thus, logical judgments are continually oriented to grammatical usage and this often leads to a confusion of the structure of the two. This is closely related to the Greek view of the *logos* in which word and logical concept are grasped in an indivisible unity.

This does not mean that they did not distinguish between word and concept. It may be granted that Cratylus, a pupil of Heraclitus, the cynic Antisthenes, and the Megarici completely identified these two on the basis of their philosophical views. But already Plato in his dialogue *Cratylus* subjected the distinction between word and concept to a thoroughgoing philosophical investigation (which was entirely dominated by the form-matter motive), and brought to light the priority of a concept over against its symbolical expression in words.

Nevertheless, logical enquiry was tied to linguistic expressions. In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle emphatically established that linguistic types of words (categories or elements of speech) are related to being, just as concepts.² And so he related his entire logical theory of categories, which encompasses the original specific modes of being, to the linguistic elements of speech as “forms of expression,” whereby the category of substance corresponds to the linguistic substantive.

For this reason the investigation of the meaning of words automatically had to assume an important place in Aristotle’s logic and ontology. In connection with the latter, for instance, the entire seventh chapter of Book V of his *Metaphysics* is devoted to the different ways of speaking, using the word “being.”

1 Julius Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles* (ed. Leipzig and Berlin, 1933), pp. 157 ff. In Neoplatonism (Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus) the doctrine of the analogy played a central role in the so-called negative theology; from here, and via pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, it entered Augustinian scholasticism.

2 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 5.7 (1017a 22-23): “. . . because the subject, which has an attribute that of which it is itself predicated, itself is.”

Very many words in our spoken language have more than one meaning without any point of correspondence, and so already for that reason cannot refer to the same logical concept.

This also holds for the word “being,” which in common usage may function purely as a copula signifying an implication (for instance, a symphony *is* a piece of music). It can also function as an equivalence (a dollar *is* one hundred cents); and then again, it may mean real presence (he *is* here). All this makes it impossible to connect the word “being” with the same delineated concept.

The concept of “being” in Greek metaphysics does not at all coincide with what we mean by “reality,” and is therefore not a true concept in relation to a word. Rather, as we shall see, it is a transcendental idea that has to receive its true transcendental content from the religious basic motive of form and matter.¹

Aristotle and Thomas treat the analogy as a “logical” figure, related to being in the Greek sense described above. (As I will explain later, it cannot possibly be that.) This figure is located between that which has two or more meanings (*aequivocum*) and that which has purely one meaning (*univocum*).

In equivocity one and the same word is used in entirely different meanings; univocal words are always used in the same sense.

With the analogy, neither the one nor the other is the case. The analogy differs from the equivocity because the latter excludes every semblance between subjects that are given the same name. For instance, the word “file” denoting an orderly row, a folder for keeping papers in order, or a steel instrument for smoothing rough surfaces is the same for very different things. Thus, the word used equivocally cannot correspond to a common concept.²

1 In the Philosophy of the Law-Idea the word *being* only refers to God in its real and original meaning, following the revelation of the name of the Lord in the Old Testament. For the creature the mode of existence as *meaning* is reserved for the restless creaturely expression of being which always refers back to its Origin. A *concept* of being is thereby excluded *a priori*. Concepts remain entirely within the bounds of created *meaning*. *Being* strictly *transcends* meaning and thereby the human concept. The concept “being” of Greek metaphysics is always rooted in the Greek *form* motive and already for that reason useless for reformational thinking.

2 [Dooyeweerd uses the example of *beer*, which in Dutch can mean debt, bear, dam and feces.]

However, the analogy also differs from univocity, since the words we use univocally are necessarily related to the same logical genus and therefore correspond to the same generic concept. In the case of an analogy, on the other hand, the same use of a word does not correspond to a generic concept, but to a so-called analogical concept.¹

6. Analogical and generic concepts

We can describe the difference between analogical and generic concepts in scholasticism as follows.² *Generic concepts* are formed according to the well-known method of Aristotelian abstraction, which progresses from *genus proximum* to *differentia specifica*. They are formed from our experience of individual things that are similar in some of their essential characteristics in a process of real or perfect abstraction. The “essential characteristics” that are common to a group of things and thus belong to them “in the same manner” (*univoce*), are combined in a general or generic concept, along with abstraction of everything in which they are individually different.

Thus we can say that all men are rational beings, because they indeed have the “rational form of being” in common. The predicate “rational” applies to them in the same sense, or univocally. In the same way the concept “sensory living being” is the *genus proximum* of rational living beings (*animal rationale*) and animals (*animal brutum*). In this way it is possible, according to Thomas, that generic concepts indeed express a complete unity of concepts because there is room here for a perfect or real abstraction.

On the other hand, the *analogical concepts*, which all go back to the concept of being, are in Aristotelian-Thomist theory assigned to beings of a fundamentally different character. Therefore, these concepts can never be used in the same sense for these beings, but only in the manner of analogy or relationship.

“Being” does not apply to God and creature in the same manner, neither to a “substance” (something that exists as a separate

1 Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, chaps. 32-34 (Pegis ed.).

2 Cf. my essay “De leer der analogie in de Thomistische wijsbegeerte en de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee” [The doctrine of analogy in Thomist philosophy and in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea], *Phil. Ref.* 7 (1942): 45-57.

entity), nor to an “accidens” (accidental attribute).¹ Thus we can assign unity as a “transcendental” determination of being to everything that is, although not in the same manner, but according to the special nature of what is. This unity too is therefore not a generic but an analogical concept. The same holds for the concepts “good,” “true,” “cause,” etc.

In all these analogical concepts being cannot possibly offer a “real or perfect abstraction” of the differentiating attributes or the different modes of realization. For “perfect abstraction” presupposes that being, which we can grasp in the abstract concept, can be understood by theoretic thinking apart from the modes proper to its realization in an individual thing. In this case, thinking is justified to abstract these proper attributes because they do not belong to the logically understandable or intelligible content, to the *ratio* or the *eidos* (the essence) of the thing.

In the case of analogical concepts, on the other hand, the unity of concept can only be obtained through an unreal or imperfect abstraction. This imperfect abstraction is the result of the fact that the realities that fall under analogical concepts differ exactly in that in which they are similar. As a result, when we grasp the similar element, we cannot abstract it from the difference. The similarity is the objective basis for covering them with the same concept. But since that similarity includes an intrinsic difference, that concept is not a perfect unity but harbors the germ of theoretical diversity. The unity and identity, grasped in these analogical concepts, is not absolute but proportional; the identity is a relational identity.²

7. The two classes of the *analogia* of being

As a relational identity the analogy can reveal itself in different ways. According to Thomas, they can be divided into two classes.

In the first place, the same predicate can be assigned to two or more things because of the same relation with a third. Thus, in relation to the same health, an animal is called “healthy” as a subject of

1 Cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, 10.2 (1054a 13).

2 It is precisely this doctrine of the analogy of proportion, developed by Aristotle in chapter two of book four of his *Metaphysics*, that is derived directly from Plato’s statement in his *Timaeus*, 31C (trans. Jowett): “proportion is best adapted to effect such a union.” See also Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, p. 157.

this condition, medicine as an effective means to achieve it, food as a sustainer, etc.

In the second place, the same predicate can be assigned to two subjects on the basis of the relation between the first and the second, not because of a relation between these two and a third. For example, “being” is assigned to both the “substance” and its “accidens” to the extent that the accidental attribute exists only as related to the “substance” (the independent carrier of attributes), not because of a relation of substance and “accidens” to a third.

The first class of analogy cannot play a role in the words we use equally for God and the creatures, since there is no third to be found to which both are related, and which in this sense would logically have to precede God and creature, since they would have to share it in a different manner. This leaves only the second class of analogy, whereby pronouncements about God are derived from the creature “insofar as the creature is related to God as its first Origin.”¹

In various works Thomas Aquinas elaborated on this theory of the proportional analogy in the footsteps of Plato, Aristotle, the church fathers and earlier scholastics, but not always in the same

1 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 34 [2-4]: “From what we have said, therefore, it remains that the names said of God and creatures are predicated neither univocally nor equivocally but analogically, that is, according to an order or reference to something one . . .

“This can take place in two ways. In one way, according as many things have reference to another thing. Thus, with reference to one *health* we say that an animal is healthy as the subject of health, medicine is healthy as its cause, food as its preserver, urine as its sign.

“In another way, the analogy can obtain according as the order or reference of two things is not to something else but to one of them. Thus, being is said of substance and accident according as an accident has reference to a substance, and not according as substance and accident are referred to a third thing.

“Now, the names said of God and things are not said analogically according to the first mode of analogy, since we should then have to posit something prior to God, but according to the second mode.”

[The “one” Aristotle has in mind is that of a “kind”: “There are many senses in which a thing may be said to ‘be’, but all that ‘is’ is related to one central point, one definite kind of thing, and is not said to ‘be’ by a mere ambiguity.” *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001, page 732; *Metaph.*, 1003a 33-35).]

manner. On this score one can note a different approach in his earlier and his later, more mature, works.

As a result, Thomas has been interpreted in different ways. Most modern Thomists follow his exposition of the *analogia entis* as it has been elaborated on by Cajetan,¹ John of St. Thomas, Silvester of Ferrara and other, older Thomas commentators.

8. Thomas' earlier concept of the proportional analogy.

The so-called *analogia proportionalitatis*

These Thomists preferably followed the expositions which he gave in his earlier works concerning the proportional analogy, especially in his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard and his *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*.

In the latter work Thomas again distinguishes two cases in this analogy (*De veritate* Q. 2, art. 11). Here follows the paragraph concerned in its entirety:

There can exist a relationship and, therefore, similarity and analogy, between two things on the basis of the circumstance that a relation of degree, distance or measure exists between them. This involves all things that include a direct and mutual disposition [*habitudinem ad invicem*]. An example is the relation between the number two and the unit of number, whose double it is. However, one can also establish a correspondence between two things that have no direct relationship [to one another] based on the circumstance that the one relates to the other as the second to a fourth.

The number six corresponds with the number four in that six is the double of three, four the double of two. The first type of similarity is one of a direct relationship, the second signifies the "relation of a relation" (*proportionalitatis*). In the first type certain concepts are applied to two things, insofar as the one has a direct relation to the second; in such a way we apply the predicate being to the substance and its accidental attribute on the basis of the direct relationship between the second and the first.

In other cases, however, we use the concept of analogy in the second fashion: we apply the word "seeing" to the eye as well as to intelligence because intelligence is the same for the soul as the eye is for the body.

The first class of analogy demands a direct and distinct relationship between things that we call analogous; it is therefore impossible that such an analogy exists between the attributes we assign

¹ See esp. his *De nominum analogia* (On the analogy of names).

to both God and creature; for no creature stands in such a relationship to God that it could serve to determine God's perfection.

On the other hand, nothing stands in the way of using certain words in such a way equally for God and for the creature in the sense of the second analogy, in which no direct and defined relationship between the expressions applied to both is demanded.

From this passage the well-known Thomas interpreter Sertillanges, in agreement with the majority of modern Thomists and entirely in the footsteps of Cajetan and others, draws this conclusion: that Thomas declared the relation between the names, jointly assigned to both God and the creature, valid only in the sense of the so-called *analogia proportionalitatis*.

This means that when we name God, we do in no way claim that a relation of direct similarity exists between us and the "First Cause." We do not ascribe things such as "spirituality," goodness, personality, or anything else to God as something that He would have in common with us (*ut quando idem diversis inest, vel ex eo quod duo participant unum*).¹ Sertillanges writes:

It is not true that a direct relation exists between something in God and something in us. There is no sharing of something we have in common – at the same level – of any concept, not even of being. What is there is a proportionality, a relation of relationships, such as when one says: 2 relates to 4 as 8 to 16; or as in the concrete expression: the ruler is for the people what the helmsman is for the ship.²

He invokes another well-known passage from *De veritate* where Thomas remarks:

even if we cannot place the infinite in a relation to the finite, we can still grasp them in a proportionality to each other, because what the finite is to the finite, the infinite is to the infinite; and this is how we have to understand the similarity between God and creature: God relates to that which pertains to Him in the same manner as the creature relates to what pertains to it.³

1 Cf. *De veritate* Q. 2, Art. 11, Repl. to Obj. 2: *ut quando idem diversis inest* (that the same is never in opposites); cf. *vel ex eo quod duo participant unum* (for instance, from that in regard to which two partake of one).

[Note: In the subsequent footnotes Dooyeweerd's translation of Latin quotations are without quotation marks.]

2 A. D. Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 250.

3 *Questiones disputatae de veritate* Q. 2, Art. 11; Q. 23, Arts. 7-9.

Now it should be pointed out that the mathematical example of an *analogia proportionalitatis* that Thomas gives in the long passage quoted above – and which he derived from Plato¹ – cannot be called a happy one. For the *mathematical* relational identity to be found in the equation $3:6 = 2:4$ cannot itself be of an analogical character, for it remains entirely within the modal aspect of quantity. The equal sign (=) that connects both relations signifies a modal (in Thomist terminology “univocal”) “equivalence.”

This is not the case with the metaphysical *analogia proportionalitatis*. Here diversity in the modes of being enters – as we have heard – into the concept of being itself. There is no univocal equivalence here in the relations, merely one of analogy, of a similarity of relations or relational identity.

Secondly, it should be noticed that Thomas chooses a mere relational identity between God and creature in his earlier works and expressly rules out any direct relationship between the two. Apparently, he does not yet know here how to understand the direct relationship in any other sense than as a mutual disposition. Yet, even in his later view, he cannot assume a mutual relation between God and creature, for God in His so called aseity can never be dependent upon his creature.

It is striking, however, that in his later works (in his *Summa Theologiae* and his *Summa contra gentiles*) Thomas illustrates the second class of analogy, which according to him exists between the being of God and that of the creature, with the very example which he presents in *De veritate* as a *direct* analogy, which was to be ruled out in the relation between God and creature, namely, the relation between the being of the substance and that of its accidents.

“Substance” as independent bearer of accidents or “accidental attributes” is not related to these attributes in a *reciprocal* relationship according to Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics. Substance is rather taken as the absolute point in which all accidents (attributes) are centered, that is to say: the accidents depend unilaterally for their being upon the substance, not the reverse.

1 Cf. *Timaeus* 31 C, where Plato substantiates the equivalence in the relation between things with the relations between numbers. This results from his efforts to connect sensible reality with the world of ideas by means of mathematical relationships.

The question therefore remains whether in his later works Thomas remained faithful to the *analogia proportionalitatis* as the exclusive analogy in the relation between God and creature.

9. The *analogia proportionalitatis* and the *analogia proportionis*

The majority of modern Thomists accept the doctrine of Cajetan and others and practically identify the *analogia entis*, at least regarding Thomas' pronouncements about God, with the *analogia proportionalitatis*. Opposed to that, others¹ remain of the opinion that Cajetan has cut the heart out of Thomas' doctrine concerning proportional analogy by misjudging the primary significance of the *analogia proportionis* as espoused by Thomas in his later works.

This typically scholastic distinction between *analogia proportionalitatis* and *analogia proportionis* may be somewhat of a deterrent to an outsider, but it is of an importance for scholastic theology and metaphysics that is not to be underestimated.

The *analogia proportionis* does not merely deal with an analogical identity of relations, but with a direct relation of the terms of the equation to each other.

Can one speak of such an *analogia proportionis* in the relation between God and creature? We have seen already that this cannot possibly be the case in the sense of a direct reciprocal relationship. But this does not exhaust the possible reach of the *analogia proportionis*?

Thomas inevitably had to re-enter the road of Aristotle for his proofs regarding God's existence, which we will discuss presently. And this road would take him automatically back to accepting a certain *analogia proportionis*, despite the fact that the predominant influence of the Neoplatonic, so-called negative theology, had brought him to fundamentally reject this analogy in his earlier works.

Thomas acknowledges God and creature to be of a fundamentally different nature. Aristotle did not apply the proportional anal-

1 Cf. e.g., P. Kreling, "De beteekenis van de analogie in de kennis van God," in *De Analogie van het Zijn*, papers presented at the 8th general meeting of the Association for Thomistic Philosophy, in *Studio Catholica*, Supplement (1941): 31-54.

ogy of being to the relation between divine and human knowledge¹ but rather to the matter principle as undeified by Anaxagoras. In contrast, Thomas dealt with this analogy at considerable length, no doubt under the influence of the Neoplatonic-Augustinian negative theology.

In Neoplatonism, negative theology, which wants to teach only what God is *not*, was undoubtedly an off-shoot of a non-Greek trunk. It clearly betrays the influence of Philo's conception of divine transcendence as derived from the Old Testament.

In Volume One of my *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy* (pp. 193-223), where I analyzed Plato's *Parmenides*, I have demonstrated that Plato already developed the method of this negative theology within the framework of his dialectic logic in order to show that logical distinctions do not transcend the relative.

On the other hand, no Christian thinker could accept this negative theology in its ultimate consequences, because that would imply emptying God's self-revelation in His Word of its positive content.

It was thus necessary to find a certain accommodation of this Neoplatonic *via negationis* to the revealed Word as interpreted by the church. Thomas sought this accommodation via the *analogia proportionis* in his later, more mature works, but conceived it in a way that guaranteed an immediate link with the main proof Aristotle gave of God's existence.

Since in human nature the *anima rationalis* as "rational form" remains bound to "matter," human knowledge cannot free itself of its bond with matter, insofar as it can only abstract "pure forms of being" from sensory representations of material things. Thus, it remains imperfect, since the matter principle is the principle of imperfection in Aristotelian metaphysics.

A rational, conceptual knowledge of God which leaves the basis of knowledge about "material things" behind, is therefore beyond the reach of a person. Now if there were no trace of similarity between God and creature, all knowledge about God would be impossible for humankind by definition. However, in the footsteps of Aristotle, Thomas concludes from the metaphysical relation of cau-

1 [The rest of this sentence follows the MS, not the printed version.]

salinity that a certain similarity must exist in one sense, namely, by way of an immediate unilateral relation.

If, as Aristotle taught, God is the unmoved Mover, i.e., the first cause of the movement of all changing things – a thesis which Thomas interprets in a creationistic sense – then the creature cannot be entirely foreign to this divine first cause. Since the latter, by virtue of its actual Being, is a cause, something that is caused must correspond to it in some way.

However, since the First Cause contains so much in its fullness of Being and in its creative force that it is able to reveal itself in different ways through different creatures, none of these can therefore be equal to it in their nature of being because of their restriction and limitation. On the basis of their causative relationship, the similarity between God and creature can only be one of proportional analogy.

However, it is not just an analogy of relational identity; it is one of a real *analogia proportionis*: since God is the cause of the things outside of Him, they resemble Him, just as that which is caused resembles its First Cause.

In his *Summa Theologiae* and his *Summa contra gentiles*, Thomas states that in this case we have a similarity of imitation (*similitudo imitationis*).¹

The term *analogia attributionis* is also used here, namely, to denote a similarity between two things where what they have in common is a real attribute of the one in the primary and proper sense, and is attributed to the second only because of its dependence upon the first.²

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 13, Arts. 3, 5; cf. Q. 4, Art. 3, Repl. to Obj. 3. Thomas clearly expresses himself in *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 13, Art. 5, Repl. to Obj. 1: "Therefore the universal cause of the whole species is not a univocal agent; and the universal cause comes before the particular cause. But this universal agent, while not univocal, nevertheless is not altogether equivocal (otherwise it could not produce its own likeness). . . ." And in his *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 29 [4], appealing to Dionysius the Areopagite (in *De divinis nominibus* IX, 7). Thomas writes: "Dionysius . . . says: 'The same things are both like and unlike God. They are like according as they imitate as much as they can HIM Who is not perfectly imitable . . .'"

2 Cf. K. Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Vol. II/1 (2nd ed., 1946), p. 268 [cf. *Church Dogmatics*, T. F. Torrance, ed. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936/1957), *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, II/1: 237].

And with this, the foundation is laid for the knowledge concerning God by means of His works in creatures (“ex eius effectibus”).¹

According to the *analogia proportionalitatis*, one cannot go beyond saying that what the finite means for the finite (e.g., the intellect for the human being) is like the infinite for the infinite (e.g., divine intellect for divine being). In other words, God exists in the same relationship to His “attributes” as the creature to its attributes.

In all this the *analogia proportionis*, which is connected to the metaphysical relation of causality between the creature and its divine Origin, certainly misses the mark. And in his more mature works, Thomas undeniably ties proportional analogy to precisely this relation to the Origin.

10. The genuine divine predicates. The Greek principle of form as the criterion

We must notice something else yet. When Thomas, in the *Summa Theologiae*, discusses the analogical character of the predicates assigned to God and creatures, he first asks whether some predicates are God’s in a proper sense. He answers this question in the affirmative with respect to all those words that express a perfection, such as goodness, wisdom, life, and so forth, albeit that the human intellect can only grasp them in the imperfect fashion in which they are realized in the creature.² And with that Thomas, in his *theologia naturalis*, places the main problem of our knowledge of God outside of the problem of analogy, as Kreling rightly remarks. It is already established at the outset that all “predicates of perfection”

1 *Summa Theologiae*, 1, Q. 3, Art. 4, Repl. to Obj. 2.

2 *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 13, Art 3: “I answer that, ... our knowledge of God is derived from the perfections which flow from Him to creatures; which perfections are in God in a more eminent way than in creatures. Now our intellect apprehends them as they are in creatures, and as it apprehends them thus does it signify them by names. Therefore, as to the names applied to God, there are two things to be considered – namely, the perfections themselves which they signify, such as goodness, life, and the like, and their mode of signification. As regards what is signified by these names, they belong properly to God, and more properly than they belong to creatures, and are applied primarily to Him. But as regards their mode of signification, they do not properly and strictly apply to God; for their mode of signification befits creatures.”

are God's in their proper sense, even before the question about the analogical use of these words comes under discussion.

This view of Thomas is undoubtedly related, not only to Scriptural considerations, but directly to the Aristotelian form-matter motive. For the divine form principle is the principle of perfection, in contrast with the matter principle as that of imperfection. And this view fits harmoniously with the fourth way of Thomas' proof for God's existence, as we will see below.

In any case, employing the principle of causality, and the *analogia proportionis* related to it in Thomas' natural theology, demands the admission that the predicates which we recognize in the operation of creatures and then assign to God, can only apply to Him in an original unity. They are His in absolute perfection of form, purified of all the restrictions, limitations and imperfections that are proper to man's existence by virtue of his tie to matter (the *via eminentiae et remotionis*).¹

In this way "natural theology" deduces the various predicates, assigned to the divine being, from the creaturely relationships and then relates them to the unity and perfection of their Origin.

Some of these predicates of divine being are: his unity, his simplicity (i.e., not composed of form and matter, no diversity of substance and accidents or of "essence and existence"), his identification as the highest good, his infinity (i.e., unlimited fullness of being), his omnipresence, his immutability and eternity, his omniscience, his providence, his spiritual fullness of life, his perfection of will, his being as Prime Mover (and as a result, his freedom), his omnipotence, his love, mercy, justice and bliss.

Thomas emphasizes, however, that these different statements concerning God cannot denote any real diversity in the divine being, since all these attributes, which we perforce keep separate in the course of making the theoretical distinctions so characteristic of

1 Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 4, Art. 2: *Utrum in Deo sint perfectiones omnium rerum* (Whether the Perfections of All Things are in God). The prototype of this whole line of argument can be found in the scholastic *logos* doctrine we mentioned earlier, as developed by Gregory of Nyssa in his famous work *Λόγος καθ' ἑκαστικόν* (*Logos Catecheticos* – *The Great Catechism*. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, volume 5. Prologue, p. 474, and Chapter 20, p. 491), where all kinds of predicates are assigned to the divine *Logos*, such as self-contained life, will-power, omnipotence, etc., in the sense of the *via eminentiae* (the more eminent way).

human thinking, are one and the same in the full original unity of His Being.

God entirely transcends all creaturely determinations of being, all categories or kinds of being. Thus when we use these categories, especially that of causality, analogically in our pronouncements regarding God, we must immediately deny that through them we determine or define the character of God's being.¹ Ultimately all Thomas tries to do with his natural theology is to give a metaphysical proof of the lack of self-sufficiency of the created cosmos. As Sertillanges assures us:

... his last resort is the true and definitive assurance that the word cause, like the word being – applied to God – does not try to assign anything definable to Him. It merely expresses the thesis of the general deficiency and insufficiency of the world; we call God the First Being insofar as He is the fountain of Being; also, Fountain and Origin, insofar as we feel ourselves and the entire cosmos to be dependent. Thus everything that we say about God ultimately flows back towards ourselves. Our pronouncements do not in any way determine God in Himself: they determine Him "in relation to us." And since it has been established that He does not stand in a real relationship to anything, therefore, when these expressions say anything about God in relation to something else, they say it on the basis of our relationship to Him – in the form of such relationships.²

Indeed, Thomas remains faithful to his negative theology³ also in his later works. An exception is his adaptation, noted earlier, to the views of Aristotle via the *analogia proportionis*.

11. The inherent antinomy in the synthesis between Augustine's negative theology and Aristotle's conception of a natural theology

Meanwhile it can scarcely be denied that this synthesis between the negative theology of Augustine and the Aristotelian conception of natural theology harbors an internal contradiction.

1 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 14 [2]: "Quod ad cognitionem Dei oportet uti via remotionis." (Now, in considering the divine substance, we should especially make use of the method of remotion.)

2 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, pp. 252-53.

3 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk 1, ch. 14 [2]: "For, by its immensity, the divine substance surpasses every form that our intellect reaches. Thus we are unable to apprehend it by knowing what it is. Yet we are able to have some knowledge of it by knowing *what it is not*."

The theology of Augustine indeed has no other aim than to emphasize the lack of self-sufficiency of theoretical thinking and of the entire created cosmos.

In contrast, Aristotle starts with the autonomy of theoretic thinking which by its own power will rise above material things in which the matter motive of continuous movement operates, and will ascend to the first unmoved Mover as the absolute form, where it attains to a union with divinity as *noēsis tēs noēseōs*.

Augustine rejected the autonomy of natural reason; Thomas accepted it.

12. Natural theology in the light of our transcendental critique

To those who have followed us on the road of the transcendental critique of theoretic thought it will be clear at first sight what really happens in Thomas' natural theology.

In the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation we separate and oppose the modal aspects of temporal reality, such as those of movement, life, logical distinction, free control (or cultural form-giving with its intrinsic element of power), justice, and moral love. Then we relate these aspects, as well as the order in time in which they are arranged, to a divine unity of Origin in a distinct religious concentration. We do the same with the direction of our human acts of knowing and willing. Only the metaphysical ontology prevents the thinker from acknowledging the structure of the *Gegenstand* relation and of the modal aspects it sets opposite each other; and under the influence of the dualistic form-matter motive it rules out the integral concentration of all these aspects upon the Origin who reveals Himself as the Creator.

The third basic problem immediately arises here for the transcendental critique of thought: From what standpoint can the theoretical diversity, inherent in the *Gegenstand* relation, be grasped in a view of unity in its root and its origin? Or, put differently: How is it possible to concentrate theoretic thinking upon the original unity of all the aspects of reality that are distinguished theoretically?

We have demonstrated from the very structure of the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation that no "Archimedean Point" can be found in the theoretic-logical function of thought which could elevate our thinking above the theoretic diversity.

It is therefore out of the question that theoretic thinking could find within itself the required concentration point for climbing out of the theoretic diversity in order to attain to an idea of its Origin.

This alone demonstrates by implication that a “natural theology” as the capstone of an autonomous metaphysics is impossible.

13. The scholastic appeal to Scripture for justifying the autonomy of a *theologia naturalis*

It is entirely in keeping with the scholastic standpoint of accommodation that Thomas also resorts to Bible texts to defend the autonomy of his natural theology which he imagines is a purely philosophical science. The *locus classicus* that he appeals to, entirely in keeping with Roman Catholic church doctrine and its religious ground-motive of nature and grace, is the statement by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:20.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (KJV).

In Book I of his *Summa contra gentiles*, he adduces this text side-by-side with the various proofs of God offered by Greek philosophers in order to counter the view of those who believe that God’s existence can only be maintained through faith and cannot be proven scientifically: “For they say that we cannot arrive at the existence of God through reason; it is received by way of faith and revelation alone.”¹

Does Paul indeed wish to say here that we can know God purely by way of theoretical conclusions drawn from the nature of creatures? Does Paul teach the autonomy of the theoretic-logical thought-function here with its idea of the Origin in opposition to God’s revelation?

This is, of course, out of the question. To the contrary, in the verse that immediately precedes it, Paul says that God has *revealed* what we can know of Him to those who “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (verse 18). And by its very nature, divine self-revelation (*φανέρωσις*; *phanerōsis*) is directed to the aspect of faith in which the human act of knowing necessarily functions; while the function of faith, conversely, is by its very nature always directed towards a revelation of God.

¹ *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 12 [1].

Obviously therefore, the text concerned deals with God's general revelation in creation, which by the apostate attitude of the human heart is falsified in unbelief and the Truth of which is suppressed in unrighteousness. For that reason the natural knowledge of God does not lead to glorification and adoration of the true God (verse 21).

Only when one begins to explain Paul's statement in terms of the dialectic religious synthesis motive of nature and grace does it seem to support the Thomist conception of a "theologia naturalis." But the Greek conception of "nature" (*phusis*), which is entirely dominated by the dualistic religious motive of form and matter, just cannot be reconciled with the integral religious motive of Holy Scripture: that of creation, fall into sin, and redemption by Christ Jesus.

It can be demonstrated irrefutably that the entire *theologia naturalis* of Thomas springs from the religious ground-motive of nature and grace with its accommodation of the Aristotelian form-matter motive to the church's teaching concerning creation.

14. Why Thomas' proof of God's existence has convincing power for Thomist scholasticism despite all criticism

In immediate connection with this we can see that the Thomist proofs for God's existence can only convince those who share this religious basic motive in their thinking. For those who take the autonomy of natural reason in the Kantian-humanistic sense, for example, these proofs can merely have the repelling effect of arrogant sophisms.

All this means that the real power of conviction in the Thomist proofs for God does not lie in their purely scientific character but in the religious ground-motive that guides the entire theoretic discourse. It disappears as if by magic as soon as one rejects this motive.

15. The "speculative illusion" in the Thomist proofs of God. The task of the transcendental critique. The dogmatic prejudice in Kant's view of the latter

This metaphysical argumentation produces a real "speculative illusion": it suggests to us that theoretical thinking, through purely scientific argumentation, climbs up from theoretic diversity to the idea of the Origin, while this Origin was indeed the foundation of the proof from the very beginning.

Now it is not merely the task of the transcendental critique of philosophy to unmask and upset this “speculative illusion.” It must also demonstrate why on Thomas’ starting point the view that natural theology is of a purely philosophical character simply had to be upheld.

The Kantian critique of knowledge, for instance, is of the opinion that it can prove, in a purely philosophical way, that the metaphysical *theologia naturalis* is a pseudo-science. Yet that opinion is at least as uncritical as the metaphysics it attacks.

In many discussions I have had with the most sharp-witted Thomists I have been able to observe repeatedly how they in turn claim that they can refute the Kantian critique of knowledge in a purely philosophic way.

The crux of the matter, however, is that because of the structure of the *Gegenstand* relation, philosophy is impossible without a theoretical idea of the Origin, and that the content of this idea depends entirely on the religious ground-motive which necessarily determines the direction of theoretic thought.

In the final analysis, the Kantian critique of knowledge is rooted in an idea of Origin in which the humanistic freedom motive seeks its solid ground.

Kant resolutely refuses to admit that this is the case, and demands recognition of his critique of knowledge as a purely theoretical investigation, free from all religious prejudice. But that is just as much a necessary consequence of the dualistic religious ground-motive (nature and freedom) from which he starts out, as it was for Thomas who started from the dualistic motive of nature and grace, which in his Roman Catholic conception required him to cling to the metaphysical *theologia naturalis* as a purely philosophical science.

Only those who remained dogmatically caught in the conviction that real science is only possible in its complete autonomy versus faith and religion, could conclude from this unavoidable state of affairs that our transcendental critique would have to lead to a complete relativism and skepticism on scientific terrain. They forget that truth, in its absolute character, transcends the boundaries of science, exactly because, as its very presupposition, it makes science possible.

The conviction of the absolute truth of a philosophic theory is only born in the religious concentration of theoretical thought, which does not arise from the logical thought-function but from the religious root of our existence and is always governed by a religious ground-motive. The theory itself can at most lay claim to *relative* truth.

The battle for absolute truth is indeed always fought on the field of religion. Only those who no longer believe in an absolute Truth necessarily become relativists and skeptics concerning science. As long as we keep seeking the absolute (i.e., the religious) Truth in an “autonomous religious consciousness,” the fatal circle of apostasy is not interrupted, and our knowledge of ourselves and of God remains under the spell of the Lie. The ego, the religious center of human existence, is nothing in itself, but finds the solid ground of truth only in its divine Origin. Only the divine Word, revealed in Christ Jesus, can break this spell of the Lie. Only when that Word becomes the central driving force, the central ground-motive of our thinking can it be directed towards the Truth that liberates it from the false prejudices as determined by apostate religious ground-motives. The ego cannot existentially climb up to transcendent Truth, but Truth must draw it out of the vicious circle of its apostate faith in its autonomy through the irresistible love revealed to us in Christ Jesus. Autonomous *ex-sistere* (“a standing out”) must make way for theonomous *ex-trahere* (“a drawing out”), if the drive towards the origin, which is innate to the human ego, is not to guide our theoretic thinking in an idolatrous direction.

Those who wish to cling to the absolute Truth and at the same time maintain the dogma of autonomy for scientific thinking are simply uncritical in their scientific activity, since they fail to see how this dogma is determined and controlled by the religious ground-motive of their thinking.

The latter is also the case with the metaphysical *theologia naturalis*, which starts out from very specific theorems of the Aristotelian ontology. Its adherents operate with these theorems as thought they are axioms about which no scientific discussion can be tolerated; for they say that they are absolutely certain of them and that being wrong about them is impossible.

16. Indubitable states of affairs in reality and the so-called theoretic axioms

In order to gain insight here, one must distinguish sharply between indubitable states of affairs in temporal reality, and scientific judgments by which we try to formulate their relations in a theory.

No reasonable person will doubt that $2 \times 2 = 4$, for one realizes that this concerns a state of affairs in a relation between numbers that cannot be denied.

A *scientific* judgment, however, cannot be limited to the formulation of an indubitable state of affairs (in that case, for example, the judgment that I am sitting in my study while writing these lines would be of a scientific nature). Instead, a scientific judgment demands that I grasp a state of affairs in a scientific, i.e., abstract-systematic nexus, and that I give an account of that. The undeniable state of affairs is thus merely a systematic problem for science.

As soon as I try to grasp the numerical relations in an abstract-systematic nexus, I encounter the relation between whole numbers and fractions, between rational and irrational and complex numerical values; I encounter the meaning of infinity in numerical functions, and the question whether we may speak of transfinite numbers, etc. This forces me to account for the nature of the numerical aspect and of its relation to the spatial, sensory, logical and linguistic aspect of reality. Here problems arise that can be resolved in fundamentally different ways, depending on the starting point of the thinker. Think of the battle between the logistic, formalistic, empiricistic and intuitionistic schools of mathematics. The difference of starting point can make itself felt so strongly here that, for instance, the intuitionistic school tears out an entire chapter from the theory of numbers that had been built up by the formalistic and logistic schools.

This does not alter the fact that mathematicians will always agree on undeniable states of affairs, for without that mathematics would become impossible as a task of the scientific community.

However, the axioms of Aristotelian epistemology are anything but pure formulations of indubitable states of affairs in temporal reality. Instead, they are transcendental ideas, which relate theoretic thinking in aprioristic fashion to the dialectic religious ground-motive of form and matter, and therefore intend to dominate the whole direction of thinking.

The axiomatic character which Aristotle and Thomas give the theoretic principles on which they base their metaphysics does not rest on a scientific foundation but on a religious conviction, which is rooted in the religious ground-motive.

And the idea of the divine Origin which Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics appears to have gained through a strictly logical proof from the causal relations in temporal reality, lies already as an *a priori* at the foundation of their entire proof.

17. The five ways of Thomas' proof for the existence of God

In order to demonstrate this we will now have a closer look at the Aristotelian-Thomist proofs for the existence of God, which in essence really form one single proof that only chooses five different "ways."

Thomas bases *the first way* of his proof on the well-known Aristotelian principle "omne quod movetur ab alio movetur": "whatever moves is moved by something else." "Change" in Aristotelian metaphysics means: to move from a potentiality to actuality, from the possible to the real. And, says Aristotle, the concept of change coincides with that of motion in the most comprehensive sense of the word.

Nothing can "cause motion" and "be moved" at the same time and in the same respect, for the former means to impart Being, the latter to receive Being. When we perceive motion, an activity must precede every individual case of this established motion (namely change) that calls forth this motion. When this action comes from something that itself in turn has been put in motion by something else, then we ask again for the cause of this last motion, etc. In this series of causes for motion, one cannot proceed to infinity,

because in that case there would be no first Mover and as a result of that, also no other mover; for the secondary movers cannot impart motion except insofar as they themselves are moved by the first Mover . . . It is therefore necessary to arrive at a first Mover who himself is moved by nothing; and everyone understands that this is God.¹

1 *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 2, Art. 3. ("prima via probationis"): "Prima autem et manifestior via est quae sumitur ex parte motus. Certum est enim, et sensu constat, aliqua moveri in hoc mundo. Omne autem quod movetur, ab alio movetur: Nihil enim movetur nisi secundum quod est in potentia ad illud ad

The other four ways of Thomas' proof of God's existence adhere closely to the first. *The second way* starts with an examination of the "causes that have an effect" (*causae efficientes*). This is only distinct from the first because it does not focus on the conditions of "motion" (or "change" or "becoming") in itself, but as "motion" pertains to its end result.

There is "motion" in the world, as the first "proof" established. But, as a result of motion, we also have "effects." These effects appear to be tied to causes, to efficient causes, and these causes seem to be linked into a chain of causes.

Now something that is itself an "effect," cannot be its own efficient cause. For if something were its own cause, it would at the same time have to be earlier and later in relation to itself, which is impossible.

Nor can the chain of efficient causes be infinite. Because, wherever such a chain can be observed, the first link is cause for the middle one and the middle one cause for the last link, regardless of whether there is only one middle cause or many. When one eliminates the cause, one cancels its effects. Thus, if there were no first efficient cause, no ultimate effect or middle cause could exist. Therefore, if the chain of efficient causes were infinite, there could be no first cause and thus also no ultimate effect, nor middle

quod movetur; movet autem aliquid, secundum quod est actu; movere enim nihil aliud est quam educere aliquid de potentia in actum. De potentia autem non potest aliquid reduci in actum nisi per aliquod ens in actu: sicut calidum in actu, ut ignis, facit lignum, quod est calidum in potentia, esse actu calidum, et per hoc movet, et alterat ipsum. Non autem est possibile, ut idem sit simul in actu et potentia secundum idem, sed solum secundum diversa; quod enim est calidum in actu, non potest simul esse calidum in potentia, sed est simul frigidum in potentia. Impossibile est ergo quod secundum idem, et eodem modo, aliquid sit movens et motum, vel quod moveat seipsum. Omne ergo quod movetur, oportet ab alio moveri. Si ergo id a quo movetur, moveatur, oportet et ipsum ab alio moveri, et illud ab alio. *Hic autem non est procedere in infinitum, quia sic non esset aliquod primum movens, et per consequens nec aliquod aliud movens, quia moventia secunda non movent nisi per hoc quod sunt mota a primo movente, sicut baculus non movet, nisi per hoc quod est motus a manu.* Ergo necesse est devenire ad aliquid primum movens quod a nullo movetur; et hoc omnes intellegunt Deum."

[The section cited by Dooyeweerd in the text is here italicized.]

causes, which is patently false. Consequently, we must necessarily accept a first efficient cause, which everyone calls God.¹

The third way proceeds from the contemplation of the fundamental metaphysical concept of being and moves towards the viewpoints of the possible (becoming) and the necessary (lasting).

Among the things we experience we find realities (substances or phenomena) that can either be or not be, since they arise and perish. But it is impossible to assume that everything that exists is of such a nature. For if everything were perishable and contingent, then anyone would be free to assume that at a certain moment nothing would really exist. But if this were true, there would also be nothing now, because what is not yet cannot have had an origin other than from something that really exists.

When nothing is a being (of a constant form), then it is also impossible that anything has become. In this fashion, nothing would exist, which evidently is a senseless statement. Therefore, not all that is can be merely possible and of a fleeting character, but there must be something necessary and permanent in things.

Now all that is necessary finds the cause for its necessity either inside or outside of itself. There are inevitable realities that have a cause for their necessity outside of themselves. The causes of these inevitabilities again link up in a chain, which can no more be continued *ad infinitum* than the chain of causes.

It is therefore necessary to assume that there is something which is necessary and permanent in itself, and has no cause for its necessity outside of itself, but that it is the (first) cause for all other necessary things; this is what everyone calls God.²

1 *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 2, Art 3. "Secunda via est ex ratione causae efficientis. Invenimus enim in istis sensibilibus esse ordinem causarum efficientium; nec tamen invenitur, nec est possibile, quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius, quia sic esset prius se ipso, quod est impossibile. Non autem est possibile quod in causis efficientibus procedatur in infinitum, quia in omnibus causis efficientibus ordinatis primum est causa medii, et medium est causa ultimi, sive media sint plura, sive unum tantum. Remota autem causa, removetur effectus. Ergo si non fuerit primum in causis efficientibus, non erit ultimum, nec medium. Sed si procedatur in infinitum in causis efficientibus, non erit prima causa efficiens et sic non erit nec effectus ultimus, nec causae efficientes mediae, quod patet esse falsum. Ergo necesse est ponere aliquam causam efficientem primam, quam omnes Deum nominant."

2 *Ibid.*: "Tertia via est sumpta ex possibili et necessario, quae talis est: Invenimus enim in rebus quaedam quae sunt possibilia esse et non esse . . . Impossibile est autem omnia quae sunt talia semper esse, quia quod possibile est non esse, quandoque non est. Si igitur omnia sunt possibilia non esse, aliquando nihil

Again, this proof is only distinct from the previous pair because of its particular viewpoint. The course and means employed for its proof are identical to those of the other two.

The *fourth way* begins with the various degrees to which the transcendental determinations of being are realized in things: they are unity, truth, goodness, perfection and beauty. Plato formulated this proof first, and it can also be found with Augustine, pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and in the *Monologium* of Anselm of Canterbury. It belonged to the traditional body of thought in the school of Albertus Magnus, the teacher of Thomas.

Whatever we know is more or less good, true, beautiful, one, etc. With Plato this “more or less” originates in the “apeiron,” in the matter motive of Greek thinking.¹ According to Thomas, this means that various things approach to a relative degree what in a certain species is the “highest degree possible” (*maxime*) of what determines its being. Thus, there is something that is true, good, etc. to the highest degree, and therefore being to the highest degree; because, in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics being and its transcendental determinations are identical.

“Now that which is called one, true, good, etc. to the highest degree in a certain species of things, is the cause of all that belongs to

luit in rebus. Sed si hoc est verum, etiam nunc nihil esset, quia quod non est, non incipit esse, nisi per aliquid quod est. Si igitur nihil fuit ens, impossibile fuit quod aliquid inciperet esse; et sic modo nihil esset, quod patet esse falsum. Non ergo omnia entia sunt possibilia, sed oportet aliquid esse necessarium in rebus. Omne autem necessarium vel habet causam suae necessitatis aliunde, vel non habet. Non est autem possibile quod procedatur in infinitum in necessariis, quae habent causam suae necessitatis, sicut nec in causis efficientibus, ut probatum est ([in isto articulo]) . . . Ergo necesse est ponere aliquid quod sit per se necessarium, non habens causam necessitatis aliunde, sed quod est causa necessitatis aliis; quod omnes dicunt Deum.”

- 1 Cf. Plato, *Philebus* 24C: “. . . for whenever they [more or less] occur they do not allow of the existence of quantity – they are always introducing degrees into actions, instituting a comparison of a more or a less excessive or a more or a less slight, and at each creation of more or less, quantity disappears.” A few lines above (24B): “Ever, as we say, into the hotter and the colder there enters a more and a less.” And again (24B): “Then, says the argument, there is never any end of them, and being endless they must also be infinite.”

that species.”¹ This means: all beings that share in the perfection of being in different ways, must necessarily be caused by a first being that possesses being in its fullness. This is why Plato said that one must place unity before all multitude, and why Aristotle said that “what is being and truth to the highest degree, is the cause of all being and all truth. . . .”² And this we call God.

Notice the proposition, “What is called one, true, good, etc. to the highest degree in a certain species of things, is the cause of everything that belongs to that species.” In this connection the Platonic *eidos* as the metaphysical ground for being of the species concept has undoubtedly come to Thomas’ mind. But he lets go of this train of thought at the right moment in his conclusion.

Plato took the ideas (*eidē*) or forms of being as “ousiai,” as pure form-substances, which have pure being, apart from material things that are subject to the matter principle of becoming and perishing.

Thomas on the other hand sides with Aristotle in that the realm of the species is one of “matter”; matter enters here into the definition of being itself, so that the species or type cannot exist apart from material things. Thus, in his search for unity beyond multiplicity, Thomas, with Aristotle, ascends directly to the deity as the absolute and only form of being, brushing aside the Platonic ideas.

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 2, Art. 3: “Quarta via sumitur ex gradibus qui in rebus inveniuntur. Invenitur enim in rebus aliquid magis et minus bonum, et verum, et nobile, et sic de aliis huiusmodi. Sed magis et minus dicuntur de diversis, secundum quod appropinquant diversimode ad aliquid quod maxime est; sicut magis calidum est quod magis appropinquat maxime calido. Est igitur aliquid quod est verissimum, et optimum, et nobilissimum, et per consequens maxime ens. Nam quae sunt maxime vera, sunt maxime entia. . . . Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis; sicut ignis, qui est maxime calidus, est causa omnium calidorum. . . . Ergo est aliquid quod omnibus entibus est causa esse, et bonitatis, et cuiuslibet perfectionis et hoc dicimus Deum.”

2 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 44, Art. 1: “Necesse est igitur quod omnia quae diversificantur secundum diversam participationem essendi, ut sint perfectius vel minus perfecte, causari ab uno primo ente, quod perfectissime est. Unde et Plato dixit . . . quod necesse est ante omnem multitudinem ponere unitatem. Et Aristoteles dicit . . . quod id quod est maxime ens, et maxime verum, est causa omnis entis, et omnis veri. . . .”

Finally, *the fifth way* of Thomas' proof of God in the brief summary of the *Summa Theologiae* is of a physico-teleological character, but in his later elaboration it takes on a broader and more universal character. "The fifth way," says Thomas,

starts out from the guidance of things. For we see that things that lack [thinking and] knowledge, such as natural bodies, work towards a certain goal. This is evident from the fact that they always, or usually, act in the same way in order to achieve what is best for them. That makes it clear that they do not reach their goal by mere chance (*casus*), but on the basis of a specific aim. Now something that has no knowledge does not strive for a goal unless it is guided by a being endowed with knowledge and intelligence – like the arrow by the archer. There is thus a thinking principle by which all natural things are ordered towards a purpose. And such a principle we call God.¹

In his later exposition, Thomas extends this physico-teleological proof also to thinking and knowing creatures. Knowledge and judgment of a purpose in a being endowed with knowledge, rest on a primary "instinct," which is a "work of nature" rather than a work of reason. This internal instinctive urge is a "fact of nature" to which knowledge attaches itself.

This instinct then belongs to the series of peculiarities of "nature" that lead to this proof of God as a special case. Our will undoubtedly sets goals for itself, but would not do this if "nature" had no goals. Our rational goals are nothing but rationally transformed goals of nature.²

18. The ontological proof and its relation to the so-called cosmological and physico-teleological proofs

As one may have noticed, the famous ontological proof of Anselm of Canterbury, developed in his *Proslogium*, is missing in these five "proofs" of God's existence.

1 *Ibid.*: "Quinta via sumitur ex gubernatione rerum. Videmus enim quod aliqua quae cognitione carent, scilicet corpora naturalia, operantur propter finem, quod apparet ex hoc quod semper, aut frequentius eodem modo operantur, ut consequantur id quod est optimum. Unde patet quod non a casu, sed ex intentione perveniunt ad finem. Ea autem quae non habent cognitionem, non tendunt in finem nisi directam ab aliquo cognoscente, et intelligente, sicut sagitta a sagittante. Ergo est aliquid intelligens a quo omnes res naturales ordinantur ad finem; et hoc dicimus Deum."

2 Cf *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q. 10, Arts. 1-4.

The ontological proof started out from the pure idea of God as the highest Being, which everyone would have in mind with the word “God,” and concluded from this idea to the real existence of God, since His real existence is already implicit in the concept of the supreme Being. For if one would deny this real existence, one could, in contradiction with this concept, think of a still higher Being, insofar as one could ascribe it real existence.

Thomas denies the effectiveness of this proof, since one cannot conclude that something exists simply because we merely conceive that it is possible. The real existence of a being cannot add anything to its concept, but neither can its real existence follow from its concept alone.¹

Kant dealt with proofs for God’s existence in his *Critique of Pure Reason*.² He demonstrated that all proofs for the existence of God which, like those of Thomas, wish to start with human experience, must ultimately merge into the ontological proof. They all end up with a concept of the highest and most real Being that transcends all boundaries of our experience, but that still is hypostasized into a really existing Being.

As Kant sees it, the purely theoretical idea of the totality of all possible predicates of empirical reality is thought of as a “transcendental ideal,” an individual being in which this idea is completely embodied and as such is held up as the prototype and origin of all empirical things.

1 K. Barth [in 1931] tried to interpret Anselm’s proof of God anew from his adage “fides quaerit intellectum.” [See Barth, *Fides quaerens intellectum: Anselms Beweis der Existenz Gottes im Zusammenhang seines theologischen Programms*, new ed. by Eberhard Jüngel and Ingolf U. Dalferth (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981).] The proof then acquires meaning only from faith, in which God’s revelation is already accepted.

But for that very reason the ontological proof falls entirely outside the framework of the *theologia naturalis* in its pretended autonomous path to knowledge of God. I believe that in Anselm this was indeed the case. Historically, however, the ontological proof certainly has played an important role in natural theology. For instance, the place it occupied in Descartes’ proof for the reliability of scientific knowledge is well known.

2 *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Grossherzog Wilhelm Ernst ed., 3: 442 ff. [*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. K. Smith (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929), A 592/B 620-A642 / B670; pp. 495-531].

The empirical starting point of these proofs is therefore a mere camouflage for the purely aprioristic proof from the purely theoretical idea that includes all possible predicates.

This critique may contain much that is true, but it does not touch the heart of the matter. Kant starts from the presupposition that the “transcendental ideal” of a “most real being” (*ens realissimum*) arises autonomously from “theoretic reason” itself. However, our transcendental critique of philosophic thought has demonstrated that this presupposition is false.

If Kant’s presupposition were correct, then the idea of Origin would have to exhibit basically the same content in all philosophical systems. But this is quite demonstrably not the case. Rather, the transcendental idea of Origin takes on a different content in the various philosophical systems, which is essentially determined by the religious ground-motive.

Kant himself rejects a divine origin for “nature,” and gives his idea of God a purely religious-ethical content, entirely in keeping with his starting point in the ground-motive of nature and freedom. He takes “nature” in the sense of the natural-scientific ideal of determination and degrades it to the sphere of a pure “phenomenal world,” while the real *noumenon*, the root of reality (hidden to theoretical reason) is sought in the idea of the free, autonomous personality. Obviously, this humanistic idea of origin is radically different from the idea of God in Aristotelian-Thomist scholasticism.

For Kant, “theoretic reason” remains restricted, also in its (merely regulative) ideas, to the knowledge of “natural phenomena” in the field investigated by mathematical natural science. Because of this limitation of reason, he must reject the possibility that we can find natural knowledge of God through theoretic-metaphysical reasoning. He must reject it also because the real religious center of his thinking is located in the humanistic freedom motive.

For these reasons Kant cannot understand how the theoretic idea of the totality of all attributes of “empirical reality” could ever direct theoretic thinking towards a transcendental Origin.

In Greek philosophy, on the other hand, the idea of origin moves between the poles of the religious motives of matter and

form. With Thomas it is determined by the ground-motive of nature and grace in its typical Romanist conception.

Thomas' first way towards proof for God's existence ties in with the fundamental thesis of the metaphysical proof of Aristotle: "Whatever moves is moved by something else." This can only lead to the idea of an "unmoved Mover," because Aristotle approaches temporal reality in its theoretical exposition on the basis of the Greek form-matter motive and from the very start sees only the form principle as divine. Matter, as the principle of motion, then becomes the principle of imperfection, of the smooth transition from the possible to the real. Then all "motion" has to be directed towards an unmoved Mover.

This form-matter motive in its typical Aristotelian conception, however, rules out the Scriptural Christian idea of creation: for in this conception, the matter principle can never be derived from the divine form principle, because it is its polar opposite.

When Thomas tries to derive God's existence as the creative Origin from Aristotle's fundamental thesis, he can only do that because he adapts the form-matter motive in the Greek conception of "nature" in an *a priori* fashion to the church doctrine of creation.

For the rest it is typical for the permeation of the religious Greek ground-motive also into Thomas' idea of God, that he assigns intellect and will to God as predicates of perfection in a real sense, but not sensibility. In general, he refuses to relate anything that is connected with the "matter principle" to God in a real sense.

This proves that the Greek form-motive prevents Thomas, in spite of all his efforts to accommodate it to the Scriptural motive of creation, from doing justice to God, who revealed Himself as the absolute and integral Origin of all things.

The criterion for what can be said about God in a real and in an unreal sense was, as we already noted, derived by Thomas from the Greek form-motive in its Aristotelian conception. Already Philo and Plotinus had assigned a real, positive meaning only to the divine predicates of unity and goodness in their negative theology; and as we shall substantiate later, they obtained these transcendental attributes of being from the Greek form-matter motive.

19. The reversal of the axioms in the ontology of Heraclitus' dynamistic metaphysics

We can see no way in which Thomas could have refuted Heraclitus, who deified the matter principle of eternal flux, in a purely theoretic manner with his first and second proof of God.

If the matter principle is made into the religious absolute, theoretical thinking can no longer find a single argument for postulating that "motion" in the sense of continuous change needs an "unmoved, first Mover" as first Cause. Here the eternal flowing of all forms is everything. "Motion" is here not, as with Aristotle, a transition from potential to reality, but is itself the only reality, the only actuality.

One can of course demonstrate that making the matter principle absolute in our theoretic thinking leads to internal antinomies (indicating that we cannot ignore the constant structures of temporal reality with impunity¹), just as making the rigid form principle absolute, as in the Eleatic school, led to ignoring the dynamics in temporal reality in an internally contradictory way. It was this state of affairs that led later Greek thinkers to try and bring the form and matter principles into a certain synthesis, since they had found that the one could not be reduced to the other.

Time and again they had to give primacy to one of these two principles, without ever succeeding in bringing both back to a common origin. That fact already shows that an inner synthesis was out of the question here, since the religious dialectics of the ground-motive ruled that out. And with that, the antinomies remained in Greek thought.

In my treatise on Thomist ontology² I have demonstrated that in Aristotelian metaphysics this religious dialectic prevented a truly theoretical synthesis of the form and matter principles. This dialectic

1 One should not assume, however, that exposing such theoretical antinomies would really convince a thinker like Heraclitus of error, steeped as he is in a religious hylo-zoism. For his thinking is guided by an absolutizing of movement and thus sanctions all such antinomies in a dialectical logic. For him the antithesis arises only through isolating and stabilizing the form elements in the eternal stream of becoming. When everything is in fact caught up in this stream, the discrepancies themselves become fluid. Only one who is caught in the appearance of the senses can then still believe that the opposites in life are absolute.

2 [See chap. VII in the present volume.]

tic dominates the axiomatic tension of Greek metaphysics. That of Aristotle is dominated by giving religious primacy to the form principle of the culture religion in its ethical-idealistic deepening. Divinity as pure actuality of thinking is purified here of all burdens of the matter principle. Heraclitus, on the other hand, deifies the matter principle of the eternally flowing stream of life, which he raises into the Origin of all temporal things that have form.

This shows that with the foundation of Heraclitus' idea of origin the whole of metaphysics acquires a fundamentally different axiomatic stance. The metaphysical fundamental principles, which Aristotle built on the religious primacy of the form principle, must be completely reversed in their theoretical use. It is patently clear, therefore, that to refute Heraclitus' dynamistic idea of God with the Aristotelian theorem, *Whatever moves is moved by something else*, simply amounts to begging the question.

20. The analogical use of the causality concept in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics

Meanwhile we notice how the concept of causality is used here without any qualification, which is directly related to the equal lack of delineation of the purely analogical concept of being. A causality concept that is so poorly outlined is in itself already useless in science. What scientific sense does it make, for instance, to state that the organic function of life "causes" physico-chemical changes when these changes cannot be reduced to organic functions because of their modal nature? Nor is the reverse possible. Such an approach offers no scientific explanation. The attempt to find a causal nexus between different modal aspects of reality implies an unmistakable "metabasis eis allo genos" ["crossing into a different genus"] or illegitimate leap from one domain to another.

Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics handles the causality concept in exactly such a modally unqualified manner because the form-matter motive prescribes that. Its causality concept must contain both formal causes and material causes, final causes as well as efficient causes, because its basic concept of being is defined by the form-matter motive.

This concept of being shows two poles: pure or absolute "form" (the deity), and pure or primary "matter." The first is seen as pure actuality and the second as mere potential or possibility. It is thus

obvious that an idea of the pure form-cause as “unmoved Mover” lies at the basis of the metaphysical concept of causality from the very start. Thus, it must promptly make its appearance again in the first way of Thomas’ proof of God, as a “conclusion” from a seemingly strictly scientific argument.

If one handles the concept of cause and effect in a genuinely scientific fashion, he must use it in a univocal sense, which must be qualified by the modal boundaries of the field under investigation.¹

In his critique of knowledge, Kant took causality in the mechanistic-deterministic sense of the classical humanistic science ideal and dogmatically proclaimed it to be a transcendental-logical thought category of relationship, to be applied *a priori* to possible sensory experience.

This mechanistic causality concept dominated all of classical physics, but had to be abandoned in the twentieth century. Still, it had a well-defined meaning when used in physics. It was based on Galileo’s basic principle that the change or cessation of a condition of motion, and not the continuation of a uniform motion (the so-called principle of inertia), requires an explanation. This differed entirely from Aristotle’s metaphysical concept of causality, which looks for an intrinsic cause for motion in the “nature” of things. A “heavy body” does not merely move as a result of an external force, says this Greek thinker, but already as a result of its inner nature, since it is made up of components that are “heavy by nature” and through motion seek their “natural place.” From this standpoint motion as such needs to be explained. Aristotle does not take the causality concept in the modally defined sense of the physical aspect of motion, but relates it to the inner nature of indi-

1 [At this point the MS has crossed out the following passage: “Thus it is meaningless for physics to inquire after a cause of kinetic energy (*bewegungsenergie*) that lies outside motion, because physics investigates temporal reality within [the bounds of] the original modal aspect of motion, taking kinetic energy as an ultimate and irreducible *given*. In handling the concept of causality, therefore, physics can never rise above the aspect of motion. Any concrete instance of motion can only be explained in terms of motion (or potential motion, as the case may be), and never in terms of something to which that motion (in a physical sense) is fundamentally foreign. As well, one should guard against identifying the modal character of motion with so-called ‘mechanical’ motion, which is just one of its possible typical manifestations.”]

vidual “substances.” And this inner “nature” he in turn construes according to his form-matter scheme.

The same metaphysical concept of causality is used to explain the “self-motion” of living beings. But it is always dominated by the religious Aristotelian form-matter motive in which the idea of origin as an “unmoved Mover” is implicitly incorporated. The “nature of things” as the immediate cause of their spontaneous movement is itself in turn moved “by that which moves their nature” (*moventur ab eo qui movet naturam*). Thus, in order to be able to explain motion he needs a cause above and outside motion, since motion is *a priori* seen metaphysically as a transition from matter to form, from potential to actuality.

At least one argument in Kant’s criticism of the cosmological proof of God cannot be refuted: it is that theoretic thinking cannot find anything in the physical causality concept by itself from which to conclude to the real existence of a first unmoved Cause.

Causal relationships within one modal aspect can never lead beyond the aspect itself. As soon as one tries to bring the causal relations in different aspects of reality (e.g., in the psychic, biotic or physical-chemical aspects) together in a synthetic relationship, one is faced with science’s transcendental basic problems, which go fundamentally beyond the boundaries of the scientific problem of causality. These are the three basic problems of our transcendental critique and they are inseparably connected.

What is involved here is the mutual coherence, the deeper unity and the common Origin of the aspects of temporal reality which are distinguished theoretically and which make scientific investigation possible. But as its presuppositions, they transcend theoretic thinking itself. Only its religious ground-motive can direct our theoretic thought towards the common Origin of created reality. But this thought can never rise above the theoretic diversity to the common Origin in autonomous fashion.

This does indeed not happen in the first two Aristotelian-Thomist proofs of God, as we have shown above. For the second proof does not fundamentally differ from the first.

But not even the third way of proof differs in principle from the first two. It, too, follows the metaphysical concept of causality and, because of that, implicitly the analogical concept of being as deter-

mined by the religious form-matter motive. This proof comes down to this: the things to which we assign being cannot be explained purely from “matter” as the principle of possibility or potency. Matter only arrives at real existence through its form, which is the necessary condition for the being of things.

Living beings are composed of form and matter and as a result of this, they must necessarily die.¹

And so there is a whole series of things in nature that must necessarily occur because one is the cause of the other. Yet, this series demands an ending in something that has the cause of its necessity within itself, namely God, as the absolutely necessary Being.

That this proof also presupposes the idea of origin, which it pretends to derive in a purely scientific manner from empirical reality, needs no further arguments.

The fourth way of the proof attempts to ascend from the empirical degrees of perfection to the divine Being that possesses perfection in the original sense. As we already saw, the criterion of the attributes of perfection come mainly from the Aristotelian form principle, just as the degrees of more or less come from the matter principle. But Aristotle’s form principle already implies the idea of origin, which he seemingly derives from the empirical degrees of perfection in a rigorously scientific discourse.

Kant called the fifth way, the physico-teleological, the most respectable among the proofs of God, and it is indeed the most appealing to us, *on condition however that we already bring along the religious conviction that an omniscient and provident God exists*. But that already condemns it as a pretended purely scientific proof.

1 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 30 [9]: “Et quia materia, secundum id quod est, est ens in potentia (quod autem potest esse potest etiam et non esse), ex ordine materiae necessario res aliquae corruptibiles existunt sicut animal, quod ex contrariis compositum est. . . . Forma autem, secundum id quod est, actus est, et per eam res actu existunt; et ex ipsa provenit necessitas ad esse in quibusdam.” (“Since matter is by nature a being in potentiality, and since that which can be can also not be, it follows that certain things, in relation to their matter, are necessarily corruptible – like animals, because they are composed of contraries. On the other hand, form is by nature act, and through form things exist in act; so that form causes the necessity of some things to be.”)

It, too, employs the metaphysical concept of causality, but it focuses especially on the “final causes” as they are said to be realized empirically in nature.

In this proof it is implied that striving for a goal always presupposes an intelligence, so that natural beings without intellect, to the extent that they appear to strive for a certain goal, evidently are guided to this goal by a thinking being.

Again, it is characteristic how this whole teleology in nature is conceived according to the example of teleology in the aspect of human culture, from which the religious deification of the Aristotelian form principle was born. Thomas’ archer with his arrow is a typical example of cultural technique. The human being has first given the arrow a purposeful form according to a freely conceived design, and then directs it to a goal which, again, the human being itself seeks out.

So this teleological turn of the cultural motive of form, which dominates Thomas’ fifth way of proof, can, as Kant rightly pointed out, never lead us to the idea of a “creating cause”; at most, it can give us an idea of a primary form-giving Cause. The matter principle, dominated by blind necessity (*anankē*) and fate (*tuchē*), remains the inevitable correlate of the form-principle, and can never be derived from the latter.

As we saw, the idea of a primary form-giving cause already lies at the foundation for Thomas’ proof of God as a hidden idea of origin. So this idea again contains the inevitable *petitio principii* that we laid bare in the other four “ways.”

What is therefore the real truth about the metaphysical *theologia naturalis*? That it is a dogmatic pseudo-science, not because it is directed by religious presuppositions, but because it passes its religious presuppositions for purely theoretical axioms. All it really does is to explicate its aprioristic idea of origin in the form of a logical proof. But this idea was already implicitly contained in the foundations of the argument, which were then elevated as theoretical axioms.

Kant is therefore incorrect when he contends that ultimately natural theology derives its proofs purely from logical concepts, which then extend the thought-categories (that are restricted to

sensory perception) into the “unconditional” (*das Unbedingte*) or the absolute totality of all conditions.

The idea of origin can never be explained from an autonomous direction of theoretical thinking. Instead, it is the convincing proof that theoretical thinking itself is not self-sufficient even in internal scientific investigation.

Without an idea of origin philosophic thought is impossible, regardless whether or not the thinker is critically aware of the fact that this idea is determined by his religious position.

To pretend that one can ascend to this idea of origin along a purely scientific route and prove scientifically that God exists remains altogether uncritical.

21. Why Thomist scholasticism cannot abandon metaphysical natural theology

Now why can Thomist scholasticism not abandon its concept of a *theologia naturalis* as a pure science? How is it to be explained that it refuses to be convinced by any critique on this point, as we know from experience?

Our transcendental critique gives a conclusive answer to this question as well. The religious ground-motive of nature and grace that dominates all of Thomist philosophy demands in its typical Romanist conception a substructure of an autonomous natural knowledge of God as a foundation for the theology of revelation.

The scholastic motive of nature is, as we saw, nothing but the Greek form-matter motive in its failed accommodation to the Scriptural motive of creation.

The Aristotelian view of human “nature” raised the *anima rationalis* into the form principle of a person’s existence and saw the actual function of theoretical thought (*intellectus agens*) as the organ that gives us religious knowledge, for it held the absolute *nous*, the deity, to be the absolute ideal of the *theoria*.

The Thomist conception tries indeed to adapt the Aristotelian idea of origin and its idea of human nature to the doctrine of the church. But it does not part with the dualistic form-matter motive. Therefore, it also does not abandon the view of Aristotle that human nature finds its essential form in the *anima rationalis*, and that the theoretic-logical function of thought is the organ for our natural knowledge of God.

All this prevents it from radically taking the road of critical self-reflection in philosophic thought. It cannot see the true nature of the dogma concerning the autonomy of “natural reason.” It must represent it as a purely theoretical axiom.¹

In our day many representatives of neo-Thomist scholasticism are beginning to interpret *pater angelicus* or the Angelic Father (i.e., Thomas Aquinas) in a more Augustinian sense. In this way an opening appears for a transcendental critique of philosophic thinking, at least insofar as it can lead to the admission that in the deepest sense the dogma of the autonomy of natural reason is ultimately determined by the religious ground-motive of Roman Catholicism. For Augustine denied the autonomy of natural reason over against divine revelation.

Even though the Roman Catholic church has parted with the great church father on this point, it is certainly consistent with its teachings that in the final analysis it would see the autonomy of natural reason as determined by the central motive of its church doctrine: the motive of nature and grace. In the philosophical dialogue between Rome and the Reformation this is no mean step forward.

1 [The two paragraphs that follow were added to the MS when prepared for publication in *Phil. Ref.* 17 (1952): 181–82.]

CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANISTIC THINKING AS SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL CRITIQUE¹

Modern humanism viewed the autonomy of reason in a manner profoundly different from that of Aristotelian-Thomist scholasticism. In its science ideal humanism abandoned the Greek idea of "theoria" and rejected every dogmatic connection of natural reason with any church authority.

"Autonomy" now became complete "sovereignty," which, especially during the Enlightenment, submitted even the church doctrines of faith to the forum of human reason.

This conception of the autonomy of theoretic thought was also rooted in a dialectic basic theme of an intrinsic religious character. The polar contrast between "nature" and "freedom" arose from an insoluble religious conflict between the new religious personality ideal of the free, ethical self-determination of man as an absolute "end in itself," and the modern science idea, called forth by the personality ideal itself. It strove to dominate all of experienced reality from top to bottom by recreating it with the new method of thinking used by mathematical natural science. The result would be a closed, theoretical chain of causes and effects in which nothing would escape its determination by human thinking. The epistemology of Kant, too, can only be understood philosophically on the basis of this humanistic ground-motive.

1. The primacy of the nature motive in pre-Kantian humanistic philosophy

In the first phase of development, humanistic philosophy gave primacy to the science ideal (the nature motive). Descartes started with the absolute sovereignty of creative mathematical thought. His "ideal of God" was also determined by it. He even assigned to mathematical thought the authority to determine the supra-tem-

¹ [For a more elaborate exposition of this brief summary see my *WdW*, Vol. I, Part 2 (cf. *NC*, 1:169-495).]

poral root of reality. The thinking ego is for him a “thinking substance,” a “*res cogitans*.” Clear, distinct thought forms the center of its being, and only finds its touchstone in the mathematical method.

Using the same mathematical prejudice he brought the entire “corporeal world” under the denominator of “spatial extension” and saw it as “extended substance,” “*res extensiva*.” But here the dialectic tension in the humanistic ground-motive made itself felt in Descartes’ thinking. The personality ideal had withdrawn into the creation motive of the science ideal, but it refused to submit to the consequences of this.

In the mechanistic worldview, which the mathematic method of thinking had formed of the “corporeal” world, it could not uphold its postulate of the free self-determination of the human personality. And so the religious dualism gained the upper hand in Descartes’ philosophic doctrine of reality.

He made the “rational soul” independent as a “thinking substance” in opposition to the corporeal world. In the *Gegenstand* relation Descartes could not reduce mathematical thought to its opposite corporeal extension. For that reason he could also not accept a substantial union of “soul” and “body,” for in Descartes’ worldview such a union would threaten to sacrifice the freedom of mathematical thinking – in which he had dissolved the personality ideal – to the mechanistic view of reality. Hence the sharp separation between “thinking” and “extensive” substance, “soul” and “body.” Both substances, he said, can never combine substantially, only accidentally. The “soul” must be seen as if no “body” exists and conversely the “body” as if there is no “soul.”

This dualism is resolved only in the divine intellect; for Descartes interpreted God as having created both body and soul through His absolute, mathematical thought. The dualism of this Cartesian religious ground-motive no longer has anything in common with the Greek dualism between material body and rational soul.

The English thinker Thomas Hobbes, a younger contemporary of the French philosopher, rejected Descartes’ dualism, in which he saw an arbitrary scaffold for the application of the science ideal.

Hobbes' whole philosophical system was derived from the new mathematical, natural-scientific method by which Galileo had founded classical mechanics. For that purpose he tried to bring all of reality, including the psychic and normative aspects, under the common denominator of the "moving body."

The same laws of attraction and repulsion that rule the mechanical movement of bodies, he said, are also valid for human feeling and thinking and even for economics, justice and morality. For also the movements of feeling and thought that "cause" human social relations are according to him merely modalities of motion as such.

Hobbes also theoretically sacrificed the ideal of the free, autonomous personality by consistently applying this science ideal. He saw the human will as unfree, as dominated by the mechanistic law of causality which is valid for all motion.

And yet, it soon became apparent that the humanistic ideal of the personality had been the hidden religious stimulant of this whole mechanistic system. For Hobbes, glorified mathematics and mathematical physical science are the great illuminators of mankind which will liberate man from the "kingdom of darkness" into which he had sunk during the Middle Ages, when "reason" was tied to ecclesiastical authority.

The German philosopher Leibniz introduced a new metaphysical system in which he tried to cancel the dialectic tension between "nature" and "freedom," between science and personality ideal, through an ingenious religious synthesis.

Like his predecessors, Leibniz assumed a "reality in itself" as the foundation for the "sensory world of appearances" as seen in sensory experience and accessible only to theoretic philosophical thinking. He resolved this "true reality" behind sensory phenomena in time and space through the method of mathematical thought into metaphysical "points of force," which are all "animated" without exception and which he called monads. In this metaphysical construction Leibniz was guided by the method of calculus, which he had discovered and by which he learned to approximate both spatial and kinetic continuity with infinitely small units (differentials), which in turn can be reduced to continuity through integrals.

A point has no real existence in our “world as it appears in space.” But in the world of metaphysics, accessible only to theoretic thinking, a point has, he said, a deeper reality.

The “monads” are the real metaphysical building blocks that compose the cosmos. They all possess a soul, the monads of the material corporeal world as well as the spiritual “monads of the soul.” These monads do not influence each other: they are strictly closed, “windowless.” Every monad lives in representations in which the entire system of monads is mirrored. The representations of one monad correspond with those of the others through the law of predetermined harmony. Monads of matter and soul differ only in the degree of clarity of their representation. Matter-monads are submerged in representations that are as yet subconscious.

In the monads of the soul, perceptions are conscious and their degree of clarity reaches its natural maximum in the clear and distinct conceptual apperceptions of human’s mathematical thinking.

Finally, in divinity as the highest monad, we find the “*intellectus archetypus*,” original, creative thought, which calls all creatures into being through its mathematical thought-activity only. By contrast, human mathematical thinking can only create constructively in a theoretical sense; it is only an “ectypical intellect.”

There is thus an ascending series of monads in the world of metaphysics. The matter-monads occupy the lowest rung, the divine monads the highest.

This infinite metaphysical series of discrete, animated points of force is “integrated” by the metaphysical law of continuity, by which the members of the series approximate each other in infinitely small transitions and in this way form the totality of the universe.

The matter monads and soul monads differ only in the clarity of their perceptions. There are infinitely small transitions between “unconscious” and “conscious” representations. In this way metaphysical thinking again manages to construe the continuity between the discrete monads.

The sharp dualism between “body” and “soul” which Descartes had accepted for the sake of the personality ideal, had now become redundant. The science ideal seemed to have found a way to incor-

porate the personality ideal without abandoning its claims to complete continuity halfway in its application.

But the science ideal still had priority in humanistic philosophy. humanist thought had not yet taken the road to critical self-reflection. It was not yet realized that the real root of the science ideal was hidden in the ideal of personality, and that the urge to dominate all of reality through the mathematical method of natural science had been called forth by the new personality ideal with its free self-determination.

2. The critical turning point in humanist philosophy. Kant's epistemology seen in the light of the dialectic development of the humanist ground-motive

After the humanistic science ideal had reached its high-water mark, a critical reaction set in. Rousseau reproached modern science for ignoring the prime right of human personality: its freedom and autonomy. He preached the complete primacy of the personality ideal and sought to found it in a religion of feeling.

At the same time David Hume developed his psychologistic critique of knowledge by which he undermined the foundations of modern natural science that Newton had brought to classical heights after Galileo.

At this stage of dialectic development in humanistic philosophy Kant appeared on the scene with his so-called "transcendental critique" of human knowledge. Rousseau's impassioned plea for the autonomous personal freedom had opened his eyes.

The metaphysics of Leibniz had also been unable to save this freedom because of its overextension of the science ideal; it had degraded the human personality to a spiritual automaton that had to fit into a series of metaphysical monads, constructed by a mathematical method of thinking. And Hume's critique of knowledge had undermined the foundations of modern natural science by overemphasizing the sensory side of human experience.

Kant, in turn, wished to abandon neither the personality ideal nor the science ideal. Locke, Hume, and Rousseau had taught him that science can never lay bare the deepest root of human life. He had learned that theoretical metaphysics, which believed it could penetrate to the essence of the "human soul" by means of science,

must be based on a transgression of the boundaries of scientific knowledge.

From a humanistic standpoint Kant could only find the root of human existence in the idea of the free moral self-determination as it had been preached since the Renaissance in the humanistic personality ideal.

Kant had seen through the weakness of metaphysics in the deterministic science ideal and therefore no longer doubted the primacy of the personality ideal over the science ideal. Still, on no condition was he prepared to abandon the latter. A critical dividing line had to be found by which some sort of balance was to be reached in the dialectic tension of the humanistic ground-motive.

For this purpose Kant's critique limited the science ideal to the sensory phenomena. As to their value for knowledge, the thought categories of the intellect are limited to "sensory matter," but they do not originate with the impressions of sensory experience as Hume had taught. In its aprioristic synthetic activity our scientific thinking has autonomy, a creative freedom, through which, by its own power, it prescribes the law for its object (*Gegenstand*) in giving it its logical form. But this logical formation remains bound to sensory matter, which reason itself has not created, but which it receives.

3. The new religious meaning of the form-matter motive in Kant's critical philosophy. Why Kant did not wish to found his critique of knowledge in his so-called practical philosophy

The Greek form-matter motive received an entirely new meaning from Kant's critique of knowledge. It now served to put a limit to the claims of the humanistic science ideal for the benefit of the personality ideal: outside of the boundaries of sensibility, scientific thought has nothing to say. The natural-scientific category of causality, by which theoretical thinking strives for a complete determination and domination of the "natural phenomena," is not valid outside of the area of sensory phenomena. Therefore it cannot dominate the center of the human personality, its autonomous freedom.

An unbridgeable chasm thus opens up between the laws of nature, determined by the science ideal, and the norms for moral behavior, set by the personality ideal.

In other words, Kant incorporated the form-matter theme in the religious ground-motive of humanistic philosophy, just as Thomas Aquinas had incorporated it in the ground-motive of Roman Catholic thought. Of course, in both cases the Greek ground-motive underwent a fundamental change in its religious meaning.

Why did Kant refuse to acknowledge his religious conception of the humanistic personality ideal as the real basis for his postulate of thought-autonomy? Why did he wish to separate “thinking” and “believing” by such a wide chasm? Because, if he had admitted that his entire critique of knowledge depended upon the religious prejudice of the moral autonomy of human personality, it would have meant abandoning the autonomy of science, of his science ideal. For him that ideal possessed a self-sufficient religious value in the tradition of the Enlightenment.

Kant was still far too firmly bound to the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment. He could not sacrifice the ideal of a scientific domination of nature and all of temporal reality to a consistent application of the implications of the personality ideal.

In his *Critique of Judgment*, meant to be some sort of connecting link between his critique of theoretical and of practical reason, he did not go beyond a subjective “as-if” treatise that can lay no claim to scientific value. “Nature” and “history” were viewed from a purposeful perspective by the teleological ability to judge as if they could serve the realization of the freedom idea. But Kant did not dare to posit that this is truly the case.

4. The absolute freedom idealism

Only post-Kantian idealism, as represented by the triumvirate of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, was prepared to bring the humanistic idea of freedom to bear as well on the area of “nature,” and to attack the old science ideal even on its very own domain – natural science. Only now did the idea of freedom acquire such an absolute character in the view of reality that it no longer seemed to have to fear any competition from the science ideal.

However, by virtue of the polar structure of the humanistic basic theme, the science ideal returned in a new form, even in this ab-

solute freedom idealism, and once more ended up in dialectic tension with the personality ideal.

5. The transpersonalistic conception of the “Idea of Freedom” and the origin of the new historicistic science ideal

The attempt to permeate scientific thinking with the idea of freedom, and to think in dialectic fashion of “nature” and “freedom” as one, led to a new view of science which was no longer guided by the method of mathematics and natural science but by the method of the science of history.

This rested on a new conception of the personality idea. Kant’s view of autonomous freedom had been individualistic and rationalistic. As he saw it, the “autos,” the selfhood of the human personality, is based on the “nomos,” the general rule of moral law. That left no room for individuality in natural talent and ability. His rational being makes every human individual into an autonomous, free personality, which determines its will according to the same general rule – the categorical imperative.

Ideally, an individual person is merely an exemplary instance of the autonomous moral law. It is the same as with “natural phenomena,” which he saw merely as exemplary applications of natural laws. In this rationalistic view of human personality the humanistic science ideal maintained its influence as it related to the natural sciences.

Kant allowed room for the individuality of the genius only in the aesthetic field.¹ And so he never arrived at an idea of community, the idea of a spiritual, moral realm where individual persons are inwardly bound together into a higher totality without losing their own individual make-up and talents.²

1 [Cf. his *Critique of Judgement* (1790; New York: Hafner, 1964), § 46, or pp. 150-51; see H. Dooyeweerd, *NC*, 1:387-88.]

2 [Even in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), in which Kant endeavored to establish a kind of kingdom of God on earth superseding ecclesiastical or pseudo faith, he acknowledged that “all single individuals must be subject to a public legislation, and all the laws which bind them must be capable of being regarded as commands of a common law-giver” (*ibid.*, p. 90; cf. p. 91).]

In contrast to this, the new conception, which the absolute freedom idealism gave to the humanistic ideal of personality, took an irrational. turn.

6. Humanistic irrationalism

Early romanticism already derided Kant's "bourgeois law-morality" and opposed it with the "morality of genius": the brilliant personality does not find its guidelines for action in a general rule for the masses, but in its own incomparable individual make-up.

In the idea of autonomy the "autos" was no longer to be derived from the "nomos," but conversely, the "nomos" was to flow out of the individual "autos."

In this manner a polar contrast was revealed in the humanistic personality-ideal between the *rationalistic* and the *irrationalistic* view. The former tried to reduce the subjective personal individuality to the law, the general rule; the latter conversely sought to reduce the law to an individual revelation of the subjective individuality.

This overextension of the subjective individuality automatically had to lead to an overextension of the idea of a community. For, if one was not to end up in complete moral and juridical anarchy on this standpoint (as was advocated by Friedrich Schlegel in his novel *Lucinde*), at least a supra-individual community of personalities had to be accepted above the individual personality. This community or "superperson" (*Überperson*) could then raise its communal will as the guideline for individual action.

This "superperson" too could then be seen in an irrational sense. Its "general will" (*volonté générale*) was not mathematically construed in the sense of the earlier humanistic natural-law doctrine, but was merely the concrete consequence of its individual community character.

It was believed that the autonomy of the individual personality could be maintained here by viewing the communal will as the true individual moral will of all its members. Individuality only comes into its own in the community. Human individuality can only be seen within the community, just as in a living organism the individual organic functions can only be understood in their significance for the individual whole.

In such a conception of the freedom idea, natural scientific thinking – as it had been developed in classical physics – had to lose all its attraction. Absolute freedom idealism saw in it only a residue of the individualistic, rationalistic thought-pattern of the Enlightenment. Science too had to be permeated with the new spirit of freedom idealism, and one believed to have found in history the field of inquiry where the right of existence for an irrationalistic and supra-personal way of thinking reveals itself most emphatically.

The historian cannot be concerned with tracing general laws that fully determine individual events and persons. He is interested exactly in the once-only, the individual, the unique. What matters here is not a rational, natural-scientific understanding of relations that conform to law, but a spiritual understanding of individual relations in a supra-individual bond, relations that never repeat themselves in the same way. In the latter part of the eighteenth century Herder had already discovered individual historical totalities in peoples and nations that also determine the individual nature of their members.

In his final period Fichte had worked out a whole methodology for historical science in which he held history to be “lawless” in striking opposition to the field for investigation of natural phenomena, even though he still recognized a “hidden law” of providence in cultural development (God’s hidden counsel).

7. The doctrine of the folk spirit and the battle of the Historical School against humanistic natural law.

The influence of Schelling

The Historical School of the science of law brought the doctrine of the individual folk spirit onto the battlefield against the rationalistic natural-law doctrine. Under the influence of the mathematical science ideal, the latter thought it could deduce an eternal order of natural justice and an eternal natural morality from general rational human nature, which would fit any nation in any age.

On the other hand, the Historical School, led by Friedrich Carl von Savigny, taught that every legal system is the historical product of the individual nature of a people, an individual folk spirit, which has produced the entire national “culture.” Justice, language, social customs, art, etc., are merely its dependent aspects.

In this individual folk spirit, “nature” and “freedom” are dialectically united. It may be true that each people produces its culture in “freedom,” but the supra-individual tradition plays the role of regulator in the process of historical development. This tradition initially dominates people “subconsciously.” It operates with inner necessity as the unique character of a people, which only in a higher phase of cultural development rises to consciousness, when science begins to interfere in the process of development through freely formative action.

Under the influence of historical science, historical necessity is canceled in freedom, since culture is now formed consciously by knowledge of the ties with the past, and hence in the line of historical continuity. In this historical manner of thinking “nature” becomes “freedom” in the line of development.

Schelling had likewise tried to permeate natural science with the ideal of freedom through his doctrine of potentialities, which already reveal an individual creative freedom for natural phenomena in a process of development, something which had escaped the earlier mechanistic method of explanation. In support of his argument he could already point to electro-magnetic phenomena that could not be fitted into the mechanistic picture. And he pointed especially to the development of living organisms, which works out a purposeful plan. History in the sense of cultural development was thus seen as a higher stage of natural development: “Nature” itself is permeated with a freedom-idea in its “potentials.” In this way, the view of science came under the influence of the rising historicism, which initially had been fertilized by the spirit of freedom idealism.

8. The influence of the Historical School in the Protestant Christian (anti-revolutionary) theory of the state. The demand for reformation, also here

The new historicistic way of thinking also gained a foothold in Christian thought. Friedrich Julius Stahl, a Lutheran (anti-revolutionary) writer and statesman, connected the irrationalistic ground-motive of the Historical School with the Christian motive of “God’s guidance in history,” which he identified with God’s hidden counsel in the footsteps of Fichte and Schelling. He saw God’s guidance at work in history wherever its development was guided by silent, “subconscious forces,” operating beyond human interference. This

made him call “right by tradition,” wherein he saw an unconscious operation of people’s conviction, “holier” than “right by law,” which was to be merely the work of humankind.

As is well known, this view also gained support in the Netherlands among anti-revolutionary authors. Following the example of the Historical School these authors held to an irrationalistic concept of the “normative force” of history. One must have respect for everything that has been formed in the history of a people “outside of one’s interference and under God’s guidance,” to the extent that it does not come into conflict with an expressly revealed divine commandment in the “moral law.”

In Christian circles the opinion took hold that this historicistic view would give the best support possible in the battle against the natural law doctrine of the French Revolution with its theory of the innate human rights of freedom and equality.

But it went largely unnoticed that the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom permeated this whole view of history, nor was it realized that the doctrine of a person’s innate right to freedom and equality expressed the very foundations for civil law. Here, too, the transcendental critique of philosophic thought must lead to reformation.

9. The dialectic tension between the new historicistic science ideal and the humanistic idea of freedom

Historicism was born of the freedom motive, but soon it was found to harbor a dangerous tendency for the humanistic personality ideal.

As long as historicism was checked by the ideas of humanity, as long as “individual folk spirits” were seen merely as temporary historical revelations of the eternal idea of the human community, a “spiritual realm of free persons,” this dangerous tendency was not yet fully revealed.

Yet, in the Germanistic wing of the Historical School it already led to an opposition against the founding principles of civil law, as they had been developed in the Roman *ius gentium*, fertilized by the *ius naturale*, and had changed into the modern codifications of civil law partly through the influence of the humanistic doctrine of natural law. This opposition initially led to a glorification of German folk right, which tied the whole system of justice to the folk

community. It was Gierke, one of the grand masters of the Germanistic school, who recognized in time the dangers of historicistic folk glorification – and devised a compromise with the classical idea of natural law, which started with the general rational nature of human beings and assigned to them indisputable rights, even outside the folk community.

However, as historicism proceeded to dominate scientific thought in close alliance with the modern sociological way of thinking,¹ it became obvious that freedom idealism could not hold its ground against the relativistic tendencies of the historicistic train of thought.

Were not supposedly eternal “ideas” themselves historically determined? How can a person think scientifically and still surrender to idealistic speculations and believe he is able to place himself outside of the historical flux that encloses all of “experienced reality?”²

The new historicistic science ideal wanted to understand everything historically, and no longer appreciated a faith in the autonomous freedom of the human personality in its idealistic conception.

Darwinism, in alliance with Marxism, undermined faith in the unchanging rational nature of human beings. Nietzsche and the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard sounded the death-knell for German idealism.

10. The process of internal disintegration of humanistic philosophy and the timeliness of a transcendental critique for philosophical thinking

The process of internal disintegration of humanism as a worldview became apparent even in thinkers who sought to revive Kantian or Hegelian philosophy in the twentieth century. Historicistic thinking did not seem to tolerate a return to the idealistic metaphysics of

1 Cf. my “*Recht en historie*” [Law and History] (Assen: Hummelen, 1938). This was a paper presented at the 23rd Scientific Gathering of the Free University, Amsterdam, 13 July 1938.

2 Cf. Nietzsche’s “. . . man must from time to time believe that he knows *why* he exists; . . . and from time to time the human race will decree over and over again: “There is something that is strictly forbidden any longer to laugh at.” *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 5:37 [cf. *The Joyful Wisdom* 1.1].

the personality ideal. Anti-humanistic spiritual currents arose out of modern relativistic historicism, and caused the crisis in the foundations of Western culture on which we already touched in our introduction.¹ This involved nothing less than the foundations of the philosophical community of the Western world.

In the light of this whole development, the transcendental critique of philosophical thinking, as we instituted it in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, is extremely timely.²

The storms of a tremendous period of transition have jolted the earlier foundations on which thought could be built. Along the entire front the spiritual battle is revealed as a struggle of religious convictions. Adherence to the dogma of the autonomy of reason may have been understandable in the days when the humanistic basic theme still dominated philosophic thought with little opposition; but it will no longer do to accept this outdated dogma as a scientific axiom.

11. The significance of the transcendental critique for Humanism and Roman Catholicism

However, those who in the present spiritual crisis still believe that they can withdraw to this dogmatic standpoint in order to block the road toward critical self-reflection in philosophic thought, merely demonstrate that they have understood nothing of the causes of this crisis. They continue to belong to the realm of epigones that have nothing left to say to the present generation.

If humanistic philosophy still is to have a future it will have to begin with openly acknowledging the religious character of its ground-motive and to stop trying to camouflage it under self-assured *dicta* which have now to a large degree lost their influence.

To throw one's whole person into the battle of the spirits is impossible without a religious commitment. Whoever clings to an absolute truth on philosophical territory must not believe that he or she can at the same time make that truth relative again by limiting it to a purely theoretical area.

Roman Catholicism has in general remained aware of its ground-motive in philosophic thought. The fact that, in spite of that, the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholic thinkers can-

1 See above, p. 21.

2 [This paragraph was inserted by the author in the page proofs.]

not admit the religious determination of their philosophic insights is, as we noted earlier, largely due to this ground-motive itself.

The religious synthesis which has been carried out under the influence of this ground-motive prevents those who ground their philosophic thinking in it from penetrating to the real religious root of their view of "nature." What would happen if he or she admitted this? Such a Roman Catholic thinker would admit that this view of nature, sanctioned by the church, is pagan in origin, and that reformation, also of this standpoint of the church, is demanded by the Christian religion. Obviously we cannot expect this of a devoted Catholic. The infallibility of Romanist Church doctrine itself is for Catholics an article of faith.

This does not exclude the possibility of a transcendental critique of philosophic thinking in principle, also on the Roman Catholic standpoint. They may still become critically aware of the truth that their entire view of natural reason depends on the Romanist view of grace, just as conversely the latter is unbreakably connected to the former.

The Augustinian view, which still exists in Roman Catholic philosophy, will undoubtedly arrive at such a critical view much more easily than the Thomist school. After he became a believer Augustine never again acknowledged the autonomy of theoretical thought vis-à-vis the Christian faith. For that very reason his line of thinking could never play a really representative role in Roman Catholic philosophy. Undoubtedly Thomism remained the official philosophy (if not the infallible interpreter) of Roman Catholicism. And the Augustinian school had to adopt the religious ground-motive of "nature" and "supernature" in order to be tolerated in Roman Catholic circles.

But this does not have to prevent their demonstrating the lack of self-sufficiency of natural reason in philosophy along the lines of a transcendental critique.

As we saw earlier, this has recently been done by a well-known French thinker, Maurice Blondel, who sees a connection between the Augustinian tradition and the modern irrationalistic motives of humanistic philosophy. Blondel has introduced a kind of transcendental critique, which led him to the result – as did our Philosophy

of the Law-Idea – that theoretical thinking is always religiously determined.

Undoubtedly Blondel traveled a fundamentally different road than the one we took. But this does not alter the fact that he has shown in a convincing manner that a transcendental critique is also possible from the Roman Catholic standpoint, and his critical work was for the entire Roman Catholic philosophy a call to further self-reflection on the nature and structure of philosophical thinking in its relation to religion.

Meanwhile, among some members of the neo-Thomist school the realization that philosophy is determined by religion has penetrated of late, although not along the road of a really transcendental immanent critique of philosophical thinking.

I can point to the expositions of Jacques Maritain whom I mentioned earlier, concerning a Christian philosophy. And now there is a pronouncement of the well-known French Thomist Etienne Gilson:

If our traditional philosophy doesn't find today the audience that we would wish for it, it is not at all because it is suspected of being sustained by a faith; it is indeed rather because, being so, it pretends not to be so, and because no one wishes to take seriously a doctrine that begins by denying the most evident of its sources.¹

That is indeed how it is. And exactly for that reason it is to be deplored that the large majority of Thomist philosophers still maintain their dogmatic standpoint and still claim a purely theoretical character for their philosophy, independent of any church belief. No one outside of Thomist circles can take this thesis seriously, since it is contradicted by the facts.

12. Calvinist thought at the crossroads

As far as the Reformation is concerned, it stands at the crossroads in the full sense of the word. It has just barely started developing a philosophic thinking of its own. It is at least in a favorable position to the extent that it still *can* choose.

¹ Gilson, *Christianisme et philosophie* (Paris, 1936), p. 161 [Eng. trans. by Ralph MacDonald, *Christianity and Philosophy* (Toronto: Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1939), p. 119.] Pierre Marcel reviewed this work in *Phil. Ref.* 4 (1939): 189-92, and concluded that in Gilson's emphasis on the foundational role of faith in philosophical thinking there is an evident tendency in Thomism to move toward Augustinianism. To me that seems quite plausible.

It has not yet developed a philosophy that is truly founded on the religious ground-motives of the Reformation. It is merely tied to a scholastic tradition which has assured itself a powerful influence in Reformed thinking via theology.

But for the Reformation, the days of dogmatic canonizing of scholastic thought-content are gone beyond recall. It must indeed try to remain the pure expression of Scriptural, reformational Christianity. And as such it must be conscious of its calling, also for the development of Western philosophy.

Kuyper already saw this towards the end of the previous century with a truly prophetic vision. He did indeed give a reforming guideline for Christian thinking.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea has instituted the transcendental critique which opens the way for putting this guideline into effect in philosophy: it does indeed mean a reformation of philosophy. It has lifted the theoretical camouflage off the false syntheses between the religious ground-motive of Christianity, of Greek paganism and modern humanism. It has laid bare the true character and the intrinsic significance for philosophical thinking rooted in these motives.

And so the only possible sense of a Christian philosophy has become clear. A philosophy can only be Christian if it knows how to bring the Scriptural ground-motive of the Christian religion to expression in the inner course of philosophic thought. According to the Reformation this motive is that of creation, fall into sin and redemption through Christ Jesus. In doing this it must maintain the complete sphere-sovereignty of science, according to its inner nature. And it must break fundamentally with all thought-motives that issue from an unscriptural religious ground-motive.

CHAPTER VI

THE COSMONOMIC IDEA AND THE BASIC STRUCTURES OF TEMPORAL REALITY

Part A

1. The Law-Idea as the transcendental basic idea of philosophic thinking and the modal structures of reality

We have now traveled the road of a transcendental critique of philosophic thinking to the end. The first problem was: “How is philosophic thinking as theoretic thinking possible?” In a process of critical self-reflection this carried us to two further transcendental problems which, as we have seen, were not raised arbitrarily. The structure of the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation and theoretical synthesis itself forced them upon us.

a. Summary of the three phases of the transcendental critique

Once more we will summarize the three phases through which our transcendental critique passed.

The nature of theoretic thinking, which consists of abstracting and placing things in opposition¹, led us – via the contrast with the attitude of naive experience – to the following question:

- (i) *What is abstracted from full temporal reality in the theoretic Gegenstand relation and how is this abstraction possible?*

Next, the structure of the theoretic synthesis, in which the aspects of reality were separated and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation, were bundled together again in a theoretical nexus. This led us to the second problem, which we formulated as follows:

1 [I.e., in opposition to our logical function, which ensures the logical character of our theorizing. See chapter III.]

- (ii) *From what standpoint can the aspects, which were separated and opposed to each other in the theoretical view of totality, be reunited?*

This is the problem of the starting point, that of the Archimedean point of philosophy.

We found that this Archimedean point must be located above the *Gegenstand* relation, and that we can discover it only along the road of critical self-reflection. This appeared to revolve around the question where the religious center or the religious root of temporal reality must be sought. And so we encountered a third basic problem, namely: how can we discover this Archimedean point in our critique of philosophic thinking? We formulated this problem as follows:

- (iii) *How is the choice of the Archimedean point possible?*

During the investigation of this final transcendental problem it appeared that self-knowledge depends entirely upon the knowledge a thinker possesses concerning God, the Origin of all things.

It follows that choosing the Archimedean point of philosophy is an intrinsically religious act, in which the aspects, which we separated and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation, are directed to their absolute Origin.

It is easy to see that the three basic problems are inseparably connected, and that it is therefore impossible to answer any of these critical basic questions of philosophy apart from the other two.

To answer them within the theoretical boundaries of philosophy means, as we saw, to give a critical theoretic account of the presuppositions necessary to philosophic thinking, presuppositions which the structure of philosophy itself demands.

In this process of self-reflection, theoretic thinking is directed toward its presuppositions, which lie outside and above the *Gegenstand* relation. If this thinking is to retain its theoretic, scientific character, it must also leave this *Gegenstand* relation intact in the process of its transcendental critique.

This means that theoretic understanding can never rise above the purely synthetic connection of the aspects, which it had first abstracted and opposed to each other in the *Gegenstand* relation. Neither the pre-given coherence of the aspects in reality, nor their tran-

scendental radical unity or their Origin can be grasped through a concept.

The theoretical concept always remains caught in the theoretical multiplicity of syntheses. For instance, our concept of justice serves to identify in logical fashion the jural aspect in its theoretical distinction from all other aspects. It does not teach us to see the juridical aspect as something by itself, in its pre-given uninterrupted coherence with the others, but as abstracted and isolated in the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation. This coherent unity is presupposed, just like the deeper radical unity and common Origin of the aspects.

Because of its structure, theoretic thinking must be directed philosophically to these presuppositions, which make it possible in the first place. Only this direction can give us the theoretic view of totality of the aspects that is so characteristic for philosophy.

b. The transcendental-theoretic idea as the theoretic concept carried to its limit

Theoretic understanding is opened up and deepened in this direction towards its transcendental presuppositions in a transcendental-theoretic idea or a limiting concept. In this idea the theoretic diversity of the aspects is drawn back towards their unbreakable connection in the cosmic order of reality, towards their deeper unity in a common root, and towards their Origin. This occurs according to the view which the religious ground-motive opens upon these presuppositions, a view which is integral-scriptural or dialectic-unscriptural.

How shall we explain the relation between concept and idea to our reader?

When we start a philosophic inquiry into the founding modal structure of one of the aspects of temporal reality, we begin by abstracting this structure theoretically and confronting it with our logical function in the *Gegenstand* relation. Such a structure is always a totality, a unity in the diversity of elements, which are not all on the same plane but lie grouped around a central nucleus.

Thus we begin by theoretically abstracting the modal structure under investigation from its pre-given unbreakable coherence. Next we try to dissect this structure itself by separating its distinct elements. And finally we seek to connect these elements again in a synthetic concept as a theoretic unit.

This attempt at uniting is met with the same resistance on the part of this *Gegenstand* as the attempt to abstract it as a whole out of the given coherence of the aspects.

In reality the diverse structural elements are not separate but interwoven; they are the unified parts of an inseparable whole. If we lack theoretic insight into the modal structure as a whole, our entire theoretical analysis of the diverse elements in this structure falls apart in an unconnected multiplicity, which can never be combined into a theoretic unity.

If a theoretic concept, a theoretic synthesis of the structural elements of a modal aspect, is to be possible, then we have to found our investigation of it upon an idea of the whole.

c. The scientific significance of the modal idea: It later must supply us with insight into the place of the aspect concerned in the order and coherence of all aspects

If this idea is to give us real theoretic insight into its structure, it must keep the diverse structural elements separated in theory, and must at the same time discover their order and place within the whole. All this therefore comes down to nothing more than a theoretical insight into the place which one aspect occupies in the order and coherence of all of them.

For in its general theory of the modal spheres the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated that the modal structure of an aspect is nothing but a reflection of the order of all aspects inside a certain aspect.

d. The modal nucleus in the structure of the aspect and its logical irreducibility

When we theoretically analyze a modal structure we first discover a nuclear element that cannot be reduced to something else and that imprints its special characteristics on the whole aspect. And only here does it have an original character. Theoretical thinking cannot analyze this nuclear element further: it cannot be reduced to the nuclear elements of the other modal structures.

Just try to further analyze the nucleus of organic life logically. You will soon notice that this is impossible, and that every attempt to define it further presupposes the nuclear element in question.

For example, on the Thomist standpoint the attempt has been made to further define “life” as *self*-motion. But for that they use the nuclear element from another modal structure, i.e., the aspect of movement, which is just as irreducible as the aspect of life. Motion as such cannot clarify the nucleus of life theoretically for us. In the nucleus of its modal sense, life is not motion, although we readily admit that life cannot exist in time without motion.

Can the further qualification as self-motion give a real definition of life? What then is meant here with self-motion? It is apparently this: that a living organism, unlike, for instance, a falling stone, produces its movements spontaneously and organically, and purposefully directs them toward its life-function.

This whole further clarification of the concept of self-motion presupposes the irreducible nuclear moment of life as a modal aspect of temporal reality, because spontaneity and organic activity are qualified here exactly as life-characteristics.

If one tries to express with the concept of self-motion that movement starts with an individual whole, we confuse the modal structure with that of an individual, and that leads the entire process of concept formation astray. One cannot define the modal “life aspect” with the aid of the individuality structure of a “living being.” For such a being functions in all aspects of reality without exception, as we noted earlier.

The same thing we remarked concerning the concept of life is valid for the concept of motion that Thomist philosophy tried to use in order to define life.

Thomists have also tried to eliminate the nuclear moment from the definition of the aspect of motion by defining it as a continuous change of spatial form, a continuous change of place or a continuous qualitative change (e.g., in heating and cooling, increase or decrease of tension, etc.).¹

1 Cf. P. Hoenen, S.J., *Philosophie der anorganische natuur* (Antwerp and Nymegen, 1938), p. 261. At the place quoted from Sertillanges (p. 480) he distinguishes movement of quantity and place, of growth and of quality. This division goes back to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He derived it in turn mainly from Plato's *Theaetetus*, where all movement was brought back to two main forms: change of place and of quality. Aristotle added to that the quantitative movement characterized by growth and decline.

2. The Thomist view of the analogy leads to undefined and therefore scientifically useless analogical concepts

Now one must first of all ask whether it is logically possible to put such fundamentally different states of affairs together in one concept. What “attribute” do they indeed have in common? This would have to be continuous change. But a “change of spatial form,” of “place” or of “quality” can only be related by analogy. And we have seen earlier that according to Thomist philosophy analogical concepts just could not be based on the abstraction of univocal common characteristics.

Motion is not taken here within the modal structure of the corresponding aspect of reality. “Continuous change” is only described in a general sense as “the realization of what is potential or possible.”¹ And with that we have landed back again inside the area of the transcendental concept of being, which tolerates no other transcendental² distinction in its “analogical character” than that of “form” and “matter,” of “potential” (possibility) and “actuality” (realization). We will discuss this further later on.

This manner in which the “analogy of being” is used here leads to a logical leveling of the nuclear moments of the modal aspects, and makes the analogical concepts scientifically sterile.³

In the light of our transcendental critique we can establish that such is due to the starting point of Thomist philosophy. It begins with the autonomy of theoretic thinking in the area of “nature” (in the sense it has in the nature-grace schema), and then notices the analogies which indeed present themselves in the structure of the aspects of temporal reality. But it is not able to trace these analogies back to their real, deeper, radical unity, and to leave the aspects themselves theoretically intact in their irreducible nuclear elements.

1 A.D. Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 459.

2 [This means here: raised above the theoretical diversity of the categorical determinations.]

3 See my more elaborate treatment in “De leer der analogie in de Thomistische wijsbegeerte en in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee” [The doctrine of analogy in Thomist philosophy and in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea], *Phil. Ref.* 7 (1942): 45-57.

Instead of this radical unity¹ of all aspects the metaphysical concept of being is introduced, which itself is expressly recognized as an analogical concept: the unity of being is only a unity of analogy.

In other words, ontologically, the analogies themselves keep floating in midair in Thomist philosophy. They are not traced back to their radical unity. And for that reason they are also not seen in relationship with the irreducible nuclear elements to which they refer.

The metaphysics, which chooses theoretical thinking as its autonomous starting point, takes the place here of the transcendental critique, which has brought the lack of self-sufficiency of theoretic thought to light.

Theoretic thought which has no other insight than the analogical concept of being of Thomist metaphysics, can also not penetrate to the modal structure of the aspects. It levels the irreducible nuclear elements that qualify the aspects in the first place, with an unqualified analogy-concept.

In this way, the complaint of De Raaymaeker becomes understandable when he remarks regarding the use of the analogy of being in Thomist philosophy:

The transcendental concept of being excludes nothing, but mixes up everything in a colorless lack of definition. It embraces everything without exception but, also without distinguishing in the slightest; it gets to the point of depicting everything, exactly because it delimits nothing clearly.²

With a description of motion as “continuous change of spatial form or place” one summons the spatial aspect for help, which in turn is again as irreducible as the aspect of motion.³

1 [Orig.: *worteleenheid*, “radical unity” or, more literally, “root-unity.”]

2 L. J. de Raaymaeker, *Ontologie: algemeene metaphysica* (Antwerp and Nymegen, 1933), p. 48. [Louis Jan de Raeymaeker, S.J., taught philosophy at the University of Louvain.]

3 On the Thomist standpoint it is recognized along Aristotelian lines that the static continuum cannot be reduced to the dynamic continuum of motion. The first is the *starting point* and the *finishing point* of the latter. But one does not know any real modal structures of space and motion, because the structure of reality is seen merely in the concept of “substance” and in the categories that

A qualitative change, however, is not of a spatial nature by definition, and can therefore never be qualified in the same sense as motion.

So here too it is evident that the nuclear element offers resistance against every attempt by theoretical thinking to define it further logically, just as we saw with the definition of life.

Still, it is no accident that one always takes the coherence with the nuclear elements of the other modal structures into account when one analyzes a certain modal structure.

3. The analogies and anticipations in the modal structure of an aspect. They are qualified by the modal nucleus of meaning

As we remarked before, the entire temporal order and coherence of the aspects express themselves in the modal structure of each one of them. This comes about in such a way, that on the one hand this structure contains other elements besides its nucleus that point back toward the nuclei of all aspects in the temporal world-order that precede the aspect under investigation; on the other hand it contains elements that point forward to the nuclei of all the aspects that follow the elements of motion and space, and are qualified by the modal nucleus of life.

do not take the modal structures of the aspects into account. The first elements are called analogies or retroceptions in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, the latter anticipations. The modal nucleus is of an original character, while the analogies and anticipations are not. They are merely analogies of earlier modal nuclei, respectively anticipations of later ones, whose meaning-nuclei they presuppose. But the structural totality in which they are put together groups all these elements in such a manner that the modal nucleus imprints its own character upon all the other modal elements. In this state of affairs the lack of self-sufficiency of the aspects stands out clearly. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea calls this lack of self-sufficiency the character of meaning. Each aspect can only reveal its modal sphere-sovereignty in its coherence with all the others. The modal nucleus is only its nucleus of meaning within the structural coherence with its analogical and anticipatory elements. Now it can be understood why the life-aspect cannot be defined independently of motion and space. For the modal structure of life contains the analogies of these aspects as the elements of life-movement, life-development and life-space or the biotic field for reaction of the life-function. But "motion" and "space" no longer carry an original sense in the inner structure of the life-aspect: they are merely analogies of the nuclear aspect under investigation in the order mentioned.

Life-movement or life-development is not motion in a real sense, but merely its analogy, which as such cannot exist without a connection with real motion. Neither is the biotic field for reaction (the so-called life-space), space in the original sense of static, continuous extension, nor is it true for physical kinetic space, whose modal characteristics are entirely determined by motion (gravity).¹

Conversely we can find an anticipation of the modal nucleus of life in the modal structure of motion, i.e., motion, directed biotically, or life-movement, in a physico-chemical sense.²

The metabolic movements in a living organism for instance show an anticipating character in this sense. They differ from the mechanical or electro-dynamic movements of inorganic material in that they are directed towards the life-function of the organism, and are guided by “bio-impulses” (Woltereck).³ But in spite of that they remain original or real movements, subjected to the modal laws of the aspect of movement and to the law for the conservation of energy.

We can distinguish the content of consciousness from consciousness itself. But the modal anticipations of feeling are inherent within the feeling of a living person. We could call them directions of feeling that point forward.

Earlier on we called this state of affairs the sphere-universality of each aspect, as the other side of its modal sphere-sovereignty, or irreducibility to other aspects.

4. Closed and disclosed structure of a modal aspect. The process of disclosure and the tendency towards its origin

The anticipations unlock or disclose and deepen the modal meaning of an aspect. So long as its anticipations have not been realized, an aspect remains in the state of a closed or primitive structure. The

1 [As noted, since 1950 Dooyeweerd distinguishes between the kinematic aspect of uniform motion and the physical aspect of energy-operation.]

2 In our conversational and even scientific language it will often be very difficult to describe, in unambiguous terms, the difference between an analogy in a certain modal aspect and an anticipation in a preceding aspect. For instance, the terms “life-movement” or “life-space” can be used in an anticipating physical sense as well as in an analogical-biotic sense.

3 Cf. Richard Woltereck, *Grundzüge einer allgemeinen Biologie* (Stuttgart, 1932), p. 731.

intrinsically dynamic tendency of the modal structures comes to a succinct expression in the process of aspects being “unlocked.” This process anticipates from aspect to aspect, and it cannot be closed off in the order of time, but points beyond time towards the religious dynamic in the radical unity of temporal reality. And the latter never belies its striving toward its origin.

Augustine famously expressed this tendency to strive towards an origin, a tendency that is concentrated in the heart of the human person and that only comes to rest in God, in the pregnant words: “*Inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in Te.*”¹ We can complement these words as follows: “*Inquietum est cor nostrum et mundus in corde nostro, donec requiescant in Te.*”² For, as we saw, the entire cosmos is centered religiously upon its Origin within the radical community of the hearts of humankind.

5. The cosmic order of the modal aspects and of the individuality structures is a real order in time

It is extremely important that we gain the insight that the order of the modal aspects and of the individuality structures is a real order in time. It has a cosmic character and spans all aspects.

This insight is not shared yet by all adherents of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, but I must state here that from the start I have seen it as a fundamental building-block of this philosophy. Precisely this view of time and the corresponding view of the religious center of our temporal existence, which transcends the cosmic order of time with its diverging multiplicity, have taken on a decisive significance for our theoretic insight into the inner nature of the structures of reality.

I have illustrated this view extensively in my essay about “the problem of time in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea.”³ I will have to return to this in the present work, especially in the section on anthropology, in which I will for the first time submit the place of man in the cosmos to a systematic philosophical inquiry.⁴

1 “[R]estless is our heart, till it finds rest in Thee.” *Confessions* 1.1.

2 “Restless is our heart, and the world in it, until they find rest in Thee.”

3 “Het tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee,” *Phil. Ref.* 5 (1940): 160-82, 193-234.

4 See Vol. III, chap. 5.

The cosmic order of time expresses itself in the modal structures with their analogies and anticipations. For the question whether we are dealing with a modal analogy or a modal anticipation is essentially the question whether the aspect, whose meaning nucleus determines the analogy or anticipation, occupies an earlier or rather a later place among the aspects in the cosmic order of time.

6. What is the criterion of distinguishing between analogy and anticipation?

In order to answer this question, using an exact method, one must always begin with the closed structure of the aspect under investigation. For in its closed structure no anticipations can reveal themselves.

Now if it is apparent that the nuclear meaning in this structure can only be grasped in connection with non-original modal meaning elements, which are determined by other modal nuclei, one may conclude with certainty that these elements of meaning are of an analogical, not anticipating nature. For the application of this method of inquiry I must refer to its extensive exposition in Volume II, Part 1 of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.¹

7. The two boundary aspects of temporal reality

It will be clear at first sight that there must be two limiting or boundary aspects in the order of time. The first can contain no analogies in its modal structure because no other aspects precede it. The last contains no modal anticipations because there is no aspect to follow it.

Also, as the number of analogies decrease in a modal structure, that of its anticipations will increase proportionately.

The first limiting aspect is that of quantity or number as was demonstrated in the general theory of the law-spheres. The last one is that of faith.

8. The first transcendental idea of philosophy as a guideline for the method of scientific concept formation

The theoretic analysis and synthesis of a modal structure therefore comes down to the following. First we distinguish its indefinable nuclear element from the analogical and anticipating elements,

1 [Cf. NC, 2:163-80, where analogies are called retrocipations.]

which we then grasp in the modal meaning of this nuclear element as they are successively ordered and related.

At the same time it becomes clear that the proper theoretic idea of a modal structure as a whole is nothing but an idea of the place it occupies in the entire temporal order and temporal relation of the aspects. However, even when this transcendental idea is taken falsely, it still remains a necessary guideline for all further philosophic inquiry, and with that implicitly also for special scientific investigation. The reason is that the choice of its starting point forces scientific thinking that is founded on it to level theoretically the structures of reality.

This transcendental idea guides the entire method of scientific concept formation, and forms its foundation, even if the thinker is not critically aware of that. We were already able to demonstrate all this in our transcendental critique of the scholastic “analogical” concepts.

For example, both the scholastic idea of “being” and Leibniz’ modern humanistic idea of the continuity of “creative” mathematic thinking remain real transcendental ideas, which as such retain their theoretical character but are nevertheless determined by supra-theoretical prejudices and, in the final analysis, by a religious ground-motive.

In this transcendental idea, which dominates the method of forming scientific concepts, the first transcendental basic problem of our philosophy was formulated as follows: “What do we abstract from the given structures of temporal reality in the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation, and how is this abstraction possible?” We will only find its satisfactory answer if we conceive of that idea “critically” in the radical sense we have intended.

When one starts with absolutizing theoretic thought, one will never be able to direct the transcendental idea – which guides the method of scientific concept formation – towards a temporal order of reality that contradicts the dogma of the autonomy of theoretic thinking.

Meanwhile, it is not difficult to formulate the basic problem mentioned in such a way that it implicitly contains its theoretical answer for every possible conception of the first transcendental basic idea.

This can be formulated as follows: What is the mutual relationship and coherence of the aspects, separated and confronted with each other in the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation?

Clearly, this formulation lacks the critical acuity of the first one. Nevertheless, the problem as formulated here lies enclosed in the first, and cannot be rejected by a philosophy based on a dogma.

From our reformational Scriptural standpoint the answer to the question we first formulated is: God has created the uninterrupted coherence of the modal aspects, which, enclosing them all, is a coherence of cosmic time; in it, each aspect, with its modal sphere-sovereignty, is fitted in according to the cosmic time order of earlier and later. This order is expressed in every modal structure in its sphere-universality.

9. The structure of the act of theoretic thinking is also founded in this coherence of cosmic time. And the abstract *Gegenstand* relation is implicit in this act

It is the ontic structure of theoretic thought – founded in this order and coherence of temporal reality – which makes possible also the abstraction in the *Gegenstand* relation because it maintains the *real*, supra-theoretic coherence of the aspects in spite of all theoretic abstraction. And this automatically answers the first basic problem in its second formulation.

It is our standpoint that the idea of sphere-sovereignty and sphere-universality of the modal aspects, as founded in the idea of a cosmic time-order, expresses their mutual relation and cohesion in theoretical fashion. This must indeed lead to an internal reformation of the method by which we form scientific concepts.

Already this first transcendental idea is a real transcendental limiting concept. In it we carried theoretic thinking to its limits and we discovered that this thinking, with its structure of the logical modal aspect, is the only possible one within a pre-given temporal world-order. This order assigns the logical aspect its proper place; and it has interwoven it with all other aspects that can be placed opposite it in the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation.

A theoretic concept can only approximate this temporal created order in its boundary function as a transcendental idea in which it gives a critical account of its own lack of self-sufficiency.

A theoretical idea itself cannot cancel the *Gegenstand* relation; it stays within the area of theoretic separation and correlation.

But, as we have seen in the process of critical self-reflection, this idea draws theoretic understanding towards its presuppositions, that make understanding possible, and constitute its foundation.

Theoretic understanding is intrinsically determined by its supra-theoretical prejudices of a religious nature, which express the religious view of these presuppositions and are founded in the religious ground-motive of philosophic thinking.

And so this theoretic idea carries theoretic thought in succession from synthesis to synthesis and relates all these syntheses to a structural whole that is founded in the order of the temporal world.

10. The second transcendental idea of philosophy: How to relate the theoretic concept to the one root common to all modal structures

The first transcendental idea in turn depends upon a second, in which we give a critical account in our theoretic thought of the Archimedean or starting point of philosophy.

It is from a Calvinist standpoint that we have given content to the transcendental idea of the connection and order of the aspects that we separate in the *Gegenstand* relation. It must be clear at once that this content is entirely determined by our Scriptural, Christian starting point. It is a content that cannot be accepted on a humanist or Thomist standpoint. The starting point is indeed decisive here.

In the second phase of its transcendental critique philosophy will have to give an account of this state of affairs in the idea of our Archimedean point, in which the modal structures are related in the *Gegenstand* relation to their religious center. And from that point we accomplish the theoretical synthesis of the structures we had separated and analyzed.

11. The third transcendental idea: The idea of the origin of the modal aspects that we set apart in the *Gegenstand* relation

As we have seen, the idea of the Archimedean point depends in turn upon the idea of an Origin, in which the theoretical opposition is based on the absolute foundation of Truth.

And so the transcendental critique of philosophic thought leads us through the three basic problems posed by the theoretical

Gegenstand relation to giving a critical account of a trio of transcendental ideas, which determine the entire immanent course of philosophic thinking in their unbreakable connection.

12. The synthetic union of these three ideas in the transcendental basic idea of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea

Finally these three ideas are synthetically grouped together in the transcendental basic idea of our philosophic system, which is called the “Law-Idea” in a broader sense.¹

13. Kuyper’s basic religious conception of Calvinism and the Law-Idea of a Calvinist philosophy

It will now be clear to our readers why Kuyper’s fundamental religious conception of Calvinism contained exactly these necessary presuppositions of which we had to give a critical, theoretic account. It gives us the supra-theoretical content that determines the Calvinist idea of the Origin in the confession of the absolute sovereignty of God as Creator in the Scriptural sense.

It gives us the same determination of the Calvinist idea of the Archimedean point in the confession of Christ Jesus, the Word incarnate, as the new religious root of mankind and the Head of the *Corpus Christi*, of the religious community of mankind which He restored and redeemed and in which members are incorporated through a conversion of their hearts. And in that community the central meaning of the divine law – the religious command to serve God and our neighbor in love – finds its fulfillment.

Finally, this conception determines the content of the idea of the mutual relationship and coherence of the aspects and individuality structures of temporal reality, as abstracted and mutually confronted by the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation. It determines this in the tenet of sphere-sovereignty in its “organic” sense: the aspects and individuality structures are indissolubly connected in God’s created world-order whereby all structures received their own irreducible nature and place in that order, and which interweaves and connects them in a bond that cannot be broken.

Kuyper’s basic conception of Calvinism was nothing but the religious ground-motive of Scriptural, reformational Christianity.

¹ In a broader sense, because it comprises the idea of a law-side as well as that of a subject-side of structures of reality, which we analyze in the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation. But more about that below.

And all that had to be done was to relate the Law-Idea of Calvinist philosophy to the basic transcendental problems of theoretical analysis.

This Law-Idea or basic transcendental idea can never depend on theological dogmatics for its content, because theology as a science must also be founded on that idea.

This Law-Idea gives account of the unbreakable connection and mutual relationship of the theoretic-logical function and the function of faith, and at the same time it cuts off at the root every attempt to blur the boundary between the two.

While Thomism saw faith merely as a supra-natural function of the intellect, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea sees the aspect of faith along Kuyper's lines as the last boundary aspect of the temporal cosmos. It has an irreducible nature and structure, and yet, it is inseparably interwoven with the logical aspect in the temporal world-order. And it shows the analogies of this logical aspect in its own modal structure.

14. No depreciation of theoretic thinking. The perspectival structure of the horizon of human experience and of truth

This Calvinist Law-Idea indeed signifies a radical reformation of philosophic thought and awakens it to a new and joyful life.

This does not mean – as some have said – that it depreciates human thinking, but rather it recognizes our thought again in its proper position in the divine order of creation.

Because it directs theoretic thought towards its true absolute Origin and its true Archimedean point, therefore it liberates philosophy from the false prejudices that darken the horizon of human experience.

This horizon is universal: it spans the structure of the entire cosmos, and is not merely a theoretic abstraction out of it, as Kant felt he had to assume in his epistemology. And this horizon also gives us a true perspective which reaches its pregnant expression in our Law-Idea.

The temporal horizon of experience has a pre-theoretic and a theoretic structure, and both are transilluminated by the supra-temporal, religious horizon, which in turn receives its light from the absolute Origin of all things through His self-revelation.

When this light is resisted, a darkening of the horizon of temporal experience follows automatically. False religious prejudices also lead science astray, exactly in the discovery of relative truths.

The dogma of the autonomy of theoretic thought is in this regard one of the most tenacious idols, eagerly feeding on human *hubris* and leading science away from the way to Truth.

Truth also has a perspectival structure: behind its pre-theoretic and theoretic dimensions lies the religious dimension. For truth is universal and absolute, and allows no attempt to make independent what is dependent. Whoever makes theoretic – i.e., relative – truth absolute, by founding it in theoretic thought itself, deviates necessarily from Truth, also in his theory.

15. The idea of the law in a narrow sense. The origin of law

The Scriptural idea of creation leads a reformational philosophy to the idea of the law in a narrower sense of the word, which is of fundamental significance for all scientific thinking. The holy sovereign will of God is the origin of all law and order. The law does not originate in “Reason,” and therefore cannot find its yardstick in theoretic thinking. The law gives all of creation its limits and determines its nature. God Himself, however, is not subject to law.

16. Occam’s doctrine regarding the *potestas Dei absoluta*.

The continued influence of the Greek matter-principle in this view of the sovereignty of God’s will

That God is not subject to law does not mean that we may see the infinite, omnipotent and holy creative will of God as being basically despotic, arbitrary, and disorderly, as William of Occam, the spokesperson of the nominalistic school of late-medieval scholasticism, taught in his idea of the *potestas Dei absoluta*: that God could just as well have sanctioned an egocentric morality with his omnipotent will.

This doctrine sided only seemingly with the Scriptural view of God’s sovereign creative will as held by Augustine, nor was it inwardly akin to the view of the Scottish scholastic Duns Scotus, an adversary of Thomas in the matter of *potestas Dei absoluta*.

In his thinking Occam, who tried to uphold the absolute sovereignty of God as creator against the intellectualism of Thomas, remained typically rooted in the same Romanist synthesis theme of nature and grace that also formed the foundation of Thomism.

The internal dialectics of this religious theme merely led him to a polar dualism between the two “spheres.” But his view of the “nature” of creation did not undergo an inner reformation through the Scriptural motive of creation.

The Greek form-matter theme continued to govern his entire “doctrine of nature,” and it also penetrated his idea of the origin. His *potestas Dei absoluta* was internally infected by the Greek matter principle, in which the divinity was seen as a lawless *fluidum*, operating through the blind *anankē* (or “fate”), whereas in Thomas’ idea of God the rational form principle was absolutized. Just as Thomas adapted the Aristotelian idea of God as absolute actual *form* to the church doctrine of creation, so Occam did the same with the Greek *anankē* as the arbitrary, lawless nucleus of the *matter* principle. The *anankē* became the personal, absolute, creative will of God, but in this adaptation it retained its fatalistic character.

The law as the expression of the *potestas Dei ordinata*, was seen as giving form to “nature,” which however could be canceled time and again (in principle) through an eruption of the lawless “omnipotence of God.” According to Occam, we can never know whether the divine law is the lasting expression of God’s will. Not only has it no rational foundation in God’s being, it also has no firm footing in God’s will, since in its fathomless secrecy it is a lawless *fluidum*, an ever changing stream, a real absolutized arbitrariness.

According to the Scriptural view, however, God’s will is holy, unchanging (without “shadow of turning” says Scripture) and good,¹ and all these Divine characteristics express themselves in the Divine laws given for His creatures. We have no higher yardstick for judging the good and holy character of the divine law-order than the self-revelation of God in His word.

We cannot summon the divine law before the forum of human reason. For this cosmic law order, originating from God’s sovereign creative will, has determined the entire structure and nature of human thinking. Exactly for that reason God cannot be subject to

1 [Dooyeweerd here refers to Romans 7:12 and James 1:17. The King James Version of Romans 7:12 reads: “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good”; and James 1:17 reads: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”]

the law, because “being subject” is a typical characteristic of the creature.

Calvin expressed – in an unsurpassably pointed manner – this relation between God and His creation laws in his well-known dictum: “*Deus legibus solutus est – sed non exlex*”: God is free from the law – but not outside the law. That is to say, He is not arbitrary in His will but He is a law unto Himself.

17. Once more: The dogma of the autonomy of reason.

The normative aspects of the law and of the human person give form to the normative principles

The idea of the autonomy of theoretic reason – the notion that theoretic reason can set its own law – is thoroughly incompatible with the Scriptural doctrine of creation. As we demonstrated in our transcendental critique of philosophic thought, it is also in utter conflict with the inner structure and nature of theoretic thinking.

But it is something altogether different that in the normative aspects of temporal reality, i.e., in those aspects in which reality is not subjected to natural laws but to rules about what *ought* to be, the law of God is given only in the form of a principle. It is left up to man’s capacity for rational distinctions and [formative] will to give these norm-principles a positive form, a concrete content.

In its theory of the law-spheres the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated that this state of affairs is related to the place which the logical and historical aspects occupy in the temporal world-order.

The logical laws for human thinking are only given as norm-principles. The science of logical thought, so-called logic, gives a positive scientific form to these principles, which in the naive attitude of thinking are applied without scientific reflection or any logical formulation. What form they are given is closely related – in the anticipating connection between the logical and the historical aspects – to the state of cultural development. It has its history: the history of logic.

The modal meaning nucleus of the historical aspect is culture in the sense of free (human) formative control. The logical formative activity is an historical anticipation in the modal structure of the logical aspect. Only unlocked (disclosed) theoretic thinking has real logical forms, while naive, prescientific thinking lacks them.

In the same manner all normative aspects that follow the historical in the world-order have the form element as a historical analogy in their modal structure. Without linguistic forms no language can exist, not even a primitive one in which the linguistic aspect of symbolic signification still exhibits a closed structure. Without forms of social interaction no social life between people can exist. Without juridical forms (e.g., judiciary, law, ordinances, rules, international treaties, etc.) no positive law is possible. And because of this state of affairs humankind has undoubtedly been allowed much freedom and latitude for giving a positive form to the divine normative principles. But an autonomy of reason in the sense that human reason could be a law unto itself is out of the question.

This whole state of affairs is entirely and without exception determined by the divine order of creation. The normative freedom of the human will, mentioned above, merely exists by the grace of God's law and is completely subject to it.

This act of giving a form to normative principles is historically founded, and cannot withdraw from the connection with the norms for historical development, which submit all free human cultural activity to a divine law with its own modal character in God's created order.

One could only speak of the autonomy of reason if reason were the origin of the law. But that would mean that reason were above the law, that it could submit the law to its own test of purity. And this view is of idolatrous, not Christian, Scriptural derivation.

18. The law as the boundary between the being of God and creature

If all creatures by their creaturely nature are subjected to the law, which determines their being – while, in contrast, the Origin of all law stands above it – one will have to agree with the Philosophy of the Law-Idea that the law is the boundary between the being of God and the cosmos.

19. The subject of law is "subjected." Radical excision of the polar contrast between rationalism and irrationalism

This whole view of law is entirely determined by the Scriptural motive of creation. It also implies the view that the creature as subject is really submitted, subjected to the law. All of created reality

therefore shows two sides which cannot be reduced to each other – the law-side and the subject-side – which at the same time are connected by an unbreakable bond. There is no law without a subject, but conversely there is no subject without a law.

This conception of the law has got lost entirely in philosophic and scientific thinking under the influence of unscriptural ground-motives. But it has consequences that are of fundamental importance for science.

By this Scriptural Law-Idea two polar contrasts of current philosophy have also been cut off at their root: rationalism and irrationalism.

1. Rationalism makes the law absolute and tries to reduce the individual subjectivity to something entirely determined by natural laws.
2. Irrationalism conversely declares the individual subjectivity to be absolute at the expense of the general rule. It debases the rule to a fictitious construction of thought that supposedly falsifies reality.

20. The deeper, radical unity of God's law

Now let us pursue our Law-Idea from the idea of its origin and derive from that the idea of the Archimedean point for gathering up all the law-aspects that we have abstracted and opposed to one another in our theoretical *Gegenstand* relation. We then arrive again at the true Scriptural view that all temporal aspects of the divine law find their deeper unity in a common root: the central religious commandment: to serve and love God with our whole heart and all our strength; and our neighbor as ourselves, as a fellow member of the religious community of mankind – with its common root (origin).

This is the fullness and absolute unity of divine law, as Christ Jesus taught us. Only in this religious sense is the law of God supra-temporal, does it transcend the temporal cosmos, does it have meaning for eternity.

21. The full meaning of the religious command. The "moral law" as the unity of norm in scholastic ethics

One can easily fail to grasp the full religious meaning of this command if one applies it only to human existence as perceived according to the Greek doctrine of substance, whereby the other tem-

poral creatures such as inorganic things, plants and animals, are left out. Such a view certainly fails to do justice to the deeper sense of the Christian law-idea. It fails to appreciate that the entire temporal cosmos is religiously rooted in the human race, which is why the radical fall into sin has dragged this whole temporal cosmos with it.

No, the full meaning of the central religious command was already given in the order of creation itself. This command includes nothing less than the divine demand of centering the entire temporal cosmos, with all the forces and potentialities placed in it, upon the religious service in love of God and neighbor. For God created the human being as the lord of the entire temporal creation. The entire meaning of the temporal cosmos is included in the heart of his existence.

Only for that reason does this central command indeed include the deepest religious unity of all divine ordinances for temporal reality, without exception. This implicitly condemns the view that it contains only the religious meaning of the “moral law,” which itself merely governs a temporal aspect of our existence – that of morality.

The concept of the “moral law” as the unity of norm for human action is derived from Greek, and especially Aristotelian and Stoic philosophy, but is utterly foreign to Scripture. It was originally inspired by the rational form principle in the religious ground-motive of form and matter. According to Thomas the moral law as the norm for our actions is founded upon the rational form of “human nature.” Just as “theoretic reason” is to lead us to theoretic knowledge of nature in its essential forms, so “practical reason” applies the theoretic knowledge of human nature to our actions. Theoretic knowledge becomes practical because the will, as the rational ability to desire, transforms general insight of the intellect into what is “naturally good,” into concrete action. It does this by means of a practical judgment, whereby the will is “free” (*liberum arbitrium*), because a general theoretic insight never offers the solution for the individual case. Now the imperative fundamental principle of the natural “moral law”: “do good, shun evil,” and “the principles derived therefrom by direct inference,” are withdrawn from the freedom of our will, because they are founded in human “rational nature.”

This view of the moral law left no room for an investigation into the various modal normative aspects for human action.

Aristotelian-Thomist “natural ethics” developed a “doctrine of virtues” that was not at all based on the nuclear element of the moral aspect, the temporal relationship of love in its normative sense. The traditional Greek virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice were taken ethically by Aristotle and Thomas as properly mid-way between two extremes (e.g., courage as midway between recklessness and cowardice). The modal nucleus of meaning of what is moral was never made into a problem here.

The theology of the Reformation accommodated this Greek concept of the moral law to Scripture by identifying the moral law with the Decalogue, which in turn was concentrically compressed into the central religious command. Thus one could reject autonomous “natural ethics” and declare only a “theological” moral law valid, while still taking one’s philosophic orientation from the Greek view of the moral law as the unity of norm.

However, the great cultural mandate, given to humankind at creation, could not possibly be squeezed into the framework of “moral law.” The result was that the view of the moral law as the absolute and only norm for our actions simply could not be squared with Scripture.

22. The consequences of absolutizing the “moral law” as the unity of norm for action

Again, this whole concept of the norm was the fruit of the scholastic urge to accommodate. But it left science completely in the dark when it saw itself confronted with the task of investigating the normative aspects of reality in their specific law-spheres (and those are all the aspects that come after the psychic-sensory aspect in the cosmic order of time).

The prejudice that the unity of norm for human action would be given in the “moral law” led to the following situation. It became impossible to accept norms for historical culture, for social interaction, for economics and justice in the irreducible character for each of them; and the danger of identifying the norms for faith with the moral law was ignored altogether.

But absolutizing the moral aspect of reality at the same time led to an intrinsic disturbance of insight into the modal structure of

this moral law-sphere itself, which is inseparably interwoven with all other law-spheres in time in its analogies and anticipations.

As a result, basic problems such as the relation of morals and history, of justice and history, of economics and history, etc., were addressed in a fundamentally erroneous manner – if they were addressed at all.

Earlier we drew attention to the influence of modern humanistic historicism upon the political theory of the anti-revolutionaries [in our country]. We can only explain this from their lack of a truly reformational starting point. They had no idea of the law in its deeper unity of origin and its temporal differentiation.

23. The deeper coherence of the so-called laws of nature in the pre-logical law-spheres with the norms of the later spheres. Natural law and miracle

The lack of insight into the radical and all-encompassing sense of the central religious command also prevented insight into the deeper connection between the “natural laws” of the pre-logical law-spheres and the normative ones.

One failed to see that the “laws of nature” also possess normative anticipations in the modal structure of their respective aspects. These anticipations extend all the way to the sphere of faith and find their deeper root only in the central religious command. Thus man can unlock and disclose or actualize these anticipations in faith.

Kuyper had developed the Scriptural view of the law in his six Stone Lectures in a most uncompromising way, calling the laws of nature “God’s servants.” If one had indeed followed his view, one would have better understood how the fall into sin also had to influence the operation of the “natural laws,” and one would have gained a deeper insight into the relation of “miracles” to these laws.

Under the influence of its ground-motive of nature and grace, scholastic theology was forced to banish the “miracle” from “nature” and to take refuge in a supra-naturalistic view.

Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas saw the “miracle in nature” simultaneously as *supra et praeter naturam*, i.e., it occurs outside of the natural order of cause and effect, although not strictly *contra naturam*. For God, who alone can perform miracles, has cre-

ated things as his instruments, and it is their nature to serve God. In this instance the natural order, seen in the conception of Aristotle, is temporarily put out of action but not canceled.¹

This “supra-naturalism,” that also has run rampant in Protestant scholasticism, obviously could not perturb modern natural science, led as it was by the humanistic science ideal. Science could put it aside, convinced that the “supernatural” is entirely beyond the reach of the laws of nature, and that whoever believes in “miracles” must give up natural science.

This either-or was a compelling dilemma for classical physics because, under the influence of the religious ground-motive of “nature and freedom” it could see the laws of nature only in the model designed by the mechanistic science ideal.

Science indeed disclosed the normative anticipations of the laws of nature (think of the “miracles of technology”), but only under direction of an apostate faith in the omnipotence of natural-scientific thought. And this faith excluded the Christian faith as a matter of principle.

It is true, modern physics has let go of the classical deterministic conception of natural law. But that did not at all prepare the way for an inner reformation of natural-scientific thinking.

It makes no sense to look upon the natural “miracles” communicated in Scripture as “supernatural” whenever they were done by believers, if reality in its pre-logical aspects possesses real, normative anticipations in both their law-side and subject-side that reach into the sphere of faith and that are founded in the religious root of temporal reality. And from this root these anticipations can be disclosed by humans through the performance of miracles, in faith.

In that case it is indeed founded in the “nature” of creation that true faith, issuing from the religious dynamics of God’s Word, can also unlock the physical and biotic forces so completely, and thereby actualize their normative anticipations to such an extent, that they fully obey humankind. And so nothing would be impossible to humankind in faith.

The “forces of nature” do not exist enclosed within themselves, but were initiated by God for complete domination by humankind, through faith. Only sin robbed humankind of true faith in God and

1 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 100.

of this dominion. Christ Jesus, the Word incarnate, has fully regained this dominion again. And again it was Kuyper who brought this Scriptural view of the “natural miracle” to light against scholastic supernaturalism.¹

In every age, “magic” is nothing but the childish attempt to regain this regal position for humankind in creation, but without really unlocking the forces of nature and without dominion from their religious root.

Faith in the modern science ideal did indeed rise above this naive phase; it brought science and technology to an “unlocking” of the natural forces, but in a one-sided direction. It made the theoretic-logical and technological-cultural anticipations in the structure of the pre-logical aspects absolute, which did not only turn into a relative blessing for humankind but at the same time into a curse.

As long as Christian thinkers refuse to be led by a truly Scripturally-directed idea of the law, they cannot gain insight into the proper relation between faith and the laws of nature. As long as the entire view of the law is not transformed, miracles have to remain in conflict with the concept of natural law for the scientist.

But humankind held on to a theoretical view of reality, determined by the dialectic, unscriptural ground-motives. And so, from the standpoint of accommodation, the same irreconcilable dualism retained the upper hand in the understanding of the law. It prevented scholastic anthropology from penetrating to the root and deeper unity in human nature. It created the same theoretic dichotomy between the “moral law” and the “natural laws” – discovered by modern science – as between “material body” and “rational soul.”

From this starting point one cannot possibly penetrate to the radical unity of all the aspects of the law. Indeed, the dualistic starting point of one’s theory blocked all insight into the various modal structures of the law-spheres.

The wealth of modal structures was lost due to a theoretic dichotomy in the temporal order which the divine law-order dis-

¹ See A. Kuyper, *Encyclopaedie der heilige Godgeleerdheid*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1893-94), vol. 2, § 41; and *Diktaten Dogmatiek* (privately published student class notes).

plays in time. Even though a specificity in the “essential forms” of the “substances” was recognized, this did not in the slightest take into account the irreducibility of the modal nuclear elements of the law aspects.

24. The light refraction of the divine law in the modal aspects of law-spheres within time

As soon as theoretic thinking was again concentrated upon the radical, all-encompassing meaning of divine law, the leveling dichotomy in the theoretical law-concept also had to be broken.

When we direct our theoretical glance in time from a Scriptural starting point, the religious unity and meaning-fullness of God’s law breaks up into a multicolored wealth of law-spheres, which are merely the modal aspects it displays in time.

Just as sunlight is refracted by a prism into the color spectrum of the rainbow, time functions like a prism that breaks up the meaning of the religious fullness of the divine law.

The temporal aspects of this law possess sphere-sovereignty and sphere-universality. In their modal structures they are inseparably interwoven, so that not one of them can be lifted out of this coherence and made into an absolute law. This completes the present discussion of our transcendental basic idea as seen from its modal *law-side*.

25. The idea of the subject as the correlate of the idea of the law. The modal subject-object relation

The Law-Idea in the narrow sense, as the idea of the law-side of the modal aspects, finds its necessary correlate in the subject as the idea of the subject-side of the aspects.

We must realize in this connection that the subject-object relation, which we discussed before, falls under this subject side, as it has its modal functions in the various aspects.

The temporal creature is subject to the laws of the law-spheres in which these aspects are incorporated, and also in the aspects where it functions as an object, albeit in a structural relationship with the subject-functions within these aspects.

I have submitted this subject-[object] relation to an extensive investigation, both with regard to its modal structures and its individuality-structures, in my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.¹ I concluded there that the subject-object relation must occur in all aspects that

1 [WdW 2:301–42. Cf. NC, 2:366–413.]

contain analogies in their structure. This conclusion shed a surprising light on several problems of modern science.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea indeed had to rediscover the true character of the subject-object relation, just like the modal and individuality structures of temporal reality could only be revealed by the light of a truly Scriptural, reformational Law-Idea.

Only in that way could the polar contrast between subjectivism and objectivism be eliminated.

As long as philosophy was dominated by unscriptural dialectical ground-motives, the subject-object relation was continually confused with the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation; and by misunderstanding the structural character of the subject-object relation, philosophic thinking was constantly driven into the polar opposition between subjectivism and objectivism.

This polar opposition is not identical with that between irrationalism and rationalism, which we discussed before. In humanistic philosophy particularly subjectivism can very well assume a rationalistic character, for example when the subject is proclaimed to be law-giver (autonomy in the Kantian sense) and the object is seen as identical with being subject to law.

The modal structure of the subject-object relation had to be discovered first. That yielded insight into the fundamental error of the current theoretical conceptions of reality. The inseparable coherence of the aspects had been overlooked. As a consequence reality was broken apart into theoretic abstractions of certain complexes of modal functions. And then reality was locked up in these abstraction. Time and time again, both the Greek form-matter motive and its modern humanistic counterpart of nature and freedom forced theoretical thought to proclaim such abstractions to be independent.

The metaphysical substance-concept was the vehicle par excellence for such thinking, even though in spite of a rejection of metaphysics the abstractions of theoretic thinking were still passed for reality. However, as soon as the structural character of the subject-object relation was recognized, it was found that it is absolutely impossible to lock the temporal reality of things up in certain of their aspects. It became necessary to admit the truth that all

things, without exception, function in all aspects of reality, and if not in a modal subject function, then in any case in an object function, which equally belongs to the full reality of the thing.

The insight into this state of affairs meant at the same time that every dichotomistic view of human existence, which seeks this dichotomy within the horizon of temporal reality, is untenable.

26. The limits of the modal subject-object relation. Can we only see the earlier modal functions in an aspect as object? A correction of my earlier view

I must make one important correction of my exposition of this matter in *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.

Starting with the undeniable state of affairs that the modal object-functions of reality are inseparably related to the analogies in the structure of the aspects, I concluded that only the modal functions of reality that precede the aspect under investigation can be objectified.

For an example, I took the sensory object function of a thing in the psychic aspect of feeling. I established that the following functions of a thing objectify themselves in the sensory characteristics of a thing in an analogical fashion: the numerical, spatial, kinetic and biotic functions. However, in my earlier view, this was impossible with the later functions (i.e., the logical and post-logical functions).

Upon closer examination I have had to abandon this restricted view of objectivity which I had not consistently followed through in my analysis of the individuality structures. It was not in agreement with the idea of the sphere-universality of modal aspects and individuality structures.

It cannot be denied that the objective logical characteristics of a thing express themselves in its objective-sensory characteristics by anticipation. All pre-theoretical concepts are still derived from sensory images we observe, and that would be impossible if the characteristics mentioned did not sensorily objectify themselves.

Nor can we deny in any way that objective cultural characteristics of a thing objectify themselves by anticipation in the sensory characteristics of their form. One can indeed see the difference be-

tween things formed by culture and natural things in our sensory perception by anticipation.

The fact that the logical and historical functions of human consciousness are always involved in this process does not in any way change the fact that cultural products cannot exist without their cultural attributes being sensorily objectivized.

Similarly the linguistic function is objectivized by anticipation in the sensory aspect of feeling. Every individual sign or symbol of language must be objectively observable by our senses, by anticipation.

The same holds for the aesthetic function, which by anticipation is objectified in what can be observed by the senses.

27. The sensory objectification of the manner in which the modal functions that follow the function of language in the cosmic order of time can become the object of sensory observation

But greater difficulties for our insight into the way in which the normative aspects can be objectified in the sensory aspect by anticipation seem to start in earnest with economic and jural functions.

For instance, how can the objective economic value or the objective jural characteristic of something be observed with our senses? Initially I could not see how this was possible, and that was the major reason that I answered this question in the negative in Volume Two of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.¹

However, this difficulty resolves itself automatically if we only hold on to our insight that the cosmic order of time holds also in the sensory objectification of the modal functions that follow after the sensory function of feeling. This means that we can make objects for our sensory perception out of all modal functions that follow the linguistic function in this order, and which can only take place on the basis of sensory symbolism.

This is true already for the aesthetic anticipations in the objective sensory picture. When sensory lines, forms, colors in a painting have nothing to say to some viewer, then this viewer cannot see the beauty of this work of art either. The artist always wants to ex-

¹ See *WdW*, 2:310-11. [The new conception is explained in *NC*, 2:376-79, where special types of objective things are discussed as well as the *intentional* relation of representation.]

press his aesthetic concept in sensory forms. The sensory aspect of a work of art is only disclosed in its aesthetic anticipations by means of sensory symbols. Whoever cannot experience these symbols simply does not see its beauty.

Similarly, the economic and juridical characteristics of a thing can only be perceived as such a sensory object through sensory symbolism. And this objective-sensory symbolism indeed makes all economic and juridical activity possible.

One could not blame anyone for appropriating someone else's land if the juridical subject-object relation between an owner and his land were not observable by some objective sensory means through sensory symbols.

Not a single positive norm for justice could be valid in our society unless it were signified for its juridical subjects through objective sensory symbols.

Of course, this objective sensory perception can only occur in a structural relation to subjective human perception and presupposes the cooperation of the normative functions of consciousness. And it assumes that humans as subjects, will disclose (unlock) the normative anticipations in the sensory object by means of his human consciousness. But all this does not alter this one fact: the modal functions that follow the linguistic function can be made into sensory objects.

However, a fundamental difference obviously remains. On the one hand we know objects for our sensory perception in the aesthetic function of reality, and on the other hand those in the linguistic, economic and juridical functions. For in the former we do not need an arbitrary addition of an objective sign that we can perceive with our senses, whereas in the case of the latter we do.

In order to be objectively observed by the senses the objective beauty of a landscape requires no signification through an objective sensory symbol added by the human being.

In contrast, when I want to signify in a manner that can be observed by the senses that a book is my property or indicate its economic value in a manner that can be perceived by the senses objectively, I must add a sign to this thing.

How can we explain the difference? In the third volume of this work,¹ where we will discuss the act-structure of the human body, we will see that human act-life shows three basic orientations: those of knowing, imagining and willing. Some of the normative modal functions of our action are directed primarily by the first, others by the second, and still others by the third direction of our acts.

Now it is clear that the aesthetic function is especially related to the direction of imagination, while the economic and jural functions are especially directed by the will in our act-life.

Acts of will are naturally expressed by an objective realizing of their intention in the world around us through invasive action, which is not the case with the intention of the acts of knowing or of our imagination as such.

This explains that we can only objectively perceive the economic and jural functions of a thing by adding an objective sensory sign through a human act. In other words: the objective sensory anticipation towards the economic and jural functions must be realized here through a deliberate human act.

Once the normative jural and economic anticipations are realized by the human person in the sensory object function of a thing, they belong to objective reality, and are not just a purely subjective addition of human contemplation. In addition, they lie enclosed as a potential in the modal structure of the sensory aspect, even before they are unlocked and realized by man.

28. The subject-object relation as the relation that unlocks, realizes, and actualizes

In their normative subject-functions, conscious human beings may realize these anticipations subjectively; nevertheless these anticipations are objectively realized and actualized in the thing through human action. (A person does this by a practical use of the thing that conforms to the objective destination of the thing.)

1 [See *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, vol. 3, Part B, chap. 2 and 3.]

I took great care in Volume Three of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wets-idee*¹ to sharply distinguish these two sides of the subject-object relation, which on the one side reveals itself as a relation of disclosure in human experience, on the other side as a relation of actualizing and realizing in human action.

These two sides are often confused, which results in a fundamental misunderstanding by those who believe, for example, that they can reduce the juridical or economic objectivity of a thing entirely to the subjective thought-content of human consciousness. As a result they deny the real objectivity of these attributes.

29. The focusing of the subject-idea on the three transcendental basic problems of philosophy

The transcendental idea of the subject is related to the theoretically disclosed subject-side of reality with its modal subject-object relations. That this subject-idea zeroes in on the three transcendental basic problems of philosophy, in the same manner as did the Law-Idea, needs no further explanation after the foregoing.

In its narrow sense our Law-Idea relates the law-aspects, separated in our theory, to their mutual relation and cohesion, to their religious radial unity of origin and to the Origin of the law. In the same way, the subject-idea relates the subject side of the aspects of reality, separated in our theory, to their mutual relation and coherence, to the subjective religious radical unity of mankind and to the Origin of all subjective existence in time.

Part B

1. The Law-Idea and the individuality structures of reality

Thus far we have investigated the Law-Idea only as it applies to the law-side and the subject-side of the modal structures of reality.

Indeed, because of its theoretical character, the Law-Idea is primarily an idea of how things differentiate in their modal aspects within our horizon in time.

In this respect it pointedly joins the structure of the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation, which primarily arises by separating the as-

1 See *WdW*, 3:77-128 [cf. *NC*, 3:109-53], where special types of objective things are discussed as well as the *intentional* relation of representation.

pects and by placing the logical aspect in opposition to the non-logical ones.

As we shall see, from a theoretical point of view, distinguishing the modal aspects is fundamental for all further philosophical investigation, even though this distinction demands a transcendental idea of their radical unity.

But philosophic thought cannot halt at an analysis of the modal structures. Since concrete reality is founded on typical structures of individuality, we must now try to penetrate to the structures of individuality which ground concrete reality. The *Gegenstand* relation itself demands to be directed towards what is concrete, if it is not to ignore that which is pre-given and which makes it possible in the first place. Reality presents itself to human consciousness only in typical individuality structures, never in modal abstractions. We must therefore submit these individuality structures to an analysis in the *Gegenstand* relation if theoretic thought is indeed to disclose reality theoretically.

This means that we must also direct our idea of the law toward these structures if it is to maintain itself as the transcendental basic idea of philosophic thinking.

These individuality structures, too, as soon as they are placed in the *Gegenstand* relation, pose a real transcendental problem for philosophic thought that can never be solved in a purely theoretical way and is closely related to the problem raised by the analysis of the modal structures.

2. The transcendental problem of unity in the theoretic diversity of the individuality structures

We can formulate this problem again as that of unity in relation to the diversity exposed by our theory, a problem which not a single philosophic school can avoid, since it emerges automatically from the *Gegenstand* relation itself.

In individuality structures, however, this problem displays an especially complicated character. As we saw earlier, the reason is that individuality structures span all modal aspects and yet are structures of an individual whole.

What guarantees the intrinsic unity here? Is this unity absolute or relative by nature? Is it a unity above or within the diversity of

aspects? The answer to these questions will decide the whole direction of our philosophic investigation of the typical structures of reality. It will depend on how we view the mutual relation and coherence of the various types of structures, and this in turn is determined by our deepest religious presuppositions concerning the basic unity and Origin of temporal reality.

And only the Law-Idea can give a critical theoretic account of these presuppositions.

3. The intrinsic unity of the modal structure as the unity in the theoretic diversity of structural moments

Our transcendental idea of the modal structure showed this structure to be a fundamentally relative unity in the diverse elements of its structure. And this relative unity is immediately drawn towards a religious unity in the origin of all aspects that transcends the horizon of time in reality. In its turn it necessarily exists in dependence upon the divine Unity, the Origin of all modalities of reality.

The intrinsic unity of the structure of an aspect, however, cannot be located above the diversity of the modal nucleus of meaning, its analogies and anticipations. If it were itself a transcendent unit as the root (origin) of its elements, then it could not be a real structure, for a structure is always a “unity in diversity within the horizon of time.”

In that case it also could not display its intrinsic coherence with all other modal structures, but itself would have to transcend the horizon of time, and then be some sort of “substantial carrier” of all other modalities.

Since our Law-Idea disclosed the time-horizon of reality as seen from the radical unity and Origin of all modal structures, we were able to avoid making any modal aspect into an absolute.

The modal unity appeared to be merely a modal expression of the continuity of cosmic time. We found it to be a modal structure in time which guarantees structural coherence but not unity of origin. Still, unity comes first, also in the idea of the modal structure.

This fundamental unity itself, which is *a priori* in the ontological sense of the word, cannot be analyzed theoretically, since this unity, as we now know, is an ontic presupposition for all scientific analysis.

4. The unity of the individuality structures is also grounded within the horizon of time

In its application to the individuality structures our Law-Idea can give no direction to philosophic investigation that would cancel the idea of the modal structures, since that would bring it in flagrant conflict with this Law-Idea.

We have conducted an inquiry into the Archimedean point of philosophy earlier on, and demonstrated why an individuality structure can never offer us a true radical unity of its aspects. The insight we gained there will benefit us greatly later on when we set ourselves the task of a definitive critique of the scholastic substance-concept.

The individual structures are not given to us outside of cosmic time and are, as our further investigation will show, only possible within time and through time. They lose all validity beyond the horizon of time.

5. The fundamental error of the metaphysical way of thinking

As soon as one loses sight of this, philosophic thinking is always driven toward a speculative metaphysics, which pretends it can raise theoretic thinking with its abstractions above the horizon of time and so ends up declaring independent what is relative.

Metaphysics does not establish the relationship between on the one hand all things that are relative within time and on the other their radical unity and their absolute Origin which, as our transcendental critique has demonstrated, is a transcendental precondition for all philosophic thinking.

But the defect of the metaphysical way of thinking is its failure to understand that it itself is determined at a pre-theoretical level and that it mistakes intrinsically religious prejudices for purely theoretical conclusions and in the process elevates theoretical abstractions to the level of supra-temporal substantial entities.

For that reason alone the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has become the radical adversary of metaphysical thought, and certainly not in order to curry the favor of positivism, which itself is rooted in a dogmatic metaphysical view of science.

The individuality structures include all individual reality within cosmic time. Like the modal structures, they form a universal horizon for all that exists or occurs in time.

Full temporal reality always reveals its subject-side individually. And this individuality can only be realized in typical structures, which as law-types of individual totalities span all modal law-aspects and arrange them in the unity of a typical structure.

The horizon of these structures is of an inexhaustible wealth, and every philosophic theory that tries to explain the individuality from a uniform principle and to reduce structural types to a few abstract schemes is objectionable from the start, because it sacrifices the wealth of God's creative wisdom to its passion for arbitrary constructions.

6. The humanist science-ideal and the tendency to dissolve the individuality structures in a closed system of modal relations. The classic phylogenetic doctrine in biology

We must especially warn against the attempt of the humanistic science ideal to dissolve the individuality structures into modal relations, which one then believes one can put into a closed causal, or at least a logical system. The modal denominator under which the structures are brought then depends upon the synthetic viewpoint in the scientific discipline that one has made absolute as his Archimedean point.

A typical example of such an aspiration is the classic doctrine of evolution, which Charles Darwin started (1859, 1871) and Ernst Haeckel worked out philosophically (1899) and which tried to fit all living organisms into one genetic tree, starting with protozoa (unicellular beings in the plant and animal realm) and ending with the human species.

Beginning with the unlimited variability of form-types, they attempted to arrange them in a biological system of development in which the most primitive evolved into the most highly developed forms of life in purely mechanical fashion. A process of natural selection of those most adapted in the struggle for survival, and the inheritance of acquired characteristics, was proposed for its explanation.

What immediately strikes us here from a philosophical point of view is that the unity of all life in the diversity of its typical forms of appearance is placed in the foreground. This was the strongest side of this theory of descent. Because this unity does indeed exist.

However, it is modal in character. "Life" as such is not a thing but an attribute, a modal aspect of temporal reality. Its nucleus of meaning returns in the structure of all later aspects as an analogy and its unity of origin and fulfillment can be found only in the religious communion with God as the Fountain of all life.

We cannot reduce the immense diversity of the typical individuality structures to the purely modal unity of all of life.

Unforeseen, evolutionism therefore reduces the modal unity to a material complex. "Life" is reduced to a material unity determined by physico-chemical processes; it is identified with the living protein of protoplasm, which in protists¹ would crystallize into living individuals, and from that beginning it would in mechanistic fashion account for the rich enfolding of all the forms of a typical structure as mere varieties.

Here then begins the fundamental aberration of scientific thinking. For the problem of the individuality structure returns in the "protists." They are not pure modal units of life, but individual living beings that function in all aspects of reality when we reckon with the subject-object relation.

The unity of their individuality structure and the unity of their individual existence as subject are not guaranteed by the unity of the modal structure of the life-aspect.

When it is evident that the typical totality structure of living beings cannot be reduced to each other and that a human being proves to be radically different from animal and plant already in its temporal existence, how then can anyone in all seriousness believe that one can bridge these differences in structure in a purely biological manner?

Indeed, how would one propose to reduce the typical differences in structure of the "protists" genetically to an original unity of structure? In order to bring off this theoretic trick of magic, the really existing protists in the plant and animal world (the unicellular algae or protophytes and the unicellular amoeba or protozoa) would first have to be reduced genetically to a hypothetical proto-cell without nucleus, the so-called "moner." However, the existence of moners could not be demonstrated, yet they had to form the hypothetical "origin" of the genetic system of all living beings. They were the "proto-protists," which themselves were to be the

1 [Protists: a group of unicellular living entities.]

individual crystallization products of living protein: crystals without any special shape or organization.

Haeckel did not know yet that every type of living organism produces its own type of protein, so that in the living protein, formed by cellular protoplasm, the problem of individuality structures returns immediately. In his day scientists had no idea yet of the immensely complicated structure of the various types of protein.¹

Finally, the mechanistic science ideal demanded the denial that the modal aspect of life cannot be reduced to another modal aspect. The functions of life were nothing but a complicated modality of the physico-chemical characteristics of protein matter. And this protein in turn was supposed to have been formed in the same mechanistic manner from existing inorganic compounds in the “proto-sea” of earlier geological periods.

And so one witnessed the revival – under the banner of the modern mechanistic science-ideal of an ancient mythology, already known in Greek natural philosophy: of a spontaneous production of living matter from dead material: the “*generatio aequivoca*.” The leap from dead to living protein posed no problem for this mechanistic way of thinking.

In reality, however, the problem of the structure of individuality returned even beyond the boundaries of the life-aspect in inorganic chemical compounds.

7. The so-called pure law doctrine and the typical structures of human society

We derive another instructive example of the urge to dissolve the individuality structures in purely modal relationships from modern legal theory.

The jural aspect of reality also has a unity of modal structure. Inside this modal unity we encounter a great diversity of typical law-spheres, which as such function in the individuality structures of human society. And the latter in no way tolerate being dissolved in a system of modal juridical relations.

1 A protein molecule consists of over twenty different amino acids. These in turn are complex compounds of carbon chains or rings which contain nitrogen in the form of the NH₂-group.

Professor Hans Kelsen tried to do this in his “reine Rechtslehre” (theory of pure law), which he introduced from the Neokantian standpoint of the Marburger school.

The typically jural spheres of the various communities in society show many differences in their internal structure, and Kelsen dissolved them all in a system of what he thought were pure modal relations of justice.

The Neokantian law doctrine had introduced the Kantian form-matter scheme also into juridical science, and this scheme allowed only a formal, “norm-logical” determination of juridical life in spite of its typical differentiations. All typical law-spheres were ordered in a logical hierarchy of norms, in which a higher “level” was distinguished from a lower one only by a greater generality of content.

Kelsen saw the state and justice as identical in his “reine juristische Normlogik” (“pure juridical logic of norms”). And with the State his system leveled all other social communities under the jural aspect.

But here too, identifying the unity of a modal structure with the unity of typical individuality structures could not be carried out. By its nature the concept of justice may only contain modal characteristics, but almost unnoticed, structural elements typical for the State (the organized compulsion by the power of the sword) were incorporated into this concept.

And in the end this imagined “pure doctrine of right,” came to nothing but a reduction of all other typically juridical spheres to that of the state. Above the individual states, a community of international justice was acknowledged, whose law-order in turn had to found the formal validity of their internal law-order.

This whole system, which merely allowed stages of higher and lower – or derived – jural power, finally ended up in a “logical norm of origin” that had to serve in giving a supra-positive, theoretical basis of validity to the system of positive law, as it had been “created” genetically out of still un-ordered juridical matter of experience through a theoretical “logic of justice.”

In truth, from the start a typical individuality structure of society was smuggled into the concept of the unity of the jural modal aspect. Thus all typical jural law-spheres were reduced to a system

of “purely juridical relations.” But only in this way could this artificial “norm-logical” reduction appear to succeed.¹

8. So-called pure economics and the individuality structures of human society

One could add many examples to those just given. For instance, “pure economics,” (“reine Ökonomie”) presents itself as a purely modal economic theory. However, in reality it takes a typical individuality structure of modern society, the “free market” with its typical historical foundation, and then makes that into the foundation of its hypothetical system.

Here again we see how the modal unity of the structure of an aspect is confused with typical structures of individuality that occur in such an aspect.

By its sharp distinction of these two basic structures of reality the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has confronted science with a new critical demand which until now was all too often ignored.

9. The universality of the horizon of structural types

The horizon of individuality structures is far wider than that of thing-structures. A one-sided investigation of the individuality structure of the individual thing would therefore mean an inadmissible restriction of the problem. Scholastic metaphysics has greatly facilitated this narrowing of our theoretic view with its substance-concept which, as we will demonstrate amply later on, also had no place for the intrinsic character of individuality and could not give an account of its structure.

In its Democritean and Aristotelian conceptions this substance-concept also led to an atomistic view of “individual being.” That view could not do justice to the individual character of collectivities.

The atomistic view of individuality precludes our insight into real individuality structures, for just like the modal structures, they never exist “by themselves,” but are only given in often very complicated interweavings that help determine the individual existence.

1 [Cf. H. Dooyeweerd, *The Crisis in Humanist Political Theory* (Grand Rapids: Paideia, 2010), p. 6 et passim.]

Zoology teaches that the boundaries between individual and collectivity are often very relative. We can think of examples such as the animal colonies that we find in certain groups of coelenterates, the coral polyps and jelly fishes, or the cell-colonies as we find them with the volvox or spongiae.

However, the horizon of individuality structures is not exhausted with the collectivities of symbiosis. Concrete events too possess an individuality that can only be realized in typical structures.

For instance, the battle of Waterloo is an individual whole with a structure of a typically historical character, although this structure cannot be reduced in any way to that of a thing.

We may thus not prematurely close off the horizon of structural types. It is an inexhaustible field for the scientific investigator, who before all else must be willing to let the experience of reality teach him, and be imbued with respect for the wealth of what is given.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea has attempted to respect this demand in its theory of the individuality structures.¹ That was why the third volume of my work automatically became the most voluminous.

10. The connection between the modal structures and the individuality structures

There is an inseparable connection in the temporal world-order between the modal structures and the individuality structures of reality. The former are only given us within the latter. We can isolate the modal aspects from the individuality structures of concrete things, events and social spheres only in the abstract, theoretic attitude of thought. The naive attitude of experience never does this, as we have seen. It takes numerical relations, spatial relations, relations of movement, relations of life, etc., only from concrete things, events, etc.

From a scientific point of view, however, it is necessary first to isolate the modal structures from the individuality structures, because only then can we gain a theoretical, systematic insight into both.

¹ [See *WdW*, 3:33-546; cf. *NC*, 3:53-624.]

A simple example can convince us of that. When we want to teach a child arithmetic, we first place it in front of an abacus, it then begins to count the simplest numbers with the help of colored beads moved along a metal rod. Initially the child takes the relations between numbers merely concretely from individual things.

Later on this teaching device is put aside, and the child must then learn to gain insight into the abstract modal relations of numbers, detached from individual things. Only in this way can it obtain systematic knowledge of the modal laws that govern the numerical aspect.

These modal laws of numbers are indeed valid independent of the typical individuality structures of counted things. For the modal structure of the aspect, the general characteristics of numerical relations are not influenced by the typical structures of the things that function in this aspect.

On the other hand, it is impossible to give someone a scientific insight into the individuality structures of things unless we teach him to analyze them theoretically, that is, in theory to separate the modal aspects of a thing in order to trace the typical arrangement of the aspects within the structural whole.

The modal structures cannot be reduced to individuality structures. But the latter could not exist without the former. For they group the aspects in a typical way in an individual whole and at the same time introduce types of individuality within the law-spheres in which the aspects are enclosed.

If the framework of the modal aspects were not given, the individual totalities in temporal reality could not possess typical characteristics.

For instance, how could the various social communities each possess a typical jural sphere, characteristic for its individuality structure or typical inner nature? We have state law, church law, commercial law, etc. How could all these typical jural spheres exist if there were no modal structure of law in which each of them functions and which guarantees their general jural nature in spite of their typical character?

Or how could a painting and a sculpture each possess a typical beauty, unless both revealed these typical aesthetic characteristics

within a modal aesthetic aspect which alone makes it possible for beauty to reveal itself in typical forms?

If one can therefore not reduce the modal structures to individuality structures even though they are inseparably connected, the reverse is not possible either. The great wealth of typical structures can never be derived from the order of the modal aspects, since it is this great variety that guarantees each thing its special character as an individual whole.

11. The application of our Law-Idea to the individuality structures of temporal reality. These structures too can only be approached in theory through limiting concepts

In the idea of the individuality structure our Law-Idea is now directed to the mutual relation and coherence of the typical laws that characterize individuality in its transcendental relationship with the radical religious unity and Origin of all types of law. It also concerns all ways in which individuality reveals itself in reality as subject or object, subjected to law.

This idea also remains of a transcendental theoretical character, since it approaches the individual structures only in the theoretical separation and re-connection in the *Gegenstand* relation, that is, always by way of theoretical analysis and synthesis of its modal aspects.

Theoretic thinking can only gain access to the typical totality structures of individuality by theoretically separating and reconnecting their aspects, because as we saw, we must always abstract them from the continuous coherence in time in which these structures are grounded and which as the presuppositions of the *Gegenstand* relation also make the theoretic concept possible in the first place.

The pre-given totality, the typical whole, in which the aspects are arranged by the individuality structure, can only be approached by our theory in a transcendental idea or limiting concept, in which the successive syntheses are critically related to the pre-given totality; our concept can never fully grasp it because it is the presupposition for the concept.

Neither cosmic time, the real bedrock of all structures of temporal reality, nor their religious radical unity, nor their Origin can ever be grasped in a theoretical concept.

12. Metaphysics, with its substance-concept, does not penetrate to the individual whole but remains bound to the horizon of the modal aspects

Metaphysics began with the dogma of the autonomy of theoretic thought. In keeping with this dogma it tried to grasp these transcendental presuppositions in metaphysical, analogical concepts. But in reality it could never overstep the temporal horizon of the modal aspects, because, due to its structure, theoretical thinking remains bound to the theoretic *Gegenstand* relation. And the theoretic synthesis can offer only a relative theoretical unity in the theoretical diversity of the aspects, which presuppose time.

Through its idea of the individuality structure the Philosophy of the Law-Idea tries to theoretically approximate the structure of the individual, that is, the structure of the individual whole in temporal reality. Scholastic metaphysics believed it could grasp this structure in its substance-concept, although this attempt was only applied to natural individual beings.

But at least Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas themselves have admitted that the theoretic concept cannot grasp the substance directly, but only through its *accidentia* or dependent attributes,¹ and then in a real sense only those of “independent beings” composed of form and matter.² Practically, this means that even the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept only knows how to distinguish the typical modal functions of things in its theory, even though it has no place for modal structures in its system.

Similarly, Descartes only knew how to delimit the “material body” as substance by its spatiality – which is essentially a modal

1 Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 77, Art. 1, Repl. to Obj. 7: “*quia tamen formae substantiales, quae secundum se sunt nobis ignotae, innotescunt per accidentia, nihil prohibet interdum accidentia loco differentiarum substantialium poni.*” [“But because substantial forms, which in themselves are unknown to us, are known by their accidents, nothing prevents us from sometimes substituting accidents for substantial differences.”] (Ital. mine, H.D.)

2 *De ente et essentia* (§ 9): “*Accidentia autem propria substantiarum immaterialium nobis ignota sunt: unde differentiae earum nec per se nec per accidentales differentias nobis significare possunt.*” [“But the proper accidents of immaterial substances are unknown to us; whence we can signify their differences neither through themselves nor through accidental differences.”]

attribute – from the “rational soul” as a “non-spatial substance that thinks logically.”

13. The metaphysical substance-concept is necessarily of a dialectical character

We will devote a separate investigation into the fundamental difference between our idea of the individuality structure and the metaphysical substance-concept in a later context. At this point we will only emphasize the difference between the two that dominates everything: the difference in religious ground-motive from which they each start out. And that is what our transcendental critique of philosophic thinking has brought to light.

The metaphysical substance-concept is intrinsically dialectical in all its possible shades, which vary only with the religious ground-motive that drives them.

Whether we deal with the Greek theme of form and matter, the Romanist nature-grace or the humanistic nature-freedom theme, time and again we miss the integral idea of the individuality structures of reality in the substance-concept. And thus the substance-concept never leaves intact the modal horizon of human experience, i.e., the inseparable coherence of all the modal aspects in cosmic time as the presupposition of the concept.

The result is again an inevitable antinomy, an inner contradiction of the metaphysical substance-concept: every attempt to make a theoretical abstraction from the modal horizon into something with independent existence involves our thinking in internal ontological contradictions; for the theoretic concept collides here with its own presupposition that made it possible in the first place.

For example, the concept of an inorganic thing, conceived of as an independent reality closed off in the physico-chemical aspect, suffers from an inner contradiction. The concept itself contradicts the “substantiality” here. For “substantiality” is entirely the product of a theoretic abstraction from the modal horizon of reality, and can therefore not possibly exist “by itself,” independent of the logical thought-aspect.

As I have amply demonstrated in Volume Two of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, this gives rise to further antinomies by the theoretical leveling of the modal aspects, which is the necessary result of substantializing the *Gegenstand* relation.

14. The integral character of the individuality structures

The idea of the individuality structure, as developed in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, struggled free of the dialectics of the substance-concept because it brings the Scriptural principle of creation to philosophic expression without mixing in any dialectical ground-motives of unscriptural philosophy.

Thanks to its integrality, creation in the Scriptural sense differs radically from the Greek and humanistic view of the origin of our cosmos. No independent “matter” confronts a divine “form principle” here, and no natural-scientific construction of reality opposes the freedom-idea of a humanistic personality-ideal.

Insofar as it has a temporal existence, every concrete creature of God is an individual whole and functions in integral fashion in the full coherence of all aspects. We already discovered a totality in the modal structure which precedes the diversity of all its structural elements and in which the integral connection with all other aspects is expressed. The integral character of God’s creative work expresses itself here, even in the modality of the aspect itself.

15. The deepest layer of temporal individuality is inaccessible to theoretic concepts

The modal aspects are realized only in an individual whole, where they become typical and where they are all in play. This individual whole is something different and something more than the sum of its aspects. It is the bearer of its individual characteristics that function in all the modal aspects.

However, when our theoretical thinking tries to penetrate behind the modal horizon to this pre-given individual whole, and tries to gain understanding of what it is, it hits upon the impenetrable, deepest layer of cosmic time, the real abyss for all theoretic knowledge, from which the scientific understanding performs its abstractions..

The French thinker Henri Bergson and others defended the view that philosophy had paved the metaphysical road to this deepest layer of reality. This view resulted from his confusing the physical and biotic aspects of time with time itself. We do indeed directly experience cosmic time in the non-theoretical attitude of thought, but theoretically it can only be approximated in a tran-

scendental idea, because cosmic time is a presupposition for all theoretical understanding.

Temporal reality, in its individuality structures, is completely imbedded in time. This same time lies at the foundation of the modal structures.

Not the “what,” but only the typical modal characteristics of the individual totalities in their typical structural groupings and relations are open to our theoretical knowledge. In the same sense we can only theoretically approach time itself in its modal aspects by means of a transcendental time-idea.

But in the transcendental idea of the individuality structure we relate the theoretical concept to the individual whole which typically expresses itself within its modal aspects. The idea of the whole is presupposed. This is the only way that reality can be theoretically approached.

Is this a shortcoming of the theory of individuality structures? Must it capitulate before the question of the “what” of the individual totalities? Does this reveal the necessity of a “metaphysics” with its concept of substance?

But earlier we saw that the Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics gives us no result concerning the *nature* of its substances. The opinion that the theory of individuality structures must have a metaphysical foundation in the concept of substance rests upon a basic failure to understand the religious background of this concept. For the metaphysical substance-concept is always rooted in a dualistic ground-motive.

CHAPTER VII

THE IDEA OF THE INDIVIDUALITY STRUCTURE AND THE THOMIST SUBSTANCE-CONCEPT, AS APPLIED TO ANTHROPOLOGY

Part A

1. The Thomist substance-concept, the idea of the individuality structure and naive experience

The tenacity by which the substance-concept has been maintained, not just in philosophy but equally in theology—even Reformed theology—makes it mandatory to submit it to a closer investigation. This is especially true for the scholastic substance-concept of Thomist ontology. For that should be seen as the fertile soil for the scholastic residues that managed to maintain themselves in Reformed theology up to recent times and to obstruct the proper development of its Scriptural reformational ground-motive.

In the struggle which ensued since the emergence of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, our theological opponents have largely failed to account sufficiently for the radical difference between the scholastic substance-concept which they defend and the concept of individuality structures that we propose.

Still, it is obviously necessary before all else that we seriously try to enter into each other's standpoint if our debate is to be fruitful.

Without further proof the thesis was advanced that the substance-concept is entirely identical with the thing-concept of naive experience, at least as the former is used in theology, especially for determining the relation between "soul" and "body" in human nature.

a. The method of analyzing individuality structures and the theory of enkapsis

An individuality structure refers to a typical ordering of the modal aspects within an individual whole. Within this typical ordering, however, individuality types begin to appear within the aspects themselves. These cannot be understood purely modally but only as expressions of *typical totality structures within these modalities*.

In this way the modal meaning itself is typified on the law-side, just as it is individualized on the subject-side. Modal individuality types express individuality structures within the structure of the modality. This state of affairs in a striking way shows the indissoluble connection between these two basic structures of reality.

Just as the cosmic temporal order of the aspects turned out to express itself within each modal structure in the order of modal nucleus, analogies and anticipations, so the individuality structure expresses itself in each of its modal aspects in a typical structural ordering of time of the modal individuality types.

To gain insight in this state of affairs we have to take note of the following.

b. Original (nuclear-type) analogical and anticipatory types of individuality within the modal aspects

When we take a closer look at the individuality types that occur within the various law-spheres it is striking that in any given aspect some of them bear an original character whereas others evidently still point back to original individuality types in an earlier aspect and others point forward to original types in a later aspect. In other words, a similar state of affairs such as we noted earlier in the structures of the modalities appears to be present in the individuality structures of temporal reality.

Extending this analogy, we can speak of *nuclear* types, *analogical* types and *anticipatory* types of modal individuality.

Take for instance parental love. It is an individuality type of a *moral* nature. Within the horizon of time, after all, love is the core or nucleus of the moral aspect, and this love in its temporal-modal sense finds its religious meaning-fullness in *love* of God and love of neighbor in the religious root-unity of mankind, where the other temporal aspects likewise find their deeper root-unity.

Yet love as the *meaning-nucleus of the moral aspect* is differentiated in a great many individuality types—such as patriotism or love of country, comradeship, marital love, love of art, love of learning, and so on and so forth, each of which has an unmistakable temporal structure.

All these individuality types are evidently defined by the individuality structures of human society, which are not exhausted in

any one aspect but which in principle comprehend them all equally.

From what, then, does parental love derive its *typical* moral character? This it derives from the parent-child relationship within the family community or the extended family. Clearly it is based in the biotic line of descent, in a direct blood relation. This blood relation is an individuality type that has the original character of the nuclear type only in the aspect of organic life. The typical character by which parental love is distinct from, say, love of country can therefore never be captured in purely moral terms but only in unbreakable correlation with biotic consanguinity. That is why we say that this moral individuality type does not have an *original* but only an *analogical* character. Nevertheless this type of love relationship is without a doubt of a moral nature. In a typical way it specifies the moral obligations that obtain between parents and children.

Anticipatory types of individuality can be seen in, for example, the spatial forms of mollusc shells which in their typical shapes can only be understood in terms of the typical object function which these protective forms fulfill in the organic life of the creature. They are found as well in the typical spatial forms of spiderwebs, honeycombs, bird's nests, etc. In the numerical and spatial aspects of reality we even find exclusively *anticipatory* and never *original* or *analogical* types of individuality. Why this should be so will be examined shortly, but even in these aspects individuality plays an essential role. Thus there are *typical numbers* in the so-called action quanta of atoms, in the molecules of various chemical compounds, in the internal atomic structure of the different elements, in the enormously complicated structure of the living cell,¹ in the brain mass of the different animal species, but also in the internal structure of a work of art, of a piece of furniture, in the internal structure of a conjugal relation as a bi-unity, and so on and so forth.

All these individuality types can only be discovered in the individuality structures of things, creatures or societal relationships, never in the modal structures of the numerical and spatial aspects.

1 Every species of plant or animal, for example, has its own typical number of chromosomes or nuclear types in all its body cells; humans have 46 chromosomes.

Now then, within an individuality structure an essential role is played by the ordering of individuality types into nuclear types, analogical types and anticipatory types as we have briefly sketched it above.

c. Primary and secondary ordering in the typical-structural grouping of the aspects

This ordering, however, is not the only ordering in the typical-structural grouping of the aspects. It is not even the primary one.

The primary ordering consists in this, rather, that within the structure of the individual whole one specific aspect is assigned the qualifying role of a typical destination function or an internally *guiding* or *leading* function.

When the destination function in this typical structural grouping does not itself display a nuclear type, the second structural ordering comes to be of fundamental significance. For in that case a second modal aspect can be identified in the individuality structure, one which in a typical manner *founds* the individuality type of the destination function since it contains the nuclear type. The individuality structure will then be characterized by two individuality types which theoretical thought can grasp only in their indissoluble interconnection with each other, namely: (1) the typical destination function, and (2) the typical founding function.

In order to develop a theory of the structures of individuality, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea mounted a thoroughgoing inquiry into the above state of affairs, similar to its extensive analysis of the modal structure of the aspects in its general theory of the law-spheres.¹ Meanwhile, as our philosophy was worked out further with a new theory of enkaptic structural wholes, certain corrections appeared necessary;² these will turn up in the present volume as we continue our analysis. At this juncture my sole aim is to elucidate the significance of the Calvinist Law-Idea for this theory by means of an example. My hope at the same time is to orient the reader in our general train of thought to such an extent that he will be able to follow the application of the theory of individuality

1 [See *WdW*, 2:3-356; cf. *NC*, 2:3-426.]

2 [See *NC*, 3:694-780.]

structures in the special anthropology section in Volume III of the present work.¹

d. Analysis of the individuality structure of an apple tree

Let us take as our example the individuality structure of an apple tree. This tree without a doubt functions in the first three aspects of reality: those of number, space and motion. So long as we leave aside the typical structure of the individual whole the tree does not yet exhibit any individuality types in these aspects whereby it would portray its particular nature. That changes as soon as we zero in on the aspect of organic life as it finds its typical place in the structure of the tree. Here the tree as such displays an original or nuclear type of individuality which simply cannot be dispensed with.

What place does this modal aspect then occupy in the structural whole of the tree? It is the function of organic life, which is the *last subject function* that the tree has in the order of the modal aspects. In all later aspects the tree has only *object functions*. A tree has no subjective feelings or sensations, but it does have objective properties in the sensitive aspect, which, standing as it does in typical inter-modal relations with the biotic, physical, spatial and numerical aspects,² can function only in a structural relation with *possible subjective sensations*. The tree does not *think* as a subject, but it is *thought of* in its objective logical characteristics which exist only for possible subjective concept formation. It is not the subject of cultural activity in the historical aspect, but it can become a *cultural object*, just as it has structural object functions in all later aspects, which, however, can be disclosed or realized only by man. A tree possesses potential object functions even in the moral and the faith aspect, functions that are part and parcel of the tree's full temporal structure. It can become an object of love or hate and an object of faith.

e. Object functions of natural things in the moral and faith aspect

If there is anything that is imprinted on us by Holy Scripture, it is this *integral* character of the temporal reality of natural things. The notion, imported into the view of reality by both the Greek sub-

1 See *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, 3:146-88.

2 Think of the typically biotic and physical foundation of the optic, acoustic and tangible properties (qualities?) of a thing.

stance-concept and the humanist science ideal, that normative qualities do not belong to the “thing in itself” but rest exclusively on the subjective appreciation of human consciousness—this notion is definitely unscriptural and at odds with the primary given of our naive experience of reality.

Christ Jesus in faith rebukes the storm, and it subsides; he curses the fig tree that bore no fruit, and it withers; he blesses the few loaves and fish, and they feed thousands. Modern science in its pride explains these miracles away; the supernaturalism of Roman Catholicism has these miracles take place in circumvention of “nature.” If the Reformational view rejects both positions, how can one at the same time uphold a philosophical view of reality which denies natural things all objective reality in the moral sphere and the sphere of faith?

For that matter, this view of reality is self-refuting. For example, whoever follows the natural science ideal and ascribes real existence to the tree only in the aspects that are investigated by mathematics-based natural science, such a person is guided by the *faith* that the tree is merely a “product of nature.” To think that natural science teaches this is a naive misunderstanding. For science begins by consciously setting aside all aspects that it is not interested in. But the subjective faith in question, which is in conflict with the Christian belief in creation, pertains to an objective state of affairs in the sphere of faith. Either the tree is objectively a creature of God, or it is not; therefore it ought to be either the object of belief in creation or else an object of faith in the sovereignty of natural science. Whoever claims *truth* for his faith cannot deny the subject-object relation in the sphere of faith. To attain a proper understanding in subject-object relations one should of course bear in mind that the object functions of natural things in the moral and faith aspect are of a fundamentally *normative* character. That means that the disclosure and realization of these functions by man can take place not only as conforming to but just as well as in conflict with the modal norms in question.

In a pagan society, for example, a tree can play an objective, idolatrous role in the life of faith, in the same way as a tree under the idolatry of the naturalistic science ideal turns into an object of idolatrous faith in the dominant power of natural science. But it is

always related to reality-based objective states of affairs which are potentially present (i.e., by predisposition) in the structure of natural things and which cannot be reduced to purely subjective vantage points from which human consciousness views things.

The curse that man's fall into sin brought down on the whole earth is a reality. Out of the faith aspect it pervades all aspects of reality. It does not leave intact the reality of natural things that are created with a temporal structure. Within the temporal horizon there is no such thing as a *Ding an sich* whose reality is closed off in the pre-logical aspects and so falls outside structural subject-object relations in the normative law-spheres.

f. Object functions of cultural things

That the metaphysical conception of the *Ding an sich* is untenable is immediately apparent with respect to things made by man in culturally formative activity.

If one denies real object functions to things in the faith aspect, how is one to distinguish, for example, a church building (or other man-made things that are typically *qualified* by their objective function in man's faith life) from things that have a different typical destination, such as a factory building, a stock exchange, or a private residence? One will have to concede that the typical destination of these buildings ought to come to objective expression in their entire construction, that the objective realization of the architect's subjective design will undergo a normative assessment, and that one cannot grasp the *reality* of these buildings if one leaves out of consideration their typical normative destination function. At issue here is certainly not a purely subjective, individualistic "value judgment" of a piece of "natural reality" that endows it with meaning, as the Baden School of Neokantians would have it. A church building as such is objectively something different from a factory building, because its individuality structure is qualified by an objective destination in the faith aspect.

The fact that a natural living thing such as a tree does not have a typical destination function in the faith aspect by no means precludes that it, too, functions as an object within this aspect.

If the reality of the tree were *closed off* in the aspect of organic life, it could possess no sensitive qualities either, nor any logical characteristics or cultural properties. But this is simply untenable.

An apple tree from a nursery has cultural properties and therefore differs objectively from an apple tree found in nature. This difference is also evident in its objective sensitive shape and in its objective logical characteristics in which the difference manifests itself.

g. The typical destination function of a living organism

If we now go back to look at the typical place that the organic life function occupies in the internal individuality structure of the tree, then we have to conclude not only that it is the last subject function but also the qualifying or internal destination function in this structure.¹ In a typical manner it discloses the anticipatory spheres of the earlier modal aspects (those of number, space and motion) and directs them to the typical destination of the living organism.

This results in a typical internal structural relation between the functions which the tree has in the different aspects and by means of which it stands out as an individual whole over against its surroundings.

In the internal structure of the living organism the numerical and spatial relations, as well as the physico-chemical movements, are *guided* by the particular organic needs of the whole. Even when disease has temporarily or permanently disrupted normal functioning, such deviation can only be identified against the internal structural principle of the organism. Thus the criterion is not the merely subjective, factual manner of functioning, but the *structural principle* as the tree's internal law-of-life.

Theory, however, can approach this internal structure correctly only by holding on to the principle of sphere-sovereignty of the modal aspects, as postulated by our Law-Idea. The distinctiveness of the pre-biotic aspects is not compromised in any way by the internal structural principle of the individual whole. The typically directed physico-chemical processes in the tree, for example, retain their own original modal character; they do not become biotic processes.

Nor does the organic life function intervene in these processes from the outside, like some kind of *deus ex machina* (as is done by

¹ As we develop our theory of the enkaptic structural whole it will become apparent that we must not identify the tree with its "living organism" but that the latter is the qualifying structural principle of the tree-body which as such also contains lifeless components.

“entelechy” in Driesch’s neo-vitalist view of the organism, which once again conceives of entelechy as a “substance.”) Rather, it is the typical *structural whole* which, while maintaining the sphere-sovereignty of the law-spheres, orders the modal functions into an internally closed structural bond and which asserts itself within the modal aspects of the tree. Thus, within the sphere-sovereign aspects and with retention of the distinctive modal law-conformity the modal functions of the organism obey the typical law of the whole. This whole, as we shall see, is much more complicated than appears from our provisional analysis. The modal structure of an aspect offers universal possibilities for disclosure and typicality within the framework of an individuality structure. This holds also for the later law-spheres, in which the tree has only typical object functions. Even its objective psychical-sensitive qualities, its objective logical characteristics, its objective beauty, etc., are of a typical structural nature. They are biotically qualified. The individuality types that it displays in these aspects are therefore not *original* but *analogical*: they point back to the original individuality type (or nuclear type) of the qualifying function of organic life.

h. The descending series of typicality within an individuality structure

Upon closer inspection the individuality structure exhibits a graduated descending series of typical determinants of the individual whole. This series starts with the typical grouping of the modal aspects around the qualifying aspect, quite apart from any typicalizing of modal functions.

If, as we have done thus far, we only look at the typical place that the organic life function occupies in the internal structure of the tree without immediately involving the individuality type of this modal function, then we have determined only *modally* the qualifying or destination function of the individuality structure. In doing so, we are carrying out a strong theoretical *abstraction*, it is true, but we are not guilty of willful or arbitrary *construction*. The factual state of affairs is that the aspect of organic life occupies the qualifying place in the entire internal coherence of aspects within the individuality structure of the tree.

i. Radical function, radical type, and the kingdoms of individuality structures in a primary sense

So long as the destination function is still defined in purely modal terms the Philosophy of the Law-Idea calls it the *radical* function of the individuality structure, while it gives the structure that is defined by this radical function the name *radical type*.

Radical types encompass a complete kingdom of individuality structures which are therefore interrelated in a radical-typical way.

Strictly speaking, there are but three such kingdoms, namely the kingdom of physico-chemically qualified entities, the plant kingdom,¹ and the animal kingdom. That man in his temporal structure does not possess a radical function will be argued extensively in Volume III. Thus we cannot speak of a “kingdom of human beings” in the sense of a radical type. Meanwhile it is an established fact that countless individuality structures are not (or at least not directly) included in the three radical types mentioned.

j. The secondary, broader sense of radical function, radical type, and kingdom

For this reason our theory of individuality structures has from the start used the idea of radical types in a broader sense by including among the radical functions not just typical destination functions but also typical founding functions that may at any time enter the picture.

The attentive reader will realize at once that this expansion of the idea of radical types rests on nothing else than a combination of the primary and secondary ordering principle in individuality structures.

Strictly speaking, a typical founding function can never be determined primarily in modal terms because, as we noted above, it always contains the nuclear type of individuality in the structure in question and therefore does not appear in individuality structures when the destination function does not represent an original type. However, the moment we begin to determine the destination function according to its individuality type we have left the radical type behind us.

1 For the sake of simplicity we subsume “bacteria” under the kingdom of plants, even though some biologists believe bacteria belong to a kingdom all their own. As for “viruses,” to date too little is known of them to risk classification.

Accordingly, in order to be able to include also the typical founding functions among the radical functions of the individuality structures, we had to learn to forgo the further definition of their nuclear types and for the time being reckon only with the modal aspect within which these nuclear types manifest themselves.

Thus it can be established that all individuality structures of man-made things have their typical objective founding function in the historical aspect which is qualified by free formative control (culture).

It is clear, however, that in theoretically establishing the modality of the typical founding function we have to *assume* a certain individuality type of the destination function in order to be able to go on and track down the founding nuclear type, from which we cannot abstract except after the fact. *For establishing* the radical function of the living organism of the apple tree, by contrast, we could from the very outset hold to the primary typical grouping of the modal aspects.

Even so, our broader conception of radical types does not involve any arbitrary construction that lacks all foundation in individuality structures. The modal nuclear type itself is only possible in a modal definition and therefore can never appear outside the horizon of the modalities.

There can be no objection, therefore, to *apply* the idea of radical types and the kingdoms of individuality structures delineated by them in both the primary, narrower sense defined earlier and in a secondary, broader sense. In the latter sense, accordingly, we can speak of a radical type of art works, radical types of human societal structures such as family, state and church, and so on and so forth.

***k. No undifferentiated individuality structures
fall under radical types***

Only the so-called *undifferentiated individuality structures* remain fundamentally excluded from the idea of radical types. They are the structures that are characterized by the lack of a typical differentiated destination function. We meet these undifferentiated structures first of all in the so-called *act-structure* of man's temporal

bodily existence, and in the second place in a still primitive human society.

The last category was subjected to a detailed inquiry in the third volume of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.¹ There I showed that in these societal types we are really dealing with typical forms of interlacement of individuality structures in which one of the interwoven structures in its entirety fulfills the role of qualifying principle. Here we encounter at least an analog of the radical type of differentiated structures.

The undifferentiated act-structure of the human body, where even this analog is absent, will be subjected to a detailed examination in the third volume of the present trilogy.² It will at the same time offer an opportunity to call attention to the remarkable coherence between undifferentiated societal structures and this act-structure.³

Radical types—and where these are absent, the undifferentiated basic types—are differentiated in a descending series of subtypes, in which the radical functions—or the undifferentiated basic structures, as the case may be—take on an ever stronger degree of typicality.

1. Genotypes, with their subtypes, and variability types

To the extent that in this differentiation the structural peculiarities flow from the constant internal nature of the individual totalities, we speak of *genotypes* and their *subtypes*. To the extent, however, that they originate in the interlacement with other individuality structures and cannot be explained from the genotypes alone and in themselves, we speak of *variability types*, which of course vary with the typical interlacements involved.

Since the Danish scientist Johannsen this distinction is known in biological genetics as that between *genotypes* or *idiotypes* and *pheno-*

1 [See *WdW*, 3:291-330; cf. *NC*, 3:342-376.]

2 [See *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, 3:146-88.]

3 The fact that the human act-structure, also as to its temporal-corporeal side, cannot be enclosed within a radical type is directly related to “man’s place in the cosmos” as it ought to be viewed in the light of our biblical Law-Idea. But to work out this fundamental point must be reserved for the third volume. [See *ibid.*, chap. 5.]

types or *paratypes*.¹ The first are then the constant hereditary disposition factors, of which only so-called *mixed variations* — that is, typical *internal* combinations between paternal and maternal hereditary factors — have been established. The second are the variable typical phenomenal forms of a living organism which can only be explained from the environmental influences on the way the disposition factors work themselves out and which lack all hereditary character.

Our distinction, however, is also valid outside the narrow sphere of genetic research. The contrast biologists make is but a special application of our fundamental distinction. Ours must therefore not be viewed as a hypothetical and premature generalization of a state of affairs that has been confirmed experimentally in genetic research. On the contrary, what we have here is a *fundamental state of affairs in the horizon of structural types* which, when theoretically analyzed, impress themselves upon all who refuse to commit a leveling of the structures of individuality.

m. Structural interlacements and the phenomenon of enkapsis

Individuality structures cannot materialize except in reciprocal interlacement within the temporal horizon. In this interlacement the internal uniqueness of the structural types is retained and therefore their internal sphere-sovereignty is not compromised.

At the same time, the interlacement binds and “encapsulates” one structure by the other within the unique sphere of operation of that other structure. This gives the first structure an *external* function within the second and forces it to adjust totally to the latter’s typical law-conformity without however forfeiting its own uniqueness within its *internal* sphere.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea calls this bond “enkapsis,” a term borrowed from the Tübingen anatomist Heidenhain. We speak of one individuality structure’s “enkaptic functions” within the structure with which it is interlaced (intertwined, interwoven). The interlacement as well is called “enkaptic.”

The *external form* of the individual whole acts as the nodal point of such enkaptic interlacements, either as a natural form or as a

1 The last term is usually employed in a narrower sense to indicate those phenotypes that differ from each other not just by degrees but across the board.

historico-cultural form. The latter, as we saw, also expresses itself “by anticipation” in the objective sensitive form of a thing, though it never traces its origin to the latter. In the case of the structures of human society, the cultural form is always an historical organization form.

Consequently, all variability types are of a *morphological* or “*formal*” nature insofar as they always originate in the enkaptic bonds of an individuality structure within another individuality structure by means of the *form* of the “enkaptic structural whole” that we shall examine below. Thus variability types may also be called *form-types*.

The theory of enkaptic structural interlacements once again highlights the transcendental ground-idea of our philosophy. The concept of sphere-sovereignty, which first demonstrated its scientific usefulness in the theory of modal structures, is applicable this time to typical concrete totalities, an application that was certainly foremost in Kuyper’s thought, namely in the area of the structures of human society.

n. Enkapsis and the part-whole relation

The phenomenon of enkapsis as conceived in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is fundamentally different from the part-whole relation with which it was identified by Theodor Haering. He was the first to attempt to expand Heidenhain’s biological theory of enkapsis to a general philosophical theory of individuality structures.¹ Haering’s theory, however, was fated to remain unfruitful for our understanding of the internal structures of individuality precisely because of this identification and also because it remained stuck in a trichotomous view of temporal reality with its schema of “*physis*,” “*psyche*” and “*spirit*.”² Particularly in its application to anthropology it did not rise above the current—and in our opinion incorrect—framing of the problem. “Enkapsis” in our sense never makes an individuality structure part of another with which it is interwoven qua form. Enkapsis can occur only in the interwovenness of individual totalities that are by nature radical types or at least

1 Theodor L. Haering, *Ueber Individualität in Natur und Geisteswelt* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1926), pp. 46 ff.

2 For a critical discussion of Haering’s theory, see my *WdW*, 3:558-564 [cf. *NC*, 3:634-646; see also 766].

different in genotype and whose internal structures retain their sphere-sovereignty.

That which is genuinely a part of a whole can never possess *structural sphere-sovereignty* vis-à-vis the whole but at most a *relative autonomy* whose limits depend on the requirements of the whole. In all individual totalities the part is essentially determined by the structure of the whole.

o. The fundamental difference between sphere-sovereignty and autonomy in the spheres of human society

The difference between *sphere-sovereignty* and *autonomy* is of fundamental importance especially in the theory of human society. It throws the Calvinist position into sharp relief vis-à-vis both the *universalistic* and the *individualistic* theories of today. Universalist theories, for all their variations, always try to grasp the different spheres of society in a part-whole relation, creating an all-encompassing temporal community.¹ Individualist theories, using a purely formal schema (e.g., the construct of a contract), try to deduce all societal bonds from relations between “individuals.” Both universalism and individualism can only lead to a theoretic leveling of individuality structures.

p. The sociological basic idea of modern Calvinism and Roman Catholicism

This question also sheds light on the fundamental contrast between the sociological basic idea of modern Calvinism and that of Roman Catholicism, which still finds its best philosophical expression in Thomism.

Thomism’s social philosophy is unquestionably oriented to the universalist position, in spite of the fact that by virtue of its metaphysical *substance concept* it takes an individualistic standpoint since it can acknowledge only individuals and not collectivities as “individual substances.” In an *ethical* sense, too, it inclines toward universalism since it appreciates society only for the sake of perfecting the individual. In the realm of “nature” it defines the state, in line with Aristotle, as the totality structure of human society

1 The favored community can be the state, the “Volk”, the instituted church, the cultural community of the civilized nations, and so on.

which comprehends¹ all “lower” communities (e.g., the family, the business firm, etc.) as the “*unitas ordinis*” (ordering unity) consisting of subservient components. This *unitas* is characterized exclusively by its end, the common good, and it is ordered to the “social nature” of man. On the other hand, in the realm of “grace” the instituted church is the totality structure of the entire society that is specifically Christian, of which the state, too, including its lower components, is a part to the extent that it is a *Christian* state — Christian, that is, with respect to all those relationships that involve, according to the Roman Catholic view, the *spiritual* well-being of the faithful.

Thomist sociology never conducted an inquiry into the internal individuality structures of society. The societal spheres were all in theory placed on the same level. They were merely defined externally, in accordance with their serviceability for an end that was posited in a teleologically conceived world-order (e.g., marriage as an institution of natural law that must serve the end of the propagation of the human race).

In the universalistic part-whole order there is no room for “sphere-sovereignty” but only for a form of “autonomy” for the lower subordinate parts within the comprehensive totality structure. This universalistic schema goes back all the way to Thomist-Aristotelian metaphysics, in which the part-whole relation is elevated to a transcendental definition of the concept of being (namely, by virtue of the “transcendental unity” of all that truly is).

q. The order of reality of individuality structures

The theory of individuality structures and their enkaptic interlacements that we have outlined above holds universally for the whole of temporal reality, in contrast to the theory based on the Aristotelian substance-concept concerning the natural essential structures of anorganic things, plants, animals and humans.

The awe-inspiring wealth of individuality that all creation possesses in its religious root breaks into our temporal horizon in a no

1 Comprehends with the proviso *insofar as they fall within the same order*, a restriction that is meant to uphold the “autonomy” of the subordinate parts in their own sphere of operation.

less awe-inspiring wealth of individual realizations of innumerable structural types which are all, without exception, grounded in God's immeasurable order of creation.

These structures, however, are not all of the same order of reality. For a start, there is a fundamental difference between individual things like a tree or a mountain, and constant, enduring bonds like a forest or a mountain range. Furthermore, among the actual thing structures there is a fundamental difference in the order of reality between a structure qualified by a *subjective* structural function and one qualified by an *objective* structural function.

Take, for instance, the relation between a thing formed by an animal that is not part of the animal's body but has been given form outside of it, such as an ant hill, a spider's web, and so on, and compare this to the animal in whose life the thing serves a typical function. Such a thing is qualified by a typical sensitive object function in the life of the animal and has a typical objective-psychical destination in this animal existence; apart from this destination it cannot reveal its individuality structure. In daily usage this relation is clearly indicated by referring to things of this sort as typical animal products. These objectively qualified animal structures are unilaterally dependent on the subjectively qualified animal structure. They are intertwined in a typical subject-object relation.

The relation between man and his form products is of a similar nature.

r. Thing structures embrace only a limited circle of individuality structures

Additionally, there is a fundamental difference between *things* on the one hand and *events* on the other, like a thunder storm, a flood, a war, a battle. Events, like human acts, take place in a succession of parts, whereas real things, even when they exhibit a succession of genetic phases, still possess a relative persistence throughout the simultaneous functioning of their parts within the whole. This fact is also true of an enduring bond which (within limits) is independent of the variation in the individual things of which it consists. But these bonds (such as a library, furniture, a mountain range, etc.) are not themselves "things": they have typical bond structures, not thing structures.

The social spheres of man and animal, too, have typical individuality structures that differ fundamentally from thing structures.

Finally, the individual bodily existence of man is built up over time in an enkaptic whole of individuality structures, to be examined later. This whole, which we call the human body, can likewise not be classified among the thing structures, as it is indissolubly connected to the human soul or spirit (in the sense of religious root of life).

In fact, it isn't really proper to call plants and animals "things." Common usage generally restricts the word thing (at least insofar as it is used somewhat pointedly) to *inanimate* objects and matters,¹ while plants, animals and men are referred to as "beings" or "creatures."² But both *things* and *living beings* are sharply distinguished from all other temporal individualities according to their reality status. Exactly what accounts for this ontic difference?

s. Individuality structures of the primary and the secondary order of reality. The element of truth in the Aristotelian-Scholastic substance-concept

It is clear that thing complexes, events, human acts and societal spheres presuppose the existence of subjectively qualified things or beings, and that therefore the structural types of things and beings occupy a primary, foundational place in temporal reality. These primary structures, with the exception of man, fall within the three primary "kingdoms" or "radical types" examined earlier: inorganic things, plants and animals, while man himself, by his temporal existence alone, occupies an utterly unique position in the cosmos. Should we then conclude that the individual subjects of these structures are really the only independent, "self-standing" bearers of all other structures of temporal reality? And does that not send us back again to the necessity of embracing a species of "substances" in the sense of *primary bearers of reality*? This question has continued to occupy me ever since the completion of my work *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, particularly in connection with the debate which then arose about the meaning of the substance-concept.

1 [Dutch original: "niet-levende voorwerpen en zaken".]

2 [Dutch original: "wezens".]

We should bear in mind that the strongly negative stance taken by the young Calvinist philosophy against this concept was not prompted by a desire to tear down everything that pagan, scholastic and humanist philosophy had built up over the centuries. The opposite is the case. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea, probably more than any other non-historicist philosophical school, has highlighted the historical conditionality of philosophical thought and the great significance of historical tradition. This was not done from any ulterior motive—for example, to pre-empt the likely accusation of being “revolutionary upstarts.” On the contrary, it was our *Law-Idea* which from the outset led us to the insight that the cosmic temporal order links theoretical thought in the modal structure of its theoretical-logical aspect indissolubly to the modal structure of the historical aspect. Our philosophy has always been intent on doing justice to the important “moments of truth” in the course of philosophical thought of former times and to take them into account in terms of our own Christian basis, fully reckoning with the operation of common grace in the world of learning. Our opposition to the traditional substance-concept was a matter of principle because, as we have amply shown, the concept is indissolubly linked to unscriptural religious ground-motives in Western thought.

t. The substance-concept in modern “organic” political theory versus the Aristotelian conception of “substance”

This does not detract from the fact that the substance-concept, at least in Aristotelian-Scholastic usage, contained the important element of truth that in its limitation to natural things and living beings it made a fundamental distinction between realities of primary and secondary order, and that consequently scholasticism, insofar as it held to the Aristotelian concept of substance, has never lapsed into the error of granting state and man, for instance, the same reality status. Not until the modern so-called organic theory of the state, which received a philosophical foundation in the works of Otto von Gierke and others, was the state, too, characterized as a “supra-personal” *substance* that could be placed on a par with the individual human being.

To do justice to this moment of truth in the traditional scholastic substance-concept, however, we need not in any way return to a kind of substantialistic viewpoint. The theory of individuality structures is perfectly capable of absorbing it by means of the distinction between reality of the primary and reality of the secondary order. We avoid the term "substance" or "substantiveness," not because we oppose a word but because scientific terminology must be handled with the utmost care. Below we shall see how scholars who had their reservations with respect to the philosophical concept of substance nevertheless, by borrowing the term, were unexpectedly dragged back into a substantialistic framework of thought complete with all its inner dialectic.

As far as that goes, we must regard the substance-concept as one of the most dangerous concepts of philosophic thought. Even if one wants to understand "substance" as nothing more than a "bearer of properties" which, not being a relative *relatum* itself, is assumed for all relations, still one has entered a philosophical train of thought which cannot but ensnare theoretical thought in inner antinomies. One will arrive again at the "absolute orientation point" that Thomist scholasticism proclaimed to be a purely logical postulate for the doctrine of relations, but which is without any point of contact in the whole of temporal reality. *Temporal structural unity* and *aboluteness* contradict each other without fail.

It is one of the basic theses in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea that reality offers itself explicitly to naive experience only in its individuality structures, and that naive experience grasps these familiar individual things only in these structures.

If the substance-concept as used by scholastic theology were identical with the concept of a thing in naive experience, there could be no radical difference between the substance-concept and the idea of the individuality structure. The latter then would be nothing but a theoretical explanation of the substance-concept as used in the naive attitude of thought. In that case the Philosophy of the Law-Idea, in attacking this concept, would have been tilting at windmills.

In order to clarify this point it is therefore necessary to confront the scholastic substance-concept with the idea of individuality structures, and then both ideas with the concept that naive experience forms of things.

u. The point of contact between the substance-concept and things¹ given to naïve experience

As I observed at the start of the third volume of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, it is undeniable that the substance-concept has at least some point of contact with a thing that is undoubtedly given in naïve experience.

What is given is the relative durability of things over time in spite of the variability of their components and sensory qualities. We do not hesitate for a moment to call a tree to be the same in its summery and wintry appearances, even if biologists teach us the continual breakdown and renewal of all its cells. In the same way we recognize a house as the same edifice even if it has lost a few bricks from its front wall, or if several of its components have been renovated.

However, this experience of identity has its limits. Let me use an example given by Descartes.² When I throw a piece of wax into the fire, and it “perishes before my eyes,” I certainly will no longer say that this piece of wax continues to exist, albeit in a different physico-chemical form, even when natural science teaches us the law of the conservation of energy. For the question here is merely whether the same individual thing can still exist in a way accessible to naïve experience. The answer from naïve experience is clearly negative, and natural science teaches us nothing that would conflict with the negative answer to this question.

The experience of identity mentioned is not restricted to living beings and lifeless things. We acknowledge the identity of a church congregation, a state, or a family without hesitation, in spite of changes in their individual members.

Now if you approach someone to whom the theoretical attitude of thought is foreign and ask that person to give account of his or her naïve judgment that, for instance, the tree in one’s garden remains the same through all visible changes, that person will, if prepared to entertain such a learned question, refer you to sensory experience, and then will necessarily get caught in his own words.

1 [The Dutch words *iets* and *ding* can be rendered a thing or a concrete entity. Such an entity has both subject and object functions.]

2 [*Meditations of First Philosophy*, Meditation 2.]

This does not at all prove that for experience that is not deepened by science reality is exhausted by that which can be perceived by the senses; the naive judgment of identity, after all, is not of a purely sensory character. All it proves is that the naive concept and judgment—while not yet opened up by theory—remain bound to sensory impressions and representations, even though they themselves are not of a sensory nature.

Now metaphysicians were convinced that the ontic existence of the judgment of identity mentioned can never be located in the sensory aspect of experience. It therefore turned away from what is given in naive experience and began to search for the “thing in itself,” the “thing in its essence,” and believed that it would have to be taken independently of human experience as a “substance,” as an entity not dependent upon anything else for its existence.

The substance-concept, when first conceived in Greek philosophy, did not even have a single point of contact with empirical things. Rather, in sharp opposition to the things of naive experience it was expressly conceived as the *noumenon*, that which is only accessible to theoretic scientific thinking, in contrast to the deceptive *phenomenon* of the sensory appearance in the empirical world of things.

In fact the problem of substance was raised in Greek philosophy as the problem of the relationship between being and becoming. What gives us the right to say that something *is*, if it is empirically subjected to continuous change? Typically, metaphysics regarded being as transcendent to the temporal reality of experience and accessible only to theoretical thinking. In this way it was removed from the cosmic order of time which encloses all structures of temporal reality and first makes them possible. And with that it was also detached from the typical human horizon of experience.

Theoretic thought attempted to penetrate to a metaphysical sphere of being in which being as such, in its indifference towards all special creaturely limits, would reveal itself.

True being is the being of theoretic thinking, and theoretic thinking is the thinking of being, so taught Parmenides, the founder of the Eleatic School. And in this pronouncement theoretic thinking itself was raised above the boundaries of what is human.

v. The Greek idea of theoria in its religious-contemplative tendency

One must remember that the Greek idea of *theoria* had a deeply religious-contemplative heritage.¹ According to this theory the metaphysical sphere of being to which theoretic thinking is directed, is of divine character. In this manner, theoretic thought becomes the religious organ par excellence for acquiring knowledge, while in Greek philosophy *pistis*, the function of faith, is always pushed back to the level of *doxa*, the unfounded subjective opinion or conviction, which may never lay claim to the truth.

This religious character of theory was deepened in Greek thought with Anaxagoras, the last of the Ionian nature philosophers, who identified deity with the absolute *nous* as cleansed of all contamination by the chaotic *hulē*² ("matter" in the Greek sense); and with Aristotle, who saw the ideal of the absolute theory realized in this divine *nous*, in the pure thinking spirit.³

For Aristotle, the deity is the "*noēsis tēs noēseōs*," pure thought, which has only itself, as the fullness of all true being and living, for its object, in blissful contemplation.

w. Once more the religious ground-motive of Greek metaphysics: The form-matter theme

But there is more to it. One will never understand the Greek idea of "*theoria*" when detaching it from the religious ground-motive, which I have brought to light as the dialectic form-matter motive in

1 Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, 2nd ed. (Berlin and Leipzig, 1936). [Eng. ed.: *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet (London, 1944–45)] sees in the Greek "*theoria*" only an inner relationship with "*the dominant form tendency*" of Greek art, and especially in the Platonic idea, something pointed out by Cicero, *Or.* 7–10, who was steeped in Hellenistic literature. But Kurt Schilling, *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Munich, 1943), p. 17, dug deeper into the essence of Greek "*theoria*" when he remarked: "This knowing is not 'theory' in the modern sense, but rather praxis, praxis of the newer philosophical piety and direction of life." However, this misses the contemplative nature of the Greek *theoria* as it emerged in the *βίος θεωρητικός* [theoretical life], which beautifully expressed the ideal of the old Pythagorean piety.

2 Anaxagoras even took away from the *hulē* the moment of *movement* which was always ascribed to it in the religious ground-motive of the nature religions (the eternal flowing of the divine stream of life). He let movement emerge only from the divine *nous*, as *form-giving* movement. This was fully in accord with his de-divinizing of the principle of matter.

3 Cf. *Metaphysics* 12.6 (1072b 10 ff.).

the first volume of this work.¹ It had arisen from the irreconcilable conflict between the ground-motive of the older nature religions and that of the newer Olympian culture religion.

It can even be demonstrated that the entire metaphysical contrast between being and becoming, from which the Greek substance-concept is born, originated from this religious ground-motive, in which the *hulē* [matter] as the eternally flowing current of becoming and the eternal form of being are deified by turns.²

Parmenides endows metaphysical being, only accessible to theory, with absolute unity and truth as attributes of its being, while excluding all becoming, multiplicity and diversity. And subsequently, as the eternal all-encompassing form of the celestial sphere, being is proclaimed to be the one and only substance.

From the start, Greek metaphysics connected the concept of being with the form principle in a dialectic-religious contrast with the matter principle, which is the principle of the eternal stream that flows through visible forms. Only a *principle of measure and harmony* can once again bridle the chaotic character of the latter.

Anaximander and Heraclitus, for example, did not derive this principle of measure and harmony from the matter principle itself, which submits becoming only to the blind, irrational *anankē* or *tuchē*, but rather from the form principle of the culture religion as the religion of measure and harmony.

The older Greek nature religions had deified the matter principle as origin of all that exists, but even there the ground-motive of the culture religion operated as a hidden counterweight. It was simply naturalized there.

Similarly, the eternal, all-encompassing form of being in the metaphysics of Parmenides, as well as in the theology of Xenophanes (which shows no further affinity to Parmenides), is oriented to the worship of the heavens in the ancient Uranian nature religions. This also had a demonstrable influence on the Pythagoro-

1 [See *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, Collected Works, Series A, Volume 5/3:165-88.]

2 Very important is Aristotle's statement that no one among the nature philosophers held the solid, the earth, to be the original stuff of the cosmos; *Metaphysics* 1.8 (989a 5). K. Schilling, commenting on this, writes: "evidently because they held that only something flowing and formless could change into the various things, as the primal 'stuff' would have to do"; *Geschichte der Philosophie*, p. 182.

reans. Parmenides wanted, as it were, to put his hands around all of “nature” in an all-encompassing bodily form of the celestial sphere. Its being is divine, exactly in this closed, all-inclusive form. But lifting the form of being out of and above the eternal flowing *hulē* [matter] could never be explained from the nature religions. Because there, too, the heavenly bodies are subject to the process of rising from and falling back into *anankē* [fate].

Not until the culture religion are the gods elevated above the flux of transitoriness. The gods leave mother earth, out of whose womb the eternal flowing stream of life arises; they take up residence on Mt. Olympus and become immortal, no longer subject to the cycle of the seasons, elevated above the endless cycle of birth, death and resurrection, “the wheel of birth and death.”¹

Later on, the philosophical conception of the form principle breaks out of the confines of the naturalistic framework of the old nature philosophy, and begins to take its orientation from the form principle of the culture religion, as deepened theoretically and ethically by Anaxagoras and especially by Socrates. They relate the metaphysical concept of being not only to unity and truth, but especially also to the good and the beautiful (the *kalokagathon*).

In Greek form-realism, *theoria* concentrates on these four essential attributes of “being.” Already with Socrates this whole method of forming concepts is guided by the idea of the good and the beautiful, which is inseparably connected with unity and truth. Any concept that does not lead us to the discovery of the divine formative power of the *kalokagathon*, that does not teach us to what end a thing is “good,” lacked all theoretical value for him. Plato defined the *eidē* as the static forms of being of all that is; yet above their diversity were his *ideas*, which he undoubtedly directed in a concentric and dynamic fashion to the unity of the divine being in its truth, goodness, and beauty.² The Greek substance-concept therefore always remains rooted in the metaphysical concept of being as

1 On this, see F. H. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (New York, 1912).

2 See e.g. Plato’s *Symposium* 211, in which the various stages of *ἐρως* [*erōs*] are comprehended in their concentric focus upon the idea of the beautiful, which elevates itself from bodily beautiful to the ethically beautiful, to the beauty of the knowledge of the truth, and finally to the idea of beauty itself which includes all the other stages in a unity.

oriented to the form principle and cannot be detached from it without abandoning its real meaning.

After Parmenides, Greek metaphysics began again to look for a rapprochement with concrete experience of reality and to differentiate the substance-concept according to the typical species or types of form. In fact, even when, as in Aristotle, it began to recognize individual “material substances” in which “being” and “becoming,” *form* and *matter* are both recognized as constituent principles, even then the metaphysical concept of being remained the foundation without which the entire substance-concept would have collapsed.

This also holds for the mature Aristotelian conception which would be introduced later on into scholastic philosophy and theology under the dominating influence of Thomas Aquinas.

The scholastic-Aristotelian substance-concept is strictly derived from the Aristotelian ontology with its religious form-matter motive. Because of that dependence it can have no inner relationship with the concept of a thing in naive experience.

That this can no more be the case with the modern substance-concept of humanistic philosophy, where being is taken according to the dialectic ground-motive of “nature” and “freedom” (the deterministic science-ideal, placed in opposition to the personality ideal of autonomous freedom), requires no further argument.

Furthermore, in this discussion we wish to submit only the Thomist-Aristotelian substance-concept to a critical analysis, as I mentioned at the outset. I do that among other things because in my work *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* I directed the frontal attack not against scholasticism but against modern humanistic thinking. The scholastic school of thought was only cursorily mentioned there.

However, the Philosophy of the Law-Idea is now forced by its theological opponents to carry the battle into the open also against the scholastic school of thought. And because of that it was the Thomist substance-concept that had to become the focus of the struggle, because it occupies a predominant position in Reformed scholasticism. This is true despite the fact that our theologians try to accommodate it to the reformational line of thought.

The substance-concept has seen many variants in the course of its development. And indeed, if any conception could claim to do full justice to the naive experience of things, it should certainly be this one. For it once again accepts “transitory” substances composed of “form” and “matter” and also wishes to give an account of the individuality of things. This is in contrast to the earlier conceptions of the Eleatic school, the atomists (Leucippus, Democritus, and Plato), and also in contrast to the substance-concept as oriented to the modern humanistic science-ideal.

Is therefore this substance-concept not oriented to the real individuality structures of temporal reality? This is what we must now critically investigate.

x. *Thomist ontology*

The metaphysical ontology of Thomas was erected on the foundations of Aristotle, which were then adapted to Rome’s ground-motive of nature and grace.

The Greek idea of *theoria* also underwent a fundamental change in Thomas because he suppressed its original religious sense and sharply accentuated the purely analogical character of the metaphysical knowledge of God in an Augustinian-Neoplatonic spirit. Aristotle had strongly emphasized the analogical character of the concept of being. In the process of gaining theoretical knowledge he saw the supra-personal active *nous* as an immortal spiritual substance (*ousia*), which is implanted in the human being from the outside.¹ And if it is not identical with the deity itself, it is in any case in direct religious knowing contact with the deity.² In contrast to this, as we saw earlier, Thomas shows a strong tendency in his so-called *theologia naturalis* towards the negative theology of Neoplatonism, which attempts to approach the divine unity only through the negation of conceptual attributes.³

1 Aristotle, *De Anima* 408b 18–19.

2 Schilling points this out (op. cit., p. 142) in his remark about Aristotle’s idea of *theoria*: When a man thus beholds God in *theoria*, “he no longer lives a human life, but the life of God. He contemplates God, and united with God in his soul, he as it were thinks God; and therein consists his sweetest bliss” (*εὐδαιμονία*; *eudaimonia*). Cf. *Metaphysics* 1072b 10 ff., which states that this theoretical union with God is available to man only in the rarest and most exalted of moments.

3 Cf. above, chap. V.

For Thomas, natural theology is merely the philosophical stepping stone for a revelational theology of the mysteries of grace, a theology that rests entirely on faith in the doctrine of the church.¹ Since Thomas emphatically defends the autonomy of theoretical thinking in opposition to Augustine, theoretical thinking must have a different meaning for him than it has in Greek philosophy.

Because “nature” is a stepping stone for “grace,” autonomous reason may never teach anything that could pose a conflict with the revealed truths of church doctrine. Given its nature, it cannot actually do this, because it has no access to the revealed truths. If therefore natural philosophy teaches theses that are condemned by the church as “heretical,” such a situation must be due to theoretical errors that can also be refuted by purely theoretical arguments, without requiring the help of revelation.

A second important difference with Aristotelian metaphysics is the adoption of the Neoplatonic-Augustinian *logos* doctrine in the natural theology of Thomas (albeit that it deviates from the Augustinian conception). With this, the ideas in the divine *Logos* are adopted as proto-images according to which all things have been created and in which their full individuality is encompassed in ideal fashion. We will return to this in a later context.

The theology of Aristotle had to be adapted to the church doctrine of creation along these lines. Creation itself, says Thomas, can be proven theoretically by natural reason, apart from all revelation. He is even of the opinion that Aristotle had already taught this.²

According to Thomas, only the fact that the created cosmos has not always existed but had a beginning, cannot be seen through reason; we can only know this through revelation.

1 Thomas sees faith, the first of the “theological virtues,” only as a supra-natural gift of grace to the intellect. See *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, Q. 62, Art. 3: “Unde oportuit quod quantum ad utrumque aliquid homini supernaturaliter adderetur ad ordinandum ipsum in finem supernaturalem. Et primo quidem quantum ad intellectum adduntur homini quaedam principia supernaturalia, quae divino lumine capiuntur; et haec sunt credibilia de quibus est fides.” Hope and love, by contrast, according to Thomas, are supernatural gifts to the will.

2 See *Summa contra gentiles*, bk 2, chaps. 15–18.

Thomas said that Aristotle's belief that the cosmos has had no beginning was in itself not at all in conflict with the fact that God has created it.¹

We shall see later that the Scriptural motive of creation stands in a radical antithesis to the dialectic form-matter motive of Greek philosophy, and that it becomes denatured through this accommodation to the Aristotelian idea of God.

Thomas, as well as Aristotle, sees being as that which has been known from the start (*primum notum*), since thinking cannot know anything independently of this first concept. Being itself cannot be determined by a higher concept.

In Thomist metaphysics *being* serves indeed as the basic denominator for all the modal aspects as they are separated and placed in opposition to one another in the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation. It performs the same function for the individuality structures of temporal reality. This is true in spite of the fact that Thomist thinking negates the cosmic order of time and as a result of that has no way of penetrating to the real structures of the modal aspects and of individuality. In Thomist metaphysics all theoretically analyzed diversity in temporal reality finds its deeper unity in the concept of being. But what is the character of this unity?

y. Once more the analogical character of the concept of being and the scholastic method of concept formation²

As we saw earlier, the metaphysical concept of being is not centered in the true radical unity of the temporal structures of reality that we dissect in our theory. Its unity is merely a unity of an unqualified analogy. It is a so-called analogical concept, which in its speculative metaphysical character pretends to rise above the horizon of time. In its generality it claims to encompass even the being of the "purely spiritual substances," and even—within the limits of analogy—the "Supreme Being of God."

1 *Ibid.*, bk. 2, ch. 37: "Sic igitur evidenter apparet quod nihil prohibet ponere mundum non semper fuisse." Cf. *De aeternitate mundi* (*Opuscula* ed.): "Sic ergo patet, quod in hoc dicitur aliquid factum esse a Deo et nunquam non fuisse, non est intellectus aliquid repugnantia."

2 [Most of section y was inserted by the author into the text of the original article in *Philosophia Reformata* as he prepared it for inclusion in the present volume.]

According to the doctrine of the *analogia entis*, being does not accrue to all reality in the same way but only in a similar, analogical manner. The Being of God is truly different from that of creatures. The being of “substance” is essentially different from that of the “*accidentia*.” The “being” of the “form” is really different from that of “matter.”

Thomist metaphysics does not trace the analogies back to their radical unity as creatures. This keeps them floating in midair. To trace them back to that unity is excluded simply because this concept of being ignores the limits of the cosmic order of time which first makes the theoretic concept possible.

Earlier we pointed out that the metaphysical *analogia entis* eliminates the irreducible nuclear moments of the modal aspects that *qualify* the modal analogies. This must necessarily lead to a theoretical leveling of the modal aspects within the Gegenstand relation. And with that, it also leads to a leveling of the true individuality structures of temporal reality in which these modal aspects are arranged in typical totalities.

This leveling permeates the entire scholastic method of forming concepts, not just with the analogical concepts but also with the so-called generic concepts. The latter, as we saw earlier, are formed in this manner: one starts out with searching for the *genus proximum* of the matter to be defined, and then seeks out the so-called specifying attributes or *differentia specifica*.

But what is meant by the *genus proximum*? First, one will look for the “logical characteristics” which the matter to be defined has in common with others that are closest to it. In this way, for instance, one says: man and brute have in common that they both belong to the nearest genus *animal*, i.e., both are living beings equipped with sensory-psychic “capabilities,” as distinct from plants.

However, when one traces the specifying characteristics, the genus *animal* is broken up into the species *animal brutum* (the animal that functions as far as sensory life is concerned) and the *animal rationale* (the human being who is qualified by his reasoning abilities).

The *genus proximum* or “nearest genus,” however, is in itself already to a certain extent a specific concept. One can search still further for common characteristics that a human being shares with a still wider circle of creatures. In this scholastic manner of thinking one finally ends up, via the different “grades of abstraction,” with the so-called composite substance that consists of “form and matter.” This then is the *genus ultimum* or *generalissimum*,¹ which immediately demonstrates the inseparable connection of this method of forming concepts with the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of being. Ultimately, matter gives rise to the genus, form provides the species.² Man has the being of *material being* in common with all other beings composed of form and matter.

And so the form-matter motive dominates this scholastic method of forming concepts from the start. And since we have recognized this motive as being intrinsically religious and of pagan origin, it is clear that this method is of no use to genuinely reformational thought.

A correct method for forming scientific concepts must focus on the structures of temporal reality. The scholastic generic concept ignores these structures and leads to their complete theoretical leveling. This holds not only for the individuality structures, but first of all for the modal structures. As we saw earlier, to eliminate these modal structures must lead at once to the elimination of the individuality structures. We will return to this point when we discuss the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of categories.

1 One finds this method of forming concepts described in striking fashion by John Scotus Erigena (c. 801–877) in his *De divisione naturae*, V, 4, 868D, 869A: “Ars illa, quae a Graecis dicitur Dialectica, et definitur bene disputandi scientia, primo omnium circa proprium sui principium versatur, ex qua omnis divisio et multiplicatio eorum de quibus ars ipsa disputat, inchoat per genera generalissima mediaque genera usque ad formas et species specialissimas descendens, et iterum complicationis regulis per eosdem gradus, per quos degreditur, donec ad ipsam ousian, ex qua egressa est, perveniat.”

2 *De ente et essentia* (*Opuscula* ed., p. 402): “in sensibilibus genus sumitur ab eo quod est materiale in re, differentia vero ab eo quod est formale in ipsa” (in the things that can be observed by the senses, the genus is derived from that which is matter in them. The specific characteristics, however, are derived from that which is of a form-character in them).

In the present context I would just like to point out that the scholastic method of forming concepts by progressing from the *genus proximum* to the *differentia specifica* is still of predominant influence today, particularly in modern legal science. Here the attempt is made, for instance, to use this method in forming the founding concept of law.

First, one searches for the *genus proximum* and believes to have found it in the concept of “norm for action,” which then covers social interaction as well as jural norms and moral norms. Next, the attempt is made to delimit legal norms from the other types of norms-for-action through specific characteristics. Legal norms and social norms, in contrast to the norms for morality, would then have in common that both are communal norms for “external” action, whereas moral norms would regulate a person’s internal inclination. Finally, the legal norm and the social norm are then distinguished by the specific characteristic of organized compulsion. Justice would be the communal norm for external action based on organized compulsion, while the norm for social interaction would be merely a conventional norm of a purely invitational character.

Modern science of law has derived this method of forming concepts from scholasticism by way of the natural-law teachers Hugo Grotius and Christian Thomasius. This method—it cannot be said often enough—is scientifically useless and misleading. A cursory analysis of the concept of law gained by this method—which already contains typically humanistic elements—can convince us of this.

The founding concept of law is by its very nature a modal concept of the jural aspect of temporal reality. As we saw earlier, we can only obtain such a modal concept correctly from an accurate analysis of the modal structure of the corresponding aspect. The modal structures of reality cannot be classified as a logical *genus proximum*. Their modal “sphere-sovereignty,” which is guaranteed by their logically irreducible meaning-nucleus, offers resistance to this. They find their deeper unity only in their religious root, which can never be grasped in a theoretic concept.

The concept “norm-for-action” is not at all a modal concept. On the contrary, it is oriented to an individuality structure of temporal human existence, the so-called act structure. We will discuss this

extensively later on in connection with the individuality structures of human society.¹

It may very well be that the jural aspect of reality is especially related to a specific direction of the act-life of man, namely the direction of volition. We already established this incidentally in an earlier context. But in the modal aspect of the jural the element of will must immediately be taken in its qualification by the modal jural nucleus of meaning. A typical element derived from an individuality structure cannot function in the modal structure. For, as we saw earlier, the modal structure is indifferent towards the individuality structures that function in it.

The human act is the realization of an intentional act of will, which as such functions in all aspects of reality without exception since it can occur only in an individuality structure. In addition, it can incorporate all kinds of individuality structures of human society, as we will demonstrate further in the third volume of the present trilogy. That is why the concept “norm-for-action” can never serve as a starting point for an analysis of the modal nature of justice.

Indeed, this concept does not encompass the modal nature of justice (on its law-side) in any exhaustive sense. This becomes immediately apparent when one recalls that certainly not all norms for justice allow themselves to be taken as norms for *action*. For instance, there are also norms for *judgment* in the area of justice. We also know typical norms for *organization*, and none of these conform to the type “norm-for-action.”

If we now examine more closely the “specific” characteristics by which Thomists think they can delimit the jural and social norms from the norms for morality, we are once more faced with a concept that is not qualified in a modal sense: that of the community. To delimit the norms for justice and social intercourse from those of morals by the “specific characteristic” of “externality” as opposed to “internality” clearly points to its origin in the humanistic personality ideal of free autonomous self-determination in its rationalistic version. In the personality ideal the Christian idea of the inner freedom of a person reborn in Christ was moralized and secularized.

1 See *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*, vol. III, part B, chap. 3.

A community as such is not a modal configuration, but a form in which human society manifests itself, and it can show itself only in individuality structures. Communities (*Gemeinschaften* in German sociology) are distinguished from coordinational relationships (*Gesellschaften*). Communities bind people together into a whole of which individuals are members, whereas in coordinate social relationships people function side by side as equal individuals apart from any special communal bonds.

It is simply impossible to maintain that morality does not recognize communal norms. One has only to think of the morals of marriage, of the family, of a nation, etc. Morality, like justice, takes on typical communal traits in the different individuality structures of human society. Undoubtedly, not all norms of morality bear a typically communal character. But neither is this the case with norms for justice and social interaction.

The meaning of the jural realizes itself in human society in different individuality structures, in which communal as well as social relationships manifest themselves. For instance, civil law is not communal law in its typical individuality structure, since by its own internal nature it has to offer a counterweight exactly against the overpowering pressure of the community in a free sphere of rights for human beings as such, which came to expression in the natural-law idea of human rights. In any case, a community as such can never characterize the modal nature of justice, since in principle it functions in all aspects of reality. For that reason, in its modal function as a law-community it must receive its very qualification from the jural. The converse is definitely impossible.

Finally, let us look at the compulsory nature of law as its supposedly specific characteristic, in distinction from the norm for social conduct. In this scholastic definition even this element of compulsion is taken in an unqualified sense from a modal point of view and is therefore completely ambiguous.

A physical, a psychological, an historical, a social, an economic, a jural, yes, even a moral and a pistic compulsion are all possible. In social life compulsion can be exercised by ignoring or expelling someone from this or that social group in the case of a violation of social norms. This is often of a much more drastic nature than a small fine imposed by the law for a violation. The element of compulsion must therefore again receive all its qualification and delin-

eation from the modal meaning-nucleus of justice, and that was exactly what one wanted to eliminate.

The concept of compulsion is a real analogical concept that remains completely suspended in midair when given no modal precision and is therefore scientifically useless. It can certainly not serve as a specific characteristic of the norm for justice in distinction from the norm for social conduct, since organized compulsion is also not foreign to social life.

We cite this example of scholastic concept formation in the area of modal concepts only in order to illustrate the method. Thomas himself would certainly not have endorsed it in this form. But the method is undoubtedly purely Aristotelian-Thomist. It cannot grasp the modal structure of an aspect of reality because its starting point prevents this.

One might try to detach this scholastic method of forming concepts, insofar as it was retained in modern thinking, from its foundations in the Aristotelian-Thomist ontology, yet one could still not deny its origin in the latter. The analogical concept of being—which in essence is not a concept but a transcendental idea, determined by the religious ground-motive of form and matter—cannot be severed from its philosophical background. Given its dualistic character, this motive cannot direct theoretical thought toward the integral center, the religious unity and origin of temporal reality, and therefore it also does not provide thinking with insight into the nucleus or center of the modal structures of reality. Instead it keeps thought imprisoned in unqualified analogical concepts that want all exactitude.

This is the great contrast between the idea of being in Thomist-Aristotelian metaphysics and the transcendental basic idea of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. Our philosophy does not pretend to offer a truly theoretical concept of the created spiritual (religious) radical unity of the temporal cosmos. But it does give us a theoretical account of the manner in which we must allow our theoretic thinking to be directed by the Scriptural ground-motive if it is to arrive at a synthetic knowledge of the structure of temporal reality according to its own inner nature.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea shows how we can penetrate to the unity of the temporal cosmos in its spiritual origin: namely, by the religious knowledge of ourselves and of God through the divine Word-revelation. Our philosophy is therefore directed to-

wards the center of the supra-temporal religious dimension of the horizon of human experience. From that dimension we grasp all temporal-theoretical diversity within the central perspective of their spiritual unity. Only from that perspective can the temporal dimensions of this horizon of experience also disclose to us their diverging structures.

The Thomist concept of being, by contrast, lacks a real center, and can therefore never show how theoretic thought can discover the actual structures of temporal reality. Thomist metaphysics itself wants to occupy the place that belongs only to the transcendental critique of philosophic thought. It believes it can find its idea of the origin in the idea of the First Unmoved Mover and Cause by way of purely scientific deductions, as well as in the idea of the unity of everything that our theory can distinguish.

Thomist metaphysics wants to maintain the autonomy of theoretic thought, which our transcendental critique has unmasked as a pre-theoretical, religious prejudice.

z. *The four transcendental determinations of the Thomist concept of being*

Thomist metaphysics further defines general “being” theoretically as an “analogical” (non-generic) concept in two ways. First, it analyzes the attributes of being which are possessed by all that is, but which are not yet expressed by the word “being.” Secondly, it investigates the fundamental types (*genera*) of “being” or categories through which being reveals itself in different forms.

The first more complete definition of being does not yet deprive the concept of being of any of its generality and “transcendence.” That is done through the “transcendental” basic concepts of unity, truth, beauty, and goodness.¹ All that is, is at the same time one, true, beautiful, and good.

Thomist metaphysics is correct in sharply distinguishing transcendental unity—as well as its correlate: transcendental multiplic-

1 Thomas Aquinas, *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, Q. 1, Art. 1. Here I follow Sertillanges in the understanding of the Thomist transcendentals. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 11, Art. 1, with a description of being as *ens*, *res* and *aliquid* which together are included in the unity. This reduction in Thomas’ work *De veritate* of the six transcendentals to only three (or four, if beauty is included) became the consensus after Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, 3, sec. 2, n. 3. For the development of the doctrine of the transcendentals from ancient Greek

ity—from quantitative or numerical unity and multiplicity.¹ Every being possesses this transcendental unity as soon as one views it in its quiddity or whatness.²

All that is (*ens*) is necessarily a unity, i.e., it is a univocal “something” (*aliquid*), as opposed to that which is not, and in that sense undivided (*indivisum*) and separate from all other being.³

A multiplicity must also have its unity if it is to be something. Nothing can be an absolute multiplicity. For according to Thomas, all that is, is intelligible, knowable; but to know something means to comprehend it as a unity.

“Pure matter” (*materia prima*) cannot find unity in itself. Only the *form* of being of a “composite substance” can give it unity. Exactly for that reason pure matter cannot attain real existence without form.

However, Thomist metaphysics makes this “transcendental unity” share also in the analogical character of the concept of being: encompassing all that is, being remains merely a unity of analogy, which comprises an inexhaustible, unlimited diversity of real and potential beings in which it unfolds itself. But these beings do not share a real, common root; they merely share their character of being by analogy.

As for the three additional transcendental determinations of “being”: truth, beauty, and goodness, these too have being “in themselves,” but only in their relation to *knowledge*, and in the case of goodness only in its relation to the *desire* that follows knowledge.⁴

thought, see S. Schulemann, *Die Lehre von den Transcendentalien in der scholastischen Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1929).

1 Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 11, Art. 2. Clearly the Philosophy of the Law-Idea does the same in its idea of the transcendental structural-unity, which applies both to the modal structures and the individuality structures and is sharply distinguished from numerical unity and multiplicity.

2 This is also seen in the fundamental descriptions of unity according to number, species, genus, and analogy found in Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6 (1015b 17-1017a 7).

3 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 11, Art. 1.

4 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 16 (“On Truth”), Art. 1: “Sicut autem bonum est in re, in quantum habet ordinem ad appetitum, et propter hoc ratio bonitatis derivatur

Is the theoretical concept of being, at least here, restricted to the human horizon of experience? No, for in that case it would lose its speculative metaphysical character. Relations to specific human knowing and desiring are not the primary issue here. It is being that remains absolutely primary in all its transcendental determinations.

Human knowing and desiring depend upon “being,” not the converse. The yardstick for truth, goodness and beauty lies in “being” itself because of its “intelligible nature.” Thomas does say that what is good resides within the things themselves as the goal or “end” of desire, and what is true resides in the intellect as the “end of knowing.”¹ But with that he certainly does not intend to make the truth dependent upon human knowledge, which in any case would have amounted to a self-undermining relativism. He sharply distinguishes, on the one hand, *relative* or accidental truth, which according to him exists merely in the subjective relation between the being of things and our human knowledge,² and, on the other, *absolute* or transcendental truth.³ Only relative truth resides in the human “mind” (*in mente humana*), and consists in the agreement of the nature of things with our subjective concepts. But it remains grounded in transcendental truth which, says Thomas, most certainly resides in the being of things themselves, and these two are one (*ens et verum convertuntur*).

a re appetibili in appetitum, secundum quod appetitus dicitur bonus, prout est boni; ita, cum verum sit in intellectu, secundum quod conformatur, rei intellectae, necesse est quod ratio veri ab intellectu ad rem intellectam derivetur, ut res etiam intellecta vera dicatur, secundum quod habet aliquem ordinem ad intellectum.”

- 1 *Ibid.*: “. . . et sic terminus appetitus, quod est bonum est in re appetibili; sed terminus cognitionis, quod est verum, est in ipso intellectu.”
- 2 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 12 [3]: “Scibile autem licet ad scientiam relative dicatur, tamen relatio secundum rem in scibile non est, sed in scientia tantum.”
- 3 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 16, Art. 1: “Res autem intellecta ad intellectum aliquem potest habere ordinem—vel per se, vel per accidens.—Per se quidem habet ordinem ad intellectum, a quo dependet secundum suum esse;—per accidens autem ad intellectum, a quo cognoscibilis est. . . . Unde unaquaeque res dicitur vera absolute secundum ordinem ad intellectum a quo dependet.”

The identity of truth and being, however, is related to the “creative knowledge of God” to which things owe their origin; that is to say, the being of things corresponds with the creative ideas in the mind of God.¹ And this divine creative knowledge, says Thomas, is in turn identical with God’s “Supreme Being,” with the divine *being* as “supreme being.” In this way Thomas accommodates Aristotle’s idea of truth to the church doctrine of creation by means of the *logos* theory of the Neoplatonists and Augustine with its doctrine of the “creative ideas” in the divine *Logos*.

Further, the last three transcendentals of the concept of being also retain the analogical character of this concept. What is “good” as a transcendental concept is therefore not taken in the religious, radical sense of the word, i.e., within the modally defined sense of what is morally good. Quite the converse: the morally good is merely seen as a special manifestation of transcendental goodness. All that is, is “good” as such because it possesses perfection in its ontic form, and this perfection makes it desirable, the goal or end of desire. The good is therefore that which is “desirable,” that which every being desires to be.²

However, things do not possess this transcendental definition of their being in an identical sense, but merely in an analogical sense, according to the special nature of their being. The infinitely diverse manifestations of what is good are therefore not truly directed towards their deeper radical unity.

Aristotle attacked Plato in his *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.4 (1095a 13–1095b 12), because Plato viewed an idea of what is good in a concentric manner, a good elevated above the diversity of its analogical manifestations in the various “goods.” Aristotle does not know any other, deeper unity of the manifestations of the “good” besides the unity of analogy, which is inherent in the concept of being it-

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 16, Art. 1: “Et similiter res naturales dicuntur esse verae secundum quod assequuntur similitudinem specierum quae sunt *in mente divina*.”

2 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 5, Art. 4; *De veritate*, Q. 21.

self.¹ Thomas follows his Greek teacher here. But this “unity” is only a metaphysically imagined unity.

There is no question that Thomas does arrive at the idea of a unity-in-origin of all that is within the *divine* fullness of being. But he cannot arrive at the idea of the religious radical unity of the entire *creaturely* diversity that theoretic thinking sets apart within the horizon of time. Without this transcendental idea of radical unity, theoretic thought lacks the basic denominator required for distinguishing the structures of reality that leaves those structures intact and does not replace them with theoretical constructions that arbitrarily levels them.

***aa. The connection between the four transcendentia
and the Greek form-matter scheme***

Whoever looks critically at the scholastic doctrine of the *transcendentia*, which has also largely been adopted by Reformed theologians,² cannot help but wonder how they could have assigned the “concept of being” to just these four basic determinations. We already gave the answer implicitly when we discussed the Greek concept of being: they are related in a characteristic manner to the Greek form-concept as religiously defined.

We also saw how the first two determinations—those of unity and truth—go back to the Eleatic concept of being, which could only grasp being in a naturalistic form: as the spatial shape of a ball, the all-encompassing celestial sphere.

The second pair of transcendentals, those of beauty and goodness, is entirely governed by the form principle of the culture religion which deepened it theoretically and ethically and proceeded

1 In his *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6 (1096 b 27–30) Aristotle asks: “But what then do we mean by the good? It is surely not like the things that only chance to have the same name. Are goods one, then, by being derived from one good or by all contributing to one good, or are they rather one *by analogy*? Certainly as sight is in the body, so is reason in the soul, and so on in other cases” (italics mine, H.D.). The question is not finally answered here, but from the clear rejection of Plato’s idea of the good one can see where Aristotle is headed.

2 See e.g. H. Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing* [*Christian world view*], 2nd rev. ed. (Kampen, 1913), pp. 82 ff.

to guide the entire formation of concepts along the Socratic idea of the “*kalokagathon*.”

In all four transcendentals the analogical concept of being remains the correlate of the activity of theoretic thought which is made independent—autonomous—and oriented to the form principle. As such, it (*ousia* in Aristotle) is proclaimed to be entirely independent of the matter principle.¹

The transcendental determinations of being become perfectly transparent in the light of the original Greek conception of *theoria* in its religious, contemplative character. They are much less transparent in Thomist metaphysics, where Greek *theoria* has been robbed of its original religious sense. Here they are debased to what are assumed to be purely scientific analogical basic concepts that belong to “natural,” not “supernatural” knowledge.

bb. Potentiality and actuality of being. The relation between the scheme of potentiality and actuality and that of form and matter. The Aristotelian synthesis of the form and matter principles

From the outset Thomas fills the concept of being, as further defined in this transcendental fashion, with the Greek form-matter scheme, following Aristotle. Aristotle, however, had made a brilliant attempt to theoretically bridge the polar religious dualism originally inherent in this scheme. Even the terminological designation of this age-old religious theme, first introduced by him as that of “*hulē*” and “*morphē*,” clearly betrays his attempt to make the dualism relative and to conquer it from within by borrowing these terms from the (historical) cultural aspect of temporal reality.

The historico-cultural aspect is characterized in its modal nucleus as freely controlled form-giving. Actually we have to take this meaning-nucleus in a still narrower sense as free dominion, for

1 Aristotle makes this clear in *Metaphysics* 5.6 (1016 b 1–3): “Ὅλως δὲ ὧν, ἡ νόησις ἀδιαίρετος ἢ νοοῦσα τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, καὶ μὴ δύναται χωρίσαι μήτε χρόνῳ μήτε τόπῳ μήτε λόγῳ; μάλιστα ταῦτα ἔν καὶ τούτων ὅσα οὐσίαι.” (“In general those things the thought of whose essence is indivisible, and which thought cannot separate either in time or in place or in definition, are most of all one, and of these especially those are one which are substances.”)

form-giving also occurs in the world of plants and animals.¹ What distinguishes cultural form-giving fundamentally from the latter is the fact that it takes place in free control of the material according to man's own design. By contrast, vegetative and animal formation displays a rigid type and rests entirely on a vegetative or instinctive foundation respectively. But in the cultural aspect, free control of the material is only possible in the giving of form and for that reason these elements belong inseparably together in the modal sense of *culture*.

Now within the cultural aspect of reality there can be no polar dualism between "form" and "matter." All cultural activity requires material that is capable of being shaped or formed. "Material" relates to "giving form" in the modal-historical subject-object relation, and not in a contrary relationship such as we know in the normative aspects as logical-illogical, historic-unhistoric (reactionary), beautiful-ugly, legal-illegal, moral-immoral, and so on, as governed by the principle of non-contradiction.

The Greek culture religion had deified this form principle. Aristotle tried to nullify the polarity between the ground-motive of the culture religion and that of the older nature religions in the form-matter relation of this cultural aspect. Thus he tried to rise above the basic religious dualism by converting it to a complementary relation within the ground-motive of the culture religion itself. This was greatly facilitated by the analogical concept of being of his metaphysics. With the aid of this analogy he was easily able to extend the relationship between form and matter within the cultural aspect to all "composite substances." He could do that without having to take into account the intrinsic differences in modal nucleus between the physical, biotic, and cultural. He simply elevated the form-matter scheme to the transcendental distinction of "being" as such. Anyone can read for himself how his *Metaphysics* time and again illustrates his metaphysical conception of form-matter with the image of an artisan or sculptor who gives form to his ma-

1 The formative element really carries an original character only in the spatial aspect. The physical form (the physical configuration in an atom, molecule, crystal) and the biotic and psychic formation (of plants and animals) already bear an analogical character. They are qualified by the modal nuclei of their corresponding aspects. The same holds for the cultural form.

terial—a favorite theme for comparison since Socrates, which can be explained not only from Socrates' own occupation and that of his father, but also as a clear indication of the reorientation of Greek thought to the form principle of the culture religion with its artistic Apollonian features (the ideal of the *kalokagathon*).

With Parmenides the "eternal flow of things" (the *panta rhei* of Heraclitus) was an absolute non-being (*ouk on*); and Democritus, the atomist, already called the *kenon* (the void), moved by *anankē* and *tuchē*, a relative nothing (*mē on*) insofar as it still lacked all form: it only exists in relation to the eternal atoms as form-substances. But for Aristotle the eternal flow and change becomes a "*dunamei on*," a being in predisposition or potential. It thus gains a share in being. It is passive matter, capable of taking on a form that will impart being to matter in its realization, in actuality.

Thomas follows the Aristotelian conception of matter and form, and yet his distinction between being in potential and being as actualized—potentiality and actuality—is not entirely identical to that between matter and form. Thomas also distinguishes potentiality and actuality in substances that are not composed of matter and form, the "essence" of which is exclusively form and which occupy an in-between position between the deity as *actus purus* (pure actuality) and the composite or material substances.¹ He argues this as follows. These "pure form-substances" receive their being from a first being that is not only "pure Form" but also pure actuality (*actus purus*) and First Cause of all dependent being. Now, everything that being has received from the divine Form stands in relation to the absolute Form in the condition of potential, and that which it has received is its actuality. The essential "form" of these substances is the "intellect." Therefore the intellect must be in potential in relation to being (*esse*) that they have received from God, and they have received this "being" as their actuality.²

1 These are the separated human "souls" (*animae rationales*) after the death of the body, and the angels and demons. See Thomas' treatise *De substantiis separatis seu de angelorum natura* (*Opuscula* XV). I cite the shorter treatises by Thomas from *Opuscula*, incorporated after the edition of *Summa contra Gentiles* of Boux-Lavergne, d'Yzalguier and Germer-Durand, vol. I (Paris, 1853).

2 *De ente et essentia*, cap. 5, p. 400 (*Opuscula* ed.): "Omne autem quod recipit aliquid ab alio, est in potentia respectu illius; et hoc quod receptum est in eo, est actus eius. Ergo oportet quod ipsa forma vel quidditas quae est intel-

cc. Has the actuality-potentiality scheme overcome the polar dualism of the form-matter motive?

But even where the contrast between potential and actual does not coincide with that of matter and form, it is still understood as an analogy of the latter. We shall see that the relation between actuality and potentiality is indeed not the ground-motive of Aristotelian metaphysics but rather the age-old dualism of “form” and “matter,” and by implication it also remains the ground-motive of Thomist metaphysics (except for accommodation to Rome’s ground-motive of nature and grace).

Neo-Thomist philosophy has taken great pains to demonstrate that neither the contrast between “act” and “potential,” nor that between “form” and “matter” introduced a basic dualism into Thomist metaphysics. When in the third volume of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* I advanced the thesis that the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept did not succeed in overcoming the dualism in the Greek ground-motive, the neo-Thomists immediately contradicted me with vigor. On the contrary, they think that the problem concerning the relation between being and becoming in the things of our world of experience can only be solved satisfactorily through the metaphysical distinction between actuality and potentiality and between form and matter, without falling into a dualism or else a metaphysical monism.

The well-known Thomas commentator Sertillanges explains that among the things of our experience all that is, becomes. This “becoming” presupposes a predisposition or potential which, when investigated, shows itself in two ways: as an active potential from the side of the activity that calls something into being; and as a passive capacity from the side of that which receives its being through this activity and so becomes something. Before a house was built it was “capable” of being built because its “matter”—in the materials used—was receptive to accepting the “form.” And it was capable of being built from the side of the builder who used

līgēntia sit in potentia respectu esse uod a Deo recipit; et illud esse est receptum per modum actus; et ita inuenitur actus et potentia in intelligentiis, non tamen forma et materia, nisi ae uiuice .”

these materials in order to realize his “idea.” And such is the condition of all things.¹

But, Sertillanges adds, this distinction between “act” and “potency” does not introduce a dualism. For Thomas argues, more often and more emphatically than Aristotle, that the “act” always precedes the “potency” and is never its opposite. An active potential is an overflowing reality that can pour itself out over a passive one. A passive potential is an insufficient reality which cries out to an active one, as it were, to give it what it lacks. Only pure actuality (God) is not capable of receiving anything; and only pure becoming (the void proto-matter) is not capable of giving anything. But the “act” is always first: it stands above the potency, precedes it, and is its cause. All intrinsic dualism is therefore excluded in this conception, according to Sertillanges. Is this indeed the case?

Taken by itself, the distinction between potentiality and actuality in reality has undoubtedly been a brilliant and fruitful discovery. It has indeed enriched Western philosophic thinking. We also find it in all kinds of variations in modern philosophy. Biology in particular cannot do without it. And it is certainly not the intention of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea to reject or minimize an Aristotelian distinction that has proven to be fruitful.

However, as often happens in philosophy, the potential-actual scheme acquires a quite special philosophic meaning in Aristotelian and Thomist metaphysics, owing to the religious basic theme these thinkers start out with. The discovery of this fundamental state of affairs within given reality was important in itself. But it was incorporated in a metaphysical framework of thinking that is only acceptable to those who start out with the same ground-motives. With Aristotle this ground-motive is simply the dialectic Greek one; with Thomas it is that of nature and grace.

***dd. The polarity in the Aristotelian scheme of act and potency
in which the form-matter theme remains primary***

Upon careful inspection the relation of potential-actual in Aristotle turns out to move between two poles, which do indeed create the

1 A. D. Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, pp. 106–07. In Sertillanges one finds the typical Aristotelian attempt to approach the form-matter theme in terms of the cultural aspect.

dialectical tension in the Aristotelian idea of origin. These poles are *pure actuality* and *pure potentiality*. The first is the deity as pure, actual Form. The second is prime matter as pure matter (*πρώτη ὕλη*; *prōte hulē*). And that brings the whole scheme back again within the framework of the form-matter theme. This theme in fact turns out to be primary, even though the scheme of potential-actual appeared to be more encompassing for a moment.¹ Its polar character cannot be camouflaged by constantly referring to the form-matter relationship within the cultural aspect.

In Aristotelian metaphysics, “pure matter” and “pure form” are in fact equally original and mutually irreducible principles of being. This makes for the age-old dialectical tension between the eternal flow and the eternal form of being, the tension which Aristotle attempted to make relative in the complementary matter-form relationship of the cultural aspect. But it requires no argument that this complementary relationship knows no poles of “pure form” and “pure matter.” Nor can we find such a polar contrast in the kinetic, biotic and psychic aspects.

Now the Thomist will object: “pure matter” as such has no real existence in Aristotle and Thomas; it is merely a principle of being which in reality can never reveal itself without a substantial form.

I concede this immediately. But it only proves that Aristotle assigned primacy to the form principle, not that he looked for the origin of the matter principle as such in the deity as pure actual form. The latter had been definitively recognized to be impossible in Greek metaphysics ever since the dialectical battle between Parmenides and Heraclitus, and it was the fundamental gain of this battle.

The first Ionian nature philosophers still had the form principle arise from the matter principle. Conversely, the Pythagoreans tried to incorporate the matter principle (*apeiron*) in the form principle (*peras*), taken mathematically in the distinction between even and odd. It was Parmenides who definitively demonstrated that the eternal flow cannot be explained from the form of being itself; and

1 Sertillanges too has argued this against other neo-Thomists. He expressly calls the actual-potential scheme an “application” of the primary form-matter scheme: “Is it a word game,” so he writes, “when we say that matter and form, which give the concept of substance to the Thomist system, becomes the substance of the system itself?” (*Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, pp. 451–52.)

that conversely the form of being cannot be derived from the eternal flow.

As it continued to evolve, Greek metaphysics turned on just two questions. First: what principle ranks first in building the cosmos? Second: how can one avoid the Eleatic “either-or,” and how can the principles of form and matter again be united in a synthesis through *theoria*?

A genuine theoretical synthesis, however, was without an integral Archimedean point and an integral idea of Origin. Therefore the only way out was to give primacy to one of the two principles and to construct a metaphysical analogical relation between form and matter.

We can summarize the result of classical Greek metaphysics in the thesis *ex nihilo nihil fit* (“nothing can come from nothing”). Nothing that becomes can obtain real existence in a form without “matter.” Within the dualistic ground-motive of this metaphysics there can be no question of creation in a Scriptural sense. Even when the matter principle definitively loses its divine character and is downgraded to a principle of imperfection, the divine *nous* still merely remains the Origin of the *form* of the cosmos. At most the divine mind can be taken as the *demiurge*, as the divine giver of form, never as the Creator of heaven and earth in the sense of the divine Word-revelation.

The conception of the divine *nous* as “demiurge” that dates back to Anaxagoras is not found in Aristotle. His god as “first unmoved mover” and cause is at rest in total contemplation. Thus when Aristotle takes the *actus purus* as the “Origin” of all potentials, the issue there is not one of an ultimate *efficient* cause of prime matter, but merely the *teleological* cause, which can never be considered the creating Origin of the matter principle as such.¹

The form principle, made absolute as the divine *nous*, “attracts” all matter as a teleological cause through its own perfect actuality. By doing so it points the process of becoming in the direction of a relative perfection of form. But this is only possible by a simultaneous absolutization of its correlate, the pure matter principle. Even after this has been deprived of its divinity, it remains the

1 *Metaphysics* 12.7 (1072b 3–4): God moves as the “beloved.” At most, the Aristotelian deity can be called the first efficient cause of all movement towards form as *actus purus*. But the matter principle itself is a principle of motion which in itself is subject to *tuchē*.

self-contained antipode of the form principle in which, as Aristotle himself admits, blind *anankē* and *tuchē* (irrational fate) counteract the pure operation of the rational and purposeful form principle in the process of becoming.¹

To compare this “pure matter” to “refractory material” for giving shape to culture does not fit here at all. The raw material for cultural form-giving never exists as “pure matter”: it definitely has a physico-chemical form and can even take on a preliminary cultural form as a semi-finished product. The cultural aspect knows no polar opposition between pure form and pure matter.

It was to no avail that Aristotle gave matter a share in “being” as a “potential” and in this way tried to trace it back to the concept of being. He even went so far as to call the last (i.e., the specific) “*hulē*” and “*morphē*” one and the same, albeit in different respects.² He covered up this attempt at reduction again through the unqualified analogical character of the concept of being. But this merely had the effect that the latter itself now became involved in the polar dialectic of the form-matter motive. Aristotle was far too sharp a thinker, however, to fall back into the pre-Eleatic standpoint by trying to reduce the matter principle to the form principle, or the other way around.

ee. The doctrine of creation in Thomas

No doubt, matters were different for Thomas. His metaphysics no longer took the form-matter scheme in a purely Aristotelian manner, but instead placed it between the “brace” of the synthesis-theme of nature and grace. It was “adapted” to the church’s doctrine of creation by implicitly tracing the matter principle in its Greek sense (as the co-constituent of all dependent “composite” substances) back to the Divine being as the absolute, creating Origin.³

1 Cf. *Physics* 2.4–6.8 (esp. 199b 1–4); *De caelo* 2.8 (289b 27); *Posterior Analytic* 3.30 (87b 19). *Tuchē* (chance) stands over against *taxis* (order) and *phusis* (natural essence); cf. *Metaphysics* 7.7 (1032a 12).

2 *Metaphysics* 8.6 (1045b 18), ἔστι δ, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, ἡ ἐσχάτη ὕλη καὶ ἡ μορφή ταῦτο καὶ ἐν, τὸ μὲν δυνάμει, τὸ δ' ἐνεργείᾳ (“But, as has been said, the proximate matter and the form are one and the same thing, the one potentially, and the other actually.”).

3 Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 16: (“Quod Deus ex nihilo produxit res in esse” (That God generated things into being out of nothing).

According to Aquinas, matter is created together with the substances, although it is not created as independent. God has not created his creatures out of pre-existing matter, for to generate things from matter that is already present can only take place through motion and change, whereas creation is neither motion nor change. To create is to bring forth without available matter.¹ In the footsteps of Augustine, Thomas even arrives at the insight that God's act of creation tolerates no succession, and that it is fundamentally elevated above time.² This view is again blurred by his lack of insight into the cosmic character of time that embraces all modal aspects, because he accepts the Aristotelian view that time is merely the objective "measure or number of motion."

Meanwhile, owing to its adaptation to the metaphysical, Aristotelian concept of God, the Scriptural doctrine of creation is debased at two points.

First, taking over the Aristotelian concept of the divine *nous* as "unmoved mover" forces Thomas to view creation as a pure relation *ex parte creaturae* in which the creative activity, the working of God in the Scriptural sense, has really disappeared.³

Later we shall discuss the Aristotelian doctrine of categories that Thomas adopted. In accordance with this doctrine he was able to view all activity only within the form-matter scheme, as a transition from potentiality to actuality, from material imperfection to relative perfection of form. In the nature of the case, he could only speak of a "work" of God in a metaphorical sense. This view of creation as a pure, unilateral "relationship" is indeed good Aristotelian, but definitely not Scriptural.⁴

1 Ibid., bk. 2, ch. 16 [4]: "Deus igitur non agit tantum modo movendo et transmutando. Omne autem quod non potest producere res in esse nisi ex materia praeiacente, agit solum movendo et transmutando; facere enim aliquid ex materia, est per motum vel mutationem quandam. . . . Nihil enim aliud est creare quam absque materia praeiacente aliquid in esse producere."

2 Ibid., bk. 2, ch. 19: "Quod creatio est absque successione" (That creation is without succession).

3 Ibid., bk. 2, ch. 18 [2]: "Non enim est creatio mutatio, sed ipsa dependentia esse creati ad principium a quo instituitur, et sic est de genere relationis."

4 [Aquinas discusses the biblical account of creation in six days in his larger *Summa Theologiae*, I, QQ. 65–74, 90–102.]

The work of God in His creation completely transcends human understanding. But according to the revealed Word it is no less the original fullness of work, activity in the primal meaning of the word, of which all human activity is but a weak shadow. The “theoretical” rest of Aristotle’s first “unmoved Mover” is the radical opposite of the active God who reveals himself in His Word (cf. John 5:17, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”).

Second, the polarity in the form-matter motive that we exposed earlier keeps infecting the idea of creation in Thomas. Earlier we saw how Thomas’ criterion for the predicates that we must assign to God in a real sense is mainly borrowed from the Greek form principle, although we acknowledge that he was guided by Scriptural considerations rather than this criterion in the case of, for example, the attribute of omnipotence.

According to the Scriptural doctrine of creation, the *integral* character of God’s creative work fundamentally excludes from creation any polar principles of being.

That Thomas accepted the matter principle in its original Greek sense is clearly evident from his definition of “prime” or “pure” matter as *chaos*.¹ How then could he possibly view the “nature” of creation as corresponding to the integral Scriptural creation doctrine when he keeps clinging to the Greek polar dualism between the matter principle and the form principle?²

Why does Thomas time and time again ascribe divine character to “form,” whereas he so deliberately denies “matter” this predicate?³ In Aristotle this is perfectly explainable, for he deprives the matter principle of all divinity and at the same time places it as a

1 *De principiis naturae* (*Opuscula* ed.): “dicitur materia prima, propter hoc quod ante ipsam non est materia alia; et haec etiam dicitur *ὑλη*, hoc est *chaos* vel *confusio* graece.”

2 There is no justification for an interpretation of Gen. 1:2 in terms of the scholastic use of the Greek matter principle (in the sense of prime matter). This idea goes back to Augustine and the Alexandrian school. A stronger proof could not be found that Scripture, in order to be understood, must be approached in the light of its own ground-motive and not from that of Greek thought. It proves as well that biblical exegesis is governed entirely by a theologian’s religious ground-motive.

3 Cf. also Sertillanges, *op. cit.*, pp. 441 ff. Against this one could cite Thomas’ statement, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 14, Art. 11, Repl. to Obj. 3: “materia licet

self-sufficient antipode over against the divine form. But within the framework of the Scriptural idea of creation, this discrimination is untenable. We can indeed call all of creation divine because of its Origin, but within creation we never distinguish between two ontological principles, one of which is honored as “divine” while the other is not. God’s work of creation is perfect and knows no principle of imperfection. It is exactly in its polar character that the Greek view of the *πρώτη ὕλη* as the flowing chaos is fundamentally foreign to the Scriptural idea of creation. Accepting a metaphysical ontology that is permeated by the dialectic of the Greek form-matter motive simply cannot fail to debase the Scriptural idea of creation in its integral character.

The proof of this is found in the view of human nature, for, as we know, it involves the idea of the radical religious unity of the temporal cosmos. In the revealed Word concerning creation the issue is God’s revelation about Himself; but when He reveals the religious, radical unity of human nature, what is at stake is His revelation about man to man himself.

The ground-motive of God’s revealed Word—that of creation, fall, and redemption through Christ Jesus—forms an indivisible unity. Whoever denies the radical nature of fall and redemption will of necessity hold an unscriptural view of creation. And conversely, whoever harbors an unscriptural view of creation will necessarily arrive at a view of fall and redemption that does injustice to the revealed Word.

recedat a Dei similitudine secundum suam potentialitatem, tamen in quantum vel sic esse habet, similitudinem quandam retinet divini esse” (Although matter has no similarity with God with respect to its potentiality, it does, however, retain a certain similarity to divine being in its quantitative or qualitative being). But this statement must be read in its context. In this article Thomas wrestles with the consequences of his Aristotelian interpretation of matter as the principle of individuation. From this it seemed to follow that God can have no knowledge of the individual things, because matter as the principle of potentiality can have no prototype in God’s being as pure form. In his solution to this problem Thomas begins to concede that “pure matter” as potentiality can have no prototype in the divine being of form. Only in its actualization in quantitative and qualitative categories can matter have a certain likeness to the divine nature. But this actuality is present thanks to the *form*. So in fact this statement actually shows that Thomas can concede the predicate “divine” only to *form*.

Now then, Rome's synthesis—the ground-motive of nature and grace—prompts Aquinas to embrace an adapted Aristotelian conception of human nature which denies its radical religious unity, the integral core of man's entire temporal existence, and which acknowledges religious communion with God only as a *donum superadditum*, a supernatural gift of grace added onto the "rational nature."

The first consequence is that the conception of the relation between "soul" and "body" is in utter conflict with the integral creation motive. Following the Greek concept, the human soul as the "*anima rationalis*" is proclaimed to be the *form* of the body while the "body" as *material* body is closed off in the abstract complex of the first four aspects of temporal reality (number, space, motion and energy). The body does receive actual existence, but only in the substantial form of the soul, and it is therefore not itself elevated to a "substance," at least so long as Thomas keeps thinking like Aristotle. However, all higher functions, including that of organic life, are real functions of form, which the material body can only derive from the "rational soul." Because the *anima rationalis* (qualified by its theoretical function of thought) is hypostasized as a "substance" (albeit an "incomplete" one, which can also exist detached from the material body after the body dies), a dichotomy is accepted in the temporal side of human existence. This is unequivocally in conflict with the integral character of human nature according to the Scriptural teaching about creation. As a result, Thomas cannot possibly discover the soul, the heart of man's entire temporal existence as revealed in Scripture. Owing to this lack, the entire metaphysical conception of human nature remains thoroughly pagan.

ff. The dialectic ground-motive of Greek "theoria" shows its intrinsically dualistic character nowhere more pointedly than in the scholastic view of human nature

Thomas was no longer in a position to grasp the *radical* significance of the fall into sin and the redemptive work of Christ. With utter conviction, against the Scriptural teachings maintained by Augustine, he defended Rome's doctrine that the fall into sin only caused the loss of the "*donum superadditum*" but did not corrupt human nature.

On this point Thomas was perfectly consistent. But not so the scholastic current in Reformed theology. It believed it could combine the Thomist view of “human nature” with the doctrine of the *radical* fall into sin. But this is simply impossible. If human nature is not centered in a religious *root*, from which the spiritual direction of every one of its temporal functions is determined, then how can human “nature” ever be *radically* corrupted by sin?

Our knowledge of ourselves depends completely upon our knowledge of God. If God is “absolute” Form over against “absolute” matter, then man can also discover himself only in form. If this form is the “*anima rationalis*,” then there is not a place left under the sun for an integral center of our temporal existence.

The scholastic philosophy of Thomas is able to discover an idea of origin, but it cannot discover the idea of the radical unity of the temporal cosmos. The idea of a radical unity must here be replaced by the metaphysical concept of being, internally fractured as it is by the dialectic form-matter motive. All it can offer us is a unity by “analogy,” which can never be a genuine unity because the analogies are not traced back to their root. There is an unbreakable link between the idea of origin and the idea of the deeper unity of the diverse structures of reality that are separated theoretically in the Gegenstand relation. Consequently, Thomas’ idea of the origin cannot be derived from the Scriptural motive of creation if his idea of the transcendental unity of reality turns out to be fractured by the dualistic form-matter motive.

We shall now demonstrate how this basic dualism permeates the scholastic substance-concept in all its applications (and not merely in application to the human soul).

PART B

1. The Aristotelian predicates or categories of being

a. *The basic division of the categories into substance and attributes*

The metaphysical concept of being received its “transcendental definitions” through the basic concepts of unity, truth, beauty and goodness. It acquired its first transcendental distinction through the scheme of potentiality and actuality or matter and form. In Ar-

istotelian-Thomist metaphysics it receives its more detailed definitions through the so-called predicates or categories, which divide being into ten types (*genera*), which in turn differentiate into species.

Aristotle gave an elaborate exposition of these categories in his logical discourses. But in keeping with his “realistic” conception they do not have a purely logical meaning but are viewed as real ways of being: they belong to reality as such.

For this reason alone it should be clear that we cannot separate Aristotle’s logic from his metaphysics. Some people still view the study of this so-called formal logic or theory of reasoning as an essential preparation in a curriculum for training Reformed theologians. But that view can only be explained from the scholastic bias in such a curriculum that penetrates down to the deepest foundations of science.

Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676), one of the most prominent representatives of Reformed scholasticism, saw this kinship keenly. In his battle against “Cartesian modernism” he wielded not just Aristotelian logic but also, in inseparable connection with it, Aristotelian metaphysics and physics.¹

It is simply superficial to want to lift “formal logic” out of the entire philosophical train of thought in which it is embedded, and to view it as a mental discipline that is neutral and of “general validity” for philosophy.

In the metaphysics of Aristotle and Thomas, the first and founding category of being is that of substance. It determines what a thing is in its essence as an individual, independent, ontic unity, to which all other categorical definitions are ascribed.

The remaining categories do not say what the thing is as a being, but merely concern its so-called *accidentia*, the attributes which are borne by the “substance” and which can therefore never exist independently, detached from a substance.

Now these *accidentia* belong to a substance in itself, i.e., in an absolute sense, or merely in relation to something else. Among the absolute *accidentia* we are to distinguish between the categories

1 See G. Voetius, *Disputationes selectae*, 5 vols. (Utrecht, 1648–69), 1:870–81, and esp. the treatise “De rerum naturis et formis substantialibus.” Here he defends the peripatetic school philosophy (pp. 871–72): “nominatim logicam, metaphysicam et physicam.”

that issue from the matter of a substance and those that are derived from its form. Issuing from the “matter” are the categories of quantity (extension or size and number). Those of quality or internal qualification issue from the “form” (such as color, warmth and cold, moving impulse, but also biotic, psychic, aesthetic, ethical and other normative attributes such as health and sickness, sensitivity and insensitivity, beauty or ugliness, virtue and vice).

The categories that only pertain to a thing in its connection to something else are the categories of relation. When we say, for instance, that a person is a father we do not ascribe something “absolute” to him, but merely indicate an internal relation with his children. The same holds for predicates such as larger, smaller, double or half, etc.

Further, the categorical definition in a judgment may concern something that determines a thing “externally” in its being (thus not as an internal or qualitative attribute). To this category belong, in the first place, the more detailed definitions of space (i.e., the location of a thing and the position of its parts) and of time (*quando*: when). The categories of time and place lie entirely outside the individual substance, say Aristotle and Thomas; they are nothing but an “external measure” for its existence. These “external” definitions of being (i.e., those of a “final” cause and “efficient” cause, which correspond with “formal” cause and “material” cause) include, in the second place, the categories of causality. Yet these categories belong to the substances in a specific way. The cause-effect relationship can be viewed either as starting point or as endpoint of motion (in the sense of “change”). In the first case we have the category of activity or operation, in the second case that of passivity or being acted upon.

Finally, Thomas—with Aristotle—knows yet a tenth category of being beside the nine mentioned above (substance, quantity, quality, relation, time and place, causality, activity, and passivity).¹ This tenth category can only be applied to man (not to animals or

1 [In this paragraph, which differs markedly from the original published version (including the footnote at the end), Dooyeweerd is responding to a communication he received from Father Angelinus, O.F.M.Cap., who pointed out that he had mistakenly interpreted the concept *habitus* to be applicable only to humans. Dooyeweerd duly noted the difference in a “Corrigendum” yet chose to follow Sertillanges’ interpretation of Thomas. See *Phil. Ref.*, 8 (1943): 92 and 9 (1944): 41.]

angels or God). Thomas calls this category the *habitus*. According to the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of categories, when we say that a person is equipped (invested, adorned, furnished) with “tools,” etc., then this is said in order to define a distinct way of being human which is not given in the human “substance.” It is different from the natural endowment of animals whose substance may entail having, for instance, a furry skin, claws, etc.; it is different because humans have a “rational” ability to provide themselves with all those things that the other natural beings possess in their very substance. The category of *habitus* is therefore a further definition of being human through something which, says Thomas, remains entirely “external” as regards the human “substance.” It is neither “measure” nor “cause” for man, and yet it further defines his way of being, and in addition it presupposes an active relationship between man and that which perfects him through his cultural equipment.¹

b. The ignoring of the cosmic order of time in this doctrine of categories

Upon examining this entire table of categories, one realizes at once that it fundamentally excludes any insight into the modal structures of the various aspects of temporal reality. It is oriented to a

1 *Habitus* as a category must therefore be distinguished from *habitus* as the “first species” of the category of quality, which Thomas discusses extensively in his *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q. 49. There *habitus* is described as a man’s good or bad disposition (of the intellect or of the will, and in a figurative sense also of the body) toward his rational activity. Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 2: “dispositio secundum quam aliquis disponitur bene vel male.” See also Art. 3: “Unde *habitus* non solum importat ordinem ad ipsam naturam rei, sed etiam consequenter ad operationem, in quantum est finis naturae, vel perducens ad finem. . . . Unde omnis *habitus* qui est aliquis potentiae ut subjecti, principaliter importat ordinem ad actum.” As a category, meanwhile, *habitus* denotes the cultural equipment of human beings. The term reminds one of a “habit” or “vestment.” *Habitus* as the first species of quality is usually translated into Dutch as “hebbelijkheid” [cf. Eng.: “peculiarity” or “distinguishing characteristic”].

Aristotle deals with the category of *habitus* (*ἥθος*; *ethos*) in his treatise *K* (*Categoriae* 8b 26 ff.) and in *Topics*, 1.9 (103b 22 ff.). His term *echein* (to have) gave rise to the confusion with the first species of quality. He intended to give a complete enumeration of the categories in his *Posterior Analytics* 1.22 (83b 15 ff.). He dropped the category of *habitus* there as well as that of the *K* (*situs*: “determination of location”), apparently in the belief that both could be subsumed under other categories.

theoretical doctrine of judgment that regards time merely as an external, accidental definition of the being of “substances.” It fails to recognize time as the internal, universal cosmic ordering for the structure of all temporal creatures. Sertillanges observes very pointedly:

Quantity and quality are merely mutually analogous modes of being, for both determine the being of the substance, although they do this in a different manner. As regards being, quantity is only related to quality via the substance. If one assumed that quantity and quality existed by themselves—which is impossible—they would also not be related to each other, and one could then assign being to them only in a completely different sense.¹

This simply means the elimination of the modal structures of the aspects with their inseparable mutual coherence in the cosmic order of time. For these structures just do not depend on the things that function in them, as our Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated. They can only exist in an unbreakable mutual coherence (in the order of time), which expresses itself within the modal structure of each of the aspects in an internal cohesion: a cohesion between the irreducible (original) nuclear element that qualifies the aspect, the modal analogies, and the modal anticipations, where the analogies refer back to the nuclear elements of structures placed earlier in the order of time and the anticipations point forward to the nuclear elements of later modal structures.²

c. A further critique of the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of categories. A comparison with the theory of the modal structures of reality

The Aristotelian categories are not oriented to the structures of reality. This becomes evident at first glance if we confront them with the fifteen modal aspects which our Philosophy of the Law-Idea has analyzed in its general theory of the law-spheres and to which

1 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 247.

2 [Initially Dooyeweerd distinguished between backward pointing “moments of coherence” (designated as *analogies*) and forward pointing “moments of coherence” (labeled as *anticipations*). His mature systematic distinction is simply between *retroicipatory* and *anticipatory analogies*.]

the structural states of affairs in our world of experience correspond irrefutably.

In this confrontation the primary category of substance obviously is left out of consideration altogether, since it is not related to attributes or modalities but pertains to concrete things and beings that function in the modal aspects.

The Aristotelian categories of quantity and location might still be compared with the modal aspects of quantity (number) and spatiality, but with the remaining eight "*accidentia*" any modal qualification is out of the question. They are nothing but completely unqualified concepts, which thus lack all scientific exactness and share in the vagueness of the analogical concept of being.

The metaphysical ontology simply ignores the modal structures of reality because it ignores the horizon of time. This gives the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of categories such an arbitrary character, namely, a total absence of any real structural guidelines. Take for example dimensionality, which is a true numerical analogy in the modal structure of the spatial aspect. Yet it is placed under the category of quantity along with the nuclear element of space (continuous extension), while the category of quantity is also supposed to contain the aspect of number in a secondary sense.

Alongside of this, location and situation are made into an entirely separate category. As if this "category" is not inseparably bound up with the "continuous extension in dimensions" in the modal structure of the spatial aspect!

Number, insofar as it is recognized as a real characteristic of what is, is viewed as being secondary to extension: it supposedly owes its origin to the potential divisibility of material extension.¹ Any insight into the modal foundation of the spatial aspect within the numerical aspect is thus made impossible. Spatial extension contains real analogies of number (e.g., dimensionality presup-

1 This view may be called typically Greek. It is most closely connected with the circumstance that the ancient Greeks still had no special symbols for indicating numbers. Numbers were indicated by means of points in space; three, for instance, was indicated by three dots, four by four dots, etc. This also explains why the Pythagoreans took numbers to really be geometric figures. Cf. Schilling, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, pp. 59–60.

poses quantity; the “point” always presupposes the intersection of at least two straight or curved lines; size, etc.), but on the metaphysical standpoint this cannot be recognized. Yet, numerical analogies presuppose number in its original sense. The Thomist tries to derive number from the division of spatial extension, but this division presupposes number that first makes division possible. For further arguments on all this I must refer to the second volume of the *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, where I have submitted the modal structures of number and space to an extensive analysis.¹

In the “category of quality” the most heterogeneous characteristics are joined in a logical jumble. The “physical” impulse for “motion,” sensory appearance, cold, heat, color, sound and other objective sensory attributes are put together with all kinds of characteristics of a biotic, psychic, aesthetic, moral, and other modal nature. In this way the modal boundaries of the aspects in which these “qualities” function are completely ignored.

Aristotle and Thomas further divided the “*genus*” of this category into “*species*,” but these too bear no relationship to the modal aspect structures. The “*habitus*” discussed above can serve as an example of this, namely *habitus* as habit or “peculiarity of will or of intellect” (or of the body, as the case may be), which is presented as the “first species” of the category of quality and hence must be distinguished from *habitus* as a separate category.

Even Sertillanges has to admit concerning this category: “Much is obscure in the further definitions of the nature of these separate types of quality. Much has been left uncertain in the distinctions which they represent.”²

We must especially take note of the limitation of the modal subject-object relation in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics.³ One of its

1 [See *WdW*, 2:60–71; cf. *NC*, 2:79–93.]

2 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 151.

3 Sertillanges believes that Thomas does not separate the objective and subjective as two distinct “things,” where it concerns the view of “motion” and “time,” but properly recognizes that motion and time, as “objective realities,” can only be combined into a “unity of being” in the subjective human mind (*ibid.*, pp. 466, 479). But this bears no relation to recognizing the modal sub-

consequences was that the “qualities” acquire that “mystic” character at which modern natural science took such umbrage.

For instance, how can we conceive of a color “white” as an “accidental quality” of a flower if we leave the structural psychic subject-object relation between sensory colors and possible subjective sensory perception out of account? We have not yet discussed just what the metaphysical substance-concept actually demands: namely, that the relationship which exists between things and human knowledge be excluded from the substantial reality of these things, thus giving this relationship real existence only in the subjective human consciousness. Concrete things would thus possess objective sensory characteristics *in themselves*, independent of possible subjective observation! We have indeed arrived at a mystical territory in metaphysics here: the labyrinth of the “*Ding an sich*,” where every attempt at forming clear concepts must be abandoned.

d. The basic dualism of the form-matter motive permeates the doctrine of categories

The basic dualism of the form-matter motive, meanwhile, carries over into the table of categories. According to Aristotle and Thomas, the categories of quantity are typical attributes of “matter,”¹ while those of “quality” issue from the “form.” For this metaphysics happens to distinguish between *substantial* and *accidental* forms² and then the “qualities” of course belong to the latter. Whatever gives actual being to a potential, regardless of whether this “being” is of a substantial or accidental nature, comes under the heading of “form.” For instance, the color white is an accidental form, whereas the “rational soul,” which makes the potential in the

ject-object relation of reality. Below we shall return at length to Thomas’ doctrine of time and motion.

- 1 Which does not alter the fact that they can only realize themselves in a composite substance.
- 2 *De principiis naturae* (*Opuscula* ed, p. 1): “Et quia forma facit esse in actu, ideo dicitur quod forma est actus: quod autem facit esse actu substantiale dicitur forma substantialis, et quod facit actu esse accidentale dicitur forma accidentalis.”

embryo into an actual being, is a “substantial form” (also called a “form of independence”).

By thus separating formal and material *accidentia* the foundation is laid for a theoretical dichotomy in the temporal horizon of reality, whereby the logical aspect and the aspects following it, as well as the sensory aspect immediately preceding it, are said to belong to the *anima rationalis* and are thus *cut off from* the first three aspects (number, space, and motion) and elevated as *accidentia* of a “purely spiritual substance.”

The dialectic form-matter theme makes it impossible to gain any insight into the integral coherence of the modal structures of reality within the horizon of time as grounded in God’s order of creation. It has also made it impossible to understand the complicated modal structures of the logical and post-logical aspects with their modal analogies in which they are inseparably interwoven with the pre-logical aspects.

In its general theory of the law-spheres the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated that the analogies of number, space and motion are incorporated in the logical aspect. This analysis established that the logical modal structure is founded in these first three aspects and that any dichotomy within temporal reality is fundamentally false.

e. The category of substance

Functioning as the only real foundation for the coherence of the accidental categories in the metaphysics of Aristotle and Thomas is the primary category of *substance*. The transcendental concept of being, having merely analogical status, is incapable of disclosing any structural order and coherence between the categories. For when it is said that each of the categories has the character of “a way of being,” of “types of being,” we gain very little for theory if the transcendental unity of being is merely a *unity of analogy*.

At least the substance-concept is more promising. It functions as the absolute point to which all accidental categories are related. These categories have only a relative “being” —that is, relative to the substance. By contrast, the substance has being *per se*, in itself; it is the foundation under all *accidentia* as their bearer. But exactly be-

cause of this “being-in-itself,” the substance cannot be known by the human being, a fact that is acknowledged by Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics. Human knowledge is only a knowing from relations. Man can therefore only know the substance theoretically from its “*accidentia*” in which it reveals its being or essence.

But how does this metaphysics come to assume the existence of a “substance” that it cannot grasp “in itself”? Solely, it claims, via metaphysical, *purely theoretical* deduction. It reasons that all that is relative rests upon a non-relative point of reference, just as all that moves depends upon something that itself is unmoved and all that is caused depends upon a first cause.

This conclusion from the relative to the absolute, however, is never justified by *pure theory*. Our transcendental critique of philosophic thought has demonstrated that it is inevitably determined by a pre-theoretic prejudice which at its deepest level is religious.

Aristotle has a favorite argument that Thomas invariably takes over with firm conviction. It is the argument that an infinite regress is logically impossible in the case of relationships. Looked at purely logically, however, this can never lead us to conclude that all relationships presuppose a substance as their absolute point of reference.

f. The modern concept of function versus the concept of substance

Modern functionalists want to replace the substance-concept with the concept of function, thereby resolving all of experiential reality into relations. That the metaphysical arguments of Aristotle and Thomas do not faze them is not due to “superficial thinking,” as the Thomist scholastic so readily assumes. In intellectual power and depth, the Neokantians of the Marburg School, for example, can certainly hold their own against Thomists. The real reason for their unconcern lies deeper: in the religious ground-motive from which they start.

As a foundation for functional relations, functionalists likewise adopt an “absolute point of reference,” namely its absolutized theoretical system, in which every relation is grounded and assigned its place. The hidden mainspring for absolutizing their particular theoretical system is the humanist science-ideal (within the

ground-motive of nature and freedom). On this standpoint, scholasticism's metaphysical substance-concept and "*qualitates occultae*" [occult qualities] are considered dogmatic hindrances that hem in the logical continuity of theoretic thought which ought to accept the logical control of the *Gegenstand* as its sole guideline. Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics, by contrast, given its form-matter motive, must have absolute points of reference like "substances" that exist by themselves.

g. The substance-concept as opposed to the naive experience of things

Is this metaphysical postulate based on what is presented to us in our naive experience of reality?

No, it is not; no more than is the functionalist resolution of the world of things into a logical, uninterrupted system of functional relations.

The things of naive experience are simply individual units *in* the diversity of their individual characteristics within the modal aspects of reality. Similarly, the modal structure of an aspect is only a relative unity *in* the diversity of its structural elements.

For example, naive experience will never grasp the individual unity of a tree as a "material substance" that exists *in itself*, without number, without spatial extension, without motion, without sensory characteristics, etc. etc., an individual unity that presumably reveals itself only in all those "categories."¹ When one's theory subtracts quantity, spatial extension and all the other modal characteristics (as these are individualized within its individuality structure) from the full reality of the tree, nothing will be left of it. A tree is always enclosed within the temporal horizon of reality, which admits only of individual totalities *in the diversity of their aspects*.

1 Cf. Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 150: ". . . the material substance which by itself is without [spatial] extension, reveals itself in two forms (i.e., of quantity)." And the same holds for the remaining accidental categories in their relation to the substance.

h. Definitive critique of the Scholastic-Thomist substance-concept. The substance-concept as an uncritical idea of the radical unity of a thing

The Aristotelian metaphysical substance-concept demands a metaphysical unity above this diversity, a unity *per se*, in and of itself, the absolute point to which all of its accidental attributes are supposed to be related and in which they all converge as in their individual, radical unity. The issue in the unity of the “substance” is indeed the radical unity, which, as we saw, was consciously excluded from the transcendental concept of being. Nowhere within the horizon of temporal reality, however, can we find such a transcendental unity in which the temporal creatures are enclosed.

Our transcendental critique has demonstrated that this point, where the temporal aspects and individual-structures converge, can be discovered only in the *religious center* of the temporal cosmos. Humans have indeed such a religious center, but inorganic matter, plants, and animals have a purely temporal structure. How then could the latter possibly possess a transcendent point to which all aspects of their existence are related?

The substance-concept, however, demands such an absolute point to which all its “accidental” categories are related and which for that reason must in truth be rooted in religion. It neither *is*, nor *can be*, a purely theoretical concept. It is undoubtedly theoretical in nature, for it is a product of theoretical abstraction. But metaphysics carries out this abstraction so thoroughly that it would leave nothing but a *logical* unity of the thing in general, without any further qualification, were it not for the fact that it reifies this unity as the “transcendent radical unity” of the thing, an absolute point to which all its modal characteristics are related and which thus assumes a religious meaning.

i. The religious meaning of the Thomist substance-concept. The eucharist dogma of transubstantiation

This religious meaning is patently evident in Thomist metaphysics at the point where it is entirely determined by the ground-motive of “nature” and “grace.”

It is no accident that Thomas chose to deal with the “category of substance” in connection with the eucharist dogma of transubstan-

tiation. When the Roman Catholic Church believes that bread and wine change “substantially” into the body and blood of Christ, this implies that natural material already possesses a mystic “substance” which through divine, “supernatural” activity can be changed into another substance without any visible change of its *accidentia*.¹

This process may be based on a “supernatural” miracle,² but without the presence of a hidden “substance,” which forms a radical unity for the *accidentia*, the dogma of transubstantiation would make no sense.

Given that Reformed scholasticism rejected this Roman Catholic dogma, it is the more astonishing that it blithely took over the Thomist substance-concept “for theological usage.” Without question, here too it was utilized in order to find a “metaphysical basis” for certain doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the resurrection of the body and the continuous existence of the soul after it has shed the body. But only the latter doctrine indeed touches the radical unity of human existence, and this unity transcends the horizon of temporal reality. The substance-concept, by contrast, assumes an individual radical unity also of things whose existence is entirely exhausted by the temporal horizon of reality, as is the case of inorganic matter, plants, and animals.

But does the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept indeed offer an absolute point—itself no longer relative—to which the relative *accidentia* are related? No; it does not, it merely gives a “metaphysical illusion.”

1 Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 4, chaps. 62 and 63.

2 Op. cit., pp. 98, 57. *Ibid.*, bk. 4, ch. 63 [6]: “Accidit igitur in hac conversione [that of transubstantiation] contrarium ei quod in naturalibus mutationibus accidere solet, in quibus substantia manet ut mutationis subiectum, accidentia vero variantur; hic autem e converso accidens manet et substantia transit.” (In this change something happens that is contrary to what ordinarily happens in natural [accidental] changes, where the accidents change while the substance persists as the subject of change; in this case, however, the accidents persist while the substance changes into another substance.) Thomist metaphysics does also recognize *natural substantial* changes, but in such cases, of course, the accidents also change.

The substance-concept, as we noted earlier, stands or falls with the metaphysical *concept of being*. Now then, we saw how this concept of being is permeated by the dialectic religious basic themes of form and matter in Aristotelian metaphysics, and of nature and grace in that of Thomas. The same is true of the substance-concept that is based on this concept of being. “The concept of substance,” to quote Sertillanges once more, “resolves into form and matter when Thomism examines corporeal substances. It resolves into pure *forms that exist by themselves* when one is dealing with purely spiritual natures.”¹

The form-matter motive, therefore, gives the Thomist substance-concept its real transcendental *content*: namely, within the framework of the Roman Catholic ground-motive of nature and grace.

For Aristotle, in the final analysis, the issue with the concept of substance revolved around the religious synthesis between the antagonistic motives of the matter principle and the form principle. As we have shown above, this synthesis could not succeed. But with that, the integral unity of individual things, which we have so strongly emphasized—oriented to the Scriptural motive of creation in our idea of the individuality structure—is abandoned.

In the view of Aristotle and Thomas, form gives unity of being to matter. But, as we saw, form and matter remain mutually irreducible. Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics manages to unite them only “by analogy” in the undefined transcendental concept of being.

For the same reason, the “substances” of transitory things remain merely “composite” entities, in which “form” and “matter” are the mutually irreducible components, each with its own area of “categorical definitions.” “Simple” substances, on the other hand, which have no “matter,” therefore also lack those “categorical definitions” that issue from the being of “matter”—that is, from the first three modal aspects of temporal reality. Thus neither the “simple” nor the “composite” substances can be real, radical unities of their modal qualities. They remain theoretical abstractions from the horizon of temporal reality. To declare these abstractions to be independent has no foundation within the structure of this horizon. And to declare these theoretical abstractions in turn to be in-

1 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 114.

dependent, due to the belief that theoretic thought itself is independent (the doctrine of the autonomy of theoretic reason)—that declaration conflicts with the very structure of theoretic thought.

Part C

1. The substance-concept and the subject-object relation in temporal reality

a. *The category of relation in Thomist metaphysics*

It should be clear by now that the substance-concept is intrinsically dualistic, which makes it so radically different from the concept of a thing in naive experience. Nowhere does this stand out more clearly than in the Thomist view of relation as an “accidental category.”¹

When Thomas explains the special nature (*propria ratio*) of this category as opposed to the others, he emphasizes that the relation does not determine the substance in itself, unlike other *accidentia*—for instance, spatial extension and quality. According to him this relation belongs to an “external order,” which it adds to things without approaching them in themselves. Expressed in a metaphor: “relations do not really tie themselves to the thing as ‘substance,’ but rather to the ‘contact,’ insofar as they connect one thing with another.”²

Thomas divides them into three types, depending on whether:

1. both members, connected by the relation, exist only in our thinking;
2. both are bilaterally given in reality; or

1 Thomas deals with this category especially in the theological context of the theme “Relations in the divine being” in his *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 28, Artt. 1–4: “De relationibus divinis” (cf. I, Q. 13, Art. 7), and more concisely in his *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, chaps. 11–14.

2 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 28, Art. 2: “Si igitur consideremus etiam in rebus creatis relationes secundum id quod relationes sunt, sic inveniuntur esse assistentes, non intrinsecus affixae, quasi significantes respectum quodammodo contingentem ipsam rem relatam prout ab ea tendit in alterum.”

3. one member of the relation is real, the other exists purely in our thought.¹

To the first type (*relationes rationis tantum*; only logical relationship) belong, besides the logical relations (those of identity, $A = A$, and of non-contradiction: $A \neq \text{non-}A$ or B), also relations between entities that are thought of, or between being thought of and being real. Among the latter Thomas counts all genera and species which determine entities.

To the second type (*relationes reales ex utraque parte*; real relations on both sides) belong the relations issuing from something that really belongs to both connected members. Examples: the quantitative relations of larger and smaller; the relations that originate from doing and receiving; those between what sets in motion and what is moved; between father and son; etc.

Finally, Thomas places in the third type those relationships whose “relata” are not of the same order. The most important case of such a relation is that between God and creature.

In this conception of “relations” we must first of all exclude the subject-object relation, discussed earlier, from the “substance” of things. This holds insofar as this relation involves things in sensory observation and logical “understanding” (the only “natural” functions for knowing, according to Thomas).

According to Thomists the subject-object relation exists only in subjective sensory observation and in subjective logical thinking, not in the things-in-themselves.²

Since the “senses” and the “spirit” (read: the intellect) have a real relationship with the things we can know with our senses or in logic, yet as natural realities these things themselves exist outside of the sensory or *spiritual* order; they therefore have no real relations with “spiritual” or “sensory” knowledge.³

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 13, Art. 7.

2 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 12 [3]: “Scibile autem licet ad scientiam relative dicatur, tamen relatio secundum rem in scibili non est, sed in scientia tantum.”

3 Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 156. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 13, Art. 7: “Et ideo in scientia quidem et sensu est relatio realis, secundum quod ordinantur ad sciendum vel sentiendum res; sed res ipsae in se consideratae sunt extra ordinem huiusmodi; unde in eis non est aliqua relatio realiter ad scientiam et sensum.”

This indeed is an immediate consequence of the substance-concept, but at the same time it demonstrates indisputably that this concept forces us to break apart, in a self-contradictory manner, the structural subject-object relation as it is given in naive experience. Thomists recognize that things have objective-sensory characteristics (e.g., color, smell, taste, sensory form and shape, etc.) and objective-logical attributes. But they attribute these in objectivistic fashion to the “thing-in-itself,” to the “substance,” outside of the structural relationship with the corresponding subject-functions of human perception. In this way the subject-object relation only really exists in human consciousness (*in mente humana*), not in things.

Now this is a self-contradictory metaphysical construction: objective sensory or logical characteristics of a thing never exist outside of a structural relationship to possible subjective perception. That is how we grasp them in naive experience. A rose is red or white for every possible normal sensory perception, not merely for that of A or B. This is precisely the structural character of the subject-object relation, grounded in the temporal order of reality itself.

As soon as one rejects this structural relation *ex parte rei*, one stumbles into the inner contradiction that these object-functions of a thing are in reality related to *nothing*. In such a case it would be better to declare, with Locke, that they are mere “secondary qualities,” not grounded in “reality-in-itself.”

How can sensory colors, smells, etc., exist in things detached from any possible subjective perception? What can then be meant by sensory characteristics? As such they are of an objective-psychic, not a physico-chemical or physiological nature, even though they are also necessarily grounded physico-chemically and biotically. And the same holds for the objective logical characteristics of a thing, which can only exist in relation to possible subjective understanding. This implies that the temporal cosmos is centered in man according to God’s plan of creation. This is true even though the temporal genesis of man—to be distinguished from creation—followed after the genesis of the inorganic, the plant, and the animal kingdoms. The logical and post-logical object-functions were already potentially included in the first three kingdoms of temporal creatures, but man alone could unlock those objective functions because man alone is a subject in the aspects involved.

It stands to reason that the substance-concept also cannot leave intact the subject-object relation in which natural things are arranged in the post-logical aspects (the cultural, lingual, sociative, economic, aesthetic, jural, ethical and pistical aspects).¹

Normative object-functions of things, which are subject to normative judgments in their structural relation with possible subjective evaluation, cannot be considered by Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics since it excludes these things as “substances” from the “spiritual order.”²

Their reality is closed off in their “substantial form.” And so this substance-concept is indeed entirely based on a dichotomy between “matter” and “spirit” within the horizon of time, between “material” and “spiritual” substantial forms.

That this substance-concept is based on the fact that theoretical thinking is given primary independence becomes abundantly clear in the Aristotelian and Thomist metaphysical doctrine of the soul. Both make the thought-activity in its logical aspect (the *nous poiētikos* or *intellectus agens*) completely independent of the “material body,” and with that they lift the logical thought-aspect out of the horizon of temporal reality with its inseparable reciprocal relationship of the aspects.

Aristotle conceives of the active *nous* as *ousia* (“substance”), and Thomas conceives of the *anima rationalis* as purely spiritual substance (separable from the material body) (albeit as *substantia incompleta*). Both views are inseparably tied to making the theoretic-logical aspect of thinking into an absolute (in the sense of “detaching” this aspect from the cosmic order of time, which is its pre-supposition).

b. The Thomist doctrine regarding motion and time

In answer to the critique given above, Thomists could point to the Thomist doctrine of motion and time, which in fact appears to

- 1 It is fruitless here to relate the “things-in-themselves” in their objective functions to *divine* knowledge. For the structural, modal subject-object relation in the sensory and logical functions for knowing is embedded in the objective-sensory and objective-logical characteristics; and because of its creaturely nature one cannot ascribe this relation to God.
- 2 The “good and the beautiful” as objective transcendental determinations of being merely bear an “analogical” character and therefore cannot possibly have normative significance in the objectivistic conception of the objective “qualities” of things.

break through the substantialistic enclosure of natural things that do not function as a subject beyond the physico-chemical aspect.

Thomas gives a general transcendental definition of motion as a continuous transition from potency (possibility) to actuality (reality). Motion is a “realization” of what is “potentially there,” but it is an imperfect realization. For as soon as it has come to a complete realization, it ends. Thus in this encompassing transcendental sense, motion is identical with becoming and lies between the poles of “pure” potentiality and complete actuality.

Motion is realized in natural things only in a potentially infinite and unconnected multitude of successive situations. An example is the successive “rises” in the temperature of water heated to the boiling point. However, when we isolate these situations as relatively static events, in which a certain degree of heat is realized each time, these situations are not the real motion or continuous change itself. Without a doubt, using modern aids unknown to Thomas, one can register the rise in temperature from moment to moment in a number on the thermometer, but in this way one only gets a series of isolated and static snapshots. They never reach the continuity of motion.

If motion itself is to really exist, says Thomas, then these successive conditions of things as they change need to be connected by thought into a unity of becoming. For according to Thomist metaphysics nothing can be real without unity (*ens et unum convertuntur*).

Our thinking completes this synthesis by taking every moving situation in a double relationship: with the preceding and the immediately following situation; i.e., simultaneously as the end of the former and the start of the latter. This double relationship, taken as one (*sub ratione una*) and assigned to numbers by time (which is the measure of motion), this relationship is motion itself. For, when so defined, it forms a dynamic series.¹

1 It is clear that this view of motion differs sharply both from its definition in modern infinitesimal calculus and from our view of the modal aspect of motion with its modal meaning-nucleus which theoretic thinking cannot further reduce. In this connection the following remark by Julius Stenzel merits special attention: “[I]t is noteworthy how to the Greek mind what matters is not motion as such but *motion’s limitations, its stops*—an essential difference with the modern conception of infinity . . . The reason for this is the generally accepted identification since Greek antiquity of motion and *thought*. Thought

Thomas explained this in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*,¹ from which Sertillanges concludes: "So we see how for Thomas, for whom that which is moved ultimately represents nature, the objective and the subjective are not separated as two 'things'; in other words: person and thing are not each 'walled off from the other.' 'Movement' needs thought for its existence: hence it is part person, consciousness, subject as well as object. Man is therefore not simply added to nature but is interwoven with it, in order for nature to exist."² But he adds: "Here is a thought that Thomas has not carried to its conclusion." We shall see that carrying this thought through consistently would indeed have nullified Thomas' entire concept of substance.

What we noted earlier about Thomas' view of motion holds equally for his concept of time, which is closely linked to his doctrine of motion. Thomas, like Aristotle, defines time as the "measure" or rather as the "number of motion." And in relation to time, motion (which has a much broader meaning for them) is seen merely as a quantitative, continuous change of location. Again, they do not take "number" here as an abstract aspect, but as something concrete and real, as potentially given by the successive conditions of things in motion that we observe in an order of earlier and later.

Since motion, which runs through a continuous (spatial) "quantity," is itself a flowing continuum, time, which is essentially the

never proceeds—the Greeks recognized this clearly—in linear fashion (in the sense of physical sliding), but always dialectically, i.e., punctuated by stops; whence the analogy of counting forces itself upon it: thinking, counting, moving—these three concepts modify each other; through these characteristic parallels each receives essential features, which one must hold fast in the interest of understanding." Julius Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig and Berlin, 1933), p. 96 (ital. mine, H.D.).

This remark especially zeroes in on the Platonic view of motion, but it also applies to that of Aristotelian-Thomism: Motion only acquires unity of being in thought, and thought grasps motion in a relation between two limiting points. We can see at the same time, however, to what extent Stenzel's statement requires a fundamental correction. It is out of the question that motion and thought are the same. Thought merely gives the limiting form to motion, which exists in moving things only as a potentially infinite and unconnected multiplicity of consecutive situations.

1 *Physica* 4.23; cf. *Sententia super physicam* 4.23; *Dist.* 19.2.1; 5.1.

2 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 466.

“number of motion,” must consequently also be a continuum. For that reason we do not observe a succession of units of time without intervening members, but a coherent stream in which the number exists in the condition of potentiality (possibility). That is to say, the number here is the potentially infinite series of numerical values that can be assigned to the potentially infinite series of points traversed in the spatial continuum.

Just as motion, as time’s measure, has no unity of being apart from the “rational soul” —it exists in a condition of pure, undetermined multiplicity and can only be grasped synthetically into a unity by thought, with the aid of our memory—so time acquires *unity*, and with it *being*, only in the human soul, which grasps the present in a twofold relation with past and future.¹

c. The antinomy between this doctrine of motion and time on the one hand and the substance-concept on the other

It is clear at once that this whole doctrine regarding motion and time, when thought through to its conclusion, can only invalidate Thomas’ metaphysical substance-concept.

As we saw earlier, when Thomas views things that are physico-chemically qualified as “substances,” these things themselves do not really relate to our sensory and logical functions of knowledge since they fall outside of the “spiritual order.” And the same must be true for “living beings” in the plant and animal kingdoms and in the case of animals also for the logical *subject function*.

But as soon as one views these same things and beings in motion and time, Thomas eliminates this substantial wall that separates them, and has to acknowledge that they have “unity of becoming” only in the subject-object relation which they have with the sensory and logical functions of knowledge.

We need to remember here that in Thomas’ mind, motion at least, in the sense of “substantial becoming,” belongs to the essential nature of the *composita*, and that their being is therefore by na-

1 See Thomas, *De instantibus*, chap. 1 (*Opuscula* ed., p. 513): “Licet enim nihil sentiamus per aliquem sensum exteriorem nisi aliquo motu facto circa corpus, tamen sola cogitationum successione potest anima prius et posterius percipere in ipsa successione; et ita necessario in successione apprehendit anima duo vel tria vel plura, et iste numerus, apprehensus in successione, est tempus. . . . et ideo anima in suis cogitationibus percipit successionem continuum, et apprehendit prius et posterius in ea; et in hoc consistit ratio temporis.”

ture one of a “moving being.” The matter principle just cannot be eliminated from the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept.

This antinomy is no accident in the system of Thomas. The Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept locks the reality of “things-in-themselves” up in their “substantial form.” This form alone confers being to the matter of a thing. But the matter principle, the principle of “flowing becoming,” remains a true polar antipode of the rigid form principle. We saw earlier that these two principles of being can have no deeper radical unity in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics, even though Thomas traces the *origin* of both back to divine creation (in order to accommodate the form-matter motive to the church doctrine of creation).

Motion and time do not admit of inclusion in the substance-concept. In their flowing continuity they break through all boundaries of the substantial form principle. The “substantial form” may be the “final cause” of motion, but motion, and implicitly moving time, run exactly between the two poles of “matter” and “form.” As soon as motion has reached its teleological end point in the “form” (either the substantial or the accidental form), motion ceases to exist. In the emerging substances and accidental forms themselves, motion remains necessarily in “a condition of matter that still lacks form of being—a condition of becoming, of the undetermined multiplicity of continually succeeding conditions of the moving thing.” But without “form of being” motion can have no real existence according to the fundamentals of this metaphysics, and the “independent form” of the substance cannot confer “unity of being” to motion.

As a result of all this, the “form” of motion must be looked for outside the substantial things themselves, and Thomas finds it in the synthetic relation in which our thinking puts the successive conditions of moving substances together in a “unity.” But, with that, the form-matter theme acquires an application that undermines the very foundations of the substance-concept. Recall that Aristotle tried to achieve the definitive synthesis of form and matter principles precisely through the substance-concept, presenting it as the absolute point of reference, the true radical unity of the thing where being and becoming, form and matter are brought to a definitive unity.

Motion for Thomas, as Sertillanges acknowledges, pertains to “the nature” of the material substances “in their ultimate foundation.” But it breaks the substance-concept and nullifies it. This antinomy merely illustrates the internal contradiction of the substance-concept itself, and Thomist metaphysics has no way out of the impasse.

Thus it is to no avail to object that at least *accidental* becoming, which leaves the “substance” of a thing untouched, occurs within the boundaries of its independent form. For as a matter of principle, “motion” in accidental becoming cannot be viewed differently from *substantial* becoming. But, in addition, the so-called accidental categories (of quantity, place, time and quality) cannot really exist except as attributes of substances: the “substance” remains their metaphysical bearer and the substance alone confers on them unity of being. But motion and time, whose real existence Thomism forcefully defends against all “idealistic relativizing,” apparently have no substance-borne unity. In the “things-in-themselves” *alone* they do not yet have real existence, nor in the “rational soul” *alone*. They have “unity of being” only in a subject-object relation between moving things and the “thinking soul,” whereby, as Sertillanges so strikingly puts it, “man is woven into the nature (of things) so that nature can exist.”¹ The “matter” of motion is in things, its “form” in the thinking soul.

But the substance-concept, which closes things off in their real existence from the sensory and logical functions for knowledge, can in no way be reconciled with this undoubtedly profound conception.

And so Thomas himself in his doctrine of motion and time dealt the heaviest imaginable blow to the metaphysical concept of substance. The insight that surfaces here into the fundamental subject-object relation within the structures of reality does not tolerate an arbitrary limitation to motion and time. It has to overturn the entire theory of the imprisonment of the thing vis-à-vis our sub-

1 One could call this a true intellectual motif of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea if only the religious ground-motive that determines it did not differ so fundamentally from that of Thomist metaphysics.

ject-functions of knowledge and volition, as soon as it is carried through consistently.

Thomas could only find some indications for his doctrine of motion and time in Aristotle. When he elaborated on it, he did not recoil from its clash with his substance-concept, which undoubtedly speaks for his honesty as a thinker and for the plasticity of his philosophical mind. I deem it more than probable that here he was particularly under the influence of Augustine's psychologically oriented view of time.¹

Aristotle himself devoted a brief treatise to the problem of time.² He tried to answer two questions there: "What is time?" and "How does time exist?" He followed the dialectic line of thinking, determined by the form-matter motive that started with Zeno's exposition of the antinomies of the concept of motion and time. The same appeared to be the case in Plato's *Parmenides*.

Some years ago Maurice de Tollenaere wrote an essay on "The Origin of the Structure of Time According to Aristotle and St. Thomas."³ He attempted to demonstrate that Thomas' entire conception can be found in the writings of Aristotle. The Greek philosopher tied the existence of time to the existence of the "now." The latter is an attribute of the thinking mind. Therefore, time cannot exist without the rational soul.

De Tollenaere will have to admit that his explanation reads a lot into the text that is not expressed in so many words. More certain is the fact that Albertus Magnus in his commentary chose a different interpretation of the *Physics*. He presented the view that time also has a real existence outside of the soul—i.e., as "*numerus formalis*" [the formal number of] of motion. This was in express opposition to Augustine and Galen. A similar interpretation is held by Suarez

1 See Augustine, *Confessions* 11.11.14; cf. Jean Guitton, *Le Temps et l'Eternité chez Plotin et Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1933).

2 See the *Physics* 4.10 (217b 29–218 b 20).

3 Maurits de Tollenaere, "Het ontstaan van de tijdsstructuur volgens Aristoteles en S. Thomas," *Bijdragen* 12.3 (1951): 224–51. [*Bijdragen* is the journal of the Philosophy and Theology Faculties of the Jesuits in the Low Countries.]

and most modern Thomists, such as Hoenen.¹ They assume time to exist extra-mentally as “successive duration” and “flowing continuum” respectively. This rests on the view that if time had no real existence outside of the soul, this would also hold for motion, which is unacceptable. For the rest De Tollenaere acknowledges that Thomas’ views are much clearer and more elaborate than those of Aristotle.

However much I appreciate the manner in which Thomas managed to rise above the substance-concept, at least in his theory of motion and time, that still does not make his theory acceptable for us. The fact remains that Thomas, precisely through his ontology and the substance-concept rooted in it, blocked the road that leads to insight into the temporal horizon of reality.

Cosmic time is of fundamental and universal significance and has its inseparable correlation of law-side (the order in time) and subject-side (duration in time), in which the modal structures of the aspects of reality are grounded and among which motion has its own distinctive place. Whoever has seen the significance of cosmic time can never accept the solution to the problem of the relation between “being” and “becoming” that is offered by the Aristotelian conception of the form-matter motive and the substance-concept grounded in it. Without insight into the modal structures of the aspects of reality and their inseparable coherence in the cosmic order of time, any insight into the typical *individuality structures* is also out of the question.

In the foregoing we have critically investigated the general foundations of the Aristotelian-Thomist concept of substance. We shall now show that this concept cannot in any way provide a theoretical account of the real structures of individuality.

1 P. Hoenen, S.J., *Philosophie der anorganische natuur*, p. 284.

Part D

1. The Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept and the problem of individuality

a. *How Aristotle formulates the problem of individuality*

The way in which Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics poses the problem of individuality clearly shows that it is not seen as a problem of *structure*. The way it is approached is entirely dominated by the dualistic form-matter motive, which makes any insight into these integral structures—that encompass all aspects equally—fundamentally impossible.

When the intrinsic *structure* of individuality is eliminated, one can never penetrate to its core. For a structural unity reveals itself only in a multiplicity of components, which are not all on the same plane, but are arranged in an architectural whole. In it a nuclear element always *qualifies* the whole, while all the other elements are grouped around the first, which is intrinsic and central.

In the modal structures of the aspects of reality such a central component (the meaning-nucleus of the aspect) governs all other components (analogies and anticipations). In the same way, in the case of an individuality structure, we must first of all track down the intrinsic nuclear component of individuality which imprints its typical character upon the individual whole, as this whole integrally encompasses all aspects exhibited by temporal reality.

Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics, however, nowhere leaves room for these structures, and thus it cannot come close to the intrinsic nucleus of an individual whole.

How is the problem of individuality posed here? Aristotle had distinguished the first substance (*πρωτὴ οὐσία*; primary substance), i.e., the “thing that exists by itself” as an individual, from the second substance (*δευτέρη οὐσία*; secondary substance), that is, the being (*to ti en einai*; universal essence), the nature (*phusis*) or the *eidos* (*essentia*), realized in the first substance.¹

The *eidos* encompasses both form and matter in all “complex substances,” at least when Aristotle uses it in the sense of being (*essentia*) of the first substance, not in the sense of form (*morphē*). But matter is only taken in a specific sense (e.g., the specific matter of the plant, the animal, the human in general), not in an individual

1 *Metaphysics* 7.3–4 (1028b 8–1029b 13); cf. also *Categories* 5 (2a 11–14).

sense (e.g., the matter of *this* horse, of *Socrates*, etc.).¹ “Form” and “being” only coincide in the “simple” substances that exist without “matter.”

In the “complex” substances the “substantial form” (*forma substantialis*) cannot exist by itself. In these cases it realizes itself only in “matter.” The “eidos” or essence of these substances therefore encompasses both form and matter, with the exception mentioned above regarding matter.²

Now the “independent” (substantial) form *as such* is never individual in the *composita*, says Aristotle; it is of a specifically general character. Thus a certain type of animal—a species—has a specific independent form: all animals of this species have it without exception, not just an individual specimen.

Next, Aristotle asks himself how this “form” can multiply itself in individual things that all realize the same form.³

With this the problem of individuality was primarily taken as one of *quantity*: the substantial form realizes itself many times over in a large number of first substances.

But how is this possible when form in itself has no individuality in a subjective sense? Within the form-matter framework of Aristotle only the matter principle could be responsible for individuation. Matter became the *principium individuationis*: the principle that individuates being through its quantitative categories of spatial extension and number (“*materia quantitate signata*” in Thomas’ terminology). For “extended matter” is potentially divisible *ad infinitum*, in contrast to form. This divisibility, however, is limited in

1 *Metaphysics* 7.10 (1035 b).

2 Besides the *compositum* (complex), Aristotle sometimes also calls matter and form “substances” (e.g., in *Metaphysics* 7.10 (1035a 1–4). Gustav Kafka, in his work *Aristoteles* (Munich, 1922), p. 20, sees evidence of two different intellectual tendencies emerging in this alternating use of the substance-concept. The first results from an aftereffect of the Platonic and—more remotely—the Eleatic concept of being. It believes “pure being” must be separated from the concrete reality of given things that we can perceive with our senses. The second tendency on the other hand originates with the typical Aristotelian manner of thinking, which has abstract “being” reach complete definition only in individual things. In our opinion the doctrine of “*formae separatae*” [separate forms] in Aristotle is also a residue of Platonic separation.

3 This amounts to an indirect polemic against Plato who had assigned independent existence to the essential forms (as separate from individual things); see *Metaphysics* 7.6 (1031 b 1–22).

actual reality by the indivisible form of being; for an infinite division can never be carried out in reality. And so it is the matter of the complex substance that individuates, i.e., *quantifies*, the form of being.

What we have presented here is really the *Thomist* interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine regarding matter as the principle of individuation. It seems to us, however, that this interpretation is entirely in line with the Greek thinker, already by virtue of the way the latter poses the problem. Aristotle touches on this subject only in passing in the seventh book of his *Metaphysics*. He says there: Socrates and other individuals (in contrast to *the* human being, *the* horse, and whatever else we can say of individuals as the *specific general*) are already single beings because of their last (read: individual) matter.¹

Somewhat earlier he remarks: "The whole, this form, thus determined in this flesh and in these bones, is Callias and Socrates. It is different because its matter is different, yet it is the same as to species (*eidos*); for the *eidos* cannot be divided."² The word *eidos* is undoubtedly used here in the sense of "form," for only form gives the specific.

Werner Jaeger has demonstrated that Book XII, Part 8 of the *Metaphysics* can have originated only in the final phase of Aristotle's development,³ where he returns to this subject in connection with the question whether one or more unmoved beings, free of "matter" and of divine nature, must be assumed to be the first cause of "motion." His argument runs as follows:

There can be only one heaven [read: cosmos or universe]. For if there were multiple heavens, such as there are multiple humans, the first principle [i.e., the form principle of celestial motion], of which each heaven would have one, would be one in form but many in number. But all things that are many by number have matter. For one and the same *eidos*—such as being human—is shared by many, whereas Socrates is one. But the first real being has no matter, for it is *entelechy* [read: pure form-actuality]. A being that is single, both as *eidos* and in number, is the first unmoved moving being; therefore only that which is always moved without

1 *Metaphysics* 7.10 (1035b 31–35).

2 *Ibid.* 7.8 (1034a 5–8).

3 Werner Jaeger, *Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1923), pp. 373 ff. [Cf. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. R. Robinson (Oxford, 1948); ch. 14.]

interruption is one. Therefore there is only one heaven [or one world].¹

Aristotle tries to prove here that there can be only one unmoved mover (god). From this he then concludes in a hardly convincing manner that heaven and world are one. If there were several “first movers,” they would be distinguished by matter and correspond in form, in which case they would be burdened with matter. For all things that are many by number have matter. But the pure actual form that is God has no matter. Ergo —

He clearly pronounces here that “matter” only individuates the “form” through quantitative multiplication, even though he does not expressly relate this multiplication to spatial extension.

At the same time, however, we can already observe the internal contradiction incurred when saying that a pure form is made single by itself. For here again Aristotle has to resort to the *number* (i.e., to a “category of matter” in his way of thinking): God is one both as to his being and as to number!

We reviewed above how Thomas explicated these pronouncements. He elaborated on this whole doctrine in his smaller treatises *De ente et essentia* and in particular *De principio individuationis*, as well as in his larger works *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa contra gentiles*. He adapted it again, however, to the Neoplatonic *logos* doctrine of Augustine and the church dogma of the individual immortality of the *anima rationalis* (in its scholastic formulation). According to Thomas, angels are “single substances,” “pure form-entities.” They can already be pointed out as “singularities” because of their appearance in reality. Their form of being does not multiply itself into additional individuals, precisely because this form is not incorporated in “matter.” There exists only one single angel of each “species” of angels.²

In the case of the “composite” or “material” substances, matter belongs to their “nature” or “essence.” Precisely this fact—being *material beings*—determines their rank in the hierarchy of being.

1 *Metaphysics* 12.8 (1074a 32–39).

2 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 93 [3.6]: “. . . quaecumque sunt idem specie, differentia autem numero, habent materiam. Differentia autem quae ex forma procedit inducit diversitatem secundum numerum; substantiae autem separatae non habent omnino materiam, neque quae sit pars eorum, neque cui

b. Individuality and the numerical principle. Thomas' doctrine regarding the "materia quantitate signata" as an individuating principle

Thomas, too, takes this subjective individuality only within the framework of *quantity*, which includes the typical categories of matter as we saw in the previous section. The form-categories of quality individualize themselves in a material substance only via the quantity. Sertillanges sums up Thomas' view as follows:

The individual beings clearly arise from the same principle as number. For we are concerned here with finding a distinction that is of the same order as these beings: a distinction that does not really exist because it does not affect the species in any way, yet ensures the individual members of this species the same grade of being—at least in the sense of the being that is substance.¹

In the Aristotelian-Thomist view we encounter the following peculiarity in numbers. On the one hand each number (including fractions) forms an independent unit of its own, while the series of numbers only possesses a *specific* multiple. For the series comes into being by adding units, and every addition of a new unit changes the species.² Every number is therefore at the same time a unit and a new species. The number 6, for instance, is not just 2×3 but a new "species" of numerical unit that differs *specifically* from 2 as well as 3.

The actualized form of the simple or pure form-substances is as such a new "specific" unit. At the same time it is a single entity, be-

uniantur ut formae. Impossibile est igitur quod sint plures unius speciei . . . non est nisi unum individuum in una specie" (. . . all things that are of the same species but differ in number have matter. The difference that stems from the form, however, gives a difference in species, while matter gives a difference in number; the separated [form]-substances have no matter at all, neither as part of their essence nor in unity with their form. It is therefore impossible that they could be many in number of one species . . . there is only one individual in one species).

- 1 *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, pp. 119–20. The word "distinction" evidently is used here in the sense of a *typical* or *specific* distinction, because according to the Thomist doctrine everything specific in the "*differentia*" stems from form, not matter.
- 2 This conception of number is typically rationalistic in that it tries to reduce the subject-side of the number aspect to the law-side.

cause the species does not multiply here. In the case of composite substances the multiplication arises from the side of “extended matter.” It is really determined here by quantity, by number, which itself, as Aristotle and Thomas see it, originates in the division of spatial dimensional extension. Therefore “matter,” insofar as it is subject to quantity, is the general principle of individuation of being for the material substances. Thomas himself summarizes his doctrine as follows:

The first hallmark of individuality—what it does not share with other things, i.e., what cannot be assigned to another thing as a predicate [*quod non praedicatur de alio*—results when the form of these substances is taken up in some matter.¹

The second hallmark of an individual thing—what makes it fit into the order of space and time, by virtue of which one can say: this thing is here and at this moment in time (*hic et nunc*)—owes this to the matter ordered to quantity (*materia sub quantitate determinata; materia sub certis dimensionibus*). For the latter assigns the thing certain quantitative portions of time and place.²

1 *De principio individuationis* (*Opuscula* ed., p. 419): “Ex quo enim recipitur in materia, efficitur individuum, quod est incommunicabile et primum fundamentum in genere substantiae, ut completum aliorum de se praedicabile subjectum.” (Because it [the form] is taken up in a matter, an individual is produced, which is the incommunicable and first foundation in the genus of the substance, as the complete subject of all the other predicates which can be said of it.) Ibid.: “Est enim individuum, in sensibilibus, ipsum ultimum in genere substantiae quod de nullo alio praedicatur, imo ipsum est prima substantia, secundum Philosophum, et primum fundamentum omnium aliorum.” (In the things given to our senses the individual is the ultimate in the genus substance that can be said of no other thing, because this is the prime substance, according to the philosopher, and the prime foundation of all the rest.)

2 Ibid.: “Aliud est in quo salvatur ratio individui apud nos, determinatio scilicet eius ad certas particulas temporis et loci, quia proprium est esse sibi hic et nunc; et haec determinatio debetur sibi ratione quantitatis determinatae; et ideo materia sub quantitate determinata est principium individuationis.” (There is another way that an individual’s nature is preserved among us, namely, in being determined by particular times and places, because an individual’s hallmark is to be “here” and “now”; and it owes this determination to the measure of the determined quantity; and therefore matter, insofar as it is determined by quantity, is the principle of individuation.)

c. *The controversy regarding the meaning of “materia quantitate signata” in Thomas*

Meanwhile one question was left unanswered. Did Thomas see quantity here as a “potential,” assigned to matter because it is ordered by the category of quantity and reveals itself in its *infinite divisibility*, independent of its actualization by a substantial form?

Or did he mean the actual quantity or the real (finite) division that can only take place in *formed matter* (i.e., in the substance as “*subjectum proprium*”)?¹ In the latter case Thomas would really have accepted two principles of individuation: (1) matter as such, and (2) the actualized quantity. And these principles would then ground the individuality only by working together.

This problem already created great difficulties for the older commentators on the thought of Thomas. Silvester of Ferrara defended the latter view because of the principle “*actus est qui distinguit*” (all distinction is derived from actuality). By contrast, Cajetan and in his footsteps John of St. Thomas and the Salmanticenses interpreted Thomas’ doctrine regarding the *materia quantitate signata* in the first sense mentioned.

This latter interpretation, as first advocated by Cajetan, has been generally accepted by modern Thomists as the more correct one.² This is probably justified. If Thomas had intended the *actual* quantity, and hence had declared matter to be an individuating principle only when actualized by form, it would have amounted to giving up on his doctrine that matter must be viewed as the *principium individuationis*. For in that case the form principle would immediately have asserted itself as the co-principle that individuates.³

1 Ibid.: “*accidentia non individuatur per materiam primam sed per subjectum proprium, sicut formae substantiales per materiam primam*” (the accidents are not individualized by the prime matter, but by the substance, just as the substantial forms are individualized by the prime matter).

2 Cf. Johannes Assenmacher, “Die Geschichte der Individuationsprinzips in der Scholastik,” in Arthur Schneider and Wilhelm Kahl, eds., *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie und der Paedagogik*, 1/2 (Leipzig, etc. 1926), pp. 56 ff.

3 Cf. Michael Glossner, *Das Princip der Individuation und die Lehre des heiligen Thomas* (Münster, 1887), p. 15: “Were matter taken as act, it would no longer be able to serve as the principle of individuation of corporeal things and as the explanation of the non-intelligibility of the empirical individual, as little as it would be able to lend itself to being the substrate of a substantial change.”

And, in addition, Thomas' thesis concerning the non-intelligible character of the sensorily individual would lose its foundation. For, says Thomas, the essence—or general nature of being—of a *compositum* is grasped in its definition by the intellect.¹ Its individuality, originating in matter that can be determined quantitatively, can only be grasped through sensory experience and is as such not an object for scientific knowledge. The individual being of a *compositum* is its *existence*, and this can only be grasped by our senses, not our intellect. If individuality were grounded in the *actual* quantity, it would not merely be purely *accidental*, but really also be of a *formal* nature. And “form” is always intelligible for Thomas.²

We note here that Cajetan's interpretation of Thomas' individuality doctrine, although probably correct, at the same time accentuates the inner weakness of viewing matter as an individuating principle. The matter principle, after all, is the principle of indeterminacy and constant change in the stream of becoming. Therefore, if matter is the ultimate ground of being for the individuality of the *composita*, then individuality is also subject to constant change, and composite substances would have no lasting individual character at all.

Duns Scotus especially, the great opponent of Thomas, raised this objection against the Aristotelian doctrine.³ And indeed it is hard to refute for the Thomist. For as soon as individuality is thought of as something “defined,” scholasticism must resort to the form principle, which is exactly what Thomas says may not become an individuating principle. The “quantity” of matter can in-

1 On this, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 7.5 (1031a 12–14): “Clearly, then, to define is to grasp the essence, and essence belongs to substances, either alone or at least by preference in the original, unqualified sense.”

2 Cf. *De principio individuationis*: “Illud ergo quod cadit sub ratione particulari est hoc aliquid per naturam materiae: quod autem cadit sub sensu exteriori, est per quantitatem.”

3 See his extensive *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (Paris, 1893). In *Sententia* 2, Dist. 3, Q. 5a he writes: “Sed materia est fundamentum naturae omnino indistinctum et indeterminatum; ergo non potest esse prima ratio distinctionis vel diversitatis alterius” (but matter is the completely undifferentiated and undetermined foundation of nature; for that reason it cannot be the first ground of distinction or difference from something else).

crease or decrease, and the individuality of the composite would therefore increase or decrease to the same extent.

In the footsteps of the Salmanticenses, neo-Thomists distinguish between actual and potential quantity, which they term *quantitas terminata* and *quantitas determinata*. The former is determined by the independent form of the substance and has fixed spatial dimensions and sizes, while *quantitas determinata* (or “*interminata*”) indicates nothing but the numerical diversity between one quantity and the next, and pays no attention to size.¹ But even numerical diversity is as such an accidental definition of the form of matter within the framework of the form-matter motive, which presupposes the substantial formation of matter. However, in Aristotelian thinking the matter principle may as such not receive any defining and distinguishing attribute.

This difficulty, it goes without saying, is present only in Thomas’ metaphysical definition of the *principium individuationis*. The real (actual) individuality of the *compositum*, he will of course acknowledge at once, can reveal itself only in matter, actualized through a substantial form. But even so, for Thomas *the real nature of individuality remains a question of quantitative multiplication in matter of a general essential form*.

d. The aftereffect of Greek atomism in this view of individuality

What is apparent from this whole exposition of the nature of individuality? That essentially it is conceived in an atomistic fashion.

The atomic theory of Democritus broke up the rigid Eleatic concept of being into an infinite multitude of “atoms” which he simply defined mathematically and called *ideas* as “forms of being.” These ideas were not accessible to sensory perception but only to theory, in *noēsis*, and so were not in the least taken to be “materialistic” in the Greek sense of the word.

1 Salmanticenses, *De principio individuationis*, Tract. I, Disp. I, sub. V, no. 132 (cited by Assenmacher, *op. cit.*, p. 56, n. 3): “Aliud est quantitas determinata, aliud vero terminata. Quantitas enim determinata dicit quantitatem ut hanc numero et non illam, non curando an sit terminata et completa per formam substantialem, nec an habeat hanc tantitatem vel illam, et sic est principium individuationis, quatenus in materia contenta.”

Stenzel has shown that this theory already exerted a demonstrable influence upon Plato in his method of forming concepts.¹ We can see this influence at work in the dialogues *Sophist* and *Statesman*. Plato searches there for the *atomon eidos*, i.e., the indivisible “form of being” in the world of “being,” to which the ultimate definition of the being of something is oriented as the result of a progressing division (*diairesis*) of a general concept into pairs of narrower concepts subsumed under it.

The “*atomon eidos*” of the thing to be defined was to unite the one and the many: the *one*, by not being further divisible, as well as the *individual*, by excluding the innumerable other; the *many*, by being at the same time the sum-total (*sumplokē*) of all higher and more general definitions of being.²

1 Julius Stenzel, *Studien zur Entwicklung der platonischen Dialektik von Sokrates zu Aristoteles*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig and Berlin, 1931), pp. 112 ff.

2 Cf. *Sophist* 52 (268 C), where the *sumplokē* or *sundesmos* is described in the following way: *Οὐκοῦν συνδήσωμεν αὐτοῦ, καθάπερ ἔμπροσθεν, τὸννομα συμπλέξαντες ἀπὸ τελευτῆς ἐπ’ ἀρχήν.* (Should we not now, as earlier, tie up his name [namely, as belonging to the essence of the sophist] into a whole, so that we relate everything together, from the last to the first.) Ibid. 16 (229 D): *ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἔτι καὶ τοῦτο σκεπτέον, ἄρ’ ἄτομον ἤδη ἐστὶ πᾶν ἢ τινα ἔχον διαίρεσιν ἀξίαν ἐπωνυμίας.* (However, we still have to ask whether this whole is already an individual, or whether it contains a certain dichotomy worth identifying.)

Ibid. 41 (257 A): *Καὶ τὸ ὄν ἄρ’ ἡμῖν, ὅσαπερ ἐστὶ τᾶλλα, κατὰ τοσαῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν. ἐκεῖνα γὰρ οὐκ ὄν ἐν μὲν αὐτὸ ἐστίν, ἀπέραντα δὲ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τᾶλλ’ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄν.* (And the being is for us therefore not identical with itself in all these relationships, in which the other already is present. For because this other is not this specific being, the latter is itself an individual; it is not, however, the innumerable other.)

The Statesman 22 (281 C): *Πότερον οὖν ἡμῖν ὁ περὶ τῆς ὑφαντικῆς λόγος, οὗ προειλόμεθα μέρους, ἱκανῶς ἔσται διωρισμένος, ἐὰν ἄρ’ αὐτὴν τῶν ἐπιμελειῶν, ὅποσαι περὶ τὴν ἐρεάν ἐσθῆτα, εἰς τὴν καλλίστην καὶ μεγίστην πασῶν τιθώμεν ἢ λέγοιμεν μὲν ἂν τι ἀλήθες, οὐ μὴν σαφές γ’ οὐδὲ τέλος, πρὶν ἂν καὶ ταύτας αὐτῆς πάσας περιέλωμεν;* (Have we now sufficiently defined the essence of that part of the art of weaving that we preferred, when we say that among all the things done to woolen clothing, these are the most beautiful and the most important? Or would we be saying something true but neither clear nor satisfactory, before we delineate its essence from all the others?)

F. M. Cornford has shown that this whole doctrine of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* concerning being, the same and the difference with the innumerable other, is at the foundation of the doctrine of *Timaeus* 35 A about the composi-

What counted here was the indivisible, the "*atomon*." Parmenides had formulated the all-encompassing concept of being that excluded all multiplicity. And it was exactly Democritus who had shown the way from this latter concept towards the infinite multiplicity of the indivisible forms of being.

This indivisibility could not be understood from quantity alone, for what is quantitative, taken by itself, can be divided *ad infinitum*. But the *atomon* of Democritus is indeed an *idēa*, a non-sensory "essential form" which does not admit of further division in its theoretical definition and belongs to eternal being, which is never subject to becoming. Number and dimension (shape, arrangement and spatial location) are here considered to be further definitions of being in the sense of the Greek form-matter motive.¹ The geometric form only becomes indivisible in the essential form of the atom. To

tion of the world-soul; see his *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* (London, 1937). Yet in *Timaeus* 33 A, where the composition of the world-body is discussed, we also find the statement (apparently overlooked by Cornford) that this body is composed in such a way that it is "*individual*, since nothing is left over from which something else of this *eidos* or this essential form could come into existence." Thus individuality is attributed to the indivisible form of being itself as the negation of the innumerable other. The latter is the *μη ὄν* [non-being] of the *ὄν* [being] which *ὄν* individuates.

In the High Middle Ages, Henry of Ghent (d. 1293) used this Platonic concept of the problem of individuality for challenging the Aristotelian-Thomist principle of individuation. He taught that the principle of individuation was not found in matter but in the negation, in that the form in the *suppositum* (the substance as subject) was created undivided, individual, singular, non-divisible and different from every other substantial form. We will return to this theory later in the main text. I have not found any discussion in the literature of its relation to the Platonic doctrine of the *atomon eidos* of the *Sophist*. Stenzel has shed a surprising light on the Platonic doctrine (*op. cit.*, pp. 54 ff.)

- 1 The "*kenon*," the emptiness or void, whose *dinē* and *plēge* are subject to *tuchē* (*ἀναγκή*), by which Democritus has his atoms come to specific transient form-relationships, may by no means be understood, as is regularly done, in the modern sense of Newton's "empty space." The "void" takes its meaning from Parmenides' metaphysical description of the genuine form of being as completely filled with being. Cf. Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 5th ed. (1934), B, Fragm. 8, l. 24: *πάν δ' ἐμπλὲόν ἐστιν ἐόντος*. Contrasting with this "being filled with being" is the eternally moving *hulē* or matter that is "empty of being" and in that sense is a *mē on*. Democritus regarded the *kenon* or *apeiron* as the matter principle in the Greek sense of chaotic, formless be-

the atom is ascribed the Eleatic characteristic of the indivisible that is completely full.

It is well known that Plato places numbers and geometric forms along with the real essential forms (*eidē*) in the intelligible world of forms that transcends the world of sensible things. But he knows of no quantitative multiplication of the *eidōs* in material things. He took the *atomon eidōs* as transcendent to the individual sensible thing.

Aristotle, by contrast, looked for *atomon eidōs* in the sensible thing as the empirically realized indivisible *eidōs*.¹ However, he located the ultimate ground of individuation of this *eidōs* in “matter” which can be defined in terms of quantity, and not in terms of the actual form of being, which is determined mathematically, as Democritus had done. For in Aristotle’s mature conception, quantity became a category of matter. He downgraded it in its own purely mathematical character to “intelligible matter” (*ὑλη νοητή*).² It lost its place in the world of forms-of-being independent of matter. The form only guarantees the actual limitation of the potential divisibility of matter. Without form, thus without *real quantity*, there can be no *real* individuality.

e. The Thomist view of the individual versus modern mathematical individualism

The Aristotelian-Thomist view saw individuality as “quantitative-material individuation” of the essential form. Meanwhile, we would be quite mistaken if we took this view to be the prototype of modern, quantitative individualism-without-individuality.” The latter arose from modern humanism’s ground-motive of nature and freedom, and more precisely from the mathematic-mechanistic conception of the humanist science-ideal with its bent towards deterministic domination, something that was fundamentally for-

coming (the primordial motion is *en to keno*) and expressly as a *mē on*, a relative nothing. Newton’s absolute space, by contrast, is completely geometrically defined in its three dimensions and according to him has static existence independent of any “material points” that might be moving within it.

1 Cf. Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles*, pp. 128 ff.

2 *Metaphysics* 7.11 (1036a): “Matter, however, is partly sensory, partly intelligible—sensory, as iron ore, wood, and in general all moved matter; intelligible, as in sensory objects, insofar as they are not sensory but mathematical.”

eign to the Greek world of thought. The science-ideal excluded from the concept of individuality all that is typically specific and all that is qualitative. In true rationalistic fashion, the “individual” became an incidental example of general law-conformity (taken as purely modal, not typical): universal natural laws in the realm of “nature,” autonomous moral law in the realm of “freedom” (Kant).

By contrast, both the Platonic and the Aristotelian-Thomist views of individuality are oriented to the Greek form-matter motive, where forms are taken in their particularization as typical species, arranged universalistically in hierarchical fashion and reaching its pinnacle in a highest form.

The Aristotelian form-concept has room for the typical and the qualitative: for the typical (specific) in the substantial form, for the qualitative in the accidental form. But the subjective-individual no longer adds anything to the typicality of the form-concept.¹ It is ascribed to the matter principle, and only taken as a quantitative individuation of the typical and qualitative form.

f. The dialectical tension between form-type and individuality within the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept

This creates a real dialectic tension between the form-typical and individuality in the concept of the composite substance, and once more it demonstrates the dualistic character of the form-matter motive that dominates everything.

In the Aristotelian-Thomist view, that which determines the individual subject is not its form but its dialectic opposite: matter. And matter is determined solely by quantity and is unable to give structure to individuality. Individuality acquires structure only through a typical arrangement of its modal aspects within an individual whole.

The incomparable individuality of a masterpiece like “The Nightwatch” by Rembrandt reveals itself in *all* the aspects. But this individuality is undeniably *qualified* in a typically aesthetic fashion and originates in the intentional aesthetic act of the artist’s imagi-

1 This explains the statement we quoted above from Sertillanges that one may seek a difference in the subjective individuality, but in fact there is no difference, because it in no way affects the species (*op. cit.*, pp. 119–20).

nation. In the objective realization of this conception in the material, this individuality is only typically *founded* in an objective cultural form: namely, the freely formed figures of the group who make up the Nightwatch, and the chiaroscuro form of the diffuse distribution of paint that Rembrandt gave to his material.

This typical aesthetic qualification of form expresses itself in all aspects of individuality, hence also in the numerical aspect: in the number of human figures, the number of color-shades used, etc. The individuality-type is never of an original character in the aspects of number and space—not in a single existing thing. These aspects never form the nuclear type of the individuality of the thing. It always owes its origin to the qualifying or leading function, or to the formative function insofar as it is in fact founded in the latter (depending on its individuality type).

How could one ever grasp the special individual character of a work of art as a bare, quantitative individualization, here and now, of a general form-type in matter determined by this type? How could its individuality find its origin in “matter”?

If the Aristotelian-Thomist conception of individuality already lets us down completely in the case of a product formed by man, how then could it possibly give account of the individuality of man himself?

As is well known, neither Aristotle nor Thomas counts artifacts among the composite substances. Their substance-concept only applies to natural entities, inorganic matter, plants, animals and human beings, entities which in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea are called realities of the first order, in contrast to the realities of the second order which presuppose the first. Yet Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics nevertheless takes the real structure of a work of art entirely as an analogy of the substance-concept, and therefore has no other method of approaching the individuality of a work of art than the method it adopted in the case of the “substances.” Thus, as to its “substance,” a marble sculpture is here nothing but marble as a natural material. The form that a human person has given to it is said to be purely accidental and external and impossible of giving rise to a new “substance.” But in spite of that, the relationship be-

tween form and matter in this view of individuality remains exactly the same as that in the case of the real substance.

g. Once more, the scholastic substance-concept and the naive understanding of a thing

This outcome provides an occasion to confront the substance-concept once more with the understanding of a thing in naive experience.

If a work of art is not a “substance,” it is in any case a “thing” with an inner structure all its own and an incomparable individuality that can never be understood merely in terms of its material. In naive experience it is definitely distinguished from a “natural thing” or a “natural being,” but it is nevertheless seen as an individual thing or entity.

Do we need any stronger proof to demonstrate the fundamental difference between the metaphysical substance-concept and the concept of a thing in naive experience? Even the individuality of natural beings is never understood by naive experience merely as a quantitative individuation of a “form-type” in “matter.” It is always experienced in structural fashion. The whole is an integral individuality, and it is the structural principle that defines this individuality. The individuality of a horse shows up through a structure that differs fundamentally from that of a fern, and it does not originate from a matter principle that remains thoroughly foreign to the structural type.

The whole metaphysical form-matter scheme in its typical Greek sense is foreign to the naive experience of those living in modern times, though they are undoubtedly familiar with the relation between form and material in cultural products. But, as we have seen, the typical polarity between the principles of chaotic flow and pure form is a religious ground-motive of a typically Greek, pagan character. As such it can no longer find a sounding board in the religious consciousness of modern man, regardless whether he lives by the Scriptural motive of the Christian religion or the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom.

Much as it arose from the form-matter motive, the metaphysical substance-concept had nothing in common with the ancients, not even with their naive experience, other than this ground-motive. It was based on making self-sufficient a theoretical abstraction, and

primarily *theoria* itself. Such self-sufficiency is entirely foreign to naive experience according to its universally valid structure. The best proof for this is the fact that Greek metaphysics expressly turned against naive experience and posed its ideal of *theoria* as a new religion in opposition to the folk religion of the masses.

h. The idea of individuality structures and the concept of a thing in naive experience. Individuality structures as typical structures in time

In contrast to the foregoing, we have to observe once more that the idea of individuality structures as developed by the Philosophy of the Law-Idea really gives a theoretical account of the naive experience of things. It is designed in keeping with the Scriptural motive of creation as revealed in God's Word, and founded on the insight that the individuality structures of reality are real structures in time with a typical nature, just as the modal structures of the distinct aspects of reality must be seen as real modal structures of reality in time.¹ For this reason these structures can never guarantee more than a temporal, i.e., relative unity in the diversity of their aspects or modal structural elements.

This is also evident in individuality structures, as long as we take into account that they are a typical expression of cosmic time, which spans all of temporal reality in all its aspects and displays its inseparable correlation of law-side and subject-side. Seen from the law-side, time is *order*, i.e., an order of earlier and later. On the subject-side of reality, time is *duration* of the individual subject.

And so every individuality structure is by implication a typical order of time for the individual duration of the subjective thing or being, prescribing a typical law for its individual existence.

Thus the subjective duration of a plant's existence is subject to the time-order of its individuality structure, which in a typical way ties the existence of this being to the function of *organic life*. For this is the modal function that plays the role of qualifying or leading function in the typical structural whole of the plant body, as we shall discuss more closely later on.

1 Cf. my essay "Het tijdsprobleem in de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee" (The problem of time in the Philosophy of the Law-Idea), *Phil. Ref.* 5 (1940): 160–82, 193–234.

On the other hand, for instance in the case of a radio-active element, the individuality structure ties the duration of its individual existence to the *physico-chemical* function in a typical manner (time is meant here in the subjective sense of *duration*). For this is the modal function that acquires the typical role of qualifying or leading function in the individuality structure of such an element.

And in the same way the individuality structure of a work of art such as the “Hermes” of Praxiteles (350–340 B.C.) ties the duration of its individual existence in typical fashion to the *aesthetically* qualified function of its form in the modal historical aspect of culture. As long as this cultural form of the sculptured marble can maintain itself in its aesthetic qualification, so long does the work of art continue to exist as an individual whole.

i. Individuality structures and individuality are related as law-type and the subject subordinate to it

In this way the relationship between the individuality structure and individuality itself becomes altogether clear. The former is a typical law for the individual subject; the latter is subjected to this law as subject.

The thing or a concrete entity as a subject is an intrinsic and integral individual within the *nomic* framework¹ of its individuality structure. The individuality structure retains its *nomic* character in its descending series of types—from radical type to generic type, variability type, and elementary type that is not further differentiated. The individuality structure as such, however, never reaches the actual individuality of the subject itself. Law and subject, after all, despite their unbreakable correlation, can never be reduced to each another.

This whole philosophical conception of the individuality structure as an intrinsic real-life temporal figure fundamentally agrees with what is presented in naive experience regarding the relative durability of individual things as their component parts and sensory qualities vary over time. For relative durability is only possible in time. By contrast, the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept only allows time as an entirely external measure of movement,

1 [Orig.: *wetmatig kader* (law-like or law-conforming framework).]

a category which does not inhere in “substances” in any “absolute sense.”

Thomist metaphysics, too, demands timelessness for its substances as *absolute* points of reference for all its *accidentia*, although it does acknowledge that the *composita* are subject to transitoriness owing to the matter principle. For time here is only an accidental determining factor of the *compositum per se*, as a thing-in-itself; it is not intrinsic to “substances.” This very metaphysical conceit is completely foreign to the simple judgment of identity made by naive experience.

Further, the idea of the individuality structure truly gives an account of the naive experience of a thing in that it cuts off at the root any attempt to reify an abstracted complex of modal functions of a thing.

A stone is not distinguished from a plant or animal because it functions in different or fewer aspects. The Philosophy of the Law-Idea acknowledges the structural subject-object relation in temporal reality. As soon as one does so, one recognizes that everything that possesses individual reality, be it in a subject function or an object function, functions in all the modal aspects of reality without distinction.

Thus every individuality structure spans the entire modal horizon of time in all its distinct aspects. For this horizon forms an integral, indissoluble coherence of modal aspects that tolerates no dichotomy.

The fundamental difference between the individuality structures is only to be found in the typical manner in which its modal aspects are arranged into a whole.

Within each of the modal structures of the aspects that are enclosed within their law-spheres we can point to a modal nucleus of meaning, which qualifies the entire modal structure with its analogical and anticipating elements of meaning and which imprints its irreducible character on it. In the same way a qualifying modal aspect can always be identified that puts the stamp of its irreducible type on an individuality structure (at least if for now we leave

aside the exceptional “act-structure” of the human body).¹ And this qualifying modal function realizes its type in the descending series of radical, generic, variability and elementary type.

This, too, corresponds indisputably with the datum of our naive experience of things. Our naive experience very definitely takes in individual things in the structural subject-object relation, leaving the integral cohesion of the modal aspects intact. By contrast, the theoretical Gegenstand relation pries this coherence apart in theory (i.e., purely in intentionality, not in reality). Naive experience without hesitation imparts objective-normative attributes to inorganic things, plants, animals and artifacts, attributes that are submitted to our subjective normative value-judgments. Nothing is more foreign to this experience than enclosing things inside an abstract complex of pre-logical aspects. The way in which the Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept puts the problems of individuality is in conflict with all these data.

*j. The religious depreciation of individuality in
Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics*

In the religiously conditioned framework of Aristotle’s philosophy, the reduction of the individuality of the “*composita*” to “matter” as “*principium individuationis*,” means an unmistakable depreciation of individuality as such, given that the matter principle is the principle of imperfection here. The substantial form individuates itself in matter through quantitative multiplication, and this “multiplication” is an imperfection of the “composite substances.” The latter are found on a lower rung of the ladder of being than the simple form-substances, whose being coincides with their form and tolerates no multiplication within the same “species.”

1 The human body has no differentiated qualifying function in a modal aspect of temporal reality, since in its act-structure it must retain a field of free self-expression for the soul or spirit, which transcends all temporal structures of reality as the religious root of human existence. We shall return to this in Volume Three of the present trilogy.

Thomas shares this opinion. The simple “form-substances,” he writes, bear their “essence” in a “truer and nobler manner” than the composite ones.¹

It is obvious that in the case of the simple form-substances we cannot speak of real individuality. For the “independent form” is, as we showed above,² the product of theoretical abstraction, which cannot be individual as such. In the world of Aristotelian thought it is a “species,” a “type,” which just does not individuate itself in matter. The type can never be an individual subject as such, as we saw earlier. It can only realize itself in individual subjects that have it in common.

In the Aristotelian system the “*forma separata*” was a residual of the Platonic “*chōrismos*,” i.e., of the separation between the intelligible world of “forms” and the material world of the senses, a separation against which Aristotle had nevertheless fought so forcefully. Yet the dialectic of the form-matter theme drove him again to adopting pure thought-activity as something independent.

Among the scholastics of the High Middle Ages, Duns Scotus in particular pointed out that the individuality of a separated form can never be located in the type, the species (in its abstract Aristotelian conception) in which one merely denies multiplication. If matter is the *principium individuationis*, as Aristotle had taught, then “form” cannot be individual by itself.

Part E

1. The substance-concept in Thomist anthropology

a. *The antinomy between this view of individuality and the church dogma concerning the individual survival of the human soul. The Thomist view of accommodation*

Starting with the religious ground-motive of nature and grace, Thomist scholasticism took over the Aristotelian view regarding the principle of individuation. This could not but lead to a patent antinomy between Greek metaphysics and the church’s doctrine

1 *De ente et essentia* (*Opuscula*, p. 390): “Substantiarum vero quaedam sunt simplices et quaedam compositae, et in utrisque est essentia; sed in simplicibus veriori et nobiliori modo.”

2 See Part A of the present chapter.

regarding the individual survival of the human soul after the death of the body. This antinomy caused scholastic theology—insofar as it followed Thomas' conception—no small embarrassment.

If the *principium individuationis* for the "rational nature" of man stems from "matter"—in this case, from the "material body"—how could one maintain the continued existence of an individual "*anima rationalis*" as a substance after its separation from the material body?

This "problem" did not exist for Thomas' Greek teacher. For Aristotle, the *anima rationalis* is merely the "form of the material body," not a substance (*ousia*). It can therefore not exist apart from the body: it perishes with it. Only the activity of thinking, the *nous poētikos* (in Thomas: the "*intellectus agens*") is a genuinely independent form, an actual "form-substance" (*ousia*) for Aristotle. He distinguishes it sharply from the "ability to think" (*dunamis*) that belongs to the "rational soul" (i.e., to the form of the material body).

Logical thinking is *actus* or actuality, and *ousia* is the "active *nous*." Although it is not identical with the deity as *noēsis noēseōs*, it is nevertheless a pure principle of form. In his treatise *De Anima*, Aristotle went to great lengths to prove that this ever-actual activity of thought—the forming of logical concepts—is completely "devoid of matter" and "independent of the body," in contrast to sense perception, which is bound to certain organs within the body. Hence, if it is not a function of the *anima rationalis* and yet operates in this rational soul, it must enter the human soul from the outside (*thurathen*), and as a pure form principle it cannot be bound to that soul. It has not undergone *becoming* and is therefore *non-transitory*, *imperishable*, elevated above the matter principle. But it bears no individual character in Aristotle. Rather, it is of an entirely impersonal nature. We shall return to this Aristotelian view more extensively in a later context.

Aquinas, however, interpreted this Aristotelian conception in such a fashion that the *nous poētikos* became a real function of the *anima rationalis*. Only in this way, obviously, was he able to accommodate it to church doctrine. But then it was clearly not enough to

raise the *anima rationalis* to the level of the form of the “material body.” He had to elevate it in its entirety into a “form substance.”

We shall return to this point as well. In the present context we are only concerned with the resulting internal contradiction with which also the Aristotelian view of the soul, thus accommodated, remained entangled in the church’s teaching regarding the individual “immortality of the soul.”

Thomas extricated himself from this difficulty, where Aristotle could not help him, through a line of reasoning that may be called more ingenious than convincing. If Aristotle viewed the active *nous* as implanted¹ in human nature from the outside, Thomas first of all accommodated this view, as we already observed, to the church’s scholastic view regarding the *anima rationalis* as a “simple substance” as well as to the church’s doctrine of creation.

The result of this adaptation was the psycho-creationist theory, which had already been zealously debated among the church fathers. This theory, which bore the mark of the impossible on its forehead, attempted to achieve a synthesis between the Scriptural motive of creation and the Greek form-motive. It argued that since theoretical thought is an activity of the “rational soul,” and that this activity is “independent of the material body,” therefore the soul can exist by itself as a “spiritual,” albeit “incomplete,” substance. Consequently God must have created it separately, and it must still be created separately in the body. As well, since the rational soul by its very nature is the substantial form of the material body, God must have created it within a body suited to it.

Both theses can be reconciled when one says: the soul is created as the form of the body with a view to an individual body and in accordance with this body. Through this relation it becomes individualized, i.e., in accordance with the *number* of the body.

This means, therefore, that human souls only differ from one another according to number. The individuation of souls is therefore not *caused* by the quantitative matter of bodies, but is merely

1 [The mind as an independent substance is indeed “implanted within the soul”; cf. *De Anima* 1.4 (408b 18–19); not implanted is the active intellect, which is “separable” but, as actual knowledge, provides a kind of light to potential human knowledge; *ibid.* 3.5 (430a 15–25).]

produced by God Himself in accordance with the numerical specifics of the bodies.¹

Although the origin of the individuality of the soul thus depends in each case on the body, its individuality need not expire when the body is destroyed. For, since it possesses “absolute being” (i.e., a “being” independent of the body) in which it has acquired its individuality, this “being” always remains individual. This prompted the Arabian philosopher Avicenna to remark that the individuation and multiplication of souls is independent of the body in its principle but not in its purpose.²

The Thomist construction implicitly acquired its official sanction from the church at the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) chaired by Pope Leo X. Earlier, the Council of Vienne (1312) had already adopted the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of the soul as the substantial form of the body!³

- 1 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 75 [6]: “sicut enim animae humanae secundum suam speciem competit quod tali corpori secundum speciem uniatur ita haec anima differt ab illa numero solo, ex hoc quod ad aliud numero corpus habitudinem habet; et sic individuantur animae humanae, et per consequens intellectus possibilis, qui est potentia animae humanae, secundum corpora, non quasi individuatione a corporibus causata.” (For since the human soul, according to its specific nature, deserves to be united with a certain body according to its specific nature, so this soul differs from that only by reason of number, in such a way that it is suited to another body according to the number; and in this way, human souls and consequently the receptive intellect, which is a potentiality of the human soul, is individuated in accordance with the body, but not as by an individuation that is caused by the body.)
- 2 *De ente et essentia*, ch. 6: “et licet individuatō eius ex corpore occasionaliter dependeat, quantum ad sui inchoationem, quia non acquiritur sibi esse individuatū nisi in corpore cuius est actus, non tamen oportet ut, destructo corpore, individuatō pereat; quia quum habeat esse absolutum, ex quo acquisitum est sibi esse individuatū, ex hoc quod facta est forma huius corporis, illud esse semper remanet individuatū; et ideo dicit Avicenna quod individuatō animarum et multiplicatō dependet ex corpore, quantum ad sui principium, sed non quantum ad sui finem.”
- 3 Here, rejecting the position of Averroës regarding the mortality of the human soul and the unity of the *anima intellectiva* in all humans, the following was specifically approved: “cum illa [anima rationalis] non solum vere per se et essentialiter humani corporis forma existat, sicut in can. fel. rec. Clem. V praedecess. nostri in gener. Vienn. Concil. edito continetur; verum et immor-

b. Sertillanges' defense of the Thomist construction

Sertillanges deems this construction to be altogether conclusive – at least if one agrees with the basic principles of the Thomist system.

The special characteristics of each human being, so he argues, belong to matter as to their origin, according to Thomas. This leaves a great deal of play to heredity,¹ without “violating the operation of a higher causality in God’s act of creation.” And where else but in matter would the individual characteristics of the human being find their origin? If souls were to distinguish themselves already “by themselves” (*secundum se ipsas*), the individual differences would have to be caused by a formal or essential diversity. For the soul is the essential form of the body. In that case human souls would differ from one another as *species*, just as independent spirits do, and that would mean that we no longer had the same “rational soul” as its essential form.

talis et pro corporum, quibus infunditur, multitudine singulariter multiplicabilis, et multiplicata, et multiplicanda sit.” (the soul not only truly exists of itself and essentially as the form of the human body, as is stated in the decree of our predecessor of blessed memory, Clement V, promulgated at the General Council of Vienne, but it is also immortal; and further, for the enormous number of bodies into which it is infused individually, it can and ought to be and is multiplied).

We witness here a process of church doctrine’s increasing entanglement in scholastic philosophy with its form-matter motive as ground-motive for the understanding of human nature!

When a scholastic strain in Reformed theology tries to pass off as binding confessional statements certain scholastic formulations in some Reformed confessions abroad (such as “rational soul” and a reference to soul and body as two “substances”) and to represent the Philosophy of the Law-Idea as being in conflict with the Reformed confession, then one can imagine how dangerous scholasticism might be for a Scriptural reading of the confession. Such a standpoint with respect to the confession is Roman Catholic, not reformational! [For more on this, see Marcel E. Verburg, *Herman Dooyeweerd: The Life and Work of a Christian Philosopher* (Grand Rapids: Paideia Press, forthcoming), chap. 6.]

- 1 This is typical of the method of Neo-scholasticism: it accommodates the metaphysics of Thomas to modern science. Whether the modern theory of heredity can be accommodated to the metaphysics of Aquinas is very doubtful. After all, his concept of matter is radically different from that of modern natural science.

If we wish to avoid this consequence, says Sertillanges, we must necessarily accept Thomas' thesis that we *as humans are only distinguished from one another through number*. We have, therefore, received our individuality only through "matter," which is the "origin of number." So one must say that all our individual human differences have a material cause.¹ That means that God's creative power, which calls the soul into being in and for the body, has it originate according to the measure of the body. From this follows that after the body perishes, the soul nevertheless retains this measure and adaptation to this body. In a certain sense it remains individualized through "matter," even though it is no longer connected with the "material body."²

We are confronted here with a typical example of the scholastic art of reasoning, which however can only convince the Thomist scholastic. The basic religious theme he starts from demands the accommodation of the Scriptural ground-motive of the Christian religion to the Aristotelian conception of the form-matter motive, and vice versa.

The basic principles of Aristotelian metaphysics led to the acceptance of "matter" as the principle that gives individuality to "composite substances." Whether this Aristotelian principle bears any relation to real individuality is not a point for consideration; nor whether it is intrinsically in keeping with the Scriptural motive of creation. As for this last point: natural reason is autonomous, and so may erect its metaphysics outside of the light of Revelation. And thanks to some kind of pre-established harmony it turns out to agree wonderfully well with Roman Catholic church doctrine.

But since the Scriptures expressly reveal that individual persons continue to exist in the spiritual radical unity of their existence, a construction has to be found that seems capable of reconciling both theses that are in radical conflict. Meanwhile, scholasticism distorts both Aristotle and Revelation where it concerns God's work of creation. As a remedy, the famous psycho-creationist theory is trotted out: God still creates every human soul separately! This in

1 However, Thomas expressly says in the statement cited above (*Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 75 [2]) that the individuality of the rational soul is not *caused* by the material body.

2 Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 126.

spite of the fact that Gen. 2:1–2 expressly teaches that God’s work of creation is completely finished, and according to Scripture no more new creative acts take place.

Of course, once one has turned to tinkering with Holy Scripture one can always take the next step and construe this “continuing creation” of “*animae rationales*” in such a way that it fits in with the Aristotelian doctrine regarding “matter” as an individuating principle.

But philosophic thought—which assigns itself autonomy here, even in the area of human self-knowledge—finds itself with all its clever constructs floating in the thin air of speculation which finds no support in a single datum of reality, whether it be temporal reality or the revelation of the Divine Word.

In this fashion one can prove anything! The whole psycho-creationist theory, like its antipode the (originally “materialistic”) traducianist theory, took its rise from the dialectic ground-motive of form and matter in its impossible accommodation to Scripture.¹

Why did Aristotle teach that active theoretic thinking must enter the soul “from outside” and so become operative? Because Greek metaphysics deemed the activity of theoretic thinking to be of *divine* character, which as pure “activity of form” could not be abandoned to the transience of material forms.² For is God not the activity of pure theoretic thought as “absolute actual form,” according to Aristotle?

1 See Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 29 n. 49. That is why it makes no sense to adduce certain texts from Scripture in support of this theory. For one begins by inserting the Greek form-matter motive into these texts and does not approach them from the ground-motive of the revealed Word. One merely needs to recall Gen. 2:7, one of the *loci classici* of psycho-creationism. In order to find this theory in this text one must first detach it from Gen. 2:1–2 and then interpret the “breath of life” in the Greek sense of *anima rationalis* as substantial form of a material body. Is such an exegesis to be taken seriously? But in that case one might as well take the next step and declare openly with Thomas that one can learn about the creation of the soul already from Aristotle. That is what Thomas writes in his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*.

2 Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 2.3 (736 b 27–28): “λείπεται δὲ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θύραθεν ἐπεισιέναι καὶ θεῖον εἶναι μόνον.” (. . . it remains, however, that the mind alone enters in from the outside and alone is divine.)

When this Aristotelian view is now extended to the *anima rationalis* itself, since it is the “form” of the material body, one remains, in spite of all deviation from Aristotle, entirely within the framework of the Greek ground-motive. It is then irrelevant whether one interprets the Aristotelian *thurathen* as “creation,” or leaves it in its original sense in which Aristotle meant it, as Nuyens has demonstrated, namely, as opposed to the *phusis* in the sense of the natural process of the conception of the living body.¹

c. The inner antinomy in the Thomist construction

Furthermore, the antinomy that Thomas tried to resolve with his construction has not disappeared in the slightest. In order to see this we need only follow Sertillanges’ own argument and think it through in scholastic fashion.

Human souls, so he argues, cannot be distinct from one another by themselves, for the *anima rationalis* is an essential “form” that determines human nature; if “souls” differed from one another already by themselves, humans could no longer have the same “rational nature.”

But does this argument not turn exactly against accepting an “absolute” individuality of the “*animae separatae*”?

Let us continue to reason in the scholastic manner. If we detach these “*animae separatae*” from their “material body,” in which case they are no longer distinguished from each other in dimensional extension, place and time, how then can they still distinguish themselves from each other as “individuals” without canceling the unity of the rational nature in all human beings? How are we to understand, for instance, that man’s thinking activity individuates itself in accordance with the number of the bodies, if thought is entirely independent of the material body, as Aristotle and Thomas taught? Is quantity not a category of matter, according to Aristotle and Thomas? That was why Aristotle did not know any *individual* activity of thought, as we shall still see.

Thomist philosophy admittedly distinguishes sharply between the abstract number (*numerus absolutus*), which can be applied to

¹ T. J. C. J. Nuyens, S.J., *Ontwikkelingsmomenten in de zielkunde van Aristoteles* (Nymegen and Utrecht, 1939), pp. 290 ff.

everything, including “spiritual beings,” and the concrete or real number, which arises from the division of a material continuum. But the abstract number can never be the *principium individuationis* in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics. For unlike the concrete number, the abstract number has no positive basis in the “being” of a “substance.”¹ The only positive basis for the reality of numbers, according to the Aristotelian-Thomist view, is again extended matter. There may be a transcendental unity and multiplicity in pure form-substances in the sense of “transcendental definition of being,” as explained earlier; but here a real quantitative unity and multiplicity can have no basis in their “being.”

Finally, when the “rational soul” can only become an individual “in accordance with” a certain material body, this individuality in any event cannot belong to its “substance.” It can then only have a relative, accidental significance in the sense of the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of the categories. For “accordance” points to a relation, and a relation is but an “*accidens*” of the substance. Thus the “substance” itself of the *anima rationalis* would have to remain one and the same for all human beings, and after the separation from the material body it would have to lose its accidental individuality.

The *anima rationalis separata* may well retain all its “absolute accidents,” including the function of feeling, logical thought and moral will. For according to the doctrine of categories these “*accidentia*” belong to the substance in itself. But this cannot hold for a purely relative “*accidens*” that depends entirely on its relation to the material body. Thomas’ argument that the *anima rationalis* in its “absolute being” receives its individuality in relation to the body is

1 Sertillanges, *op. cit.*, p. 145: “Thus whenever it is a case of ‘being’ alone, there can be no real number, even where there is real multiplicity. A spirit is not a third of three spirits . . . There are entities upon entities here, but no number whatsoever. If in that case we are nevertheless ‘numbering,’ we are applying an abstract number (*numerus absolutus*), which can indeed be applied to anything insofar as our mind, whose actual object is sensory being, proceeds according to its nature and utilizes the knowledge acquired through the senses with respect to all its objects. On this, cf. Thomas, *Sententia super metaphysicam* 7.10: “Unum secundum quod est principium numeri ponit aliquid additum ad esse, scilicet ratio mensurae, cuius ratio invenitur in unitate, et deinde consequenter in aliis numeris et deinceps in quantitibus continuis, et deinde translatus est hoc nomen ad alia omnia genera.”

simply in direct conflict with the Aristotelian doctrine of categories he has accepted. What is assigned to a “substance” in its “absolute sense” can never be something that is merely imparted to the “soul” in “relation to something else” (in this case “matter”).

Thomist scholasticism could now resort to another argument. It could argue that the relation to the material body is a *natural* relation for the human soul, which cannot be detached from its essential character because, according to its “nature,” it has a “substantial and not just an accidental union with the body.”¹ However, the Thomist argument would then merely retreat to the original Aristotelian conception which has no room for an “*anima separata*.”

Aristotle’s utterance that “all things that are many by number, have matter”² undoubtedly implies that immaterial form-substances just do not admit of a multitude of individuals of the same species.

If the human soul is an *anima rationalis* which by nature is “individualized” in accordance with the material body, then it cannot be a “substance,” but merely a “substantial form or *actus* of the body.” Nuyens has irrefutably demonstrated in his important dissertation that this was also Aristotle’s view.³

We have presented a counterargument here, entirely in keeping with the scholastic art of debate, delivered with pros and cons! But it was necessary on this occasion because we had to fight against scholasticism with its own weapons, according to the method of immanent critique.

1 A statement pointing in this direction is found in Thomas, *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 73 [4]: “. . . est proportio animae huius hominis ad corpus huius hominis. Non est igitur possibile animam huius hominis ingredi aliud corpus quam istius hominis” (the soul of this person is proportional to the body of this person. So it is impossible that the soul of this person could enter into any body except the body of this person). Incidentally, the Aristotelian doctrine of categories knows no “natural relations” that belong to the inner nature of a substance. Actually, one ought to speak here of a “transcendental relation” between “form” and “matter” in the *compositum*, and this relation utterly excludes the concept of the *anima rationalis separata*.

2 *παντα ὅσα ἀριθμῶ πολλά ὑλὴν ἔχει*, *Metaphysics* 12.8 (1074a 34). This nullifies Thomas’ construction of a multiplication of the soul as form-substance “secundum multiplicationem materiae,” as found in his *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, chs. 80–81 [2].

3 Nuyens, *op. cit.*, pp. 244 ff.

d. The Thomist substance-concept and the idea of human personality

One can imagine how this whole concept of individuality within the framework of the Aristotelian substance-concept has pervaded the view of human personality. Thomist scholasticism adopted¹ the definition of Boethius, that a person is “the individual substance of a rational nature.”² This definition contained the whole dialectical quandary of the Aristotelian substance-concept and the quantitative view of individuality.

If this conception was not even able to do justice to the real unity of *human* nature, how could it ever have provided clarity in the theological discussions about the great revealed mystery of the “unity of the two natures” in Christ? Aristotelian metaphysics surely is the very worst guide for Christology!

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea starts out with the Scriptural ground-motive, which states that a person’s individuality is rooted in the spiritual center of his existence, of which the selfhood is the expression, and that precisely because human nature possesses such an integral religious unity in its root, it expresses that it is created after God’s image. If one accepts this, then the scholastic view fails utterly in doing justice to the Redeemer’s being truly human. For it teaches that the second Person of the Divine being adopted a material body and an *anima rationalis* in a substantial connection.

The unity of human nature—and *a fortiori* the personal unity of the divine and the human in Christ—can never be grasped from the Greek form-matter motive, because this motive from the outset demands a dichotomy in the temporal horizon of man’s existence and eliminates its radical unity.³

Anima rationalis and its material body remain in the mutually dialectic relation of the form-matter principle; and in Aristotelian metaphysics, as we have seen, no higher unity can be found for

1 Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 4, ch. 38 (“*Contra eos qui ponunt duas hypostases vel duo supposita in una persona Christi*”): “nihil enim aliud est persona quam hypostasis talis naturae, scilicet rationalis; quod patet ex definitione Boetii dicentis quod ‘persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia.’ ”

2 “persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia.” Boethius, *De persona et duabus naturis*, *De duabus naturis*, III [MPL 64, col. 1357].

3 There is no doubt that the theses condemned by the church regarding two persons or two substances in Christ are equally embedded in this unscriptural ground-motive.

both than the analogical concept of being. What do we gain then by saying that human nature is a substantial unity of body and soul if the substance-concept itself remains caught in the dualism of form and matter?

And when scholasticism erects its “concept of personality” on this substance-concept, what remains then of the spiritual root of individuality as expressed so tellingly by the apostle Paul in his description of the *Corpus Christi* with Christ as Head and those reborn as individual members?¹

Man’s very soul or spirit—in the signal, religious meaning of divine revelation—is the radical unity of his “body” which encompasses his entire temporal existence in one integral “enkaptic structural whole,” including man’s temporal act-life with its three basic directions of knowing, imagining and willing.²

But here the “body” is something entirely different from the abstract “material body” of Aristotelian scholasticism, just as the soul in its succinctly religious, Scriptural sense is something entirely different from the abstract “*anima rationalis*.”

True self-knowledge is absolutely dependent on the knowledge of God. No one arrives at this self-knowledge except through the Word-revelation regarding the creation of man after God’s image, the fall into sin in its radical meaning touching the spiritual root of human nature, and redemption through Christ Jesus as an equally radical rebirth in the *heart* of our life.

Similarly, true knowledge concerning the individuality of a human being is completely bound to the revealed insight into the significance of the origin of this individuality. Every attempt to reduce individuality in human existence to a matter principle or something else within the horizon of time necessarily eliminates man’s integral spiritual individuality.

1 [Cf. Eph. 4:15–16; Col. 1:18.]

2 In Volume 3 of the present work I shall deal extensively with the concept of “enkaptic structural whole,” but let me give a provisional definition now. By “enkaptic structural whole” the Philosophy of the Law-Idea understands a typical form-entity (in the sense of a *Gestalt*) in which several *intrinsically different* individuality structures are interwoven to form an individual whole while retaining their internal distinctiveness and their “sphere-sovereignty,” the highest interwoven structure qualifying the whole. The “body” of a plant, animal or man is such a typically qualified form-entity. Only, in man it is rooted transcendently.

e. The ideas as primal forms of individuality in Neoplatonism. The fundamental differences between Plato's dialectic and Aristotle's logic

In Neoplatonism, the movement founded by Plotinus, admixed though it was with non-Greek motives, the Greek spirit, emerging from a long-standing process of inner decay, rose once more to its full height in the religious concentration on *theōria*. At the same time it defended itself against the spirit of the Christian religion that was penetrating everywhere.

Plotinus fully understood what was unsatisfactory in the Aristotelian view of the matter principle as the origin of individuality. But his thinking too remained oriented—at least in part—to the dialectic ground-theme of form and matter. So, in rejecting matter as the causative principle of individuality, he had to burden the form principle with that role. The “ideas” in the divine *Logos* became for him the true prototypes of what is individual in the world of the senses.

Plotinus conceived of the individuality principle in a different way from Aristotle: not just as a quantitative individuating from the general form-type, but as a manifestation of the infinite wealth of the *logos* in its perfection and fullness of being.

This undoubtedly ran parallel with Plato's conception in his dialogue the *Sophist*, where the idea was not taken as an abstract universal but as a concrete fullness and totality of essential form, which was meant to simultaneously combine the universal and the individual concentrically. For that reason it was presented as a thinking, living, and self-propelling being, which in the process of *theōria* actively operates upon the contemplative thinking of the subject.¹

1 In the dialogue *Sophist* 35 (249A), the stranger from Elea asks Theaetetus: *Τὶ δαὶ πρὸς Διός, ὥς ἀληθῶς κίνησιν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν ἢ ῥαδιῶς πεισοήσομεθα τῷ παντελῶς ὄντι μὴ παρεῖναι μὴδὲ ζῆν αὐτὸ μὴδὲ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ σεμνόν καὶ ἅγιον νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον ἀκίνητον ἐστὸς εἶναι*. To which Theaetetus answers: *Δεινὸν μὲν τᾶν, ὦ ξένη, λόγον συγχωροῖμεν*. (ELEATIC: By Zeus! Are we really to be persuaded so easily that the plenitude of being has neither motion nor life, neither soul nor thought? That it neither lives nor thinks, but rests in a motionless, venerable, sacred, mindless state? THEAETETUS: To be sure, stranger, that would be a bizarre concession on our part.)

From the Sophists Plotinus derived the categories that further define the spiritual cosmos: being, rest, motion, identity and diversity.

The Platonic dialectic differs fundamentally from Aristotelian logic. The latter takes the *genus* as an abstract, general framework which is determinative of being, is enriched by the addition of *differentia specifica*, and is endowed with a final (no longer intelligible, since not specific) addition in the individual substance, given that “form” causes a single entity to arise from matter.

With Plato this is reversed. Here the progression from genus to species is not an addition; it is no enrichment of content. Rather, it is a transition from the whole of the idea to its parts: namely, the special *eidè* or essential forms in which these parts still preserve the wealth of the whole. In this train of thought as well, individuality must lie enclosed within the supra-sensory whole of the idea and its specific *eidè*. Individuality can never be an addition that the *eidōs* as intelligible essential form supposedly receives only when empirically realized in matter.¹ Matter “adds” nothing to the fullness of being of the world of ideas. The proto-image comprises all real being.

Yet Plotinus’ view of the idea as the individual essential form of every separate thing (e.g., an idea of Socrates) is certainly not Pla-

The notion that Plato teaches that *χώρα* in the sense of the matter principle moving according to blind *anankē* is the principle of individuation is not supported anywhere in Plato’s *Timaeus*, where *χώρα*, though not mentioned for the first time (see *Philebos* 24 D), is discussed for the first time in its significance for the empirical world.

This interpretation, which goes back to Cl. Bäumker’s *Problem der Materie* (1890, p. 177), is simply untenable. It takes *χώρα* as “empty space” which is bounded by specific “copies” of the ideas and so is responsible for the origin of individual corporeal things. The concept “empty space” is simply not to be found in Plato’s *χώρα*. In my opinion this has been irrefutably shown by F. M. Cornford in his important commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus* (*op. cit.*, pp. 197 ff.).

That Plato’s *χώρα*, like Aristotle’s *ύλη*; *hylē*) multiplies the “form” by means of quantification is clearly a completely non-Platonic thought, because in Plato number is simply not a “category of matter.”

For that matter, in my opinion there is an urgent need to revisit Plato’s works for tracing the problem of individuation in the development of his thought.

1 Cf. E. Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie*, 1: 454–55. [Cf. *The History of Philosophy. The Hellenic Age*, trans. J. Thomas (Chicago, 1965), pp. 119–20.]

tonic. Plato clearly rejects this view in the dialogue *Parmenides*.¹ The Platonic *atomon eidos* may embrace individuality and itself be an “individual” in the sense of an indivisible whole (a *pan*, placed in contrast with the *holon* or the purely universal in the dialogue *Theaetetus*), nevertheless Plato would never admit that each and every individual thing or being in the sensory world has a separate individual prototype in an idea.² For him the idea does not multiply itself in relation to empirical things.

But this is exactly Plotinus’ opinion. He takes the individual ideas as real, separate primal forms for every individual being and thing in the world of our senses. He sees in them the ideal prototypes of every empirical individuality within its universal definition of being.³ To be sure, the “ideas” contain, besides the form, also an ideal “matter,” otherwise they could not be the proto-images of the sensory things that are composed of “form” and “matter.”⁴

Yet individuality cannot find its origin merely in ideal “matter,” since it belongs to the perfection of things. Plotinus conceives of in-

1 Cf. e.g. *Parmenides* (135 B–C): ἀλλὰ μέντοι, εἶπεν ὁ Παρμενίδης, εἴ γέ τις δῆ, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἄν μὴ ἐάσει εἶδη τῶν ὄντων εἶναι, εἰς πάντα τὰ νῦν δὴ καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα ἀποβλέψας, μηδέ τι ὀριεταί εἶδος ἑνὸς ἑκάστου, οὐδὲ ὅπη τρέψει τὴν διάνοιαν ἔξει, μὴ ἑὼν ιδέαν τῶν ὄντων ἑκάστου τὴν αὐτὴν αἰεὶ εἶναι, καὶ οὕτως τὴν τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δύναμιν παντάπασιν διαφθερεῖ. (But surely, dear Socrates, said Parmenides, if someone, taking into account what has just been shown and other arguments of this sort, will not admit that there are essential forms of being, nor is willing to accept a self-standing idea for every different thing—if he will not admit that the idea of every being is always the same—then he will not even know where he can direct his thought, and so he will eliminate the possibility of a common study.)

2 In the *Parmenides* the contrast individual-universal is resolved in the higher concept of the whole (*pan*). The unity of the whole of the idea reveals itself in the individual empirical thing as *ἐν ἑκάστω*, as *individual unity*. See the previous note.

3 *Enneads* 5.7.1.

4 *Enneads* 2.4.4. However, the *ύλη* (matter) in the ideas is only like the *ύλη* in the empirical things to the extent that both come under the general characterization of matter as dark depth (*βάθος, τὸ σκοτεινόν*). Furthermore, the difference between both kinds of matter is as great as that between the ideal and the sensitive form. Cf. *Enneads* 2.4.5: διάφορόν γε μὴν τὸ σκοτεινὸν τό τε ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς τό τε ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ὑπαρχόν, διάφορός τε ὕλη, ὅσον καὶ τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἐπικείμενον ἀμφοῖν διάφορον.

dividuality predominantly in the “form,” not in the *hulē*. At most one can say that he places individuality in the relation between form and ideal *hulē* insofar as individuality presupposes *heterotes* (the being-different) and insofar as the *hulē* shares in this *heterotes* as a *mē on*, a *sterēsis* of being. Individuality, after all, is the negation of the innumerable other, as Plato already taught.¹

The world of ideas is identical with the being of the *logos* or *nous* as *hypostasis* that first radiated from the divine All-One (*to hen*). The ideas are in the *logos*, but are nevertheless taken as real, operating substances in the *kosmos noētos*, in agreement with Plato’s view in the *Sophist*.

Individuality, in the sense of what it does not share with other beings, belongs to the perfection of beings. This holds especially for the human soul, *but only to the extent that it remains in absolute communion with the divine All-One*, of which it is a secondary (individualized) radiation. The greater or smaller distance from the divine One and, *beneath* that, from the ideas in the *logos* determines the “degree of being.” To this also corresponds the “degree of individuality.”

Individuality decreases as the things of the sensory world descend to lower rungs on the ladder of reality. Eventually, it disappears completely in “pure matter” as *bathos* of the formless darkness.

f. The influence of Neoplatonic doctrine on Thomas and the fresh antinomy it caused in his doctrine of individuality

Remarkably, the Neoplatonic doctrine, which partly penetrated the Augustinian tradition, exerted a subtle influence on Thomas’ view of creation, even though he simultaneously maintained the Aristotelian view of matter as the *principium individuationis*.

We saw earlier that Thomas sought to accommodate the Aristotelian idea of the deity to the church doctrine of creation by adopt-

1 Assenmacher (*op. cit.*, pp. 14–15) is quite wrong in his view of the Neoplatonic understanding of individuality, because he starts out from the Aristotelian concept and thus pays no attention to a form-individuality in the idea.

ing the Neoplatonic *logos* doctrine in its semi-Augustinian form.¹ In his *Summa Theologiae* he tried to “prove” that ideas must be assumed in the divine *Logos*.²

Through ideas (*idea* in Greek, *forma* in Latin) the forms of other things are known that exist outside of these things. However, the form of a thing that exists outside of this thing itself can be taken in two ways: either as an “example” of that of which it is the idea or as the basis for our knowledge of it, according to which we say that the forms of knowable things are in the mind of him who knows.³

According to Thomas it is necessary to accept “ideas” in both meanings. For form is necessarily the purpose for the origin of all beings that did not originate by accident (Greek *tuchē*, Latin *casus*). For a form must have been given as an “example” which the being or thing strives to resemble in its own form. In the natural world a form exists for natural things as the example for the thing that is to come into being: humans reproduce human beings after their likeness; fire produces fire. With artifacts an intelligible form is present as an example in the mind of the artisan. An idea of the house he wants to build exists in the mind of the builder.

Therefore, since the world did not originate by accident but was made by God, who works through His intellect, . . . it is necessary that a form is present in the divine *Logos* after whose likeness the world was created. And this is the divine idea.⁴

1 Augustine, as we shall see, did not take over Plotinus’ viewpoint regarding the existence of separate ideas for each separate individual being in the sensory world. On the other hand, he did hold that the spiritual substances have an ideal matter, which view Thomas rejected.

2 Augustine already believed he could “prove” this. In his *Retractationes* 1.3.2 he says that if a person were not willing to accept that the ideas according to which everything is created are not in God’s eternal and unchangeable *Logos* by which He made the world, then one would have to say “that God worked *without reason* when creating the world.” As if this dilemma could apply to God! See also *De ideis* [i.e., *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 15, Art. 2: “Hence Augustine says that each thing was created by God according to the idea proper to it . . .”].

3 [Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 15, Art. 1.]

4 *Ibid.*, Repl. to Obj. 3: “quod Deus secundum essentiam suam est similitudo omnium rerum. Unde idea in Deo nihil aliud est quam Dei essential.”

Now then, since God according to His essence is the primal image of all things, the idea in God is none other than God's being.¹ Nor does it conflict with the "simplicity" of this being that separate ideas of all that is created exist in the divine *Logos*. For these ideas are not species, abstracted from things by the active intellect, but different ways in which creatures are created after the example and likeness of His Being.

Therefore these ideas are God's Being itself after the different ways in which it is imparted to the distinct creatures by way of similitude. It is like the form of a house: something is known by the builder in his mind, after the likeliness of which he forms the house in material.²

In his treatise *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* Thomas now expressly accepts the idea in the sense of "creational idea" as the individual primordial form of *each individual creature*. He writes:

When we speak of the idea in the proper sense, according to which it is the idea of a thing, as it can be called into being by creation, then the individual, the species and the genus correspond simultaneously to one single idea. Therefore, Socrates, a human

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- 1 *Ibid.*, Art. 2: "Hoc autem quomodo divinae simplicitati non repugnat, facile est videre, si quis consideret ideam operati esse in mente operantis sicut quod intelligitur, non autem sicut species qua intelligitur, quae est forma faciens intellectum in actu. Forma enim domus in mente aedificatoris est aliquid ab eo intellectum, ad cuius similitudinem domum in materia format. Non est autem contra simplicitatem divini intellectus quod multa intelligat; sed contra simplicitatem eius esset, si per plures species eius intellectus formaretur. Unde plures ideae sunt in mente divina ut intellectae ab ipsa. Quod hoc modo potest videri: ipse enim essentiam suam perfecte cognoscit; unde cognoscit eam secundum omnem modum quo cognoscibilis est. Potest autem cognosci non solum secundum quod in se est, sed secundum quod est participabilis secundum aliquem modum similitudinis a creaturis . . . Sic igitur in quantum Deus cognoscit suam essentiam ut sic immitabilem a tali creatura, cognoscit eam ut propriam rationem et ideam huius creaturae; et similiter de aliis."
 - 2 *De veritate*, Q. 4, Art. 8, ad secundum: "Si loquamur de idea proprie, secundum quod est rei eo modo quo est in esse producibilis, sic una idea respondet singulari, speciei et generi, eo quod Socrates, homo et animal non distinguuntur secundum esse. Si autem accipiamus ideam communiter pro similitudine vel ratione, sic, cum diversa sit consideratio Socratis ut Socrates est, et ut homo est, et ut est animal, respondebunt ei plures ideae vel similitudines." (First part translated in the text.)

being and a living being, cannot be distinguished according to their being.¹

The idea is therefore sharply distinguished here from the abstract form-type (the species) as “framework” in which individual beings occur—i.e., the “*universale*” in Thomist thinking.

According to Thomas, scientific knowledge remains limited to a definition of things according to genus and species within the established framework of the metaphysical ontology. Yet for him the idea, at least in the divine *Logos*, expresses everything that is in the individual creature. It must therefore contain everything that is necessary, in order that it be generated and sustained in reality through the action of God’s will. This idea itself therefore becomes “individual” according to the *number* of the individuals in the created cosmos.²

1 See Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 79.

2 Thomas appears to have felt the difficulty himself. In *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 15, Art. 3 he deals with the question whether there are ideas for all things that are known to God. Against a positive answer, among other reasons, he cites the following objection (Obj. 3): “Deus cognoscit materiam primam, quae non potest habere ideam, cum nullum [sic] habeat formam” (God knows prime matter, which cannot have an idea, since it has no form). The objection is answered (Repl. to Obj. 3): “quia nos ponimus materiam creatam a Deo, non tamen sine forma, habet quidem materia ideam in Deo, non tamen aliam ab idea compositi; nam materia secundum se neque esse habet neque cognoscibilis est” (Since we hold that matter is created by God, but not without form, so matter in a certain sense has an idea in God, but no other than the idea of the *compositum*; because matter has no being by itself and as such is unknowable).

But the creational idea of the *compositum* in turn can only be a form without matter. Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 24 [2]: “formae, quae sunt in materia, venerunt a formis, quae sunt sine materia . . . nos vero ponimus eas in intellectu existentes et causantes immediate formas inferiores per motum coeli.”

So the question remains: How according to Aristotelian metaphysics is this form individualized if there truly are individual ideas in the divine *Logos*? To assume that the idea itself has an “ideal material” in no way fits in the Thomist schema. For consider: since the creation idea, according to his clear statement, is identical with the “*essentia Dei*”, such an assumption would imply that in the divine being itself there is “matter,” ideal though it might be; meaning, that in the Aristotelian way of thinking there is *incompleteness* in God! But is God’s

It is obvious, meanwhile, that this view of the creational ideas in the divine *Logos* cannot really be reconciled with the Aristotelian doctrine of matter as *principium individuationis*. For the “idea,” as Thomas expressly establishes, is “pure form.” He resolutely rejects the Neoplatonic view of an “ideal matter” in the idea, a view which, with a little good will, could still have been combined with the Aristotelian view of the principle of individuation. Thus if the individuality of creatures originates in the divine idea as individual primordial image, then the individuality of composite substances cannot possibly find its origin in *matter*.

It does not help to distinguish between, on the one hand, the idea as the primordial image of what is created, and on the other the idea as abstract, general concept. The activity of theoretical thinking abstracts form as a general type (species) from individual things by dematerializing them. It does not help because the basic principles of the Aristotelian ontology are at stake here! These principles dictate that form is merely the type (species), not an individuating principle.¹

Thus the attempt by the Thomist system, utilizing the Neoplatonic *logos* theory, to accommodate Aristotle’s view of individuality to the doctrine of creation resulted only in a fresh antinomy.

being not pure actual form? Once again we see the basic incompatibility of the form-matter motive with the Scriptural ground-motive of creation.

In Plotinus’ Neoplatonic theology this objection does not apply, because the divine *Logos* (*nous*) is not identical with the divine All-One, but is only a radiation from the One, in which the difference between thought and that which is thought is already present—thus a relative incompleteness, according to Plotinus. And Plotinus further rejected the Aristotelian doctrine of categories, which allowed the category of quantity to function only as a category of matter.

- 1 Plato is the source of the distinction between “matter” in the “ideal” world of ontic forms (*eidē*) and “matter” as the formless substrate for the becoming of sensory things. After the “Eleatic” dialogues (*Parmenides*, *Sophist*, *Republic*) he introduced an *eidētic* material that ensures *difference* in the world of eternal forms. In the *Timaeus*, *hulē* is called the *chōra* as the substrate of all becoming in the sensory world. In his final phase, when he identified *eidē* with “ideal” numbers, Plato had the latter arise *after* absolute unity, from their union with ideal matter.

g. The Augustinian view of individuality and the older Franciscan wing of scholasticism

Of course the *logos* doctrine mentioned above could not detach itself from the Greek form-matter motive. Plotinus tried to overcome the religious dualism of this motive in his idea of the divine All-One, elevated above the ontic forms. He managed to do this by means of his mystical doctrine of radiation (*uitstraling*), according to which the different levels of being radiate out from the absolute divine One — but once again he too managed it only dialectically, so only *in appearance*. The light of the divine One proceeds in a process of radiation in step-like fashion, steadily decreasing in clarity, and finally passing into its opposite: the dark depth of absolute formless matter!

Augustine, to be sure, replaced this radiation theory with the doctrine of divine creation, and he replaced the Neoplatonic *nous* with the divine Word as the second Person in the divine Tri-unity. He also did not adopt separate creative ideas for every individual thing or being—but at least at this point he did embrace the Platonic view that the idea, as indivisible whole, embraces also the individual in its universality.

However, by interpreting the idea as the creational idea in the divine *Logos* (*verbum*: the Word), nothing changed in the Greek view of individuality, which had managed to approach individuality only in the polar ground-motive of form and matter.

Following in the footsteps of Neoplatonism, Augustine assumed that also the “spiritual substances” (human souls and angels) possess, besides an ontic form, “matter,” albeit “spiritual matter” (*materia spiritualis*).¹ And he finds the foundation for individual existence in the real connection of both these principles, not exclusively in one of them.

Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) and his student Bonaventure (d. 1274) elevated this Augustinian view to a classic position of the older Augustinian wing of the Franciscans in late scholasticism.²

It is striking how especially Bonaventure emphasizes the matter principle as the co-individuating principle in the *composita*, even

1 *De Genesi ad litteram*, V, cap. 5, n. 13; VII, cap. 5, n. 7; cap. 6, n. 9; cap. 17, n. 39. See also *Confessions* 13.2.

2 The later Franciscan school is identified with Duns Scotus (c. 1270–1308), to which we will return later on.

though he clings to the Augustinian view that the “principle of individuation for creatures is the conjunction of matter with form.”¹

This undoubtedly is an indication that Aristotelian motives were forcing their way in under the influence of the general revival of the study of Aristotle in the thirteenth century. But we may not forget that the Augustinian-Franciscan school viewed “matter” itself in a fundamentally different way than Aristotle and Aristotelian-Thomist scholasticism.² We will return to this point below.

Bonaventure puts the question of the *principium individuationis* in scholastic thought more sharply than any of his predecessors. He emphasizes the polar contrast in the framework of the form-matter theme between philosophers who looked for the individuating principle exclusively in matter, and others who sought it only in form.³

1 *In Sententiam*, II, Dist. 3, Art. 2, Q. 3: “Creaturarum principium individuationis est coniunctio materiae cum forma.” (Quoted from the *Opera Sixti V pont. max. iussu diligentissime emendata*, 5:55.)

2 Assenmacher overlooks this (*op. cit.*, p. 33), as do the neo-Thomists, who take Aristotelian-Thomist scholasticism as the key to understanding and evaluating the Augustinian school. This failure is often to be observed among Thomists; for instance, to a large degree in Sertillanges, *Le christianisme et les philosophies*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1939/41).

3 *In Sententiam*, II, Dist. 3, Art. 2, Q. 3: “Quidam enim innitentes verbo philosophi dixerunt quod individuatō venit a materia: quia individuum supra speciem non addit nisi materiam. Et hoc ponebant: quia dixerunt universalia solum dicere formas: et tunc primo tangitur materia, quando pervenitur ad hoc aliquid. Aliis vero aliter visum est, scilicet quod individuatō esset a forma: et dixerunt quod ultra formam speciei specialissimae, est forma individualis. Et quod movit hos ponere illud, fuit quia intellexerunt ordinem in formis secundum generationem, et naturam esse per eundem modum, per quem ordinatur in genere: ita quod forma generis generalissimi primo advenit materiae; et descendendo usque ad speciem. Et adhuc, illa forma non constituit individuum, quia non est omnino in actu, sed ultra hanc formam individualis subsequitur, quae est omnino in actu, sicut materia fuit omnino in potentia.” (There are some who, relying on the word of the philosopher [read: Aristotle], said that individuation comes from matter, because the individual adds nothing to the species other than matter. And they held this because they said that the universals mean only forms, and that matter does not come into the picture until we come to the individual thing. Others had a different idea, namely that individuation comes from form; and they said that besides the form of the narrowest species there is in addition an individual form. They

Rejecting both extremes, he defends the intermediate standpoint of Augustine and illustrates this with an example of wax and the seals imprinted on it (an image derived from Plato's dialogue *Theaetetus*). Just as the number of imprints cannot be multiplied without the wax, no more can wax, that was one before, be "numbered" after a multiple without having several seals pressed on it.

If one asks, however, what is the principal basis for calling an individual a *hoc aliquid* ("this particular individual"), Bonaventure replies:

Being *this* thing, the *hoc* [evidently he means the thing we can observe with our senses] springs principally from matter, which gives its form a position in place and time. For form is not individual without a connection with matter. But that it is something particular, an *aliquid*, it owes to form. For the individual possesses both *esse* [the real being or the *essentia*] and *existere* [empirical reality in space and time]. Form owes existence to matter, but matter owes its actual being to form. The individuation of creatures therefore springs from a twofold principle.¹

Bonaventure adds one more important remark here concerning the personal individuality of the human being. The personal distinction, he writes, means singularity as well as dignity. The personal-ity derives its singularity from the conjunction of form and matter

came to this opinion because they understood order in the form to be like generation in nature, so that the form of the most general genus comes first to matter, and then, by descending, to the species. Up to this point the form constitutes no individual because it is not yet completely actual; but there still follows a final individual form that is completely actual, just as matter is completely potential.)

- 1 *Ibid.*: "Ideo est tertio positio satis plana, quod individuatō consurgit ex actuali coniunctione materiae cum forma, ex qua coniunctione unum sibi appropriat alterum: sicut patet cum impressio, vel expressio sit multorum sigillorum in caera, quae prius erat una, nec sigilla plurificari possunt sine caera, nec caera numeratur nisi, quia fiunt in ea diversa sigilla. Si tamen quaeras a quo veniat principaliter: dicendum quod individuum est hoc aliquid. Quod sit hoc, principaliter habet a materia, ratione cuius forma habet positionem in loco, et tempore. Quod sit aliquid: habet a forma. Individuum enim habet esse: habet etiam existere. Existere dat materia formae: sed essendi actum dat forma materiae. Individuatō igitur in creaturis consurgit ex duplici principio." *Ibid.*: "non totaliter [individuatō] est a forma, quia forma nulla est individua, nisi propter coniunctionem sui cum materia" (. . . individuation is not completely derived from form, because form is never individual except in conjunction with matter).

principles from which results that which is. But it gains its dignity mainly from form, and this holds for persons both human and angelic.¹

The acknowledgment of a normative value of the individual personality, its “dignity,” is remarkable here. It does not surprise us that he seeks the basis for this mainly in form. It is that much more conspicuous, when compared with the Thomist-Aristotelian viewpoint, that dignity is owed not solely yet mainly to the form principle. The Augustinian school no longer deprives the matter principle of its divine origin: it has received a certain “value” in and of itself. It did this, as we shall yet see, thanks to a different conception of the *prima materia*. For the rest, it is evident from the foregoing how Bonaventure too was influenced by Aristotle; he strongly emphasizes the purely quantitative in individuality. This Augustinian thinker looked for the individuating principle in the connection between form and matter. But now the Neoplatonic conception of “ideal matter” (*materia spiritualis*) in the “spiritual substances” had to come to the rescue of the “individual immortality of the *anima rationalis*.”² Form cannot itself individuate on its own, but only in a real connection with “matter,” even if only “ideal matter.”

This was at bottom the position that ignited the battle in scholasticism between the older Franciscan school and that of the Dominicans who adhered to the Thomist doctrine, during which even a few among the Dominicans initially turned against Thomas in defense of Augustine.

1 *Ibid.*: “Personalis autem discretio dicit singularitatem et dignitatem. In quantum dicit singularitatem, hoc dicit ex ipsa coniunctione principiorum, ex quibus resultat ipsum quod est. Secundum dignitatem dicit principaliter rationem formae: et sic patet unde sit personalis discretio originaliter, in creaturis loquendo, sive in hominibus, sive in Angelis.”

2 *In Sententiam*, II, Dist. 17, Art. 1, Q. 2: “Licet autem anima rationalis compositionem habeat ex materia et forma” (although the reasonable soul has a composition consisting of matter and form). Thomas rejects this viewpoint with extensive argumentation; see *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 75, Art. 5.

h. The Averroist school of Siger of Brabant. The denial of “individual immortality” of the human soul on the basis of the Aristotelian principle of individuation

The Thomist position was initially weakened by the consequences which the Latin Averroists among the Aristotelian scholastics had drawn from Aristotle’s view of matter as *principium individuationis*.

Siger of Brabant (d. 1282), the leading spokesperson of Averroism in Paris, followed his Arabian teacher in seeking the basis for individual multiplicity in matter.

In the Aristotelian view, pure form-substances do exist, and because of this no individuating principle is found here. Consequently the *anima intellectiva* as substance can only be one for all men, also in number, and thus there can be no question of individual immortality.¹ (This substance does not, according to Siger, include the vegetative and sensitive abilities of the human soul but only the ability to think and the active intellect.)

To be sure, this view—which Siger largely abandoned later²—did not coincide with that of Aristotle. For the latter only took the active *nous* (the actual thought activity, not the ability to think) as a

1 *Quaestiones in tertium de anima* 13.172, written in his first period as a teacher (1265–70), when he was still a pure Averroist; and again (after the appearance of Thomas’ treatise of 1270 against Averroism, *De unitate intellectus*) in the milder tract of 1272, *De anima intellectiva* (ed. Mandonnet, 1899, p. 107, 28: 2nd part 1908, p. 165): “Natura quae in esse suo separata est a materia, non multiplicatur multiplicatione materiae . . . Ergo [anima intellectiva] non debet multiplicari multiplicatione materiae neque multiplicatione corporum humanorum.”

2 Namely, in Book III of his unpublished treatise *Quaestiones in libros tres de anima*, edited by F. van Steenberghen and published by the Institut supérieur de Philosophie de l’Université de Louvain in the collection *Les Philosophes Belges; Textes et études*, XII/1 (1931). *Ibid.*, XII/2 (1942) has the important commentary by the editor, “Siger dans l’histoire de l’aristotélisme.” (Both volumes were presented to me as a gift by Professor Van Steenberghen.) On pp. 660–61 he remarks: “Our philosopher remains faithful to the fundamental principle of the peripatetics, according to whom a separate form could not be numerically multiplied; on the other hand, the hesitations of *De anima intellectiva* concerning monopsychism resulted in his abandonment of the pernicious heresy. . . . The doctrine of the intellectual soul which the author of the *Quaestiones* proposes is quite close to that of St. Thomas. Nevertheless, certain formulations are different, and one can blame Siger’s technical vocabulary for his long opposition to the thesis of the substantial union.”

pure form-substance (*ousia*). And he did not let this *nous* count for “soul” since the latter is always the “form of a body.”

Aristotle’s “metaphysical psychology” did indeed result in the denial of the individual “immortality” of the human soul. And that was sufficient to make the Aristotelian principle of individuation a target for fierce criticism from the side of the Augustinian school.

The whole controversy, so typical of scholasticism, always moved within the framework of the Greek form-matter motive, despite its accommodation to the Roman Catholic motive of nature and grace. No critique was ever leveled at the *religious root* of Aristotelian metaphysics that had given birth to the unacceptable consequences regarding individuality. Nor was the metaphysical substance-concept beneath this view of individuality ever subjected to a transcendental critique from a truly Scriptural ground-motive.

The latter is even more striking because the older Augustinian school in scholasticism, in the main, held to the view of the great church father that the *naturalis ratio*, in its search for eternal truth, cannot possess autonomy over against the light of the divine Word-revelation of which we can partake only in faith. This tells us that the Augustinian school, too, had no insight into the real point of connection between Christian belief and philosophic thought. It failed to see that the Scriptural ground-motive of the Christian religion must set in motion an *inner reformation* of all philosophical and scientific thought.

Augustinian scholastics continued to pay homage to the typical scholastic standpoint of accommodation: they too aspired, not to a reformation of philosophy as such, but to a synthesis of Greek philosophy and church doctrine. To these scholastics—in contrast with Augustine himself—Rome’s ground-motive of nature and grace had become second nature.¹ And for that reason the whole

1 By way of illustration only, we cite here two statements by Henry of Ghent, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 2, n. 26: “Nunc autem ita est, quod homo ex puris naturalibus attingere non potest ad regulas lucis aeternae, ut in eis videat sinceram veritatem . . . illas deus offert quibus vult et quibus vult substrahit.” *Ibid.*, n. 5: “Sed in illa [*scl.* incommutabili veritate] nihil vidimus nisi speciali illustratione divina, quia ipse excedit limites naturae nostrae” (ital. mine, H. D.). (Now the situation is this, that man cannot, purely by his natural abilities, attain to the rules of eternal light in order to behold the pure truth . . . these God offers to whom he will and he withholds them from whom he will. . . . But in

battle between Augustinianism and Thomism became barren and fruitless for Christian thought.

i. The battle against Thomas' doctrine of individuation and the initial condemnation of it by church authority

With great acuity, both John Peckham and William de la Mare, from the school of Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, combated Thomas' doctrine of individuation with the weapons of Augustinian scholasticism. They considered themselves the defenders of church doctrine.

On March 7, 1277 Stephan Tempier, bishop of Paris, rejected 219 theses, mostly Averroistic. Among them were also a few theses of Thomas, especially his doctrine of the *principium individuationis*. The condemned theses read as follows:

That, because the pure intellects [the angels] have no matter, God could not create more of the same species.

That God cannot multiply the individuals of one species without matter.

That forms are not amenable to division except through matter.¹

Other Thomist theses, in particular those concerning the unity of the ontic form in man, had already been condemned by the strictly Augustinian Dominican Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and by his immediate successor in this chair, John Peckham.

In this way church authority took part in the philosophical battle on a scholastic basis by officially condemning the Thomist doctrine of individuality—that is to say, the same doctrine that Roman Catholic church authority was later to sanction by implication, for the sake of the same scholastic dogma regarding the “individual immortality of the *anima rationalis*.” Nothing demonstrates more

the unchangeable truth we see nothing except by means of a special divine enlightenment, because this goes beyond the bounds of our nature.) Quoted from Maurice De Wulf, *Histoire de la philosophie scolastique dans les Pays-Bas* (Louvain, 1895), p. 178, n. 3 and p. 179, n. 1. Subsequent quotations from Henry of Ghent's works are also taken from the work of De Wulf.

1 N. 81: “Quod quia intelligentiae non habent materiam, deus non posset facere plures eiusdem speciei.” N. 96: “Quod Deus non potest multiplicare individua sub una specie sine materia.” N. 191: “Quod formae non recipiunt divisionem nisi per materiam.” Quoted from H. Denifle, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1889–1897), 1:543 ff., and Pierre Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme latin au xiième siècle*, 2nd ed. (Louvain, 1908), pp. 175–91.

clearly the dangers of entangling Christian articles of faith in the dilemmas of an accommodated Greek metaphysics.

*j. Negation and form as an individuating principle
in the school of Henry of Ghent*

As scholasticism developed further, a different stance with regard to the problem of individuation remained one of the most prominent points in the struggle of the Augustinian spirit against the Thomist mind.

Since Alexander of Hales the older Franciscan school generally clung strictly to the Augustinian view regarding the real connection of form and matter as *principium individuationis*. It must be granted here that they, at least in part, increasingly emphasized the co-individuating role of matter as regards the *composita*.

Outside this religious order we find the form principle back again among some scholastics who were wholly or partly oriented to Augustine. They made it the individuating principle, either *per se*, or in connection with the Platonic principle of negation (*thateron*).

Once again the polarizing effect of the form-matter motive, so sharply formulated by Bonaventure, became manifest. The dilemma whether form or matter is the *principium individuationis* remained. Attempts to surmount it were shipwrecked, one after the other, upon the common pseudo-premise of scholastic metaphysics: the concept of being. We saw how this concept remained permeated by the dialectical ground-motive of Greek philosophy and thus could not contain real unity above the polar contradiction.

Henry of Ghent (d. 1293), the Flemish “doctor solemnis,” was one of the most prominent figures in the Augustinian school of thirteenth-century scholasticism outside of the Franciscan order. He combated Thomas’ Aristotelian doctrine concerning the *principium individuationis* with weapons derived from Plato’s dialogue the *Sophist*. According to him, the individuating principle is not located in matter, as Thomas taught, but in *negation*, inasmuch as form is created in the *suppositum* (the individual substance as subject), that is, as undivided, individual, singular, indivisible, and different from the countless other forms of being. Real individuality, therefore, hails from form, but only by exclusion of any identity with other forms of being.

Henry of Ghent elaborated further on the Platonic doctrine as found in the *Sophist*. The negation that establishes individuality, he wrote, is of a dual character: inwardly it excludes any possible multiplication and diversity of form; outwardly it excludes any identity with other forms.¹ Matter and quantity cannot be the proper basis and cause of individuation, according to him.² The question why the “substance” is ontologically individual and single through negation is a question that the Flemish scholastic does not deem amenable to a “metaphysical solution.” Only God knows this in His wisdom as Creator.³

In the Platonic-Augustinian line, Henry of Ghent also rejected the Neoplatonic-Thomist doctrine that there is an “idea of the individual” creature in the divine *Logos*: the divine creative idea of the species has universality and so includes also the individual. There are therefore no special ideas of the individual creatures in God.⁴

Instead, he adopts an idea of his own regarding the matter of sensory things in the mind of God.⁵ But this implied again, as in all of Augustinian scholasticism, a view of the *prima materia* that was fundamentally different from that in Aristotelian Thomism.

Henry’s pupil Godfrey of Fontaines (d. 1309) already showed a strong rapprochement with Thomism, especially in his epistemol-

1 *Quodlibeta*, V, Q. 8 (vol. I, p. 246, col. 2): “Est igitur dicendum, quod in formis creatis specificis, ut specificae sunt, ratio individuationis ipsarum, qua determinantur in suppositis, et quae est ratio constitutiva suppositi, est negatio, qua forma ipsa . . . ut est terminus factionis, facta est indivisa omnio in supposito et individualis et singularis privatione omnis divisibilitatis per se et per accidens et a quolibet alio divisa. Quae quidem negatio non est simplex, sed duplex, quia est removens ab intra omnem plurificabilitatem et diversitatem, et ab extra omnem identitatem.”

2 *Ibid.*, II, Q. 8, pl. 54: “Patet igitur clarissime, quod materia et quantitas non possunt dici praecisa ratio et causa individuationis.”

3 *Ibid.*, II, Q. 8, fol. 56: “Sed quales secundum substantiam sint differentes nescimus; solus autem deus, qui fecit eos, novit.”

4 *Ibid.*, V, Q. 3 (vol. 1, p. 230, col. 3): “individua proprias ideas in Deo non habent.”

5 *Ibid.*, I, Q. 10 (vol. 1, p. 13, col. 3): “Immo ipsa [materia] est susceptibilis esse per se tamquam per se creabile et propriam habens ideam in mente creatoris . . . actione creatoris spoliari potest ab omni forma” (As such, matter is susceptible of being-in-itself [as substance], of being created by itself and having its own idea in the mind of the Creator . . . It can be divested of every [complete] form by action of the Creator).

ogy and in his stance against the “primacy of the will.” But in spite of that he persisted in rejecting the Thomist-Aristotelian standpoint at important points and particularly as regards the problem of individuation. According to Godfrey, the *principium individuationis* lies in the substantial form. For a substantial difference between individuals can never spring from the “*materia quantitate signata*”; the latter only gives rise to an *accidental* difference between individuals, otherwise they would be merely “*plura quanta*,” not “*plures substantiae*.”¹ This criticism hardly touched Thomas, however, since he did not seek the individuating principle in the accidental category of quantity as such, as we saw earlier, but in matter as substantial principle in its quantitative divisibility.

k. The dangers of this view for scholasticism: nominalism

On the Thomist standpoint, one forever faced the following question: How can the substantial form individuate itself? One feared—not without cause—the consequences of a theory that sought the *principium individuationis* in the “form.” In the form-matter framework of Aristotelian metaphysics, after all, form must play the role of *law* in the sense of defining the being of substance or of accident.² However, if ultimately form were completely individualized in itself as a type of law, it would no longer be able to fulfill its defining and delimiting function vis-à-vis “matter.” This immediately posed the threat of nominalism: namely, a denial of the reality of the universal determinants of being in the individual thing, and a complete degrading of all law-conformity to subjective mental constructions, resulting in the erasure of the metaphysical boundary between *essentia* and *existentia*.

1 See B. Hauréau, *Histoire de la philosophie scolastique* (Paris, 1880), 2/2, p. 149, n. 1: “Ergo si in duobus individuis non sit alia et alia forma substantialis, sed solum accidentalis, quae est quantitas . . . unum individuum differet ab alio solum accidentaliter sive secundum formam accidentalem, et essent plura secundum quantitatem sive plura quanta, et non secundum substantiam sive non essent plures substantiae, quod est manifestum inconueniens.”

2 On this, see Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 114, where he discusses the relation of the Thomist substance-concept to the concept of law, according to which the form principle is likewise identified with the real law-principle. Note also his statement on p. 542: “The law of the body is the soul” (namely, as form).

The scholastic standpoint made it impossible to see the right relation between law and subject. And so one faced the dilemma whether to have the individual subject spring from “matter” or from “form.”

Godfrey of Fontaines, no more than his teacher Henry of Ghent, answered the question how it is ontologically possible that the individuating principle can be found in the form principle. Both refer here to divine creative wisdom: God creates real things, and these have only *individual* existence. The universal determinants of being, says Godfrey, do not really exist; they are only construed as such by the intellect.¹

This was not necessarily meant in a nominalistic sense, yet it opened the door for the peril of nominalistic consequences. For they neglected to give the same emphasis to the universal determinants of the being of a thing as equally a part of God’s creative work.

Once one had started to infect the Scriptural idea of creation with the Greek form-matter motive, all kinds of dangers loomed. The “form” was allowed to fulfill a function which imperiled its special significance for “matter.” On the other hand, as we have seen, no less grave dangers lurked in the Aristotelian-Thomist standpoint.

Meanwhile, relocating the individuating principle in form indicated an obvious tendency to break with the religious depreciation of individuality in the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine described above.

The older Franciscan school of Oxford was quite interested in experimental natural science and mathematics. Its members had already given complete priority to the individuality of empirical objects rather than to the universal in *genera* and *species*. Roger Bacon, a contemporary of Bonaventure, even went so far as to characterize the whole question regarding a *principium individuationis* as

1 Cf. Hauréau, *op. cit.*, p. 150, n. 1: “Res non existunt nisi singulariter prout nomine proprio significantur: communiter autem sive secundum suam communitatem non existunt, sed solum intelliguntur, et sic etiam nomine communi generis vel speciei significantur.”

foolish, and to seek the basis for individual existence exclusively in the creative act of God.¹

On the standpoint of nominalism, of course, the metaphysical problem of the individuating principle is gone. But so long as one retained Greek ontology with its form-matter motive, the elimination of this metaphysical problem had to call forth the quite justifiable resistance of all scholastics who rejected the nominalistic standpoint. *To be able to see the problem concerning the principle of individuation as a problem falsely put, Christian thinkers first had to regain the Scriptural view of the relation between law and subject.* And this was impossible within the framework of the form-matter theme. Thus it cannot surprise us that the question of the individuating principle came under discussion again, with full metaphysical acuity, in the younger Franciscan school of Oxford founded by Duns Scotus.

This “doctor subtilis” was, according to Wilhelm Dilthey, the keenest thinker medieval scholasticism ever produced. Duns Scotus (c. 1270–1308) must be seen as the renovator of the Augustinian tradition in the older Franciscan school of Alexander of Hales, albeit in a direction that accentuated the infiltration that was already noticeable of Aristotelian-Thomist notions.

In his epistemology Scotus rejected the Augustinian doctrine of illumination and already fully accepted the autonomy of the *naturalis ratio*, albeit that he, unlike Thomas, left very little intact of a *theologia naturalis*. According to the tradition of the Oxford Franciscans, his concept of science was oriented to *mathesis*, which made him draw the boundaries of natural reason much narrower than Thomas did. At least in part of his writings he does not deem it possible to prove rationally the immortality of the *anima rationalis* and its origin in divine creation.²

1 Assenmacher, op. cit., p. 26, note 3: “Ista quaestio est stulta, quum supponit, nihil aliud posse reperiri quod causat individuum, nisi species et aliquid cum specie. Et cum quaeritur . . . quid est causa individuationis, quaerendum est ab illis, quid facit universalis eorum esse universalis . . . et non possunt dicere quod creator facit quod libet, secundum quod proprietas eius exigit et ideo materiam primam fecit singularem. . . .”

2 On the other hand he defended the provability of these theses in his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, XII, Q. 2, no. 2; Q. 10, no. 2; *De rerum principio*, Q.

Duns Scotus, however, remained the defender of the older Augustinian body of thought of the Franciscan Order with respect to a whole series of mutually related points, which he placed in opposition to the Aristotelian-Thomist views with new, trenchant arguments. In this regard he remained the representative of the anti-Thomist viewpoint nurtured by a Franciscan spirit.

After Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure had revived the Augustinian view of the *principium individuationis*, Scotus' doctrine concerning this *principium* may be seen, I think, as an attempt to sharpen and deepen this view metaphysically.¹ If the individuating principle is the real connection of form and matter in all creatures without distinction, also in the case of "spiritual substances," then an individual distinction (*differentia individualis*) must be present in the real being of the creatures themselves.

Therefore, the *principium individuationis* can reside neither in form nor in matter. It must be located in the being of substance itself. Duns Scotus emphatically defends the thesis in opposition to Thomas that not an imperfection but a perfection is to be seen in the individuality of composite substances. For individual existence as "ultima realitas" cannot be seen as an imperfection.² The older

10, Art. 1, no. 3 ff. (which, however, is probably not by Scotus); and his *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, Q. 21, no. 15.

- 1 Duns Scotus' individuality doctrine has been interpreted in just about the same way by P. Mingos, "Suarez und D. Scotus," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 39 (1929): 337, and by T. Klug, "Die Lehre des Joh. Duns Scotus über Materie und Form nach den Quellen dargestellt," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 27 (1917): 58, and both against the well-known interpretation of Suarez which holds that Scotus sought the principle of individuation in form.
- 2 In *Sententia* (Paris, 1893) [this is the large commentary by Scotus on the Sentences of Peter Lombard], II, Dist. III, Q. 6: "sicut unitas in communi sequitur entitatem in communi, ita quaecumque unitas per se consequitur aliquam entitatem: ergo unitas simpliciter qualis est unitas individui consequitur per se aliquam entitatem; non autem consequitur per se entitatem naturae, quia illius est aliqua unitas propria et per se realis, ut probatum est: igitur consequitur entitatem aliam determinantem istam: et illa faciet unum per se cum entitate naturae, quia totum, cuius haec est unitas, perfectum est de se." (As the unity in the commonality follows the entity in the commonality, so every substantial unity follows a certain entity: therefore the substantial unity, which is the unity of the individual in itself, follows a certain entity; however, it does not as such follow the entity of a thing's [universal] nature, because this

Franciscan school at Oxford, with its traditional strong interest in empirical natural science and its greater appreciation of individuality, acquired no more than a deeper metaphysical foundation in Duns Scotus.

The *ens individuant*, as the ultimate metaphysical foundation of individuality in the things themselves, is the so-called *haecceitas*. Just as *animal* (a sensory living being) becomes *homo* (a human being) when (sensory) “being alive” is joined by the specific differentiation of *humanitas*, so *homo* in turn becomes Socrates when individual differentiation, “*Socratitas*” (the being of Socrates), joins the generic and specific entities. Undoubtedly, Aristotelian logic is speaking here, not Platonic dialectics. Therefore, if the *entia individuantia* are the true principles that individuate, then the “form” may not be identified with the “universal,” as in Aristotelian Thomism. Rather, in this case form and matter are equally individualized in the individual substance through the *haecceitas*. Henry of Ghent’s principle of negation is thus replaced by a positive definition of being. Duns Scotus, on the basis of scholastic ontology with its transcendental definitions, defends the thesis that the transcendental predicate of unity can only be ascribed to a positive entity, and that every special positive entity also possesses its special unity proper to it alone.

From this it follows that also the individual unity as the ultimate unity of a thing must be grounded in a positive entity, which as such is formally different from the universal nature of the individual.

It was long assumed, in the footsteps of Suarez, that Duns Scotus sought the individuating principle in form. But though this is not so, one can nevertheless say that the founder of the younger school of Franciscans accentuates individuality as the individual form, in contrast to Bonaventure. Accordingly, he writes that the individual form is the first distinctive (distinguishing) principle and determines the nature of the thing in numerical unity.

has its own real proper unity, as has been shown; hence it follows another unity, which is determined by that of nature, and this endows a thing with [individual] substantial unity, because the whole, of which it is the unity, is perfect in and of itself.)

The great Scottish scholastic forcefully resisted the nominalistic consequences of the individuation of form *qua* form. He wished to stay completely on a “realistic foundation.” According to him, the essential ontic types of things have, just as they had for Thomas, a three-fold reality: *ante rem* as the creative idea in the divine mind, *in re* as *essentia* or *quidditas* of the thing, and *post rem* as the mental concept of a thing. As nominalism would have it, all scientific knowledge is directed to what is universal, which exists purely in human thinking without any foundation in the reality of things. If this were true, metaphysics and science in general, according to Scotus, would end up as logic.¹ The individual substance is *one* in its being. The human intellect can abstract the *genera, species* and *differentiae specificae* as general metaphysical degrees of being (*gradus metaphysici*) from this natural unity of being through the so-called “*distinctio formalis ex natura rei*.” In the same way “*haecceitas*,” the “individual differentiation,” can be abstracted from the nature of the thing through formal distinction as the positive individual degree of being that is added to the general degrees of being.²

A sharpening of the realistic standpoint reveals itself here even vis-à-vis Thomas.

1. *The epistemological difference between the views of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus*

According to Thomas, the universal has real existence in the individual *composita* only as to its content and foundation (*fundamentaliter*), while it acquires actual existence only in the human soul as “pure form” (*formaliter*). The latter occurs through an inner transformation of the material *individuum* in the sensory image (*phantasma*), after which the sensory image, received by the passive intellect, is transformed into a “pure form” by the active intellect (*intellectus agens*).

1 *Theoremata subtilissima*, IV, note 1: “ita quod universalia non sunt fictiones intellectus, tunc enim nunquam in quid praedicarentur de re extra, nec ad definitionem pertinerent, nec metaphysica differet a logica; immo omnis scientia esset logica.”

2 *Scholium ad Sententiam*, II, Dist. 3 (part 1), Art. 2, Q. 2, note 2: “entitas essentiae specificae superaddita et ex parte rei formaliter ab ipsa distincta-differentia individualis [haecceitas] sicut natura specifica per differentiam specificam ita individuum per haecceitatem.”

The activity of thinking, which accomplishes an abstraction from matter and individuality here, is not conceived as a purely *logical* but as an *ontological* abstraction. It totally transforms the purely sensorially given into a “purely spiritual” being. The sensory image is only “potentially” present in the “individual thing”; and the universal form in turn is present in the sensory image only “potentially,” that is, as a possibility. The “potential” must be elevated to “actuality” by an activity of a higher order. And this is only brought about, where it concerns the *universalia*, through the conceptualizing active intellect. This epistemological standpoint is inseparably linked to the Aristotelian-Thomist ontology and the substance-concept rooted in it. If the “material substance” as such has no relation to human knowledge, which as knowledge of concepts is exclusively directed towards the “universalia,” and if this substance and its “being” is composed of “form” and “matter,” actuality and potentiality, then human knowing must indeed be an inner process of transformation, whereby these “material forms,” which as such are merely embodied in a material-individual substance, are transformed into an entirely different, “purely spiritual” manner of being.¹

At this juncture, however, Duns Scotus is more “realistic” than Thomas. Although he concedes that the *universalia* or general essences as such are not actual but only exist in individuals, yet he wants to maintain the general type in the individual thing—also formally. He does not wish it to take on a form only in the human mind in its generality. This is what Scotus means with his famous “*distinctio formalis ex natura rei*.”

1 See Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 635: “When rational knowledge thus proceeds through ‘subtraction’ and conceives only the general framework of objects—that which is common to all individual things as encompassed by the type of *genus*—then it stands to reason that the individual thing—at least directly—does not have any relation to rational knowledge. An individual entity is an object of the senses; rational knowledge merely grasps it indirectly insofar as the understanding, harking back to its action and assessing it as it is, finds there the—mutually demanded—principle of this act, namely the rational knowable form, and then the origin of this form, namely the image, and finally the origin of the image, namely the external individual entity.”

According to this view each creature has a double unity: the individual and the formal. The formal unity is founded in “formal being,” which in itself is indifferent toward individuation. It is granted that it can only become reality in individuals, but still by nature it precedes the individual as “general being.”

The individualities originate as follows. The general, essential nature adopts different individual characteristics according to the different individuals. For this reason the general essential nature of a thing must already be present *formaliter*—i.e., as a general form—in the individual substance in a real way. Thus even in the ultimate individuation the substantial form maintains its general essential characteristics which are related to human knowledge. In other words, the generic and specific peculiarities are present in things, not just potentially or *virtualiter*, as Thomas taught, but *formaliter*.

An important epistemological difference between Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas is connected with this view of the *universalia*. Whereas the Augustinian doctrine of illumination taught that the *anima rationalis* views the ideas in the divine *Logos* directly through divine enlightenment, independent of sensory perception, the Scottish scholastic sides with the Aristotelian-Thomist view that the intellect can only form the general essential concepts through abstraction from sensory perception. Nevertheless, unlike Thomas, Scotus teaches that the intellect is immediately directed to what is individual and knows this before it knows what is universal.¹ If form is not individualized by matter but is intrinsically individual through the *differentia individualis*, then also the individual difference between things must be directly intelligible, even before the general characteristics.

It is obvious that the Scotist doctrine of individuality avoided the difficulties and inner contradictions in which Thomist Aristotelianism ensnared itself with regard to the individuality of the “purely spiritual substances.” Duns Scotus followed the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition by maintaining that all created substances,

1 Cf. *De rerum principio*, Q. 13, Art. 3, n. 28–33; *ibid.*, n. 44: “Unde fundamentum originale, a quo movetur omnis cognitio, dico radicaliter est esse actuale.” (“Whence the original foundation, by which all knowledge is moved, I say radically, is an actual being.”) If it should be shown that this statement is from one of his students rather than from Scotus himself, it remains true that this is a typically Scotist way of thinking.

including the *animae rationales* and the angels, have form and matter. But in the case of spiritual substances he does not have to locate the *principium individuationis* in the “*materia spiritualis*.” The individuating principle also of human souls and angels is the “*differentia individualis*” of their essence. And Scotus tried to block the nominalistic consequences of the doctrine of the *differentia individualis* by means of an ultra-realistic theory, summarized above, concerning the formal existence of the *universalia* in individual things.

m. Critique of Scotus' individuality doctrine

Let us now look at this Scotist theory. It is clear that the Scottish scholastic tried to surmount the dilemma whether the *principium individuationis* is matter or form. He tried to do this by letting individuality spring from some sort of radical unity of substantial being. In the first section of this chapter we saw that the metaphysical substance-concept itself was taken as the “radical unity” of a thing, as a unity above the diversity of its accidental attributes, and that precisely this trait brought to light the hidden religious foundation of this concept. We also saw that the metaphysical substance-concept, rooted as it is in Greek ontology, cannot possibly offer such a radical unity above the polar contrast of the form-matter motive—just as, for that matter, inorganic things as well as plants and animals do not possess an independent radical unity.

But then Scotus' *differentia individualis* has essentially nothing to offer that would transcend the old Augustinian view concerning the real connection between form and matter as an individuating principle. He taught that the individual differentiation is added (*superadditur*) as an “ultimate definition of being” above and beyond the generic and specific essential definitions. This whole view points to the same misconception of the intrinsic *structure* of individuality as that in Aristotelian Thomism. Subjective individuality is not “added to” its intrinsic structure, which is its *law-type*. It can only reveal itself in its own structural type. Nor can it be an “ultimate definition of its being” above its structural principle, because it is only defined *in its structure*.

Since the Scotist school kept clinging to the metaphysical substance-concept within the framework of Greek ontology, it could obviously have no more insight than Thomist scholasticism into the religious radical unity of the individuality of human nature.

For this school too, the human soul remains the abstract *anima rationalis* as “spiritual substance.” The teaching of Duns Scotus stands entirely in the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition, which holds that the organic material body possesses its own independent form, the so-called *forma corporeitatis*. And only the latter makes the original matter susceptible to taking up the ultimate essential being: the *anima intellectiva*.¹

n. The Augustinian view of the “prima materia” and its significance for the view of soul and body as two substances

Earlier on we already drew attention to the view of the *prima materia* which formed the foundation of the traditional teachings of the Franciscan school and which deviated fundamentally from the Aristotelian-Thomist view. We must now take a closer look at this view because it also implied a different conception of the substance-concept, one that had already brought Augustine to adopt the view of the “material body” as a particular “substance” (albeit an incomplete one), to be distinguished from the purely spiritual substance, the *anima rationalis*, which links up with this body.

This sharpened dualistic construction of the relation between soul and body, which, as we shall see, Thomas adapted again to the Aristotelian construction, is simply not understandable from either a purely Platonic or an Aristotelian standpoint. It becomes understandable only from Augustine’s view of “prime matter.”

According to the great church father, the “earth” of which the first two verses of Genesis 1 speak is identical with the “*prima materia*” that had been created by God with no fixed form as yet, while the creation of the “heavens” refers to the purely spiritual world of angels. However, from the beginning God placed the seeds (*rationes seminales*) of corporeal creatures into the “prime matter.” The order in the temporal cosmos rests on their development—a thought derived from the Stoic doctrine of the *logoi spermatikoi*. This prime matter therefore must *as such* have had an actual independence (*ousia*), as the older Stoa had taught, and can-

1 *Reportata Parisiensia* (*Opus Parisiense*), IV, Dist. 11, Q. 3, n. 22: “sed corpus, quod est altera pars compositi hominis, pars, inquam potentialis respectu animae intellectivae, quia per illam formam corpoream organicam ultimate disponitur materia ad susceptionem animae intellectivae.”

not be viewed as a purely “potential being” (*dunamei on*), as in Aristotle. It was equipped by God from the outset with active seeds for development, out of which sprang the corporeal forms through the operation of natural *agentia*.¹

***o. The Stoic view of prima materia
as opposed to the Aristotelian view***

This conception of *prima materia* did indeed deviate radically from the mature Aristotelian view. According to the latter, “prime matter” (*protē hulē*) never has actual being, but is merely a principle of being that is the absolute opposite of the form principle. Matter does not acquire actual being except through form.

The Pythagoreans and Speusippus were said to hold that the seed is prior to plant, animal, and human life. Aristotle fought against that view because, he said, the seed derives from the completed living being, not the reverse.²

In contrast to this view, the old or early Stoa took prime matter to be a real substance (*ousia*), in which the “forms” are already potentially present as operative seeds of development (and therefore not as already completed forms). These so-called *logoi spermatikoi* are themselves of a material nature; they are the derivatives of the matter principle as operating principle (*poioun*).

The Stoics, following Heraclitus, taught that matter, as an operative principle, is divine; it is the “cause,” the origin of the individual form-things that arise. As a patient principle (*paschon*), matter is passive, inert, capable of taking on all possible forms. But the distinction between passive and active matter is only gradual: the latter is merely of a finer structure, it is a fiery *pneuma* that permeates the coarser matter as its *logos*. And this fiery *pneuma* is the Stoic deity, which therefore is itself taken as material. Active and passive

1 *De Genesi ad litteram* 2, c. II.

2 *Metaphysics* 12.7 (1072b 35–1073a 1): “For the seed comes from other things which are prior and complete, and the first thing is not the seed but the completed being.”

matter, however, are inseparable. The deity dwells in passive matter as its form-giving principle.¹

Of course this Stoic doctrine of *prima materia* first had to be thoroughly “accommodated” to the creation doctrine of the church, and to be stripped of its “materialistic” pantheistic traits in order to be made fit for “theological usage.” To this end the Stoic view of the “material” character and the material origin of the *logoi spermatikoi* had to be eliminated first.

*p. The Neoplatonic conception of the logoi spermatikoi:
no real connection between form and matter*

This elimination had already occurred in Neoplatonism, which had adopted the doctrine of the *logoi spermatikoi* while rejecting the Stoic doctrine of the *prima materia*.

Plotinus linked up with the Platonic conception of the world-soul, which is called into being by the “demiurge” as a perfect portrayal of the idea of the “living being” (*to zoon*), the prototype that comprises all possible sorts of living beings. He makes this world-soul into the third “hypostasis” or the third principle of the deity.

Its first “hypostasis” is the absolute one (*to hen*), elevated above the form of being and therefore not to be taken itself as “substance.” Like light, it radiates the second hypostasis (which is indeed *ousia* or substance) from its fullness: it is the *nous* with the fullness of the world of ideas that is contained in the being of the *logos*. From this second “hypostasis” the third one radiates: the soul, primarily the “world-soul,” in whose substance the individual human beings, animals, and plants share, but of which they are only fragments. This “world-soul” is the intelligible world of the *nous* itself according to its “being,” but it is more divided than the *nous*. It is destined in its turn, in weakened measure, to radiate into “matter” the immeasurable riches of the intelligible world with its individual ideas. In this fashion it imparts the radiation of the eternal es-

1 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 7, 134, st. v., fr. II, no. 300: δοκεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι τῶν ὅλων δύο, τὸ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ πάσχον, τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἄποιον οὐσίαν, τὴν ὑλὴν, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον, τὸν θεόν (they thought that there are two principles of origin of all things, the active and the passive, and that the latter is the nonqualitative substance, the *hylē*, the active principle being the *Logos* operative in it, that is, the deity).

sential forms to the non-divine world of the senses. These forms of being “depict” themselves fleetingly in the eternal stream of becoming, in dark matter. In the “soul” the “ideas” become *logoi*, which immediately radiate into sensory things as their form principle.

No real or substantial connection between “form” and “matter” comes into being here, as in Aristotelian metaphysics. And the “form” is *potentially* even less proper to the primary matter in the form of its *logos spermatikos* (itself material), as in the Stoic doctrine of nature.

An absolute dualism remains between the two basic principles of the Greek form-matter motive. The thing of the senses is only a transitory radiation of form in matter, according to Plotinus. This radiation does not change the *hulē* any more than light changes the air which it fills.¹ On this point Neoplatonism stays in the line of Plato, who also did not accept a substantial connection between essential form and matter in the sensory world, but took the *ousia* as completely transcendent to matter.

q. The Augustinian view is closer to the Stoic view and accepts a connection of form-potential and matter in a semi-Aristotelian spirit

The Augustinian view of the *logoi spermatikoi* concurs with the Stoic concept of matter more closely to the extent that it understands “prime matter” as being filled with *rationes seminales*. God has placed these as active potentials in prime matter from the beginning, corresponding to the proto-image of the creative ideas in the divine *Logos*. In this sense, Augustine could say that the earth is filled with “seeds,” not only of plants but also of animals.² The souls of plants and animals are taken here as real form principles (in contrast to the “rational soul” of Adam, which was created separately by God). And these form principles are created in this “prime matter” as *rationes seminales* by God. They are not, however, of a material nature themselves, as the Stoics taught, but are placed

1 *Enneads*, III, 6, 6 ff.; II, 4, 6 ff. Cf. Emile Bréhier, *Histoire de la philosophie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1928), 1:461. [Eng. trans. by W. Baskin, *The Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Chicago, 1971), p. 193.]

2 *De trinitate* 7.8.3. Cf. the entire third book of *De Genesi ad litteram*.

in this matter as immaterial active potentials, dependent on matter.¹ This notion of making the *logoi* immaterial undoubtedly follows the Neoplatonic line.

But Augustine accepts a substantial connection between form-potential and matter in an Aristotelian sense, and with that he deviates fundamentally from both Plato and Neoplatonism. And on this foundation the view of *prima materia* was developed in Augustinian scholasticism.

According to Henry of Ghent it is a real substrate that is capable of taking up forms and corresponds to a particular creative idea in the divine *Logos*.² In typical scholastic fashion no less than a three-fold being is then distinguished in matter: [i] an *esse simpliciter* or *esse primum*, which it possesses through a certain participation in God's being insofar as it is the work of God through creation;³ [ii] an *esse secundum*, through which it has the capacity to take up

- 1 This is the way that Bonaventure, invoking the same places cited above, interpreted the viewpoint of Augustine; see his *In Sententiam*, II, Dist. 15, Art. 1, Q. I (ed. cit., 4:217): "seminalis enim ratio, sive potentia activa ipsius materiae est ipsi materiae concreata, non ex aliquo producta . . . Ad id quod quaeritur, quod si ex aliquo, illud est aut spirituale, aut corporale, dicendum quod non est materia spiritualis, nec est materia corporalis: sed est quaedam potentia spiritualis indita a Creatore ipsae materiae corporali, et ei innitens, et ab ea dependens." (For the *ratio seminalis* or active potency of matter itself is created with matter, not brought forth out of something. As to the question whether, if it were brought forth out of something, it would be spiritual or bodily by nature, it should be said that it is neither a spiritual nor a bodily matter; but rather it is a certain spiritual potential which the Creator himself places in the bodily matter, and which is founded upon and dependent upon this matter.)
- 2 *Quodlibeta* I, Q. 10 (Venetian ed., vol. I, p. 13, col. 3): "Immo ipsa [materia] est susceptibilis esse per se tamquam per se creabile et propriam habens ideam in mente creatoris . . . actione creatoris spoliari potest ab omni forma" (As such, matter is susceptible of being *per se* [as substance], of being created by itself and having its own idea in the mind of the Creator . . . It can be divested of every [completed] form by action of the Creator). Ibid., p. 14, col. 2: "Ipso etiam deo conservante quod in ipsa potest creare absque omni actione formae, potest habere a sua natura, quod sit aliquid in actu subsistens, licet non in tam perfecto actu, qualem habet in composito sub forma." (Since God himself preserves it so that He can create in it without any working of form, matter can have a truly independent existence due to its own nature, though its reality is not as complete as it is in the *compositum* under a form.)
- 3 This is posited against the dedivinization of matter by Plato and Aristotle and to a certain extent in agreement with the Stoics.

forms (*quo est formarum quaedam capacitas*) and which it possesses by nature insofar as it is distinct from form; and finally [iii] an *esse tertium*, which matter receives from form insofar as the latter perfects the potential of matter. This is the nature of the being that matter has in its complete reality (*in actu*) and by which it possesses a perfect actual existence.¹ Bear in mind that “form” is understood here as “the completed form,” not the *ratio seminalis* as active form-potential of matter.

Duns Scotus likewise utilizes this view of matter. He too understands *materia prima* as matter insofar as it is not yet defined by the (completed) form; but in this first matter he distinguishes, largely in the line of the scholastic thinker Henry of Ghent, the following elements:

1. *Materia primo prima*, the most universal material basis of all finite existence, immediately created by God.
2. The *materia secundo prima*, i.e., the substrate of *generatio* and *corruptio* (becoming and perishing) that is altered and transformed by the created forces operating in nature (*agentia creata* or *secundaria*).
3. The *materia tertio prima*, i.e., matter that is formed through human technique (*technē*), or generally through a purely external (accidental) force, after it has already acquired a form, produced internally through nature (a substantial form), while it has not yet taken on the form conceived by the artist.

The *materia tertio prima* is then taken in the Stoic sense as an imperishable substance. The *materia secundo prima* is defined by the distinction between perishability and imperishability. The *materia tertio prima* is a *materia secundo prima* defined by natural generation.²

Again, one can clearly see how a fundamental difference with the Aristotelian-Thomist view of “prime matter” surfaces here.

Pure matter is not a bare “potential” (*dunamis*) but a certain actual substance (*aliqua res actu, aliquid actu*).³ For Henry of Ghent as well as for Duns Scotus no other matter exists than *prime* matter, which is, however, identical with all particularly formed matter (*materia prima est idem cum omni materia particulari*) and as “materia

1 *Quodlibeta* I, Q. 10 (vol. I, p. 14, col. 1).

2 This further differentiation is especially developed by the students of Scotus in *De rerum principio*, Q. 8, Art. 3, note 20.

3 *De rerum principio*, Q. 7, Art. 1, note 3.

primo prima" is one and the same in all created beings (*quod unica sit materia*).¹

r. The doctrine concerning the plurality of substantial forms. The "forma corporeitatis" and the metaphysics of light in Augustinian scholasticism

As we have already observed, the doctrine concerning the *anima rationalis* and the material body as two substances was generally accepted in Augustinian scholasticism, a view that was closely connected with the scholastically elaborated Augustinian view of this prime matter. This view was combined here with the assumption of several substantial forms in one and the same "composite substance." In Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus the Aristotelian view concerning the unity of the substantial form in the *composita* had penetrated to the extent that these thinkers presumed the existence of two *formae substantiales* only for the human being (as *compositum* of the *anima rationalis* and the material body), that is, a *forma corporeitatis* (or *forma mixtionis*) and the *anima rationalis* as the final form of being of the human body.² In Bonaventure we still find the doctrine concerning the plurality of the independent forms embraced in the widest sense where it concerns all *composita*. In him the same composite substance possesses a larger number of these forms, proportionate to the complexity of its components.

One is struck by the remarkable view here concerning the *forma corporeitatis* as the first substantial form of the material body. It is a

1 *Ibid.*, Q. 8, Art. 4, note 30.

2 In contrast to Bonaventure and most of the other Augustinian scholastics of the older Franciscan school, Henry of Ghent holds to the Aristotelian-Thomist understanding of the unity of the substantial form for the other *composita*. In addition he assigns to human beings a *forma corporeitatis* or a *forma mixtionis* alongside the *anima rationalis*. So humans are understood to be a composite of *materia prima*, *forma corporeitatis* and *anima rationalis*. Cf. *Quodlibeta* IV, 9, 13 (vol. I, p. 167, col. 1): "Cum ergo terminus proprius divinae actionis sit anima rationalis, oportet quod terminus actionis humanae sit aliqua forma substantialis alia in homine" and *Quodlibeta* III, Q. 6 (*ibid.*, vol. I, p. 89, col. 4): "sic ergo in homine vegetativum et sensitivum infusa sunt cum intellectivo et adveniunt composito ex materia et forma naturali de potentia materiae producta." These quotations show that Henry of Ghent, as well as Duns Scotus, adhered to the doctrine of psycho-creationism as well as to the Augustinian doctrine of *prima materia* with its *rationes seminales*. Augustine himself could never come to a definite choice between psycho-creationism and traducianism.

view that was still held by the trailblazer of Aristotelianism in high scholasticism, Thomas' teacher, Albertus Magnus, and even by Thomas himself in the earlier period of his development (in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard).

This form of corporeity was of astral origin, identical with light such as God created after the "*prima materia*" as the first form-giving principle of corporeity, a view that was held in common by the Franciscan bishop of Lincoln Robert Grosseteste, by Bonaventure, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

This latter view went back to the Neoplatonic-Augustinian and Arabian metaphysics of light, which acquired an extensive elaboration in the thirteenth century, especially by Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure. Although it also found defenders outside of it, the metaphysics of light became an established body of thought in the Franciscan school and shared this with the doctrine of the multiple substantial forms in things and with the Augustinian-Stoic theory concerning the *prima materia*.

Grosseteste, like Augustine, understood light (*lux*) to be an extremely fine material substance that approximated the immaterial substances in the closest manner. It is the bearer of power and its operations; it can generate and multiply itself and instantaneously diffuse itself in all directions outside of time in the shape of a sphere.¹ The three-dimensional extension of space itself is but a function of light and its laws of operation.

This light, then, is seen as a metaphysical substance of which empirical light (*lumen*) is but a corporeal product. The bishop of Lincoln now identifies this light rather fuzzily with the first substantial form of corporeity (*forma corporalis* or *corporeitatis*). Light is the first form that was created in the *materia prima*.² According to Grosseteste the entire cosmos is the self-unfolding of the one light

1 Grosseteste, *Hexameron*, as explained by Ludwig Baur, "Das Licht in der Naturphilosophie des Robert Grosseteste," in *Festschrift für Georg von Hertling* (Munich, 1913), p. 46: "[lux] significat enim substantiam corporalem subtilissimam et incorporeitati proximam, naturaliter sui ipsius generativam." See also Grosseteste, *De luce* (ed. Baur), p. 51, 11: "Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit, ita ut a puncto lucis sphaera lucis quamvis magna subito generetur, nisi obsistat umbrosum."

2 *De luce*, p. 51, 10: "Formam primam corporalem, quam quidam corporeitatem vocant, lucem esse arbitror." *Ibid.*, p. 52, 15: "Lux est ergo prima forma corporalis. Lux ergo, quae est prima forma in materia prima creata."

principle, following immanent laws.¹ Light is also, as Augustine taught, the instrument by which the soul operates upon the body.²

In Bonaventure we find this metaphysical light-theory outlined and philosophically clarified, albeit not in the mathematical and natural-scientific elaboration that Grosseteste gave it.³ According to him, light is not itself a body because no single body, such as light, is a pure form. He does not wish to call it an extremely fine corporeal substance in any real sense, as Grosseteste did, following Augustine, because all created substances, both “corporeal” and “spiritual,” are composed of form and matter.

Therefore, if light is “form” it cannot itself be a body but only “something of the body,” namely the first and most important substantial form of all corporeality.⁴ In this case light is taken *in abstracto*. If one joins Augustine and takes it *in concreto*, one is referring to the “luminous substance,” i.e., the fine corporeal substance

1 *De luce*, p. 57, 5: “Et in hoc sermone forte manifesta est intentio dicentium ‘omnia esse unum ab unius lucis perfectione’ et intentio dicentium ‘ea, quae sunt multa, esse multa ab ipsius lucis diversa multiplicatione.’ ”

2 Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 3.5: “anima per lucem, id est ignem et aerem, quae sunt similia spiritibus, corpus administrat.”

3 Cf. L. Baur, “Das Licht in der Naturphilosophie des Robert Grosseteste,” pp. 41–55.

4 *In Sententia*, II, Dist. 13, Art. 2, Q. 1: “Nullum corpus potest esse pura forma: si ergo lux formam dicit, non potest esse lux ipsum corpus, sed aliquid corporis, si enim lux esset ipsum corpus, cum lucis sit ex seipsa seipsam multiplicare, aliquod corpus posset seipsum multiplicare ex se sine appositione materiae aliunde: quod est impossibile alicui creaturae, cum materia non habeat educi nisi per creationem.” (Not a body there is which can be pure form; so if light means form, then light itself cannot be a body, but only something of the body. For if light itself were a body, then the fact that light by nature can multiply itself would imply that a body could multiply itself without the help of matter, which is impossible for a creature since matter can come into being only by creation.) This passage clearly shows agreement with Grosseteste’s doctrine concerning the self-multiplication of light. *Ibid.*, Q. 2: “Verum est enim quod lux cum sit forma nobilissima inter corporalia, sicut dicunt philosophi et Sancti, secundum cuius participationem maiorem et minorem, sunt corpora magis et minus entia, est substantialis forma.” (It is indeed true that light is a substantial form, given that it is, as the philosophers and the saints say, the noblest form among corporeal bodies, bodies which are greater or lesser beings according to their greater or lesser participation in light.)

in which light reveals itself as form. This substance is then identical with “fire” as “element.”¹

Light is the form of substantial bodies whose grade and rank are determined by their degree of participation in it.²

Light is the form *common* to all bodies through which the general acquisition of form in matter takes place. At the same time other forms, i.e., the elementary and mixed forms, determine the *special* taking on of form.³ By “elementary forms” scholasticism meant the substantial forms of elementary matter which they believed were found, according to the primitive Greek view, in fire, air, water and earth. All material bodies were supposedly “mixtures” of these “elements.” The *mixtum* has then again a specific “mixed form.”

Light as the first and common substantial form of all bodies, which gives the luminous body its being, cannot be observed by the senses. The light radiance (*fulgor, lumen*) that can be perceived by the senses is merely an accidental effect of light, not light itself.⁴

Therefore, according to Bonaventure, the bodily substances have a plurality of substantial forms, and with this view he remained entirely in line with the Franciscan tradition. It was in sharp contrast to the Aristotelian and the mature Thomist conceptions of the unity of the independent forms within a substance.

The light form may be the form common to all bodies, but in the complex of substantial forms it is by no means an imperfect disposition that arose just to be perfected by the highest form. Rather, it plays a central and dominating role in the body, inasmuch as it sus-

1 *Ibid.*, Art. 2, Q. 1, conclusion: “Lux secundum abstractionem concepta corpus non est, sed simplex forma: in concretionem vero accepta, corpus dici potest.” *Ibid.*: “Vocat enim ibi lucem quod nos vocamus ignem.”

2 *Ibid.*, Art. 2, Q. 2: “Lux est forma substantialis corporum, secundum cuius maiorem et minorem participationem corpora habent verius et dignius esse in genere entium.” Cf. *ibid.*: “Verum est enim, . . . est substantialis forma” [full Latin text and translation is given two footnotes earlier].

3 *Ibid.*, Dist. 13, divisio textus: “Et quoniam duplex est informatio materiae corporalis quaedam generalis per formam communem omnibus corporalibus, et haec est forma lucis; specialis vero per alias formas, sive elementares, sive mixtionis.”

4 *Ibid.*, Dist. 13, Art. 2, Q. 2: “fulgor qui est circa corpus luminosum, qui consequitur existentiam lucis in tali materia, et qui etiam est sensus obiectum, et operis instrumentum: et sic est accidentale complementum.”

tains every other form, gives it its power to operate, and defines its value and excellence in the series of bodily forms.¹

s. Bonaventure's view of the relation between soul and body

Bonaventure's view of the relation between "soul" and "body" only makes sense in terms of this metaphysical foundation. To be sure, he takes over the Aristotelian and Thomist formula of the *anima rationalis* as the "form" of the human material body,² but he interprets it in the Augustinian, pseudo-Platonic sense: the "rational soul" is composed of form and (spiritual) matter, in contrast to the "plant and animal soul,"³ and is connected to the body as "*perfectio et motor*" (as its perfecting and moving principle).⁴

The basis for this union is located in a desire (*appetitus*) of one towards the other: the "soul" desires to perfect the nature of the body; and the organic body (*corpus organicum*), which already is

1 *Ibid.*, Dist. 13, Art. 2, at 5: "Forma enim lucis nun ponitur in eodem corpore cum alia forma, sicut dispositio imperfecta, quae nata sit perfici per ultimam formam: sed ponitur tamquam forma, et natura omnis alterius corporalis formae conservativa, et dans agendo efficaciam et secundum quam attenditur cuiuslibet formae corporalis mensura in dignitate et excellentia."

2 *Ibid.*, Dist. 17, Art. 1, Q. 3 (*Fundamenta*): "Item anima naturaliter est forma corporis."

3 *Ibid.*, Dist. 17, Art. 1, Q. 2: "anima rationalis, cum sit hoc aliquid et per se nata subsistere . . . habeat intra se fundamentum suae existentiae et principium materiale, a quo habet existere, et formale a quo habet esse." *Ibid.*: "Sed quia anima brutalis propriam operationem non habet nec est nata per se subsistere, non videtur, quod habeat materiam intra se." *Ibid.*: "Cum igitur principium, a quo est fixa existentia creaturae in se, sit principium materiale: concedendum est animam humanam materiam habere: illa tamen materia sublevata est supra esse extensionis, et supra esse privationis et corruptionis: et ideo dicitur materia spiritualis."

4 *Ibid.*, Dist. 8, Part 1, Art. 1, Q. 2: "quod cum anima uniatur corpori ut perfectio et ut motor quaedam sunt operationes, quae consequuntur ipsam animam in corpore ut est motor, quaedam ut perfectio, quaedam partim sic et partim sic." Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 76, Art. 4, formulates this standpoint (which he opposes) in the following way: "anima non movet corpus per esse suum, secundum quod unitur corpori ut forma, sed per potentiam motivam, cuius actus praesupponit iam corpus effectum in actu per animam" (the soul does not move the body by its nature, by virtue of which it is united with the body as form, but rather by a moving capability, whose realization presupposes the body which is made actual by the soul).

composed of form and matter, has a desire to take on its highest, ultimate form: the *anima rationalis*. The latter therefore unites with an already “formed body,” which, according to the Greek notion, is a mixture of the four “elements,” fire, air, water and earth. The plurality of the substantial forms is not in conflict with the unity of the composite substance, according to Bonaventure, since both soul and body are “*substantiae incompletae*” (incomplete independent entities). The specific form of the organic body is not the ultimate target of the desire of its “matter.” The body becomes an “*ens completum*” only by taking on its highest, ultimate form, the *anima rationalis*; and in the same manner the soul, through its final formation into the material body.¹

The doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms had also been defended in Arabian philosophy, particularly by Avicenna and Averroës. Christian scholastics in general, such as Henry of Ghent, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas in his earlier period, adopted the Aristotelian doctrine of the unity of substantial form for composite substances. But even they recoiled from allowing the absorption entirely through the soul of the “*forma corporeitatis*” as “*forma communis*” for the corporeality in composite substances, as the specific form of being of the *compositum*.

According to them, the *esse* of the ‘elements’ are preserved in the material *composita* (mixta) according to the *forma corporeitatis* which does not contain any specific bodily differences (*esse elementi substantiale sine contrarietate*), yet not according to the specific form by which the substances are guaranteed their mutual contrasts and diversity, even though these last forms, as also Aristotle taught, al-

1 *Ibid.*, Dist. 17, Art. 1, Q. 2, at d: “Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod compositum ex materia et forma est ens completum, et ita non convenit ad constitutionem tertii, dicendum quod hoc non est verum generaliter: sed tunc, quando materia terminat omnem appetitum formae et forma omnem appetitum materiae, tunc non est appetitus ad aliquid extra: et ita nec possibilitas ad compositionem, quae praeexigit in componentibus appetitum et inclinationem, licet autem anima rationalis compositionem habeat ex materia et forma: appetitum tamen habet ad perficiendum corporalem materiam: sicut corpus organicum ex materia et forma compositum est, et tamen habet appetitum ad suscipiendam animam.”

ways remain preserved potentially (*virtualiter*, not *actualiter*) in the elements of the *compositum*.¹

According to this view, therefore, the human being as *compositum* has two substantial forms: *forma corporeitatis*, derived from astral light (*lux*), and the *anima rationalis*. And these “forms” are both actually present in human beings. Thus a human being as a *compositum* is composed of two “incomplete substances”: the “material body” and the “rational soul.”

This entire theory was a typical specimen of scholastic thinking applied to theology, in which the tortuous paths of theological thinking, ensnared in the substance-concept, were exposed to the glaring light of day. No matter how far one was willing to go along with the Aristotelian conception concerning the “soul” as the substantial form of the material body, one shrank back from abandoning the “independence” of the body vis-à-vis the soul and of the soul vis-à-vis the body. Church dogma confessed to the continued existence of the soul after the shedding of the body, and the resurrection of the latter. When thought through within the metaphysical framework of the substance-concept, this dogma therefore had to lead in pre-Thomist scholasticism to the doctrine of the two “independent entities.” With this, however, scholastic philosophy landed in a veritable maze of contradictions.

t. The Platonic and Aristotelian views of the relation between soul and body

At this juncture I must once more point out that the doctrine referred to was in flagrant conflict as much with the Platonic as with the mature Aristotelian conception of the substance-concept, although it attempted to unify, more or less, both conceptions. It is

1 Cf. Sertillanges, *Le Christianisme et les philosophes* (1939), pp. 240 ff., esp. about the doctrine of Albertus Magnus. See also Hoenen, *Philosophie der anorganische natur*, pp. 327–28, where this Neothomist writes: “The Arabic Aristotelians and the older scholastics, until Thomas, were almost unanimous in assuming the actual preservation of the element forms [in the *compositum*]. Almost unanimous—but with many different explanations, which for the matter of that are usually worse than abstruse. Note that, strictly speaking, the issue is not—this should not be overlooked—the preservation in the *mixtum* of the elements themselves, as substances; for then the *mixtum* of course would no longer be one substance but a mixture, an aggregate; and that is not what these philosophers wanted. To save the substantial unity of the *mixtum*, therefore, the substance of the elements were not allowed to be preserved in the *mixtum*. Nevertheless they wanted to assume a certain actual preservation of their independent forms.”

not superfluous to emphasize this, since Thomas himself later on attacked the view of the material body as a “substance” (as distinct from the *anima rationalis*), in which case the “soul” is taken as the “motor” of the “body.” He explicitly called this conception Platonian.¹ This was quite incorrect.

For Plato the *ousia* (substance) is always transcendent with respect to material things that can be perceived by the senses and whose real forms are subject to the flow of becoming. He never views the perishable material body as “substance.” Plato may assign imperishability to the “astral bodies” of the “visible gods of the heavens” (the celestial bodies), but only in connection with the soul, not as “independent entities.” Things are different with humans. In the first phase of the development of his doctrine of ideas only the “simple immortal soul” could be considered as *ousia* or substance. In the dialogue *Phaedo* the soul is still entirely identified with the theoretical thought function; later on, after the *Phaedrus* and the *Politeia* corrected this view, only the immortal rational portion of the soul is considered a substance.² However, in the dialogue *Timaeus*, which deals with the origin of the world, the soul (both the world-soul and the human soul) is sharply distinguished on the one hand from the intelligible world of the eternal *eidē* (forms of being) that have no beginning, and on the other from the visible world that does have a beginning. In conjunction with an earlier dialogue, *Philebus*, which had introduced the theory of “the mixed or composite being” formed out of *peras* and *apeiron* (form and matter), the soul is now counted as a third *genus* that takes up an intermediate position between the first two worlds mentioned, i.e., the position of an invisible composite being that has a beginning. This being owes its origin to the formative activity of the di-

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 76, Art. 4: “Respondeo dicendum quod si poneretur anima intellectiva non uniri corpori ut forma, sed solum ut motor, ut Platonici posuerunt, necesse esset dicere quod in homine esset alia forma substantialis, per quam corpus ab anima mobile in suo esse . . . constitueretur.”

2 In the *Timaeus* (34 B–36 D) the world-soul is described in more detail as a mixture of the indivisible—elevated above becoming—*οὐσία* and that which is divisible, bound to the body and subject to becoming, or as a mixture of the nature (*φύσις*) of that which is like itself (*τό ἐαυτόν*) with that of the other (*θάτερον*) and the *οὐσία* (*ousia*). So the soul is no longer completely *οὐσία*, as it was in the *Phaedo*. One should keep in mind that the “world-body” (the all-inclusive sphere of heaven), which in Plato’s view is “animated” and moved by the world-soul, is not a “*corpus organicum*” like the human body, but rather it has a divine, complete and immutable existence and still it is never called *οὐσία*.

vine *nous*, just as much as the visible things that have come into being corporeally.

The highest part of the human soul is the *logistikon*, qualified by the power of thinking. Even this is no longer a pure *ousia* according to this theory, but the product of a mixture of differing components that have been joined in a fixed mathematical harmony.

Like the rational world-soul, the human soul possesses internal movements of thinking and feeling. It is not the “pure thinking soul” that is intended only for contemplating the eternal world of the indivisible *eidē*. It also has an internal (non-sensory) function of feeling, by which it can direct itself towards the world of the corporeal and divisible. In other words, it is indeed a mixture of “form” and “ideal matter,” through which it can acquire knowledge not only of that which “eternally remains the same” (the *eidē*), but also of the diversity (*thateron*) in the corporeal, visible world. In regard to the former it can acquire real *epistēmē*, knowledge of the eidetic world; in regard to the latter it can acquire *doxai*, or notions of faith.

Only the rational portion of the soul is directly formed by the divine *demiurge* himself and possesses immortality. It is left to the “gods of heaven” (the divinely animated “planets”) to put together the other, mortal parts of the soul (the “*thumo-eides*” that know sensuous desires and are amenable to moral feelings),¹ which are bound to the material body. They also are to put this body together and connect it with the immortal portion of the soul.

In Plato’s interpretation, however, this binding is not a secure one. The material body is merely the “vehicle” (*ὄχημα*) of the soul, which contains its life-principle and exists before the body. All of human existence is an image of the eternal idea of the living being (*τό ζῶον*) that contains all that is good and beautiful.

By the same token the “*ousia*” of human beings is then located in the “rational soul.” The dualism of Plato’s conception can therefore never be that he viewed humans as a *compositum* of two “substances.” Rather it rests exclusively in the *χωρισμός* (separation) between the substantial form principle and the sensory material body. Because of that, the Aristotelian conception of substance as composed of form and matter and, by implication, the soul as the immanent substantial form of the body, remained foreign to him.

Aristotle broke with the Platonic *χωρισμός* between ontic form (*ousia*) and matter in his mature conception of the “material substance.” For him neither the *anima rationalis* nor the “material

1 For a more precise formulation, see vol. I, pp. 223–25 of the present work.

body" is an independent entity,¹ and a connection of two substances is therefore also out of the question. Only the individual person is an *ousia* in the primary sense of the word and this *ousia* is the individual animated material body. The *anima rationalis* functions here merely as the substantial form of the body. The "specific human nature" (the *eidos*) or the general human being can therefore only be called a substance in a secondary sense. Besides this, the active intellect (*nous poiētikos*), which becomes operative in the human soul "from outside," is a pure (non-individual) form-substance. But this substance to him is not the "soul."

u. The problem of the "compositum" of soul and body

As soon as scholasticism attempted to take a human being as a *compositum* of two "substances," the question, What then really makes the *compositum* itself into a substance? became insoluble. If a new "independent being" is to originate from the union of two "independent beings," then this *compositum* must also possess a new substantial form that is not identical with that of its compo-

1 In the second book of his work *De Anima* (περί ψυχῆς), which contains his mature conception, Aristotle gives two definitions of the soul, in which the first still holds on to the term *ousia* (substance), but in the more precise sense of substantial form (*eidos*) of a natural body, while the second definition of the soul speaks only in terms of the "first entelechy of a natural body, which contains the life potential." First definition: Ἀναγκαῖον, ὅρα τὴν ψυχὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι ὡς εἶδος σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει δὲ ζῶν ἔχοντος (*De Anima* 2.1 [412a 19–21]) ("Hence the soul must be a substance in the sense of the form of a natural body having life potentially in it.") Second definition, which gives a more exact description of its nature: Διὸ ἡ ψυχὴ ἔστιν ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ δυνάμει ζῶν ἔχοντος (*ibid.* 2.1 [412a 27–28]) ("That is why the soul is the first grade of actuality [entelechy] of a natural body having life potentially in it.") The entelechy is the active, determining principle (form) which together with the receptive principle (matter) forms the one indivisible substance, which is the living being. Cf. T. J. C. J. Nuyens, S.J., *Ontwikkelingsmomenten in de zielkunde van Aristoteles* (Nymegen and Utrecht, 1939), pp. 219–220. Two additional definitions follow, of which the first affirms that the earlier (second) definition applies to all living beings. Third definition: Εἰ δὲ τί κοινὸν ἐπὶ πάσης ψυχῆς δεῖ λέγειν, εἴη ἡ ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη σώματος φυσικοῦ ὁργανικοῦ (*ibid.* 2.1 [412b 4–6]) ("If, then, we are to give a general formula applicable to all kinds of soul, it would have to be that it is the first entelechy of a natural organic body.") [While Dooyeweerd and others render Greek ὁργανικοῦ "organic" or "organized," a better translation would be "instrumental" or "active."] Fourth definition: Ἡ ψυχὴ δὲ τοῦτο ᾧ ζῶμεν καὶ αἰσθανόμεθα καὶ διανοούμεθα πρώτως (*ibid.* 2.2 [414a 12–13]) ("it is the soul by which we primarily live, perceive and think.")

nents. But this *tertium* could not be demonstrated, since one had no other “form” available for the human *compositum* than the *anima rationalis*. Furthermore, both substantially united independent beings might no longer actually exist as such in the *compositum*. But the “soul” is “indestructible” as “spiritual substance” according to orthodox scholasticism, and must therefore also remain present in the *compositum* as an independent entity.

Next, how would one have to think of the “material body” as a “substance” (albeit an incomplete one) which *qua* substance should in any case be able to exist independently of the *anima rationalis*? The organic structure of the body cannot be explained from a simple chemical bond of elementary components.

The body must live as an organism. For the scholastic-Greek view which does not know the modal difference between the biotic and the psychic aspect of reality, to live means the same as to be “animated.” Therefore, only a “soul” can form the material body into a “*corpus organicum*.” When body and soul separate, the former becomes a corpse, which can hardly be seen as a substance since it enters a state of “decomposition.”

In the footsteps of Aristotle, scholasticism distinguishes three types of “soul” as the life principle of an “organic” body: 1) the *anima vegetativa* or plant soul; 2) the *anima sensitiva* or animal soul; and 3) the *anima rationalis* or human soul.

When this *anima rationalis* unites with a previously formed “organic” body, then the latter cannot bear a human character prior to this union.

Psycho-creationism has the *anima rationalis* emerge through a separate creative act of God in a previously formed *corpus organicum*. This required that the material body must be viewed as an “independent entity” vis-à-vis the “rational soul.” But this “substance” would then have to be pre-formed as a *corpus organicum* at least through a non-human soul. We are only dealing here, however, with a body’s genesis on the way to becoming human as its final phase. Does the material body not have to possess at least an enduring general form of material corporeality if it is to be a real substance?

Thomas Aquinas embraced this psycho-creationist standpoint in his mature conceptions as well, and so was forced to accept this “problem” on the foundation of the Aristotelian substance-concept. He had to think this through, as well as he could, by way of

speculation, and with his scholastic predecessors he assumed that the body initially receives its specific form in its embryonic stage through a vegetative and subsequently through an animal life principle. Thus in this process of becoming, an animal stage precedes the real human characteristics of the body. Aristotle too had taught this in his treatise *De generatione animalium*.¹

When the body is then sufficiently prepared to receive the *anima rationalis*, which is separately created by God, it takes over the formative task from the *anima vegetativa* and *anima sensitiva* and cancels the earlier psychic life principles as substantial forms.²

A human being as a *compositum* of *anima rationalis* and a material body can possess only one substantial form.³ And, according to the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine, the higher form includes all the capacities of the lower form in a still more perfect sense. The *anima rationalis* therefore possesses at the same time the potencies of the *anima vegetativa* and the *anima sensitiva*, and that in a still more perfect sense than the plant soul and the animal soul.⁴

In Aquinas' mature conception there is, therefore, no longer room for a *forma corporeitatis*, which the *anima rationalis* (as typical form of the human body) would only specify when the two are substantially united.

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 77, Art. 7: "imperfectiores potentiae sunt priores in via operationis, prius enim animal generatur quam homo." This with a reference to Aristotle, *De generatione animalium*, 2.3.

2 *Ibid.*, I, Q. 118, Art. 2, Repl. to Obj. 2: "Sic igitur dicendum est quod anima intellectiva creatur a Deo in fine generationis humanae, quae simul est et sensitiva et nutritiva, corruptis formis praeexistentibus." (So it must be said that the intellective soul is created by God at the end of human generation, and that this soul is also sensitive and vegetative, the earlier existing forms having been done away with.) Cf. also *ibid.*, I, Q. 76, Art. 3.

3 *Ibid.*, I, Q. 76, Art. 5: "nihil enim est simpliciter unum nisi per formam unam, per quam habet res esse; ab eodem enim habet res quod sit ens, et quod sit una" (nothing is a unity in and of itself, unless by means of a form that gives a thing its being; for a thing receives from one and the same its being as substance and its being as unity).

4 *Ibid.*, I, Q. 76, Art. 5: "Anima autem intellectiva habet completissime virtutem sensitivam; quia quod est inferius, praeexistit perfectius in superiori" (The intellective soul has the sensitive power to the fullest degree; because that which belongs to the inferior pre-exists more perfectly in the superior).

“Forma dat materiae esse actu” (form gives actual being to matter) is the basic thesis on which the entire Aristotelian-Thomist conception of the composite substance rests. However, the *“esse”* (being) must be internally *one*, according to the doctrine of the transcendental definitions of being. Consequently, there can only be one substantial form of the *compositum*. Several other forms can only bear an accidental character.¹

But if the human body possesses no substantial form of its own apart from the soul as its *“life principle,”* then one can no longer view the human being as a *compositum* of two substances, as the traditional scholastic doctrine did up to Thomas. In the Aristotelian conception there simply is no room for an independent material body vis-à-vis the rational soul.

1 In his *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 66, Art. 1, Thomas attempts an extensive refutation of the doctrine according to which matter first had a *“forma communis”* while taking on various specific forms afterwards. *“Nec etiam potest dici, quod habuit [materia] aliquam formam communem, et postmodum supervenerunt ei formae diversae, quibus sit distincta: quia hoc esset idem cum opinione antiquorum naturalium, qui posuerunt materiam primam esse aliquod corpus in actu, puta ignem, aerem, aut aquam, aut aliquod medium. Ex quo sequebatur quod fieri non esset nisi alterari; quia cum illa forma praecedens daret esse actu in genere substantiae, et faceret esse hoc aliquid, sequebatur quod superveniens forma non faceret simpliciter ens actu, sed ens actu hoc, quod est proprium formae accidentalis; et sic sequentes formae essent accidentia, secundum quae non attenditur generatio, sed alteratio. Unde oportet dicere quod materia prima neque fuit creata omnino sine forma, neque sub forma una communi, sed sub formis distinctis.”* (And we should not say that matter has first had a general form, and that afterwards various distinct forms were added to it. For that would be the same opinion held by the old nature philosophers. They held that prime matter was a certain real body, for example, fire, light, or water or something in between. From this it followed that to become is nothing other than to be altered. For since the preceding form would impart true being [to matter] as substance and make its being an individual thing, it followed that the subsequent form did not bring into being a real thing in an absolute sense but rather a being of this determined reality that is truly proper to the accidental form; so also the subsequent forms would be *accidentia*, which can only bring an alteration but not a true generation. Therefore it must be said that prime matter was created neither without form, nor with a common form, but under distinct forms.)

v. *Thomas' reversion to the traditional doctrine of human beings as the "compositum" of two substances and their cause*

Although Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* and his *Summa contra gentiles* reflect his mature conception concerning the relation between body and soul, nevertheless he keeps speaking of human beings here as composed of a spiritual and a bodily substance.¹ How is this to be explained, when Thomas' entire further exposition excludes the view of the body as an independent entity versus the *anima rationalis*?²

In Thomas' adoption of Aristotle's mature conception, the "bodily substance" could not be understood except as the human person itself as a *compositum*, whereby the *anima rationalis* makes up the substantial form of this substance. But how can he then introduce the *corporalis substantia* as part of the human *compositum* besides a "spiritual substance"? This can only make sense if Thomas, openly accepting the antinomy within his mature conception, has reverted to the traditional doctrine of soul and body as two substances.

In his masterly exposition of the Thomist system, Sertillanges avoided dealing with this text, which was so dangerous for the logical consistency of the mature Thomist conception regarding the relation of body and soul. Was this a slip of the pen on the part of Thomas?

When dealing with an extremely ingenious and terminologically exact scholastic as the Aquinian, such a supposition is hardly plausible. And as we shall see, it is utterly excluded by the elaborate exposition in the *Summa contra gentiles*.

1 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 75: "De homine, qui ex spirituali et corporali substantia componitur." This is the title of the famous question about human nature. One should compare this with *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 56, which we shall discuss below.

2 Cf. also Sertillanges, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquin*, p. 541: "The soul, being distinct from the body, is not the source of a potency, nor does it need to be, for in fact it is not different [*non est quid diversum secundum esse*]. But surely the soul may in some respect be independent of the body, as is the case with the spiritual soul. Yet the body is in no way independent of the soul; the soul fully disposes over it, along with all its potencies—for it is the soul that imparts being to the body, defines it, and directs it to its proper ends."

In truth, the inner antinomy concerning the relation between soul and body in a human being could no longer be suppressed, and it emerged in the heading above the famous question on this matter. Thomas entangles himself philosophically here in his attempt to accommodate the Aristotelian substance-concept to the doctrine of the church.

The mature Aristotelian conception was at least logically consistent in its definition of the relation between soul and body. Thomas had to break through this consistency for the sake of the scholastic doctrine upheld by the church. He had to take the *anima rationalis* simultaneously as the sole “substantial form” of the material body and as “immortal substance.” At the same time the psycho-creationist standpoint carried him back with inner necessity to the traditional scholastic view of the body as a special “independent entity.” This also explains why Thomas in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard continued to maintain the doctrine of a *forma corporeitatis*, just as his teacher Albert the Great had done. But when Thomas adopted the Aristotelian conception of the substance-concept wholesale, he had to abandon this doctrine again. Meanwhile, the religious ground-motive of this doctrine continued to permeate his philosophical thinking and entangled it in an antinomy that Thomas himself had so cleverly laid bare in the traditional scholastic conception.

We can formulate it again as follows: No new substance can arise out of two independent entities unless this new substance possesses a new substantial form that is not identical with either the “corporeal” or the “spiritual” substance while still guaranteeing to the *compositum* all the capacities of the elementary substances. But according to the Aristotelian doctrine, also defended by Thomas, the human being as a *compositum* has no other substantial form than the *anima rationalis*. Moreover, a “spiritual substance” can never lose its actual existence, because it is “indestructible.” As a result, the *anima rationalis* as “part” of “human nature” cannot be an “immortal substance,” but as Aristotle taught, merely the “form of the body.”

Thomas, however, clings to the substantial character of the *anima rationalis*. But then the latter cannot be the substantial form of the material body, and the material body itself must be viewed as a “substance,” independent of the *anima rationalis*. But that makes for a return to the traditional scholastic doctrine of the human being as

a *compositum* of two substances. And that lands us again in the antinomy indicated: it comes into conflict with the assumed substantial unity of the human being. For Thomas at least cannot deny the actual continued existence of the *anima rationalis* as an independent entity in the *compositum*.

It is a vain effort to try to resolve this antinomy on the basis of Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics. For the antinomy, derived as it is from the Aristotelian substance-concept, is unavoidable as soon as one tries to adapt it to the doctrine of the church.

With the precision endemic to the scholastic art of debating, Thomas himself extensively explores this question in the second book of the *Summa contra gentiles*, where he enumerates every one of the objections, already raised in his day, against the possibility of a substantial union between the *anima rationalis* and the material body.

First of all he establishes that the *anima rationalis* as *substantia intellectualis* cannot unite itself with the material body through admixture (*per modum mixtionis*). A *mixtum* of “elements,” after all, can only occur when two material substances survive—not actually but only potentially (*virtualiter*)—the admixture. For if the elementary “independent entities” *actually* remained intact in the admixture, no new substance would emerge, but merely an aggregate. The *corpus mixtum* as a substance may not be identical to either of its “elements.”

The *anima rationalis*, however, does not have any matter in common with the corporeal substance, nor can it lose its character of “independence” in its union with the material body because it is “indestructible” (*incorruptibilis*). Consequently, it cannot unite with the material body “*per modum mixtionis*.”¹ Neither can it do so through a “contact” in the real (spatial) sense of the word (*tactus*

1 *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 56 [2–5]: “Est autem primo manifestum quod substantia intellectualis non potest corpori uniri per modum mixtionis. Quae enim miscentur, oportet ad invicem alternata esse; quod non contingit nisi in his quorum est materia eadem, et quae possunt esse activa et passiva ad invicem. Substantiae autem intellectuales non communicant in materia cum corporalibus; sunt enim immateriales, ut supra ostensum est. Non sunt igitur corpori miscibiles. Adhuc, quae miscentur, mixtione iam facta, non manent actu, sed virtute tantum; nam si actu manerent, non esset mixtio, sed confusio tantum; unde corpus mixtum ex elementis nullum eorum est. Hoc autem impossibile est accidere substantiis intellectualibus; sunt enim incorruptibiles,

quantitatis), because this contact is only possible between extensive bodies.¹ This leaves only the question whether the *substantia intellectualis* can unite with a body as its substantial form.

At this juncture Thomas cites the following objections to this possibility:

14. No new (substantial) unity can arise from two actually existing substances. The *anima rationalis*, however, is an actually existing substance, and the same holds for the body.
15. Form and matter must be part of the same genus. For every genus is distinguished between actuality and potentiality. But the *substantia intellectualis* and the material body are of a different nature; they belong to different *genera*.
16. If the intellectual substance is the form of the body, its “being” must be realized in a corporeal material, since the “being” of form cannot be located outside the “being” of matter. But then the *anima rationalis* cannot be of an immaterial nature either.
17. Something whose “being” is in a body cannot possibly be separate from the body. But according to Aristotle the intellect is separate from the body and is neither itself a body nor a capacity in the body.
18. Finally, that which shares “being” with the body ought also to share in its activity. Therefore, if the intellectual substance were the form of the material body, then it would also share in its activity because it would share its “being” with this body. And therefore its capacity to work would have to be a capacity inside the body as well. This is impossible, because the *anima rationalis* is an immaterial substance and its conceptual activity takes place entirely independent of the body.²

ut supra ostensum est. Non igitur potest substantia intellectualis uniri corpori per modum mixtionis.”

- 1 *Ibid.*, bk. 2, ch. 56 [6]: “Similiter autem patet quod substantia intellectualis non potest uniri corpori per modum contactus proprie sumpti. Tactus enim nonnisi corporum est; sunt enim tangentia quorum ultima sunt simul, vel puncta vel lineae aut superficies, quae sunt corporum ultima.”
- 2 *Ibid.*, bk. 2, ch. 56 [14]: “Ex duabus enim substantiis actu existentibus non potest fieri aliquid unum; actu enim cuiuslibet est id quo ab altero distinguitur. Substantia ver intellectualis est substantia actu existens, ut ex praemissis apparet. Similiter autem et corpus. Non igitur potest aliquid unum fieri, ut videtur, ex substantia intellectuali et corpore. [15] Adhuc, forma et materia in eodem genere continentur; omne enim genus per actum et potentiam dividitur. Substantia autem intellectualis et corpus sunt diversa genera. Non

The refutation of these objections occurs a few chapters further (bk. 2, ch. 69). It can be restated as follows:

Regarding the first argument. This argument starts out from a false presupposition: for soul and body are not two actually existing substances, but out of these two one actual substance emerges; the human body in reality is not the same in the presence or absence of the soul. Only the soul makes it exist in actuality.

Regarding the second argument. Form and matter are not two species of one genus but two ontic principles of the same species within one genus. In this way the spiritual and the corporeal substances, which would be species of different genera if each were existing by itself, are different ontic principles of one genus the moment they are united.

Regarding the third argument. The *anima rationalis* need not be a material form, even though its “*esse*” is realized in matter. For it is not, as is the case with material forms (among which Thomas also counts the plant and animal souls besides the elementary and mixed forms), entirely immersed in matter or entirely comprehended by matter. Rather, it transcends the material body, as evidenced by the independence of its conceptual activity. For the intellect does not need the corporeal organ in order to become active: it is completely independent of the body.

Regarding the fourth argument. The intellect does not cease to be separate from the body when the intellectual substance *qua* form is united with the material body. For one must take into account both the essence and the potency of the soul. According to

igitur videtur possibile unum esse formam alterius. [16] Amplius, omne illud cuius esse est in materia, oportet esse materiale. Sed, si substantia intellectualis est forma corporis, oportet quod esse eius sit in materia corporali; non enim esse formae est praeter esse materiae. Sequitur igitur quod substantia intellectualis non sit immaterialis, ut supra ostensum est. [17] Item, impossibile est id cuius esse est in corpore esse a corpore separatum. Intellectus autem ostenditur a physicis [*De Anima* 3.6 et 9], separatus a corpore, et quod neque est corpus neque virtus in corpore. [18] Non est igitur intellectualis substantiae forma corporis; sic enim esse eius esset in corpore. Adhuc, cuius esse est commune corpori, oportet et operationem communem esse; unumquodque enim agit secundum quod est ens; nec virtus operativa rei potest esse sublimior quam eius essentia, quum virtus principia essentiae consequatur. Si autem substantia intellectualis sit forma corporis, oportet quod esse eius sit sibi et corpori commune; ex forma enim et materia fit aliquid unum simpliciter, quod est secundum esse unum. Erit ergo et operatio substantiae intellectualis, communis corpori et virtus eius virtus in corpore; quod ex praemissis patet esse impossibile.”

its essence the soul imparts being to the material body. According to its potency, however, it carries out its own activities; and the capacity for these activities does not belong to the actuality of any particular body, if the activity of the soul does not take place by means of a bodily organ.

With this, the fifth objection too is refuted by implication.¹

Such are the five arguments enumerated against the possibility of a substantial union between soul and body as form and matter. From their refutation it becomes clear that Thomas continues to stand fully behind his view of the human being as a *compositum* of two substances in his *Summa contra gentiles*, even though he uses the term *substantia corporalis* only once.² He believes that he can now completely resolve the indicated antinomies of this view with the aid of the form-matter scheme. Soul and body exist no longer as ac-

1 *Ibid.*, bk. 2, ch. 69: [1] "His autem consideratis, non est difficile solvere quae contra praedictam unionem supra posita sunt. [2] In prima enim ratione falsum supponitur; non enim corpus et anima sunt duae substantiae actu existentes, sed ex eis duobus fit una substantia actu existens; corpus enim hominis non est idem actu, praesente anima et absente, sed anima facit ipsum actu esse. [3] Quod autem secundo obiicitur, formam et materiam in eodem genere contineri, non sic verum est quasi utrumque sit species unius generis, sed quia sunt principia eiusdem speciei. Sic igitur substantia intellectualis et corpus, quae, seorsum existentia, essent diversorum generum species, prout uniuntur, sunt unius generis, ut principia. [4] Non autem oportet substantiam intellectualem esse formam materialem, quamvis esse eius sit in materia, ut tertia ratio procedebat; non enim est in materia sicut materiae immersa vel a materia totaliter comprehensa, sed alio modo, ut dictum est. [5] Nec tamen, per hoc quod substantia intellectualis unitur corpori ut forma, removetur quod a philosophis dicitur [*De Anima* 3.9], intellectum esse a corpore separatum; et est quarta ratio. Est enim in anima considerare et ipsius essentiam et potentiam eius. Secundum essentiam quidem suam dat esse tali corpori; secundum potentiam vero, operationes proprias efficit . . . Si autem operatio eius non compleatur per organum corporale, potentia eius non erit actus alicuius corporis; et per hoc dicitur intellectus esse separatus . . . [6] Non est autem necessarium, si anima, secundum suam substantiam est forma corporis, quod omnis eius operatio sit per corpus, ac per hoc omnis eius virtus sit alicuius corporis actus, ut quinta ratio procedebat."

2 In *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 56 [2] Thomas clearly speaks of a binding together of the intellectual and the bodily substances that cannot take place by way of a mixture: "Substantiae enim intellectuales non communicant in materia cum corporalibus."

tual substances in their union. They are now merely form and matter of one new substance: the human being.

But we may not forget what Thomas had remarked a little earlier against the possibility of a substantial union between the *substantia corporalis* and the *substantia spiritualis* by means of a mixture. For there he said expressly that the soul as intellectual substance cannot lose its independence in the substantial union because the spiritual substance is “indestructible.”

The true view of Thomas therefore is the following: In the substantial union with the *anima rationalis* only the material substance ceases to be an “independent entity.” The rational soul, by contrast, continues to exist actually as a substance in this union.¹

To view the *anima rationalis* (which is nothing but a theoretical abstraction from the temporal corporeal existence of a human being) as a “substance” was indeed the source of all the antinomies in the scholastic view concerning the relation between soul and body.

According to the Aristotelian conception, an “immaterial substance” can never become the substantial form of a material *compositum* since this would mean that it would cease to be an independent entity. And this latter event is of course ruled out by Thomas because it is “indestructible.”

w. Thomas is trapped in his own argumentation

Thomas has gone to a great deal of trouble arguing that the *anima rationalis* can be at one and the same time substance and form for the material body. Time and again his most important argument is that the higher and more dignified the form of the material *compositum*, the less it can be entirely comprehended by matter and the more it transcends the limits of matter in its “esse” and its activity.

“A unity that arises from the union of the intellectual substance and corporeal matter,” says Thomas, “is not inferior to that which is born from the union of the form and the matter of a material element (such as fire), but rather a very superior one. For in the mea-

1 The following citation makes this very clear (Summa contra gentiles, bk. 2, ch. 68 [6]): “Non enim minus est aliquid unum ex *substantia intellectuali* et materia corporali, quam ex forma ignis et eius materia, sed forte magis; quia quanto forma magis vincit materiam, tanto ex ea et materia magis efficitur unum” (ital. mine, H.D.).

sure that form more thoroughly conquers matter, the latter also becomes more of a unity.”¹

But there is a hidden trap in this argument, disguised only by the use of the Aristotelian form-matter scheme. For the question is not whether the *anima rationalis* as “form” transcends the limits of “matter” and can “overcome” it. It is rather whether it can transcend the limits of the *substantia corporalis* in the sense of a material body of which it is the substantial form. That would be necessary if the *anima rationalis* were an “independent entity” even in the *compositum* and not just a substantial form of the body. This of course is impossible in the Aristotelian conception of the substance-concept, because form belongs to the body. Exactly for that reason Aristotle denied the substance character of the *anima rationalis*, and correctly so from his standpoint. According to him the active intellect, which he counted as *ousia* or independent being, is not a capacity of the soul, but is active in it from the outside.

The substantial form of a *compositum* may transcend its “matter,” but it can never be a substance inside the composite substance. As soon as a substantial form arises in the *compositum* itself as a substance, the unity of the *compositum* is irretrievably canceled.

This is also irrefutably the case in the Thomist construction, since it declares the theoretical thought function (in the sense of the logical conceptual activity of the *anima rationalis*) fundamentally independent of the material body. Here already a dichotomy in human nature as a “*compositum*” takes over, even before the separation of the soul from the body.

The *compositum* itself as a putative substantial unity exhibits a clear duality: a so-called spiritual complex of functions is made independent inside it, versus the so-called “material” complex of functions that is viewed as the *corpus organicum*. However, since the “organic” body cannot exist without a substantial form and includes this form as actuality, Thomas sees himself compelled to introduce a dichotomy into the potencies or capabilities of the “soul.” The capacity for this activity gives actuality to the body only insofar as this activity of the soul takes place by means of a bodily organ. This then does not hold for the thinking capacity of the soul. And yet the *anima rationalis* as a whole is called the “*actus*” of the

1 See previous note.

body, for Thomas, like Aristotle, resolutely rejects the Platonic division of the human soul and maintains its substantial unity and “simplicity” (non-complexity).

However, if the *anima rationalis* as substance is indeed to transgress the limits of the *corpus organicum*, it must be possible to take the latter according to its “essence” and delineate it with some precision from the spiritual substance. The distinction between “essence” and “potency” is definitely not sufficient here, for in Thomist doctrine “activity follows being” (*operatio sequitur esse*). But if the *anima rationalis* as “form” and “actus” of the *corpus organicum* belongs to the *essentia* of this body, this delineation is impossible. Then one must postulate at least for the material body its own substantial form, a “form of corporeality,” if one is to be able to maintain the *anima rationalis* as “spiritual substance.”

There is a dialectic necessity inherent in the substance-concept. If one accepts the substantial character of the *anima rationalis*, one is again forced to give independence to the *corpus organicum*. And with that, one is forced to abandon the substantial unity of human beings.

The Augustinian-Franciscan school saw the material body as an “independent entity.” This view, as we have seen, was rooted in the conception of the *prima materia* as substance. Thomas, however, rejected this doctrine of “prime matter” and instead accepted the Aristotelian view. But with that he also knocked the bottom out from any attempt to view the material body as a “substance” versus the *anima rationalis*.

And so his entire theory of body and soul is led into a true impasse, and the claim that it provides a closed system as compared to that of Augustinian scholasticism is merely imaginary.

*x. How to explain the enduring influence of the view
of the human soul as an immortal anima
rationalis independent of the body?*

We now have to face yet one more question in order to gain full insight into the significance of the substance-concept for scholastic anthropology in general and for Thomist anthropology in particular.

We had to lay bare all the inner antinomies in the scholastic conceptions in order to realize how they found their deepest foundation in the Greek view of the human soul as *anima rationalis*.

This *anima rationalis* turned out to be nothing but a theoretical abstraction from the temporal, corporeal existence of a human person, in whom no real dichotomy can exist. This theoretical abstraction resulted in a “spiritual substance” that could exist independently of a “material body.” This forced scholasticism to view human beings as a *compositum* of two substances: a corporeal and a spiritual one. And all the ingenuity and subtlety that scholastic thinking has so amply at its disposal was then focused on the insoluble problem: How can a substantial unity of a human being originate from these two independent entities?

As in every anthropology, the view of the soul is decisive for the entire philosophical view of human existence. Our transcendental critique has demonstrated why this must necessarily be the case.

It is also clear what lies at the basis of the application of the substance-concept to the human soul in scholastic thought. It is the identification of the Greek conception of the *anima rationalis* with the Scriptural revelation of the “soul” or “spirit” as the religious root of a person’s existence, which is not affected by the death of the body.

We cannot possibly form a scientific concept of the “soul” (or “root”) of human existence, and *a fortiori* we cannot grasp it in the pseudo-concept of a “metaphysical independent entity.” Scholasticism had adopted the Greek form-matter motive, and thus no longer had insight into the position of the human soul as the religious root of man. The Greek substance-concept was indeed the only possible way for the “*anima rationalis*” to exist “separate from the material body.”

But all this still does not explain how the view of the *anima rationalis* as substance could keep Christian scholastic thinking imprisoned right up to the present day. This is the more inexplicable because even classic Greek philosophers themselves, where the scholastics received their schooling, only sporadically ventured to work with a conception that can only implode from internal contradiction.

It is true, Plato in his dialogue *Phaedo* took the human soul to be a “simple,” immortal “spiritual substance” and contrasted it with the “composite,” transitory and impure “material body.” But he still identified the human soul here with the theoretical function of thought. Its “simplicity” supposedly consists precisely in that it is nothing but theoretical activity of thought, which in its orientation to the world of eternal ideas must possess an inner affinity with them and must therefore share in their imperishability.

But as soon as Plato realized that the human soul cannot be identified with its function of theoretical thinking, but also has other functions, whose intrinsic connection with the “material body” cannot be denied, he also broke with the view that the *anima rationalis* in its entirety bore the character of a spiritual substance. And so he allowed only the “rational portion” of the soul, the *nous*, to count as an immortal *ousia*.

Aristotle, who had adhered to the Platonic division of the *anima rationalis* in his earlier days, attacked it in his *De Anima*¹ and emphatically denied, as we saw, the substantial character of the “human soul.” He allowed the *anima rationalis* to function only as the substantial form of the human body. But, as we saw, he taught that the active intellect (the real activity of thinking) was a spiritual substance, which was then sharply distinguished from the ability to think (*dunamis*) of the *anima rationalis*.

Ultimately, the issue in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy was therefore not that they made the human soul independent, but that they made it the activity of theoretic thought, the *nous theōrētikos*,² with its religious charge.

Thomas Aquinas seeks to prove the substantial character of the *anima rationalis* metaphysically and employs the arguments which

1 In his earlier writing *De partibus animalium* (1.1 [641a 14–641b 10]), Aristotle held that the human soul had three parts: the plant soul, the animal soul, and the human soul, of which the first two make up the form of being of the living being and therefore belong to the theory of nature (*phusis*): “οὐδὲ γὰρ πᾶσα ψυχὴ φύσις, ἀλλὰ τὸ μόνιον αὐτῆς ἐν ἧ καὶ πλεῖω” (641b 9–10).

2 A statement to this effect is the famous passage from Aristotle’s *De Anima* 2.3 (415a 11–12): “περὶ δὲ τοῦ θεωρητικοῦ νοῦ ἕτερος λόγος” (“The mind that knows with immediate intuition presents a different problem”). That is, the theoretical intellect is not in the same relation to the psychic functions and the organic body as these are in relation to each other and to the body, so that here another problem makes its appearance.

Aristotle fielded exclusively for the independence of the activity of theoretical thought vis-à-vis the material body. And this once more underlines that Thomas saw the real characteristic of the human soul in its activity of theoretical conceptualizing.

These arguments are still often used (albeit in different variations) for proving that man's thinking activity and his act-life in general bears a purely "spiritual character" and has to take place independently of the "material body." A denial of this "purely spiritual character" is then immediately deprecated as the result of a "materialistic" standpoint.

We can now imagine how this viewpoint has contributed to making the view of the *anima rationalis* as a purely spiritual, immortal and independent entity into one of the most deeply rooted presuppositions in Christian scholastic thinking. This imagined "spiritual substance" was then identified with what Scripture reveals to us as the "soul" or root-unity of human existence. This fully explains how every attack upon the scholastic view of the soul could be viewed as a fundamental attack upon a central article of the faith of the church.

Within Reformation circles it has become possible to engage in a serious discussion about the substantial view of the rational soul without being accused by the church of attacking the Reformed confessions. This is an encouraging sign that the scholastic spirit has definitely lost its hegemony here.

We will now submit to a closer critical examination the arguments that Aristotle and, in his footsteps, Thomas adduced for the fundamental independence of the intellectual activity of concept formation by the "*corpus organicum*."

y. Aristotelian and Thomist arguments for the independence of theoretical conceptual activity vis-à-vis the material body

The thinking *nous* (or active intellect), taken as spiritual substance, possesses universal knowledge of concepts that are valid beyond time and space, according to Aristotle. This knowledge therefore presupposes a principle that must be independent of any mixing with the "material body."

"Since the *nous* thinks everything," so he remarks in *De Anima* (3.4), it is necessary that it not be mixed, in order for it, as Anaxagoras says, to "dominate," in other words, to "know."¹

Thomas Aquinas elaborates on the same thought in his *Summa Theologiae*, but he immediately transfers the argument to the *anima rationalis*:

. . . one must of necessity say that that which is the principle of conceptual activity, which we call the soul of the human being, is an incorporeal and substantial principle. For it is clear that the human being can know the nature of all things through the intellect. However, because this intellect can know, it is necessary that it have nothing of these things in its nature. For the presence of these things in its nature would preclude the knowledge of other things. When the tongue of a sick person is permeated by a bilious and bitter fluid, he cannot taste anything sweet, but all things appear bitter to him. Thus, if the intellectual principle were to have the nature of any body in itself, it could not know all things. For each body has a defined nature. Thus it is impossible that the principle of thought could be a body; and it is equally impossible that it could know through an organ of the body, because the defined nature of this organ would prohibit the knowledge of all bodies . . . Consequently, the principle of thought itself, which is called spirit or intellect, has an activity by itself in which the body does not share. However, nothing can be active by itself except that which exists as an independent entity, because an activity can only issue from an actually existing being . . . One can only conclude, therefore, that the human soul which is called intellect or spirit is an incorporeal, independent being (substance).²

While this passage emphasizes the difference between intellectual and sensory knowledge, Aristotle points out that "sensory percep-

1 *De Anima* 3.4 (429a 18–20): "ἀνάγκη ἄρα, ἐπεὶ πάντα νοεῖ, ἀμυγῇ εἶναι, ὥσπερ φησὶν Ἀναξαγόρας, ἵνα κρατῇ, τοῦ το δέ ἐστιν ἵνα γνωρίζῃ."

2 *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 75, Art. 2: "necesse est dicere id quod est principium intellectualis operationis, quod dicimus animam hominis, esse quoddam principium incorporeum et subsistens. Manifestum est enim quod homo per intellectum cognoscere potest naturas omnium corporum. Quod autem potest cognoscere aliqua, oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura; quia illud quod inesset ei naturaliter, impediret cognitionem aliorum; sicut videmus quod lingua infirmi, quae infecta est cholorico et amaro humore, non potest percipere aliquid dulce, sed omnia videntur ei amara. Si igitur principium intellectuale haberet in se naturam alicuius corporis, non posset omnia corpora cognoscere. Omne autem corpus habet aliquam naturam determinatam. Impossibile est

tion's activating principle, through which perception becomes real, comes to us from the sensory objects outside of us, from the visible, audible and other things our senses can perceive," whereas the activating principle of conceptual knowledge comes from the activity of theoretical thought itself. "The reason for this," he explains, "is that sensory knowledge has the individual for its object, whereas science is focused on the universal essences of things. Now this universal in a certain sense is in the soul itself. That is why man can think as he wishes, but he cannot perceive with the senses whenever he wishes, because for that the perceivable object must be present."¹

Next he points out that sensory perception is limited. It only covers a limited field of things it can perceive. Whatever lies outside this territory is either not perceived² or it damages the sensory organ.³ Thus the object of sensory knowledge, according to Aristotle, is not everything that can be perceived as such, but only a certain range of perceivable things. This differs from case to case according to the greater or lesser acuity of the sensory organs. The limitation of this sensory knowledge is best shown in the so-called "*sensibilia per accessum*," i.e., the perceptible objects that lie above the level for which the sensory organ is equipped: "For sensory perception is unable to function well after experiencing something that is strongly perceptible. For instance, we can no longer hear a

igitur quod principium intellectuale sit corpus; et similiter impossibile est quod intelligat per organum corporeum, quia natura determinata illius organi corporei prohiberet cognitionem omnium corporum . . . Ipsum igitur intellectuale principium, quod dicitur mens, vel intellectus, habet operationem per se, cui non communicat corpus. Nihil autem potest per se operari nisi quod per se subsistit; non enim est operari nisi entis in actu . . . Relinquitur igitur animam humanam, quae dicitur intellectus, vel mens, esse aliquid incorporeum et subsistence." Cf. also *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 2, chs. 49–50.

1 *De Anima* 2.5 (417b 21–26): "Καὶ τὸ κατ' ἐνέργειαν δὲ ὁμοίως λέγεται τῷ θεωρεῖν· διαφέρει δι, ὅτι τοῦ μὲν τα ποιητικὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἐξῶθεν, τὸ ὁρατὸν καὶ τὸ ἀκουστὸν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν αἰσθητῶν. τῷ αἴτιον δ' ὅτι τῶν καθ' ἑκάστων ἢ κατ' ἐνέργειαν αἰσθησις, ἢ δ' ἐπιστήμη τῶν κατόλου. ταῦτα δ' ἐν αὐτῇ πῶς ἐστὶ τῇ διὸ νοῆσαι μὲν ἐπ' αὐτῷ, ὁπότεν βούληται, αἰσθάνεσθαι δ' οὐκ ἐπ' αὐτῷ. ἀναγκαῖον γὰρ ὑπάρχειν τὸ αἰσθητόν."

2 *Ibid.*, 2.9 (421b 6–8); 2.11 (424a 12–13).

3 *Ibid.*, 3.2 (426a 27–b 7).

normal sound after a very loud sound, and the same holds for sight after seeing very strong colors or for smell after smelling very strong odors. However, when the *nous* thinks something that is very well thinkable, it can think whatever is thinkable to a lesser degree not in any lesser way, but in an even better way. The sensory ability to know, after all, depends on the body; but the *nous* is separated from the latter" (*chōristos*).¹

z. A critical examination of these arguments. The activity of theoretical thinking made independent into a spiritual substance

What to think of this argumentation? Nuyens has carried out a serious investigation in his doctoral thesis which we have already quoted several times. In view of this investigation we may consider it an established fact that Aristotle did not seek the "spiritual principle" of the human activity of theoretical thinking—for which he demanded complete independence, including independence from the organic material body—in the *anima rationalis* as substantial form.

He is not speaking here of the human ability to think (*dunamis*) as a function of the human soul, i.e., the so-called "*pathētikos nous*" which possesses the general concepts of entities only "in principle" or "in potential." Rather he is dealing with the active thought-principle, the so-called *poiētikon*, which in fact realizes the *noēta* (the general concept of entities).

This "*poiētikon*" enters the human soul from the outside ("*thurathen*"), in contrast to the capacities and functions that develop "naturally" (*phusei*) during the process of becoming of the living body, of which the soul is the "form."

According to Aristotle, in the theoretical act of thinking there is a unity between thinking and what can be thought, between the *nous* and the *noēton*. The active *nous* in fact is all that can be thought;

1 *Ibid.*, 3.4 (429a 29—b 5): "Οτι δ' οὐχ ὁμοία ἡ ἀπάθεια τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ καὶ τοῦ νοητικοῦ, φανερόν ἐπὶ τῶν αἰσθητηρίων καὶ τῆς αἰσθησεως, ἡ μὲν γὰρ αἰσθησις οὐ δύναται αἰσθάνεσθαι ἐκ τοῦ σφόδρα αἰσθητοῦ, οἷον ψόφου ἐκ τῶν μεγάλων ψόφων, οὐδὲ ἐκ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν χρωμάτων καὶ ὁσμῶν οὔτε ὁρᾶν οὔτε ὁσμᾶσθαι ἀλλ' ὁ νοῦς ὅταν τι νοήσῃ σφόδρα νοήτον, οὐχ ἥττον νοεῖ τὰ ὑποδεέστερα, ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον. τὸ μὲν γὰρ αἰσθητικὸν οὐκ ἄνευ σώματος, ὁ δὲ χωριστός."

the passive *nous* qua thinking capacity can *become* all that can be thought.

Aristotle assumes that this active *nous* as “spiritual substance” is always actively involved in thinking. It is not the case that “sometimes it thinks, at other times it does not think.”¹ Nuyens comments:

If—as the context clearly warrants—we join [commentators like] Alexander and Themistius and take as the subject of the sentence (ὁ ποιητικός νοῦς or οὗτός ὁ νοῦς) (i.e., the active intellect, or “this spirit,” which is at issue beginning with line 17), we find a strong argument for the view that sees the *poiētikon* as something outside of the human soul. For it cannot be said of the human spirit that it always thinks.²

This last observation is indisputable to the extent that we only take the *conscious* activity of thinking into account, which is what Aristotle undoubtedly had in mind with this statement.

“Separated” (from the body), remarks Aristotle further on in the third book of *De Anima*, “the spirit is only that which it is, and only that is immortal and always existing” (“eternal”).³

Nuyens⁴ also relates this pronouncement to the *poiētikon* (the active *nous*), and in my view correctly so: “During a man’s thinking,” he remarks, “another union comes into being between the *poiētikon* and the *pathētikos nous* (the passive intellect or thinking in potential), but Aristotle does not spend one word defining this union any further or making it plausible. This influence upon human thinking, however, occurs outside of the real being of the *poiētikos nous*. In itself, apart from its role in the process of human thinking, it is

1 De Anima 3.5 (430a 22): “Ἄλλ’ οὐχ ὅτε μὲν νοεῖ, ὅτε δ’ οὐ νοεῖ.”

2 Nuyens, *Ontwikkelingsmomenten in de zielkunde van Aristoteles*, p. 282.

3 De Anima 3.5 (430a 22–23).

4 Op. cit., p. 283, citing *De unitate intellectus, contra averroistas* (*Opuscula* ed., p. 477): “Manifestissime igitur apparet, absque omni dubitatione, ex verbis Aristotelis, hanc fuisse eius sententiam de intellectu possibili, quod intellectus sit aliquid animae quae est actus corporis, ita tamen quod intellectus animae non habeat aliquod organum corporale, sicut habent caeterae potentiae animae.” (These words of Aristotle render it crystal clear and beyond any doubt that this was his position concerning the capacity to think [*intellectu possibili*]: the intellect is something of the soul, which is the actuality of the body, but in such a way that the soul’s capacity to think has no bodily organ, as do the soul’s other capacities.)

only that which it is and only as such (hence not as a factor during the process of human thought) is it immortal and eternal.¹

aa. Thomas' erroneous interpretation of the Aristotelian view. Nuyens' refutation

Thomas Aquinas was of the opinion that Aristotle had taken both the active and the passive intellect as capacities of the human soul, and thus he did not elevate them to a separate substance, as Averroës and Averroistic scholastics (Siger of Brabant) did.

Like Themistius and Ammonius before him, he appealed for this view to the well-known passage in chapter five of the third book of *De Anima*, where Aristotle remarks: "Just as in all of nature on the one hand a principle of potency is present with each type of thing (i.e., all the things in potential), and on the other hand an effective cause (*αἴτιον ποιητικόν*) that makes everything, just as technology does with matter, in the same way these differences must also be present in the soul."² Thomas concluded from this in his commentary on *De Anima* that the Averroists, who saw the *nous*, both in its active and passive or receptive function, as an independent entity outside the soul, "are in conflict with Aristotle's intention, who says in so many words that both these distinct entities, namely the active and the passive intellect, exist in the soul, by which he expressly gives his readers to understand that they are parts or capacities of the soul and not separate substances."³

In addition, Thomas wrote a separate essay, *De unitate intellectus, contra Averroistas*, in which he sought to refute the Averroist interpretation by means of a close analysis of Aristotle's pronouncements in *De Anima*, *De generatione animalium* and the *Meta-*

1 Op. cit., p. 283.

2 *De Anima* 3.5 (430a 10–14): "Ἐπει δ' ὡς περ ἐν ἀπάσῃ τῇ φύσει ἐστὶ τι τὸ μὲν ὕλη ἐκαστῷ γένει (τοῦτο δὲ ὁ πάντα δυνάμει ἐκεῖνα), ἕτερον δὲ τὸ αἴτιον καὶ ποιητικόν, τῷ ποιεῖν πάντα, οἷον ἡ τέχνη πρὸς τὴν ὕλην πέπονθεν, ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὑπαρχειν τὰς διαφοράς."

3 Thomas, in *Aristotelis librum de Anima commentarium* (ed. Pirotta; Turin, 1925) no. 736: "Est autem praedicta positio contra Aristotelis intentionem, qui expresse dixit, has differentias duas, intellectum agentem et intellectum possibilem esse in anima: ex quo expresse dat intelligere quod sint partes animae vel potentiae et non aliquae substantiae separatae" (as quoted in Nuyens, op. cit., p. 275).

physics. He was on firm ground here in his argument that Aristotle did view the capacity to think (*intellectus possibilis*) as an intrinsic faculty of the human soul, and not, as Averroës thought, that it is extrinsic to the soul.¹

As for Thomas' explication of the statement cited above from *De Anima* (3.5), Nuyens observes correctly:

In short, Aristotle's words come down to this: the difference ("differences," *τάς διαφοράς*) between a potential element (*τὸ το μὲν ὕλη*) and an activating element (*τὸ αἴτιον καὶ ποιητικόν*) that we find everywhere in nature, must also be present in the soul. Not a word is spent claiming that these two elements are characteristics or potentials of the soul. . . . The question, for instance, whether the activating element is something inside or outside the soul is neither posed nor answered in this passage in Aristotle.²

Aristotle has indeed left unsolved the problem concerning the relation between the *anima rationalis* and the activity of theoretical thinking as a substance. One may consider it an established fact, however, that he did make the activity of theoretical thinking *independent* of the soul as "form" of the organic material body.

bb. The pitfall in the Aristotelian argument.

Substantializing the Gegenstand relation

From this fact the desired light is also shed on the argumentation concerning the independence of theoretical conceptual activity in relation to the material body, which in turn enabled Thomas "to prove" the substantial character of the *anima rationalis*.

The activity of thinking is not taken here as a concrete human "act" but merely in the abstract modal structure of its logical aspect. As such it is expressly abstracted from its pre-logical aspects (the sensory-psychic, the biotic, the physical-chemical, etc.) and placed in opposition to the "material body."

Now we know that this entire abstraction is only possible in the theoretical *Gegenstand relation* and that this relation exists only within the reality structure of the concrete act of knowing. The theoretical *Gegenstand relation*, after all, is the product of an intentional abstraction performed upon the given structure of temporal reality, as the Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated in its

1 Thomas, *De unitate intellectus, contra Averroistas* (*Opuscula* ed., p. 477).

2 Op. cit., p. 267, 277.

transcendental critique of theoretical thought. This abstraction suspends—purely theoretically—the unbreakable coherence between the aspects of reality, a coherence which is guaranteed by the cosmic order of time and which makes the synthetic conceptual activity possible in the first place. Of course, in reality this unbreakable coherence is not undone, for without it the theoretical act of knowing would itself become impossible as a real activity.

For that reason the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation can only exist as a purely putative (intentional) relation within the reality-structure of the theoretical act of knowing. And this act of knowing functions as a real act in all aspects of temporal reality without distinction. As a *scientific* activity it only exhibits an individuality structure that is qualified by the *theoretic-logical* function.

Not a single human act of thinking can exist in which the human body as a temporal whole is not active in all its aspects.

Not a single “act” is given to us in human experience otherwise than in this concrete coherence of reality. If this be the case, then we must be able to point to an individuality structure also in the human body that makes the theoretical act of thinking possible and within which alone it can operate. In the anthropology of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea as I have worked it out in later years, this individuality structure is called the act-structure of the human body.

cc. The concrete acts in the theoretical Gegenstand relation

What do we mean by “acts”? We call people’s internal activities “acts” when they are intentionally (i.e., intending or imagining) directed to states of affairs in reality or in the subjective world of imagination. People do this with the guidance of normative viewpoints (e.g., logical, aesthetic, ethical or pistical) and they internalize these states of affairs by relating them to the ego or selfhood as the individual center of personal existence.

These acts always issue from the integral center of human nature, which Scripture calls the heart, the soul or the mind in its succinctly religious meaning, as we saw earlier. But these acts can only play their role within the human body as the enkaptic structural whole of human temporal existence. And, to define it further, they occur within the act-structure of this existence by which it is wholly qualified.

These acts are *internal* in their intending or imagining character. Their intention is realized only through *action* in the “outside world,” that is to say, outside a person’s individual bodily existence. An action, therefore, is never without an act; but not every act realizes itself in an action. Thus a scientific act of knowledge or an aesthetic act of imagination can remain completely internal. In contrast to this, an act of volition is naturally directed toward action.

It has long been held that in principle an act is independent of the “material” body; that it is a purely “spiritual” operation of the human soul. This view has entered modern act-psychology and phenomenology (Husserl) from scholasticism (albeit transformed in keeping with the humanistic ground-motive of nature and freedom). It can be demonstrated that this view took hold when the theoretical Gegenstand relation was made independent (substantialized), as analyzed by us earlier.

As is well known, Franz Brentano (1838–1917), the founder of modern act-psychology, was strongly influenced by Aristotle. With Edmund Husserl, Brentano defined an act as a “spiritual awareness of the ego which *qua* content is intentionally related to a *Gegenstand*.”¹ In this way he makes the intentional Gegenstand relation into an inherent component of the human act-life in all its manifestations.²

1 Cf. E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, p. 64. Cf. also August Messer, *Psychologie*, 5th ed. (Leipzig, 1934), p. 105. Throughout Husserl’s book the “Gegenstand relation” is confused with the “subject-object relation,” so that the terms Gegenstand” and “Object” are used interchangeably and thus incorrectly.

2 Simply as an example we cite here the well-known statement of Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Bern, 1928), p. 48: “If we place at the top of the concept of “spirit” a special function of knowing, a kind of knowing which it alone can provide, then the fundamental destination of a spiritual being is its existential liberty, freedom, its capacity—or at any rate that of its center of existence—to be set free of any ban, any pressure, any dependence upon the organic, free of “life” and of all that belongs to “life,” therefore also free of its own instinctive intelligence. Such a “spiritual” being is no longer bound to instincts or to the environment but free of the latter [Umweltfrei], and, as we want to call it, “open to the world” [Weltoffen]. Such a being has “world.” It is able to raise into “objects” [Gegenstände] the centers of resistance and its pri-

But only the theoretical act of knowing exhibits this relationship. It is foreign to all other acts, including the pre-theoretical act of knowing. It is intrinsic only to the intentional subject-object relation, which differs fundamentally from the *Gegenstand* relation because it does not, like the latter, pry apart the structure of reality but leaves it intact, in the unbreakable coherence of its aspects. The confusion of these two relations by act-psychologists and phenomenologists is simply the result of the fact that they take their starting point in the theoretical attitude of thought.

Only within the theoretical *Gegenstand* relation can the logical aspect of our act of thinking be placed in opposition to the pre-logical aspects of our bodily existence. Aristotle starts out by taking this relation as a "metaphysical reality" and so gives rise to a metaphysical illusion as if the act of thinking itself is by definition separate from the pre-logical aspects of the body because they can, after all, become *Gegenstände* of the logical aspect of thinking.

And Husserl, by making this relation phenomenologically independent, arrives at his view of the "absolute consciousness" whose "being," according to the scholastic description of the substance-concept, requires nothing for its existence (*nulla re indiget ad existendum*).¹

In actual fact, the *Gegenstand* relation simply does not exist between a concrete act of knowing and a "material body." It is found only within the bodily reality-structure of the act of knowing between its logical thought aspect and the pre-logical aspects of a person's bodily existence. In its conscious abstractions from the pre-given coherence of all the aspects of the body, the *Gegenstand* relation is of a purely intentional character. It is therefore impossible in reality to separate the logical thought aspect from the pre-logical aspects of the body. The Aristotelian arguments may be impressive at first sight, but they can never prove the independence of the logical thought activity, let alone that of an abstract "*anima rationalis*." These arguments must be founded on a speculative metaphysical misinterpretation of the theoretical *Gegenstand*

mordial environmental reaction, centers in which the animal remains ecstatically immersed; it is able, as a matter of principle, to apprehend in and of itself the being-thus of these "objects," without the restriction which this world of objects or its actuality experiences by the system of biotic instincts and the mediating functions and organs of the sensory apparatus."

1 Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie*, p. 92.

relation. Let us demonstrate this by critically examining them one by one.

Aristotle posits that the “thinking mind” thinks *everything* and that it therefore cannot be mixed with “corporeal matter.” As we saw earlier, this argument does not pertain to human thought activity, but only to the absolutized theoretical thought activity as the impersonal, always actually thinking, theoretical *nous*. For it cannot be maintained that an individual human being would indeed have an understanding of everything.

When Thomas therefore relates this Aristotelian argument to the human intellect he is forced to give it a twist. A human being, he says, does not *really* know the “nature of all things” by using his intellect, but he is merely *able to*—has the *capacity for it*.

If this possibility does in fact exist it can only be defined, we are bound to say, by the universally valid structure of theoretic conceptual activity. And so we are referred back again to the structure of the theoretical Gegenstand relation, since that is what characterizes the theoretical activity of thinking and knowing.

The Gegenstand relation comprises the logical thought aspect and the abstracted non-logical aspects placed in opposition to it. Theoretical knowledge is only achieved in a theoretical synthesis between our logical concept function and the non-logical function of our existence, a synthesis that we perform within the Gegenstand.

Because of its modal structure the theoretic-logical concept can indeed be directed to all non-logical aspects of reality. In the theoretical attitude of thought we can even abstract the modal structure of the logical aspect itself from the concrete act of thinking, and submit it to an analysis again in opposition to the non-logical aspects. But scientific knowledge is only achieved in a synthesis that is performed within the concrete act of knowing. It can never issue from the logical conceptual function of human consciousness.

dd. Human consciousness embraces all aspects of reality in an integral fashion. The influence of the metaphysical doctrine of the soul on epistemology

In order to gain complete insight into this state of affairs we must first of all realize that human consciousness, which is centered in

the ego in its individual, spiritual character, embraces all aspects of reality without distinction.

The conscious and the subconscious are not themselves aspects of reality, but rather two conditions of the same existential reality (with its integral individuality structures) that flow into each other without a sharp boundary.

Modern “depth-psychology” (founded by Freud) has demonstrated irrefutably that a subconscious layer underlies human act-life which is hierarchically arranged under a conscious superstructure and in which the continuity of this act-life is grounded. This “subconscious” is not restricted to the pre-psychic aspects, but equally embraces the aspect of feeling, the logical aspect, and the later aspects of human existence.

On the other hand, the conscious act-life is not restricted to the function of feeling, or to the logical and post-logical functions, but functions just as much in all aspects of temporal reality without distinction.

Only when one has gained insight into this state of affairs can one really give an account of the synthesis in the conscious theoretical act of knowing. In its purely intentional character the Gegenstand relation is indeed *immanent* in human consciousness. The Gegenstand therefore does not stand *opposite* to and *outside* of this consciousness as a sort of “thing in itself,” but only in opposition to the theoretical-logical function of consciousness.

The synthesis between the logical thought function and the non-logical function of consciousness is performed in human consciousness. This non-logical function of consciousness operates inside of the non-logical aspect that is intentionally placed in opposition to the logical thought aspect. This is possible only because consciousness itself functions in that non-logical aspect. *It is therefore a fundamental error to restrict human consciousness to its psychic and logical functions, as is done repeatedly in current epistemologies.*

This erroneous view, which was also maintained in Kant’s epistemology in spite of its anti-metaphysical tendencies, was influenced from the start by the metaphysical view of the soul in scholasticism. The *anima rationalis* as “purely spiritual substance” was then placed in opposition to the “thing in itself” as a “material substance,” and in this way the following “problem” arose: How can

“reality in itself,” as it exists apart from human consciousness, enter subjective human consciousness, which is only present in the *anima rationalis* with its sensory and logical functions of knowledge?

This “problem” also dominates the epistemology of Thomas, one that he tries to solve in a metaphysical way in terms of the form-matter motive. According to him the “general nature” of things, which is the only object the human intellect can really know, is the product of a dematerialization of the “idea,” i.e., of a theoretical abstraction. In this process, the material substances, in which the *eidos* realizes itself in “matter,” are transformed in stages and in the final stage are raised to the “purely spiritual” sphere of the intellect by the theoretical act of thinking.

In this metaphysical view of the theoretical process of knowing the theoretical synthesis is therefore fundamentally converted by a metaphysical process of transformation. It does indeed start out with sensory perception, but it ends up in a purely theoretical activity, purely in its logical conceptual function. The identification of this activity with the *Gegenstand* finally has to serve here in order to assure the character of truth to subjective knowledge.

While Kant, from his “critical” standpoint, has the theoretical synthesis emerge from the theoretical-logical function, Thomas does the same from his metaphysical standpoint. Both are of the opinion that they have avoided the danger of dissolving the process of knowing into a formal logic. Kant does this through his doctrine of the synthetic thought-categories that are *a priori* related to sensory intuition and formally define the *Gegenstand*. Thomas does this with his metaphysical Aristotelian view. He holds that the theoretical-logical function of the act of thinking only dematerializes the “*eidos*” that is realized in material substances, so that the abstracted general ontic forms possess a *fundamentum in re* (an ontic foundation).

Both misconstrue the real nature of theoretical synthesis, for their starting point forces them to have the synthesis issue from the theoretical-logical function of thought. Therefore, they cannot leave intact the non-logical character of the aspects in the *Gegenstand* relation that are placed in opposition to the logical aspect.

Aristotle and Thomas *identify* the logical thought aspect with the non-logical Gegenstand in the sense of the general “*eidos*” of things. This is an entirely uncritical elimination of the real basic problem of the Gegenstand relation. The religious form-matter motive places a dogmatic *fiat* in the place of a critical solution of the epistemological problem. As if the Gegenstand is dematerialized by a logical conceptual activity that is presumed to be separate from the “material body” and is then transformed into a purely logical *noēton*!

The first argument of Aristotle and Thomas for the “separateness” of the theoretical-logical function of thought rests on the universality of the thought activity according to its logical aspect. However, this universality is not absolute but merely a universality in its own sphere, which is delimited and made relative by the sphere-sovereignty of all non-logical aspects of reality.

Thomas posed the thesis that theoretical thinking can grasp everything in a logical concept. But its scope must immediately be restricted by adding: insofar as the logical aspect extends. In that case this sphere-universality of the theoretical-logical function of thought concerns only the modal structure of the logical thought aspect, i.e., the structural possibility of making subjective logical distinctions.

This possibility does indeed extend as far as the objective-logical aspect-structure of reality—but no further. It certainly does not hold for the subjective individual conceptual activity, nor does it coincide with the “empirical” possibility in each individual thinking human being. No one can say that he or she really understands all that can be thought of, and in many people the subjective possibilities to know theoretical concepts are very much restricted by their limited native ability to theorize. In some, it is restricted by an imperfect development of the cerebrum, to which our human act-life is bound willy-nilly.

When Thomas said that the intellect can grasp all things in concepts he can only have had in mind the universal modal structure of the theoretical logical function of thought. But we have seen that Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics renders insight into the modal structures of reality impossible.

*ee. The transcendental-logical thinking subject in
Kant's epistemology and the "separate intellect"
in the Aristotelian-Thomist doctrine of the soul*

It is worth the effort at this point to once more compare the Kantian epistemology with that of Thomas. Even though Kant was driven by a radically different ground-motive (i.e., the humanistic motive of nature and freedom), there is, as we saw, a distinct influence of the metaphysics of Aristotelian scholasticism on Kantian epistemology.

Kant introduced a very sharp distinction between the so-called transcendental-logical ego and the empirical one. The former is said to be a universally valid condition for all *empirical* thought activities and alone makes the latter possible. It does not bear an individual character, for whatever is individual belongs to the empirical thinking subject. Kant did not elevate this transcendental logical ego¹ to a metaphysical substance. From his "critical" humanistic standpoint he also rejected the metaphysical doctrine of the soul, as is well known.

What did Kant have in mind with his transcendental thinking subject? It can have been nothing other than that which Aristotle made independent as *ousia* in the active *nous*, and which Thomas also saw clearly as "separate from the material body."

This, as we already noted, is really the modal structure of the subjective-logical function of thought which makes possible the individual activity of a human being within the logical aspect of thought. Nothing else can be found within the structure of reality that could furnish a point of connection for the epistemological or metaphysical conceptions mentioned.

When Aristotle assigns uninterrupted actuality to the active "general thought principle," this can only be due to his making the logical thought structure independent as a "spiritual substance." Of course the structure of the logical function of thought cannot itself function as an individual subject. It does not think, but is only a *structural norming condition* for the concrete activity of thinking in its logical aspect. The Aristotelian epistemology hypostasizes this universally valid structure as a spiritual substance, and in this re-

1 Kant calls it the "transcendental unity of apperception."

veals its unmistakable rationalistic inclination. The same rationalistic bent is manifest when Kant raised the modal structure of the logical function of thought to a transcendental thinking subject from which all “synthetic acts of thinking” were supposed to issue, whereas in reality the structure of the logical thought function is not the logical subject itself, but a norming determination of logical subjectivity. A characteristic of the rationalistic way of thinking is its constant attempt to reduce subject to law.

There is a kernel of truth in both the Aristotelian-Thomist and the Kantian argumentation concerning the independence of the theoretical-logical function of thought versus the organic body. We can indeed establish that the modal structure of the logical thought aspect cannot depend on a typical bodily organization. However, this is not a peculiarity of the modal structure of the logical aspect only, but holds for every modal structure without exception. The organization of the body, after all, is only given in an individuality structure, and we know that the modal structures of the aspects of reality are indeed indifferent towards the individuality structures that function in them; for these modal structures only define the *general nature* of the aspects. For instance, the modal structure of justice cannot be defined by the typical structures of society such as state, church, business enterprise, etc., which only bring about within the jural aspect the typical structural differences between state law, church law, corporate law, and so on.

However, the metaphysics of Aristotle and Thomas only knows of grasping reality with the concept of substance and its *accidentia*. As we demonstrated earlier, it renders insight into modal structures, individuality structures and the proper relationship between law and subject impossible by definition. Consequently it was bound to make the error of calling the modal structure of the theoretical-logical thought function independent—respectively as a “subjective spiritual substance” or as a capacity of a “purely spiritual substance” (*anima rationalis*).

Misleading as well is the second argument by which Aristotle and Thomas tried to prove the exceptional independence of conceptional activity vis-à-vis all the organs of the body, in distinction from sensory perception, which indeed depends on specific

sensory organs. Let us assume that the modal structure of the logical function of thought is independent of all “empirical limitations of the human body.” If this were so, exactly the same would have to be true of the modal structure of the subjective sensory perception. The latter, too, possesses sphere-universality in its modal (psychic) aspect. In other words, in principle the structural possibility of subjective sensory observation extends just as far as the objective-sensory perceivability of things.

Not at all, so believed Aristotle and Thomas. Subjective sensory perception is limited, because there are things that can be perceived yet lie above the levels for which the sensory organ is designed. The flaw in this argument is that suddenly the modal-structural standpoint is abandoned which was so emphatically maintained with great acuity of distinction in the case of the logical function of thought.

An individual, concrete, sensory organ, of course, does not belong to the modal structure of sensory perception, any more than the “empirical” peculiarities in the organic structure of the cerebrum belong to the modal structure of the logical function of thought.

An amoeba lacks all differentiated sensory organs yet possesses sensory perception. Therefore we cannot say that sensory perception in its modal nature is bound to specific organs such as the eye or the ear. But its modal structure is necessarily bound to the organic life function and the earlier aspectual functions of reality. Sensory perception as a *concrete* accomplishment is of a bodily nature, but not in its *modal* psychic structure. And the same holds for the concrete act of thinking in its relation to the modal structure of its logical aspect.

It has been established experimentally that the concrete thought activity of a human being is strongly influenced by emotional and organic-biotic factors, such as excitement, fatigue, intoxication of the brain, defective organic brain development, and so on.¹

But the modal structure of the logical function of thought obviously does not depend on such individual factors, for it concerns

1 Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q. 75, Art. 3, Repl. to Obj. 2, held that bodily fatigue affected thought only in an accidental way, inasmuch as the “intellect” requires the working of the “sensitive knowing potentials” by means of which

the logical nature of every possible temporal thought-activity in its analytical side.

Surely it will not do to deny such a modal structure all sensory perception and to place it only *qua* empirical concrete possibility in opposition to the abstract modal structure of the logical function of thought. The objective-sensory attributes of things are necessarily related to the modal structure of subjective-sensory perception. They are not related to a concrete, empirical, subjective possibility of human observation. This is obvious because sensory perception is present in animals as well as in humans. Therefore, if we were to assume the existence of a general logical principle of thought (a “transcendental-logical subject of thought,” if you wish), then one would also have to assume the existence of a general principle of sensory perception (or a “transcendental subject of feeling”), a general vital principle (a “transcendental biotic subject”), and so on and so forth. And all of these would then have to be similarly independent of any specific “material body.”

To turn the “modal structure” of this conceptual function into an independent “substance,” existing entirely separate from the material body as a real spiritual being, remains pure metaphysics of course. In Aristotle it is entirely rooted in the dualistic ground-motive of his philosophy and in no way founded on the data of experience, as he tries to suggest in his argumentation. And the same remark must be made about Thomas, because he utilizes the Aristotelian argument of the “separateness” of the intellect in order to “prove” the substantial character of the “*anima rationalis*.”

It is true that we cannot point at a specifically differentiated organ for human conceptual activity, which is different for the differentiated sensory perceptions. But it is equally certain that the empirical human act of thinking is bound to the cerebral cortex as a whole, which is also true for sensory perception (which, by the way, never takes place in persons separate from their logical function). It is certain that damage to the cerebral cortex can have a serious effect on the logical, linguistic, aesthetic, moral and pistical

they furnish thought with sensitive representations (*phantasmata*). Clearly, this is no real explanation of the phenomenon, but rather a purely *a priori* construct that stands and falls with the accepted “separateness” of the intellect over against the material body.

functions of consciousness, while a defective development of the cerebrum is invariably attended by disability in the act-life.¹

Thomists can never explain these experimental data as purely “accidental” phenomena that occur separate from the “truly spiritual” sphere of the intellect and the rational will. For disruptions like the ones mentioned definitely turn out to affect the consciousness in its logical, moral, and other functions *as such*: a person can no longer think logically, starts to lie, steals without scruple, whereas earlier his thinking and his moral sense, as measured against social criteria, functioned normally.

Should one base this whole argument—that the logical thought function is independent of every bodily organization—on this function’s *modal structure*, and come to the conclusion that there is a dichotomy in the temporal existence of man, then one ought not to obscure the issue through a fundamentally faulty comparison of this modal structure to the empirical, differentiated sensory perception. Rather, one should then investigate whether the logical function of thought, even in its abstract modal structure, can exist separate from the modal structures of the pre-logical functions. And exactly at this critical point Aristotle’s and Thomas’ view is not the fruit of a critical investigation but of an *apriorist* metaphysical dogma.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea has demonstrated that the modal structure of the logical aspect is entirely enclosed within the cosmic order of time, and as such is inseparably interwoven with all other modal structures, including those of number, space, motion, energy, organic life and sensory feeling. No single human concept is absolute; not one transcends the cosmic order of time. On the contrary, it is exactly this cosmic order of time in which the logical aspect is interwoven with all the other aspects that makes

1 Cf. e.g. the important discussion of B. Pfeifer, “Die psychische Störungen nach Hirnverletzungen,” in *Handbuch der Geisteskrankheiten*, Vol. 7, Part 3 (Berlin, 1928), pp. 415 ff. The psychiatrist Dziembrowski reported an incident of concussion with serious lesions in the prefrontal areas of the brain. Along with memory loss there was loss of love for family members, and faith life was also affected. We also know of the grave distortions in the function of logical thought, the language function, the musical function; and in the case of the latter two we are aware of the differentiated places in the brain where these functions are to some extent “localized.”

the logical concept formation of a non-logical Gegenstand possible in the first place. Once time is transcended there is no more distinction between logical and non-logical, and every possibility of human concept formation has come to an end.

If the logical thought function in the act of knowing were not bound up inseparably with all non-logical functions of this act through the cosmic order of time, all conceptualization would be impossible. Placed in complete isolation, the logical aspect would not be able to maintain even its logical nature. For it is only logical in its temporal relation to the non-logical. Only in the case of the supra-logical is the argument valid that it cannot be bound to time because of its transcendence beyond the order of time.

The human “spirit” or “soul”—in the pregnant sense of Scripture the religious root of human existence—possesses its individuality in the ego or selfhood and is indeed of such a supra-logical nature. And it is from this spirit, and not from some abstract “transcendental-logical subject” or an abstract theoretic-logical principle of thought, that the theoretical activity of knowing proceeds in its bond with temporal corporeal existence.

It is not the logical function of thought that can gain knowledge of the “general nature” of things, i.e., the modal and individuality structures of reality. Only the human ego can do this in its concrete act of knowing, even though such is not possible without the logical conceptual function.

Thus in the end, the entire case of Aristotle and Thomas as to the independence of the theoretical conceptual activity from the organization of the body turns out to have nothing to do with the data of experience and everything with the dualistic ground-motive of Aristotelian philosophy. It is “uncritical” in the pregnant meaning of the word as intended by the transcendental critique of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea. Uncritical not because it allows itself to be dominated by a religious—that is, a supra-scientific—prejudice. It is uncritical because it puts this prejudice *in the place of* the scientific investigation of the data of experience and in fact eliminates the scientific problem of human knowledge with a dogmatic fiat. To declare the theoretic-logical thought-function to be “independent” amounts to making it “absolute.” This can never find its scientific basis in the structure of the theoretic Gegenstand relation, but must

be entirely ascribed to the dualistic religious form-matter motive in Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics. In Aristotle it can only find its ultimate explanation in his idea of God: the idea of the deity as pure, actual form in which the ideal of the pure *theoria* finds its fulfillment.

ff. The acceptance of the Thomist doctrine concerning the relation between body and soul in Reformed scholasticism

And so we draw to a close our extensive analysis of the philosophical background of the scholastic constructions concerning the relation between soul and body in human nature. We have done this because only after fully acquainting oneself with it is one able to judge to what extent the Philosophy of the Law-Idea was justified in radically rejecting the scholastic substance-concept and demanding the development of anthropology on an entirely different basis, controlled by the Scriptural, reformational ground-motive.

On this point our philosophy encountered strong opposition from certain theologians, and that should not surprise us if one traces the history of Reformed theology since Beza managed to re-introduce the study of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics as a necessary foundation for the academic study of theology. Reformed theology was gradually led back to the ways of scholastic thinking from which Calvin had largely liberated it.

Kuyper infused theological thinking again with a fresh, reformational approach, but in the absence of an intrinsically reformational philosophy the residues of scholastic philosophy continued to encumber Reformed thought with the tenacity of a centuries-old tradition.

The Aristotelian-Thomist substance-concept, rooted in the nourishing soil of Greek metaphysical ontology, was at the heart of this scholastic tradition. And it managed to penetrate the terminology even of some confessional documents (particularly the *Westminster Confession* and the *Second Helvetic Confession*).

Kuyper himself, in his scientific-theological works, followed the entire Thomist doctrine concerning the relation between soul and body. Yet in other writings he put the axe to the root of this whole

scholastic construction through his thoroughly Scriptural understanding of the religious root of human existence.

Geesink¹ and Bavinck,² too, adopted the Thomist conceptions from first to last. What strikes us especially is their rejection of the Augustinian-Franciscan conception of the “plurality of the substantial forms” and their acceptance of the Aristotelian-Thomist view of the unity of the substantial form of human nature in the “*anima rationalis*,” which they also adopted *in toto* in their elaboration of the psycho-creationist standpoint.

An old garment is not lightly discarded if a better one is not available.

The Philosophy of the Law-Idea, however, did not immediately come up with a newly elaborated anthropology. Instead it began with attacking the religious root of the scholastic manner of thinking and with confronting the standpoint of accommodation with the standpoint of reformation in philosophy. This brought it reproaches that could well have remained unsaid if only one had calmly reflected on the demands one has to make of an anthropology that takes the results of modern scientific investigation into account.

Philosophical inquiry begins and ends with the doctrine of man. It begins with it because the very idea of the Archimedean point of theoretical philosophic thought implies that the philosopher carries an all-controlling presupposition concerning human existence into his work before he even begins. It ends with it because a genuine anthropology can only be erected upon the foundations of a philosophical doctrine of reality in which all the structures of temporal reality have been submitted to an elaborate investigation. That is why the three volumes of my *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* had to precede any “introduction to anthropology.”

We have come to the end of a detailed demonstration why from a reformational standpoint a philosophical view of man cannot be oriented to the scholastic substance-concept. Rather it will have to

1 G. H. J. W. J. Geesink, *Van 's Heeren Ordinantiën*, 4 vols., 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Kirchner, 1926), 2:289 ff.

2 Cf. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 4 vols., 3rd ed. (Kampen: Kok, 1918), 2:627 ff. [Cf. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003–08), 2:548 ff.]

be oriented to the idea of individuality structures as developed in our philosophy. It will have to make a radical break with the scholastic conceptions of body and soul and the “connection” between them.

From now on theology too will have to reflect seriously on the question which of these two conceptions agrees in its starting point with the Scriptural motive of the Christian religion. It will have to be a process of reflection that will signal a critical turning point in reformational thinking as it conducts its own investigation of what the Word-revelation tells us concerning human nature.

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