



A PARALLEL VERSION OF DOOYEWEERD'S

TRANSCENDENTAL PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT (1948) &

**“INTRODUCTION TO A TRANSCENDENTAL CRITICISM OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT “ *EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY*
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<p style="text-align: center;">TRANSCENDENTAL PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>An Inquiry into the Transcendental Conditions of Philosophy</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dr. Herman Dooyeweerd</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1948</p> <p>PREFACE</p> <p>There have come to me over a period of many years repeated requests for an exposition of the fundamentals of my philosophy in the English language, since my Dutch works do not make it accessible to those in America and England who are interested in it.</p> <p>I hope this brief treatise, which I now present, will satisfy this wish in some degree.</p> <p>It contains a transcendental critique of philosophic thought, in terms of what the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea” has discovered to be the intrinsic and necessary connection between religion and science. Its own positive contribution to philosophy is only mentioned in passing. I hope soon to find the opportunity of publishing a larger work in the English language, in which this subject will be treated in detail.</p> <p>The method of investigation followed in this treatise will suggest perhaps the impression of an inner contradiction.</p> <p>A reader who is of the opinion that a philosophic investigation should be unprejudiced might ask me whether the results of my inquiry are not already implied in my religious starting point. If such were the case, it would be contradictory indeed to pretend that they proceed from an inquiry into the structure of theoretic thought itself.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Evangelical Quarterly</i> XIX (1) Jan 1947</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INTRODUCTION TO A TRANSCENDENTAL CRITICISM OF PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT</p>
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I must answer, however, that such an objection would reveal a fundamental misunderstanding.

I do not pretend that my transcendental investigations should be unprejudiced. On the contrary, I have demonstrated that an unprejudiced theory is excluded by the true nature of theoretic thought itself. The really critical character of my transcendental method appears only from its sharp distinction between theoretic judgments and supertheoretic prejudices and from its merciless fighting against the current dogmatic confusion of both these behind the mask of an “autonomous” science.

However, the results of my inquiry are not implied in my starting point. If this were true, it would seem a little astonishing that Christian thought has not detected long ago the *inner point of connection* between religion and scientific theory. This point of connection could only be discovered by means of a serious and exact inquiry into the structure of theoretic thought itself. And this is a matter of critical *science*, not a matter of *dogmatic confession*.

That this critical investigation is necessarily dependent upon a super-theoretic starting point does not derogate from its inner scientific nature. This latter would only be true if the thinker should eliminate a really scientific problem by a dogmatic authoritative dictum, dictated by his religious prejudice. For instance, if he should proclaim that theoretic synthesis can start only from the logical function of thought, because logical understanding is “autonomous.” Equally dogmatic would be an authoritative dictum from the side of the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea,” that the synthesis cannot start from the theoretic thought itself because this “autonomy” would contradict the Revelation concerning the religious root of human existence.

I invite my readers to examine my inquiry on this point. I believe they will consent that it is nowhere turning away from the critical path and that the transcendental problems formulated in the course of this investigation are strictly bound to the structure of theoretical thought itself. The influence of

the starting point appears in the transcendental ideas, which as will be demonstrated in the course of my treatise, determine the viewpoint on these problems and the direction of their solution.

But it is not true that the possibility of scientific discussion should end here. The solution presented by a philosophical thinker, ought to be a *real* solution in view of the *real* problem. If it should appear that he tries to *escape* from this latter by means of an authoritative dictum, prescribed by his starting point, this can be discovered in a strictly scientific way, which cannot be denied by the thinker himself. And if it should appear that the transcendental ideas that dominate the direction of his theoretic thought prevent his finding a real solution in view of the real problem, these ideas ought to be concerned in the discussion. But on that issue scientific discussion cannot transcend the limits of the really scientific problem.

It would be pure illusion if one should imagine he could convince his opponents in a purely theoretic way that a starting point in itself is true or false. For in that question are concerned the thinker's religious convictions, which as sure are not capable of theoretic discussion. Here can avail only an absolute standard of truth, offered in Revelation. And the convincing power of the Word of God is not that of theoretic demonstration.

Nevertheless, I am confident indeed that philosophic thoughts will be necessarily led astray if it starts from a religious starting point that is unmasked by Divine Revelation as idolatrous and false.

This may suffice for the present to defend my method of investigation against misunderstanding. I hope this introductory treatise will be read not only by congenial spirits, for its aim is, on the contrary, to open a real scientific discussion with the adherents of the autonomy of human reason, and especially also with the adherents of the dialectical theology, who either deny the possibility of a Christian philosophy or accept the ideas of such a philosophy only in a purely negative, critical sense, or at best, restrain its positive significance to problems of ethics and anthropology.

Dooyeweerd.
Amsterdam, June, 1948.

CHAPTER I:

*The dogma concerning the autonomy
of reason and the possibility of a
transcendental criticism of philosophy.*

The subject which I have chosen for this treatise gives me the opportunity to introduce to the foreign reader some of the fundamental characteristics of the new philosophy which has been developed during the last twenty years at the Free University of Amsterdam, and which has come to be known in the Netherlands as the "Philosophy of the *Wetsidee*," a Dutch term which does not permit of an adequate translation in English. The English term "law-idea" would be quite different from the true meaning of the word *Wetsidee*. For lack of a better English term, however, we will use it. Its true meaning will be explained in the course of this treatise.

What is the aim of this Philosophy?

It is a fact generally known that the student who sets himself to study the history of philosophy finds himself much embarrassed and even disappointed because he must observe profound disagreement between the different schools even with regard to the most fundamental principles of philosophy. In this situation the most embarrassing point is that the different schools, so far at least as they maintain the scientific character of philosophy, all profess to be founded solely on purely theoretical and scientific principles; in other words, that they are all adherents of the so-called autonomy of reason in science. Now, if that were true, it seems a little astonishing that they cannot succeed in convincing one another by purely scientific arguments.

When, for example, a philosopher of the Thomist school alleges that he can prove by purely scientific arguments the existence of a supreme God, First Cause and Final End of the universe, and the existence of a rational immortal soul, a substance immaterial, indissoluble and simple, he meets a philosopher of the Kantian "critical" school, who alleges on the contrary that all these

The subject which I have chosen for my lecture gives me the opportunity of informing you of some of the fundamental characteristics of the new philosophy which has been developed during the last twenty years at the Free University of Amsterdam, and which has come to be known as "The Philosophy of the Idea of Law".

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arguments issue from a vain and sterile metaphysic, based on the misuse of the categories of the understanding and the theoretical ideas of pure reason. The Thomist for his part does not believe his position to be affected by the “critical” arguments. The result is that these schools continue to follow each its own way after a simulated combat. Have they had real intellectual contact? I believe the answer must be: No.

Exactly the same situation can be observed in the meeting of adherents of other opposite tendencies of philosophic thought, for instance of a representative of the Vienna school with a phenomenologist from the school of Husserl or a Hegelian thinker. That prompts us to raise the question whether theoretical principles are the true starting point of these schools. Is it not possible that the latter is hidden beneath supposedly scientific theses, and that scientific thought has deeper roots, which must be discovered in order to establish a real contact between philosophic adversaries?

It will not help us to say that philosophy is a matter of *Weltanschauung*, which offers many possibilities of a subjective view of the world and life, and that only in “empirical science” do we have an objective standard of truth.

In the first place, this conception of philosophy is fundamentally rejected by every defender of the scientific conception and would have destructive consequences even with regard to the problem of truth, which, in its fundamentals transcending the bounds of the several branches of mathematical and so-called empirical science, nevertheless remains the basic problem of all scientific knowledge. Even the pragmatic conception of empirical science requires a higher philosophic standard of utility for life, which cannot escape from the problem of philosophic truth.

In the second place, each branch of so-called empirical science appeals to a theoretic conception of empirical *reality*, which, as will be explained in the course of this treatise, exceeds the limits of each branch and must have a philosophic character.

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For the rest, we can eliminate the different opinions concerning the question whether philosophy is a scientific business or not, when we state that all possible philosophy must give explicitly or implicitly a theoretical total-view of reality, which is accessible to human experience in its widest sense. Real philosophy has necessarily the theoretical attitude of thought in common with science in its strict sense, which is examining a distinct aspect of empirical reality, as in physics or biology or economics.

We should not be led astray by the current distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy. The latter is no less of a theoretical character than the former, if it is to be real philosophy, as for instance the Kantian “critique of practical reason,” or the Aristotelian ethics. Only the so-called practical wisdom lacks the theoretical attitude of thought. But this practical *wisdom*, which can be found beyond every theory, cannot be called philosophy any more than the *Weltanschauung* that has its roots in that wisdom.

For the rest, theoretical attitude is of the essence of every possible philosophy, even of the modern *Existenzphilosophy* of Heidegger, which depreciates fundamentally the results of empirical science. His phenomenological ontology is an attempt at a theoretical (so-called “hermeneutic”) total conception of true reality, no less than the Aristotelian or Thomist metaphysic.

Now the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea,” in respect to the fundamental divergence of philosophic thought and the great diversity of schools and movements, raises the problem: *How is philosophy in the theoretical sense, as stated above, possible, that is to say, under what universal and necessary conditions?*

This problem is of a radical-critical character. It implies the question in respect to the possibility of scientific thought in all its forms, in its quality of *theoretical* thought. It touches the necessary *pre-supposita* of all theoretical thought whatsoever. The *pre-supposita* should not be confused with the subjective *pre-suppositions* or *prejudices*, on which a philosophical course of thoughts is founded, and in which the subjective view of

The Philosophy of the Idea of Law has raised that question, which is closely related to the question of the relation between faith and scientific thought.

It begins with a criticism, thus called transcendental, of philosophic thought, and demands a profound study of its universal and necessary structure. It opens this criticism by raising the problem: how is a scientific philosophy possible? that is to say under what universal and necessary conditions?

the *pre-supposita* is contained. These latter (i.e., presuppositions) may have very different contents in the case of different philosophical tendencies.

Insofar as a thinker does not account for the *true nature* of these subjective presuppositions, he is running into a *dogmatical, uncritical* manner of philosophizing: he thinks that his *pre-theoretical* or *super-theoretical prejudices* will pass for *theoretical judgments of universal value*, that is to say *valuable for every thinker*.

This can occur very well behind the mask of a critical method of thought. A striking example of such a pseudo-critical attitude is given in the Kantian critique of human knowledge. The question raised by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? suggests indeed a transcendental critical direction of philosophical thought.

Nevertheless, we do not find here a true transcendental critical attitude. For the great thinker of Königsberg is raising indeed the problem of the possibility of metaphysics, mathematics and physics in respect to the limits of human knowledge, but his theory of knowledge itself, as a philosophical business, preserves a purely dogmatic start. This latter is based on a complex of subjective prejudices, which are asserted as *theoretical axioms* without their being examined in a critical manner: the prejudice about the autonomy of theoretical thought, that about the spontaneity of understanding (the logical function of thought) as a formal legislator in respect to “nature,” that about understanding and sense as the two sole sources of knowledge, and that about the identity of “object” and theoretic *Gegenstand*, etc.

All these dogmatic prejudices are in their mutual connection ruled by a *basic-prejudice*, that turns out to have no philosophical character at all, and that should be unmasked by a real transcendental criticism of philosophical thought.

A grave error would be committed by supposing one could escape the dogmatic start of the Kantian criticism of knowledge by his founding theory of knowledge itself on

At first sight it might appear that this problem is not at all new. Did not Kant, the founder of the “critical” school, already ask: How is an objective experience, i.e. a truly scientific experience, possible? But this latter problem is not identical with that raised by the Philosophy of the Idea of Law. Kant wanted to investigate only the objective basis of the mathematical sciences and the Newtonian Physics, and the true limits of scientific thought with regard to metaphysics. But he did not examine the possibility of a critical theory of human knowledge as a purely scientific theory. He invites his readers in the introduction to his celebrated work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, to accept no other datum than Pure Reason. Consequently the theoretical attitude of thought has for him nothing problematical. He considers it as an unshakable datum. Now it is precisely here that the Philosophy of the Idea of Law sets its mark of interrogation. It demands a truly critical study of the structure of theoretical thought as such.

an *ontological basis*.

It is true, indeed, that every problem about human knowledge contains an ontological one. Kant himself was aware of this very well when he introduced at the beginning the distinction between the “thing in itself” and the “empirical phenomena” and, agreeing on this point with English Empiricism, asserted that the former is unknowable. But ontology in its turn is charged with exactly the same transcendental basic-problem as theory of knowledge is charged with, namely that about its possibility. Modern ontologists are asserting indeed that they can avoid the speculative way of dogmatic metaphysics by founding their ontology on the new phenomenology.

However, the unserviceableness of this latter for the purpose of a true transcendental criticism of philosophical thought is obvious.

The so-called “phenomenologic reduction” (*epoche*) contains the transcendental problem about the *datum* in human experience and the question whether that datum can be described in an adequate manner, when it is subjected to the series of theoretical “reductions” prescribed by the phenomenological method. The conception of “absolute consciousness” as a result of a methodical destruction of the “world” (*die methodische Weltvernichtung*) cannot escape the transcendental problem implied in Kant’s conception of the “transcendental unity of apperception,” namely that the “pure self” (*das reine Ich*) as simple centre of the act “cogito.” What is the true nature of that “pure self” and in which way can philosophic theory account for the hypostatizing of “transcendental consciousness” as an absolute consciousness “*quod nulla re indiget ad existendum*”?

The phenomenological distinction between “pure essence” and “fact” (*Wesen und Tatsache*) implies a theoretical abstraction made about reality, as it offers itself to pre-theoretical human experience. The basic problem of phenomenology appears to be the same as that of the theory of knowledge and that of metaphysical ontology. It is inherent in the theoretical attitude of thought as such, which is characteristic for science in every form and in its widest sense. As long as this

attitude of thought is accepted as a *datum* involving no problem in itself, and as the true starting-point of philosophy, there is no room for a real transcendental criticism of philosophical theory.

This implies, that it is also not permissible to handle the so-called autonomy of philosophic thought as a theoretical axiom, which could escape from a transcendental critique. This latter does not require indeed that anybody should abandon this “autonomy” as a “postulate.” Its sole requirement is that such a postulate should be *perused in its true nature* and that it should not pass for a *criterion of scientific character*.

That in this postulate must be hidden a transcendental basic problem appears clearly indeed from the circumstance that in the course of the evolution of western philosophy it has been conceived in a very different sense.

In Greek metaphysic *theoria* was presented as the way to true knowledge of Divinity, and as opposite to the popular *pistis* (faith) and *doxa* (opinion). Philosophical *theoria* was in the Pythagorean school introduced as a new autonomous religion (*bios theoretikos*) and it maintained this pretension up to the struggle between neo-Platonic metaphysic and Christian religion.

In Thomist scholasticism autonomous metaphysical *theoria* was conceived as a natural base for the higher supernatural knowledge resulting from revelation, and the *pistis* was conceived here as *donum superadditum* to the *ratio naturalis*.

This conception of the autonomy of philosophical thought led to the well-known *accommodation* of Greek philosophy to Roman Catholic doctrine: “natural” knowledge should not contradict the “supernatural.”

When, nevertheless, a conflict did appear, it was imputed to mere intellectual mistakes, which should be discovered in a purely theoretical way.

Again, autonomy has been conceived in a fundamentally different manner in modern

humanistic philosophy.

Here the postulate about the autonomy of thought has been dominated entirely by the motive of freedom in the modern ideal of personality and science, which has broken fundamentally both with the Greek and with mediaeval-scholastic attitude of thought in philosophy. As we shall see in the course of this treatise, the Kantian solution of the problem concerning the relation of faith and science was not the real result of a serious transcendental-critical inquiry into the possibility of theoretical thought; rather it originated in the hidden dualism of his *super-theoretical* starting-point, a dualism which also ruled his whole critique of human knowledge.

This may suffice for the present to support our thesis, that in the postulate concerning the autonomy of theoretical thought must be hidden a basic-problem of transcendental character, by which it comes to be inconvenient as starting-point for a transcendental criticism of every possible philosophy.

So we must finally consider the question, whether such a transcendental critique, which raises its problems in respect to the *theoretical attitude itself* and *as such*, can still be possible within the cadre of philosophic theory.

If not, it should be eliminated by philosophy as a *meta-philosophical* matter. But in this case there would be no sense, indeed, in presenting such a critique as a *transcendental* one. Rather, this later would have the character of a *transcendent* criticism, which wrongly would confront two spheres of human consciousness, which have not mutual contact.

There will be place for a really transcendental criticism of philosophical thought only when in a *radical-critical* attitude we can fix our *theoretical thought itself* on its necessary *pre-supposita*, which are contained in the *real structure of the first*, more particularly, which are *postulated* by this structure.

However, the supposition that this transcendental criticism should bear a *purely*

theoretical or scientific character must be abandoned in this critical examination, because this supposition would be charged with the dogmatic prejudice about the autonomy of philosophical thought, whose problematic character we have already noted.

The nature of theoretic thought as a *subjective activity* implies that the critique, which is fixed on the inner *structure* of theoretical thought and in this sense on the real *pre-supposita* of this latter, must necessarily end in a criticism of the subjective *pre-suppositions* of a philosophy. These latter preserve their subjective character in respect to their *contents* and should therefore never *as such* pass for general and necessary conditions of philosophy. However, they reply in a subjective aprioristic manner to philosophical basic questions, which are implied in the *general structure* of theoretical thought itself and therefore are questions, which by no possible philosophy can be neglected or evaded. In this situation we can only escape from the crag of a fundamental relativism if the transcendental critique has an absolute standard of truth, by which every subjective presupposition, *at least in so far as it touches the absolute truth*, can be tested.

In respect to the real nature of this standard one should abandon again the dogmatic prejudice that it could only be a purely theoretical standard, when it should have a claim to general value.

The critical reply to the question, which nature must have that criterion of truth, can only be given as a *result* of the inquiry into the real *structure* of theoretical thought itself.

If it should appear that a purely theoretic thought is impossible in consequence of its own inner *structure*, this would imply that a *purely* theoretic rate of truth can exist no more in philosophy.

CHAPTER II:

The method of this transcendental criticism

After these introductory considerations about the real nature of a transcendental criticism of philosophical thought, we will now briefly explain the method of this critique, developed by the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea.”

The real inner structure of the theoretical attitude of thought can be discovered only by confronting together the theoretic attitude and the pretheoretic or prescientific attitude of common experience.

(1) *By what characteristics is scientific thought distinguished from prescientific thought?*

Without doubt it is characterized by a specific attitude in which we create a theoretic distance between the logical aspect of our thought and the non-logical aspect of our field of study.

This attitude produces an antithetical relation in which the *logical aspect of our thought* is opposed to *non-logical aspects of reality*. In this antithetic relation the non-logical aspect opposes a resistance to every effort of our understanding to comprehend it in a logical concept. From this theoretic antithesis arises the *scientific problem*. The Germans have expressed this resistance, of which we become conscious in the antithetical relation of the theoretic attitude of thought, by the strong word *Gegenstand*. This term does not permit of an adequate translation in English. In the future we will use the semi-German term “gegenstand-relation” as a stronger expression for the antithetical relation, which characterizes the theoretical attitude conformable to its own structure.

We must lay great stress upon our description of this relation, for it disagrees on a fundamental point with the current conception. According to this latter, *Gegenstand* would be the same as empirical “reality” and the “gegenstand-relation” would exist between the *knowing subject* and *reality* as its *object*. This opinion is very erroneous and its mistake is caused by the dogmatic prejudice concerning the autonomy and the self-sufficiency of theoretical thought and, in the background, by the influence of the scholastic conception of “rational soul” as an immaterial substance, which in its spiritual

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acts would be quite independent in respect to material body.

A real, concrete act of our thought has as many aspects as empirical reality itself has. The thinking and knowing *self* as *subject* and *centre* of its acts cannot be the true correlate of the *Gegenstand*. For in this case the self would remain ever a stranger to the *Gegenstand* and human knowledge would be impossible. The antithetical relation is only regarding the logical *aspect* of our act of thought as opposite to non-logical *aspects* of reality, respectively of our own real act. This implies at the same time that the identification of *Gegenstand* as reality and “object” must be fundamentally erroneous.

That comes to be completely evident, when we raise the question: *Does the “gegenstand-relation” correspond to reality?* The answer must be: Not at all. If this were true, there would be in effect a deep gulf fixed between the logical aspect of our thought and the non-logical aspect of reality, which is its *Gegenstand*, its opposite. There would be no possibility of throwing a bridge across this abyss. The possibility of knowledge would be lost.

In fact, the antithetical relation is based on a purely theoretic *abstraction*. The different aspects of reality are indissolubly linked by *time*, which is the deepest *stratum* of temporal reality and can only in its *abstracted aspects*, but never in its real *continuity*, be conceived in a logical concept.

This compels us to raise a second problem, which we may formulate thus:

(2) *From what is abstraction made in scientific thought and how is this abstraction possible?*

In setting forth this problem we prevent ourselves from falling back upon the dogmatic opinion, as though we could *start* from the antithetic relation as from a *datum* involving no problem in itself. This relation is far from being a *datum*, for it contains a fundamental *problem*.

This comes to be evident still more when we compare the theoretic attitude to the pre-

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In setting this problem we may not start from the antithetic relation as from a datum involving no problem in itself. It is far from being a datum, for it contains precisely a fundamental problem. Let us now compare the theoretic attitude with the pre-theoretic attitude of common experience. The latter is characterised by an absolute lack of all antithetic relation. In the attitude of common experience we find ourselves completely

<p>theoretic attitude of common experience. This latter is characterized by an absolute lack of all antithetic relation. In the attitude of common experience we find ourselves completely <i>within</i> empirical reality with all the functions, with all the aspects, of our consciousness and existence.</p> <p>There is no distance, no opposition between the logical aspect of our thought and the non-logical aspects of reality.</p> <p>But if there is an absolute lack of the antithetic relation, naïve experience is nonetheless characterized by another relation, namely <i>the relation of subject and object</i>. Current philosophy has very erroneously confounded this relation with the antithetic relation of theoretical thought. It is precisely the opposite.</p> <p>In naïve experience we attribute without hesitation <i>objective</i> qualities of biotic, sensitive, logical, cultural, symbolic, social, aesthetic, even moral character to things of our common life, which cannot have a <i>subjective</i> function in these specific aspects of reality. We know very well that they cannot function as subjects, which live, feel, distinguish logically, live together in a social commerce, or make value-judgments. We know perfectly that these <i>objective</i> qualities belong to them only <i>with reference to the subjective functions</i> of any living or rational being with regard to the mentioned specific aspects.</p> <p>We experience this relation of subject and object as <i>a structural relation of reality itself</i>. That is to say, the objective quality of “necessary for life” belongs to water with reference to every possible living being, not only to an individual; visible color belongs to the rose with reference to every possible optical perception of colors, not only to my individual perception of yours, etc.</p> <p>To sum up: <i>The subject-object relation leaves reality intact, together. The antithetic relation (“gegenstand-relation”), on the contrary, is the product of an analysis, an artificial abstraction.</i></p> <p>The view of naïve experience that I have given here is not at all generally accepted.</p>	<p><i>within</i> empirical reality with all the functions of our consciousness.</p> <p>There is no distance, no opposition between the logical aspect of our thought and the non-logical aspects of reality.</p> <p>But if there is an absolute lack of the antithetic relation, naïve experience is none the less characterised by another relation, namely the relation of the subject to the object of our experience. Current philosophy has very erroneously confounded this relation with the antithetic relation of theoretical thought. It is precisely the opposite.</p> <p>In naïve experience we attribute without hesitation objective qualities – sensual, logical, cultural, social, aesthetic, even moral – to the objects of our common life. We know very well that they cannot function as subjects which feel, distinguish logically, live together in a society, or make value-judgments. We know perfectly that these objective qualities belong to them only with reference to the subjective functions of some possible consciousness.</p> <p>We experience this relation of subject and object as <i>a structural relation of reality itself</i>. That is to say, sensual colour belongs to the rose only with reference to a possible sensual perception, not to my individual perception or yours.</p> <p>To sum up: the subject-object relation leaves reality intact, together. The antithetic relation on the contrary is the product of an analysis, an abstraction.</p> <p>The view of naïve experience which I have here given you is not generally accepted.</p>
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Current opinion in theory of knowledge considers naïve experience from the theoretical point of view, without any insight into the fundamental difference between theoretical and pre-theoretical experience. This latter is conceived as a specific *theory* of reality, the so-called “naïve realist” theory or the “image theory.” According to this view, naïve experience would imagine that human consciousness is placed like a photographic apparatus opposite a reality, as it were, independent of that consciousness. This “reality in itself” would be reproduced faithfully and completely in consciousness.

That is a very erroneous conception of naïve experience. Naïve experience is not a *theory* of reality. Rather, it takes reality as its is *given*, that is to say in its *given structure*. It is itself a datum, or rather the *supreme datum* for every theory of reality and of knowledge. Every philosophical theory that cannot account for it must necessarily be erroneous *in its fundamentals*.

Let us return now to the antithetic relation of scientific thought. We have seen that from this relation arises the scientific problem.

Theoretical thought cannot stop before the problem. It must advance from theoretical *antithesis* to *synthesis*. It must arrive at a logical concept of the non-logical aspect of reality.

Here emerges a new problem, which we may formulate thus:

(3) *From what starting point is it possible to apprehend integrally in a synthetic view the diverse aspects of reality which are separated and opposed to one another in the antithetic relation?*

Here we touch the central or nuclear problem of our transcendental critique. In raising this question the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea” submits every possible starting point of philosophical thought to a fundamental criticism.

Now it is indubitable that a truly critical attitude of thought does not permit us to choose the starting point in one of the opposed terms of the antithetic relation, that

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That is a very erroneous conception of naïve experience. Naïve experience is not a theory of reality. Rather it takes reality as it is given. It is itself a datum, or rather the supreme datum for every theory of reality and of knowledge.

Let us return now to the antithetic relation of scientific thought. We have seen that from this relation arises the scientific problem.

Theoretical thought cannot stop before the problem. It must advance from theoretical antithesis to synthesis. It must arrive at a logical concept of the non-logical aspect of reality.

Here emerges a new problem, which we may formulate thus:

(3) *From what starting point is it possible to apprehend integrally in a synthetic view the diverse aspects of reality which are analysed and opposed to one another in the antithetic relation?*

In raising this problem the Philosophy of the Idea of Law submits every possible starting point of philosophic thought to a fundamental criticism.

Now it is indubitable that a truly critical attitude of thought does not permit us to choose the starting point in one of the opposed terms of the antithetic relation, that

is, neither in the logical aspect of thought, nor in the non-logical aspect of the *Gegenstand*. Yet the current philosophy seems obliged by its dogma of the autonomy of reason to seek a point of departure in theoretical thought itself. Now here arises an inescapable embarrassment. For by its intrinsic structure the logical aspect of our thought in its scientific, theoretical function is obliged to proceed by a theoretical synthesis.

And there are as many possible theoretical syntheses as reality has aspects. There is a synthetic thought of a mathematical nature, another of a physical nature, another biological, psychological, historical, etc.

In which of these possible synthetic points of view will philosophical thought seek its point of departure? It does not matter which it chooses, for in so doing it will always exaggerate one of these aspects, and this will lead to the proclamation of the *absolutism of one of the special synthetic points of view*. There is the true source of all the "isms" in philosophy, which haunt scientific thought and furiously give one another battle.

We may observe in this connection, that for an "autonomous" philosophy there is no escape from this crag by a pretended rupture between philosophy and mathematical and "empirical" science in its several branches and by taking refuge to a higher source of "intuition" or a *Wesensschau*. For it must be stated that into all these pretended "super-scientific" efforts, which lack a transcendental criticism of philosophical thought itself, the "isms" return in a same way. The irrationalistic metaphysic of Bergson, for instance, is a fundamental "vitalism," Heidegger's *Existenz*-philosophy is an evident "historicism," etc.

The embarrassment of all philosophy that maintains its "autonomy" is caused by the antithetical structure of theoretic thought as such. Theoretic thought cannot get loose from the diversity of abstracted *aspects* of reality.

Now we must observe, at the same time, that these "isms" are uncritical in a *twofold* sense.

In the first place, the antithetical relation

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Now it is curious that apparently all these "isms" can be pursued in theory. How is that possible? The Philosophy of the Idea of Law has unveiled this mystery by a serious analysis of the structure of the aspects of reality.

gives no ground for the pretended absolutism of any of the abstracted aspects. On the contrary, it opposes resistance to every effort of our thought, by which we try to reduce on or more aspects to another. It takes its revenge on such efforts by implicating theoretical thought in *antinomies*. Such antinomies arise, for instance, when you try to reduce the spatial (geometrical) aspect to the arithmetical one of number (the antinomies of the so-called “actual infinity”), or the physical aspect of movement to the geometrical one of space, or the historical aspect of power to the juridical one of right, etc.

In the second place, into each “ism” returns the basic problem of theoretic synthesis, for it presupposes a synthesis of the logical aspect and the non-logical aspect, which is proclaimed to be “absolute.” You cannot proclaim the “absoluteness” of historical evolution before you have abstracted the *historical* aspect of reality (which is not at all the same as the course of *real* events) by means of a theoretic-logical analysis.

The philosophic “isms,” however, neglect this primordial question and start from their “ism” as from a position which has no problems in itself.

Do not think that the several branches of mathematical and so-called empirical science escape from this philosophical embarrassment. Mathematical science shows us a fundamental divergence of opinions precisely in respect to the problem of synthesis. How must we see the relation between the logical aspect of our thought, the aspects of number and space, the sensitive aspect of experience and the linguistic aspect of the symbols, which are used in mathematics? Has the mathematical *Gegenstand* its origin either in logical thought or in sensual perception, or in an intuition of time, or is it perhaps a complex of linguistic symbols, that can be handled on the base of “convention?”

Mathematical logicism, formalism, empiricism, and intuitionism give a very different reply to these questions.

And the influence of these “isms” is not

restrained to a purely philosophical discussion. On the contrary, it determines one's appreciation of a whole branch of mathematical theory (the theory of the "alephs" in the higher mathematics).

In biology we know the struggle between mechanism, neo-vitalism and holism with regard to the fundamental problem of life. Can the biotic aspect of the living organism be reduced to the physico-chemical one, or must the reverse be accepted?

Psychology, logic, sociology, economy, jurisprudence, etc. – they all are embarrassed by the "isms" in consequence of the philosophical "dogmatism" in respect to the problem of synthesis. Theoretical view of empirical reality is always dominated by philosophical theory. For the basic problem of every theoretical view is that of the mutual relation of the several aspects of reality.

And this problem transcends the bounds of a specific *branch* of science, which examines only one specific *aspect* of reality. Its solution presupposes a total-view of the aspects, that is, a *philosophical view* of their *enduring modal structure*.

And it seems that the dogma of autonomy and self-sufficiency of theoretic thought must unpreventably implicate this philosophical view of reality in the "isms."

Now it is curious that apparently all these "isms" can be pursued in theory, not considering the mentioned antinomies.

How is that possible? The "Philosophy of the Law-Idea" has unveiled this mystery by a serious analysis of the modal structures of the aspects of reality.

What is a "structure?" It is an architectonic plan according to which a diversity of "moments" is united in totality. And that is only possible as long as the different "moments" do not occupy the same place in the totality but are rather knit together by a *directive and central "moment."* This is precisely the situation with regard to the modal structure of the different aspects of reality. They have an enduring structure in time, which is the necessary condition for the

What is a structure? It is an architectonic plan according to which a diversity of "moments" is united in a totality. And that is only possible so long as the different "moments" do not occupy the same place in the totality but are rather knit together by a *directive and central "moment"*. This is precisely the situation with regard to the structure of the different aspects of reality. They have an enduring structure in time which is the necessary condition for the functioning of

functioning of variable phenomena in the framework of these aspects.

This structure has a *modal* character, because the different aspects are not reality itself, but are only *modalities of being*. There does not exist a purely “physical” or “biotic” or “psychical” or “historical” or “economic” or “juridical” *reality*. There exist only physical, biotic, psychical, historical, etc. *aspects* of reality. Each real thing, each real event, each real living being, each real social connection is functioning within the temporal *totality* of aspects, either in subjective or in objective functions. This (empirical) reality does not offer itself to naive experience in abstracted *aspects*, but in *typical* structures of *totality* and *individuality*. These latter, which in the “Philosophy of the Law-Idea” are called “structures of individuality,” embrace *all modal aspects* without difference. In their framework the different aspects are grouped in a typical manner and bound together in an *individual totality* and *unity*. The *modal* functions of reality within the different *aspects* are here *individualized by degrees*, and they are grouped in such a typical manner, that the whole structure is characterized by one of them, which is called the inner *directive* or *qualifying function*.

When the typical individuality of the latter appears to be founded on a type of individuality in a preceding aspect, the whole structure finds in the latter its typical “function of foundation”.

The typical inner social structure of marriage, for instance, is *qualified* by its directive function within the moral aspect as enduring love-community of husband and wife. But the typical individuality of this moral love-community is founded on the enduring *sexual connection* within the *biotical* aspect.

So much concerning the mutual relation between the *modal* structures of the different *aspects* and the *structures of individuality*.

Let us return now to the former.

In this modal structure we find, necessarily, a central and directive “moment” which cannot be logically defined because by it an aspect maintains its irreducible character with

variable phenomena in the framework of these aspects.

In this structure we find, necessarily, a central and directive “moment” which cannot be logically defined because by it an aspect maintains its individuality with regard to all the other aspects of reality, even with regard to the logical aspect of our thought.

regard to all the other aspects of reality, even with regard to the logical aspect of our thought.

We call this directive moment the “*nuclear moment*”. The nuclear moment, however, cannot display its own modal sense except in close liaison with a series of other “moments”. These latter are by nature partially *analogical*, i.e., they recall the “nuclear” moments of all the aspects that have an anterior place in the temporal order of aspects. Partially also they are of the nature of *anticipations*, which recall the “nuclear” moments of all the aspects which have a later place in that order.

This implies that there must be two *limiting* aspects, the first of which cannot have “analogical” moments and the last of which cannot have “anticipations” within its modal structure. These limiting aspects are respectively the arithmetical aspect of number and the aspect of faith. The former is the first; the latter is the last aspect in the modal order of time.

Let us take, for example, the sensation aspect of reality (including the character of feeling and sentiment). In its modal structure we find a nuclear moment which cannot be further reduced and which guarantees the true character of the aspect in its proper sense. This is the “*sensation-moment as such*”. “Was man nicht definieren kann, das sieht man als ein Fuehlen an,” says the German. But it would be quite wrong to suppose that this is a trait characteristic of the sensation aspect and of it alone. In fact, we encounter the same situation in all the other modal *structures of reality*.

Around this central or nuclear “moment” are grouped analogical “moments”. We find, in the first place, an analogical “moment” that recalls the nuclear moment of the biotic aspect of reality (the aspect of organic life, which should not be confused with the “living organism” as a typical *structure of individuality*).

There is a “*sensation-life*” (a process of “living sensations”) and in this “vital moment” the sensation-aspect discovers its indissoluble liaison with the aspect of organic

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Let us take for example the sensation-aspect of reality. In its structure we find a nuclear element which cannot be further reduced and which guarantees the individuality of the aspect in its proper sense. This is the “*sensation-moment as such*”. “Was man nicht definieren kann, das sieht man als ein Fuehlen an.” Only it would be quite wrong to suppose that this is a trait characteristic of the sensation-aspect of reality and of it alone. In fact we encounter the same situation in all the other aspects.

Round this central or nuclear “moment” are grouped analogical “moments”. We find in the first place an analogical “moment” which recalls the nuclear “moment” of the biological aspect of reality. There is a living sensation and in this “vital moment” the sensation-aspect discovers its indissoluble liaison with the aspect of organic life. The living sensation is not identical with the organic life of our body. It obeys its own laws, which are of a psychological nature. It remains characterised by its own nuclear “moment” the “sensation moment”.

life. The living sensation is not identical with organic life. It obeys its own laws, which are of a psychical nature. It remains characterized by its own nuclear “moment”, the “sensation moment”. Nevertheless, there is no sensation life possible without the solid foundation of an organic life in the biological sense.

Then in the modal structure of the sensation-aspect we find an analogical “moment”, which recalls the nuclear moment of the physical aspect, i.e. *movement*.

No sensation-life is possible which does not reveal itself in emotions. Emotion is a movement of feeling. But a movement of feeling cannot be reduced to a physical or chemical movement. It remains characterized by its nuclear “moment” and submissive to its own psychical laws. However, every emotion takes place on the solid foundation of the physical and chemical movements.

Next we find in the structure of the sensation aspect an analogical “moment” which recalls the nuclear moment of the spatial aspect of reality. In the subjective life of sensation there is necessarily a *feeling of space*, which corresponds to the *objective* sensitive space of perceiving (differentiated as optical, auditive and tactile space). This “space of perceiving” is not at all identical with space in its original (mathematical) sense, but it is not possible without the foundation of the latter. So we can say that our psychical *space of perceiving* is by its nature founded on a three-dimensional geometric space. But it would be fundamentally erroneous to say with Kant that an euclidian three-dimensional space of perceiving (*Anschauungsform*) is the only possible for mathematics. This would be a confusion of the “analogical” space of perceiving with the “original” geometrical space. And it would be equally wrong to identify the objective physical “movement-space” with the latter. For the “physical space” has also an “analogical” character, in respect to the original space of mathematics; it is characterized by the nuclear moment of (energetic) movement. Space in its original sense is *statical* and allows no movement. The spatial aspect has only a moment of anticipation with regard to the nuclear

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Next we find in the structure of the sensation aspect an analogical " moment " which recalls the nuclear moment of the spatial aspect of reality. In the life of sensation there is necessarily a feeling of space which corresponds to perceived space, and is differentiated as optical, auditive and tactile space. This perceived space is not at all identical with mathematical space but it is not possible without the foundation of the latter.

moment of movement.

Finally, we find in the modal structure of the sensation-aspect an analogical moment which recalls the nuclear moment of the arithmetical aspect, i.e. that of quantity or number. There is no emotional life possible without a multiplicity and diversity of sensations. This multiplicity is not at all identical with multiplicity in the arithmetical sense. It is qualitative and psychical. It allows no quantitative isolation like the different parts of a straight line. The different sensations penetrate one another. But this multiplicity is impossible without the foundation of an arithmetical multiplicity.

So far we have analyzed the structure of the sensation-aspect only in the analogical direction. That is the “primitive” or “closed situation” in which we find the sensation-life in animals. But when you study the sensation-life of man, you discover moments of anticipation by which the life of feeling relates itself to the nuclear moments of the latter aspects of reality.

We meet successively a logical feeling, an historical feeling, a linguistic feeling, a social feeling (for propriety and tact), an economic feeling, and aesthetic feeling, a feeling for right, a moral feeling, and a feeling of unshakable certitude, which is akin to faith.

We will give now a second example of analysis of a modal structure and choose this time the logical aspect. But we must now restrain our analysis to a brief scheme:

Analogical moments	logical apperception logical thought-life logical movement of thought (subjected to the principle of logical causality, viz., the <i>principium rationis sufficientis</i>). logical thought-space (<i>Denkraum</i>) logical unity and multiplicity (of logical characteristics)
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Moments of anticipation	logical domination [ruling by systematic (theoretical) concepts or logical forms] logical symbolics logical commerce logical economy of thought
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	logical harmony logical right logical (theoretic) "eros" (platonic love) logical certitude
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With regard to this scheme we remark that the first modal analogy recalls the nuclear moment of the sensation aspect (cf the sensual perception).

The mentioned moments of anticipation are only disclosed in *theoretical thought*; they fail in the closed structure of pre-theoretical thought. The first mentioned anticipation recalls the nuclear moment of the historical aspect, namely the cultural moment of (form-giving) power or domination. That this anticipation really has an intrinsic relation to the historical aspect appears from the circumstance that only theoretic (and not pre-theoretic) logic has its "history," because only here do the logical principles receive variable logical forms. (In pretheoretic thought the logical principles are practiced at random without any logical form.)

Here is revealed a structural phenomenon which we call *the universality in its proper orbit* of every aspect of reality, as the reverse of its *sovereignty in its proper orbit*, that is to say, its irreducibility in respect to other modal aspects.

Every aspect is a true mirror of the entire order of aspects. It reflects in its own way the totality of aspects.

And here at the same time is the clue to all the philosophical "isms." We now understand how it is possible for them all to be pursued equally with the appearance of conviction. And it is also evident that they cannot result from a truly critical attitude of thought. For we must choose between these alternatives: either all the "isms" are equally right, in which case they destroy one another; or they are equally wrong, and that is more likely. Thus it seems that the current opinion that maintains the autonomy of scientific thought is self-refuted.

It is just at this point, however, that Immanuel Kant, the founder of the "critical" school, believed he could show another way. He saw very clearly that the various

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philosophical “isms” lack a critical attitude. He sought a starting point for his theory of knowledge that would be raised above the special synthetic points of view. And he is of the opinion that this higher point of our consciousness can only be discovered by the way of *critical knowledge of ourselves*.

This way contains a great promise indeed. For it is indubitable that our theoretical thought, so long as it is fixed on the different aspects of reality, is dissipated in a theoretical diversity. Only in the way of knowledge of itself can human consciousness concentrate on a central point where all the aspects of our consciousness and empirical reality *converge in a radical unity*.

The ancient Greek philosophers knew this very well. Socrates already asserted that self-knowledge is the key to all philosophy. St. Augustine meant the same when he said: “Deum et animam scire volo. Nihilne plus? Nihil omnino.” And at the beginning of modern Philosophy Descartes sought his “archimedean point” in the act “cogito,” in which the “ego,” the self, must be the centre.

But here arises a new transcendental problem, which we may formulate thus:

(4) *How is self-knowledge possible, and of what nature is this knowledge?*

Kant did not wish to abandon his theoretical point of departure, the autonomy of scientific thought.

Owing to this dogma he was obliged to seek a starting point in pure reason itself. But he supposes it to be possible to demonstrate in scientific thought itself a central point of consciousness that will be raised above the different special synthetic viewpoints.

This is how he thinks to resolve the problem. He believes that in the logical aspect of our thought there is a subjective pole —“I think”— which has an opposite pole in every concrete empirical reality, and which guarantees the radical unity of all synthetic acts. This “I think” is, according to Kant, the ultimate logical subject, which can never become the *Gegenstand* of our knowledge,

his theoretical philosophy which would be raised above the special synthetic points of view. And he is of opinion that this transcendent point of our consciousness can only be discovered by the way of *knowledge of ourselves*.

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This is how he thinks to resolve the problem. He believes that in the logical aspect of our thought there is a subjective pole – “*I think*” – which has an opposite pole in every concrete empirical reality, and which guarantees the radical unity of all our synthetic acts. This “*I thin*” is, according to him, the ultimate logical subject, which can never become the object of our knowledge,

because every act of theoretical knowing must start from "*I think*."

This "*I think*" is not at all identical with our real concrete acts of thinking. These latter can themselves become the *Gegenstand* of "*I think*," while "*I think*" is the universal and necessary condition of every theoretic and synthetic act of our consciousness. It has no individuality. It is not of an "empirical nature." It is a condition, logical and general by nature, of every scientific act. It is, as it is called by Kant, the "transcendental unity of (logical) apperception."

The question now is whether Kant has succeeded in demonstrating a true point of departure in theoretical thought, and the critical answer must be: No. As we have just seen, the point of departure of theoretical thought must transcend the opposed terms of the antithetical relation. But Kant seeks for one in the logical aspect of thought. His "transcendental logical subject" remains within the antithetic relation, opposed to the *Gegenstand*, just as Husserl's "absolute consciousness" as correlate to the opposite "world." In the logical aspect there cannot be a radical unity given in "*I think*". For we have seen that the structure of a specific aspect is always a unity in diversity of moments and never an *absolute* unity *above* the moments.

The self is necessarily transcending its logical function. Besides, it is a profound error to suppose that empirical reality itself should become the *Gegenstand* of the logical aspect of our thought. For we have seen that the *Gegenstand* is always the product of a theoretical abstraction, which opposes a non-logical aspect of reality to the logical aspect of our thought. Thus there arises anew the problem which we have already formulated: How is self-knowledge possible? For undoubtedly the way of self-knowledge will be the sole way to discover the true starting point of our scientific thought.

Kant's opinion was not that the true human self should be contained in the "transcendental unity of apperception," in this purely formal concept of "*I think*." Rather, his true conviction was this, that the hidden root of human existence cannot be

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Besides it is a profound error to suppose that empirical reality itself could become the object of the logical aspect of our thought. The object is always the product of a theoretical abstraction by which a non-logical aspect of reality is opposed to the logical aspect of our thought. Thus there arises anew the problem which we have already formulated. How is self-knowledge possible? For indubitably the way of self-knowledge will be the sole way to discover the true starting point of our scientific thought.

discovered in the *theoretical way*, but only in the way of *practical belief*. The *homo noumenon*, the autonomous “free will” as moral first cause of human acting is, according to him, the true human *self*. It is an *idea* of practical reason, which has practical reality in a categorical norm with regard to human behavior. But he would not admit that this moral idea of “autonomous liberty” should be the true hidden starting point of his “critique of pure Reason.”

His disciple Fichte, nevertheless, made this step in the first edition of his *Wissenschaftslehre* and frankly founded the former on the idea of moral autonomy of the self. This was, however, in contravention of Kant’s own “critical” standpoint, which implied a sharp dualism between autonomous science and autonomous belief (theoretic and practical reason). His theoretical “dogmatism,” which we have pointed out, was required by this “dualism” in his *hidden* starting point, which should be discovered by a really transcendental criticism. For it is sure that this true starting point cannot be found in the pseudo-concept of the transcendental “*I think*.”

Now self-knowledge, the only way to discovering the true starting point of theoretical thought, is *always correlative to knowledge of God*. When, for example, Aristotle seeks the characteristic and central point of human nature in the theoretical understanding, this self-knowledge is indissolubly knit with his conception of Divinity. God is, for Aristotle, Absolute Theoretical Thought, *noesis noeseos*, which has only itself for object, and which is *pure form* opposed to all *matter*. When in modern philosophy the great German thinker Leibniz seeks the central point of human nature in mathematical thought with its clear and distinct concepts, this self-knowledge is quite dependent on his conception of God. God is for Leibniz the archetypal Intellect, “the great Geometrician,” Creative Thought. And when Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, seeks the true core of human nature in its moral function of pure autonomous will, in its liberty to give itself its own laws, this self-knowledge is correlative to his idea of God. God is for Kant a postulate of autonomous practical Reason, which must guarantee the

Now it is generally admitted that *self-knowledge is always correlative to knowledge of God*. When for example Aristotle seeks the characteristic and central point of human nature in the theoretical understanding, this self-knowledge is indissolubly knit with his conception of God. God is for Aristotle Absolute Theoretical Thought, *noesis noeseos* which has only itself for object, and which is pure form opposed to all *matter*. When in modern philosophy the great German thinker Leibniz seeks the central point of human nature in mathematical thought with its clear and distinct concepts, this self-knowledge is quite dependent on his conception of God. God is for Leibniz the archetypal Intellect, the great Geometrician, Creative Thought. And when Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, seeks the true core of human nature in its moral function, in its liberty to give itself its own laws, this self-knowledge is correlative to his idea of God, which is moralistic.

recompensing of good moral behavior by eternal beatitude, in harmonizing the order of “nature” with that of “liberty.”

In fact, self-knowledge is by nature religious. Man’s “self” is the concentration point of all his existence, of all his functions within the different aspects of temporal reality.

The self seeks, by an original innate tendency –that is, the “law of religious concentration” – its divine origin, and cannot know itself except in this original relation.

The Self is thus the religious centre, “the heart,” as Holy Scripture says, of the whole of our temporal existence. It is also the hidden player playing on the keyboard of theoretical thought. For “theoretical thought” is not an independent being, a “substance” in its metaphysical sense. It has by nature no concentration point in itself. Rather it is an *act of oneself*. The “self” in its own true nature of *religious centre* cannot be eliminated from its “acts.” And when a transcendental critique of knowledge or a phenomenological inquiry into the acts of consciousness, for the sake of the pretended autonomy of theoretical thought, refuse to account for the true nature of this “self” and neglect its *transcendent* character, they turn away from the critical way. For we have demonstrated that theoretical thought by its own intrinsic structure postulates a transcendent point in our consciousness from which the synthesis can be executed.

It is not true that transcendental criticism of theoretic thought by accounting for the true nature of human “self” should be obliged to fall back upon theoretical metaphysic, which by Kant’s critique of pure reason has been unmasked as a vain speculation.

Our transcendental criticism has demonstrated, on the contrary, that all metaphysic, which pretends its theoretical autonomy, is a purely dogmatic aberration from the critical way of thinking.

If we will really remain in the way of a transcendental criticism, we must fix our theoretical thought itself *upon its pre-supposita*. And the thinking “Self” is such a *pre-suppositum*. Here theoretical thought

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must admit that true self-knowledge is not possible in the way of purely theoretical inquiry and that it is nevertheless strictly required for the sake of *saving* the *critical attitude*.

CHAPTER III

The religious motives of Western thought and the idea of law

But is the Self, as religious centre of our theoretical thought, the true starting point of philosophy?

It is the *individual* centre indeed of our temporal existence, not in the current sense of individuality as determined by time and place, but in the *central spiritual* sense of *radical unity* of human individuality.

This individual centre of our existence, however, is not *enclosed* in itself. It can only live within a spiritual (that is, in a radical, religious) community as its feeding ground.

Moreover, philosophy itself is not the mere product of individual thought. Rather, it is, just as human culture, a *social* task, which can be fulfilled only on the base of a long common tradition of thought. This too, requires a spiritual community as its *root*.

Now, a spiritual communion is bound together only by a common spirit, which as a *dynamis*, as a motive force, dominates the centre of our existence.

We will call these motive forces the "fundamental motives." And here we have discovered at last the true starting points of philosophy, and at the same time of the whole of human culture and social activity.

These fundamental motives are the true motive forces that have dominated the evolution of western scientific and philosophical thought.

Each of them has established a community among those who have started from it. And the religious motive as hidden motive force of his spiritual community dominates the thinker all the more if he is unconscious of it.

The true starting point of any possible philosophy is always a *fundamentally religious motive*. That is guaranteed by the very structure of theoretical thought which we have investigated above. These religious motives are the true motive forces which have dominated the evolution of western scientific thought. Each motive establishes a community among those who start from it. It dominates the thinker all the more if he is unconscious of his hidden religious motive.

The thinker, indeed, can fashion this motive according to his individual view, but the motive itself is super-individual.

There have been four great religious motives that have dominated the evolution of western culture and western scientific and philosophical thought. Three of them are of a "dialectical" character, that is to say, they are in fact composed of two religious motives, which, as implacable opposites, drive human action and thought continually in opposite directions, from one pole to the other. This inner conflict within the religious starting points implicates human thought and action in a *religious* dialectique, which is completely different from *theoretical* dialectique as inherent in the antithetical relation of theoretic thought.

For *theoretical* antithesis is by nature *relative* and requires a theoretical synthesis developed by the thinking "Self." Religious antithesis, on the contrary, is by nature *absolute* and does not allow a theoretical synthesis.

At best it allows the awarding of first rank (*das Primat*) to one of the antithetical motives (cf., Kant's *Primat der praktischen Vernunft*).

Now it must be remarked that this religious antithesis originates in a deifying of some aspects or parts of temporal, created reality. This latter is by nature *relative*.

If one part of it is proclaimed to be *absolute*, its correlative is roused by religious consciousness to claim its own and opposite absoluteness.

Every philosophical effort to bridge over this religious antithesis by means of an "autonomous" theoretical dialecticism is fundamentally *uncritical*. This was the way, however, of all so-called dialectical philosophy from Heraclitus up to the Hegelian school. The uncritical character of these efforts is evident, because the latter are attempted from the starting point of a religious motive, which in itself is dialectic. Hegel's "absolute idea," for instance, is nothing else but the dialectical process of his philosophic thought dominated by the religious motive of Humanism.

There have been four great religious motives which have dominated the evolution of western scientific thought.

Religious antithesis in the starting point of philosophy can be overcome only if the entirely or partly idolatrous motive, which has occupied theoretical thought, is conquered by the motive force of the true religion of Revelation.

The four great religious motives which have dominated the evolution of western philosophical thought can be mentioned here but briefly. For an ample explanation of their influence in philosophy I must refer the reader to the first volume of my work *Philosophy of the Idea of Law* and to volumes I and II of my new work *Reformation and Scholasticism in Philosophy*.

I

In the first place, there is the great motive of *Matter and Form*, which was the ground motive of Greek thought. It originates in an endless conflict in the religious consciousness of the Greeks between the natural religion of antiquity and the younger cultural religion of the Olympic gods. The motive of "Matter" corresponds to the faith of the ancient natural religion, according to which divinity was the great vital current without stable or personal form, out of which emerge all beings of individual form, which are subject to the great law of birth and death by a blind necessity, *Anangke*. The motive of "Form" corresponds to the later religion of the Olympic gods who are only deified cultural forces who have left the "mother earth" with its vital current to receive an immortal personal and invisible form (*eidos*). But the Olympic gods have no power over against *Anangke*, which dominates the stream of life and death. *Anangke* is their great antagonist.

This dialectical religious motive, which before Aristotle had no fixed name, and was not bound to the mythological forms of popular faith, dominates Greek thought from the beginning and disperses it continually into opposite directions.

Since Nietzsche's ingenious book *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, this conflict in Greek religious consciousness is characterized as the conflict between the

I can but briefly mention them.

In the first place there is the great motive of Matter and Form, which was the fundamental motive of Greek thought. It originates in an endless conflict in the religious consciousness of the Greeks between the natural religion of antiquity and the cultural religion of the Olympic gods. Matter corresponds to the faith of the ancient natural religion, according to which divinity was the great vital current without stable or personal form, out of which emerge all beings of individual form, which are subject to the great law of birth and death by a blind necessity, *Anangke*. The motive of form corresponds to the faith of the later religion of the Olympic gods who are only deified cultural forces who have left their mother earth with its vital current to receive an immortal, personal and invisible form. But the Olympic gods have no power over against *Anangke*, which dominates the stream of life and death. *Anangke* is their great antagonist.

Dionysic and the Apollinic motive.

The ancient Greek poets Homer and Hesiod and the Orphic "seers" made many efforts to explain to the Greek people that the new Olympic gods were the real offspring of the elder natural gods (*the theogonies*). But all these efforts to reconcile the two antithetic religious motives were condemned to miscarriage. The Olympic gods could not help men when the cruel *Moirai* or *Anangke* struck them down. Therefore Greek people in their private life kept up the ancient religion and the Olympic gods were only the public gods of the Greek *polis*. Greek philosophy originates in the archaic transition-period, and this was the time of a great religious and social crisis. The ancient religion, which was pushed back by the official religion of the *polis*, broke forth in religious revivals, as the great Dionysic and the Orphic movements.

In this situation Greek philosophy begins under the religious "primate" of the *motive of matter*. The ancient philosophy of nature is a deification of the formless vital current as the divine Origin (*arche*) of all things which have an individual form. This vital current is conceived as the true *nature* or *physis*. The great Ionian thinker Anaximandros says that everything returns into its origin, from which it proceeds. "For the things pay one to another just penalty and punishment in the order of time for sake of the injustice of their existence." The divine origin is called by him the *Apeiron* (the invisible, unlimited). But in this first period already the polar tendencies of the ground motive disperse Greek thought into two opposite directions.

Whereas Heraclitus of Ephesus denies the real existence of an eternal form of being and proclaims the divinity of the eternally flowing vital current, presented by the dynamic "element" fire, Parmenides, the founder of the Eleatic school, on the contrary, denies the true reality of the flowing *hule* (matter) and seeks the true divine *physis* only in eternal, invariable *being*. Only metaphysical *theoria* is the path of truth, the true way to knowledge of god, opposite to the uncertain *doxa* (opinion) and *pistis* (belief) of the common people. But this Greek conception of *theoria* is dominated by the religious *motive of form*. Therefore, divine

being cannot be conceived only in a logical concept; *theoria* must *behold* it in its celestial spherical *form* or *eidos*, which is an immaterial geometrical one: the form of firmament.

Since this controversy between Heraclitean and Eleatic conceptions of divine *physis*, Greek *thought* has abandoned every attempt to reduce form to matter or matter to form, and *physis* is generally conceived as a compound of both.

But when the motive of form, which dominates the Olympic religion, has won the "primate" in Greek philosophy, divinity is sought *above physis*, and matter is undeified. This undeifying of matter can go to such an extent that it is even deprived of its original characteristic of autonomous flowing and movement. In this case matter is conceived of as a dead "chaos" and the origin of movement and life is sought in divine thought, which is *pure form*, and which as a demiurge has given form to the original chaos. But the dialectic motive of Matter and Form excludes the Christian idea of creation. "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*"¹ is the principle of Greek cosmogonic wisdom. In the Orphic anthropology, which has had a great influence with the Pythagorean school and with Plato, the religious dialecticism reveals itself in the dualistic conception of the immortal, rational soul as opposite to the impure material body, which is the prison or the "grave" of the former.

In the evolution of Plato's theory of ideas this Orphic dualism corresponds to the original polar conception of the transcendent world of eternal *eide* or pattern-forms of being over against the world of sensual phenomena, the material world of becoming. The religious dialecticism also dominates the crisis of this theory of ideas when Plato tries to bridge over the dualism by means of a dialectic method of theoretic thought explained in the three so-called Eleatic dialogues, at the cost of the pure idea of form itself. When this critical phase is overcome, the fundamental dualism reappears in Plato's dialogue *Timaios*, in which is explained the generation of the cosmos and in which the form-giving

power of the divine Demiurge or divine Reason is placed over against the original power of blind *Anangke*, the power of the principle of “matter” which can only be restrained by *persuasion*, but not by divine *domination*.

And Aristotle, too, though he in his later philosophy abandoned the Platonic conception about the transcendence of the ideal forms and conceived matter as a pure *possibility of being* which can only get actual existence by a form, could not escape from the consequences of the fundamental dualism in his religious motive. His metaphysical theory of being reveals the polar antithesis of pure matter (*proote hule*) and pure form (the divine thought) and he does not know a higher principle as starting point for a true synthesis. Even his anthropology could not overcome this fundamental dualism. Although apparently “soul” and “material body” are bound together to a “substantial unity” and rational soul is conceived as *form* of the body, so that body can have no actual existence without the soul, the dualism reappears in Aristotle’s conception of the *nous poietikos*, that is, the act of thought, which is conceived by him as completely separated from the body and as an immortal divine “substance,” coming “from outside” (*thurathen*), in human soul. Thus the dialectic religious motive of matter and form indeed dominates Greek philosophy in all its tendencies.

II

The second fundamental motive was introduced into Western thought by the Christian religion. It is the motive of *the Creation, the radical Fall due to sin, and Redemption in Jesus Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit*. This motive attests its absolute Truth by its *integral and radical character*. As Creator God reveals himself as the Absolute and integral Origin of all relative existence. He has no original antagonist over against himself. God has created man according to the divine image; here man is revealed to *himself*, in the *radical* unity, in the *religious centre* of his existence. He is not “composed” of a “rational form-soul” and a “material body,” as Greek anthropology pretended according to its

The second fundamental motive was introduced into western thought by the Christian religion. It is the motive of *the Creation, the radical Fall due to sin, and Redemption in Jesus Christ*.

dualistic religious motive of “Matter and Form.” Man’s “soul” or “spirit” or “heart” is the integral and radical unity of all his temporal existence. And because sin has its origin in the religious *root* of human existence, it is necessarily of a *radical* character, just as the redemption.

This fundamental motive in its Scriptural sense cannot have a “dialectical” character. But from the beginning it had to wage war to the death on the Greek religious motive, which as its “parasite” in the Hellenic world continually tried to derogate from its radical and integral character.

Many apologists, who wish to demonstrate the “reasonableness” of the Christian religion over against Hellenic philosophy, have interpreted creation in the sense of the Greek motive of matter and form. The “Creator” was presented as a Platonic “Demiurge”, as the *logos* in the Greek sense of “divine thought.” And since this *logos* was compelled to come in contact with impure “matter”, he could not be of complete divine nature, but was only a half-god.

Moreover, the influence of the Greek conception of *theoria* could be observed in the heterodox patristic distinction between popular *pistis*, the belief of the Christian congregation, which is bound to a “material” or sensual way of representation, and the higher theoretic *gnosis*, which conceives the eternal truth of Revelation in a philosophic sense.

Orthodox patristic thought reaches its highest point in Augustine. He held indeed to the integral and radical sense of creation, sin, and redemption. He accepted the absolute sovereignty of God as Creator and the radical sense of sin and redemption. He denied the autonomy of theoretic thought. But he did not see the true point of connection between philosophy and the Christian religion. This connection was understood in this way, that Greek (especially neo-Platonic and Stoic) philosophy should be accommodated to the Christian dogma and should be used only in the cadre of dogmatic theology. That is to say, Christian philosophy should be only the servant of Christian theology.

Now it must be observed that this conception about the relation of philosophy and theology originated in the Greek conception of *theoria*. Aristotle had clearly said in the second book of his *Metaphysic* (B. 996, b15), that metaphysical theology as science of the supreme good and the last end is the queen of all other sciences and that the latter as its servants (slaves) should not contradict its truth.

In so far, the Augustinian conception of Christian philosophy is the origin indeed of all later scholasticism in Christian thought. For the scholastic way is always the way of *accommodation* and not the way of inner *reformation* of philosophic thought. Nevertheless the fundamental motive of Augustine's philosophy is not that of the later Roman-Catholic scholasticism. He did not seek a *religious* synthesis between Christian and Greek motives, and in his later thinking he more and more sought to emancipate his thought from the Greek influence.

III

The third fundamental motive is that of *Nature and Grace*, introduced by Roman-Catholicism, which originates in a real attempt to reconcile the opposed religious motives of Greek and Christian thought. "Nature" is conceived here in the Greek sense of *physis* (composed of "form" and "matter"), but accommodated to the Roman doctrine of Creation. "Nature" in this sense should be the autonomous basis of supernatural "grace." Thus "grace" in its turn could not contradict "nature" in its accommodated Greek sense.

In this mutual accommodation both motives lost their original sense. The Christian motive was deprived of its integral and radical character and, thus degenerated, it could not, of course, be the motive force of "natural" thought and action. In the Thomist philosophy the Roman synthesis found its solid basis. Here the autonomy of natural reason was openly proclaimed.

But this autonomy was conceived in the typical scholastic sense, which we have explained before. In Thomas' natural theology creation as such is understood as

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natural truth, which can be demonstrated in a purely theoretical way, from the logical necessity of an unmoved Mover as first cause and final end of all movement. This was the well-known demonstration furnished in Aristotelian metaphysics.

The logical conclusion of the syllogism was precisely the religious presupposition of the latter, namely that God is “pure form,” *actus purus*, and that the principle of “matter” is the principle of imperfection. The ancient Greek thinkers, who deified the eternally flowing stream of life, could never ask for a cause of *movement as such*, since according to them divinity was absolute movement itself.

If, however, God is pure form –and Thomas accepts this Aristotelian conception – he must have over against him the principle of pure matter. But the principle of real Creation does not agree with this Greek polarity.

Thus the Greek religious motive is accommodated to the Christian motive of creation. God has created matter, together with form, but only matter and form of concrete creatures. The *principles* of matter and form are not created and Thomas agrees with the Aristotelian undeifying of the former. The idea of creation is accommodated in its turn to the Greek dialectical motive. “Creation,” according to the latter, cannot be a real divine *activity*, since activity, according to Aristotelian categories, is a movement from matter to form, from potentiality to actuality. Thus creation is conceived in the Aristotelian category of relation. This is nothing else but a relation of one-sided dependence, a *dependence ex parte creaturae*.

Thus being deprived of its *integral* sense, the motive of creation is deprived, moreover, of its *radical* character. In the cadre of the dialectic motive of matter and form there is no place for a radical unity of nature in the religious centre, in the heart of human existence.

Now the dialectic motive of nature and grace produces a new fundamental dualism in the ideas of creation. Creation of man contains a natural and a super-natural element: human

nature and a supernatural *donum superadditum* (gratuity).

Thus the revelation concerning human fall due to sin, too, is deprived of its integral and radical sense. Sin, according to the Roman doctrine, is not the radical fall of nature, but only the loss of the supernatural gratuity. Thus the Redemption can be radical no more. So long as the motive of nature and grace is dominating Christian thought, this latter is implicated in a “religious dialecticism,” which has the tendency to disperse it into opposite directions. Only the Roman Church can maintain the artificial “pseudo-synthesis” by its hierarchic authority.

The nominalistic Occamism and Averroism, which had accepted a polar antithesis of nature and grace were condemned, but could nevertheless prepare the way for Reformation and Humanism.

Insofar as this dialectic motive maintains its influence within the Reformation, which lacks an hierarchic and infallible ecclesiastical authority, the “polar” tendencies have sufficient leeway. It can serve as well for scholastic agreement with Greek as for modern agreement with humanist thought, and it can lead to a polar antithesis of Christian belief and natural autonomous Reason.

IV

The fourth fundamental motive is that of “*Nature and Liberty*,” introduced by modern Humanism, which originates in an insoluble conflict between the religious cult of human personality in its freedom and autonomy, and the desire (stimulated by the religious motive of human liberty and autonomy itself) to dominate reality by modern natural science, which in its classical form seeks to construe it as a rational mechanical and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects. This humanist motive has tried to absorb into itself the three earlier fundamental motives, secularizing the Christian and the Catholic motives.

The dialectical character of this humanist motive is clear. “Liberty” and “nature” are opposite motives, which, in their religious roots cannot be reconciled. When all reality is

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conceived according to the motive of “nature”, that is within the cadre of the “image of the world” created by natural science, there remains in all reality no place for “autonomous and free personality.” In Kant’s “dualism” between “nature” and “liberty,” “science and belief,” “theoretical and practical Reason,” this “polarity” of the humanist motive is clearly seen. Into Kantian philosophy the Greek motive of form and matter returns in a new humanistic sense. The motive of form has now accepted the new sense of liberty and autonomy, both in theoretical thought and in practical Reason. The motive of matter has now adopted the humanistic meaning of necessity in the sense of heteronomy. The Roman-scholastic motive of “nature and grace” reappears, too, both in Leibnizian and Kantian philosophy in this new humanistic sense of *nature and liberty*.

Romanticism and post-Kantian idealism gave a new form to the humanist motive of liberty and autonomy. Kant had conceived the autonomous liberty in an individualistic and rationalistic sense. The true *autos* (self) of man should be found in the abstract general form of the *nomos* (moral law). Here was no place for a valuation of human individuality, or for an idea of real community. After Kant the relation between *autos* and *nomos* is altered. Now the human self is conceived as an individuality and as a part of a super-personal national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), which itself has its own original spirit (*Volksgeist*). The national community is not subjected to general rule, but its individual spirit and nature is its own individual *nomos* (rule). The *nomos* should be deduced from the *autos*.

This irrationalistic and super-personal conception of the motive of liberty evokes a new irrationalistic view of “nature” and a new dialectic method of thought. “Liberty” and “nature” should be thought of together in a dialectical way. From this new conception of the motive of freedom proceeds a new irrationalistic ideal of science: the historical method of thought, pushing back the classical ideal of science, which had found its standard in mathematics and mathematical natural science. Nature, too, should be conceived in an historical way as a dialectical union of “necessity and liberty.” But “historicism” as

a new ideal of science turns out to be a new antagonist over against the ideal of liberty. It is going its own way, emancipating itself from the humanistic idealism, and undermines the belief in an eternal idea of human liberty and autonomy. Every idea is a pure historical result. Mankind is flung into the stream of “nature and history” and cannot transcend its bounds. This “relativism” is the beginning of a spiritual uprooting of Humanism. It is the result of the great dialectical process within its religious motive.

* * *

In what manner can the above-mentioned religious motives dominate the *inner* process of theoretical thought?

Only by means of *theoretic ideas of a transcendental character*, which contain the subjective reply to the transcendental basic problems, which we have formulated above.

The “idea” in this transcendental sense has the necessary function of fixing theoretical thought upon its pre-supposita.

The theoretical “concept” has the function to *discriminate* the different aspects of reality. The transcendental idea, on the contrary, *concentrates* theoretical thought on their common *radical unity* and *final Origin*.

Now it must be evident that every *concept* of the different aspects must be founded on *ideas* concerning their *mutual relation*, their *radical unity* and their *Origin*. For every theoretic *discrimination* of the aspects presupposes a *common denominator* (that is an idea of their radical unity), on the basis of which they can be *compared* to each other. And it is also clear that the transcendental idea concerning the mutual *relation* of the different aspects is determined in its content by the idea concerning their *radical unity* and this latter by the idea concerning their *Origin*.

Thus these three ideas are bound together as a coherent complex and this complex we call the “idea of law” of a philosophical system.

The “idea” must preserve its *theoretical* character, because it remains bound to the antithetical relation of theoretic thought. But

its *content* is determined by the religious motives, which are by nature *super-theoretical*. In the current “dogmatical” philosophy, the “idea of law” is hidden beneath pretended “theoretical axioms.” Kant has detected indeed the transcendental ideas of theoretic Reason in the sense of “limiting concepts” (*Grenzbegriffe*). But his own dogmatic attitude has prevented him from perusing their true function in theoretical thought. His whole attention was drawn on the wrong speculative use made of it in dogmatical metaphysic. Thus he did not see the “idea of law” of his own *Critique of Pure Reason*, whose content is completely determined by the religious motive of *nature* and *liberty*.

It is evident, however, that a critical study of the influence of the four religious motives (and of the transcendental ideas, determined by them) on scientific thought should open the door to a more profound view of the history of philosophy. Here, in fact, are to be discovered the profound roots of scientific thought which were hidden by theoretical masks under the reign of the dogma of the autonomy of reason. Here also appears the only way to establish real contact or discussion between the different schools, which at present seems impossible for lack of any notion of the true starting points of philosophy.

It is evident that a critical study of the influence of these great religious motives on scientific thought should open the door to a profounder view of the history of philosophy. Here in fact are to be discovered the profound roots of scientific thought which were hidden by theoretical masks under the reign of the dogma of the autonomy of reason. Here also appears the only way to establish real contact or discussion between the different schools, which at present seems impossible for lack of any notion of the true starting points of philosophy.

I regret that I cannot now pursue this transcendental criticism of philosophic thought in its application to the different schools. I hope however that I have succeeded in inspiring in you some interest in the critical view of the Philosophy of the Idea of Law.

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