

1. LIFE AND WORLD VIEW: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS*

1. VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LIFE AND WORLD VIEWS

Because every person adheres to one or other life and world view, and because a life and world view *is* typically human, our scientific (philosophical) knowledge about it could be valuable to us all.

1.1 Social value

This type of knowledge will *help us to understand our fellowmen much better*. It will help us to realize why certain people differ, why they view the same reality differently. That is because a human being sees what he thinks. (His point of departure determines his views). We see what we are prepared to see, or have been trained to see.

A familiar story is told about four men who stood on the brink of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado at sunset. The *geologist* busied his mind with the light *as* it reflected itself on the various strata of rock. The *poet* thought of life as pictured by the dying day. The *painter* watched the various hues of red and yellow and purple. The *estate promotor* thought of building a restaurant with large picture windows, and the good prices for food in such a setting.

This shows us how a specific vocation (usually chosen in accordance with one's personality) determines our view of life.

But the persons of the same profession may have different life and world views: Different poets look with poetical eyes at one and the same tree. The *conservative* poet wants to prune the tree; the *revolutionary* one intends burning it; the *optimist* immediately tries to make a Christmas tree of it, and the *pessimist* thinks of hanging himself!

We all tend to see things in the light of our own interests, our training and our perspective or view of life. This is called selective perception. None of us *is* really objective in the way we look at life and its problems. The way we see others and our interpretation of the facts of life depends upon our own emotional background, our sense of values, our life and world view.

An European psychiatrist, Hermann Rorschach, found in this fact a tool that can be used to test what we tend to see, and possibly why we see things the way we do. He took some large cards and put inkblots on them. These strange figures do not actually represent any particular object, but they can be interpreted by one person *as* one thing, and by other persons *as* another thing. This Rorschach test is used by psychologists *as an* instrument to discover what a person sees. One may see in the ink figures a bird with

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wings, another may see a face with large ears, a third may see the map of an island. Experts have found out that what one sees in these inkblots is an index of emotional adjustment to life. Naturally, no test is infallible, but it is a great help of determining the structure of the personality.

1.2 Cultural-historical value

Knowledge of life and world view in general, and the different conflicting life and world views in modern society, may *help us to understand our contemporary world more profoundly*. The struggle of today is not only in the first place an atomic (physical) war, but the struggle of our age is also an ideological one between clashing life and world views, and different spiritual directions.

Our knowledge will help us to discern the spirit of our times. The spirit of a person or movement is the characteristic dynamic of what inspires his or their acts, the motor in the grip of which they move on and which characterises whatever they do. When you speak of the spirit of a movement you speak of its life, of its way of going about things, of its heart, of that which truly makes it what it is. When we speak of spirit we speak of guidance, direction and motivation. The spirit moves and leads men into a certain direction, along a certain path. We must hold on to the fundamental idea of spirit as direction in its religious *sense*.

Our philosophical knowledge of life and world views clarifies our discernment of the great world systems. It helps us to realize that at the back of the different ideologies lie human hearts struggling with each other because there is a difference in religious direction. It makes clear to us the great passion and seriousness in the gigantic struggle for truth.

You may say: "Tell me who you are and I will tell you what your life and world view looks like". But your may just as well say: "Tell me how your life and world view is and I will tell you who you are". A world and life view may build a person but it may also totally destroy him. (Compare for instance the modern brainwashing of Communist ideology).

1.3 Personal value

Our knowledge of life and world views also *has a pertinent personal value* for each of us. It may help us to deepen the knowledge of our own life and world view, or to choose another life and world view than the one we have been brought up with.

Each of us needs a life and world view because no man can live without direction or perspective in his life. Men grow when they are inspired by a high purpose, when contemplating vast horizons.

Our intellectual and spiritual wilderness of today cries out for direction. The great sickness of our age is aimlessness, boredom and lack of meaning and purpose in living. There are many

who lack an adequate purpose for living. They take a joy-rider's attitude towards the pilgrimage of life for they are indifferent both as to the direction and destination. They drift along with the tide of time. How do we achieve consistency and unity? This can only be accomplished by establishing a dominant purpose in life. When our whole life is directed towards one, all-embracing goal, the scattered forces of the person will be unified to accomplish that purpose.

Scientific knowledge about life and world views will give us certainty. It will help us to distinguish and also see the coherence, the unity of life; to be alert and watchful; to explore genuine new ways so that we may be better equipped for our life's task.

1.4 Practical value

A life and world view has a living immediacy to reality, in it thought is focussed on the full, concrete reality and its relations. The pre-theoretical thought of a life and world view should come to theoretical clarity in the Philosophy of Life and World Views. This clarity may again be a stimulant in the practical approach of the life and world views because it should guide and direct the life and world view.

It is thus clear that a Philosophy of Life and World Views cannot be dismissed to the realm of theory which has no intrinsic connections with the practical situations with which the life and world view has to cope.

I should like to make the incidental remark that our philosophy (theoretical explication of our world and life view) is not isolated from our walk of life but is a part of it. Our walk is closely bound to a world and life view and to philosophy. The serious walker looks about him and orientates himself as he goes along. He knows both his destination and the various stages of his journey as he reaches them.

It might be helpful to consider that theoretical activity is not so much a case of being *different* from those activities commonly called practical as it is *another* kind of practical activity. *Theory is not opposed to practice, but the impracticaris opposed to the practical.* Trying to draw water, or to milk a cow, while using a bucket with holes in it is not a theoretical activity but an impractical one; trying to find out how children react psychically under certain situations is not an impractical activity, but a theoretical one. It is important to distinguish between practical activities of a theoretical nature, and such activities of a non-theoretical nature.

As with every Science, Philosophy is also of a theoretical, but not impractical, nature.

To deepen the pre-theoretical knowledge of the life and world view(s) (one's own and other's) by grounding it objectively, tracing its historical development,

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arranging it systematically, comparing it with other life and world views and classifying the various life and world views according to certain principles, is, in my opinion, one of the most important tasks of Philosophy.

2. LIFE AND WORLD VIEW IN ITS RELATION TO SIMILAR PHENOMENA

It is possible to distinguish various comprehensive grips of human consciousness:

- Way and conduct of life
- Style of life
- Life and world view
- Ideology
- Philosophy

2.1 Way of life or manner of living (“*lebenswijze*”) & Conduct in life (“*lebenswijze*”)

There is an intimate relation between life and world view and way of life. The knowledge given in a life and world view directs and guides man to action, to a certain way of life. It is essential that one should *live* according to one’s specific life and world view otherwise the life and world view is unfruitful and dead. Life and world view and way of life are only the two sides of the same coin.

The attitude of life (view of life or life and world view) is not opposed to the way of life. The person who walks through life should *look where* he walks.. Walking is not only to *walk* but to *look where* you are going, to have a *view* of life and the world. View of life and way of life are an unbreakable unity which is clearly illustrated by the fact that a wrong view of life results in an incorrect way of life.

Every sane human being, whether he is aware of it or not, has a way of life. (Just as everyone has a view of life). It is a subconscious habit or activity (knowing and doing both) which is not a studied view but is a pattern which gets beaten out in the course of time and the press of daily life and notably shows itself in crisis. This habitus is not just an individual phenomenon but it has historically developed and is corporately held, which is constantly being tested and modified by experiences.

2.2 Style of life

In the way of life you may get a differentiation of styles of life. Style is not a specific

aesthetic phenomenon. Except in style of art, architecture, music, etc., certain people have a different style of thought (analytical style), a specific style in their culture, language, social intercourse, economic transactions, juridical, ethical and ecclesiastical life. The difference in style depends on factors such as character, talent, circumstances, historical development.

Way of life is thus more comprehensive and fundamental *as* compared with life style. Style of life, however, is not superficial like fashion — which may change from year to year, or even from day to day.

2.3 Life and world view

When one's subconscious way of life (and style of life) reaches sustained consciousness, when the pattern becomes understood *as a* pattern, gets expressed, articulated with intelligible implications, then you have a life and world view. A life and world view is a reflective, persistent, comprehensive view of everything together, but it is not scientifically precise. It breathes the concrete push of life and is literally suggestive rather than theoretically defining.

We prefer not to speak of “view of life” only (cf. Rudolf Eucken's *Grundlinien Finer neue Lebensanschauung*), neither of “view of world” (cf. Karl Jasper's *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*) or of “view of man and world” (modern tendencies) but of “life and world view”. Even “life and world view” is not comprehensive enough because a life and world view always includes also a certain idea of God (or gods) but we prefer to stick to this current terminology.

2.4 Ideology

The difference between life and world view and ideology is not always very clear. Dictionaries define ideology *as*: The whole set of principles or ideas in a system; manner of thinking characteristic of a class or individual; system of ideas especially for an economic or political system; ideas at the basis of some economic or political theory or system.

The, *first difference* between life and world view and ideology is that ideology is used more or less in the political and economic sphere, whereas life and world view includes the basic ideas on these two areas, but also the principles for the rest of life. It is more comprehensive.

The *second difference* between life and world view and ideology is that “ideology” is very often used *in malam partem* (*in a bad sense*):

- purely speculative system which people blindly obey
- when a certain life and world view is enforced by scientists or a certain (political) group in a community it becomes an ideology (compare the Communistic ideology).

2.5 Philosophy

Thus far we have: style of life, way of life, life and world view. Now we come to Philosophy.

Hyperconscious Philosophy systematizes into analytical order what a subconsciously developed life and world view bring together in an easier, less defined coherence.

According to C. Seerveld the relation of these levels of consciousness, namely, way of life, life and world view (view of life), and Philosophy is one of interdependence with mutual influence, sympathetic stimulation, correction and re-inforcement. Philosophers are not the elite contemplating the *hoi poloi*, and should not consider themselves as advanced beyond the simple workaday wisdom of busy people. Philosophy should not overlook life and world views as vague and useless, and likewise, those with a life and world view should not accuse Philosophy of making too definite assertions and of being presumptuously clear about indefinable and very complex matters.

On the other hand, it is necessary for Philosophy, as a science, to be critically distinguished from the pre-scientific way of life and life and world view (although in real life these levels of consciousness flow imperceptibly from one to the other in an interlocking manner). If this is not done, Philosophy suffers because it is reduced to popularized practical hints on how to live and lacks any professional scientific precision.

In the history of Western thought can be established the fact that on the one hand Philosophy and life and world views are distinguished most sharply, and on the other that they are identified with one another.

The genuine life and world view has undoubtedly a close affinity with Philosophy because it is essentially directed towards the totality of our cosmos. However, it is not of a theoretical character *as such*. Its view of totality is not the *theoretical*, but rather the pre-theoretical. It is not restricted to a special category of “philosophic thinkers”, but applies to everybody, the simplest included. Philosophy cannot take the place of a life and world view, nor the reverse, for the task of each of the two is different.

Dooyeweerd, particularly, emphasized that Philosophy will never be in a position to replace the life and world view because naive experience cannot be replaced by theoretical (scientific) knowledge. There is left a residue of living in every life and world

view which must necessarily escape the theoretical concepts of Philosophy. An authentic life and world view is never a *system*. Not that it should be lost in a vague feeling, but because in it thought must remain focused on the full, concrete reality. This is exactly what theoretical scientific, systematic thought as such cannot do. As soon as a life and world view is made into a system, it is no longer speaking to us out of the fullness of reality. The immediate contact with concrete relations in the fullness of reality is essential to the life and world view, but not to Philosophy.

SUMMARY

It is impossible that Philosophy and life and world view, from the same root, should not influence each other making mutual appeal to each other, because they have a close *relation*.

Philosophic thought should find in the life and world view a continuous actual stimulance to self-reflection.

Conversely, life and world view should come to theoretical clarity in philosophic thought. Philosophy is the scientific counterpart of the life and world view because it has to bring the latter to theoretical clarity by rendering a theoretical account to its pre-theoretic picture of the world.

The two *differ* and they should remain sharply distinguished, each according to its own task and essential character.

As little as Philosophy may fall with impunity into the concrete tone of the life and world view, as little may the life and world view accept with impunity the distance from the full reality which is suitable to theoretical thought.

3. GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL LIFE AND WORLD VIEWS

A life and world view is the pre-scientific comprehensive view and the fundamental convictions of a group (or community) concerning reality. We will analyse the different components of this definition.

3.1 A life and world view is “pre-scientific”

By pre-scientific we mean that a life view is not something which you find only with scientists. It is something typically human. Science is based on an already existing life-view.

Although a life and world view is not scientific by nature, there is a science which studies the different life views: Philosophy.

Philosophy studies the whole reality whereas the special sciences concentrate only on aspects of reality. For example, Physics – the inorganic beings, Botany – the vegetable kingdom, Zoology – the animal kingdom, Anthropology – the human being, etc. Philosophy is the scientific counterpart of the pre-scientific life and world view. Both life and world view and Philosophy gives us a comprehensive view of reality; the first a pre-scientific, and the latter a scientific.

3.2 A life and world view is “the comprehensive view concerning reality”

A life view is therefore comprehensive. The term “life and word view” gives the impression that it only concerns life and the world. Man, however, never lives without God or his own fabricated gods. In his life view his idea about God or gods will always be included.

A life view concerns reality *as a whole*. With reality we designate that which is – which exists. According to Scripture, God who exists from eternity, created heaven and earth (cf. Gen. 1:1) and posited laws for creation. Thus *we* find three entities: God, His law and His creation (including heaven and earth).

It is remarkable that we find reflection on these three entities (God, law and cosmos) in every life view. Apart from that, the relation between the three (between God and the law, the law and the cosmos and between God and the cosmos) plays an important role in every life and world view.

We need the light of God’s Word to enable us to see everything which reality includes in the right way. With this Light alone it is possible to place everything in the right place, and in the correct relation. Therefore, we find that when a life view has broken away from the Word of God, it mostly sees reality in the wrong way or distorts it. People take one of the aspects of the multicoloured creation and absolutise or idolize it.

Examples: Liberalism absolutizes the freedom of the individual, National-Socialism absolutizes the nation, Communism, the worker class. In all these life views man stands in the centre, therefore, we call them Humanistic life views. They differ amongst themselves according to which aspect of man they consider *as* the most important.

The third part of the definition of a life and world view is:

3.3 A life and world view is “the fundamental convictions”

A live view centres around principles, the basic, the fundamental, most important things. It asks questions, such as the following: What is God? What is man? What is freedom? What is good and what is bad? The answers which are given to these questions determine the whole life of man. It even comes to expression in the result of human

labour.

The life view, however, does not come to the fore so clearly in all cases. *Example:* Comparison between a Christian novel where the Christian character comes out clearly and a painting or a bridge built by a Christian, where the Christian character is not shown clearly. Or comparison between a Christian Philosophy or Theology on one side, and Christian Physics or Mathematics on the other side.

The last part of the definition to be explained is:

3.4 A life and world view is “of a group (or community)”

3.4.1 *A life and world view is thus typically human.* It is never found in 8 the three other realms of things (inorganic beings, plants and animals).

3.4.2 *Specific-human*

It is not only certain groups who have a life and world view. Even although certain people assert that they are neutral, neutrality is impossible.

It is quite possible that the life and world view of some people does not come to the force so clearly. Some people are not conscious about their life view. Every life and world view, however, has its philosophers who reflect on that specific life and world view. In their philosophy they only voice the thoughts applicable to a particular community, and reproduce it systematically. Vice versa, the Philosophy influences the ideas of the community . (Cf. for instance, the existentialist philosophers in relation to the modern existentialistic life and world view.)

Everybody has a life and world view because it is an absolutely indispensable compass directing your life. A world view is something glorious. It gives rest and peace, it helps us to see the apparently confused and bizarre chain of events in a definite arranged whole.

3.4.3 *A life and world view is by nature social.* We do not find a separate life and world view with everybody — although it is true that the personality of a person is connected with the life and world view to which he adheres. The social character is clearly pointed out by the following:

The *origin* of a life and world *view*: The public opinion, formative work of different societal structures, such as the family, the school, the church, the university, and different organisations.

The *progress* of a life and world *view*: It is not limited to a specific generation, but is transferred from one generation to another.

The *extent* (geographical) of a life and world view: Often a whole nation or a certain group within a nation honours a specific life and world view. (Cf. for instance, Russian communism and American pragmatism).

3.4.4 *A life and world view is, by its very nature, religious.* The human being is a religious being. This means that he is somebody standing in relation to God (positive or negative). This relation between man and God is also revealed in his life and world view.

4. DIFFERENT METHODS OF CLASSIFYING LIFE AND WORLD VIEWS

The methods we will mention were not developed specifically for classifying life and world views. As the names with which we will indicate them reveal, for instance, they were methods dividing the history of Philosophy or the development of Western culture. This is a totally new field of investigation. In our search for a more or less appropriate method for classifying life and world view we may learn, therefore, from these various possible ways of classification.

4.1 The chronological method

The life and world views are divided according to specific periods in the history of Western thought, for instance:

The age of Architecture	(the Greeks)
The age of Belief	(the Middle Ages)
The age of Adventure	(the Renaissance)
The age of Reason	(the 17th Century)
The age of Enlightenment	(the 18th Century)
The age of Ideology	(the 19th Century)
The age of Complexity/ Anxiety/Analysis	(the 20th Century)

There is some truth in this way of classification, but this method oversimplifies the actual facts. It is not true that in a certain period (for instance, the Renaissance or 19th Century) there was only one common life and world view. It is also possible that a certain life and world view may be active from the 17th century to the present time!

4.2 The Geographical method

The life and world views are divided according to the land of origin or the lands where they play(ed) an important role. For instance, the American, Anglo-Saxon,

German, Eastern, etc., life and world views.

It is not, however, necessary that one country or part of the world adheres to only one specific life and world view and conversely, a certain life and

world view may play a dominating role in different countries. (Cf. the Communistic and Calvinistic life and world views). The moment of truth in this method is that a life and world view is not something of an individual, but rather something of a group. This does not, however, imply that the life and world view co-incides with a certain geographical area.

4.3 The Ethnographic method

This method is nearly the same as the Geographical method as there is a close correlation between the nation and the country it inhabits. The same critique applies here: a life and world view should not necessarily be limited to a certain nation, and it is also possible that one encounters different life and world views within one nation. It is an over-simplification to speak of the Italian, English, etc., life and world views.

4.4 The Epistemological method (Van Peursen)

According to the type or way of thought which is dominant Western culture is divided into:

- mythological thought (Greeks)
- ontological thought (Middle Ages and Modern thought)
- functional thought (Contemporary thought)

The abovementioned critique of oversimplification also applies in this case.

4.5 The Progressive Method (Comte)

According to his universal law of progress Auguste Comte divided human intellectual development up to his time into three stages. He used it as a device for subtly undermining all points of view previous to his own. The three stages were in chronological order:

- The theological or fictitious (Subdivisions: the fetishistic, polytheistic and monotheistic)
 - the metaphysical or abstract
 - the scientific or positive.

Except that this division is outdated the critique of oversimplification is also

applicable in this case.

4.6 The Philosophical-Historical Method(s)

Life and world views are divided according to periods (philosophical) or currents. For instance:

- Rationalistic life and world views
- + Older rationalistic types
- = Scientialistic
- = Practicalistic
- = Idealistic
- + Younger rationalistic types
- = Positivistic
- = Neo-positivistic
- = Neo-idealistic
- Irrationalistic life and world views
- + Vitalistic
- + Pragmatistic, and
- + Existentialistic types.

In general it should be kept in mind that a life and world view is not a purely chronological (historical) or geographical or ethnographical or epistemological or philosophical phenomenon, and should not be classified according to such methods.

4.7 The Philosophical-Systematic Methods Different possibilities:

4.7.1 According to the *distinction God-cosmos* the life and world views are divided into theocentric (God-centred) and cosmocentric (cosmos-centred).

4.7.2 According to *different conceptions of man in history* (Weber):

- = The first man : sociological groupman of prehistoric times.
- = The second man : mythological-irrational man of ancient cultures.
- = The third man : rational and religious man
- = The fourth man : the de-christianised or contemporary secular man.

4.7.3 According to the *aspect of reality which is absolutized* in the specific life and world view.

For instance, *materialistic, vitalistic, logicistic, socialistic, economic, ethicistic*, etc., life and world views. These and other are all totalitarian views about reality which arise not from a mere rational observation and analysis of positive facts, but rather from the failure to see the relative aspects of our life as all relative, and from the consequent effort to explain all the remaining relative aspects in terms of one that is religiously lifted out and absolutized, and thus made the deeper source of unity of the others. For all these theories we use “ism” words (materialism, etc.). These words always indicate exaggerating, distortion. We feel the distortion and speak of the theory as being one-sided. When the one-sidedness has been sufficiently felt a change may come to another theory, but in time it also proves to be one-sided. There never comes a resting point — a satisfactory end to the search.

Lacking the knowledge of the true God, many apostate thinkers of history had to fill up the lacuna by enlarging (absolutizing) one of the relative aspects of the temporal order. This phenomenon explains the diversity of life and world views. Man has to take one particular *aspect* of created reality for the *whole* of it, thereby reducing all the other aspects to so many modes of the one they have just absolutized. In this way one’s view of the whole structure of reality is obscured because one can then no longer grasp any one of the aspects in its peculiar inner nature.

How is it possible to be in such a position and still show signs of being sufficiently in touch with reality, to uncover even important moments of truth? The answer lies in the inner structure of the different aspects themselves. No aspect is something which is cut off from the other aspects. In each *aspect* we have what we call its *sphere-sovereignty*. But over above that there is the principle of *sphere-universality*. For the one aspect cannot even exist except in indissoluble coherence with all the other aspects that together make up the integral whole of reality.

It is this creation-principle of sphere-universality that has supplied whatever grounds men have been able to adduce for their attempts to find the whole meaning of reality in what is actually but one aspect. But of course the mirroring of all the sides is not the same thing as all the sides.

It is here, therefore, that all the “isms” (materialism, organicism, psychologism, logicism, technicism, economism, historicism, aestheticism, moralism, etc.) arise.

You have an “ism” when you have too much of something, and exaggeration of

what is not proper to a matter, or when what is tangential, peripheral, is given central importance. In socialism one gives too much importance to society and in Calvinism, technically speaking, too much value is put on Calvin's teachings.

Each ism seems to have something to say for itself and from each of them we can learn something. But in fact each of them is a religious distortion of the fullness of meaning of reality.

Out of the specific mother-idea (central idea) for instance, matter in the materialistic life and world view, life in the vitalistic, etc. the whole life and world view is built up.

4.8 The Religious Methods

4.8.1 The Religious Motives (of Dooyeweerd)

According to Dooyeweerd a certain religious motive grounds and shapes the core complex of leading ideas which guide and set up the kind of systematic coherence which a man's philosophical conceptual analysis of things bears. The underlying religious motive is the inner spring of a certain philosophy's problematics. The what/how/why of a philosophy's first questions, the fundamental *cast* of its basic ideas, is critically determined by a usually hidden motive, which is always permeating and demandingly religious. This is the jugular vein. The make-up, thrust, the spiritual temper of a given philosophy depends upon what religious motive drives it.

Let us allow Dooyeweerd to speak for himself: "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 which 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 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 which 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." (*Transcendental problems in philosophic thought*, p. 59-61).

Dooyeweerd distinguishes four fundamental religious motives in the history of western civilization:

"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 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

14to 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". (Op. cit., p. 62)

"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". (Op. cit., p. 67)

"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 `metal, but accommodated to the Roman doctrine of the Creation. `Nature' in this sense should be the autonomous basis of super-natural `grace'. Thus `grace' in its turn could not contradict `nature' in its accommodated Greek sense". (Op. cit., p. 70)

"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 liberty 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 had tried to absorb into itself the three earlier fundamental motives, secularizing the Christian and the Catholic motives." (Op. cit., p. 73)

4.8.2 *The Religious-Cultural Method (De Klerk)* Divides the life and world views as follows:

- The pre-Christian period (up to 400 A.D.)
- The Christian period (400 - 1600 A.D.)
- The post-Christian period (1700 - 1900 A.D.)
- The anti-Christian period (20th Century)

4.8.3 *The attitude towards the Bible (Vollenhoven)*

Some people did not know the word of God (Ancient Greek); others tried to reconcile the truths of the Word of God with pagan Greek thought (Middle Ages); others broke with this synthesis thought either because they wanted to give the Word of God its appropriate place in their life and world view (or philosophy) or they wanted to break totally with God and his Word.

This way of looking at Philosophy and at the different life and world views gives us the following divisions or classification:

- Pre=synthetic thought (Ancient thought) from ± 700 B.C. to +- 40 A.D.¹⁵
- Synthetic thought (Patristic and Medieval thought) from ± 40 tot 1600 A.D.
- Anti-synthetic thought (Modern and Contemporary thought) from plus minus 1600 to the present time with two possibilities:
 - + Anti-synthetic right wing: gives the Word of God its appropriate place.
 - + Anti-synthetic left wing: breaks with God and His Word.

4.9 Conclusion

Personally I would prefer a crossbread of methods 4.7.3 (according to the *aspect in reality which is absolutized*) and 4.8.3 (according to the *attitude towards the Bible*).

Method 4.7.3 gives us a *systematic method*; 4.8.3 a *religious-historical-cultural* classification. There are amongst the pre-synthetic, synthetic and anti-synthetic (right and left) different possibilities depending upon the specific aspect of reality which is viewed most important, or absolutized. The following diagram explains this schematically:

		1 Arithmetical	2 Spatial	3 Physical	4 Biotic	5 Psychical	6 Analytical	7 Historical	8 Linguistic	9 Social	10 Economic	11 Acesthetic	12 Juridical	13 Ethical	14 Pistical
A	Pre-Synthetic			B						S					T
	B Synthetic									S					
Anti-Synthetic	C Right														
	D Left			C	E					S	C				

Examples of classification according to this scheme:

– The *Thomistic life* and world view (T) is to be qualified as B-14 (Synthetic, absolutizing of the pistical aspect, the Church).

– The *Communitistic Life* and World View (C) is to be typified as D-3, 10 (anti-synthetic left absolutizing or idolizing matter and the economical aspect of reality).

– The traditional *Bantu Life* and World View (B) before the acceptance of Christianity may perhaps be classified as A-3 if we accept the views of P. Tempels in his book, *Bantu Philosophy*, wherein he advocates the idea that power (the nuclear moment of the physical modality is power) is the central or mother-idea in Bantu thought.

– The *Evolutionistic Life* and World View (E) D-4 (anti-synthetic left, exaggerating or idolizing the biotic aspect).

– The *Socialistic life* and World View (S) may be A-9, B-9, or D-9 depending on the attitude of the specific life and world view towards the Bible.

None of the methods of classifications — not even the last — is absolutely satisfactory and complete enough to give a classification of all life and world views.

The situation is much more complicated than this simple diagram. It only serves *as a preliminary method to be of some help*. To be complete, it should be necessary to include much more detail in this more or less skeleton map. For instance, the different possible nuances in the same life and world view such *as* people accepting one and the same life and world view and yet they may differ in their attitude towards it. The one may have a negativistic viewpoint, the other a conservative, another a progressive, and the attitude of the last may be that of a compromise. If a person with the last attitude is a communist, you will not get a pure Communistic life and world view with him, but Communism blended with, for instance, the shade of Liberalism.

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