

Commentary upon  
**Herman Dooyeweerd** 1936  
“Het Dilemma voor het Christelijk Wijsgeerig  
Denken en het Critisch Karakter van de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee”  
*Philosophia Reformata* 1e, 1, 3-16.

Some time later this year, the English translation of this 1936 article of Herman Dooyeweerd will be published in the journal *Philosophia Reformata*. Chris should be congratulated for bringing this to publication. I am happy to do so because I discussed his translation with him. As I did so I penned the following essay because I believe it holds significant value as the inaugural article of the journal for which Dooyeweerd served as Editor-In-Chief for many years. It is an important contribution and in it we can read how he carefully shaped his role as a university academic, a founding of a philosophy association, the editor of this journal and the writer of scientific and philosophical works. All of these responsibilities were bound together as part of Dooyeweerd’s efforts to give cogent scholarly expression to his Christian vocation.

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## Confronting the Dilemmas of Christian Philosophy

In 1936, the task fell to Herman Dooyeweerd, one of the Editorial Board of *Philosophia Reformata*, to introduce the journal to members of the *Vereeniging<sup>1</sup> voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* and to subscribers. In this inaugural article for the new journal, Dooyeweerd sets forth some basic theses that characterise “this still youthful philosophical movement<sup>2</sup>”. This article examines the first four or so pages of that initial article, which sets the direction for the subsequent discussion and then, for the subsequent contribution of the philosophical association’s scholarly journal.

The first edition of the new journal *Philosophia Reformata*, published in 1936, includes a brief editorial “From the Outset” (“*BIJ DEN AANVANG*”) above the signature of The Editors (“De Redactie”). These editors are announced on the front cover (in alphabetical order): Dr J. Bohatec, Dr H. Dooyeweerd, Dr H. G. Stoker, Dr C. van Til and Dr D. H. Th. Vollenhoven.

The edition in my library is bound, so from a little detective work (from the finely printed marginal indices in the corners of pages, printed there as guides to those printing the volume) we discover that Volume 1, 1936 comprises 4, 64-page editions. It set sail as a “quarterly”. The initial number includes articles by: Dooyeweerd; S. G. de Graaf, the preacher and writer of biblical studies; J. H. Diemer, a biologist; B. ter Brugge, an engineer. There is also a book review of a recent Dutch translation of an English study of Socrates (by “K.J.P.” presumably K. J. Popma).

The physical context and literary layout is important because they frame the Editors' commendation of their journal to readers. And the manner of this commendation has a bearing upon my discussion of the lead article that follows. *Philosophia Reformata* was launched as the organ of this association for Calvinistic philosophy, the *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte*.

The Editorial “*BIJ DEN AANVANG*”, is just over one page in length and presents the *Vereeniging's* published understanding of the scholarship it wants to promote. The Editors are convinced that: “all philosophy, from its starting point, orientation and outworking is decidedly religious and in this sense therefore any neutrality is completely ruled out.” The intention is to promote philosophy and, in particular, the philosophical outlook that would be known by its belief that through Christ Jesus the Word of God is restored to its God-ordained place directing humankind's cultural vocation in an ongoing generation-to-generation guidance of life and thought - therein lies the mandate for Christian scholars to engage in theoretical and philosophical reflection by a faithful scholarship that seeks to wholeheartedly respect this

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<sup>1</sup> *Vereeniging* is the front cover spelling of the term and it would remain until 1960 when it was replaced by *Vereeniging*.

<sup>2</sup> The Dutch “*richting*” implies a specific effort to orient or direct their combined work.

restoration. This is the Editorial Board's explanation of how it wants the association's journal to make a salient scholarly contribution to the reformation of science and scholarship - *Philosophia Reformata*.

There is brief reference to a decade-long discussion among those associated with the Vrije Universiteit that had led to the *Vereeniging's* founding. Despite the comment's brevity, it is clear that the journal's "Calvinistic philosophy" is a self-conscious expression of "Kuyper culture", a fruit of the "neo-Calvinism" presupposed by that university's founding in 1880. Readers may have to wait until page 19 for a citation from one of Kuyper's voluminous writings, but the impact of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century revival of neo-Calvinism in The Netherlands upon the editorial is unmistakable.

Our discussion below will refer to this when examining how Dooyeweerd begins his own article with a more detailed explanation of the philosophical orientation the journal seeks to promote. We raise these matters explicitly because he writes philosophically not merely as one scholar among others, not merely as a member or even a founding member of the *Vereeniging*, but also as a member of the editorial board who then became "editor-in-chief".

So, we infer that the Editors agreed that the journal's contribution should be inaugurated with his brief article explaining the basic propositions of this "still youthful philosophical trend". The year is 1936. The first two volumes of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, Dooyeweerd's *magnum opus*, have appeared in Dutch bookstores and have taken a place on shelves of academic libraries. The third and culminating volume of this substantial work would be published later that same year.

The Editorial indicates that the journal has arisen from, and been endorsed by, the deliberations of the *Vereeniging*, the association. In the December meeting of the previous year, the association had come to its decision: a journal would be established to promote the study, propagation and fruitfulness of philosophy, in systematic and historical terms, and that it would attempt to do so "*in de richting van de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*".

This association for Calvinistic philosophy saw its basic and youthful promotion of philosophical reflection and discourse to be well served by following in the scholarly direction indicated by this substantial philosophical work of one of its prominent academic members. In fact, they say, it was this *philosophical* articulation of "*de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*" that had provoked the birth of the association itself. The editors, by lower case use of the key terms in this phrase, leave it to Dooyeweerd to convey to readers, if they needed to be told, that these words form the title of his own philosophical publication (as indicated by the article's title and from fn 2. p. 6). We can surmise that most of the journal's initial readers would have already known of Dooyeweerd's book, and so would have appreciated the association's founding

intention in such terms. The Editorial Board in acknowledging the direction indicated by Dooyeweerd's work want the *Vereeniging* and its journal to assume the same direction (*richting*).

It is an interesting exercise to reflect upon the relationship between the Editorial and Dooyeweerd's article. Some questions arise: How were they written? And were they composed simultaneously? Could Dooyeweerd have written the Editorial as well, submitting it to the other members of the Board for their approval? Did the formulation of one exercise influence over the way terms were used in the other? Any terminological confusion between Editorial, article title and the article itself would have been the responsibility of that member of the editorial team who put the final finishing touches to this initial edition by checking and authorising any necessary changes to the galley proofs. In whatever way we might answer that question we can say that all three references to "*de wijsbegeerete der wetsidee*" combine to confirm the direction (*richting*) taken and as announced by the first edition of the *orgaan*.

We can't completely resolve this issue but it should be mentioned because it helps us to contextualise the opening paragraphs of Dooyeweerd's article in the social context of the association which was launching the journal. It is the article that will be our concern from here on, and my introductory comments here have tried to draw attention to the author's (Dooyeweerd's) variegated but closely related responsibilities, as they are expressed in these opening paragraphs and as we consider this discussion 82 years later. After all, in this situation Dooyeweerd was wearing a number of different, though inter-related "hats". There is the *author* of the aforementioned work which at that point existed in two volumes. He is a *member* of the Editorial Board. And he is the *writer* of the journal's inaugural article. These responsibilities are distinct, even though they presuppose each other to a significant extent.

Dooyeweerd was clearly the natural choice from among the Editorial Board to contribute the inaugural article of the journal's first edition. But what is to be said about the Editorial's use of the title of Dooyeweerd's book, albeit in the lower case, to indicate the *direction* they intend to follow for the journal?

Of course, it is understandable that the title of a significant published work might become the appellation commonly used when referring to a new philosophical school or movement. And in that case we might have seen the launching of "The Journal of the Philosophy of the Law-Idea". But when *Philosophia Reformata* became the association's *orgaan*, the editorial is explicit: this is a journal which aims, just like other philosophical journals, to promote philosophy, an important and enduring facet of the scholarly enterprise. The editorial policy of this distinctive contribution is one that adheres to the *religious direction* presupposed by the Christian law-idea (*wetsidee*) basic to Dooyeweerd's work, and which, his work implies, is crucial for a developing a *Christian philosophical understanding* of all philosophy and theoretical reflection.

And so, the Editorial, as much as Dooyeweerd's inaugural article, affirm that the *vereeniging* and its journal follow a *religious* direction that Dooyeweerd's major publication also follows. This is not just a subtle point; it is basic to the scholarship *Philosophia Reformata* and Dooyeweerd promote.

Here then is a scholarly development that would explain how the religious direction of philosophical reflection can be identified. This journal is only one kind of contribution to that complex task, as is its inaugural article: “*Het dilemma voor het Christelijk Wijsgeerig Denken en het Critisch Karakter van de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*” (“The Dilemma for Christian philosophical thought and the critical character of De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee”). A journal is formed editorially in terms of this presumed *direction*; the articles that fill up the journal's pages will also be included to confirm this intended *philosophical direction*.

Dooyeweerd begins his article in these terms:

Referring to itself by the name “Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee”, this still youthful philosophical *richting* sets forth a basic proposition...

From the outset, Dooyeweerd announces himself ready to present this philosophy's basic proposition. But before we get to what he says, let us briefly note what he avoids saying:

Referring to itself by the name “Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte”, this still youthful philosophical *richting* sets forth a basic proposition...

Referring to itself by the journal's name “*Philosophia Reformata*”, this still youthful philosophical *richting* sets forth a basic proposition...

He does not begin in either of these ways. He does not begin an initial article for a philosophical association's journal with a discussion of the name the association chose for itself, nor of the name it chose for its journal. Instead, he begins his article by naming the philosophy from which this journal of this association derives its “*richting*”, and he does so by reference to the title of his own work and for this he proceeds to use capitals.

In so doing Dooyeweerd allows any anomalies that may arise from this identification to fall where they may. The emphasis is turned away from the nomenclature of this philosophical “*richting*”, to the basic proposition by which the philosophy would have itself known. This, he says, is a yet youthful philosophy that not only positions itself in relation to prevailing philosophies, or dominant traditions but sets out self-consciously to beat a path

... in striking *opposition* to the traditional attitude to thinking ...  
(emphasis added BCW).

That is how the journal sets sail. The association's course is set. The title of his book might, *in nuce*, present the association's philosophical aspirations, but the important thing to him is to focus upon this *proposition* which, he says, is basic to his philosophy. In focusing his discussion in this way, Dooyeweerd

will explain how it is consciously positioned against what has been assumed by traditional and current philosophy. In just over 4 lines and in 34 words Dooyeweerd acknowledges that the new journal represents an intention to develop a philosophical “opposition”, an alternative “direction”. Those adhering to this “trend”, potentially a “school” of philosophical thinking, have to be deeply and profoundly self-conscious of what it is they stand for and not simply of what it is they oppose. They are in need of their own clearly articulated position. So, what is it that they are actually standing for and, given that, how do they propose to “oppose” the traditional philosophical attitude?

The Editorial may have identified the journal's “line” by an oblique reference to Dooyeweerd's publication, but Dooyeweerd's “nutshell” proposition is not even an attempt to explain his own work's title even though he has begun by giving it a capitalized rendition. Instead, a statement is given; it is a proposition that requires exposition, elaboration and defense, not just by consulting his work for this or exploring his other publications but is a task that has to be taken up by those philosophizing in the same “*richting*”. And this task is not just momentary, not just now as we set sail; it is something that is going to have to be continually at the front of thinking as these thinkers who are engaged in philosophical opposition negotiate the high seas of science and scholarship. If the association is to stay true to its founding vision it will need to do this in an ongoing and corporate scholarly sense.

My *Engels Worden Boek* renders this key word “*richting*” as a “direction” or a “trend”, and then it goes on to suggest that it can be used to describe a “persuasion”, a “creed”, a “conviction”. The dictionary notes that when it is used in the phrase “*van onze richting*” it can also mean “of **our** school of thought”. It can thereby refer to a collective sentiment, a shared belief. “*Richting*” can connote a personal identification with a trend, a trend of thinking, of belief and of intentional action. And in the lingo of those identifying themselves as “neo-calvinists” or “*reformatorische*” or “reformational”, the term “our” or “ours” has been used often to signify such adherence. “*Ons*” or “our/s” may relate to “our trend” in “our church”, “our school”, “our political party”, and not just “our family”. “Our/s” is the signifier used by an “*aanhanger*”, an adherent. It is not just a private signifier but also a public one. “*Ons*” is inherently a directional, a normative, signifier.

So, the Dutch dictionary's insertion of the word “*onze*” (ours) to qualify “*richting*” is also consistent with the way it has often been used as a Dutch-Calvinist signifier, and as it was prominently used by Kuyper himself, for example in describing *ons program*, “our political programme”. I guess it would also naturally become part of public discussion for those referring to themselves in relation to the public institutions of their “own” pillar when

living within the “pillarized” Dutch pluralist society. And therein lies “our” temptation, on that “we” will need to confront continually.

We might therefore note that “*ons*” is not prominent in the editorial “*BIJ DEN AANVANG*”. There it is used twice to indicate the collective view of the Editorial Board. We might wonder whether in writing about this “still youthful philosophical *richting*”, Dooyeweerd has qualified it as “our school” or “our trend”. However, we should note that “*ons*” is by no means a prominent term and it is used only once in anything like a confessional sense where the author refers to “**our** Roman fellow Christians.” (p.15) The other times it is used by Dooyeweerd is in an authorial way to join himself to his readers, drawing attention to what they *jointly* experience in “our cosmos” (p. 6), in “our temporal cosmos”, from “our selfhood” (p.8), in “our shared experience of the cosmos.” This indicates, I suggest, Dooyeweerd's careful use of language, a degree of circumspection in avoiding connotations of possessiveness that could easily affix themselves dogmatically to the philosophy he seeks to set forth.

But nevertheless, we should still reflect upon the way in which his published article negotiates any personal “dilemmas” he may have had in writing this inaugural article. After all, the way in which the title of his *magnum opus* (albeit without capitals) appears as a taken-for-granted in the Editorial, does suggest some attempt to address the ambiguities and potential misunderstandings of why the association had been set up. Indeed, it would seem that the *Vereeniging* had arisen as a result of a recognition that organised support and promotion for such philosophical work was needed? *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* as published foreshadows significant further scholarly work in its line, in its direction.

But note carefully some facts that are taken for granted in this editorial and article. The journal, launched by an **association of members**, aims to develop philosophy *per se* through its promotion of *this* philosophy. Membership in this association is not limited to scholars or philosophers; at this point it was understood as an association for *Calvinistische* philosophy.

As a “free-standing” (voluntary) association with an annual membership fee, it is clearly not a university's philosophical school, faculty or department. Membership is open to those who wish to promote philosophical reflection and scholarship in this particular *richting*. It has its own constitution and articles of association. Academics of all disciplines are found among its membership, some of whom are university teachers of philosophy, others are academics of other disciplines, and there also teachers, historians, ministers and other kinds of professionals represented among its ranks. These facts are important and coincide with the fact that “*De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*” is not the work of an academic *philosopher* but of a jurist in the *Vrije Universiteit's* Law Faculty. So here in these opening pages we confront a scholarly association

that considers philosophy in what might be called an inter-disciplinary frame of reference, and in ways that reach beyond professional and academic spheres. Moreover, one of the articles in this first edition is from an engineer.

The prevailing sense conveyed by Dooyeweerd's article is that he had dug deep. The impression from what he has written is that he is not too worried in any personal sense by the prospect of theoretical critique. But reckoning with the inherent reciprocal relationship between theoretical argument and the critique thereof, he has, at least in principle, turned from a form of academic engagement that is preoccupied with articulating and defending his own theorising. If he is serious about setting forth a philosophical orientation that is in "striking opposition" to "the traditional understanding of thinking" then he should be prepared for theoretical disagreement that is in "striking opposition" to his own work.

In this, Dooyeweerd's cogent summary of how this philosophy is oriented, we do not read a review of his own work. Instead, he writes as spokesperson of a school, of a trend, of a commitment to promote philosophy via *this* journal. So it has been written in a way that still invites us to assess whether he has adequately introduced "this still youthful philosophical school", and whether as *aperitif* it actually clarifies the scholarly intention that led to his 3 volume work.

By noting the tendency in common usage for "*richting*" to imply a circle of "*aanhangers*", who then might refer to it as "*our* school of thought"<sup>3</sup> (i.e. the school of thought that has called this journal into existence), I have drawn attention to temptations that must have arisen in some way or other for Dooyeweerd as the writer of this article. Apart from any personal dilemmas of negotiating "simultaneous and closely linked responsibilities", there were his various differentiated responsibilities as a writer of the published work, as editor of this journal and as a prominent founding member of the new association set up to advance "*Calvinistische wijsbegeerte*". And of course he was an academic jurist at the *Vrije Universiteit*, and contributor to public policy development for the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*. And so with these "hats" in mind, we picture him picking up his pen to give an account of the basic intentions and propositions of this "still very young" philosophical "*richting*".

It is now almost 80 years later. It may be helpful if we list some of the questions we should try to answer as we seek to disclose the true meaning of this article: How does he write? Does the article read as someone at home in

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<sup>3</sup> It may well be that the challenge thrown out by the *Vereeniging* should also be understood in terms of the potential confrontation with those in Dooyeweerd's *Vrije Universiteit* who wanted to construe the emergence of a *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* as a *sectarian* challenge to "*ons universiteit*". See Marcel E Verburg 2015 pp. 229-259. But if that were so, it would also be a challenge to the sectarian motif that presumed that, having inherited the results of Kuyper's initiatives, the *Vrije Universiteit* had some kind of proprietorial ownership of what was henceforth to be understood as "Calvinistic".

the philosophical arena? Are there hints that suggest that the author is concerned that he might be viewed as an interloper in philosophical discourse? Has the author avoided a “sectarian” way of arguing, that has often affixed itself to Calvinistic endeavours? Is he respectfully alert to those who may not want to be associated with this philosophical innovation even as they identify themselves “*in Kuiper's lijn*”? In his own work “in opposition” has he avoided an ethic of intellectual combativeness or even nastiness? These are some of the questions we should be asking. No doubt there are others as well.

This article then is an announcement to those holding this first number of *Philosophia Reformata* in their hands that the *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte* is going to set forth its antithetical contribution to philosophy. Of course it is; this is philosophy; this is scholarship. This is not a world championship heavy-weight boxing bout.

... and in the Orange corner the new youthful contender for the crown, risen from the ranks of light-weight and middle-weight Kuiperian theological apologetics, bent on proving to us that he is quite capable of punching far above his class ... ladies and gentlemen let me present ...

No, it is not that, even if there is a cultural echo of someone addressing a lively Kuiperian audience, knowing they are eager to discover what this new “*richting*” might have on offer. It is, as the article's title indicates, a scholarly discussion, an examination of “The Dilemma for Christian Philosophical Thought and the Critical Character of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*”.

And noting firstly that Dooyeweerd presents “the dilemma” we should read that as letting his readers know that he is aware of the complexity of a deep scholarly problem that is now being laid out before them.

Reading on, we find that there is not just one but two propositions that have been singled out for emphasis in Dooyeweerd's prolegomenal discussion - the first identifies the critical dimension of this “still youthful philosophy” in its “opposition”. The second proposition introduces the dilemma that arises for *any* Christian philosophical thought when a *lack* of critical self-reflection prevails. In the remainder of what we have to say here, our discussion will be on these two propositions. Evidently, they are set forth not just to orient the reader's understanding of what Dooyeweerd will say further on in this inaugural article but to indicate the *critical intention* that this new journal seeks to promote in an ongoing way.

The mandate of *Philosophia Reformata* has been set. The article will explain that in relation to the basic challenges, the persistent “dilemma” that will be posed for those wanting to take up the challenge and follow in the line of this “*richting*”. There are basic challenges to philosophical scholarship that are implicit in these two propositions. And those aligned with this philosophical school, joined by their affirmation of these two propositions, stand in need of

an ongoing sharpened awareness of how they are in turn a significant challenge to traditional philosophy. There is an ongoing philosophical challenge represented by these propositions (*stellingen*<sup>4</sup>).

Having identified these most critical questions in these terms, Dooyeweerd writes as one who knows that this must involve an appeal wider than the circle of those supportive of this philosophy or even of those who may be influenced by Kuiperian neo-Calvinism. These are issues that demand consideration even if no-one else is paying any attention. It could not be plainer. That is why he suggests that

... this still youthful school has set forth a basic proposition [*grondstelling*] by which it finds itself in striking opposition to the traditional attitude to thinking (emphasis added BCW).

This will mean going to the heart of philosophy. This is no dabbling around the edges. Dooyeweerd does not appeal to an achievement, nor to any demonstrably successful *argument*. Rather the battle is to be waged by taking up this “*grondstelling*” of this “*richting*”, its *basic proposition*. So, what is this basic proposition?

The basic proposition can be briefly summarised in these terms: philosophical theoretical thought is without self-sufficiency [*onzelfgenoegzaam*] in its own domain (Dooyeweerd's emphasis)[*op zĳn eigen gebied*].

The term “without self-sufficiency” has at some points in the English translation of Dooyeweerd's other writing been rendered as “self-insufficiency”<sup>5</sup>. However difficult a concept it may be, however much it might sound like just another neologism of an obscurantist group of ideologues, the term (“*onzelfgenoegzaam*”) is a crucial one for the proposition as stated. A basic tenet of this philosophical disposition is its self-conscious opposition to the traditional attitude to thinking.

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<sup>4</sup> In those times the defense of a Doctoral dissertation at the Free University was accompanied by a published list of “*stellingen*” (Afrikaans: “*stellings*”) which were theses or propositions nominated by the candidate, and from which, in the public examination, the examiners could chose to cross-examine the candidate. Dooyeweerd here assumes that “*grondstellingen*” about any proposed new philosophy are invitations to ongoing debate.

<sup>5</sup> In the English translation of this term in NC “*onzelfgenoegzaam*” is rendered as “non-self-sufficient” and “self-insufficiency” see Herman Dooyeweerd (1955-56) **I**, pp. 4, 9, 21, **II** p. 333 “A genuinely transcendental epistemological criticism necessarily reveals the self-*insufficiency* of the transcendental logical function of thinking, both in theoretical *self*-reflection and with regard to the temporal intermodal coherence between the experiential aspects. This coherence only makes transcendental logical thought possible.” (should it read “alone?”); p. 489 “Anyone who recognizes the self-insufficiency of all meaning, acknowledges that no meaning *modus* is capable of seclusion ...”; p.490 “In Christ alone the meaning of all that is finds its adequate fulfilment, because in Him it is directed to God in a perfect way, i.e. in the absolute self-insufficiency which is proper to meaning.”

It is the traditional attitude to *thinking* that is opposed. Dooyeweerd uses the general term, thinking ("*denkhouding*"), which is wider than merely particular types of thinking, whether they be theoretical or philosophical. He here aligns his way of philosophical thinking with a *religious* opposition to "the traditional attitude to thinking." The careful reader may at this point note Dooyeweerd's adherence to the Kuyperian view that the Gospel brings a "religious antithesis" into human experience. It does that by breathing a new-life that is the God-given consequence of God's own merciful confrontation in Jesus Christ which has disarmed and overcome the deepest spiritual resistance, including those traditions that are maintained by idolatrous motives claiming self-sufficiency for the creature.

Dooyeweerd writes of philosophical scholarship as a theoretical exercise *completely occupied* with elaborating in a conceptual explanatory way how thought and "philosophical theoretical thought" is creationally possible despite its non-self-sufficiency, its own self-insufficiency ("*onzelfgenoegzaam*").

But how is one ever to convey the meaning of this term "self-insufficiency"? It is as if Dooyeweerd's initial seven lines are also a proclamation of the inauguration of a new philosophical language that presupposes the non-self-sufficiency of its own terms! And that, of course, is precisely what it also amounts to. Another way of saying this is to say that philosophy is quite incapable of establishing its own basis from out of reflection upon its own peculiar abstract characteristics even when it is focused upon its own basic propositions! This inherent lack of self-sufficiency of philosophical thought refers to the primordial condition that theoretical abstraction can never overcome and which, to be meaningful, has to be acknowledged up-front from the outset. The denial of this lack of self-sufficiency by an assertion to the contrary (bathed in human pride) will have to be acknowledged sooner or later when such thought has exhausted itself by its own inner contradictions and antinomies. Better that this be acknowledged as the *religious* view, as the pre-theoretical prejudice, that it is *from the outset*.<sup>6</sup>

Even at this point Dooyeweerd's brief account of this new "*richting*" is sharp and penetrating. If philosophy is begun with the supposition that theoretical thought is self-sufficient it simply won't be able to proceed to an account of what makes this self-sufficiency possible, since to seek the origin of self-sufficiency is to already admit a lack of self-sufficiency, a dependence on something or other that is ever prior to it.

But a further interesting point is still to come when evaluating these initial words. They relate to the Kuyperian context of which the author is obviously keenly aware. Dooyeweerd proceeds to explain this basic proposition that characterizes this philosophical "*richting*".

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<sup>6</sup> In Dutch this might well read "*Bij den aanvang*".

The intention can be pinpointed from the final italicised words of the previous sentence. In a clear and explicit way these words not only signify a radical break with modern humanism's leading-idea, the sovereignty of thinking, but breaks just as much with the traditional synthetic standpoint of half-way Christian philosophy.

By drawing attention to the italicized words ("*op zijn eigen gebied*") which read "in its own domain" we are reminded of the view that was a taken-for-granted appeal among Kuyperean supporters of the *Vrije Universiteit* at that time - the doctrine of "sphere sovereignty" ("*souvereniteit in eigen kring*"). Over against the view of this new philosophical trend we find a traditional view that theoretical thought *is* self-sufficient in its own domain. The new trend Dooyeweerd commends to the journal's readers is characterized by a primordial proposition that this is not so, that

... philosophical theoretical thought is without self-sufficiency *in its own domain*.

Dooyeweerd is stressing that this lack of self-sufficiency is not merely what makes theoretical thought (philosophy and science) co-relative to non-scientific spheres of human life and experience. Dooyeweerd will now go on to explain why he has italicized the phrase *in its own domain*. As it sits there on the page as an emphasized group of words there is no necessity for him to refer back to it. But at this point Dooyeweerd asserts the educative intention of his article. The readers' attention is specifically drawn to this emphasis as if he were interrupting his lecture to say:

Now why would I need to give that such emphasis?

Here Dooyeweerd shows he was aware (we might well add *instinctively*<sup>7</sup>) of the possibility that the journal's initial readers would see this phrase as endorsement of Kuyperean's famous "sphere sovereignty" doctrine. Was not the *Vereeniging* an expression of *philosophia reformata*, a philosophy that, in its own sphere, was continually engaged in reforming itself according to the famous Calvinist aphorism? And is this not a most recent attempt to further extend Kuyperean's neo-Calvinist understanding of a continuous and ongoing reformation?

Of course. That is what it was and is. But on its own, as a *dogmatic proposition*, this first proposition might well suggest that "sphere sovereignty" is being reformulated and if that was what was intended then it would seem to turn everything upside down. Why? Does not the proposition as stated indicate that theoretical philosophical thought in its lack of self-sufficiency is going to have to acknowledge that "science is *not* sovereign, *not even* in its own sphere"? Would that not be the logical corollary of this first proposition? Is that what the *Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* is actually proposing?

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<sup>7</sup> I am reminded here of a later "neo-Calvinistic" appeal to a heightened spiritual sensitivity, to "voelhoren" H Evan Runner (1970 at p. 13).

This would seem to be a possible *logical* conclusion if all we were to do was to place this first proposition next to the slogan of “sphere sovereignty”. But that would suggest that “sovereignty” and “self-sufficiency” are equivalent terms. Clearly, for Dooyeweerd, this is not the case.

And so Dooyeweerd proceeds, drawing the attention of his readers *back* to the italicised words that Kuyperian neo-Calvinists might too easily gloss over:

Oh, “in its own domain”. We know that. We've been there. We've done that. Our Christian clocks have been striking “sphere sovereignty” since Kuyper's famous lecture in 1880. So this is what Dooyeweerd is talking about! Oh, good. There's been lots of rhetoric about that phrase of Kuyper and already many debates and even schisms so its good to see he's getting beyond that stuff. Yes, we know what he's referring to, we are Kuyperians after all.

And ever so politely Dooyeweerd proceeds. The formulation is actually evidence of his willing subjection to societal norms that require good manners, even in philosophical journal articles. He is implicitly suggesting that such a gloss would not only misunderstand *philosophia reformata*, it would misconstrue “*de richting van de wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*”.

Sure, most of the first readers of *Philosophia Reformata* will have, in some way or other, come under the influence of “sphere sovereignty”. They might not have been influenced by the scholarship of the post-Kuyperian neo-Calvinist scholars at the Free University of Amsterdam, but they would have been part of the cultural life of families, churches, schools, associations and political parties. So, is it not fair to suppose that Dooyeweerd is at least a little concerned that some may have paid their subscriptions to the association without necessarily understanding what he is going to (try to) tell them.

In order to get this reflective piece on Dooyeweerd's inaugural *Philosophia Reformata* article into shape, I have had to puzzle over these opening paragraphs. Of course, those who know something of Dooyeweerd's philosophy, as well as those apprised of recent developments in “Dooyeweerd studies,”<sup>8</sup> will know we are here concerned with an early chapter in the story of Dooyeweerd's “transcendental critique”. This is an important early formulation of his efforts to suggest that a critical analysis of the presumed autonomy of theoretical thought and its ongoing impact upon science must be an implicit part of all scholarly investigation.

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<sup>8</sup> There is a modest range of serious scholarly consideration of Dooyeweerd's significance. Reference can be made to recent contributions by such scholars as Jonathan Chaplin, Roy A Clouser, Henk Geertsema, Gerrit Glas, James W Skillen, D.F. M Strauss, Dick Stafleu, Andrew Basden, and Jeremy Ive and ongoing commentary and appreciation by others as well. In a recent article in *The American Sociologist* I felt it appropriate to include a very brief footnote comparing Dooyeweerd's view of pre-theoretical assumptions with the views put forward to explain the “emergent evolutionism” of Talcott Parsons by Victor M Lidz and Harold J Bershad in their comparison of Parsons with Alfred North Whitehead (Wearne 2013 at p. 238).

To put it more exactly, these opening paragraphs are part of Dooyeweerd's repeated efforts, especially between 1936 and the early 1950s, to explain what he meant by a “transcendental critique” of philosophical and theoretical thought. My suggestion is that this particular formulation can be clarified if we keep in mind that this is written as one member of the newly established association to other members as well as to subscribers of the journal. To say this is not to dissolve any logical inconsistencies, linguistic convolutions or even philosophical antinomies that may be implicit in his propositions as he set them forth. It is to simply draw attention to an important facet of this exposition and to suggest we can confront its meaning by keeping in mind that it was motivated to a considerable degree by a desire to explain these “basic propositions” that, in their own way, express a critical Kuyperian view of any Calvinistic effort to engage in and with philosophy.

By explicitly drawing attention to these italicized words, Dooyeweerd can proceed to emphasize that this lack of self-sufficiency is an important defining characteristic of “philosophical theoretical thinking” *in its own domain*. That is, there is a lack of self-sufficiency *internally* within the activities and the consequent results of theoretical thought itself. And in our critique of theoretical thought, in our critical account of its structure, we should be alert to the various facets of this self-insufficiency. This lack of self-sufficiency is not impressed upon it from without, say, from its relationship with the results or consequences of other human responsibilities, even if human responsibility in all aspects manifests this same lack of self-sufficiency. It is this that Dooyeweerd proceeds to drive home in his next paragraph.

Still, as long as one can take up the proposition that theoretical thought is without self-sufficiency, that, on its own<sup>9</sup>, it is unable to place itself within the full meaning of the cosmos and of human personality, and still less [in relation to] the unfathomable depths of God's Being and the mysteries of grace of the Christian religion, one can still hold fast to the postulate that on *immanent* terms that<sup>10</sup> thought is self-sufficient. Thus one can still endeavour to bring about a union, to find a more or less harmonious synthesis between that which [*datgene*] “natural reason” can teach out of its own capacity [*vermogens*] and the supra-rational mysteries of the Christian religion as these are unveiled by “super-natural revelation”.

How are we to interpret this statement of two sentences, the first of 64 words and the second of 42, with so many dependent clauses? Where is Dooyeweerd going? It might seem that the radical implications that have been *antithetically* set forth by the initial proposition are now short-circuited by the author's clarification. Are these perhaps second thoughts?

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<sup>9</sup> BCW: out of its inherent nature

<sup>10</sup> BCW: kind of

No, these are not second thoughts. Dooyeweerd is affirming that the simple assertion of the *proposition* that philosophical thought is without self-sufficiency does not, *of itself*, carry the day philosophically speaking. In other words, on its own the proposition may be an assertion about its lack of self-sufficiency but any proposition, even propositions designated “basic”, do not explain themselves. *They too lack self-sufficiency; they manifest self-insufficiency* They may be a necessary part of the self-definition of a philosophical *richting*, but they are not sufficient to actually promote the *theoretical* attitude that is fully awake to the reality of philosophy's own *lack* of self-sufficiency.

The initial proposition as asserted, Dooyeweerd notes, can even be taken up and defended in a philosophical attitude that does not actually face the radical implications that the proposition foreshadows. Clearly, Dooyeweerd is formulating a statement in this 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the initial page of his article to encourage “*aanhangers*” to think about the necessity of self-criticism, the self-critical character of philosophy. We might even say that he is trying to alert his readers to the possibility of going down a wrong path. True forward movement for such a “*richting*” is along the path that maintains this “opposition”.

In another and perhaps mature formulation of the “transcendental critique”, Dooyeweerd explains that the suggestion that it requires adherents of the presumed dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought to abandon their commitment to it “in advance” is to actually adopt the presupposition of theory's autonomy at a deeper level. To assume that it is the “transcendental critique” itself which establishes the self-insufficiency of theoretical thought is to fail to understand that it can only point to it in the way of logical argument, clothed in the self-same insufficiency of our human capabilities.<sup>11</sup> In other words, it is quite conceivable for the first proposition to be received on the basis that a transcendental critique will establish theoretical thought's lack of self-sufficiency. This then identifies the antinomy in the presumption of the self-sufficiency of the concept of theoretical thought's self-insufficiency.

Dooyeweerd might have gone on to say that what he had written could be validated by a careful and critical examination of the history of philosophy. He might have appealed to findings in the historical study of philosophy in which it has become plain that thinkers could affirm such a proposition while firmly holding a view that implies the contrary position, namely, “the postulate that on immanent terms such thought is self sufficient.”<sup>12</sup> That would amount to a defense of the proposition, a defense in historically circumscribed terms. But instead, he crafts a critical observation about the

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<sup>11</sup> Herman Dooyeweerd 1972, p. 6; Herman Dooyeweerd 2015, pp. 94-98

<sup>12</sup> i.e. the medieval nominalist doctrine of the two truths.

possibility of holding seemingly contradictory propositions which, by implication, strikes deep into the underlying pre-theoretical commitments of philosophers, particularly Christian philosophers, and all thinkers. And further, having already signalled the intention of this “*richting*” to

... break with the traditional synthetic standpoint of half-way Christian philosophy

it becomes clear that this complex paragraph is, in fact, no retreat from the initial “striking opposition”. The momentum initiated by the “striking opposition” of this “still youthful philosophical school” is maintained by promoting a comprehensive *self-critical* attitude for philosophy. This philosophy can not be satisfied merely with formulating “basic propositions”.

To state it again: propositions by themselves do not do the philosophical work that is needed to demonstrate the radical self-insufficiency of philosophical reflection. Perhaps we would have to say that insight into the radical self-insufficiency is what is deepened when philosophical thinking does its work, the work in which it is busy “in its own domain” (*op zijn eigen gebied*). After all, distinctions between what is immanent and what is transcendent, between what is within reach and what is beyond reach, between what is here and now and what is ultimate, can always be introduced into philosophical reflection. And once introduced they can then be argued side-by-side with the dogmatic presumption that philosophical theoretical thought is inherently self-sufficient.

In the terms that Dooyeweerd outlines, he is anticipating the possibility of an acceptance of the first proposition on professed Christian grounds which still orients reflection about philosophical thought to its presumed self-sufficiency in an ultimate sense. In terms of its immanent conditions, theoretical philosophy may, from such a standpoint, be viewed as lacking self-sufficiency, but that, set forth from such a standpoint, might only serve to confirm that what is relative, lacking self-sufficiency and close at hand, needs to find its fulfilment in thought that is believed to be ultimate, self-sufficient and anchored ultimately beyond our human reach.

We may have suggested that Dooyeweerd has tended in this article to refer only obliquely to “Kuyper-culture”, but here he refers to a scholastic theological trend, a tendency in thought that may even arise from a close association with this new philosophy and which may indeed already be embedded within the thinking of potential “*aanbangers*” of this self-same philosophical “*richting*”.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis is very much upon the cultivation of a rigorously self-critical attitude which means awareness of the attempts to

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<sup>13</sup> Three years later on, Dooyeweerd would develop a critique of Kuyper’s philosophy of science “Kuyper’s wetenschapsleer” (Dooyeweerd H 1939) in which he explained how Kuyper’s scholastic methodology had accommodated “critical realism” and thereby departed from the reforming tendency implicit in his exposition of “sphere sovereignty”.

develop rigorous self-critical theorising that has arisen one's own cultural and intellectual context.<sup>14</sup>

Dooyeweerd emphasizes that to consider the human act of thinking as dependent upon that which transcends it does not have to mean that philosophy's lack of self-sufficiency *in its own domain* has been conceded. And here his emphasis is indeed scrupulously self-critical in its approach to *philosophy*, his own philosophy included.

And so, the italicized phrase - *in its own domain* - when connected with philosophy's lack of self-sufficiency, refers not only to philosophy's roots but to the task of going on to give a comprehensive account of the *structure* of its own possibility in its lack of self-sufficiency.

[page 4] But above all, that recognition [*Eerst de erkenning*] of the inability of theoretical thought to be self-sufficient *in its own domain* [*op eigen gebied*] brings with it a radical revolution in the concept of philosophy whereby any and every reconciliation with the traditional standpoint is ruled out.

In other words, and to repeat the point, if you begin with the supposition that theoretical thought is self-sufficient you simply won't be able to proceed to explain how this self-sufficiency is possible, since you can only do so with thinking that is already presuming upon its own self-sufficiency. It will simply be impossible to give a logically coherent account of the conditions that make theoretical thought possible without plunging into deep ambiguity by setting forth an inherently antinomic stance that has ruled itself out from its own starting point.

And that, Dooyeweerd implies, is a consequence of the failure to reckon critically with theoretical thought's lack of self-sufficiency. Despite all the evidence of the magisterial presence of this traditional self-sufficient supposition, that can be found firmly stacked side-by-side in the phalanx line-up of texts on the philosophical library shelf, such a philosophical standpoint is yet based in its dogmatic view of its own self-sufficiency. Dooyeweerd moves on.

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<sup>14</sup> In composing this I have tried to configure how Dooyeweerd would deal with scholars who conceded with him that philosophical thought lacks self-sufficiency but who do not argue their case from a standpoint of *Christian* pre-theoretical assumptions. How would such a counter-opposition to the tradition viewpoint of thinking's self-sufficiency proceed? Could not thought be viewed as a useful device as long as it "works" in a pragmatic view that the binding power of theoretical concepts or distinctions have *réalité sui generis* only so long as their immanent use and explanatory power for dealing with the problems that have to be solved meet "needs", including those for "transcendence"? In this regard Roy A Clouser's "A Critique of Historicism" (1997) critically explores such a viewpoint as found in Richard Rorty, but it raises the question as to whether Dooyeweerd's "transcendental critique" confronts other philosophy's in their alternatives to such a critique? In this sense the "transcendental critique" as taken up by Dooyeweerd would not assume that it is the exclusive possession of *de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*.

Now for a second basic proposition of the philosophy of the cosmomic-idea<sup>15</sup>: the traditional concept of the immanent autonomy of thought betrays itself as a lack of critical self-reflection in philosophical thought. In other words, such a traditionally endorsed approach has not given sufficient account for the necessary conditions by which, from the outset, genuine [*weszenlijke*] philosophical thinking is *made possible*.

An important part of any philosophy's task is to give an account, a philosophical account, of those contrary philosophical views that are in opposition to one's own philosophical "*richting*". In other words, Dooyeweerd is not only noting that he is aware of setting forth a philosophical approach that claims to stand resolutely against a view that is eminently endorsed on all sides (at all times hitherto and in all places currently where philosophy has been taken up) and in which it has been a taken-for-granted integral component of philosophical reflection *per se*. Simply by taking one's stand "in opposition" in such a comprehensive way does not remove one's obligation to explain *philosophically* how it is that these "other" philosophies lack critical true self-reflection.

It is indeed true that such an assertion will inevitably draw the criticism that this "new critique" is unduly critical, is putting itself forward as the answer to all philosophical questions, is engaging in a blatant self-promotion that is obviously sectarian and therefore can be safely ignored. However, a moment's critical reflection reveals that this is actually what *any* genuine philosophy will implicitly assert. It cannot avoid explaining other philosophies, how they arise and why they differ in the *direction* that has been taken.

A philosophy may indeed be an embrace of relativism on the grounds that all human actions, arguments and affirmations are relative. Indeed, many philosophers do adopt such a philosophy. But can the philosophical account of dissenting philosophies be explained merely by noting that they are not submitting themselves to a relativist postulate as absolute? Such a question cannot be avoided.

To what are theories relative? How are the affirmations about their validity justified? The dogmatic starting point of an explicitly relativistic philosophy points to an inner self-contradiction. And meanwhile this new "*richting*" in philosophy, by taking its own *Christian* commitment seriously, is oriented to develop a kind of scholarly confrontation that shows its commitment not merely to itself as a series of propositions, but to the human task of engaging in philosophical reflection.

There is a notable point in his discussion that bears out the above principle. Here Dooyeweerd does not use the nomenclature that he has already admitted is affixed to this philosophical trend. Instead, his second proposition refers to

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<sup>15</sup> filosofie der wetsidee.

the “*philosophie der wetsidee*” (i.e. not the “*wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*” as used by the Editorial, in the title to the article, and in his first paragraph). He is thus emphasizing this philosophical movement’s solidarity with the scholarly and philosophical task that is now required of such a philosophy.

This “*richting*” and its “*aanhangers*” may assume that, by reference to their own law-idea, a true apprehension and critical challenge of traditional and immanentist philosophy is not only possible but urgently required. In this unexpected way - and maybe it could have been stated in clearer terms - Dooyeweerd's variation in terminology suggests that it is most important from the standpoint of this philosophical “*richting*” to avoid equating the way forward for philosophy with some kind of public adherence to **De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee**.

This sounds obvious when we state it like that, but explaining the dilemma of Christian philosophy is not without its hurdles, ancient and more recent, if not modern, post-modern and contemporary. Reading this now we can detect the way in which Dooyeweerd has sharply distinguished philosophy from ideology, including those who might wish to construe this “*richting*” in ideological terms.

This philosophy’s examination of the “law-idea” is not presuming to be an exclusive proprietor of law-ideas in the philosophical market-place. This philosophy does not claim a “law-idea” monopoly. Rather, it is on *Christian* grounds this peculiar *philosophie der wetsidee* sets forth its philosophical case.

Thus Dooyeweerd's second basic proposition follows from the possibility he has noted of holding together in one philosophical outlook statements that are contradictory and logically opposed. Traditional philosophy that assumes philosophy's self-sufficiency cannot be truly radical.

The hypothesis to be defended in this *richting* is spelled out: when scientific scholarship is bound *by a pre-theoretical commitment to the self-sufficiency of theoretical thought* then it is prevented from engaging with the foundational and critical philosophical task, accounting for philosophy's own possibility, the very structure to which each and every philosophy is unavoidably bound.

But those holding to this second basic proposition [*grondstelling*] assume that it is directed at the basis of any *philosophical justification* [*haar filosofischen rechtsgrond*] for the thesis of an immanent autonomy of thought, and thereby initiate a genuine philosophical exchange with adherents of the immanence-standpoint.

And they expect in response to their so earnest philosophical attack to be given an equally rigorous philosophical defense. This then is a good scientific law for science.

And so Dooyeweerd opens his discussion of the dilemmas for Christian philosophizing by reckoning with the importance of not only giving a good account of one's own standpoint but also of the vital necessity of doing so

for, and in communication with, one's theoretical adversaries. In that context trenchant counter-criticism must be expected, should be welcomed and even encouraged. Those of this "*richting*", "*aanhangers*" of this youthful school, must keep alert to the fact that by entering into the philosophical arena they must be willing to ask very inconvenient philosophical questions not just of their opponents but also, and pre-eminently, of themselves. They should be equally willing to receive frank and inconvenient criticism according to the very same measure they have presumed to give. This is what comes with an ethic of *Christian* philosophical responsibility.

There is an important aspect of this second proposition and the "antithetical" engagement that it encourages with other philosophies, with philosophies that take an alternative immanent "*richting*". It is this. In emphasizing the non-self-sufficiency of philosophical and theoretical reflection, theorising has always to proceed in a self-critical way and cannot avoid confrontation with other philosophies.

Dooyeweerd is alert to the salient task of arguing the "other" philosophical standpoints in terms of their own "*grondstellingen*", even if these "others" dogmatically presume that theoretical thought is self-sufficient and thus avoid an appeal to any philosophical "law idea" beyond itself, to any *philosophischen rechtsgrond*.

So, Dooyeweerd has configured philosophical debate as a contention between trends to decide which philosophy can rightfully claim to be the *philosophie der wetsidee*. Hence the challenge for this *richting*, for this school of philosophy, is what it is for all philosophies, and that is to engage in such a way as to give a true account of all of "other" philosophies as well, of what may rightly be said to be a competition in giving a true account of creational reality.

The aim is also to work so that, if possible, a more comprehensive and more compelling account of the "other" philosophy can be given by the thinkers of that opposed persuasion. That task of critical representation, the immersion in the study of "other" philosophies, is an implicit part of the ongoing work of any Christian philosophy that adheres to these two founding propositions.

In the "Voorwoord" to **De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee** there is a similar formulation in which the phrase "*philosophie der wetsidee*" appears.<sup>16</sup> It may even confirm that, in differentiating between *wijsbegeerte der wetsidee* (qua *richting*) and

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<sup>16</sup> **De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee** 1935 Vol 1, p XI. *Moge dan ook de strijd om de filosofie der wetsidee slechts ter wille van de waarheid en dus op ridderlijke wijze worden gevoerd.* [my rendering: May it also be that the struggle over the **philosophie der wetsidee** only be for the sake of truth and thus conducted in a chivalrous manner]. This has been rendered in *New Critique* as "May then the conflict about *this* philosophy be carried on merely for the sake of truth and thus in a chivalrous manner." I think this misses a vital element.

*philosophie der wetstidee* (qua scholarly vocation), Dooyeweerd was simply noting that his extended formulation, his “*wijsbegeerte*”, constitutes his claim within the arena of philosophical contest to the title “*de filosofie der wetstidee.*” For Dooyeweerd any philosophy is engaged in that contest for that title.

It seems highly unlikely that Dooyeweerd, on the basis of his own philosophy, was unaware of what he intended by this subtle shift in terminology. To embark on the scholarly task of developing a philosophy means one is ready to give an account, for the sake of truth, of why one dissents from “other” philosophies.

And to do this properly one cannot remain with the initial proposition “over against” and presuming to formulate theories that transcend the theories of the “other” approach; one needs to enter immanently into chivalrous conflict with that philosophy about that philosophy's true character and contribution.

It also needs to be emphasized that those who have wanted to see themselves as “*wijsbegeerte der wetstidee aanhangers*” will, sooner or later, need to reckon with the fact that Dooyeweerd cannot do their thinking for them.

By identifying these two propositions, his call is for a genuine task in which all are called to develop their own philosophical thinking. And maybe it is not so easy to press that point home philosophically, especially when this is the journal of this young scholarly “*richting*” that has come to be known by the name of his *magnum opus*.

Integral to Dooyeweerd's “chivalry” is his awareness that there is a spiritual struggle going on, not only to decide who is going to “win”, but indeed how the *conflict* itself is to be conceived, and how the chivalrous rules for scholarly debate are to be formulated. And against the probability that there will be philosophical disagreement within this “*richting*”, Dooyeweerd's two propositions point the way to enriching philosophical disagreement by a critical self-reflection oriented solely for the sake of the truth.

So, in conclusion, let me reiterate how I have read Dooyeweerd's efforts in penning this initial article for *Philosophia Reformata*. I am suggesting that these opening paragraphs are the self-consciously written sentences of a *member* of the *Vereeniging voor Calvinistische Wijsbegeerte*, seeking to frame philosophical discussion for other members and interested parties, and thereby explain what the journal is aiming to do.

Here is a founding member of the association and law professor at the Vrije Universiteit, one of the journal's Editorial Board, encouraging other members and all others who might be interested in examining the philosophical works associated with this “trend”, to examine what is set forth as a genuine *Christian* challenge. It is a demanding task and we can add that the article is that too. The demands are outlined as much for the aspiring under-

graduate as for the thinking professional and for Dooyeweerd's fellow professional thinkers.

By reading this opening article in that light we glean helpful insight concerning the way in which the author understood how philosophy remains a genuine and authentic responsibility deserving the support of all Christians, even if *philosophical* responsibility is primarily for those working in the sphere of science and scholarship.

Much in the way of *philosophical* clarity can result by keeping in mind that there are various responsibilities coming to expression in this article. It should be read as Dooyeweerd's attempt, as an association member, to introduce other association members to the work that needs to be done, work for which they too are responsible. Clearly he is hopeful that his own work can be of service to other scholars as they set about responding to the call of Christ Jesus in their scholarly vocation.

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