

The place and historical significance of Dooyeweerd's Inaugural Address of 1926

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Abstract

Dooyeweerd entered the scene as a talented academic who soon caught the eye and was offered the position of Deputy Director of the Kuyper Foundation in 1922. A mere four years later he accepted a position at the Faculty of Law at the Free University as professor in Philosophy of Law, Encyclopedia of the Science of Law and Ancient Dutch Law. Apart from an extensive series of articles on the struggle for a Christian politics Dooyeweerd presented his Inaugural Address in 1926 on The Significance of the Cosmological Idea for the Science of Law and Legal Philosophy. This Inaugural Address marks a significant shift away from the biblicistic appeal to "Scriptural principles" which obstructed the inner reformation of the special sciences and opened up an alternative approach to Christian scholarship. Moreover, this is not done in isolation but explicitly in confrontation with the dominant trends of thought within the discipline of law. At the same time he succeeded in advancing a novel and penetrating insight into the deepest dialectical motivation directing modern philosophy since the Renaissance, designated by him as the science ideal (nature) and the personality ideal (freedom). The basic antinomy entailed within this dialectical ground

motive of modern humanistic philosophy manifested itself in multiple theoretical antinomies also within the science of law. His new intermodal understanding of theoretical antinomies is equally novel and innovative and it undergirded his analysis of the various sphere sovereign modal aspects of reality. The promise entailed in this Inaugural Address came to fruition in two directions: elaborating his philosophical foundation of the science of law in his multi-volume Encyclopedia of the Science of Law and presenting his new insight in the form of a general philosophical account to the academic world – in the publication of his magnum opus, De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee (three volumes in 1935-1936), translated into English in the four volume work, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought (1953-1958). This Inaugural Address may be appreciated as the cradle of his immensely encompassing and penetrating intellectual legacy.

Opsomming

Dooyeweerd het die toneel as 'n begaafde akademikus betree, is spoedig opgemerk en dit het in 1922 tot die aanbod om adjunk-direkteur van die Kuyper-Stigting te word, gelei. Slegs vier jaar later het hy die posisie van hoogleraar in die Regsfakulteit van die Vrye Universiteit van Amsterdam aanvaar, met as leeropdrag Regsfilosofie, Die Ensiklopedie van die Regswetenskap en Oud-Vaderlandse Reg. Naas 'n uitgebreide artikel-reeks oor die Stryd om 'n Christelike Staatskunde het hy in 1926 sy Intreerede gelewer oor De Beteekenis der Wetsidee voor Rechtswetenskap en Rechtsfilosofie. Hierdie Intreerede markeer 'n betekenisvolle beweging weg van die biblisistiese appèl op "Skriftuurlike beginsels" wat in die weg van 'n innerlike reformasie van die vakwetenskappe gestaan het en dit open 'n alternatiewe benadering tot Christelike wetenskap. Wat opval is dat dit nie in isolasie gedoen is nie, maar juis in konfrontasie met die heersende denkstrominge binne die regswetenskap. Tegelyk het hy daarin geslaag om tot 'n nuwe en indringende insig in die diepste dialekties-rigtinggewende motivering van die moderne filosofie sedert die Renaissance te kom – deur hom aangedui as die wetenskapsideaal (natuur) en die persoonlikheidsideaal (vryheid). Die grond-antinomie wat inherent aan hierdie dialektiese grondmotief van die moderne humanisme is kom ook in die talle teoretiese antinomieë binne die regswetenskap tot uitdrukking. Sy

nuwe, inter-modale verstaan van teoretiese antinomieë is ewe innoverend en dit ondersteun sy ontleding van die verskillende kringsoewereine modale aspekte van die werklikheid. Die belofte wat in sy Intreerede vervat is het tot wasdom gekom in twee rigtings: in die uitwerking van sy wysgerige fundering van die regs wetenskap in sy veeldelige werk Die Ensiklopedie van die Regswetenskap, en in die aanbieding van sy nuwe wysgerige insigte in die vorm van 'n algemene wysgerige verantwoording aan die akademiese wêreld – in die publikasie van sy magnum opus, De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee (drie volumes in 1935-1936), in Engels vertaal in die vier-delige werk, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought (1953-1958). Hierdie Intreerede kan waardeer word as die wieg van die buitengewoon-omvattende en indringende intellektuele nalatenskap van Dooyeweerd.

1. The intellectual milieu within which Dooyeweerd's new philosophy originated

Already with his Ph.D. in 1917, on the *Cabinet in Dutch Constitutional Law*,¹ Dooyeweerd distinguished himself as a scholar with exceptional intellectual talents. His growing interest in the discipline of philosophy was soon combined with his education within the cultural sphere of Abraham Kuyper. During the early 1920s he started to contemplate general philosophical problems, which included a penetrating study of the history of philosophy. During this period he developed his new philosophical insights in close cooperation with his brother-in-law, D.H. Theodoor Vollenhoven, who wrote a dissertation on the foundations of mathematics in 1918.

Initially he was influenced by the two Neo-Kantian traditions, the Baden school and the Marburg school, as well as the phenomenology of Husserl. Dooyeweerd took notice of Stahl who defended, in his *Philosophie des Rechts*, a divine, moral world order. He opposed sociological explanations of law, but could not accept morality as the basis of law either. However, one of his teachers, Fabius, emphasized the divine character of law. While considering the doctrine of *legal sovereignty* and the modern *idea of the state*

1 *De Ministerraad in het Nederlandsche Staatsrecht.*

as defended by Krabbe, his new idea of modal aspects dawned upon him during a walk in the dunes of The Hague on a warm summer evening (see Verburg, 1989:40). This idea of a diversity of aspects eventually not only proved to be highly original but also to be extremely fruitful for an understanding of the foundational problems of the various special sciences.²

In 1922 Dooyeweerd was approached by the Dutch Minister of Defence, J.J.C. van Dijk, to consider becoming the *deputy director* of the *Kuyper Foundation*. In his letter of May 15, 1922 Dooyeweerd mentioned that since 1917 he focused all his leisure time on methodological and legal philosophical studies. He did not want to spend all his time in preparing advice for the *Antirevolutionary Party* and requested enough time to work on developing a systematic foundation for such recommendations (see Puchinger, 1961:46-49). He was appointed in the said position and his first extensive philosophical writing appeared as a series of articles: "The Struggle for a Christian Politics" from 1924 until 1927.³

Colijn and Idenburg wanted to pursue an option of the Statutes of the *Kuyper Foundation* which made provision for establishing at the Free University of Amsterdam a special chair in *Antirevolutionary Political Science*, but it turned out that there was a certain amount of resistance against the idea from within the Faculty of Law. However, when Zevenbergen passed away, Dooyeweerd was appointed in 1926 as his successor and professor in *Philosophy of Law, Encyclopedia of the Science of Law and Ancient Dutch Law* (Puchinger, 1961:54).

After his appointment at the Free University of Amsterdam the growing development of a new philosophical orientation was reflected in a comprehensive *Inaugural Address* on the theme, *The Significance of the Cosmonomic Idea for the Science of Law and*

2 By the end of 1923 Dooyeweerd introduced the phrases *law sphere* and *idea of law* (*wetsidee*) (see Henderson, 1994:30).

3 "In den strijd om een Christelijke Staatkunde. Proeve van een fundeering der calvinistische levens- en wereldbeschouwing in hare wetsidee." This series of articles appeared in the monthly journal *Antirevolutionaire Staatkunde* between 1924 and 1927. It is also available as Volume 5 of the B Series of the *Collected Works* of Dooyeweerd (see Dooyeweerd, 2008).

Legal Philosophy.⁴ A mere glimpse of the extensive footnotes attached to this address clearly indicates that it significantly exceeded the expectations of a normal *Inaugural Address*. During the next decade he published a work on the crisis in humanistic political theory (1931 – see Dooyeweerd, 2010) and in 1935-1936 his *magnum opus*, *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* appeared. This was eventually translated, updated and expanded in an English translation: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (NC: 1953-1957 – 4 volumes – see Dooyeweerd, 1997). Besides numberless articles covering a wide range of academic disciplines (“special sciences”), Dooyeweerd’s main academic work since his *Inaugural Address* was focused on the science of law. This work comprises five volumes and it represents an entirely new Encyclopedic method of analyzing reality as well as the formation of the basic concepts of the numerous academic disciplines. Dooyeweerd first wanted to see if his new philosophical understanding of reality proved to be fruitful in a specific special scientific discipline, such as the science of law (his own field of specialization), before he endeavored to make public its general philosophical implications.

2. The main contours of the Inaugural Address

From the outset, as already clearly reflected in his *Inaugural Address*, Dooyeweerd was intrigued by problems and questions such as the following.

- (i) He finds it striking that many philosophical trends proceed from some or other idea of the *order for* or *orderliness of* reality – a situation that prompted him to speak of the law-idea (“wetsidee”) underlying every philosophical stance. What he actually has in mind is that no single scholarly discipline, be it philosophy, the natural sciences or the humanities, can operate without one or another theoretical view of reality. Dooyeweerd holds that a Christian philosophy ought to avoid deifying anything within creation, for then theoretical thought ends up in becoming an ism – such as physicalism, biologism, psychologism, logicism, historicism,

4 Inaugural Lecture, Free University, Amsterdam, October 15, 1926.

aestheticism or moralism.

- (ii) He finds it problematic that throughout the entire history of Western philosophy the claim was supported that human reason is autonomous and operates without any prior (supra-) theoretical assumptions or pre-suppositions. Particularly during the development of 20th century philosophy of science various trends acknowledged that faith in the rationality of human reason is not rational itself – compare the views of Popper and Stegmüller. This insight was already articulated by Dooyeweerd in 1926 in an article in the journal *Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde* on “The Old Problem of a Christian Politics” (see Dooyeweerd, 1926:68). If human understanding truly was unprejudiced and autonomous, the perplexing question is why intellectual pursuits advancing under the flag of rationality did not eliminate the numberless instances of (oftentimes mutually conflicting) philosophical stances found both within the domain of philosophy itself and within the various academic disciplines (not even excluding Physics and Mathematics)?⁵
- (iii) The alternative advanced by Dooyeweerd is that all theoretical thought operate with a *theoretical* view of reality which is itself in the grip of a *supra-theoretical ultimate com-*

5 Just consider the following significant remark made by a prominent mathematician: “The developments in the foundations of mathematics since 1900 are bewildering, and the present state of mathematics is anomalous and deplorable. The light of truth no longer illuminates the road to follow. In place of the unique, universally admired and universally accepted body of mathematics whose proofs, though sometimes requiring amendment, were regarded as the acme of sound reasoning, we now have conflicting approaches to mathematics. Beyond the logicist, intuitionist, and formalist bases, the approach through set theory alone gives many options. Some divergent and even conflicting positions are possible even within the other schools. Thus the constructivist movement within the intuitionist philosophy has many splinter groups. Within formalism there are choices to be made about what principles of metamathematics may be employed. Non-standard analysis, though not a doctrine of any one school, permits an alternative approach to analysis which may also lead to conflicting views. At the very least what was considered to be illogical and to be banished is now accepted by some schools as logically sound (Kline, 1980:275-276).

mitment. He designated this supra-theoretical commitment as the *ground motive* or *basic motive* that gives direction to the distinctions introduced in theoretical thought.

In view of these considerations he dedicated himself to show how philosophy and all the other scholarly disciplines are made possible by the inevitable presence of an ultimate ground motive and an irreplaceable theoretical view of reality (a *cosmonomic idea*). For this reason he always urged scholars within the different special sciences to elaborate the implications of his new philosophical understanding of reality.

In the introductory part of his *Inaugural Address* Dooyeweerd enters into a brief analysis of the dialectical development of the modern humanistic ground motive of *nature* and *freedom*, also designated as mutually competing motives – the *natural science ideal* and the *personality ideal*. He elaborates in some more detail how within the science ideal of Leibniz the continuity postulate took shape. This postulate acknowledged no set boundaries because theoretical thought can eliminate all limits in its rational (re-) construction of reality. Yet the initial primacy assigned to the science ideal (Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke and Hume) was turned upside-down in the criticistic philosophy of Kant during the 18th century. The dialectical tension between science ideal and personality ideal entails that both poles at once presuppose each other and oppose each other – split by an absolute divide. Dooyeweerd gives the following summary of Kant's thought in the light of the tension between nature and freedom:

Understanding stays with the endless chain of causality, but reason, with its ideas, acts as though that chain were completed; it operates with the ideas of first cause, moral freedom, the godhead, and the immortality of the soul. Accordingly it rises up beyond the realm of natural reality, of itself, to the realm of moral and religious norms. The moral will itself becomes freedom, first cause, autonomous law-giver, the categorical imperative. "Is" and "ought", the realm of reality and the realm of personal freedom, law of nature and norm, ideal of science and ideal of personality, they are separated by an absolute boundary and lie in totally different dimensions. Understanding is law-giver for the realm of nature while reason provides the law for the realm of freedom (Dooyeweerd, 1926:9).

Particularly in respect of the status of a discipline such as the science of law it is clear that Kant cannot simultaneously defend its scientific (empirical) character and its concern for jural normativity. With his identity philosophy Fichte subsequently attempted to discover within reason itself the principle which could unite nature and freedom within a higher unity. However, this entire rescue operation still remained stuck within the dialectic of nature and freedom:

The concept of "Sollen", the central concept of Fichte's philosophy, could only take this central place by absorbing the antinomy between nature and freedom, the ideal of science and the ideal of personality, while the theory of science on which Fichte wished to base the identity of science-ideal and personality-ideal could take no other form than that of antinomic dialectics (Dooyeweerd, 1926:12).

The prominence of the root-dialectic directing humanistic thought, causing theoretical thinking to get entangled in numerous *antinomies*, explains why Dooyeweerd, in the first paragraph of his *Inaugural Address*, commences with discussing the nature of an *antinomy* in the light of the cosmonomic idea (Dooyeweerd, 1926:14 ff.).

Traditionally an antinomy was equated with a logical contradiction. Dooyeweerd reverted (although initially not consistently so) to the literal meaning of the term antinomy, which means a clash of laws (anti = against; nomos = law). A clash of laws differs from contraries (like logical-illogical, polite-impolite, legal-illegal or moral-immoral). The new perspective added by him if found in his novel idea of "spheres of law," also designated by him as *law-spheres*. "The essence of antinomy, of inner contradiction, is not mere contrast, but a clash of laws. Justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, virtue and vice are contraries but they are not antinomies, not clashes of laws" (Dooyeweerd, 1926:14).⁶

According to Dooyeweerd this new understanding of antinomies presupposes a multiplicity of distinct law-spheres and acknowledged-

6 "The antinomy – a clash amongst laws – only arises when two spheres of law clash with each other: when, e.g., the natural law of the necessary relation between cause and effect should effect the validity of ethical norms, when psychological lawfulness is transformed into a mechanistic one, that of the juridical sphere into that of morality, or spiritual life into mathematical logic, sociology or biology" (Dooyeweerd, 1926:14).

ging such law-spheres needs an assessment of their coherence. Yet the levelling effect of both the science ideal and the personality ideal, with their respective postulates of continuity, gave birth to an endless number of antinomies. The underlying issue concerns what Dooyeweerd identifies as the *basic problem* of a life and world view: “The origin and mutual coherence of the various law-spheres, that is the basic problem of every life and world view” (Dooyeweerd, 1926:14).

Dooyeweerd enumerates antinomies flowing from the naturalistic attempt to deduce normative legal consequences from the psychological concept of will. The psychological trend within the science of law, introduced by Zitelmann, characterized the *will* as a nerve-driven bodily movement: “... that psychological act which works immediately upon the motoric nerves and thus is the cause of a particular bodily movement.”⁷ In similar vein, within the domain of criminal law (penal law), the Dutch scholar, Van Hamel, defines a jural act as a *willed muscle-movement* (see Dooyeweerd, 1967-II:18).

In his *Encyclopedia of the Science of Law* Dooyeweerd employs an example in connection with train signals which demonstrates the untenability both of a psychological concept of will and a physical concept of causality within the science of law. Its antinomic nature immediately surfaces if one contemplates the configuration of jural *omissions*. A person controlling train signals who disregards the obligation to switch the signal from safe to unsafe. Through this neglect in a jural sense this person can cause a train accident (Dooyeweerd, 1997-III:61). Clearly by not switching the signal this person did not move a muscle. Therefore, when a jural action is defined as a “willed muscle movement” the person did not act and consequently is not accountable. Yet from the perspective of the existing obligation to switch the signal from safe to unsafe, the person concerned caused the derailment of the train and the damage flowing from it in a *jural sense*. This means that viewed from a jural perspective both a *commission* and an *omission* are

7 Zitelmann, 1897:79. [“derjenige Akt, welcher unmittelbar auf die motorischen Nerven einwirkt und so Ursache einer eigenen körperlichen Bewegung ist”] - see Dooyeweerd, 1926:18.

jural acts. As an effect, the person who did “nothing” in a physical sense is still liable or accountable for the accident.

Surely, an omission remains inexplicable in terms of a *physical* concept of causality or a psychological concept of will. In a *jural sense* one *can* cause a *jural* effect without being involved in any physical action. Therefore, when law and jurisprudence employ a natural scientific concept of causality (albeit physical or psychological) it remains *internally antinomic*.

Dooyeweerd proceeds the analysis of his *Inaugural Address* by also paying attention to other variants of the humanistic cosmomic idea. He discusses the *idealistic-functionalistic type* (the Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism), the *relativistic-personalistic type* (the Baden school in Neo-Kantian legal theory), and the *transpersonalistic type* (the revival of *objective idealism* in legal philosophy), before he embarks upon the antithesis between the Christian and the humanistic basic structure of the idea of law.

Dooyeweerd summarizes his analysis of the various humanistic orientations by pointing at the constant elements amidst all nuances and differences: “Reflection on the fundamentals of the humanistic life and world view has taken us to the recognition of a general structure of an idea of law which, despite the seemingly most diverse, indeed, even anti-thetical, elaborations given to it, nevertheless indicates two elements as constants throughout: the ideal of personality and the ideal of science, which alternately acquired primacy” (Dooyeweerd, 1926:60).

In articulating his own Christian orientation,⁸ Dooyeweerd highlighted its differences with Augustine and Thomas Aquinas and he also accounted for the line from Luther and Melancthon to Kuyper.

Finally Dooyeweerd provides an indication of the significance of the cosmomic idea for the science of law. He mentions three elements: (a) the heuristic function; (b) the methodical function; and (c) the critical function (see Dooyeweerd, 1926:67-72).

8 For a long time adjacent to using the word “Christian” Dooyeweerd also used the term “Calvinistic.” But owing to the multiple misunderstandings caused by this practice he eventually inserted the following paragraph-heading in Volume I of his *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought: Why I reject the term “Calvinistic philosophy”* (Dooyeweerd, 1997-I:524).

Re (a): the heuristic function

According to Dooyeweerd the heuristic value of the idea of law enables us to discover, in an antithetical way, the various starting points of jurisprudential and legal-philosophical systems and to determine in an apriori manner which law-idea types will lead to antinomies in the science of law and in legal-philosophical thought.

Re (b): the methodical function

Concerning the second point Dooyeweerd summarizes his position as follows: “The methodical value of the Calvinist idea of law lies in the fact that it compels us to base scientific thought generally, and the science of law and legal philosophy in particular on the principle of sphere-sovereignty in its organic sense.”

Re (c): the critical function

The critical function incorporates the positive outcome of Dooyeweerd’s new understanding of modal aspects and on that basis his original view of antinomies as being inter-modal in nature. Acknowledging the indissoluble coherence between all law spheres in principle rejects any reduction of what is irreducible. Dooyeweerd emphasizes “that no law sphere can come into conflict with another as long as, in all one’s doing, the divine ordinances in every sphere are taken as guide-line. That is the critical value of our idea of law. The juridical sphere appeals and refers to all the law spheres positioned round about it in the cosmic coherence, and the laws of all these spheres buttress and support each other. This insight is of great importance, also for the theory of the formation of law.”

3. The significance of Dooyeweerd’s *Inaugural Address* for his further intellectual development

It is amazing to see how much Dooyeweerd “digested” of philosophy in general, of the science of law in particular and even of a number of the other academic disciplines in the short period of time after his first rudimentary insights in what became known as the theory of modal law spheres in 1922 dawned upon him. In the forthcoming years Dooyeweerd embarked on various special scientific studies within the discipline of law, articulating in more detail the implications of his new philosophical paradigm. Of course one could not expect that every part of his systematic view of reality reached

maturity at this early stage. For example, although he did have a glimpse of his later philosophy of time in 1926, he did not as yet explore the insight that *cosmic time* embraces all aspects, things and processes and that it expresses itself in accordance with the unique (sphere-sovereign) meaning of each aspect within every aspect. In his *Inaugural Address* he merely distinguished between “natural time” and jural time – but he appreciated the latter as a modal analogy:

As illustration of the peculiar character of analogies in the legal sphere, consider the juridical period (term) of validity. This period of validity undoubtedly rests on the substrate of natural time. But whereas the latter proceeds in one direction only, the juridical analogy of time, peculiarly, can proceed in two directions (think of retro-active validity) (Dooyeweerd, 1926:68).

What is also significant about his early development is that he conformed to the general natural scientific tendency since the Renaissance which resolved all *concepts of things* into *concepts of relations*. In 1923 he wrote: “The natural-scientific attitude in general ignores all the various peculiarities of the phenomena it observes. The only thing of importance to it is law-fulness, the system of relations” (Dooyeweerd, 1923; Henderson, 1994:178).

However, it was the challenge entailed in the typical nature of the state and other societal collectivities that helped him to develop his classification of social entities and to design his theory of individuality structures.

The *Inaugural Address* of 1926 served as the starting-point for two large projects. The first one was to further develop the finesse of his systematic philosophical distinctions in the context of the science of law. Dooyeweerd first wanted, as we noted, to convince himself that these systematic distinctions are fruitful for his own field of expertise before he ventured to elaborate his philosophical insights in a general philosophical context.

It is a pity that the multi-volume work, the *Encyclopedia of the Science of Law*, was never published in Dutch (or in English). It remained available only in Stenciled form from the *Student Representative Council* (SRVU – last edition 1967). After his retirement Dooyeweerd partially reworked the *Introduction*. In the meantime an

English translation of the original *Introductory Volume* appeared with Mellen Press. All the other volumes have been translated and are still in the process of being edited.

A brief summary of the basic concepts analyzed in the *Encyclopedia* certainly demonstrates the methodological scope of Dooyeweerd's study of the foundations of the science of law. In the *Systematic Volume* Dooyeweerd elaborates his impressive analysis of the elementary or analogical basic concepts of the science of law. This analysis concerns the following constitutive structural moments within the modal structure of the jural aspect:

The concept of a legal order [quantitative analogy], legal sphere [spatial analogy], legal constancy [kinematic], jural causality [physical], legal life and legal organ [biotic analogy within the jural]; the juridical will-function [sensitive analogy]; legal accountability, legal conformity and legal contradiction [logical-analytical analogy within the jural]; legal power and the formation (positivization) of law [cultural-historical analogy]; juridical meaning and juridical interpretation [lingual analogy]; legal intercourse in the correlation of jural coordinational and communal relationships [social analogy within the jural]; juridical economy and avoiding jural excesses – such as an abuse of power [economic analogy within the jural]; the juridical harmonization of interests [aesthetic analogy within the jural].⁹ In addition to this Dooyeweerd also provided a detailed analysis of what he termed to be compound or complex basic concepts of the science of law. They are also defined as *categorical* basic concepts. Three categorical relations are distinguished: (a) the categorical juridical relation of legal norms and legal facts; (b) the categorical juridical subject-object relation; and (c) the categorical relation of coming into being and passing away.

This entails an investigation into the nature of the compound basic concepts of a *legal subject*, of a *legal personality*, of a *subjective right*, and of a *legal object* (see Dooyeweerd, 1967-II:98-262).

The other important descendant of the *Inaugural Address* is found in the above-mentioned *magnum opus* of Dooyeweerd, *De*

9 See also the extensive analysis of these basic concepts by Hommes (1972:106-480).

Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee with its English translation: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (NC: 1953-1957 – 4 volumes – see Dooyeweerd, 1997). In this work Dooyeweerd commences with his transcendental critique of theoretical thought, aimed at unveiling the ultimate ground motives directing theoretical thinking, immediately followed up by a more detailed analysis of the dialectical development of humanistic philosophy (see Dooyeweerd, 1997-I:215-495). It should not be overlooked, however, that this first volume of NC contains an important concluding section in which Dooyeweerd addresses the relationship between philosophy and the special sciences (Dooyeweerd, 1977-I:528-566). It was anticipated by a remark in the *Foreword* of the Volume, where Dooyeweerd stated: “I am strongly convinced that for the fruitful working out of this philosophy, in a genuinely scientific manner, there is needed a staff of fellow-labourers who would be in a position independently to think through its basic ideas in the special scientific fields” (Dooyeweerd, 1997-I:vii).

The inspirational effect of the call to make this philosophy relevant for the special sciences directed my own scholarly work during the past four decades towards an exploration of the philosophical foundations of various natural and social sciences (disciplines within the humanities) – eventually resulting, apart from many articles, in a work dedicated to the foundational role of philosophy for the special sciences (see Strauss, 2011).

4. Concluding remark

Almost a hundred years ago the ideal of sphere sovereignty undergirded Kuyper's efforts to establish a free Christian university. He articulated it in his speech at the opening of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880 – on the theme of *sphere sovereignty*. However, the fundamentalistic (biblicistic) account of “reformed principles” did not succeed in bringing about an *inner reformation* of the various special sciences. Dooyeweerd indeed moved beyond this shortcoming by distinguishing between the radical and central motivating power of a ground motive and the theoretical view of reality (transcendental ground-idea). Dooyeweerd explicitly rejects every conception of “a scriptural philosophy that looks for support in specific Bible texts for intrinsically philosophical and in general scholarly problems and theories. It actually merely boils down to

“positing a few privileged issues” about which the Bible would give explicit statements, while for the rest, where such special texts are not found, one at leisure can continue to fit into a mode of thinking driven by intrinsically un-biblical motives (Dooyeweerd, 1950:3-4).

Amongst other considerations the *significance* of Dooyeweerd’s *Inaugural Address* is found in launching a program for the inner reformation of the science of law and scholarship in general. What he subsequently achieved in this regard simply underscores the important *place* of this work within his overall development. In it the power of meaningful systematic distinctions and analyses rendered a great service to Dooyeweerd in working out the detail of his new philosophical orientation. A key element in the acknowledgment of a diversity irreducible modal aspects is found in the idea of the *indefinable meaning-nuclei* of these aspects. Any attempt to eliminate the modal sphere sovereignty between aspects, in elevating a specific one as all-encompassing mode of explanation of all the others, exemplified in multiple monistic *isms*, according to Dooyeweerd inevitably results in insurmountable *theoretical antinomies*. The appearance of an antinomy is always a *negative indication* that theoretical thought ignored the necessary distinctions or the distinctness of particular modal aspects (serving as modes of existence and as modes of explanation. It is therefore understandable that laying bare theoretical antinomies became one of the most powerful theoretical tools in the intellectual arsenal of Dooyeweerd, because he amply used it in exercising *immanent criticism* on untenable scientific views. Exercising immanent criticism nonetheless requires a sharp intellect. Therefore it should not surprise us that already in his first public presentation, on April 8, 1922, dealing with the issue of personal freedom versus governmental constraints, Dooyeweerd effectively employed the method of immanent criticism.¹⁰ His *Inaugural Address* expanded the scope of immanent criticism by highlighting antinomies practically in all sub-domains of the science of law.

All-in-all this *Inaugural Address* may be appreciated as the originating source of his immensely encompassing en penetrating

10 Interestingly his contribution to the discussion also brought the sphere sovereignty of modal aspects into play (see Verburg, 1989:31).

intellectual legacy. This work is a “must read” for every scholar interested in the work of Dooyeweerd!

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