

TIME AND HISTORY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE COSMONOMIC IDEA

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This article identifies two trends in Dooyeweerd's conception of 'cosmic time', and elaborates their consequences for the philosophy of history. The first trend, connecting time to modal diversity and the order of the modal aspects, prevails in Dooyeweerd's analysis. The application of the second trend, emphasizing that in each relation frame the temporal order governs subject-subject relations and subject-object relations, sheds a new light on the interpretation of history conceived of as development of the culture and civilization of mankind. The distinction of faith and religion and the position of the aspect of faith in the order of the modal aspects play important parts in this discussion, in particular with respect to the possibility of transcending time.

1. *Introduction*

Philosophy of history concerns various views of history, both of *res gestae* (the things that happened) and of its oral or written description, *historia rerum gestarum*. I shall hardly discuss the latter, also known as theoretical history or metahistory (White 1973), investigating the presuppositions, structure and methods of the science of history, and its relations to other fields of science and the humanities. Concerning the former, in Dooyeweerd's Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea the theories of both time and history play an important part. One might expect that these two be strongly connected. However, his theory of time appears to have two different trends, and Dooyeweerd applies only one of them in his extensive discussion of history, completely ignoring the other one.

In the first or restricted trend, time is primarily related to *modal diversity*. Like sunlight is refracted by a prism into a spectre of colours, time refracts the totality, unity and coherence of meaning of the creation into a diversity of meaning, expressed in mutually irreducible modal aspects (Dooyeweerd *NC* I, 101-102; II, 6, 561). Though mutually irreducible, the aspects are not independent, displaying a temporal order of before and after, such that later aspects are founded in former ones. Later aspects refer back to ('retrocipate on') earlier aspects in this order of time, whereas earlier aspects 'anticipate' the later ones. The meaning of each aspect is expressed in its meaning nucleus and in the meaning of its retrocipations and anticipations. Hence, the temporal structure of each separate modal aspect reflects the temporal order of all aspects together.

Clearly there are two terminal modal aspects, the first (quantitative) one lacking retrocipations. One might expect that the final one, the aspect of faith, lacks anticipations, but that is not entirely the case. According to Dooyeweerd, in the anticipatory direction each modal aspect 'transcends' the earlier ones. Ultimately, via the aspect of faith, the human *self* in its religion (its heart) transcends time, that is, the modal diversity of meaning. In this way the aspect

of faith is opened up by religion. Faith does not anticipate religion in the modal way of one aspect anticipating another one, but it forms a 'window on eternity' (NC II, 298, 302-311). This first trend in Dooyeweerd's conception, emphasizing modal diversity, plays a decisive part in his theory of history, as well as in his treatment of epistemology (NC II, 466-485).

In the first trend,

time in its cosmic sense has a *cosmonomic* and a *factual* side. Its cosmonomic side is the temporal *order* of succession or simultaneity. The factual side is the factual *duration*, different for various individualities. But the duration remains constantly subjected to the temporal order. Thus, for example, in the aspect of organic life, the temporal order of birth, maturing, adulthood, aging and dying holds good for the more highly developed organisms. The duration of human life may differ considerably in different individuals. But it always remains subject to this biotic order of time. (NC I, 28).

The logical order of simultaneity and of prius and posterius is as much a modal aspect of the integral order of time as the physical. (NC I, 30).

Apparently, in this restricted sense Dooyeweerd supposed neither that succession is the quantitative or perhaps the kinetic temporal order, nor that simultaneity is the spatial one. Rather, these express the *serial order* or *sequence* of the retrocipations and anticipations being *simultaneously present* in any modal aspect. The discreteness of the serial order expresses the 'sovereignty in their own sphere' of the modal aspects, that is, their mutual irreducibility. Simultaneity points to the modal universality of each aspect, that is, the laws in all aspects are simultaneously and universally valid in the sense of applying to everything. In contrast, duration as the subject side of time is not expressed in the modal aspects but at the subject side of the structures of individuality, where factual duration is developed in subject-object relations (NC I, 28). For Dooyeweerd, besides modal meaning cosmic time refracts all temporal individuality from totality.

In the second, more expanded trend, however, Dooyeweerd states that time is expressed in each modal aspect in a different way, each law sphere being an aspect of time. Simultaneity is now called the *spatial* order of time, to be distinguished from the *numerical* order of earlier and later in a series and the *kinematic* order of succession of temporal moments (NC I, 31-32; II, 79, 85, 102). Whether or not this may be in conflict with the first trend depends on how it is elaborated.

Since 1970, I developed the second trend, in particular with respect to what are called natural modal aspects, arguing that the temporal order is the law for *modal relations* between subjects and objects, and even more between subjects and subjects (Stafleu 1970, 1980, 2002a). This view of time and its meaning differs from Dooyeweerd's. It may be considered *relational*, and the modal aspects may be called 'relation frames', each containing a set of natural laws or normative principles determining subject-subject relations and subject-object relations. This includes the *meaning* of existence, for "'meaning' is nothing but the creaturely mode of being under the law, consisting exclusively in a religious

relation of dependence on God" (NC II, 31). The latter relation, mediated by Jesus Christ, is the foundation of Christian philosophical anthropology.

In the first trend in Dooyeweerd's philosophy of time, retrocitations and anticipations relate the modal aspects to each other in a rather abstract way, in particular by direct or indirect conceptual 'analogies'. In the second trend, as I interpret it, retrocitations and anticipations are first of all concerned with the *characters* (structures of individuality) of concrete things, events, processes, acts, artefacts and associations. Character types are primarily qualified by one relation frame and secondarily founded in an earlier one. Third, these types determine the disposition of characters to become interlaced with each other, and to function in relation frames succeeding the qualifying one (Stafleu 2002a, chapter 1).

Dooyeweerd's treatment of history, strongly determined by the first trend in his theory of time, is almost completely restricted to the opening up of the modal aspects. However, the historical development of the characters of natural and cultural objects, of associations, and of the public domain may be more to the point, like natural evolution occurs more in the characters of stars, plants and animals than in the natural relation frames. The assumption that God created the species conceived as *characters* of bacteria, fungi, plants and animals, that is as sets of natural *laws*, is not contradicted by the evolution theory stating that these characters are gradually realized in *subjective* natural processes (Stafleu 2002a, 2002b). This also applies to the constant and universal *character types* of human acts, artefacts and associations, consisting of invariant values (normative principles) and sometimes natural laws. In contrast, humans are actively involved in the realization of the corresponding characters, not merely at the subject side, but at the law side as well, for normative characters consist largely of norms, developed from values in the historical context of human culture and civilization. This accounts for the enormous diversity of human-made characters, though the number of invariant character *types* appears to be rather limited.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 criticises Dooyeweerd's philosophy of history. Section 3 is concerned with the temporal order in the normative relation frames, determining asymmetric subject-subject relations as the engines of historical development and artefacts as objective instruments of history. It also discusses the religious meaning of history. Section 4 applies this to the various relation frames successively. Section 5 is a remark on historicism. Section 6 contains some conclusions with respect to the order of the relation frames and Dooyeweerd's idea of the 'supratemporal heart'. Section 7 points out that rejecting the second trend in Dooyeweerd's integral conception of time may lead to a relapse into a naturalistic view of time.

2. *The first (restricted) trend of time in Dooyeweerd's conception of history*

Dooyeweerd conceives of history as *cultural development* (NC II, 181-365), qualified by the 'historical' or 'cultural' modal aspect, succeeding the psychic and logical aspects and having the meaning nucleus of *power, command, control or*

mastery (NC II, 68-71, 192-217). Although retrocipations are relevant (NC II, 229-259), Dooyeweerd emphasizes the disclosure of anticipations (NC II, 259-298). This means that the anticipatory or 'transcendental' direction in the cosmic order of the modal aspects is the dominant temporal factor in history. This view of history can be and has been criticized in several ways.

Several adherents to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea deny that history should be qualified by a single modal aspect (e.g., Vollenhoven in 1968, see Tol, Bril 1992, 207-209; Mekkes 1971, 109, 111, 179; McIntire 1985, 89-96). Besides *power, command, control or mastery*, Dooyeweerd considers *cultural development*, or the *controlling manner of moulding the social process* (NC II, 195-196) to be the meaning nucleus of the historical modal aspect, but occasionally development appears to be a biotic analogy in the historical aspect, 'ultimately founded in the pure intuition of movement' (NC II, 250-251, 255, 266; McIntire 1985, 92-93). It cannot be doubted that the technical relation frame (as I prefer to call it), characterized by human skilled labour, has a pivotal function with respect to history. Several authors consider it the first frame succeeding the natural ones (Seerveld 1964, 83; 1985, 79; Hart 1984, 194; Stafleu 2002b, 13; 2003, 138), the development of natural characters by human labour being the first instance of historical processes. Dooyeweerd emphasized that the historical *aspect* should be distinguished from past events displaying all modal aspects. He states that an event can only be considered 'historical', if it contributes to cultural development in a positive or negative way, and he discusses various criteria according to which this may be decided (Dooyeweerd 1959, 60-76). I believe that historical development is a feature of all normative aspects, not only at the subject side (like evolution is in the natural relation frames), but at the law side as well. Whereas the natural laws are imperative and coercive, modal normative relations between people and their associations are subject to invariant *normative principles* or *values*, which in the course of history people actualise into variable *norms*. As observed above, the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea also distinguishes invariant normative *character types* from variable normative *characters*, developed by people in the course of history, and therefore extremely diverse. The cultural and civilizational development of associations like states, faith communities, enterprises, aesthetic companies and sports clubs constitutes an important part of history. One can only pay attention to their typical differences if one has at least the intuitive insight that churches differ from states and enterprises primarily by their qualifying relation frame. Moreover, one should investigate how various character types having the same qualifying frame may differ secondarily because of their founding frames. For understanding their historical development it is also crucial to gain an insight into the various ways each association is disposed to become entangled with other ones, as is amply illustrated in the history of the relation of church and state. Conversely, one can only get insight into the invariant values and character types by studying how they are actualized into variable historical norms and characters. Philosophy of history and the science of history are mutually dependent.

Dooyeweerd's view of the opening up of the modal anticipations seems to contain an ambiguity, surfacing when he discusses closed cultures. On the one hand he considers their existence to be a purely historical phenomenon, a primitive historical state of development. On the other hand, he considers the closed state of a culture to be a result of sin (*NC II*, 265-267, 296-297). The opening process is guided by true religion, and when this is absent, the anticipations remain closed. However, Dooyeweerd cannot and does not want to deny that the historical disclosure of the modal aspects also occurs under the guidance of apostate religion, in particular the Greek and humanist ones (*NC II*, 319-330, 334-337). He could have added various non-Western religions. It may even be doubted whether entirely closed human communities exist or have ever existed.

Dooyeweerd's emphasis on the opening up of modal anticipations downgrades the historical relevance of the development of retrocipations and of characters. This may not have been his intention, but it is an unfortunate consequence. As a case study has shown, for the development of a field of science retrocipations and the investigation of characters is just as important as the disclosure of anticipations (Stafleu 1998; 1987, chapter 6). Attempts to open up a field of science restricted to anticipations turn out to be quite fruitless.

Dooyeweerd's view of history strongly depends on the first trend in his theory of time: the idea that time expresses primarily the modal diversity of reality, the order of the modal aspects and the transcendental character of the anticipatory direction. It completely ignores the second trend in the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, according to which each relation frame has its own order of time, the law for subjective and objective relations. Dooyeweerd pays much attention to subject-object relations (e.g., *NC II*, 366-413), but hardly to subject-subject relations, which may be even more important for the analysis of time. Moreover, in his treatment of history, relations in the public domain and the characters of acts, artefacts and associations play a minor part, although these are extensively discussed in a different context (e.g., *NC III*).

3. *The historical temporal order and its subjective correlate in the normative relation frames*

In my interpretation of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, the second trend in the theory of time interprets time in each relation frame to be the law or temporal order for intersubjective relations and for relations between subjects and objects. This allows an alternative philosophical theory of history, assuming that the temporal order at the law side of each normative aspect of human experience concerns first of all an asymmetrical subject-subject relation, expressing a kind of transfer of experience, acting like an *engine of history*. In the normative relation frames, besides individual people only associations (organized communities) can be subjects as actors of history.

Next, each normative temporal order appears to determine its own kind of *artefacts*, man-made objects, things or events acting as *instruments of history*. Artefacts should be distinguished from other objects. At the subject-side of

each relation frame, anything is either a subject or an object. The difference is relational and contextual. With respect to a certain law (or a set of laws), something is a subject if it is directly or actively subjected to that law, whereas it is an object if it is indirectly (via a subject) or passively subjected to that law. In the normative relation frames an object may be anything that is not a human being or an association of human beings. For instance, an animal may be an object for someone's aesthetic experience, or it may be a juridical object in a lawsuit. However, according to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, an animal is never *qualified* as an aesthetic or juridical object. It can only be qualified as a psychic subject. As such it is a subject in the relation frames preceding the psychic one and an object in the relation frames succeeding it. In contrast, a piece of art like a painting is an *artefact*, an aesthetically qualified object produced by an artist and viewed by a spectator.

Artefacts functioning in the transfer of experience are further distinguished from other kinds of objects because of their character. A character is a set of natural laws, normative principles (values) and human-made norms determining the structure of the artefact. Technical instruments have a single character, primarily qualified by the technical relation frame and secondarily founded in the natural ones. Other human-made artefacts (as well as associations) turn out to have a dual character, a generic and a specific one (Stafleu 2003, 2004). The *generic* character is primarily qualified by one of the normative relation frames succeeding the technical one. It is secondarily founded in the technical relation frame, expressing that any artefact is a product of human activity. Hence the generic character distinguishes artefacts having different qualifications from each other. The *specific* character of an artefact is primarily qualified by the same relation frame as is the generic character, but secondarily it is not necessarily founded in the technical relation frame. Hence, the specific character allows us to distinguish various types of artefacts having the same generic character. The artefacts functioning as instruments in the transfer of experience in a certain relation frame are primarily qualified by the same relation frame, whereas a different frame qualifies other objects.

Being objects, artefacts function in subject-object relations as well as in subject-subject relations. Suppose, for instance, that an archaeologist finds an inscription recognizable as the constitution of an ancient city. It has been a state law, a politically qualified artefact, during a certain historical period valid for the inhabitants of the city concerned. For present-day people, it is not a state law, but a historical document, a semiotically qualified artefact symbolizing a law. Without any relation to people, the inscription would have no historical meaning. This view of artefacts as instruments of historical development highlights the pivotal part played by the technical relation frame in history. Hence it is not difficult to understand why Dooyeweerd called it the 'historical' mode of experience.

The religious meaning of any normative relation frame implies the meaning of history in this frame. In its most pregnant sense, Christians recognize the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the religious meaning of history. However, related to its temporal order, each relation frame expresses an aspect of historical

meaning. This historical meaning is not first of all objective or subjective, but normative. At the law side, it expresses the historical development of values into norms and of character types into characters. At the subject side it expresses how people actually perform their normative tasks according to their *ethos*, their attitude towards values and norms (Stafleu 2007). Hence, the meaning of history appears to be both a religious and an ethical affair.

4. *Survey of the historical meaning in the natural and normative relation frames*

Let us briefly review the potential relevance of the second trend in the theory of time for the philosophy of history. It is obviously quite ambitious to look for the temporal order in no less than sixteen frames of reference (one more than Dooyeweerd's modal aspects, see Stafleu 2004). Therefore, the following list is by no means definitive. First, in the six natural relation frames (*a-f*), we shall find that the temporal order is not only significant for natural relations, but for history as well. Next, some provisional suggestions with respect to the ten normative relation frames (*g-p*) will be put forward. Arguments concerning the applied sequence of the relation frames are given elsewhere (Stafleu 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2006).

a. The temporal order of earlier and later as depicted in a numbered series leads to ordering historical events into a diachronic sequence and determining quantitative relations like how much one event is later than the other one, measured in centuries, years, days and even hours or seconds.

b. The spatial temporal order of simultaneity allows comparing and connecting historical events occurring synchronically at different places, making use of spatial relations like distance and environment.

c. The kinetic order of uniform flow is recognizable in historical processes, having a beginning, an end, a certain duration, relative speed and even acceleration.

d. The physical temporal order of irreversibility determines causal relations between historical events.

e. The biotic genetic order is expressed in several historical relations, e.g., in genealogies, in the metaphor of the birth, rise, flowering, decline and demise of an empire, or in the genetic relation or kinship between various languages, systems of state law, and civilizations.

f. The psychic order of goal-directedness lies at the foundation of all historical human acts, where it is disclosed into goal-consciousness, the goal people try to achieve.

So far the sixfold natural temporal order as relevant to history. Let us now turn to time and history in the normative relation frames.

g. I consider *progress* to be the technical temporal order for history, the normative principle for technological development as well as the foundation of the development of culture and civilization in the other normative relation frames. In this sense, an event, process, artefact or association and even a personality may be called 'historical' (though not 'historically qualified') if contributing to or hampering progress. During the 19th century, progress was

not viewed as a normative principle, but as an inevitable *factual* feature of Western history. However, this optimistic view was shattered during the First World War. As the engine of technical progress I consider the transfer of practical know-how and skills, from parents to children in households, from skilled to untrained labourers in workshops, and from teachers to pupils in schools. Technical artefacts like tools are instruments in the history of tilling the earth, the opening up of the natural characters and their succeeding technical development. The character of a technical instrument is its *design*, the set of natural laws and norms the apparatus should satisfy. Technical artefacts are primarily characterized by the technical relation frame and secondarily founded in one of the natural frames. Technical artefacts function in a subject-subject relation in the transfer of technical skills, or in a technical subject-object relation, in which the subject (an individual or an association) may be its designer, its producer or its user. Technical progress as expressed in the development of many kinds of technical artefacts is an important part of historical research. Besides, all natural subjects (things, plants, animals) may be objects for technical development. By their skilled labour with the help of technical instruments, people develop natural characters in the course of history. The technical meaning of history is given by the cultural mandate to till the earth. Luther and Calvin interpreted *profession* as a *calling*, making *work* the protestant form of prayer (Weber 1904-05, chapter III). The Bible values the meaning of human labour by connecting it with God's creation (Genesis 2.2-3; Exodus 20.8-11; Deuteronomy 5.12-15).

h. The temporal order of aesthetic renewal may be expressed as *style*, the law for aesthetic phenomena like fashion, decoration, plays and the arts. History is usually divided into periods according to a dominant style. Aesthetic artefacts like a piece of art, a musical performance or a football match are subjected to the order of style and instrumental in the transfer of aesthetic experience from an artist, an orchestra or a football team to their audience or spectators. At the law side, the aesthetic meaning of history is expressed in a religiously determined *vision* of the past, a worldview. At the subject side, by making images people show themselves as persons to each other and to their god. Religion finds its aesthetic expression in the cults, in the epiphany of God.

i. *Memory* may refer to the historical order applicable to any kind of semiotic activity (White 1973, 346; Von der Dunk 2007). The common name for a semiotic object is a *sign*, but the semiotic frame does not necessarily qualify a sign. For instance, a fossil is a sign of a formerly living body, and is therefore qualified by the biotic modal aspect. In contrast, a man-made semiotic artefact is usually called a *symbol*. A rainbow is a sign that it is raining while the sun shines, whereas the Bible makes it a symbol of God's covenant with the world (Genesis 9.12-17). For the transfer of semiotic experience subject to the temporal order of memory, a language forms an important instrument. Without language, the individual memory of people would be as limited as animal memory. The use of language, both oral tradition and written texts, forms the basis of shared memory and remembered history. A language may be defined as a set of words subjected to a grammar and semantics, pronunciation and

spelling, acting as the specific character for the language concerned. According to the grammar, words are transformed and connected into sentences, which in turn are combined into narratives or texts. Semantics determines the meaning of words in the context of a sentence and a text. The generic character of any lingual act and lingual form is primarily qualified by the semiotic aspect and is secondarily founded in the technical one, in lingual skills. The specific character of a word is secondarily founded in the quantitative aspect. Words are the elementary units of a language, alphanumerically ordered in a dictionary, in which words are not logically defined but described by other words. A sentence appears to be founded in the spatial relation frame, for in a sentence the words find their position determined by syntax. A narrative or a text is kinetically founded, for it consists of a flow of sentences according to a plot. Texts are interpreted by other texts. The semiotic meaning of history would be the interpretation of the past, for Christians guided by the text of God's revelation.

j. Logical extrapolation, as in prediction, explanation and rational choice is subjected to the logical temporal order of prior and posterior, in which a conclusion follows from premises. The artificial instruments of logic are numerically founded concepts, spatially founded propositions and kinetically founded theories (Stafleu 1987). These artefacts have an instrumental function in the transfer of logical experience in a discourse or a discussion, subjected to the rational temporal order. The logical meaning of history appears to be the understanding of the past, the hope for the future, and eternal life as knowledge of God (John 17.3).

k. Reformation may be suggested as the temporal order in the relation frame of faith and trust. Artefacts like myths, confessions, party programs and mission statements play an instrumental part in the reform of views and the transfer of beliefs. Often these lie at the foundation of associations, in particular but not exclusively of faith communities. Being narratives, myths appear to be founded in the semiotic relation frame. Confessions and dogmas (often established after a theological investigation) seem to be founded in the logical frame, and icons in the aesthetic one. Besides, historical *facts* should also be considered artefacts, which truth is generally believed on logical arguments. *Conviction* and *conversion* may express the religious meaning of history in the relation frame of belief.

l. The order of time in the relation frame of keeping company could be *integration*. In this relation frame habits or customs play an instrumental part in education, the transfer of how to act as a civilized person in any company. Integration is not restricted to children, however. *Emancipation* is a candidate for expressing the historical meaning in the relation frame of keeping company, and *reverence* for the leading motive in the religious intercourse with God.

m. In the economic frame the normative order is best described as *differentiation*, without which economic acts like the exchange of goods or services would make no sense. As far as it can be owned and sold, anything may be an economic object without being economically qualified. The most obvious economic artefact besides capital and contracts is money as an instrument for

trade, the transfer of services and commodities made possible by the economic division of labour (Stafleu 2005). *Mutual service* could be considered the economic meaning of history. The service of God expresses religion in the economic aspect of human existence. Dooyeweerd mentions both integration and differentiation as laws for cultural development, but he does not identify them with the relation frames of intercourse and economy.

n. The political temporal order could bear the apt name of *policy*. A state law is a human-made artefact qualified by the political relation frame, serving as an instrument in leadership and discipline, the transfer of policy. Peace should be the historical meaning of this relation frame. In a religious sense, anybody should be obedient to God. This means that neither leadership in an association nor that association's sovereignty in its own sphere can ever be absolute, because it always concerns a mandate derived from the supreme Sovereign.

o. The transfer of justice is ordered by *justification*. A human right or duty is an artefact qualified by the juridical relation frame. Customs determined by the relation frame of keeping company, economic contracts and state laws have juridical consequences, playing an important part in the transfer of justice. The juridical meaning of history appears to be *reconciliation*.

p. Finally, the transfer of loving care is subjected to the order of *transience*, each human being and everything created or man-made being vulnerable (Stafleu 2007). In the transfer of love and friendship, circumstances to be taken care of may be recognized as artefacts primarily characterized by this modal aspect. I suggest *redemption* to be the caring meaning of history, whereas for Christians *resurrection* is the ultimate religious meaning of history.

5. *Histori(c)ism*

Dooyeweerd considered it necessary to defend the existence of an irreducible historical modal aspect in order to criticise humanist historicism (NCI, 467-495; II, 205-207, 217-221, 283, 354-356; Dooyeweerd 1959, 53-104). He believed that the rejection of the historical as a modal aspect leads to historicism, which he interpreted as the absolutization of the historical modal aspect, either of its law side or of its subject side. The first occurs in Hegel's idealism, in Marx's historical materialism and in Comte's positivism (Löwith 1949; White 1973; Ankersmit 1983; Lemon 2003, part I). Like Dooyeweerd, Popper 1957 calls this historicism. A recent example is Fukuyama 1992 (Lemon 2003, part III). Romanticism absolutized the subject side, individualizing history, implying relativism with respect to the law side of reality. It only recognized accidental, contingent, individual occurrences, an endless stream of unique events (Ankersmit 1983, 171-182). Historism (to be distinguished from historicism) 'emphasizes diachronism, for historism resolves everything in a continuous stream of historical development. Everything must be seen as the result of its previous history.' (Ankersmit 2005, 143). 'It was believed that the understanding of *x* consisted in knowing the history of *x*.' (Danto 1985, 324). Social-constructivism appears to be its post-modern form. A third kind of historism absolutizes the objectivity of historical

events, ‘*bloss zeigen wie es eigentlich gewesen*’ (merely show how it actually happened), according to Leopold von Ranke (Danto 1985, 130-133, 139).

Dooyeweerd based his criticism of historicism on the correct view that one should never absolutize a modal aspect. However, my proposal to consider the order of time as the order for historical development in all normative relation frames is sufficient to criticize any kind of historicism, for it starts from the acknowledgement of the variety and mutual irreducibility of normative principles determining both the normative relation frames and the character types qualified by these frames. These principles are not subject to the historical development of culture and civilization, but govern it. On the other hand, in their history people develop norms from normative principles or values and characters exemplifying character types. In this way it is possible to criticise the absolutization of history in histori(ci)sm, and simultaneously to recognize its nucleus of truth making it so attractive.

Hence, I do not consider historicism to be the absolutization of a single modal aspect, not even the ‘historical’ one, for in the twentieth century, history no longer absolutized progress. Rather, historicism absolutizes history by relativizing everything else (Huizinga 1937, 136-138), in particular denying the law-side of the normative relation frames, thereby destroying the meaning of history. Moreover, it interprets time in a naturalistic way (section 7).

6. *The temporal order of the modal aspects and the supratemporal heart*

In Dooyeweerd’s conception of history, the sequence of the modal aspects, expressing the modal diversity of the creation, is the primary temporal order. In the first trend of his theory of time, it is crucial that the aspect of faith is the final one in the anticipatory order from the quantitative to the pistic aspect. In this ‘transcendental’ order, starting with the historical aspect and guided by the aspect of faith, all normative aspects are disclosed in the course of history. This view gives rise to several problems, for instance with respect to the position of the logical aspect preceding the historical one (NC II, 237-241), and in particular with respect to the aspect of faith (NC II, 189, 297-298). The first problem can easily be solved by positioning the logical relation frame after the semiotic one, for which there are other reasons as well. The second problem ‘is very important to the Christian conception of history’ (NC II, 297), and Dooyeweerd discusses it quite extensively (NC II, 297-330). If the aspect of faith has no anticipations, it could not take part in the historical process of cultural development, if this means the disclosure of anticipations. Moreover, Dooyeweerd assumes that the aspect of faith has a *leading* function in this historical process. However, it could not fulfil this function, if it were closed itself. But how could the aspect of faith be opened up (either in obedience to the Divine order or in apostasy), if it cannot anticipate a later modal aspect? Dooyeweerd’s solution to this problem is to assume that in the ‘transcendental’ direction of the modal aspects, the aspect of faith is opened up by *religion*, ‘activated by the Spirit of *Civitas Dei*’ (NC II, 297), in which any person transcends the modal diversity of the modal aspects. Of course, this should not

be interpreted such that religion is a kind of modal aspect itself, succeeding that of faith. Dooyeweerd emphasizes that religion differs from faith because it is not a modal aspect, but the heart of human existence, in which each human being transcends the diversity of time in order to arrive at the coherence of meaning either in his relation with God in Jesus Christ, or in an apostate direction. Anyone ought to perform her religious concentration 'with all her heart, with all her soul, with all her mind' (Matthew 22.37; Mark 12.30; Luke 10.27).

In order to make this clear, Dooyeweerd introduced the idea of a person's 'supratemporal heart', the concentration point of his or her selfhood, religiously directed to the true or supposed origin. Man would be unable to have knowledge of himself and of God, if he could not transcend the temporal horizon of his experience (NC I, 24, 31- 32; II, 2, 473, 480; III 781-784). Later on Dooyeweerd seems to have changed his mind, stating: 'by the word supratemporal I never intended a static state, but only a central direction of consciousness transcending cosmic time. Perhaps it had better be replaced by a different term.' (Dooyeweerd 1960, 137, my translation.) In the light of the recognition of two different trends in his theory of time, this term could perhaps be 'transcending modal diversity'. The idea that a human being should be able to transcend time clearly stems from the first trend, interpreting time as modal diversity of meaning, such that the unity of the human self should transcend time. Any person is supposed to have the intention to transcend the temporal diversity in order to gain knowledge of the origin, unity and continuous coherence of the cosmos.

However, in line with the second trend in the theory of time, it should be considered impossible to transcend time, according to Mekkes' dictum: 'De mens kan zijn dynamisch tijdelijk bestaan op geen wijze transcenderen.' (Mekkes 1971, 121; my translation: 'In no way man is able to transcend his dynamic temporal existence.') In this trend there is no need for a supratemporal heart (about which a lot more can be said than I do in this article). The religious concentration towards Jesus Christ does not require any kind of transcendence of temporal relations. Rather, anybody is called to perform this concentration at any time, within all his temporal relations. In fact, it would only be confusing to call this 'supratemporal'.

The first trend in his view of time led Dooyeweerd to identify the *anticipatory* direction in the order of the modal aspects (the temporal order of historical development) with *transcendence* of the modal diversity. In the second trend as elaborated in this article, this identification makes no sense. Now the opening up of anticipations should be considered a process occurring entirely within time, never transcending the cosmic order. In this process, no modal aspect has a leading function, except the particular aspect to which the aspect to be disclosed is anticipating.

In the second trend as elaborated in this article, 'transcending time' could only mean 'transcending the law side of reality', being God's prerogative (NC I, 99). No one else can transcend the law side of time, the temporal order. Nor can anybody transcend her subjective relations to other people, to her environ-

ment, or to God. One can only have intuitive or explicit knowledge of the law side of temporal reality without transcending it. In line with the first trend in his philosophy of time, Dooyeweerd believed that the modal aspect of faith is exclusively a 'window on eternity' (NC II, 302). In the second trend this applies equally to all relation frames, for each frame includes one's relation to God through Jesus Christ, whether recognized or rejected. In each frame people concentrate the religious meaning of their existence on their true or supposed origin.

Taking the second trend in the theory of time seriously implies assuming that the order of the relation frames is not transcendental, but merely *serial*, referring to the quantitative temporal order of a series. Likewise, the modal aspects are simultaneously valid, referring to the spatial temporal order. If we reject the existence of a separate 'historical' aspect (though maintaining the technical relation frame), the guiding function of the aspect of faith becomes superfluous. People and their religion rather than their faith guide historical processes. Each relation frame does not only determine subject-subject relations and subject-object relations, but also a religious relation between any human being and her true or supposed origin. Christians believe that this relation is mediated by Jesus Christ, who became a man subjected to the laws of the creation, in order to effect the relation between God and mankind as a subject-subject relation. As a consequence, there is no problem in accepting that the final relation frame (which may or may not be that of faith) has no anticipations, like the first one, the quantitative frame, lacks retrocipations.

7. Conclusion

Between the publication of the first Dutch edition of Dooyeweerd's main work (1935-1936) and of its second, revised translation into English (1953-1958), the emphasis shifted from the transcendental idea of law to the transcendental idea of cosmic time. In the former case, 'transcendental' refers to the Origin, who alone is able to transcend the law side of creation. In the latter case, it refers to the human capacity of transcending time (the diversity of meaning) according to the first trend identified above. Meanwhile, Dooyeweerd almost lost sight of the second trend in his conception of time.

He complains that 'some adherents of my philosophy are unable to follow me in this integral conception of cosmic time' (NC I, 31). An explanation may be that these adherents (like van Riessen 1970, 119-123; McIntire 1985, 84-86) merely read the first trend in his philosophy of time. They seem to overlook the second trend, that (in my view) makes the conception of time the genuinely integrating factor in the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. In particular, many philosophers reject the idea of a supratemporal heart, even if it is interpreted as intentionally rather than actually transcending the diversity of meaning.

Objections to the first trend in Dooyeweerd's idea of time easily lead to a relapse into a naturalistic conception of time, in particular kinetic or physical time conceived as change (van Riessen 1970, 186). Eventually, kinetic time as

measured on a clock is complemented with diachronism and synchronism, e.g. in the dualistic tension between ‘process and structure’ or ‘development and context’ in historicism (Ankersmit 2005, 142-144), or in the duality of ‘direction and structure’ in Reformed thought (Griffioen 2003, 170-172). Observation of the second trend in the idea of time evades the relapse into naturalism.

Recognizing two different trends in Dooyeweerd’s conception of cosmic time and opting for the second one, leads to exploring a view of history remaining within the framework of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea, yet different from Dooyeweerd’s. Rather than qualifying history by the historical modal aspect (though recognizing the pivotal part played by the technical relation frame in historical development), in this new view history applies to all normative relation frames, like evolution occurs in all natural frames. Instead of restricting the temporal order of history to the ‘transcendental’ (anticipatory) order of the modal aspects and the order of progress, historical development of culture and civilization in each relation frame appears to be subject to the temporal order in that frame conceived as an aspect of time. This order is applicable to the transfer of experience in asymmetric subject-subject relations; to the development of artefacts; to the development of character types into characters of associations and to the development of networks in the public domain. Of course, it also applies to the opening up of anticipations in the various modal aspects, to which Dooyeweerd mostly restricts his analysis, as well as to the opening up of retrocipations. Dooyeweerd’s view of history determined by his ‘transcendental idea of cultural development’ hinges on his restrictive view of time, leading to the conception that a human being looking for coherence, unity and the origin of the creation should transcend the temporal diversity of modal meaning. Paying attention to an expanded view of time, recognizing temporal orders and relations in all modal aspects as specified in various characters, leads to a different, much richer and more empirical philosophical conception of history, and to a possible solution of some misunderstandings of Dooyeweerd’s revolutionary perception of time.

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