

DOOYEWEERD REVISED:

**A Proposed Modification of the Philosophy of
Herman Dooyeweerd
with Special Attention to the Modal Scale
and Structures of Individuality**

by

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June 1993

Note: This essay is purely experimental and represents nothing more than attempt to rework Dooyeweerd's modal scale to account for a number of phenomena which his mature modal theory appears unable to do adequately. This is not to be taken as my final word on the subject and should not be cited as such.

I. BASIC CONTOURS OF DOOYEWEERD'S PHILOSOPHY

A. The Temporal Horizon of Experience and the Modal Scale

Although Herman Dooyeweerd's thought is characterized by a number of themes, such as the transcendental critique, the cosmomic idea, the differentiation process, sphere sovereignty, sphere universality, ground motives, and the like, it is probably his modal scale which most immediately comes to mind when his name is mentioned. This corresponds to the multiple aspects of the modal horizon which is anchored in the temporal horizon of human experience. They are the "how", as opposed to the "what", of reality.

The whole of the created cosmos exists as *meaning* (*zin*), according to Dooyeweerd. By this term he wishes to convey that created reality is subsidiary to the *being* (*zijn*) of God. Meaning points beyond itself to its Origin. Creation must have a Creator, and just as creation points beyond itself to its Creator, so does meaning find its ultimate reference point in God's being. Dooyeweerd is reluctant to use the word "being" with respect to the created cosmos, since the former connotes a self-sufficiency which creation can never possess. Only God is *being* in this sense. "Meaning" expresses the derivative nature of created reality.¹

The entire created cosmos, or meaning, is dispersed in a variety of modal aspects. These modal aspects are not concrete entities which are immediately available to human experience. Rather, they are the *ways* in which the concrete things exist in their relation to human experience. They are separable only in the theoretical attitude of thought, but in reality are knit together in the order of cosmic time. Meaning is a cohering whole but is "refracted... into a rich diversity of modi, or modalities of meaning, just as sunlight is refracted by a prism in a rich diversity of colors."²

Dooyeweerd detects the existence of fifteen modes, although he allows that others may yet be discovered. Each of the modes is characterized by a "modal kernel" or "nuclear moment" which defines, but only in a broad intuitive fashion, the content of that particular modal sphere. The following list identifies each mode and its unique modal kernel.

¹ Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953-58), vol. I, p. 4, hereafter referred to in the text as NC.

² Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1980), p. 7.

- (1) *pistical* - faith, certainty
- (2) *ethical* - love in temporal relations
- (3) *juridical* - retribution, justice
- (4) *aesthetic* - harmony, beautiful proportion
- (5) *economic* - thrift, frugality
- (6) *social* - social intercourse
- (7) *lingual* - language, symbolic signification
- (8) *historical* - cultural formation, power
- (9) *analytical* - logic, cognition, theory
- (10) *psychical* - sensation, feeling
- (11) *biotic* - organic life
- (12) *physical* - energy, physico-chemical
- (13) *kinematic* - motion, extensive movement
- (14) *spatial* - continuous extension
- (15) *arithmetic* - numerical, numerable, calculable

Each of these modes is irreducible insofar as its own peculiar structure is guaranteed by the temporal order of meaning. Nevertheless, within each mode all the others are reflected in either an anticipatory (i.e., ascending) or retrocipatory (i.e., descending) direction.

The modes are not scattered haphazardly throughout created meaning but are held together in a definite order by what Dooyeweerd calls "cosmic time" (*kosmische tijd*). Time is a crucial notion for Dooyeweerd, for it constitutes, as it were, the "glue" that keeps the modes in their place. It is a much broader concept than the conventional notion of time as the physical movement from past to present to future. Time has rather to do with succession in general and there are different ways in which this time-order, or temporal order, manifests itself according to the structures of the modal spheres. For example, arithmetic or numerical time is something different from (though related to) cultural time. What we think of as clock-time is but a manifestation of cosmic time in the kinematic aspect.³

³ Dooyeweerd's notion of cosmic time is one of the more controversial elements of his philosophy and has not met with acceptance among many of his colleagues in the *Wijsbegeerte der wetsidee*, including Vollenhoven. For a critical discussion of cosmic time, see Hendrik Hart, "Problems of Time: An Essay," *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy* (Toronto: Wedge, 1973), pp. 30-42; also Peter J. Steen, "The Structure of Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought," Th.D. dissertation, Westminster Seminary, 1970, published (Toronto: Wedge, 1983). Wolters believes that there may be a connection between Dooyeweerd's and Heidegger's concepts of time. Although Wolters is unwilling to speculate as to Heidegger's influence on this matter, both figures seem to

Cosmic time also arranges the modes themselves in an irreversible order whereby certain of them fall "earlier" or "later" in the modal scale. The earlier modes are foundational for the later modes, which cannot exist without a basis in the former. There cannot be economic transactions, for example, without the existence of prior historical-cultural patterns enabling such activity. Similarly, human culture cannot exist without the foundational conditions of biological life; life in turn presupposes certain physico-chemical properties; and so forth.

Although the modal spheres are irreducible, they are nevertheless reflected in each other. The modal kernel of the historical, for example, is cultural formation or "the controlling manner of moulding the social process" (NC, I, 195). This is a distinct aspect of meaning that cannot be reduced to another modal sphere and vice versa. Yet one can detect modal *analogies* of the other fourteen modes within the historical. For example, it is possible to speak of *cultural economy* whereby the formative power of culture is exercised in a conserving manner that does not attempt to overextend itself. This is the economic analogy within the historical mode. Or one can speak of *cultural harmony* whereby cultural formation occurs in a balanced and proportionate manner. This is the aesthetic analogy within the historical mode. The economic and aesthetic are *anticipatory* analogies in that they fall later than the historical in the modal scale. The psychical analogy (i.e., cultural feeling or sensation) is a *retroicipatory* analogy within the historical mode because it comes earlier in the modal scale.

B. Structures of Individuality and Human Communities

According to Dooyeweerd there are three "horizons" of experience, that is, dimensions of created meaning as experienced by the human person. The first of these is the temporal horizon, i.e., the dimension of "cosmic time," which has less to do with clock and calendar than with succession and duration in general. The second dimension is the modal horizon, which refers to the *way* in which we experience reality through its various modal aspects. The modal horizon is based upon the temporal horizon, but it is not reducible to the latter. That is, the aspects of meaning are rooted in the order of cosmic time, but they cannot be altogether explained in terms of the latter.

The third dimension of experience is what Dooyeweerd calls the "plastic horizon" of the structures of individuality (*individualiteitsstructuur*). It is the dimension in which we experience

envison time as "a general ontological principle of continuity" (Wolters, "The Intellectual Milieu of Herman Dooyeweerd," C.T. McIntire, ed., *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985], p. 15).

the concrete entities⁴ of created meaning. If the modal horizon concerns the *how* of reality, the plastic horizon concerns the *what* of reality. The plastic horizon is also rooted in the modal, as well as in the temporal, horizon (*NC*, III, 77). The structures of individuality function in all the modal aspects and are capable of analysis with respect to the various modes. Yet they cannot be reduced to an aggregate of modal functions. The unity and identity of the former are guaranteed by the order of cosmic time.

Although the structures of individuality are not reducible to the modal horizon, they are nevertheless anchored in the latter and are capable of being analyzed in modal terms. An understanding of how an entity functions modally is essential to an understanding of the internal structural principle of the entity. Different types of entities are distinguished from each other according to their inner nature by their placement and configuration within the modal scale.

Every entity functions in all the modes as either a subject or an object.⁵ For example, a person functions subjectively in the economic mode in that he is able to act in obedience to economic norms as a subject. He is able to exercise thrift with respect to the economic resources at his disposal. A coin, on the other hand, functions objectively in the economic mode in that it is an object of economic intercourse. But not all the modes are equally important in determining the inner structure of an entity. Two modal functions in particular play the principal role in determining the inner nature of an entity. These are the *foundational* and *qualifying* or leading functions.⁶ The qualifying is "the ultimate functional point of reference for the entire internal structural coherence of the individual whole in the typical groupage of its aspects" (*NC*, III, 58). In other words, it is that function which most specifically characterizes the unique structure of an entity.

Dooyeweerd does not define foundational function explicitly, but illustrates its meaning through a number of examples. L. Kalsbeek describes it as the "lower of the two modalities which characterize certain types of structural wholes."⁷ The foundational function may also be defined as that modal aspect at which point an entity begins to take on its unique character as a

⁴ Although Dooyeweerd avoids the word "entity", which has its origin in the Latin word for "being", I shall nevertheless use the expressions, "entity", "structure of individuality" and "individuality structure" synonymously.

⁵ Roy Clouser terms these "active" and "passive" functions. See Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), pp. 212 ff.

⁶ Clouser expands Dooyeweerd's original definition of "qualifying function," describing it as a general category including both foundational and leading functions. See Clouser, pp. 216 ff.

⁷ L. Kalsbeek, *Contours of a Christian philosophy: An introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's thought* (Toronto: Wedge, 1975), p. 348.

particular entity--or perhaps the modal point at which something begins to be differentiated from other entities.⁸ The category of entities possessing the same foundational function is considerably larger than that of entities sharing the same qualifying function. The former category includes a number of the latter categories. Not every entity has both a foundational and a qualifying function, as can be seen in the case of undifferentiated communities.⁹

	Family & Marriage	State	Church	Political party ¹⁰	Business enterprise
Pistical -----			**	**	
Ethical -----	**		**	** **	
Juridical ----	**	**	**	** **	
Aesthetic ----	**	**	**	** **	
Economic -----	**	**	**	** **	**
Social -----	**	**	**	** **	**
Lingual -----	**	**	**	** **	**
Historical ---	**	**	**	** **	**
Analytical ---	**				
Psychical ----	**			(WdW) (NC)	
Biotic -----	**				
Physical -----					
Kinematic ----					
Spatial -----					
Arithmetic ---					

⁸ Clouser further distinguishes between two kinds of foundational functions in human artefacts, namely, that characterizing the natural material from which the artefact is fashioned and that characterizing the process by which the artefact came into existence. See Clouser, pp. 222 ff. Clouser places human communities in this category (p. 225), a move which I find problematic for reasons set forth below in my discussion of Dooyeweerd's *historical* modality ("The Associative, Technical and Organizational Modalities"). Moreover, a human community would not possess an initial foundational function, as would, say, a marble sculpture whose natural material is *physically* qualified.

⁹ Undifferentiated communities are what some might refer to as tribal communities in which institutional differentiation has not yet occurred. In such communities, educational, parental, political, ecclesiastical and other functions are performed by the same persons in their all-encompassing leadership capacity and are not assigned to the distinct communities of school, family, state, church, etc. See NC, III, 346 ff.

¹⁰ The two lines under the "political party" heading illustrate the fact that Dooyeweerd changed his mind as to a modal analysis of the political party. In the first edition (*Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* [Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1935-36], or WdW) he saw the political party as pistically qualified, while in the second edition (*New Critique*, or NC) he saw it as ethically qualified.

II. THE MODAL SCALE AND STRUCTURES OF INDIVIDUALITY: A PROPOSED MODIFICATION

A. An Alternative Order of the Modes and Methodological Considerations

It should be noted that not all who work with Dooyeweerd's modal scale are in agreement with him on the order of the modes within it. An alternative understanding of the nuclear moment of one of the modes is likely to lead to an alternative placement of that mode in the scale. For example, Calvin Seerveld disagrees with Dooyeweerd's description of the modal kernel of the aesthetic as harmony. Seerveld defines the aesthetic in terms of suggestiveness or "allusivity," which could be described as a prelingual mode of signification. The order of the modes in this conception follows in ascending order: arithmetic, spatial, kinematic, physical, biotic, psychic, technical/formative (i.e., historical), aesthetic, lingual, logical, social, economic, juridical, ethical and pistical.¹¹

I myself would like to propose a number of modifications to Dooyeweerd's modal theory which I believe would strengthen it. In the first place, I believe that the number of modal aspects exceeds fifteen, and I have tentatively distinguished eighteen modes. I strongly suspect that the number of modes is even greater than this--possibly much greater. But for present purposes I shall limit myself to the eighteen which are set forth below along with their respective modal kernels.

Two things should be kept in mind. First, although the isolation of these aspects is in some sense an empirical exercise, one should not expect the sort of precision and exactitude usually associated with the scientific method. Consequently, the following is offered only as a tentative effort and I am quite open to being corrected on any and all of what follows. Second--and this follows from the first point--the ordering of these modes is not intended to be definitive. Even with my slightly revised definition of the modal kernel of the aesthetic, I am not entirely certain whether the aesthetic is foundational for the economic or *vice versa*.

In attempting to establish an order of the modes, I have to a great extent used as my model the development of a human being from infancy to adulthood.¹² As a child matures, she

¹¹ See Seerveld, *Rainbows for the Fallen World* (Toronto: Toronto Tuppence Press, 1980).

¹² In adopting this approach, I may be leaving myself open to the charge of adopting an organic metaphor and thus engaging in a kind of *biotic* reductionism. I can only plead that this is not my intention, although I will admit that the danger is present. But since creation is filtered through the human "I"--the personal ego

gradually acquires an increasing number of capacities. These capacities can be seen to correspond in some fashion to the several modalities listed below. In some cases this model leads me away from the larger western philosophical tradition. For example, although reason and speech have been closely associated since the time of the Greeks, I nevertheless believe that a child's rudimentary intellect allows her to fabricate towers by placing one building block upon another (*technical*), and to use the product of her fabrication (*practical*), even before she can speak. There are attested cases in which a child has been able to articulate a memory of something which happened to her before she had acquired speech. (My brother once recounted such a memory as a child.) At the very least this appears to indicate that the *analytical* mode precedes the *semantic*.

With this in mind, what follows represents my most recent attempt to grapple with Dooyeweerd's modal scale:

- (1) *confessional* - faith, certainty
- (2) *ethical* - commitment, fidelity, temporal love
- (3) *juridical* - retribution, justice, equity
- (4) *economic* - stewardship, thrift, preservation, conservation
- (5) *aesthetic* - pleasing shape, beauty, fittingness, appropriateness
- (6) *organizational* - formation of human communities
- (7) *semantic* - language, denotation, symbol
- (8) *practical* - utility, usefulness, applicability
- (9) *technical* - fabrication of objects (tangible or intangible)
- (10) *analytical* - logic, rationality, theory
- (11) *imaginative* - creativity, innovation, fancy, playfulness
- (12) *associative* - social intercourse, interpersonal association
- (13) *psychical* - feeling, sensation, perception, consciousness
- (14) *biotic* - life, animation, vitality
- (15) *physical* - material, substance, chemical composition
- (16) *kinetic* - movement, energy, potency
- (17) *spatial* - extent, space, dimension
- (18) *arithmetic* - number, quantity (discrete and continuous)

The principal differences from Dooyeweerd's philosophy I shall set forth below under subheadings titled with the names of the relevant modalities.

which transcends the temporal horizon--it seems to make sense to establish an order of the modal scale with reference to the temporal development of this human person.

B. The Associative, Technical and Organizational Modalities

I have divided his *historical* modality into *associative*, *technical* and *organizational* modalities. Such entities in the plastic horizon as buildings, automobiles, wagons, and clocks are founded in the *technical* mode. Human communities such as the state, school, labour union and garden club are founded in the *organizational* mode. My reason for distinguishing these two modalities where Dooyeweerd sees only one lies in my inescapable conclusion that the formation of communities, which is always a precarious venture given the human responsibility of the so-called "objects" of this formation, ought not to be confused with the work of the artisan or craftsman, who moulds an object out of inanimate material and whose control over that material is limited only by physical constraints and his/her own imagination.¹³

This distinction is based on what I believe is a true insight of Aristotle as expressed in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, viz., that there is a difference between making and doing. Hannah Arendt goes so far as to assert that a confusion of these two types of human activity leads inexorably to the means-end thinking of the ideologies, which view flesh-and-blood human beings as little more than material expendable in the interest of fashioning the perfect society.¹⁴ Yves R. Simon makes a similar point in his writings.¹⁵ While I believe Dooyeweerd is correct to reject the transcendental form/matter groundmotive of Aristotelian philosophy, I am nevertheless inclined to think that on this point Aristotle, Arendt and Simon are correct and that Dooyeweerd has attempted to compress too much into his historical mode.

In addition to cultural objects (*technically* founded) and human communities (*organizationally* founded), I am inclined to add the category of human relationships, such as a friendship, which are *associatively* founded and *ethically* qualified. A friendship is not a community and is thus not something which is organized. Nor is it biotically founded, as is the marriage.

Dooyeweerd also speaks of "differentiated inter-individual or inter-communal relationships" as *historically* founded and qualified in one of the higher modes, e.g., the *social* or *economic* (NC, III, 589). Some of these relationships include fashion, sport, the market, publicity, and social philanthropy. I am not convinced that it makes sense to speak of these as

¹³ For this reason I cannot follow Clouser in labelling human communities "artefacts."

¹⁴ See Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

¹⁵ See especially *The Tradition of Natural Law: A Philosopher's Reflections* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1965).

historically founded for the same reasons that I have come to doubt the validity of an *historical* mode to begin with. I am inclined to conclude that the above are also *associatively* founded.

My reason for distinguishing between *associative* and *organizational* modes stems from the differentiation which is often (and correctly, in my view) made between relationships of a "partnership" character and those of a more communal character. The latter presupposes a certain solidarity lacking in the former. Moreover a community is an active agent requiring authority, while a partnership is not. In Dutch this corresponds to the distinction between "maatschaps" and "gemeenschaps," while in German this is rendered as "Gesellschaft" and "Gemeinschaft." Dooyeweerd acknowledges these two types of relationships, but he does not differentiate between them in foundational modal terms, as I have done here.

What about Dooyeweerd's *social* modality? For this I have substituted the *associative* modality and moved it to a place lower in the scale. Dooyeweerd describes the modal kernel of the *social* as social intercourse and includes under this such things as manners, etiquette and politeness. The *social* mode is in fact the least well-defined of Dooyeweerd's modes and seems to be something of a "catch-all" mode which he uses to qualify (in the sense of "qualifying" function) those structures of individuality which are otherwise difficult to analyze modally. For example, he argues that tables and chairs are *socially* qualified, although it is not immediately clear why this is so nor does he offer an explanation. As for manners and etiquette, I am inclined to see these as *aesthetically* qualified (given my redefinition of the *aesthetic* below). As for tables and chairs, I believe these should be seen as *practically* qualified (for which also see below).

Given that I have divided the *historical* modality into the *technical*, *organizational* and *associative*, what about history itself? At this point I am inclined to follow C.T. McIntire in seeing history as a trans-modal phenomenon. The difficulties in Dooyeweerd's conception of time are treated adequately elsewhere, and I shall not repeat them here.

C. The Organizational and Juridical Modalities

With respect to the state, I believe it must be said to be founded in the *organizational* mode and qualified in the *juridical* mode. Following Dooyeweerd, I would agree that the state is distinguished from other organized communities by its possession of sword-power, i.e., the power of life and death over persons which is held by the governing authorities. Indeed, no other community possesses such power. But I disagree with his assertion that sword-power is indissolubly connected with the state's internal structural principle and that denying this leaves us with

Aristotle's *zoön politikon* as the sole foundation for the state.¹⁶ Although the state certainly requires sword-power in a fallen world, most of the state's activities rest upon other types of power, such as implicit authority (which is obeyed because the citizens believe it is right to do so)¹⁷ and persuasion (such as advertising campaigns urging people to obey seat-belt laws which are otherwise difficult to enforce).

Moreover, I believe that justice itself has a certain power. This may be seen as the *juridical* analogy within the *organizational* mode, or jural power. If people believe they are being treated justly by the state and its laws, they will tend to obey them. Where such a conviction is lacking, no amount of physical force will be able to maintain the body politic. Even Dooyeweerd would agree, I think, that sword-power is not a *sufficient* basis for the state's existence, however necessary it may be. Again, I find myself wondering whether Dooyeweerd's views on the state's sword-power are rooted in a failure to distinguish between *technical* and *organizational* modes.

Dooyeweerd sees sword-power as a manifestation of the *physical* analogy within the *historical* mode. I myself would tend to see it in terms of the *technical* analogy within the *organizational* mode, or technical power (or perhaps organizational technique). However it be analyzed modally, an excessive emphasis on this form of power could lead one to posit too close an analogy between the statesman and the sculptor, the latter of whom can be said to use "chisel-power" to produce a marble statue. Moreover, I strongly suspect that this emphasis could lead as well to an authoritarian conception of the state in which the element of command comes to take priority over the equally crucial element of consent.¹⁸ On this point Arendt's distinction between "power" and "violence" is instructive. The latter describes something which is basically pre-political and involves the use of instruments to fashion some object. But "power" in her concep-

¹⁶ Clouser argues that Dooyeweerd changed his mind on this issue in *New Critique* (III, 423) and came to agree with Thomas Aquinas that it is only the state's sword-power, and not the state itself, which exists because of sin. See Clouser, p. 318. Having reread the cited passage in Dooyeweerd, I can only conclude that Clouser has misinterpreted it. I have found no evidence that Dooyeweerd ever departed from the Augustinian view expressed in *The Christian Idea of the State* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1968; originally published as *De Christelijke Staatsidee* in 1936). It should be noted that virtually all of Dooyeweerd's disciples disagree with him on this point. See, e.g., Paul Marshall, *Thine Is the Kingdom: A Biblical Perspective on the Nature of Government and Politics Today* (Basingstoke, Hants, UK: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1984), pp. 43-4.

¹⁷ Jonathan P. Chaplin refers to this as the "moral power" of "public trust" and believes this to be the decisive kind of power which distinguishes the state from other communities in the original unfallen order of creation. See Chaplin, "Dooyeweerd's Theory of Public Justice: A Critical Exposition," M.Phil thesis (Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, 1983), pp. 88 ff.

¹⁸ Both command and consent must be seen as phenomena associated with the *organizational* modality.

tion always flows from the people. It "corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert."¹⁹ It is a group phenomenon and can never rest in a single individual. If the group dissolves or withholds its consent, then power disappears as well.

Although Arendt's theory has its difficulties, I believe she has nevertheless discerned an important truth, viz., that political authority depends to a large extent on its willing acceptance by those under it. To be sure, an overemphasis on popular consent can lead to the distortions of voluntarism, liberalism and radical democracy of the Rousseauan variety. For this reason, in undertaking an analysis of the state's internal structure along Dooyeweerdian lines, we must always bear in mind that its foundational organizing power needs to be completed in its qualifying *juridical* function. Otherwise, we run the risk of falling into the Rousseauan error of seeing the general will of the people as infallible. Or, to put it in less technical language, the mere fact that a policy has the approval of a popular majority cannot make it just.²⁰

Such ideological distortions aside, however, a political theory such as Dooyeweerd's, which claims to be at once normative and empirical, must take into account the role played by the people in investing authority with much of its legitimacy. In other words, the fact that a particular policy may be just will not itself be sufficient in a fallen world to secure popular acceptance and obedience. Of course, the state's coercive sword-power necessarily comes into play at this point in cases where individual citizens or even groups of citizens break the law. But where a large section of the population is not convinced of the legitimacy of a particular law or of the authority promulgating the law, then sword-power becomes either ineffective or oppressive.²¹ Furthermore, if the law is indeed unjust or if the legislating authority routinely commits unjust acts, then the use of sword-power becomes implicated in these antinormative activities. Ultimately, the state's sword-power must be seen as merely supportive of the more significant form of organizing

¹⁹ Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969, 1970), p. 44.

²⁰ Rousseau's basic error is the same as Hobbes', viz., to collapse the *juridical* into the *organizational* mode. But whereas Hobbes emphasizes sword-power as the crucial form of organizational power, Rousseau emphasizes popular consent. The effect is nevertheless the same, namely to rob justice of its objective, creational content and to leave the state with only its foundational function.

²¹ This has considerable implications for such complex issues as abortion, which in our contemporary political climate seems to admit of no satisfactory solution. For an excellent argument from a principled pro-life perspective in favour of an interim "truce" in the abortion battle, see Christopher Wolfe, "Abortion and Political Compromise," *First Things* 24 (June/July 1992), pp. 22-29. Correctly recognizing the limits of politics and law, and judging that there is no public consensus favouring the legal prohibition of abortion, Wolfe argues in favour of accepting a provisional compromise that will achieve the greatest possible reduction in the number of abortions until this consensus can be changed. Unfortunately, what is largely (though not wholly) missing from his discussion is justice.

power rooted in consent.²² In an unfallen world, of course, the latter would be sufficient to secure popular obedience to just commands. But in our present world, both consent-based organizing power and its post-Fall concomitant, sword-power, are necessary for an adequate understanding of the state and its authority. Yet neither can give us a complete understanding apart from justice.

D. The Imaginative and Aesthetic Modalities

The *aesthetic* modality I have long found to be something of a puzzle. On the one hand, Dooyeweerd seems to be following the classical Greeks and Romans in seeing the modal kernel of the *aesthetic* as "beauty", "proportion", and "harmony." This approach is followed by art historian Hans R. Rookmaaker.²³ As noted above, Seerveld disagrees with this approach and opts instead for placing the *aesthetic* lower in the modal scale and redefining its modal kernel as "allusiveness" or "suggestiveness." I myself have attempted to work with both approaches at various times and have found neither completely satisfactory. I am now beginning to conclude that, just as Dooyeweerd has tried to compress too much into his *historical* mode, it may be that he and his disciples have put too much into a single *aesthetic* mode as well. For this reason I have divided this mode into the *imaginative* and *aesthetic* modes.

One of the singular virtues of Dooyeweerd's philosophy is that at several points he affirms truths which are often pulled apart and conceived as polarities within the larger western tradition. For example, he affirms simultaneously the religious character of all theoretical thought, yet he also affirms the existence of an underlying creation order. Within the broader western tradition, the former has usually been seen to imply historicism and relativism, while the latter is taken to be supportive of rationalism. With respect to the state he maintains that both power and justice are needed for a proper understanding of its internal structure. Repeated efforts to play off justice (as in the *Rechtsstaat*) and power (as in the *Machtsstaat*) against each other are illegitimate, according to Dooyeweerd.

I am beginning to suspect that the same is true within the realm of aesthetic theory. Both imagination and beauty are needed, and the attempt to drive a wedge between the two and to see

²² This is how Paul Brink aptly puts it in "A State Before the Fall? an inquiry into the fundamental nature of the state as espoused by Herman Dooyeweerd," a paper written for me in a tutorial on Dooyeweerd's political theory during fall 1992 at Redeemer College. I am indebted to him for stimulating me to work out further the ideas articulated in this paper.

²³ Rookmaaker, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973).

them as mutually exclusive alternatives is to pose a false dichotomy. Thus romanticism and classicism, the two polar traditions within western aesthetic theory, are both right--and both wrong, insofar as each abstracts one of these modalities from the coherence of the modal horizon and ascribes to it a certain supremacy. It is somewhat ironic that both Dooyeweerd and his followers, who are quite able on a theoretical level to affirm that many of the dialectical tensions in the western philosophical tradition are in fact false dichotomies, seem unable to break with the classical/romantic split within the western tradition of aesthetics.

Why two modalities where Dooyeweerd and Seerveld detect only one? If we are to accept the existence of only one mode, then I do not find either account entirely convincing. Seerveld argues that the *aesthetic* is a *presemantic* or *pre-lingual* mode. Yet this seems unable to take into account an art form such as poetry, which would certainly be *aesthetically* qualified as a work of art, but presupposes language. Visual artworks also presuppose the use of symbol. It therefore seems to me that the *aesthetic* builds on the foundation of the *semantic* mode.

The difficulty I have with accepting Seerveld's account of the *aesthetic* is that there seems to be no room for proportion and symmetry, or what is classically called beauty. When we look at the world around us, whether the natural or the human world, we see these qualities. Even when we describe a person's physical beauty, we have in mind a certain symmetry and proportion. If this is not the *aesthetic*, then what is it? It looks as if we are left with a modal kernel without a corresponding mode. Seerveld's theory cannot account for this.

Yet there is much of art that is not particularly beautiful or proportionate in this classic sense, and this seems to indicate deficiencies in Dooyeweerd's approach. Picasso's famous "Guernica" is a good example. It is ugly because it portrays an ugly event, namely, the destruction of a Spanish village by the fascists during the Civil War. Yet no one denies that this painting is a work of art or that Picasso himself was an artist. Dooyeweerd's theory cannot account for this, as far as I can see. Consequently, I believe it makes better sense to speak of an *imaginative* mode and an *aesthetic* mode, both of which are necessary to a proper understanding of the arts.

The *imaginative* mode corresponds to the ability of the human person to imagine, to create, to conceive ideas and images in the mind's eye--and also to play. It is a *pre-analytical* modality which builds on all of the lower modalities, including the *psychical* and *associative*. In order to imagine, one needs to be able to feel, to sense, to experience consciously the world. Sensation immediately brings consciousness of other human beings, which is why I have placed the *associative* mode immediately after the *psychical*. Then comes the capacity to imagine, which is not basically a rational activity. Children have powerful imaginations, and their imaginings are not constrained by logic. This works itself out in what we call "child's play," but unconstrained imagination remains powerful and necessary to the human person, even in adulthood. In other

words, adults also need to play and, more basically, to create. On the other hand, the ability to reason certainly depends on the capacity to imagine, which I believe justifies my placement of the *analytical* after the *imaginative*.

As for the *aesthetic*, I am now inclined to believe that it does, after all, have something to do with beauty or proportion. This does not mean that all visual art must be representational, that all poetry must rhyme, or that all music should avoid parallel fifths. But each must follow norms appropriate to that particular aesthetic pursuit. It is perhaps easier to pinpoint the modal kernel of the aesthetic by appealing to example. Everyone would probably agree that there is something inappropriate about wearing clashing plaids, *at least in many contexts*. In fact, the very word "clashing" tells us that we perceive that an aesthetic norm has been violated in some sense.²⁴ Similarly, if one were to insert several measures of Schönberg-style atonal music into a Beethoven sonata, virtually everyone could tell you that something is wrong or "unfitting." Perhaps the *aesthetic* has to do with "fittingness", "appropriateness", "pattern" and "regularity", as ways of filling out what Dooyeweerd means by "proportion" or "harmony" or "beauty."²⁵

On the other hand, artists and musicians make imaginative use of these aesthetic norms and often do unexpected things with them. For example, Prokofiev's First Symphony is also known as the Classical Symphony, because it is deliberately written in the style of Mozart or Haydn. At the outset of a performance the listener is likely to think it was written by one of these eighteenth-century composers, but before long it would become apparent that this is a twentieth-century work. In similar fashion, Renaissance composer Carlo Gesualdo filled his music with dissonance and chromaticism centuries before they came into vogue. In other words, if every artist sought simply to follow aesthetic patterns and regularities--i.e., pursued beauty in a purely formal sense--then something would be missing from that art. It is the imaginative use of such patterns that makes the work of art.

I believe humour falls into the same category.²⁶ Humour is rooted in an initial playfulness, which is located modally in the *imaginative*. Humour deliberately surprises and flouts regularities such as are presupposed in the *aesthetic* mode. Yet the end result is something which has a kind of beauty or fittingness in its own right. Peter Schickele, the creator of P.D.Q. Bach, regularly

²⁴ This raises the issue of clothing fashions, which are of course constantly changing. I shall not comment further on this subject since I am not particularly qualified to do so, as most of my friends and family would probably agree.

²⁵ In speaking of "fittingness", I believe my current approach may be close to that of Nicholas Wolterstorff as expressed in *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

²⁶ But laughter itself is a phenomenon rooted in the psychological mode. The making of humour presupposes the ability to laugh.

does the sort of thing described above with respect to Schönberg and Beethoven (e.g., rendering the children's song, "Old McDonald", in the form of a [J.S.] Bach chorale, or having an announcer do a play-by-play radio broadcast of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as if it were a sporting event) and originates musical works which are simultaneously imaginative and fitting (in their own zany way) and which are also works of humour and art.

Although my discussion might seem to be leading in this direction, I am not at this point prepared to say that a work of art is founded in the *imaginative* mode, since it seems evidently to be founded in the *technical* mode. Yet I believe that art must somehow be understood in terms of the interplay of the *imaginative* and *aesthetic* modalities. This undoubtedly requires further working out.²⁷ It may be that the *imaginative* analogy within the *technical* mode provides, already at the foundational level, a key to understanding the work of art as a peculiar type of individuality structure. This retrocipation we may perhaps label *imaginative technique*. In this the work of art is similar to the state, whose organizing power is already distinguished at the foundational level by its possession of sword-power.

E. The Imaginative and Economic Modalities

I have come to suspect that progressive and conservative tendencies in politics and other areas of life originate in modal reductionisms located in the *imaginative* and *economic* modes respectively. More specifically, the progressive²⁸ falls prey to the temptation to abstract the *imaginative* aspect from the coherence of the modal horizon, while the conservative does the same with the *economic* aspect.

Recall that the modal kernel of the *imaginative* mode is creativity, imagination, and playfulness. Experimentation is a closely related concept. The progressive tends to view reality through the modal lens of *imagination*. All things are possible to the imagination, and frequently the progressive has a rather undeveloped sense of human limits and other kinds of constraints. In its most exaggerated form, this *imaginative* reductionism can become utopian and divorced from

²⁷ One possible solution may lie in Clouser's apparent distinguishing of multiple foundational functions in a structure of individuality. Perhaps *imagination* in some sense provides a kind of "natural material" for the work of art, while *technique* is the "process" bringing it into existence.

²⁸ Although conventional political discourse tends to contrast conservatism and "liberalism", it is best to avoid the latter term, which refers to a specific ideology with historic roots in the thought of Hobbes, Locke, Kant and J.S. Mill. In the United States (and to a lesser extent Canada) self-styled conservatives and liberals are both followers of "liberalism" in this broader, ideological sense.

reality--i.e., from the coherence of the modal horizon. But even in its milder form it is willing to take risks--to risk losing the small amount of good existing in the *status quo* for the sake of achieving a possible greater good in the future. In favour of the progressive, it must be admitted that progress, though by no means inevitable, is possible because of the potentialities which God has built into his creation. The progressive has a vivid understanding that an imperfect world is capable of being improved and that such improvements often come through taking innovative and unprecedented steps. Furthermore, and quite apart from human imperfection, because the historical process is on-going and inevitably renders outmoded some cultural artefacts and practices, there is a continuing need for creativity and inventiveness to adapt them to the new realities, or possibly to replace them altogether.

The modal kernel of the *economic* can be captured in the terms stewardship, thrift, and preservation. A modal *economic* perspective causes a person to see the world in terms of limits. Material resources are limited and must be used in a wise and stewardly fashion. But the same is true of linguistic heritage, cultural traditions, social mores, political institutions, national constitutions, religious belief systems and the like. All of these are worth conserving and, when change becomes necessary, it must proceed cautiously and incrementally. The conservative views the world through this *economic* mode. Such a person has a heightened sense of the fragility of human cultural and political endeavours, and he thus prefers to maintain existing ways of doing things. Typically the conservative neglects to recall that the very things he wishes to preserve were once the product of someone's imagination and creativity. In its worst manifestation this form of *economic* reductionism can degenerate into a mindless defence of what exists, even if the latter includes much that is evil or anachronistic. But the conservative generally prefers to stick with the small amount of good in the *status quo* than to risk making matters worse through untried innovation.

Both progressivism and conservatism are distortions of the quite legitimate historical processes of progress and conservation. Both the *imaginative* and *economic* modes are integral aspects of the whole modal horizon. In similar fashion, no human society can exist without progress and conservation. Although there is a human tendency to treat them as dialectical polarities (and, in the realm of politics, to organize alternative partisan groupings around them and to identify oneself exclusively with one or the other), both are in principle complementary and necessary to the continued life of human society. A nonreductionistic christian worldview, which

respects the diversity of reality as God's good creation, finds a place for both progress and conservation.²⁹

F. The Revised Modal Scale and Structures of Individuality

The following represents an attempt to analyze structures of individuality in terms of my revised modal scale:

confessional ---	(1)		(3)			(6)	(7)	
ethical -----	**		**			**	**	
juridical -----	**	(2)	**			**	**	
economic -----	**	**	**	(4)		**	**	
aesthetic -----	**	**	**	**	(5)	**	**	
organizational -	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
semantic -----	**				**	**		(8)
practical -----	**				**	**		**
technical -----	**				**	**		**
analytical -----	**				(**)	**		
imaginative ----	**				(**)	**		
associative ----	**					**		
psychical -----	**							
biotic -----	**							
physical -----								
kinetic -----								
spatial -----								
arithmetic -----								

Key:

- (1) marriage and/or family
- (2) state
- (3) institutional church
- (4) business enterprise
- (5) work of art (painting, sculpture, etc.)³⁰

²⁹ H. Evan Runner makes this same point in *Scriptural Religion and Political Task* (Toronto: Wedge, 1974), pp. 58 ff and 85 ff, although he doesn't bring modal analysis into his discussion. Cf. Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular and Christian Options* (Toronto: Wedge, 1979), pp. 70 ff.

³⁰ The work of art is aesthetically qualified and technically founded, but it also has earlier roots within the imaginative. Although technique brings the work of art into being, the latter's status as work of art depends on the interplay of

- (6) friendship, partnership
- (7) labour union, political party, other voluntary associations
- (8) chair, table, tools, other use objects

G. The Limitations of Modal Analysis and a (possible) Practical Mode

I am uncertain what to do with use objects such as tables or chairs or tools. These cannot be analyzed very well modally. They are certainly *technically* founded, but it is difficult to say how they are qualified modally. Dooyeweerd claims that a table is *socially* (*associatively*, on my scale) qualified, but why this would be so is not obvious. It may be that another mode must be added to the scale. Could its modal kernel be "utility"? Perhaps there is a *practical* modality, which might be located between the *technical* and the *semantic* (*lingual*). This is only speculation on my part, and it may be that the *practical* cannot be seen as a modal aspect at all but is something characterizing human activity in general. Or it may have to be seen as a facet of the *technical*. If so, then we are left without a qualifying function for the above-listed items.

There are also other entities which do not admit of ready modal analysis. Or at least a modal analysis does not tell us very much about them. For example, between the first (Dutch) and the second (English) editions of his magnum opus, Dooyeweerd changes his mind on the modal qualification of the political party. In the earlier edition he sees it as *pistically* (or *confessionally*) qualified while in the later he sees it as *ethically* qualified. Either one of these is possible, but the importance of this analysis appears to be restricted to continental Europe where parties are based on common adherence to political principles. Even though parties are quite different between continental Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world, *all political parties seek formal control of the government*, which strikes me as being something more than merely an external goal, as Dooyeweerd sees it. This "*external goal*" seems to be the defining feature of the political party.

But perhaps Dooyeweerd's modal analysis of the political party can be saved after all and applied successfully to political parties in the Anglo-Saxon world. The political party might still be seen as *ethically* qualified, as Dooyeweerd argues in the second edition. But it is qualified by its *commitment to winning control of government*, and not by its commitment to shared political principles as such.

the imaginative and the aesthetic. Hence the parenthetical asterisks above.

H. Conclusion

The discerning reader will have noted that there is a potential problem with the enterprise I have undertaken above. Because the persuasive power of Dooyeweerd's philosophy rests largely on its principled anti-reductionism, any attempt to expand the number of aspects in the modal scale constitutes an implicit accusation that Dooyeweerd has engaged in precisely the error he has sought to avoid, namely, to reduce distinct modalities to other, closely related modal spheres. For example, my isolation of an *imaginative* modality implies that Dooyeweerd has unduly collapsed imagination into either logic or sensation. It also implies that Seerveld has reduced beauty to imagination. Consequently, it cannot be held that disagreement on the number of distinct modal spheres is simply an indifferent matter and of no consequence to the larger system. It is indeed a matter of no small import.

At the same time, Dooyeweerd himself saw his own philosophy as unfinished, and my own ruminations above should be understood in a similar spirit. Thus I believe my proposals are fundamentally in continuity with Dooyeweerd's modal theory as articulated in his major works, including the *New Critique*. As already stated, I strongly suspect that there are more modal aspects to be discerned within the modal horizon, so I cannot exempt even myself from the charge of engaging in tacit, though certainly unintended, reductionism. But for the present my remarks here represent what I consider to be a plausible reworking of Dooyeweerd's approach, and they are not my final word.

Another set of potential difficulties lies in the fact that Dooyeweerd's philosophy is grounded in human experience. The modal aspects are precisely aspects of creation as experienced by the human ego as God's image-bearer. There are two difficulties here. First, this approach could leave Dooyeweerd open to the charge that his supposedly christian philosophy is anthropocentric, since the whole of created reality seems to relate to God through man.³¹ I shall not address this charge here, except to say that man's place in the total creation cannot be understood apart from his radical dependence on God. Thus Dooyeweerd's "anthropocentrism" is itself theocentric.

Second, it also assumes that there is a commonness to human experience and that human beings in large measure share the ways they experience creation. Admittedly, my own revisions to

³¹ It is perhaps not incidental that Dooyeweerd is a product of the continental Reformed tradition, which is more experiential in orientation, rather than of the Anglo-Celtic Presbyterian tradition, which is more influenced by scholasticism. Witness, for example, the different ways in which the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms open. The former addresses the catechumen's relationship to Jesus Christ, while the latter speaks in impersonal terms of "man's chief end."

Dooyeweerd's philosophy are based on my own experience (as well as on what seem to me to be genuine insights in the philosophies of others), but I am naturally assuming that this will not be radically different from the next person's. We human persons are, after all, imbedded in the same creation and possess the same powers of perception through what are conventionally known as our five senses. Our religious worldviews will of course influence the way we perceive the world, but because the latter is real and not simply the product of our abstract mental constructs, the concrete realities of creation will also condition our religious worldviews. This insures that genuine communication across religious boundaries can continue. And it keeps Dooyeweerd's philosophy from descending into relativism.