

The Theory of Man
Thirty two Propositions
On
Anthropology
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The Theory of Man in the Philosophy of the Law Idea. (W. der W.)

Thirty-two propositions on anthropology by Prof. Dr, H. Dooyeweerd.

- I. In the development of western thought anthropological conception have been dominated by four religious ground-motives, which have shaped the entire development of the Occident. These four ground motives are: 1) the Greek form-matter motive; 2) The Scriptural ground motive of the Christian religion: creation, fall and redemption through Jesus Christ; 3) the Romanistic (R.C.) synthesis motive of nature and grace and 4) the modern-Humanistic motive of nature and freedom (this motive includes the natural-scientific determination ideal and the personality ideal of free autonomous self-determination).
 - II. The form-matter motive (theme) as well as the nature-grace motive and the nature-freedom motive are internally dialectic. That is, they are torn by and internal dualism which drives this thought to its polar (and therefore opposite) directions.
 - III. The reason for this polar dualism can be found in an internal fragmentation in the idea of the Origin of all things caused by an apostate direction of this Origin idea. Where self-knowledge is completely divorced from knowledge concerning God, the anthropological conceptions, orientated to this dualistic Origin idea must necessarily manifest the same dualistic polar stamp. And they do. This polarity is expressed in the conception of "soul" and "body", and their mutual relation.
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1. This theme (or motive) came into being as a result of an un-reconciled conflict between the older Greek nature religion, wherein the godhead had still been conceived of as formless, as an ever-flowing stream of life or as a chaos, and the newer culture religion of form, measure and harmony, wherein the god-head was elevated above the stream of life, above the chaos, and worshipped as immortal rational form principle.
 2. The conception of "nature" in this motive is equal to the entire Greek motive, but then modified to allow "adaption" to the Christian motive.
 3. This motive attempts to incorporate all earlier ground motives, conceived of, however in a fundamentally altered way.

- IV. The ground motive of the divine Word Revelation, that of creation, fall and redemption in Christ Jesus, radically excludes any dualism revelation of man to himself. Scripture does indeed speak of a radical split in the religious root of human existence through the fall, but it also teaches the radical restoration of this split through Christ's redemptive work. Nowhere does it teach the polar tension between an anima rationalis as the rational, essential form of human nature and a material body. It cannot teach this, because it discloses to us the supra-temporal religious root, the integral center of temporal human existence of which thinking and acts of volition are only temporal expressions of this supra-temporal religious root.
- V. Whenever Scripture speaks to us in a radical religious way about the human soul or spirit, it always speaks of it as the heart of all temporal existence, out of which are all the issues of temporal life. Nowhere does Scripture teach a dichotomy between a "rational soul" and a "material body" within temporal existence. Rather, it views this total temporal existence as the body, which is to be laid down at death. The human soul or spirit, as the religious root of the body, in contrast, is, according to Scriptural revelation, not subject to temporal death because it transcends temporal life (outside of Christ it is subject to eternal death). This revelation concerning the "soul" as the integral center of the whole of man's bodily existence is completely in harmony with God's Revelation of Himself as (integral) Creator of heaven and earth who has no other authority over against himself. This revelation concerning human nature cannot be characterized as an "anthropology" or scientific theory of human existence. Rather, as a religious presupposition, it is the foundation of Christian anthropology.
- VI. Current philosophical anthropologies, orientated to one of the dialectic ground motives, repeatedly attempt to give us a meta-physical theory of the human soul, at least, in so far as they are not driven by the "materialistic" pole of the Greek matter-principle, or by the modern humanistic science ideal. Any such so-called metaphysical psychology, however, must be radically rejected from a Scriptural-reformational point of view. The human soul in the religious, Scriptural sense of the word transcends every scientific conception, because it is the presupposition of every conception. Knowledge about the human soul is religious self-knowledge, and true self-knowledge is only possible by way of true knowledge of God through the diving Word Revelation.
- VII. The actual scientific knowledge about man remains limited to the structure of the human body taken in the broad sense of the temporal form of human existence. Philosophical inquiry concerning man's temporal existence, however, ought to be directed by an Idea of the human soul which relates God's revelation concerning the root of human existence to the basic problem of anthropology. This fundamental theoretical problem can be

formulated as follow: different aspects and individuality structures, nevertheless be grasped in its fundamental unity?

- VIII. Every philosophical anthropologist has, by virtue of the radical, religious determination of theoretical thought, an Idea of the human soul as its basis. This Idea, by virtue of its transcendental (i.e. making philosophical investigation possible) character, determines the total philosophic conception concerning the structure of the human body. Thus the conception of the body as “material body” is clearly dependent on an Idea of the human soul which makes the soul an abstract complex of emotional, analytical and volitional functions, and which conceives the soul, as *anima rationalis*, characterized by the logical though function.
- IX. The anthropology of the Philosophy of the Law Idea has as its basis the Scriptural Idea of the human soul as the integral religious root of the whole of man’s temporal existence. In this religious root human life is still “undivided” (Cf. Kuyper, especially the Stone Lectures) because in this center all temporal functions are concentrated in the religious relation of the soul to the Origin of all things. The human body, therefore, is not to be conceived as an abstract material body, but as the whole of man’s temporal existence, which receives its deeper unity only by virtue of its concentration in the “soul”. And thus the body can never be thought of as “self contained” or as a “substance”, since the body will disintegrate when its tie to the soul is severed (in temporal death).
- X. The human body consists of four individuality structures, of which the lower ones are morphologically bound by the higher ones, and which together, form an enkaptic whole. Thus the natural body form (*lichaams-gestalte*) is the (nodal) point of intertwinement between the various structures. Within this intertwinement, however, these structures maintain their internal autonomy or typical lawfulness and sphere sovereignty.
- XI. When we consider the three lower structures in their peculiarity and typical lawfulness apart from their connection with the fourth and highest structure, we should not think of them as actual part-structures of the human body. Only when they are seen in their connection with the fourth structure can they be considered as essential parts of the enkaptically structured whole called the “human body”. The enkaptic construction of the body implies that the lower structures can manifest their typical lawfulness externally (of e.g. temporary domination of instinctive drive (passion) in a situation where reasonable deliberation has been temporarily set aside). This happens when the highest structure (temporarily) ceases to play its leading role in the structured whole.
- XII. The body form (*Gestalte*) is the (nodal) point of all structure intertwinements in the human body. It is impossible; therefore, to classify particular organs or parts of the human body, in a morphological sense, as belonging exclusively to one of these structures. Morphology the human body with all its parts necessary functions equally in all four structures. The criterion

for the distinction between separate body structures is internal in nature and can therefore never be linked up with the external body form.

XIII. The first and lowest structure is of a physico-chemical qualification. In and by itself this structure cannot be called a body structure. Only when it is seen as interlaced with the higher structures can it be designated a body structure. In the disintegration process (decay) of the body at death, however, the typical lawfulness and individuality structure of these aspects manifests itself. The second structure is of a biotic or so-called vegetative qualification. It is not until we come to this structure that living cells and other biologically qualified combinations make their appearance. This structure, with its internal sphere sovereignty governs the vegetative body processes in so far as they fall outside of the guidance of the psychic or later functions. (These vegetative body processes include the whole of the so-called autonomic (vegetative) nervous system with the muscle tissues, bone tissue and glands innervated by this autonomic system.) This second structure, in turn, is enaptically bound by a third structure, which is qualified by the psychic or instinctive feeling function. This third structure with its internal sphere sovereignty governs the psychic functions⁴. Within certain limitations, these functions are outside the control of human volition. This third structure, in turn, together with the earlier structures, functions enaptically in a fourth structure, the so-called act-structure of the human body, that is: the typical structure of human "acts".

XIV. By the "acts" the Philosophy of the Law Idea understands all activities (verrichtingen) which come forth out of the soul (or spirit) but which function within the enaptically structured whole of the human body. By these activities, under the leadership of normative points of view, man directs (richten op) himself intentionally (bedoelend) to states of affairs in reality or his world of imagination. By relating these (now) intentional states of affairs to his "I"-ness he makes them internally his own. The act-life of man manifests itself in three fundamental ways, n.l. knowing, imagining and willing. They must not be isolated however as three separate faculties, because they are completely intertwined. In the intentional character of the "acts" lies their "innerness" (innerlijkheid). It is the performance (activity) which actualizes (realizes) the intention of the act. By this performance the knowing act, imagining act, and the act of volition are intertwined in the motivated process of decision making, which decision is then translated into deed.

4. These are the functions of the (sensible) central nervous system (more particularly those of the senses, brain, spinal cord and glandular system) and the muscle tissues (most striated muscle) innervated thereby.

XV. By viewing the typical structure of these “acts” as the act structure of the human body, the Philosophy of the Law Idea takes position against the view dominant in the current so-called “act-psychology” and phenomenology (Husserl, Scheler), which holds that acts as such are incorporeal (onlichamelijk), (pure “psychonomic”), intentional experiences, originating in the “I”-ness, which, as the center of the person, lives purely in its acts. It is typical that in this conception the intentional relatedness to a “Gegenstand” is repeatedly seen as the essential characteristic of the acts. This “Gegenstand and relation” however, is, as the Philosophy of the Law Idea has shown, exclusively a feature of acts of theoretical knowing. This intentional relation is based on a theoretical abstraction, by which the logical aspects of reality existing in inner coherence are analytically set apart), is placed over against the non-logical aspects of the fields of investigation.

“Act Psychology”, and, for that matter, every type of metaphysical psychology and phenomenology, elevates this theoretical, merely intentional abstraction to reality and, having done this, it assumes that the Gegenstand relation proves that there is no inner coherence between the intentional (“inner”) acts and the pre-logical or pre-psychical aspects of the human body.

This conception neglects two things:

- 1) That the Gegenstand relation is not present in the non-theoretical acts, and
- 2) That even in the theoretical knowing-act it is not the act itself, but merely the logical aspect that is placed over against the pre-logical (body)-aspects, and that this Gegenstand relation is only the result of an intended abstraction out of the total, actual knowing-act. The intentional Gegenstand relation can only exist within structure of the theoretical knowing-act, and this structure, in turn, is determined by the act structure of the human body.

XVI. The (worked out) Aristotelian conception of the anima rationalis as the “body in action” clearly shows that Aristotle thought of thinking and willing as conscious activities of the anima rationalis. However, he could not consistently develop this important insight, because the Greek form-matter motive demanded that at least the general principle of thought-activity (as rational form principle) be conceived as a substance (ousia) completely independent from the “material body”. Aristotle, therefore, could only conceive of man’s capacity to think (thought as), but not of the actual thinking activity, as a part of the human soul, since he conceived of the activity “as the form of the body”. The dynamic, thinking spirit” is, according to him, un-generated (ongeworden) and in-transitory. It is the general principle of all thought-acts, and it only enters into the human soul from outside.

XVII. The arguments given by Aristotle for the substantiality of this dynamic thinking-principle, and by Thomas Aquinas for the independence of the whole anima rationalis are completely governed by the Greek form-matter motive.

The anima rationalis constantly appears to be the product of a theoretical abstraction from the full, temporal (and therefore bodily) existence of man. This abstraction is then made a substance independent from the material body.

XXIII. The act structure of the body as individuality structure necessarily spans all aspects of temporal reality. The total human body, therefore, with all its aspects (including the physico-chemical and the biotic) is always in action in every act of knowing, imagining or willing.

XIX. In the act-structure of the body the so-called association fields of the cerebrum play an essential role. The question concerning the "localization" of the acts has—if properly posed—nothing to do with the problem posed by materialism.

It has been shown that so-called centers of human act-life in the cerebral cortex cannot be viewed as localization fields in the strict sense of the word, for when these centers are disturbed, neighboring parts of the associative brains can take over their function. There is no actual "center of ideas" or "moral center" in the frontal lobes of the cerebrum. In contrast, the sense and motor aspects of sensory awareness can be localized.

XX. All human acts have their origin in the soul as the spiritual center of man's existence. With respect to their temporal structure, however, they can only take place in the human body. It would be incorrect, therefore, to say that the soul or spirit thinks, imagines or wills, just as it would be incorrect to say that the body thinks, imagines or wills. The whole man as an integral unity of soul and body performs these acts. Outside of the body no acts are possible. In other words, acts should be thought of as neither purely spiritual, nor as purely bodily.

XXI. In contrast to the three earlier structures, the act-structure of the human body as such is undifferentiated. It is not typically qualified by any normative modal aspect. Human acts (in their three fundamental directions) can be qualified by any of the normative modal aspects. The scientific knowing-act, for instance, is logically qualified, the imagining-act of the artist has a typical aesthetic qualification, and the act of praying (as an act of volition) of the believer is pistically qualified. But the knowing-act as well as the imagining-act and the act of volition can also take on completely other typical structures. This typical differentiation is closely related to the differentiated structures of human society, which intertwine with the act-structure of man's bodily existence. But these differentiated act types are only variability types of human act life. With respect to their inner structure, human acts are undifferentiated. The relatively undifferentiated character of the association fields of the cerebrum is incomplete with this state of affairs.

- XXII. The undifferentiated character of the act structure of the human body is inseparably related to its function as field of expression of the human spirit in its Scriptural, religious sense. Since the spirit transcends all temporal structures of life, it must be able to express itself bodily in all possible differentiated structures. Because each differentiated individuality structure gives a typical, fixed character to the activity performed within that structure. The human spirit, however, in religious freedom can express itself in the entire field of human act life, which must therefore possess the greatest degree of flexibility. Through this activity of man's soul, the human body (which only takes on a typical, human character in the act-structure) receives its spiritual character. The animal body, limited by its psychically qualified structure, lacks this spiritual character.
- XXIII. It is undeniable that the more highly developed animals have sensory intelligence. Especially Kohler's experiments with chimpanzees have shown that these animals are capable of intuition (*prae-sentire*). By means of a dynamic sensory imagination, they can intuitively sense causal relation between sensually perceived things (e.g. a stick a banana), and they react appropriately to a completely new situation. In these cases, however, we cannot speak of acts of knowing, imagining, and willing, since the animal has no spiritual act-center. Nor can it function as a subject in the normative aspects. Animal "insight" as well as "instinct", even in its highest development, remains rigidly bound to immediate living-environment, and does not rise above the sensory feeling-function.
- XXIV. Although the act-structure of the human body has no modal qualification and therefore does not possess a differentiated qualifying function it is, nevertheless, a normative individuality-structure. This normative structure manifests itself in the harmony of all the act-functions as they are concentrated in the "I"—the religious concentration-point of man's act life—and it manifests itself further in the hierarchical subordination of the unconscious substratum of the act-life to the conscious super-stratum. Whenever this structure is broken up, as happens in schizophrenia symptoms, a pathological split appear. In such situations the unconscious act-life breaks its hierarchical subordination to the conscious act-life, so that the patient is no longer capable of relating his disintegrated act-life top his I or selfhood.
- XXV. The discovery of the so-called unconscious has dealt another blow to the traditional dichotomistic conception of human temporal existence. For it became apparent that the relation between the pre-psychical, the psychical and the post-psychical functions of human life is even closer in the sphere of the unconscious⁵ than it is in the conscious super-stratum. Messer's argument (*Psychology*, 5e Aufl.; 1934, PI 345 ff.) that the unconscious has no demonstratable existence apart from the human soul as "substance", and that the unconscious exhibits no bodily character is based on an obvious *petitio principii*.

XXVI. The act-structure of the human body, like all other individuality-structures, exhibits a whole series of types⁶. These types form the field of investigation of “characterology” (personality structure). Character is the typical temporal expression of the individuality of the human spirit in the act-structure of the human body. Character, as a temporal individuality type must be sharply distinguished from the “heart” as the spiritual center of human existence. As such it is not of a spiritual but of a bodily nature. This bodily nature is evident from the hereditary nature (of the primary aspects) of character dispositions. These dispositions are transmitted by the genes of gametes.

This transmissibility, however, only pertains to potentialities or dispositions; the heredity of acquired characteristics has never been demonstrated. The nativistic conception, which appeals to the studies dealing with the character traits of identical twins, is not in agreement with the facts.

XXVII. The voluntaristic character-theory (Stern, Messer and many others) is to be rejected in so far as they seek the center of human personality in the so-called “directional-dispositions.”

XXVII. Man’s character is of a normative nature. Man’s psychically qualified temperament, his biotical qualified dispositions (especially those of sex), and his physically qualified dispositions are enkapically bound by and interlace with his character. Kant’s separation between temperament (“Natural aptitude”) and normative character is entirely determined by the dualistic ground-motive of “nature” and “freedom” and is not in agreement with the structure of man’s bodily existence.

XXIX. The Scriptural ground-motive basic to the Philosophy of the Law Idea should also direct the study of the basic genetic problem of anthropology, namely the question concerning man’s temporal becoming (genesis). A sharp distinction must be made between the creation of man and his temporal becoming. For the creative act of God is not subject to time like the bodily becoming of man⁷. The days of creation must be understood in terms of bistic time, not in terms of the physical time measure of the earth’s rotation. Unlike Gen. 1:27, Genesis 2:7 does not deal with the creation of man, but with the temporal process of becoming.

5Cf. the appearance of blisters by means of suggestion, the so-called stigmatization phenomena, etc.

6Radical types of a secondary nature: male or female; races with their different primary and sub-types. Variability types: related to different nationalities, characteristics associated with various occupations, etc.

7Cf. Christian Perspectives 1962.

XXX. Evolutionism denies the reality of individuality structures, within which the temporal becoming of creatures takes place on the basis of God's creation order. It is built upon a nominalistic concept of species and concentrates entirely on the variability of form types. Paleontology, comparative anatomy, embryology, nor modern genetics (Mende, Johanssen), or even modern serology have presented any proof for the evolution of man's body from animal ancestors.

In Roman Catholic science various scientists have taken the position that evolutionism is acceptable with respect to the human "material body", but that the "human soul" in the sense of anima rationalis is called into being by an immediate creative act of God. From a Reformational point of view such a conception must be rejected. Both creationism and traducianism (especially in vogue among Lutherans) are in conflict with the ground motive of God's Word Revelation. Both conceptions are (partly) dominated by the Greek form-matter motive. Creationism is not only in conflict with the teaching of Scripture concerning original sin, but it is also in conflict with the creation story itself. Gen. 2:1 tells us emphatically that the entire creation has been completed.

XXXI. Both creationism and traducianism (which is favored in Lutheran circles) are contrary to the central theme of the Word of God. Both are dominated, at least partially, by the Greek form-matter motive. Creationism is not only contrary to the Scriptural teaching concerning original sin but also to the creation account itself, especially Gen. 2:1, where the whole creation is said to be completed.

XXXII. The creation of man (both body and soul), which, according to the Scriptures, has been completed, unfolds itself creaturely in the way of generation. This generation has both a bodily and a spiritual (religious) side. With respect to its bodily side, humanity is generated in cosmic time (of one blood—Acts 17:26 K.J.V.). With respect to our religious side (not taking place in "time") we are the "spiritual seed" of Adam and as a result of his fall, share in his sin. Through the regeneration by the Holy Spirit, this religious descent from Adam is interrupted. This re-generation by the Holy Spirit has a condition (not as directive) the "natural" descent of religious generation from Adam. The "natural man" is first, religiously rooted in Jesus Christ.