PREFACE

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
George Santayana

In the 1920s a distinct Reformed philosophy arose in the Netherlands. It was not specifically planned, in the sense that its appearing answered to a clearly defined goal. There was a melange of factors that accompanied its emergence, some personal and some related to the intellectual milieu. Two brothers-in-law, Dirk Hendrik Theodoor Vollenhoven (1892-1978) and Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977), entered into discussions with each other, with the intention of gaining a more ‘Calvinist’ understanding of matters intellectual, especially as concerns worldview and the foundations and methodology of the sciences. The aim of pursuing a Calvinist/Reformed understanding reflects their neo-Calvinist context, though they were critical of that context as well. Other influences, particularly those of the broader intellectual environment, relate to the dominance of neo-Idealism on the Dutch scene at the time. These influences were more problematic. The brothers-in-law never came to complete agreement as to the proper critical distance to take, nor how that distance was best formulated. This disagreement affected the understanding of Reformed philosophy itself. It resulted in its having two founders, as each acknowledged. This entails, despite their agreement on many points of detail, that neither should be approached nor understood primarily through the other. We wish to take a close and critical look at the emergence of Reformed philosophy, with particular attention being given to the part played by Vollenhoven.

This study is not the first to turn to the decade of the 1920s and investigate Reformed philosophical thought in its burgeoning years. There is valuable and informative research available, though the overall
understanding is neither complete nor satisfactory. The early thought of
Vollenhoven has been analysed by John H. Kok in his *Vollenhoven: His
Early Development* (cf. Kok 1992) in detail. He was the first to subject
early material to a thorough study. However, most of the attention went
to the work that was prior to what Vollenhoven himself considered repre-
sentative of his Reformed position, hence the recognition as to the con-
nection—to whatever degree that there is one—between that early work
and the Reformed position was left somewhat in abeyance. Also Kok
explicitly refrained from bringing Dooyeweerd into his discussion.2

The early thought of Dooyeweerd received a prominent place in the
Dooyeweerd biography of Marcel E. Verburg (cf. Verburg 1989). He in-
cluded in his discussion essential and characteristic passages from unpub-
lished work of the early Dooyeweerd, thereby showing that Dooyeweerd’s
thought definitely passed through a learning phase. But in his discus-
sion of these early years there is no mention of Vollenhoven. The author
brings him into the picture only at the point where the brothers-in-law
accept their simultaneous appointments to their academic chairs at the
*Vrije Universiteit* of Amsterdam in 1926;3 Vollenhoven in the faculty of
arts and philosophy and Dooyeweerd in the faculty of law. We will have
something to say about this neglect in chapter 3 and how this affects
Verburg’s interpretation of Dooyeweerd’s work prior to 1926. Then there
is also Roger D. Henderson’s dissertation study of Dooyeweerd’s early
thought, his *Illuminating Law: The Construction of Herman Dooyeweerd’s
Philosophy 1918-1928* (cf. Henderson 1994). Henderson focussed on
Dooyeweerd’s wrestling with the neo-Kantian context prevalent in the
philosophy of law. He describes Dooyeweerd’s development in the main
in terms of the increasing distance he takes from that context, at the same
time that the significance of Calvinism grows on him. Henderson recog-
nizes the presence of Vollenhoven in this development, but he is not able
to indicate its importance: “Vollenhoven played a role of some signifi-
cance in the development of [Dooyeweerd’s] early systematic thought.
However, it is difficult to say exactly what role this was” (Henderson
1994: 27). We hope to be more successful in this respect through a close
reading of the documentary evidence.


3 Cf. Verburg 1989: 87 ff. It is a longstanding practice, to which I shall adhere,
to refer to this university in the context of English discourse as “Free University”. We
add that Vollenhoven’s appointment to the chair of philosophy included lecturing on
theoretical psychology and its history, taken at the time to be branch of philosophy. In
1958 the main areas associated with his chair were specified as: philosophy, its history and
Preface

There are further informative and supplementing sources in the work of the late Johan Stellingwerff and in the volume, *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd*, ed. by C.T. McIntire (cf. McIntire 1985). In his “History of Reformational Philosophy”, Stellingwerff offers a biographical description of the interaction between Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd in the crucial formative years. But what must be counted as a lack is the failure to grasp the theistic context of Vollenhoven’s initial thought, as laid down in his dissertation of 1918. Here, and in other work of Stellingwerff, his emphasis is on the first appearance of characteristic features of the later position. Then, in the volume edited by McIntire, there is the opening chapter on Dooyeweerd’s intellectual milieu by Albert M. Wolters (cf. Wolters 1985). This offers a very readable description of the neo-Idealist context in which the early Dooyeweerd moved. Wolters emphasized Vollenhoven’s independent work in philosophy prior to Dooyeweerd’s entrance into philosophy. He adds the intriguing remark that on the basis of Vollenhoven’s early work, “a good case can be made for the thesis that he in some significant ways shaped the developing systematic philosophy of Dooyeweerd, especially in relation to the themes of the neo-Calvinist worldview” (Wolters 1985: 16). I don’t know if Wolters has in the meantime himself substantiated the case. But I believe that the present work comes close to making the case in point, at least to the extent that this is feasible.

So we may conclude that, to date, it is not redundant to pay more attention to Vollenhoven’s own systematic position, both within the context of his own development and in interaction with Dooyeweerd, as regards the emergence of Reformed philosophy. We should add that knowledge of Vollenhoven’s historical work fares better, at least the work associated with the so-called “consequential problem-historical method” that he initiated in the mid-1940s. In this connection we call attention to the effort and works of K.A. Bril. He has made virtually all of Vollenhoven problem-historical material available, as well as offering an introduction to the method. In the current study this problem-historical

---

5 Cf. also Stellingwerff 1990 and 1992.
6 There is K.A. Bril’s dissertation (in Dutch), *viz.* Bril 1986, and his introduction to Vollenhoven’s problem-historical method (in English), cf. Bril 2005. Bril’s edition of Vollenhoven’s “Schematic charts” (cf. Vollenhoven 2000) includes a plethora of historical remarks related to western intellectual history. He has also edited Vollenhoven’s articles for the *Oosthoeks Encyclopedie*, in which Vollenhoven makes full use of his method; cf. Vollenhoven 2005c. There is also the compilation of Vollenhoven’s own articles on or related to this method, edited by Bril: Vollenhoven 2005a; and the English translation
work, being of later date, will not be addressed directly, though we will have occasion to refer to it when assessing Vollenhoven’s own (late) characterization of his early work.

The present study wishes to fill in the stated gap in the understanding of the part played by Vollenhoven in the emergence of Reformed philosophy. It (the present study) started as the project of editing Vollenhoven’s chief contribution to systematic philosophy, viz. the text that was used as syllabus for the introductory course in philosophy at the Free University. This introduction to philosophy, indicated as such with the classical title, *Isagôgè Philosophiae*, consists of carefully crafted notes that invite the reader to enter into doing philosophy. As it turned out, Vollenhoven kept returning to the text, from the time he was appointed to the chair of philosophy, in 1926, till 1945. In that time span, about a dozen different versions came into circulation, the first complete version stemming from 1930. The initial challenge was to select the most trustworthy version of the text.

Vollenhoven’s own copy, and the notes and changes he wrote in the margins, as finalized in 1945, proved to be the ‘best’ copy. That copy was used for the bilingual edition of the text, that appeared in 2005. The other versions were thereby definitely ‘superseded’. But they still present an interesting window on Vollenhoven’s work. The more significant differences between the versions could be traced to three important changes in the set-up of the text. In other words, between 1930 and 1945 there were four ‘stages’ in the development of the text. This reflects changes in Vollenhoven’s own development. All these versions were subsequently edited and arranged in one text-critical edition. In that way the differences between the versions became more apparent, and the question as to their significance could now be addressed and studied. This text-critical edition is scheduled to appear simultaneously with the current study.

In the general introduction to the text-critical edition of *Isagôgè Philosophiae*, Vollenhoven’s own copy is used. As to other relevant work, there is an introductory review by John H. Kok of the history and systematics of philosophy, in the spirit of Vollenhoven; cf. Kok 1998. Bennie Van der Walt has done much, over the years, to promote Vollenhoven’s thought in South Africa; cf. Van der Walt 2006. In Tol 1993 there is a discussion of Vollenhoven’s historiographical work against the background of his late systematic thought.

---

7 The bilingual edition is Vollenhoven 2005d, the separately published English only version is Vollenhoven 2005e.
8 Cf. Vollenhoven 2010. This text is entirely in Dutch, including the editor’s general introduction, in which *inter alia* the ‘stages’ are discussed, and the account of the editing of the text.
As initially planned, it seemed appropriate to include an indication of Vollenhoven's course of thought prior and up to the composition of the syllabus text. From the start it was not the intention merely to indicate when the main features of the text were selected or characteristic notions first appeared. That assumes that the final text, being the 'known outcome', is a sufficient end. In fact, this is not so. Vollenhoven's thought continued to evolve, and numerous important changes took place in the later years of his career. In other words, the text is 'provisional' (as he himself insists). Thus, to understand it philosophically and not just verbally, one needs to understand the problems that sustain it. It is in connection with such problems that a change of thought signals a solution to, or at least a lessening of, a problem's urgency.

But Vollenhoven was not always inclined to do his thinking overtly, as readers of his work soon discover (though in the earlier work there tends to be more discussion). The problems that underlie the introduction to philosophy are not always evident. This is another reason why the option was pursued of tracing the context of Vollenhoven's thought, by including research of the earlier work, for this makes his choices more evident. Work that is, in a superficial sense, taken as having been surpassed, does not cease to have significance if it includes the more general schemata of problems that find continuation in a changed constellation of details. The significance towards understanding remains relevant, even though the implementation of such schemata involves critique of former use and changes of paths pursued. As this strategy was applied, the confirmation of its significance, and especially the manner in which this proved to be the case, led to surprising results.

The results were such as to invite and require proper discussion in their own right. This led to the introduction's expanding into a volume that could no longer answer to its subsidiary role, as originally planned. A more measured introduction was then written for the text-critical edition of *Isagôgê Philosophiae*, and this enabled the current text to become an independent volume.

---

9 Vollenhoven 2005d, 4. References to the *Isagôgê Philosophiae* will in general be to the bilingual edition and its 224 sections, i.e. Vollenhoven 2005d, whereby the English half is identical to Vollenhoven 2005e. (A standard reference is then often combined: 'Vollenhoven 2005d/e', followed by a section number in bold.) References to specific versions will be through the text-critical edition, Vollenhoven 2010. (The section references in the text-critical edition and the bilingual edition are identical.) For Vollenhoven's late admission that *Isagôgê Philosophiae* needed reworking, cf. the foreword to the 1967 reprint; Vollenhoven 2010: 71. (Note that section numbers in bold are separated from the year code by a comma, page numbers are separated by a colon.)
In this independent study, due attention could be given to novel features disclosed through the research of the early material of both Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd. The more significant of the novel features are the following.

i. In Vollenhoven’s dissertation on the philosophy of mathematics from a theistic standpoint (cf. Vollenhoven 1918a), one is able to discern, at least in outline, a ‘philosophical position’. The theistic standpoint, which is a variant of ‘theistic intuitionism’, is predicated on the scholastic theme of the harmony between two orders of rationality. One order is that of ‘objective rationality’, that holds of the nature of things, as secured in ideas of distinctive being, and the other order is that of ‘subjective rationality’ in the human being, who attempts to make its conceptual understanding more adequate by increasing the harmony of that conceptual understanding with the objective order. But Vollenhoven qualifies this scholastic use of concept and idea. He takes the criterion of the harmony between the two orders to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition of knowledge. As necessary criterion, the harmony is warranted by the (divine) Logos, which ‘disposes’ subject and object to come together. But this theistic criterion needs the supplement of the (human) intuition, rooted in the Self, in the sense that knowledge, as maintained, calls for a warranted conviction of certainty supporting fundamental ‘synthetic a priori’ judgments. The discussions on the foundations and methodology of mathematics, on epistemology and metaphysics and also the explication of theism, all hang together in Vollenhoven’s initial ‘qualified scholasticism’. This scholasticism will soon (in the course of 1923) be targeted as needing to be overcome. In the meantime there is the motive, expressed in late 1920, to be more consciously Reformed.

ii. Thus, evoking “Christian realism”, Vollenhoven first underscores (in Vollenhoven 1921c) the dualistic use of ‘concept and idea’ so as to sharpen the opposition to the neo-Kantian use. In the latter, the idea is predominantly a directing or limiting concept, in being the regulative idea of the metalogical sphere, which harbours the growth of scientific knowledge. (The metalogical sphere is the ‘Encyclopedia of the sciences’, i.e. methodologically organized domains of scientific knowledge.) Here concept and idea are both aligned to the metalogical sphere, the sphere in which scientific knowledge accrues as organized according to the idea (as limiting concept). But, for Vollenhoven, the growth of the metalogical sphere is controlled by the adequate concept, as ‘sighted’ by the metalogical intuition, leaving the idea free for its role as principle of distinctive being, with its own supporting metaphysical intuition. For, the metalogi-
cal intuition of an adequate conceptual ideal is distinct from the metaphysical intuition, which is aligned to the reality of the cosmos and its ‘thought foreign’ ideas of being. Hence, (adequate) concept and idea (of distinctive being) are distinct; viz. the adequate concept controls subjective rationality, in that it represents the ideal of the complete knowledge of the idea, which in turn secures the essence of objective rationality. Within the metalogical sphere there are distinct domains of validity. This latter point has similarities with Freiburg neo-Kantianism. The metalogical sphere and its distinct domains of validity together form the take-off point for the development of the modal order.

iii. Dooyeweerd who, since 1919, has been studying neo-Kantian works in the philosophy of law, accepts Vollenhoven’s framework of Christian realism, calling it “critical realism” (sometimes “transcendental realism”). A close reading of his early work, especially of 1922, confirms the background in Vollenhoven. Metalogical notions, such as region category and modality, are appropriated from neo-Kantian writers and incorporated into the context of critical realism. At this time Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd are in close contact in developing their realist position. But in October of 1922 Dooyeweerd becomes deputy director of the Kuyper Foundation. This, in turn, no longer allows the contact between Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd to be as intense as it had been.

iv. In or about the summer of 1922 there is reportedly a “find” that would appear to revolve around the realization that knowing resorts under being. This has implications at various levels: metalogical, cosmological and theistic. The metalogical sphere of scientific knowledge, also called the Gegenstand-sphere, is now taken to be secured in how the cosmos is ‘given for consciousness’, as assessed in a ‘modal viewing’. In line with this shift in how knowledge is secured, the Logos is looked on as the divine ‘giver’, in being the divine Word. In virtue of the Logos the cosmos is knowable. Thus the Logos is brought into closer rapport with the cosmos and its objective order of being. This ‘find’ evidences a tendency towards a more ‘Christo-centric cosmism’, that is now said to be an explicit motive (the Logos being ‘in Christ’). The context here is still that of critical realism, but it is ‘shifted’.

v. In November of 1922, the principal of an elementary school, Antheunis Janse, with whom Vollenhoven corresponded since 1919, quite suddenly criticises the notion of the immortality of the soul, the anthropological supplement to scholasticism. A main line of argument of Janse is that the notion of the immortality of the soul lacks proper biblical foundation. Vollenhoven is disconcerted and tries to ‘correct’ Janse. Vol-
Philosophy in the Making

Vollenhoven, now in a very busy period, becomes overworked and in mid-January of 1923 spirals downward in a psycho-somatic crisis from which he does not fully recuperate until December 1923.

vi. With Vollenhoven out of reach, Janse proceeds to publish six (fairly short) articles in anthropology and on life attitude, in which he expresses his new ideas. These articles have never been referred to in Reformed circles. They invite careful scrutiny, all the more so since it is primarily this material that persuaded Vollenhoven, upon reading it after his recovery, that Janse is essentially right. However, Vollenhoven did have criticism, and he assimilated the main new ideas in his own way.

vii. At the same time—while Vollenhoven is still out of reach—Dooyeweerd advances, in about mid-1923, his notion of the ‘law-idea’. It is, as cosmological principle, the ‘organon’ (instrument) by which a self-contained worldview is effectuated. The Christian law-idea is formally the boundary between the creator and the creature, materially it underscores a providential world-plan, that flows from God’s wisdom and is known or accepted on faith. Dooyeweerd, moving intellectually in the context of (scholastic and shifted) critical realism, continues to use ‘idea’ in the metaphysical sense of principle of distinctive being. Thus, his law-idea here focuses on the predestined future as secured in the main structure of the cosmos. The human acknowledgement of this idea, through faith, provides the key to the subjective order of knowledge.

eight. After Vollenhoven’s recovery, it is still about two years before he proceeds to publish. In correspondence at the time he indicates his rejection of the interpretation of the soul as being immortal, implying in fact a rejection of scholasticism as such. Between 1926 and 1931 his publications attest to a revised ‘theistic position’. The notion of the law as boundary between God and the cosmos is in central position, and it is interpreted in such a way as to make the scholastic use of ‘concept and idea’ entirely ineffectual. The former ‘subjective rationality’ is now itself a creaturely condition subject to the logical law-sphere. It does not seek harmony with ‘objective rationality’, i.e. the structure of the cosmos, for it is itself already a part of that structure. Anything ‘subjective’ is divested of a basis in itself—the effect formerly thought of as warranted by the immortality of the soul that supports the intuition. Subjectivity is now said to be ‘tasked’, i.e. to entail the human being’s standing in subjection to the laws that evince cosmic boundaries. The impingement of law calls for a realism of the cosmos in its response to law. This impingement and the response assume an ontological difference between law and cosmic functioning. This understanding contrasts with Dooyeweerd’s initial re-
alist use of law-idea, *viz.* as cosmological principle—in its meaning as providential world-plan—for that use proceeds from the assumption of an ontological *agreement* between law and cosmos. For Vollenhoven, such an agreement undercuts the dynamics of standing in subjection—a dynamics on which the religious-moral struggle of good and evil (direction) is predicated—which is why Vollenhoven found the notion of ‘law-idea’ to be unsuitable from its first introduction.

ix. Dooyeweerd in turn, in about 1928 (cf. Dooyeweerd 1928b), begins to express himself in a way that is characteristic of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (1935-1936). He ontologizes meaning—“meaning is the being of all creaturely beings”¹⁰—making the acceptance of a reality that bears meaning redundant. This capitalizes on the (former) ‘metalogical sphere’ at the expense of the realism of the cosmos. This calls for a reinterpretation of the understanding of ‘law-idea’, which now, as ‘limiting concept’, captures the presupposed coherence, totality and unity of meaning that is presupposed by thought. The Self is now taken as (transcendent) spiritual centre, that is focussed on the totality of meaning by means of its participation in the supra-temporal ‘Archimedean point’, a vantage point from which to view the diversity and coherence of cosmic meaning without predilection. When interpreting this ‘move’ against the background of the foregoing years, Dooyeweerd’s new use of ‘concept and idea’ appears to be closer to a neo-Kantian use than ever before, and the themes he broaches in connection with the Self’s spiritual centre—its intuitive experience and its involvement with time that is modalized in that experience—more than echo important traits of Vollenhoven’s ‘Self’, as described in his dissertation but which in the meantime he had definitely abandoned (Vollenhoven 1918a).

Thus, by the end of the 1920s Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd have each found a way of ‘reforming’ philosophy in a way that is critical of traditional scholasticism, as prevalent in their immediate environment. Vollenhoven reforms it from the perspective of a ‘Trinitarian theistic position’. This position delineates the boundary within which philosophy is practised, guaranteeing philosophy’s ‘intra-cosmic’ relevance and safeguarding it from speculation and antinomies. The Self, in Vollenhoven’s definitive view, no longer proceeds from a prior self-certainty of self-consciousness. Dooyeweerd, in turn, goes from ‘critical realism’ to a ‘transcendental criticism’. For him the Self, as transcendent spiritual principle of the human being, is the crucial factor. In its metalogical orientation regarding the diversity and coherence of meaning, as tempo-
rally experienced, the Self ‘takes a critical stand’ in the light of the supra-temporal totality and unity of meaning. The metaphysical intuition of cosmic reality is redundant. In the law-idea, as ‘transcendental ground-idea’ of philosophy, the Self accounts for its grasp of meaning in the face of the Origin of meaning.

Each of the brothers-in-law continued to develop his thinking, which naturally calls for description and study in its own right. But whichever ‘final’ formulation of the ‘definitive’ positions be deemed adequate, a difference remained between Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, a difference that cannot be assessed without taking serious stock of the early material this study attempts to elucidate and acknowledging Vollenhoven’s role ‘from the beginning’.

This study is organized in four chapters. The first chapter offers a discussion of Vollenhoven’s program. Philosophy, being a practice, it cannot but be influenced by the main determinants of historical reality. By taking a standpoint in the light of an historical tradition one evinces consciousness of this participation as well as being alive to the need for revisions in light of historical change. Through his upbringing in the Netherlands and affiliation with the Reformed tradition of that country, Vollenhoven aligns himself to the Christian religion, in its Reformed expression, and supports a neo-Calvinist (or Kuyperian) world view. Upon his becoming the first full-time appointee in philosophy at the Free University in 1926, Vollenhoven develops an understanding of philosophy, as academic discipline, that is constrained, meta-philosophically, by religious and world-view features, and secured in an objective view of truth that presupposes a cosmic order of determinants of structural differences and connections.

Vollenhoven’s introduction to philosophy, entitled *Isagôgè Philosophiae*, is his main expression of systematic philosophy. It is a set of carefully crafted notes in which he lays down his nuanced view of philosophy. A dominating thought is that scientific or academic disciplines need to proceed methodically. Vollenhoven needs no less than three methods to enable philosophy to be conducted responsibly: the thetical-critical method, the ‘method of knowledge organization’ (Vollenhoven himself nowhere names this method), and the method of resolution and composition. These three methods themselves determine the layout of the introductory text.

Understanding Vollenhoven also calls for attention to the context of the Free University and the Reformed tradition it wished to defend and promote. In that tradition there is an element of scholasticism, expressed
in the assumption of a harmony between subjective and objective orders of rationality. By the time of his appointment to the chair of philosophy, Vollenhoven had rejected this assumption of scholasticism. He therefore felt challenged to set up a practice of Reformed philosophy in an alternative way. He underscored the distinct realities of the religious life, worldview engagement and structured cosmic creatures, and culled from these realities the main delimiting features (conditions) of philosophy, thereby accounting for what he took to be the important but limited task and place of philosophy.

The first chapter discusses these matters of text, context and principles in an exploratory way.

The second chapter discusses and analyses Vollenhoven’s early thought. His dissertation (Vollenhoven 1918a) is the main object of attention here. It deals with the philosophy of mathematics from a theistic standpoint. Our discussion traces a path that begins with arithmetic and geometry, and ends with the theistic standpoint. On route the discussion touches on themes in the philosophy of science, on epistemology—especially the distinction between knowledge and intuition—, the use Vollenhoven made of Alexius Meinong’s Gegenstandstheorie (which becomes the basis for the ‘metalogical Gegenstand sphere’ and thus the modal order) and matters metaphysical, especially the metaphysics of substance. The chapter also includes a section on ‘metalogic’, which emphasizes the ‘realist’ use of idea, with the (adequate) concept being linked to a ‘metalogical intuition’. Finally, the whole discussion of the chapter is pulled together in a summarizing overview, which offers in outline the ‘philosophical conception’ Vollenhoven operates with in his early thought. Vollenhoven defends a qualified scholasticism at the time, whereby the assumption of a harmony between the subjective and objective orders of rationality is supplemented by the intuition, to warrant consciously experienced certainty.

The third chapter looks in detail at the two contacts Vollenhoven maintained, that were most consequential to him in the early years, namely with A. Janse and H. Dooyeweerd. The contact with Janse was instrumental in getting Vollenhoven to reconsider anthropology, in particular the theme of the immortality of the soul and its status as “substantia incompleta”. Janse also emphasized the importance of the ‘biblical understanding’ of the human condition and what this presupposes about the human being and the world. Vollenhoven turned the latter into a constraint on philosophy that “reckons with Scripture”. Vollenhoven’s responses to Janse’s challenges are discussed in the context of the ideas
raised by Janse.

In the discussion of the contact with Dooyeweerd, all the attention is directed to describing the factual contact between Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, and analysing the evidence of Dooyeweerd’s aligning himself to Vollenhoven as he (Dooyeweerd) works at the neo-Kantian writers in the philosophy of law. We then trace how Dooyeweerd begins to go his own way when he advanced the notion of ‘law-idea’ (in 1923) and transforms this from a critical realist notion into one of transcendental criticism.

The fourth and final chapter discusses and analyses Vollenhoven’s initial definitive position, as evidenced by the writings of 1925 - 1931. We begin with a discussion of what Vollenhoven’s criticisms are with regard to what he had called his earlier ‘theistic position’. This puts the two notions of boundary and law in the limelight. Upon analysing their relevance, we come across Vollenhoven’s revised Trinitarian theistic position, and how this leads to his cosmological ‘intersection principle’, a consequence of ‘knowing’s resorting under being’. This principle governs cosmology, understood realistically. The discussion is rounded off by a review of this initial definitive position and by looking ahead to important later developments, viz. in anthropology and the view of law. An addendum on Vollenhoven’s own retrospective account of the early years ends the chapter.

The sources for this study are mainly in the Dutch language. Use is made of translations, when available; otherwise the translations are my own. References to sources are via their bibliographical code (author, year and page). I have tried to keep the references to unpublished material to a minimum. But there is important archival material that could not be passed by. All this archival material is in the “Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme (1800-heden)” of the Free University. Here one may find e.g. the archives of Dooyeweerd (collection no. 77), Janse (collection no. 157) and Vollenhoven (collection no. 405) referred to in this study.

I maintain a distinction in the use of single and double ‘quotation marks’. The double are used for quotations and titles, the single serve to denote words that are merely mentioned.

In the course of my inquiry, important archival material came to light. Each new piece raised the spectre of possibly refuting what was thought to be known of the context. Luckily, during this research the newly found material tended to fall quite readily into place in a way that
confirmed and nuanced my own prior understanding. This made it a joy to trace the contours of the emergence of Reformed philosophy, when subjected to a close reading. For the research seemed to go in the direction of illuminating a niche of cultural history that still has relevance and that we ought not to forget.