



**JOHN RAWLS THROUGH
HERMAN DOOYEWEERD: A
DEBATE ON THE USAGE OF
RELIGION ON POLITICAL
DISCOURSE**

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ABSTRACT

This paper, by the means of a bibliographical review, aims to debate the due place of religion on political discourse. In order to do so, John Rawls' works and propositions towards a political discourse built without the influence of religion is going to be critically read through the perspective of the Cosmonomical Philosophy, defended by Herman Dooyeweerd. The center of the debate is the human self, and what is the source of the unseen commitments that all theoretical currents have. John Rawls defends that it's possible for a human being to be striped away of its contingencies and properties and still function correctly in the public arena. It's the veil of ignorance proposition, which states that inside every human being lies it's reason applied to a retributive notion of justice. On the other hand, Herman Dooyeweerd asserts that reason is not the source of political human activity, but religion is, since the human self is deeply and essentially religious. According to Herman Dooyeweerd, the human self is built around it's Origin, and only it's Origin is able to give meaning to the individual. That being said, after the ontological and epistemological debates, this work proposes a broad interpretation to the eighteenth article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, guaranteeing the right of every parliamentarian that professes a religious creed to express its political opinion based on said creed.

KEYWORDS

Herman Dooyeweerd. John Rawls. Religion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the advancement of secularization, the modern liberalism tides began to separate politics from religion, as if this was a necessary follow-up to the separation of Church and State. According to the liberals, if the individual human being is sovereign and the State should respect his choices, then the logical consequence is: any kind of moral legislation is inherently abusive and totalitarian.

So, as David Koyzis asserts in his book "Political Visions and Illusions" in liberalism, "if there is a 'good', then it should be

determined sovereignly by the individual will” (2014, p. 73). In order for it to happen, most kinds of public imposition of morality should be banned. No paternalist policies should be allowed, according to the liberalism. If the Non-Aggression Principle is observed, then all individuals should be free to self-determine their ways in life.

About the liberal state, David Koyzis (2014, p. 73) says that it should be “spiritually empty” or “metaphysically neutral” in which, every legislation about morality is inconvenient and so forth completely undesirable. In Michael J. Sandel's opinion, this philosophy implies that “government should remain neutral on moral and religious issues so that all individuals could freely choose their conception of the good life” (SANDEL, 2018, p. 308).

This paper aims to analyze the work of John Rawls, notorious for his philosophical development of the above called “spiritually empty State”. John Rawls is a strong proposer of the thesis of religious neutrality in the political discourse. His works are going to be read in a critical and Cosmonomical perspective, based on Herman Dooyeweerd's writings and commentators. The center of the debate is going to be the Right to Religious Conscience of the members of the parliament. In order to do so, it is a must to discuss not only the objective of the political discourse but also whether it is possible for a human being to “undress” itself from all of its presuppositions and enter in the state of neutrality that John Rawls argues it's possible to enter.

2. THE COSMONOMICAL FRAMEWORK

Before the attempt of interpreting the work of John Rawls through the Cosmonomic Philosophy lenses, it is necessary a greater explanation of Herman Dooyeweerd's concepts and ideas. Much can be said about Herman Dooyeweerd. He was a juridical philosopher and theologian of great influence, mainly in the twentieth-century Netherlands through his work on the Anti-Revolutionary Party. His concepts of law, society and spheres shaped much of the Party practices.

Well, in his prolific epistemological and ontological endeavors, Herman Dooyeweerd writes a book called “In the Twilight of Western Thought” a critique of the alleged autonomy of philosophical thought. The great highlight of this Dooyeweerd critique for our work is that John Rawls drinks directly from the idea of this autonomy. When, for example, Rawls talks about the

“political self” as the fundamental identity of the citizen, apart from any other assumption or belief that said individual might hold, the liberal philosopher immediately presupposes the possibility of being able to think autonomously, and also of being moral. and religiously neutral, as if these spheres were unable to influence the monolithic whole of the human ego. Or rather, as if there was an autonomous and neutral justice, set apart from any assumptions or presuppositions.

As an introduction to the *Twilight of Western Thought*, Herman Dooyeweerd asserts the incongruity of establishing reason as a starting point for theoretical thinking, as Immanuel Kant once argued. Now, as taught by Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 44), if all philosophical currents that are said to be based on reason alone had no deeper presuppositions, as indeed they do, every philosophical clash could be resolved in the theoretical field. Yet, said clashes are not solved merely by arguing, for none of the sides are able to reach the true source of commitment of each other. Subjectivism vs. objectivism; Liberalism vs. Socialism; Theism vs. Atheism. None of them can grasp the true source of their opponents in the theoretical field. So reason can't be the true starting point of the theoretical attitude. If it were, through reason alone said discussions could find closure.

Therefore, Herman Dooyeweerd takes a step back in order to find the true starting point of the theoretical attitude. To find what lies bellow the visible arguments. To find the source of all unseen theoretical commitments. The answer is in the human ego.

However, as taught by Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 232), the human ego is quite mysterious. When set apart and isolated, it fades away. It would be like running to catch the wind. There are essentially three relations in which scope it's possible to understand the ego. Two of them are able to sketch the outline of it, and only the third one is able to paint the essence of the anthropology.

The first relation is the "Ego vs. Modal Aspects of Reality". The reality is one monolithic whole. However, when seen through the theoretical attitude, the world can be divided in spheres of meaning. According to Roy Clouser (2018, p. 3), there are 15 modal spheres of reality: the quantitative, spatial, kinematic, physical, biotic, sensory, logical, historical or formative, linguistic, social, economic, aesthetic, legal-retributive, ethical or moral and fiducial (aspect of faith). It is important to stress here that each of these aspects are sovereign over the meanings they intend to translate.

For that reason, each one is irreducible in their area of meaning. Each is intended to govern over their respective area of reality, exploitable only in the theoretical attitude. For example, faith is not confused with reason and vice versa.

On the other hand, according to Tavares Viana (2018, p. 128) there is a dynamic relationship between each of the aspects, so that each of them points to the others, without the absolutization of one in despite of the others. In this way reason can only be interpreted in harmony with the interpretation of the other modal aspects. This is logic: since all of the modal aspects are sovereign above their areas of meaning, one can only know what is reason if the negative concept is equally formed. What isn't reason.

So, the "Self-Modal Aspects of Reality" can only begin to sketch the understanding of the human ego. After all, it is the observer of the observed things. However, said relation is not able to define the called "concentric direction of the ego". According to Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 233), the modal horizon of experience cannot lead one to real self-knowledge. Well, where would one find its true meaning? In the biotic-organic modal aspect of reality? Or in the historical aspect of reality? Or rather in the logical sphere? As Dooyeweerd asserts (ibidem, our translation) "the temporal order of our experiential world is like a prism, which refracts sunlight in a rich diversity of colors. None of the colors, however, is the light itself." So forth, since none of the modal aspects of reality is reality itself, to choose any of the aspects to enlighten the human ego with real self-knowledge would be arbitrary and non-scientific. So, we must reject any attempt to define a "political-self", "chemical-self", "historical-self", etc.

The second relation that Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 233) teaches is the "Self-Neighbor's Self" relation. This relation isn't more capable of leading one into real self-knowledge than the last one. The reason is quite simple (unlike most answers in Dooyeweerd's writings): the mystery of the neighbor's ego confronts us with the same mystery that our ego confronts ourselves. So, to choose this relation to lead one into real self-knowledge would drive the problem away from the real core: the central ethos of the human ego transcends the diversity of modal aspects of reality.

Having set the mood, the third relation enters. This is the only relation that is able to lead one into real self-knowledge. This relation sets the unseen commitments of the theoretical attitude. It's the "Self-Origin" relation, which has a deep religious meaning. The mood of this relation is alike to this quote from Alasdair

McIntyre's *After Virtue* (2007, p. 216): "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"

Every individual finds itself in the big picture, in a greater narrative, which has a deep religious meaning. Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 73) asserts that, if a critical self-reflection is not directed towards the absolute Origin of the human ego, it is doomed to conclude either that the ego is nothing (which is absurd and would deny even the possibility of a theoretical attitude) or to define the ego in the modal horizon of reality, creating strange concepts as the above mentioned "political-self", "logical-self" and so forth. These concepts are strange because they distort and disarrange the array of modal aspects of reality, creating an undue absolutization of a "key" aspect to the detriment of others. However, the very concept of a "key aspect" is strange. For instance, one never looks at a rainbow and states that the key color is blue. There is no key color and there is no key modal aspect of reality. Having said this, it's not possible to achieving real self-knowledge without taking a step back and analyzing the religious tendency of the self.

In accordance to Calvin's Institutes, Herman Dooyeweerd (2018, p. 75) asserts that every individual has a innate religious impulse. That being said, the epistemological framework of every human being is religious. Therefore, an individual will find his "religious ground motif" directing him towards or against God, his true origin. Either a individual will turn himself towards the revelation of God as the Creator, or this religious ground motif will be directed, in a apostate manner, to an idol, found in the modal horizon of human experience, in the form of theoretical reductionism, as will be soon explained through Roy Clouser's work. So, this framework is inescapable because it's the true essence of the human nature. It's inherent to the human mind to have "feelings of divinity". Such feelings manifest in the inner structure of the self and henceforth of the theoretical attitude. This manifestation occurs through what Dooyeweerd (ibidem) calls the "law of religious concentration of our conscience," according to which an individual's rationality is always obliged to transcend itself in order to find its positive meaning. Either to find basis in God as the source of all theoretical commitments, or to find in idols, deifying aspects of the Creation.

Ergo, Herman Dooyeweerd's anthropology is an annuler for the acceptance of the thesis of religious neutrality in any human endeavor, including political discourse. After all, formally, the

epistemological structure of theoretical discourse is already essentially religious.

2.1 ROY CLOUSER AND THE ARGUMENT AGAINST REDUCTIONISM

First of all, terms must be identified and concepts must be outlined. With "reductionism," Roy Clouser seeks to characterize the apostate theoretical attitude that metaphysically simplifies all things within the cosmos (or any other sample space studied) "as having only type X properties and as being [governed] only by the laws of the world. type X. This reduces the content and variety of the cosmos by eliminating from it all the properties and laws of non-X types" (CLOUSER, 2018, p. 2).

However, not all reductionism is so categorical in this way. There is "casual reductionism" that accepts the existence of non-X laws and properties, but is intransigent about the origin of these properties and laws: they can only be produced by purely X circumstances. As reasonable as this claim seems, it remains exclusivist in the sense that X is both independent of everything and producer of everything (CLOUSER, 2018, p. 2).

On the other hand, to end the identification of the terms of the discussion, in addition to monistic reductionism, there is also the dualistic reductionism of reality. According to it, everything that exists is the result of the interaction between realities X and Y. As an example we can mention Plato and Aristotle, who understood reality as the result of the interaction between changing matter and unchanging rational form (CLOUSER, 2018, p. 2).

In order to illustrate cases of reductionism, the beauty of Greek philosophical "radicalism" must be brought back to the reader's memory. Clouser (2018, p. 3) brings a brief painting of the Pythagorean philosophers, who believed in numbers as entities that produce the diversity of the cosmos. Already in a micro sphere, Clouser illustrates theories that claim that the source of all authority is power, wealth, reason, virtue, etc. Moreover, it is evident that this is not causality here as shown in the so-called hard sciences ("the universe is the result of the Big Bang" or "4 is the result of 2 + 2 +"), but rather metaphysical causality (as in Carl Sagan's famous phrase "the cosmos is everything that ever existed, will exist and will exist").

Roy Clouser's thesis against forms of reductionism rests on a simple mental experiment which will be quoted below. In this experiment, he will test materialism and his "physicalist" approach to things, according to which everything that exists has only physical values and properties to be observed. This criterion will be mentally tested on a banal object such as a book.

Thus, the proposal is that the book has only physical properties and is governed by physical laws. Now, let's start extracting from our book concept all kinds of properties that we experience as nonphysical. Begin by taking from him all the quantitative and spatial properties, so he has no "how much" and no locality or form. Then take from it all sensory properties, such as color and tactile sensation. Then take away all logical property from it so that it cannot be logically distinguished from anything else, and also remove its linguistic properties from being referenced in a language. I could go ahead and ask you to divest him of other types of property - such as social, economic, aesthetic, and so on - but I think you already got my point. By removing just a few of the kinds of laws-and-properties I just listed, we remove any possible idea from a book. (CLOUSER, 2018, p. 5)

At this point, the reader is directed to the modal aspects of reality exposed in the previous subsection. As Dooyeweerd asserts (2018, p. 70), these modes of reality cannot be isolated, otherwise a dogmatic and uncritical theoretical development will be generated. On the contrary, the modal aspects of reality can only be understood correctly if they are linked together in the temporal horizon, with one pointing to the other harmoniously. This is exactly what was cleverly stated above in Roy Clouser's argument. When we strip the book of all its contingencies, properties, and characteristics that are not physically experienced, the idea of the book fades away. If an object as banal as a book is inconceivable as having only these characteristics, then it is evident that the physical modal aspect of reality does not exist independently of the others (and neither do the other). To imagine otherwise is to imagine a square circle.

Again, the Dooyeweerdian relation of the "Self-Origin" (or pseudo-Origin) is all too evident because the reductionist theoretical development is essentially religious, according to Roy Clouser. According to the author (2018, p. 4), the first common ground in the discourse of all of the world's religions is the attribution of the "divine", and so forth "independent", aspect to something. This absolutized and deified element is regarded as the producer of all things, and understood as prior to all things. On the other hand, the second common feature between religions is acceptance by experience. From experience, the divinity of the object is assumed. Thus, there can be no purely theoretical conviction about the merit of deification, but it is accepted *a priori*, not by arguments. In this way, religions are equivalent to theories of metaphysical reductionism. According to Roy Clouser, when theories with these characteristics occur "within a religious tradition, their first purpose is to assist human beings in their own relationship with the divine." However, on the other hand, "when they occur in theories, their purpose is first to provide explanations." (CLOUSER, 2018, p. 4)

And there is also a special form of reductionism conveyed by the political ideologies. Epistemologically speaking, the parliamentarian who defends, for example, restrictive measures to curb deforestation on the basis of an essentially conservative or nationalist worldview (not that they are the same, but the example works) is being as religious as a Christian parliamentarian who defends the same thing, but supported by its Christian worldview.

The nationalist, for example, is both reductionist and religious. Despite all the philosophical difficulties of defining nation and nationalism (for example, German Nazi-fascist nationalism followed obviously totalitarian paths while other traditions find points of contact between nationalism and popular democracy), David Koyzis (2014, p. 126, our translation) is able to summarize well the nationalist Geist in one sentence: "From the nationalist's point of view, the nation must be the supreme focus of the loyalty of its members, who depend on it for their welfare and, to some extent, for their very existence. [...] Nationalism instills a certain religious fervor in loyalty to the state."

That is, the ultimate convictions of "good life" and loyalty are completely directed to the nation (or, in some contexts, to the political leader himself). In this sense, Koyzis (2014, p. 127) adds that it is not simply the worship and liturgy of the national anthem, flag, coat of arms and civic parade that characterize the worship of

the god-nation. No. It goes beyond that. Despite all this, nationalism “would still be religious because it sees the nation as a transcendent reality that determines the meaning of all areas of life,” according to Koyzis (ibidem, our translation).

In other words, every human philosophical-political endeavor has a religious starting point, according to Herman Dooyeweerd. This is the Cosmological Framework, which explains the nature of the self and the starting point of theoretical endeavors. The next chapter is going to be a critical analysis of John Rawls’ works through the lens of Herman Dooyeweerd’s cosmological philosophy.

3. THE (UN)VIABILITY OF THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE

John Rawls proposes a contractualist theory of justice with the intent of defining the basic structure of society in order to better distribute income, power and opportunities. It is what he calls "Justice as Equity," a term that comes to name the first chapter of "A Theory of Justice." As the name suggests, a contractualist theory proposes that the State is created by a mutual agreement of peers with the intention of serving the citizens, guaranteeing their fundamental and unalienable rights, such as life, property and freedom.

As Paulo Bonavides (2013, p. 40) suggests, it's the "Nightwatchman State". It's a state that resigns from any responsibility for promoting the common good. It has a "negative responsibility" (to refrain from abusing the citizens). So, the common good is only achieved when individuals achieve the free and full expansion of their creative energies, out of any hindrance of social nature.

In the introduction to "A Theory of Justice," Rawls argues at the outset that "everyone has an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot ignore" (RAWLS, 1997, p. 4). That is, the loss of freedom for the sake of maximizing the good of society is an unthinkable expedient for the philosopher, who, like his master Immanuel Kant, stands against utilitarian conceptions of justice.

That said, Rawls's initial concern is to build a society that is not only designed to promote the common good of its citizens, but also when "(1) everyone accepts and knows that others accept the

same principles of justice and (2) the basic social institutions satisfy [...] these principles." (RAWLS, 1997, p. 5).

According to Rawls's logic, the principles of justice of a society are decisive in the construction of equity as reality. If a wrong principle of justice is adopted, all social institutions, and consequently all systems of social cooperation, will obey them, only by fostering and reproducing inequality in income distribution, opportunities, and ultimately power. This is where the contractual character of his work comes in. Thus, the state is, according to Rawls (1997, p. 13), an agreement of initial wills in a non-historical and hypothetical situation. This initial situation, the author gives the name of "original position".

This position is an "initial equality situation" to use the author's definition. According to him, this position is most favorable for the correct principles of justice to be chosen by consensus. And this is where the boldest thesis of fifth-stage liberalism comes in: the veil of ignorance. As John Rawls tells us (1997, p. 13):

It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized in such a way as to lead to a certain conception of justice. Amongst the essential features of this situation is the fact that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, and no one knows his fortune in the distribution of natural gifts and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I will even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their particular psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen under a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is favored or disadvantaged in choosing principles by the result of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since everyone is in a similar situation and no one can designate principles to favor their particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of consensus or equitable adjustment. For given the circumstances of the original position, the symmetry of mutual relations, this original situation is equitable among individuals taken as ethical persons, that

is, as rational beings with their own goals and capable, in my hypothesis, of a sense of justice. The original position is, we might say, the appropriate initial status quo [...].

That is, in this hypothetical situation, the participants are completely stripped of their subjective worldviews. In the words of Quintanilha (2010, p. 37), the veil of ignorance allows "the contingencies of the social world to be abstracted, so that they do not affect the moment of choice of principles" which would guarantee both the consensus and the justice of the principles chosen, since Rawls's assumption is that, devoid of contingencies, human beings continue their autonomous rationality.

Moreover, for Rawls, under the veil of ignorance, it is possible to be very specific in defining what the parties know or do not know. The author specifies that the parties cannot have knowledge about themselves (ethnicity, profession, salary, property, number of children, living parents, religion, political position, to which generation they belong, etc). Nor can they have particular knowledge about society, such as level of civilization and culture, conservation of natural resources, etc. (RAWLS, 1997, p. 147). On the other hand, what they are given to know is generic information on economics, psychology, morals, politics, philosophy, and justice. That is, the outline of the framework in which reality is operated. (RAWLS, 1997, p 148).

Ergo, it is clear from the outset that Rawls's great goal is procedural justice through pure reason, in the Kantian way. Now, stripped of contingencies, rationality would subsist in man, like a pearl found within a shell. That is, not only does Rawls assume that this rationality is not biased by the contingencies of reality and the individual, (in other words, it would be autonomous) but he also assumes that, as a result, it is the same for all people. Equal between peers. This is clear when the author states that if "all are equally rational and similarly situated, each is convinced by the same arguments. [...] If anyone, after due reflection, prefers one conception of justice to another, then everyone prefers it [...]" (RAWLS, 1997, p. 150), which would generate a unanimous agreement, conducive to the construction of a society with equity as reality.

Such is the credit given by the author to the autonomous and pure rationality of the human being that, according to him, without the elimination of contingencies and the consequent

access to reason, we would not be able, as a society, to build a solid and capable conception of justice. Thus, he says, "we would have to be content with a vague formula stating that justice is what we would agree on, without being able to say much, perhaps anything, about the substance of the agreement itself" (RAWLS, 1997, p. 151).

And how would this autonomous rationality operate? The concept used by Rawls (1997, p. 151) is based on effectiveness. In more value for less money. That is, the rational individual evaluates the options available to them and prefers the one that is most effective in fulfilling their purposes or fulfilling their desires more. In a way, it is utilitarianism positioned in the individual or micro sphere. That is, using the same analogy applied by Rawls (1997, p. 156), if the starting position was a game, the parties would seek more points for themselves without having an interest in a lower score for their peers.

Moreover, in the face of criticism of his first work, published in 1971, "A Theory of Justice", John Rawls revised some points of his theory and wrote, in 1993, "Political Liberalism", originally published by Columbia University Press. In this work, the author reinforces his faith in pure procedural justice in order to determine what is fair, abstracting from values about what is ethical or what is morally acceptable.

In section 5 of the first chapter of Political Liberalism, Rawls elaborates on a political conception of the individual. In his case, he makes concessions and can identify in the citizen an identity strongly constituted by particular conceptions of religion, philosophy and morals. He states (1996, p. 31):

They may have, and often do have at any given time, affections, devotions, and loyalties that they believe they would not, indeed could and should not, stand apart from and evaluate objectively. They may regard it as simply unthinkable to view themselves apart from certain religious, philosophical, and moral convictions, or from certain enduring attachments and loyalties. These two kinds of commitments and attachments—political and nonpolitical—specify moral identity and give shape to a person's way of life, what one sees oneself as doing and trying to accomplish in the social world."

However, even with the recognition of the particular loyalties of the self, Rawls continues to insist that citizens' political and rational conceptions are independent of their particular convictions, and are in fact what constitutes their identity. That is, we must think in isolation of the "political conception of the individual" without regard to our particular loyalties.

This penalty of banishment of particular conceptions of the public square is justified, according to Rawls (1996, p. 58) in the maintenance and viability of tolerance. By our free translation, see; The author states that "'Our [...] intellectual affinities, and affective attachments are too diverse, especially in a free society, to enable those doctrines to serve as the basis of lasting and reasoned political agreement."

Consequently, according to Rawls, public reason can guide the political position of society without dwelling on moral or ethical impasses, distinguishing in these categories from what can be considered fair. In Chapter 6 of "Political Liberalism," in the very first section, the author makes his considerations about this public reason free of particular positions. Not only a State apart from Church, but also politics apart from religion.

And this is the main problem with John Rawls' philosophy: he has a limited view of what religion truly is. Following the post-Illuminism concept, John Rawls would agree that religion is a merely private and spiritual business, which is not able to influence public and rational decisions.

However, when one understands the Dooyeweerdian anthropology, this strict concept of religion simply cannot be accepted. After all, through the Cosmonomic Philosophy lens, there is no single aspect of human activity that is not under the influence of the Self to Origin relation, which is deeply religious.

So, when one strips away a individual of its contingencies, properties and so forth, remains not reason (which is one of the properties) but God, the Creator of said individual. However, in John Rawls perspective, the remainder would not be God, but reason applied to a retributive concept of justice. So, one can safely conclude that, logically, John Rawls understands this reason as prior to every other aspect of human experience. Ergo, this concept is entirely reductionist and religious, for John Rawls, as a liberal, deifies the legal-retributive modal sphere of reality, saying that it's the creator of one's identity as a citizen. It's exactly the kind of metaphysical-origin argument that theoretical reductionism

practices since before the days of Pythagorean philosophers, with their mathematism.

To prove that such proposal by Rawls is riddled with error and reductionism, let us repeat the mental experiment suggested by Roy Clouser in the last chapter. If it is stated that political discourse is essentially legal-retributive² (operates only in the semantic spheres of justice), the experiment against reductionism will take place as follows.

Try to strip an individual of anything not legally experienced; remove its quantitative and spatial kernel and you no longer know how many individuals they are or where they are; remove its historical and ethical properties and it is no longer known who this individual is in cultural terms, in customary terms, in axiological terms, in terms of nationality, ethnicity, beliefs, food preferences, etc.; remove its biotic aspect and it is now unknown whether this individual is male or female, if is in good health, has a disability, has a syndrome, an allergy or even if it shares the burdens of simply being human; remove its economic aspect and it is now unknown how it produces goods and services, or how it fits into the "capitalist food chain". Finally, even if the remaining modal aspects of reality are not demonstrated, if the logical aspect is removed, this individual can no longer be analytically distinguished from any other object.

It remains clear the invalidity of Rawls's propositions about the veil of ignorance and eminently political citizenship. That is, the balance between the modal aspects of reality, called the "sphere of universality," is all too delicate and must necessarily be viewed as a continuous and monolithic whole³. Simply removing any of the *modi significandi* from the equation would weaken the whole idea of being human. What would then happen if one could remove all, leaving only the legal-retributive? It is not possible to imagine a purely legal individual without its other characteristics. As also it isn't possible to imagine a "Legal-Self", as stated in the next chapter. This sphere of sovereignty is not independent of the others nor does it produce the others; that is, the others are not reducible to

2 This modal aspect of reality is all about justice in "fair exchanges", which is exactly the proposition by John Rawls when he says that, under the veil of ignorance, peers will be fair to each other.

3 In terms of worth, obviously, they are to be seen equally. In the theoretical attitude, the observer chooses an aspect of reality - say biotic, for instance - to observe an object through that lens. It does not follow that the biotic aspect is either more worthy or should be deified/absolutized like a reductionist would do.

it. All modal aspects of reality are equally irreducible, as has already been explained. Thus, the legal aspect of reality must not be isolated and placed on top of a mountain to be worshiped. Nor should be put on a book to be worshiped.

When John Rawls proposes that there remains a legal-retributive modal rationality at the core of a human being's identity that is independent of all others, he is ascribing an absolute, prior, and divine character to this property. Ergo, his thesis of religious and moral neutrality of the political discourse fails at the self-referential criteria, since his speech is formal and materially religious. That is, there is no escape from the Dooyeweerdian cosmonomic idea. According to Fábio R. V. Barros II (2019, p. 39), "the created being is completely dependent on origin, existence and goal, therefore, to said being is given meaning, and it would not be correct to say that such being 'possesses' or 'has meaning'".

4. CONCLUSION

Then again, as stated before, John Rawls' veil of ignorance proposition falls short at the self-referential criteria. Because of the author's strict concept about religion, and underestimation of its influence in human activity, Rawls is not able to take a firm hold at the true essence of the human being, which is, the Self to Origin relation. Instead, the philosopher mistakenly proposes that reason alone is in the core of the human self.

That being said, through a cautious read of Herman Dooyeweerd's writings and commentators, it is clear that the political discourse based on religious creeds, theoretical reductionism and political ideologies are all on the same epistemological status. They are all based on different forms of the Self to Origin relation. Consequently, if one's desire is to rip politics from religion, the task may be more difficult than it seems. The only way to take religion out of any equation is by taking human beings away from said equation. As stated through the entirety of this paper, every human being is deeply religious.

So forth, a Dooyeweerdian interpretation of the eighteenth article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴ is

4 Which states the following: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

very broad, hence that, according to the philosopher (2018, p.75), the religious ground motif is the spiritual force that drives every human activity. Therefore, every parliamentarian who professes a religious creed has the right to express its political opinion based on said creed, as every ideologically-driven parliamentarian has the right to express its political opinion based on said ideology.

Consequently, a Dooyeweerdian take on the eighteenth article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would have in mind that "religion" isn't just the collections of dogmata in which a institutionalized creed stands upon. Religion is what moves you forwards in the great scheme of the cosmological narrative. Religion is the foundation of every worldview, may it be directed towards the One True God, or may it be directed towards an idol.

For that reason, given that the 18th article states the right to publicly manifest a religious creed and worship, when one understands the true meaning of a religious statement, under the Cosmonomical Framework, it's clear that, for a Protestant Parliament member to argue against abortion based on religious reasons, said member is protected by the 18th article. It's his/hers right to publicly manifest religious conscience, which does not refer only to ecclesiastical activities. Since human beings are religious and liturgical beings, every human endeavor is full of religious meaning and purpose.

Therefore, it's clear that a politician has the right to state and align its political expressions/attitudes on his religious conscience. Because, if one doesn't, its political expressions/attitudes will be aligned with someone else's religious conscience.

Let there be no undue silence, but may our worldviews be put in combative positions within the democratic debate. In this way, and in this way alone, a haughty political discourse is stoned, which is not silent in the face of moral impasse, but has the wisdom of the multitude of opinions to leap over obstacles with the common good in mind.

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