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Hermeneutics and the Meaning of Life: A Step toward Unification Hermeneutics

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The meaning of life is one of the most critical questions for the majority of people. Feelings of meaninglessness are an open invitation to despair, addiction, sexual promiscuity, violent behavior, and even blind obedience to manipulative ideologies. Viktor Frankl, a holocaust-surviving psychiatrist, characterized the state of meaninglessness as "existential vacuum" and noted, from a psychiatric perspective, how it can lead one to depression, aggression, addiction, and conformism. [1] Feelings of emptiness can easily lead man to seek gratification through immediate sensuous stimuli or blind conformity to the masses or a manipulative authority. Those substitutive behaviors, however, only lead to further emptiness. It is like filling an empty bottle whose bottom has a big hole. Internal thirst for meaning still remains. The question of the meaning of life is a kind of universal question which has crossed nearly everyone's mind. In spite of such "cry for meaning," [2] we cannot easily find the answer.

Why is the question of the meaning of life difficult? One of the main reasons is that the question is entangled with other fundamental questions of philosophy. It is an intersection of questions concerning: the existence of God and afterlife; the nature and existence of human beings; ontological characteristics of the world concerning fate and freedom; ethical questions of justice, good and evil; happiness; and others. None of those questions are easy to answer. Furthermore, the meaning of life has a personal dimension of "why me?" When one is struck by challenging incidents such as tragic accidents, illness, and the loss of beloved ones, one naturally asks, "why me?" In the face of such challenges, it is difficult to discern a definitive answer. Even if you hold certain religious beliefs, you may still raise a theological question concerning the involvement of God in human suffering and evil; the compatibility of the existence of a benevolent and almighty God and the existence of evil is one of the most difficult questions in theology or the philosophy of religion.

By responding to those challenging philosophical questions, each individual gradually forms a certain worldview, a basic understanding of the world, which works as a framework of interpretation of the events of life. Life has twists and turns, ups and downs. Whenever you encounter challenges, your worldview, the basic assumptions of your interpretive framework, is tested. If you can manage them within the current worldview, you do not question your framework. When you experience, however, a hermeneutic breakdown by encountering things your current worldview cannot explain, you may try to modify it or even change it. Over the course of your life you may re-arrange that framework again and again.

One cannot expect definitive answers for all those philosophical questions surrounding human life. It is reasonable to see life as a process that is filled with mysteries, and to see life as a journey to explore truth. During this journey, some may find a particular religious faith as the ultimate frame of reference. If we closely examine religious faiths, however, we find speculation, wishful thinking, and ideals that have little grounds for justification other than mere belief. Furthermore, religion tends to add *ad hoc* hypotheses for any logical inconsistencies and gaps between theory and reality. For this reason, mutually exclusive and logically incompatible truth-claims are preserved in religions that are now divided into numerous sects and denominations. It is ironic that each group argues its exclusive supremacy over others.

Within the midst of chaotic status of all sorts of truth-claims, speculations, and beliefs, religious or not, how can we frame the question of the meaning of life? Some argue that the meaning of life is a matter of personal preferences and choice, [3] others argue that it should be approached as how life is grounded on objective values, [4] some view the question as the question of moral commands of how one "should" live, and some view it as a matter of religious belief. More than anything else, we need to examine the question itself and figure out how to approach it, why that approach is appropriate, and what the boundaries and scope of that approach is.

Approaching the Question of Life's Meaning

Unificationism is a theistic worldview built on a number of beliefs. Just like any religious worldview, believers tend to take its own faith-based worldview as the ultimate frame of reference, which they argue is "true" and demands no further validation or rational critique. Thus, the question of the meaning of life is solved, and it is simply a matter of believing the religious teaching. If you hold this position, that these beliefs demand no further critique. Secure in your belief, you are likely to approach the question of the meaning of life by interpreting the events of life within this framework. This approach, common to conservative believers of religion generally and which I tentatively call the "uncritical approach," has a decisive flaw. I point out two interrelated problems and the positive benefits of taking a critical approach.

First, this uncritical approach can appeal only to those who accept its religious worldview. It has no appeal outside of the circle of believers. Further, what are the compelling reasons why you accept that particular faith? What is the ground of your belief if it is not blind assertion? By critically examining its truth-claims and articulating its rational grounds, you can have better grounds for establishing why and how the truth-claims of Unificationism hold. As a matter of fact, *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, the main text of Unification teachings, provides rational grounds to validate its truth-claims against other theological positions throughout its pages. [5] What is missing is a more comprehensive and thorough critique and analysis.

Nevertheless, the Unificationist worldview, presented primarily as Divine Principle [DP], has many ambiguous claims [6] that demand critical scrutiny. It is fruitful to set aside or bracket one's belief for the moment, see the question of meaning of life as a testing ground of validity of this worldview, and see what meanings it discloses. The question of the meaning of life should be considered as an opportunity to test the validity or plausibility of DP's worldview and truth-claims. By applying the DP to the questions of life or having a dialogical interplay between beliefs and challenging questions, ambiguous concepts and ideas of DP will be clarified. This effort provides rational grounds upon which both believers and non-believers of Unificationism can discuss and assess Unificationism.

Second, the uncritical approach conceals the interpretive dimension of the belief system, thereby preventing its further development. DP is a belief system that provides a particular framework for interpreting the phenomena of life. However, interpretation by its very nature is an open process, where new meanings are continuously disclosed. In order to give openness to further findings of the Principle, we must recognize the presence of a hermeneutic dimension in our understanding of the Principle. By recognizing the interpretive dimension of the Principle, we can recognize that it not a closed system that does not accept any room for further development, but an open system that invites continuous development and reinterpretation.

The mechanisms of interpretation are independent of one's worldview. They are formal mechanisms that work regardless of the contents of one's beliefs and positions. The whole tradition of hermeneutics has been dealing with this issue since antiquity. By clarifying a mechanism of meaning, human understanding and interpretation common to all human discourse, we can review how and why worldviews affect human understanding. Even under hallucinatory beliefs and manipulative ideologies, one can interpret actions and events and find meaning. In this case, the question is not if you can find your life meaningful or meaningless, but what meaning you find. The issue is, therefore, not limited to a dichotomy between meaningfulness and meaninglessness, but it is *what* meanings you find in your actions and life events. Different worldviews reveal different meanings. It is fruitful to step back from your worldview and examine the mechanism of human understanding itself and see how meaning is born.

If one takes an uncritical approach to DP, the question of the meaning of life probably does not exist as a problem because it has been "solved." Precisely because I take a critical approach, the question of the meaning of life emerges. As I noted, contrary to its definitive claims as the "final truth," [7] Unification teachings have much ambiguity and fuzzy truth-claims. Claiming so is one thing, but validating it is another. The theoretical development of Unificationism is possible only when we put its most fundamental assumptions and beliefs under critical scrutiny.

The article will articulate three points: first, what the basic principles of philosophical hermeneutics are; second, how those principles can be applied to the question of the meaning of life; third, the relevance to Unificationism and remaining tasks. This article is, as noted, a methodological preparatory step toward a more substantial critique of the Divine Principle.

Hermeneutic Approach

Hermeneutics is a theory of meaning that articulates principles of how meaning arises or how interpretation is carried out. Although hermeneutics has a long tradition, what is most pertinent to the meaning of life is the "philosophical hermeneutics" developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer presented his hermeneutics as a universal principle applicable to all human understanding/interpretation. He did not, however, apply it to the question of the meaning of life. Thus, it is my intention to apply the basic principles of philosophical hermeneutics to the meaning of life.

The tradition of hermeneutics can be traced all the way back to antiquity. From the interpretation of religious texts, signs,

symbols, oracles and dreams to the interpretation of laws, interpretation has been an essential part of religious and legal practices. Hermeneutics developed during the medieval period primarily as the art and technique for interpreting biblical and classical texts. Modern thinkers such as Schleiermacher and Dilthey expanded it to all spheres of the humanities and everyday discourse. It was, however, Heidegger who articulated the interpretive dimension in human understanding and how human being exists by interpreting the meaning of being. In his early work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger identified philosophy as "hermeneutic phenomenology" by showing how the interpretation of the meaning of being is essential to human existence. Gadamer then further developed hermeneutics into a general theory of interpretation, known as philosophical hermeneutics.

Preparatory analysis: rejection of modern subject-object framework and physicalist assumption

In order to set a proper ontological-epistemological framework for a hermeneutic approach, we need to examine the modern subject-object framework. A common framework presupposed by major modern philosophers from Descartes to Kant, the subject-object framework that divides the world into two realms, the subjective, mental realm and the objective, physical realm, and the primary sense of reality is ascribed to the objective realm, identified as physical materiality. Thus, the modern subject-object framework is tied with physicalism that views physical materiality the primary sense of being.

A particular concept of truth is tied to this framework; truth is defined as the correspondence between ideas/statements (subjective) and reality/state of affairs (objective). If you presuppose this framework, where do you ascribe "meaning" to? It is to the mental, psychological, subjective realm. Is "meaning" a matter of feeling/thinking in the mind? If meaning is simply categorized as psychological, mental phenomena, what are the corresponding "objective" phenomena? Are they the physiological phenomena in the brain?

Both Heidegger and Gadamer rejected this subject-object framework as the primary framework of being and the correspondence theory of truth as the primary concept of truth. They argued that this framework is secondary, and presented teleological part-whole relationships as the primary framework of being. They also defined truth as "disclosure" or "unveiling": The meaning of a being is disclosed in terms of its purpose or role in the teleological matrix of the whole. For example, the meaning of a cup is disclosed in terms of its role in the totality of our living environment. As a matter of fact, multiple meanings are disclosed according to their multi-layered part-whole relationships. Heidegger and Gadamer both argued that the modern subject-object framework is a deficient way to approach the phenomena of meaning or how meaning is shown or presented to us.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger characterized the world as a teleologically organized totality. Every being in the world points to other beings in terms of its roles and purposes. The meaning of a hammer, for example, is disclosed in terms of its purpose or utility, which points to nail, wood, carpenter, house etc. The materiality of hammer, that is its metal and wood, is disclosed when it is broken. The physical and chemical properties of a hammer are shown when we impose a theoretical framework of physics and chemistry. In other words, Heidegger argues, the primary sense of being is disclosed in terms of its purpose within the matrix of various purposes. Physical materiality of the world is only secondary, and it becomes available to us when we impose a theoretical (physics for example) perspective on the object. [8]

What, then, is a philosophical methodology we can use to study the meaning of life? We will take a phenomenological approach construed in a broad sense. [9]

How does meaning arise? Three hermeneutic circles

How does meaning arise? To put it another way, how do we understand or interpret the meaning of certain things or events? What is the mechanism of comprehending or interpreting the meaning of our experiences? There are three basic principles: 1) a part-whole relationship; 2) pre-understanding; and 3) dialogical interaction. Each uses a circular process, called a "hermeneutic circle." As I noted, thinkers of hermeneutics recognized and formulated them in various ways. While earlier thinkers of hermeneutics such as Schleiermacher understood hermeneutics as primarily the technique of interpreting biblical and classic texts, Heidegger and Gadamer made it the universal principle of human understanding; Heidegger articulated how human beings exist by interpreting its meaning of being, and Gadamer formulated the principles of interpretation as universal principles of understanding in general. In order to apply hermeneutic principles to real life situation, such universality is necessary. The principles below are the most basic ones.

Part-whole relationship

The first principle of hermeneutics is the part-whole relationship: The meaning of a thing arises through its role, function, and purpose within a context (whole). For example, consider language and the meaning of a word. The meaning of a word is determined by how it is used in relationship to various wholes such as phrases, sentences, and the semantic totality of the given language. Ludwig Wittgenstein recognized the meaning of the word in its use: "For a *large* class of cases of the employment of the word 'meaning'… the meaning of a word is its use in the language." [10] Here is the circularity of part-whole: without understanding words (parts) which constitute the language (whole), you cannot understand the language, but you cannot understand the language without understanding words (parts). Thus, you need to enter into circularity of parts (words) and whole

(syntactical and semantic totality of the language) in order to understand the meaning of a word. In other words, meaning arises through contextual relationships of the word, and the contexts can extend to real life contexts where the word is used.

Consider another example. If you hear someone with a marshmallow and a stick ask you, “Where’s the fire?” that person is asking you where the campfire is to toast his marshmallow. If you hear “Fire!” at 3 A.M. in the morning, you understand it to mean that there is a fire in the building and you should leave immediately. Thus, around any given word there are multiple wholes, including phrases, sentences, entire languages, and other social, cultural, even historical contexts within which to interpret that word. Understanding the meaning of a word basically entails understanding these multiple contextual relationships.

Pre-knowledge and understanding

The second principle of hermeneutics is that understanding takes place by forming a circularity between pre-understanding and understanding the issue at hand (things you try to understand). The question is this: is understanding like receiving information from the outside and is the mind a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*, or is understanding possible only when we presuppose the presence of some sort of implicit understanding or pre-knowledge? Is understanding possible without any pre-knowledge? The issue is as old as philosophy. Plato raised the question, known as Meno’s Paradox. Consider, can you ask a question without any understanding or knowledge whatsoever? If you have no knowledge, no matter how implicit or vague it may be, how can you even raise an issue, and when you are given an answer, how do you know, “Yes, this is what I was looking for!” If you have no knowledge, you recognize neither the issue nor the question, and when you are given an answer you cannot judge the validity of that answer. Meno asks Socrates:

> And how will you search for something, Socrates, when you don’t know what it is at all? I mean, which of the things you don’t know will you take in advance and search for, when you don’t know what it is? Or even if you come right up against it, how will you know that it’s the unknown thing you’re looking for? [11]

Socrates replies to Meno:

> I see what you’re getting at, Meno. Do you realize what a controversy you’re conjuring up? The claim is that it’s impossible for a man to search either for what he knows or for what he doesn’t know: he wouldn’t be searching for what he knows, since he knows it and that makes the search unnecessary, and he can’t search for what he doesn’t know either, since he doesn’t even know what it is he’s going to search for. [12]

Plato’s solution is this: our soul already possesses eternal Ideas of truth, goodness, beauty, and other virtues; when the soul enters into a body, it is “clouded” by bodily desires and temporarily forget what it knows. When we experience things, we come to realize what we knew deep inside of the soul; so understanding is a “recollection” of eternal Ideas. For Plato, the soul is not a blank slate but an entity filled with eternal Ideas. We certainly do not have empirical knowledge prior to experience. The question is if we can have knowledge without having such pre-knowledge. Pre-understanding of eternal Ideas is, Plato argues, the condition that makes our search for truth and our judgment of value possible.

The presence of pre-knowledge is also seen in Socrates’ understanding of his role as a teacher. He characterized his role as a “midwife” and his method of teaching “midwifery.” A midwife does not “give” a baby to a mother but helps her deliver a baby. Similarly, Socrates argues, the learner is simply awakened to the truth within him or her and the teacher simply helps the learner realize the truth within.

Augustine also recognized the presence of pre-knowledge. In *The Teacher*, he argues that a teacher simply prompts the learner to see the truth within the soul. When the learner hears the words of the teacher, he consults with the “interior truth” of his soul and makes value judgments.

> But when they explained, by means of words, all those subjects which they profess to teach, and even the science of virtue and of wisdom, then those who are called pupils consider within themselves whether what has been said is true. This they do by gazing attentively at the interior truth, so far as they able. [13]

Based on his Christian faith, Augustine tied the internal truth to Christ within the soul.

> It is not a speaker who utters sounds exteriorly whom we consult, but it is truth that presides within, over the mind itself; though it may have been words that prompted us to make such consultation. And He who is consulted, He who is said to *dwell in the inner man*, He it is who teaches—Christ—that is, *the unchangeable Power of God and everlasting Wisdom*. [14]

Among modern philosophers, Immanuel Kant is probably best known for exploring "*a priori* knowledge" (knowledge prior to experience). His question for the theory of knowledge is two-fold: how experiences become possible and how non-empirical sciences such as mathematics become possible. He argued that human being has "*a priori* knowledge" as the condition to make both experiences and formal disciplines such as mathematics possible.

Experience is, Kant argues, the synthesis of material contents coming from outside and the forms of knowledge we have in the mind. When we receive information from outside we naturally organize it, and the organizing mechanism is already built into our minds. Kant pointed out two layers of such organizing mechanisms: forms of intuition (space and time) and forms of understanding (quantity, quality, relation, and modality). For example, when we receive information from outside, we naturally distinguish inside-outside, before-after. For Kant, space is our built-in mechanism that makes the distinction of inside-outside, and time is that for the distinction of before-after. Kant calls time and space "forms of sensibility," because they are the forms that organize the sensible contents we receive from the world. We also make various basic distinctions in terms of quantity (unity, plurality and totality), quality (reality, negation and limitation), relations (inherence and subsistence, causality and dependence, and community), and modality (possibility, existence and necessity). These most basic concepts are called "categories," and they are tied to forms of judgment.

Consider our experiences. We naturally organize what we experience according to these distinctions and classifications. The key point is that these categories are built-in to the mind prior to our experiences. Thus, Kant argues, the validity of logic and mathematics can be secured only when these categories are *a priori* (prior to experience). In his correspondence with David Hume, an empiricist contemporary of Kant, Kant included the concepts of causality and personal identity among these *a priori* categories. In moral philosophy, Kant also argued for the *a priori* nature of moral judgment. He saw the universality of logic, science, mathematics, and morality as secured by their *a priori* status.

In recognizing pre-knowledge (*a priori* knowledge) as the condition for understanding, Kant rejected, along with other thinkers of the Enlightenment, tradition and authority as conditions for understanding. Here is where Gadamer (and Heidegger) differ from Kant. While for Kant, pre-knowledge (*a priori* knowledge) is a-historical, for Gadamer, pre-knowledge is in fact rooted in historical heritage built on tradition and authority. Gadamer and Heidegger took similar issue with modern thinkers who viewed modern science as a paradigmatic model discipline and held to a subject-object framework and a physicalist view of reality; they both rejected the primacy of the subject-object framework in order to set a proper stage for hermeneutics.

Enlightenment thinkers shared the ideal of liberation from prejudice rooted in tradition and authority. Both empiricists and rationalists were convinced that we should be liberated from the prejudice of traditions and authorities. They sought the ideal of "prejudice-free knowledge." Rationalists (like Kant) found reason as the faculty of liberation, and empiricists found experiences as the ground to liberate us from such prejudice.

Gadamer challenged those ideas and ideals of the Enlightenment and attempted the "rehabilitation of tradition and authority." [15] For Gadamer, understanding is possible only on the ground of historical heritage. His teacher Heidegger articulated the structure of understanding as a dynamic temporal process spanning the past, present and future. Understanding/ interpretation is not simply a cognitive phenomenon but is the mode of existence. Since human beings exist as a temporal process, understanding/ interpretation is the dynamic, synthetic process of retrieval of heritage, attendance to the present, and anticipatory projection into the future. For both Heidegger and Gadamer, understanding/interpretation is not a narrow cognitive matter but an ontological issue.

Modern epistemologists working within the framework of subjectivity-objectivity, mental-physical framed the question of understanding as how the mind (subject) "recognizes" or "knows" or "reaches" things (object) in the world. Heidegger and Gadamer rejected this assumption, because under this subjective-objective framework "meaning" becomes a matter of "mental" (subjective) phenomena. Heidegger recognized that prior to such epistemological matters (i.e., how can we know things in the world), a human being already exists by being involved in or engaged in the matrix of the teleological relations in the world. It is because human being exists as "care" that his existence discloses some "meaning" to him. It is wrong to think, Heidegger argues, that a human being exits as if an isolated thing in the world. Rather, every being in the world exists in the matrix of relationships with other people and things; the world is a part of the fabric of your existence and you are a part of the fabric of the world. Heidegger conceptualized this interwoven way of existence as "being-in-the-world." Being-in-the-world is how the "*Dasein*" (human being) exists:

Being-in is thus the formal existential expression for the Being of *Dasein*, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state. [16]

Heidegger's question for modern epistemologists it this: before you (cognitive subject) cognize or reach a thing (object) in the world, how do you exist (live) in the world? Don't you have an implicit understanding of the meaning of being—of the self, things around you and the world, no matter how authentic or inauthentic that understanding may be? In fact, the meaning of being is prior to any epistemological matter; the understanding of the meaning of being is shaped by the temporal structure of human existence, delineated by birth and death. He thus shifted the question of understanding from its epistemological setting to an ontological setting with an existential twist.

What, then, is the essence of philosophical activity? Heidegger shares the conviction of Socrates, that philosophy is an activity to make implicit understanding, which everyone has, explicit. Truth is not something a teacher "gives" to a student. Everyone has an implicit understanding of truth, and the task of teacher is to make it explicit (Heidegger) or to "awaken" (Socrates) the student to it. Thus, Heidegger defined truth as *aletheia* ("disclosure" or "unconcealment" in Greek), experienced, for example, as an "awakening" in religious and artistic activities.

Here we notice a shift of the concept of truth. The modern subject-object (mental-physical) ontological framework presupposes truth as the correspondence of ideas with reality or statements with the state of affairs; this is called the "correspondence theory of truth." When Heidegger rejected the subject-object framework, he also shifted the concept of truth from the correspondence theory to truth as *aletheia*.

In his "The Origin of the Work of Art," [17] Heidegger presented our experience of truth in art by citing van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*. The truth experience we have with art, poetry and religion is not a confirmation of ideas with reality as is common to scientific studies, but a kind of realization or awakening accompanied by feelings of ecstasy or transcenddence. This experience of truth is not something we observe and discover as an "object" in the world without involving our self; rather it is an experience of self-discovery. You do not distance yourself from the phenomena of truth, but you are a part of the phenomena.

In the subject-object framework and scientific studies, the truth is understood as if it were an objective reality independent of your existence. In the experience of truth in religion, the transformative experience of the self is always a part of the phenomena of truth. This shift in the concept of truth is, at the same time, a shift from an epistemological experience to an ontological, existential experience of truth. The discovery of truth is, therefore, the process of becoming an authentic self and embodying truth.

The line of thinkers I discussed, from Socrates, Plato, Augustine and Kant, to Heidegger and Gadamer, recognized the existence of pre-knowledge. The type of pre-knowledge and its relationship with truth varies according to philosophical framework and approach of each thinker. Nevertheless, it seems to be the case that understanding/interpretation is carried out as a dynamic circular process of accessing pre-knowledge and grasping the issue at hand (the thing you are trying to understand). Since the question of the meaning of life involves existential questions of one's way of existence or attitude to life, the concept of pre-knowledge, understanding/interpretation, and truth can be best approached by adopting and expanding the perspectives of Heidegger and Gadamer.

Dialogical interactions

The third principle of hermeneutics is that understanding takes place as dialogical interactions between the interpreter and the item/issue of understanding. An interpreter lives in a certain life-world with historical consciousness, unique perspective, worldview, and other conscious and unconscious beliefs and presuppositions. These perspectives comprise the interpreter's horizon. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer defines "horizon" as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point." [18] The item/subject one tries to understand is also surrounded by and exists with its unique horizon.

The phenomenon of understanding thus takes place as the "fusion of horizons." For example, suppose you try to understand Plato's text. You have your horizon of twenty-first century America. The text has its horizon too—it was written by Plato more than two thousand years ago in ancient Greece for a certain audience. The meaning of the text changes according to how you understand the horizon of the text. For example, consider the question: to whom did Plato present his two-world theory, unchanging world of Ideas and changing world of sensible things? You can interpret his two-world theory in different ways depending on how you understand the horizon of Plato. If you take the debates between Parmenides and Heraclitus over the nature of being as the primary horizon or context of the text, you read Plato's two-world theory as his attempt to synthesize Heraclitus (the world is in flux and change) and Parmenides (the world has essentially no change; it is always and constantly "is"), combining a Heraclitian view of the world and a Parmenidean permanence to the unchanging world of Ideas. If you, however, understand the same text as Plato's answer to the ethical relativism of the Sophists, you can interpret Plato's two-world theory as an ethical objectivist metaphysics. The contexts that constitute the horizons of Plato's text can be interpreted in many

ways. Depending on how you understand the horizon (contexts) of the text and what horizon you hold, the meaning of the given theory changes. Truth is a phenomenon that emerges in multiple ways through the fusion of horizons. Interpretation is therefore a dynamic process, where new meaning emerges by changing horizons.

Meaning is not, for Heidegger and Gadamer, a fixed objective being, but the dynamic phenomenon of disclosure. If you keep to a modern subject-object physicalist ontological framework, interpretation and meaning can be seen as arbitrary, "subjective," mental, psychological phenomena. As we discussed, Heidegger defined truth as "disclosure," "unconcealment," "laying bare" in reference to our truth-experiences in arts and poetry. This attempted to make interpretation and meaning-making a dynamic open process without being arbitrary and subject to personal feelings or choices. Thus, interpretation and the phenomena of meaning are driven by our quest for truth, not as the correspondence of (subjective) ideas with (objective) reality but as "disclosure."

The dialogical structure of understanding/interpretation takes various forms depending on types of interpretation. The interpreter's active engagement and exploration play a key role in the interpretation of fixed texts. Interpretations/understandings between people are more dynamic. The meaning of life events is open to new meaning according to the life narrative. Since life is an open-ended process, the meaning of events is open to new interpretation. Events later in life can change the meaning of past events in your early life. Meaning is not a fixed, unchanging object-like being, but the phenomena of disclosure. I will explore below how we can explore and apply these basic principles of hermeneutics to the question of the meaning of life.

Relevance to Unifcationism

Developing a theory of hermeneutics from Unificationism is still an open issue. Its full exploration requires examination of the concepts of truth, being, time and other basic concepts in Unificationism. The task requires separate studies beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, we can see some relevance to Unificationism. I briefly note the relevance of the above three hermeneutic principles to Unificationism without a systematic exploration of their relations. This can be a preparatory analysis for developing a Unificationist hermeneutics.

The part-whole principle, the first principle of hermeneutics, is central to Unificationism. Unificationist ontology holds two concepts of being: "individual truth body" (ITB), and "connected body" (CB). [19] What underlies these two concepts is the concept of part-whole. Unification Thought [UT] views each being both as a part of a larger whole, and the whole made up of constitutive parts. Thus, its ontology views the world as the totality of numerous part-whole relationships organized by two purposes, the "purpose for the whole" and the "purpose for the individual." This perspective is consistent with Heidegger's view of the world as a teleologically organized part-whole organic being.

The biggest difference between Heidegger and UT is its approach. Heidegger, as well as notable philosophers in history, is clear about how and why he proceeds in his inquiry in the way he did. Both *New Essentials of Unification Thought* and *Exposition of the Divine Principle* present these ideas without articulation why and how they reached these claims. Although the former is a philosophical text, it lacks a critical examination of its approach or philosophical methodology to construct its theory. [20] Thus, it appears as a speculative metaphysics. Heidegger took hermeneutic phenomenology as his method and took how human being understands the meaning of being as the clue. From there, he articulated a teleological structure of the world. Although DP and UT indicate "revelation" as the source and authority of knowledge, [21] they also use rationality and experiences as the ground of justification. A reflective analysis on ways to justify their truth-claims is the task yet to be explored.

What is the concept of truth in Unificationism? Heidegger and Gadamer present it as "disclosure," *aletheia*, a type of truth pertinent to the truth-experience in art, poetry, and religion (e.g. Enlightenment in Buddhism) in contrast to the dominant modern concept of truth as a correspondence between ideas and reality, statements and state of affairs. Together with this shift, they changed the framework from the modern subjectivity-objectivity framework to a phenomenological approach, the descriptive articulation of how phenomena are disclosed to us. It is not clear what framework or approach Unificationism takes. Nevertheless, Unificationism attempts to articulate its basic orientation to truth. The Divine Principle is presented as the unified truth of religion and science. [22] From this orientation, it is likely that case that Unificationism attempts to integrate two types of truth at least, correspondence theory of truth, which is presupposed by sciences, and truth as "disclosure," pertinent to religion and art. A larger issue for Unificationist endeavor for the integration of these concepts of truth is the question of framework. As I noted, the correspondence theory of truth works best in the subject-object framework, and truth as "disclosure" works best in non subject-object framework such as hermeneutic phenomenology.

The second principle of hermeneutics is that understanding takes place as a circularity of pre-understanding and the issue at hand (things to be understood). Although there is no theory of understanding/interpretation in DP or UT, the idea of pre-understanding as the condition of understanding is pertinent to Unificationist concept of "individual truth body." Unificationism views each being as embodiment of truth. Thus, the cognitive dimension of the discovery of truth is tied with existential realization of its own truthfulness. [23]

Finally, dialogical circularity in hermeneutics parallels the concept of "give-and-receive action" in Unificationism. Although UT's chapter on Methodology elaborates a typology and characteristics of the concept of giving and receiving, the focus of

analysis is primarily a formalistic typology. [24] In philosophical hermeneutics, the issue of method or approach is explored in relation to the question of how we experience truth, how we discover truth, or how meanings are disclosed to us in understanding/ interpretation. The approach to the concept of give and receive action needs to be expanded in order to see its relevance to hermeneutics.

Application of Hermeneutics to the Meaning of Life

When we apply the principles of hermeneutics to human life, we find it necessary to reconfigure them according to practical specificities of human life: First, the principle of part-whole leads to the perspective of a multilayered approach to the meaning. Second, pre-understanding is re-interpreted through the potential for love, creativity and authenticity (truth). Third, dialogical interaction is understood as challenge-and-response.

Multiple layers of meaning

From the principle of part-whole, we can gain a perspective to see the meaning of life as multilayered relations of the self in multiple personal and social contexts (wholes). In addition, the temporal openness of life, the totality of which is always extended and open to the future as long as one is alive, means that the meaning of events in life is open to reinterpretation by what is coming in the future. Put differently, the part-whole principle informs the meaning of life as being multilayered from the perspective of space, and extended or open from the perspective of time.

Each individual lives in multiple personal and social contexts. Each context is a whole, and specific events and actions within each context become the parts that constitute the whole. The whole can be one's family, workplace, professional society, religious community, and other social, cultural communities. As a member of a social group or community, you constitute the whole and play a role for the whole. Meanings of life are born by your (part) relationships in these multiple contexts (wholes). For example, you may be a mother to your children in a family, a sister to your siblings, and daughter to your parents. Your existence is meaningful in certain ways to each member of your family; your life is a part of the narratives of other people's lives and their lives are a part of your life narrative. By sharing lives and existences, various part-whole relationships are formed in a family. Your life is meaningful in multiple ways to other members of your family. In a workplace, you may be a salesperson in retail or a teacher at a local school. You may be a part of a congregation at a local church. Because each individual exists in multilayered part-whole relationships, the meaning of one's life is best understood as multilayered.

The perspective of time and the temporal dimension of life further informs the multiple layers of meaning. Life is a narrative extending to the future as long as one is alive. If we see it like a novel, it is punctuated by chapters and sections; early childhood can be one chapter, adolescent life can be another chapter, and so on. Life has twists and turns, ups and downs. Some are peaceful but some are catastrophic. Events in each chapter have a certain meaning within the context of the narrative of the chapter, yet they can gain different meanings as the narrative continues to develop further on in life. A series of failures at one stage of life can take on a different meaning, such as perseverance upon the achievement of success later on in life. The meaning of a life narrative at one point of life is open to a new interpretation from what you will build in the future. Thus, the meaning of life is open to layers of meanings that can come from the future.

Realization of one's potential: love, creativity, and authenticity (truth)

We saw above that the question of the nature of pre-knowledge or pre-understanding can be approached from various angles. From a cognitive perspective, we can find conditions for knowledge such as Kant's *a priori* knowledge. Approached as a question of understanding/interpretation, we can find such answers as Gadamer's "historical consciousness." How can we approach the question of pre-understanding to expose its full scale beyond the cognitive level? The issues of life extend beyond that level to include the existential, ethical, aesthetic, practical, and more. In order to set the most appropriate angle of analysis for the question of the pre-conditions of human life, we re-examine the meaning of life itself and ask "what makes life meaningful?"

The principles of hermeneutics we have discussed so far are about the formal mechanism of how meaning is born. The question we need to consider is the contents of life; it is the question of value: "What makes life a worthy endeavor?" Since the question of worth or value is directed to both the self and others, the question of pre-condition is thus rephrased: "What are the pre-conditions of human existence to make life a worthy endeavor for the self and others?"

The question of values in life brings out another issue: the joy of living. No matter how valuable the activities and events of one's life may be, it is hard to imagine a worthy life if it has no element of joy. One can tolerate pain and suffering for some worthy endeavor. Yet unless you have a sadistic temperament, suffering is meaningful because it can make life, yours and others', genuinely joyful. Consider a life that has no element of joy at all, and ask yourself, "Do I want to live such life?" Definitely not.

In order to define the pre-condition of being human, we need to consider the nature of human life as well. Life is a series of challenges and responses, as discussed below. From birth to death, you encounter all kinds of challenges, big and small. Life is a dynamic process of overcoming, and the process of overcoming is at the same time a process of joyful transcendence, discovering and overcoming the self. Heidegger articulated the self-transcending nature of existence by conceptualizing it as "ecstatic temporality"; just as time is constant and transcends the self, human existence is a constant, self-transcending process because of its temporality. In this sense, his *Being and Time* should be better read as *Being "as" Time*.

How then can we approach the question of the pre-condition of human existence? The best approach is probably inquiring into the pre-condition of human beings from the perspective of one's potential: "What capabilities do human beings have, that can bring out value and joy in the process of overcoming challenges?"

From this question, we can find three basic human capacities: love, creativity, and authenticity (truth). These capabilities are the basis of creating personal and social human relationships, cultures and civilizations.

Love (construed in the broadest sense) lies at the most fundamental level of human existence. As Heidegger pointed in his *Being and Time*, "care" is most fundamental: "*Dasein's* Being reveals itself as care." [25] Heidegger sees it as the "a priori" condition of all human activities including all theorizing and practice: "'Theory' and 'practice' are possibilities of Being for an entity whose Being must be defined as 'care.'" [26] Because each individual exits as "care," he can pay attention to its being, its meaning of existence, other people and things around him. Although Heidegger does not explicitly define "care" as love, I adopt the concept of love in order to describe its actual works in personal and social relations. Life narratives can be seen as narratives of love from birth to marriage to death. In a variety of ways, each person realizes the potential for love through his or her personal and social relations.

When human beings encounter challenges, their creative capacities allow them to cope with and overcome those challenges. Creativity is not some special capacity that only gifted individuals have. On the contrary, it is the most universal capacity every individual is born with. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the pioneers of positive psychology, conducted extensive studies on creativity and articulated the universal mechanism of creativity. [27] He noted a correlation between the creative life and joy. Through interviews with those who have made significant contributions to society, from scientists to business people, artists, athletes, scholars, he found common characteristics: they all experienced the joy of what they do as the primary motivating factor. [28] They expressed their experience as if they were in "flow." [29] From this, Csikszentmihalyi conceptualized a kind of joyful experience those creative individuals experienced as "flow." As I will elaborate later, in being creative or experiencing flow, it is essential to keep a good tension and balance between challenges and one's coping capabilities.

In order for love and creativity to generate positive values, we need to have authenticity (truth), which includes rationality, normativity and truthfulness. Both love and creativity can be destructive forces unless they are guided by rational, ethical, and existential principles of authenticity (truthfulness). [30]

When we conceive the potentials for love, creativity, and authenticity as the pre-conditions of generating value, human activities can be seen as the processes of realizing those capacities. As we discussed in the previous section, human beings generate meaning across multiple personal and social dimensions. On the question of how to make life meaningful, Viktor Frankl lists three ways and three corresponding values: creative values, experiential values, and attitudinal values. His perspective roughly parallels the three capabilities I listed:

> We can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. [31]

Love, creativity, and authenticity (truthfulness) exist in a human being as the pre-conditions to make those activities possible. As life is a process of realizing love, creativity and authenticity in social and historical contexts, such experiences are shared; and these accumulate to comprise entire cultures and civilizations.

Challenge-and-response

Gadamer characterized the process of understanding/interpretation as a dialogical interaction. When we apply it to life, we can expand it to challenge-and-response. This perspective views life not as a flat, challenge-free equilibrium, for which challenges are accidental disturbances. It views life, on the contrary, as a path which intrinsically has challenges. Human life is a series of responses to challenges, which make possible the realization of one's potential. In other words, human beings realize their potential by responding to challenges.

The key problem is that some challenges are too hard to bear and human beings have no control over them. From birth to death, we can encounter challenges that push us to despair. The question of the meaning of life often occurs at such occasions. Can

human beings respond in meaningful ways? Viktor Frankl posited “attitudinal values” as his response to this question; human beings have a defiant power of transcendence, which he called “spirit,” that allows a person to choose his or her attitude toward even the harshest conditions. From this understanding, Frankl rephrased the question of life in order to highlight this defiant power of the human spirit. He pointed out that we should not expect life to give us some meaning but, instead, we should think that we are asked by life to answer the question by taking responsibility:

> *It did not really matter what we expect from life, but rather what life expect from us*. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life—daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. [32]

Frankl points out two areas: work and human relationships (love). The attitudinal value is the freedom of being able to choose one’s response to challenges.

We can experience the fullness of life when we can overcome challenges and realize our potential for love, creativity, and authenticity within ourselves and in relation to others. Even if your contributions are not recognized by others, you in fact experience the process of realizing the fullness of being by realizing your potential. It is this process of realization or transformation that gives you the experience of joy.

The key is in keeping a good balance between the challenge and one’s coping capabilities. When the challenges are too hard, you can become apathetic and fall into despair. When the challenge is too light, you can experience boredom. The joy of realizing your potential arises when challenges are moderately beyond one’s coping capabilities. When you experience the process of overcoming, you experience the “flow” in Csikszentmihalyi’s term; by cultivating the self, you discover the self you are meant to be or become:

> It provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to highest level of performance, and it led to previously undreamed of states of consciousness. [33]

It is not easy to keep a balance between one’s capabilities and challenges. Challenges are often too big to bear. For this reason, Frankl’s “defiant power of human spirit” is an important realization that human beings can choose his or her attitude in any circumstance.

Nevertheless, keeping a good balance is the key to cultivating one’s potential. Anders Ericsson, one of the leading scholars in expert studies, points out in “The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance” [34] that keeping a “deliberate practice,” adding moderate difficulties to what one can comfortably do, is an essential component for becoming an expert. Ericsson lists two other factors: the amount of time one invests and having a good mentor or coach at each level.

Gadamer pointed out the playful characteristics of a dialogical interplay in understanding/interpretation. Likewise, I want to point out the playful nature of challenge-and-response. Human life oftentimes seems subject to luck or chance. Unless you hold a radical deterministic worldview, be it theistic or non-theistic, you will likely to recognize the element of indeterminacy in life. A playful attitude in life, rather than holding a rigid deterministic attitude, makes life much more joyful. An attitude of trying to have a full control over everything, or of subjugating oneself to the power of fate, is not only unrealistic but also unhealthy. [35]

If there is playfulness in challenge-and-response, there should be a playful element in social, cultural activities as well. Johan Huizinga, a Dutch cultural historian, known for *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, [36] saw the essence of human being in “play” and characterized human being as *homo ludens* (man the player) as opposed to *homo sapiens* (man the wise) or *homo faber* (man the maker). In his *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, he presented play as the essence of cultural activities.

In reference Plato’s *Laws*, Book VII, which reads, “while God is the real goal of all beneficent serious endeavor, man, as we said before, has been constructed as a toy for God, and this is, in fact, the finest thing about him,” [37] Huzinga points out the “holiness” of “play.”

> The Platonic identification of play and holiness does not defile the latter by calling it play, rather it exalts the concept of play to the highest regions of the spirit. We said at the beginning that play was anterior to culture; in a certain sense it is also superior to it or at least detached from it. In play we may move below the level of the serious, as the child does; but we can also move above it-in the realm of the

> beautiful and the sacred. [38]

Against the harshest and fatalistic challenges of life, how can we cope with them? In playfulness, we may find the triumph of spirit, which makes humans "holy." Roger Caillos, who developed a typology of play in *Man, Play, and Games* [39] based upon Huzinga's studies, made an interesting remark: "Play is not only the area of 'limited and provisional perfection.' It constitutes a kind of haven in which one is master of destiny." [40]

Similarly, Nietzsche saw a sacred affirmation of life in a child's playfulness. The innocent, selfless forgetfulness of a child in the joy of play, Nietzsche argues, reveals the attitude of a holy affirmation of life, even faced with the fatalistic fact of his existence —that no one can choose his birth; the fact of existence is fatalistic in that it cannot be done, undone, or repeated:

> The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a wheel rolling out of itself, a first movement, a sacred yes-saying. Yes, for the game of creation my brothers a sacred yes-saying is required. [41]

In the "Three Metamorphoses" of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes a transformation of three stages of human spirit in a metaphorical language. The human spirit transforms from a camel (spirit of obedience; Medieval Christian spirit) to the lion (modern free spirit), and from the lion to a child. Nietzsche saw "joyful play" as the last stage which human beings can achieve; Nietzsche saw holiness in such playful, joyful, innocent affirmation, symbolized by a child's playful attitude.

Relevance to Unifcationism

The three perspectives discussed above: first, the multilayered approach to meaning, second, life as a process of the realization of one's potential for care/heart/love, creativity, and authenticity, and third, life as challenge-and-response, are consistent with the Divine Principle. Here I give short notes without full explorations. Since I have already commented on the relevance of basic hermeneutic principles to Unificationism, I note some additional points.

First, the multilayered approach to the meaning of life in Unificationism is most evident in its perspective of history. In *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, each individual is seen has being a part of historical purpose:

> As an individual, each one of us is a product of the history of the providence of restoration. Hence, the person who is to accomplish the purpose of history is none other than I, myself. I must take up the cross of history and accept responsibility to fulfill its calling. To this end, I must fulfill in my lifetime (horizontally), through my efforts, the indemnity conditions which have accumulated through the long course of the providence of restoration (vertically). [42]

In addition to personal and social meaning, the life of each individual is interpreted as having historical meaning. Due to its theistic view, historical meaning is seen as a "calling" from the divine. In other words, in addition to layers of personal, communal, and social meanings, according to Unificationism, each life has a layer of theistic, historical meaning individuated as a particular "calling." This perspective opens up a whole new question of the "purpose of history" and other issues in the philosophy of history.

Second, Unificationism views human life as a process of realizing inherent capabilities of human beings that are bestowed by God. UT articulates them as heart, logos, and creativity. [43] Heidegger's concepts of care and creativity directly correspond to these concepts in UT.

The question of authenticity and inauthenticity has always been an issue for human beings. Love can be authentic or inauthentic, and creativity can be used in an authentic or inauthentic way. As a matter of fact, the issue of authenticity is central to the meaning of life. How human beings can move from an inauthentic way of being to authentic way of being has been the issue in philosophy since antiquity. For example, in Heidegger's philosophy, it was one of the central issues in *Being and Time*.

In the Principle, the issue has been theologically framed under a series of concepts such as the "Fall," which refers to a biblical narrative of the Garden of Eden, "sin," "redemption," "fallen nature," "restoration," and others, and human life has been understood as a process of "restoring" the "original human nature." The issue of turning from inauthenticity to authenticity is conceptualized in the Principle as "restoration." In UT, however, the issue of "restoration" (from inauthenticity to authenticity) has not been sufficiently discussed except in the section on history. Generally speaking, the concept of "authenticity/inauthenticity" is a philosophical concept discussed among philosophers. While those theological concepts in philosophy remains as an issue, the concept of "authenticity/inauthenticity" is broadly parallel to the concept of "logos" in UT as

far as the issue of human nature and potential is concerned. Both concepts are tied with the question of how human being embodies truth.

Third, the biggest question of seeing life as challenge-and-response under a theistic worldview is the question of God's involvement in human affairs. Does God respond to desperate prayers and pleas when human beings encounter challenges they can handle?

According to Aristotle, God is a self-contemplating unmoved mover who is not involved in the process of human life, while on the opposite end, the Calvinist God predetermines or predestines the entire course of life. There are all kinds of variations between no involvement and full control. The Unificationist response is the concept of the "portion of responsibility"; each human being has his or her portion of responsibility with which God does not interfere:

> By fulfilling their given portion of responsibility, with which even God does not interfere, human beings are meant to inherit the creative nature of God and participate in God's great work of creation. [44]

The question of the relationships between God and human beings has so many issues to be explored. If you are a theist, you will likely pray to God when you encounter devastating challenges. To what extent and how God is involved in human affairs, including history, is still an open question. Nevertheless, the concept of life as challenge-and-response is, at least, consistent with the Unificationist perspective.

Characterizing life as joy in creativity and love is also parallel to the Unificationist concept of the "purpose of creation." The Principle views God's purpose of creating the world in joy: "The ultimate purpose of the universe, with human beings at its center, is to return joy to God." [45]

Unificationism also presents three areas for realizing the "purpose of creation." Referring to Genesis 1:28, the Principle conceptualizes it as the "three great blessings": perfection of individual character, realization of an ideal family, community, nation, and world, and proper dominion/ governance over the natural world. [46] Their realization is possible by fulfilling one's potential for love, authenticity (truth/ethical norms), and creativity.

A Concluding Remark: Worldview and Meaning of Life

Human life is punctuated by two ultimate, yet enigmatic, bookends: birth and death. Why you were born into the world is unknown, and where you are going to after death is unknown. Whether you like it or not, you were born with a certain DNA makeup, to certain parents, and into a certain social and historical environment; an absolute fact of life also is that you are walking towards death. In between, you encounter all kinds of challenges.

When you try to figure out the meaning of life, you encounter all those questions. One way or another, every individual gradually forms a certain worldview as the framework of interpreting human life. Some hold religious worldviews as the reference point to understand such ultimate questions. Because there is no definitive way to determine the truth/falsity of claims in religion, there are numerous mutually exclusive and logically incompatible belief systems. While each religion or denomination claims to have exclusive superiority over all others, there is no definitive way to assess their claims. Hence, the division and separation of religions have become inevitable.

The question of the meaning of life becomes the field upon which each person chooses his or her worldview based on its hermeneutic plausibility. In the chaos of the competition of truth-claims by diverse worldviews, the key question is how to approach the meaning of life. While substantive claims vary, formal principles of interpretation and understanding remain constant. We articulated such basic principles of hermeneutics and expanded them in order to make them applicable in the context of life.

One remaining question is this: can we approach the question of the meaning of life without dealing with the question of worldview? Viktor Frankl, who set the question of the meaning of life as the central issue for psychotherapy, [47] presented psychotherapeutic methods without touching on substantive claim of worldviews. Although he recognized the "spiritual dimension" as the key layer of human existence and defined his work as "medical ministry," [48] he left the choice of worldview to each individual.

How can we approach this question? Since Unificationism claims the Principle to be the "unified truth," [49] we probably need to articulate three things: first, how the formal principles of hermeneutics and their application to the meaning of life are derived from the Principle; second, what the relationships are between formal principles of interpretation and substantive claims of worldviews; third, how the Principle explains these relationships. Through the exploration of these issues, we are likely to be

able to show the implication of the Principle for the meaning of life. Further, we may be able to show that the idea of “unity” in Unificationism can point to an approach for integrating the formal and substantive approaches to the question of interpretation. If such an attempt at an integrated hermeneutic approach is successful, it can open up a path for the comparison of diverse worldviews.

Notes

[1] See “Logotherapy in Nutshell,” in Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), pp. 97-134.

[2] Viktor E. Frankl, *The Unheard Cry for Meaning: Psychotherapy and Humanism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

[3] Steven M. Cahn, for example, argues that the meaning of life is up to individual choice and preferences as far as they do not harm others: “If a person can find delights that bring no harm, such a discovery should not be denigrated but appreciated.” Steven M. Cahn, “Meaningless Lives?” E. D. Klemke, *The Meaning of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 236-38.

[4] Susan Wolf, for example, defines the meaningfulness of life as “active engagement in projects of worth” by referring to socially worthy activities. Susan Wolf, “Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14/1 (1997): 207.

[5] *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996).

[6] There are numerous ambiguous claims in Unificationism. For example, in *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 1-12, its teaching is presented as the “unified truth” of religions and sciences, all philosophical thoughts and ideas. It is not clear what “unity” means, and why and how it is possible.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 91-148.

[9] There is a considerable difference between the concept of phenomenology between Husserl and Heidegger. Husserl presented phenomenology as an interpretation-free philosophical discipline that describes the essence of phenomena. Heidegger rejected Husserl’s essentialist orientation and idea of interpretation-free knowledge. For Heidegger, there is always an interpretive dimension for human understanding; he presented a hermeneutic phenomenology.

[10] Ludwig Wittgenstein et al., *Philosophical Investigations* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 43.

[11] Plato, *Meno and Other Dialogues*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80d-e.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Augustíne, *The Greatness of the Soul: The Teacher*, trans. Joseph M. Colleran (Westminster: Newman Press, 1950), p. 185.

[14] Ibid, p. 177.

[15] See “The rehabilitation of authority and tradition,” in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), pp. 245-253.

[16] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 80.

[17] “The Origin of the Work of Art” is included in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

[18] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 269.

[19] See “Ontology: A Theory of Being,” in Sang Hun Lee, *New Essentials of Unification Thought: Head-wing thought* (Tokyo: Unification Thought Institute, 2005), pp. 123-171.

[20] Unification Thought presents “give-and-take action” as its “methodology.” The whole question of philosophical methodology in philosophy is why and how any philosophy can put forth its claims. Such meta-philosophical reflection on its procedure is missing in UT. For this reason, there is no methodology in UT. Among contemporary philosophy, logical analysis of language, phenomenology, and deconstruction are some examples of philosophical methodology.

[21] Unificationism presents its teachings as “revelation”: “This truth must appear as a revelation from God” (*Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 11).

[22] Reconciliation of science and religion is presented as the task of a “new truth”: “there must emerge a new truth which can

reconcile religion and science and resolve their problems in an integrated understanding." *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 6-7.

[23] Keisuke Noda, "Understanding the Word as the Process of Embodiment," *Journal of Unification Studies*, 1, (1997): 55-70.

[24] *New Essentials of Unification Thought* provides a "Unification Methodology," which gives types and characteristics of "give and receive action." They are not, however, discussed in relation to the process of understanding/interpretation and the concept of truth. Thus, a cluster of issues such as discovery of truth, embodiment of truth, existential realization of authenticity, and other hermeneutic issues have been left untouched.

[25] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 227.

[26] Ibid., p. 238.

[27] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996). Follow-up studies are discussed in Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Isabella Selega Csikszentmihalyi, *Optimal Experience: Psychological Studies of Flow in Consciousness*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[28] See Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*.

[29] His Flow Theory is one of the major theories in positive psychology. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

[30] Heidegger viewed "the call of conscience" and realization of "death" as two factors that turn human beings from an inauthentic mode of being to an authentic mode of being. For "conscience," see sections 56 and 57 of *Being and Time*; for "death," see sections 46-53.

[31] Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, p. 111.

[32] Ibid, p. 77.

[33] Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, p. 74. On the same page, he also provides a chart to indicate a zone where you can experience "flow" (where there is a good balance of challenge and one's coping capabilities) between anxiety (excessive challenge) and boredom (too little challenge).

[34] K. Anders Ericsson, Ralf T. Krampe, and Clemens Tesch-Römer, "The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance," *Psychological Review* 100/3 (1993), doi:10.1037/0033-295x.100.3.363.

[35] Franklian psychology adopts "paradoxical intention" and "deflection" as techniques for psychotherapy. The former guides one to see events/actions in life with a sense of "humor" and the latter guides one to take a distance from events/issues of concern in life. Both techniques attempt to free the person from the rigid constraints of the issues by creating a healthy distance from them. See "Specific Logotherapeutic Technique," in Maria Marshall and Edward Marshall, *Logotherapy Revisited: Review of the Tenets of Viktor E. Frankl's Logotherapy* (Ottawa, Canada: Ottawa Institute of Logotherapy, 2012), pp. 107-138.

[36] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[37] Plato, *Laws*, Book VII, 803c. Edith Hamilton, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1985), p. 1375.

[38] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens a Study of the Play-element in Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 19.

[39] Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

[40] Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), p. 159.

[41] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus spoke Zarathustra: a book for all and none*, trans. Adrian Del Caro and Robert B. Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 17.

[42] *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 187.

[43] See "Theory of Original Human Nature," in Lee, *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, pp. 173-220.

[44] *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 43.

[45] Ibid, p. 33.

[46] Ibid, pp. 32-36.

[47] Frankl named his meaning-based psychotherapy "logotherapy." His basic insight is that finding meaning in life is necessary, the meaninglessness of life results in an existential vacuum, and logotherapy provides therapeutic methodologies to

achieve this goal.

[48] “The aim of psychotherapy, especially psychoanalysis, has been secular confession; the aim of logotherapy, especially existential analysis, is medical ministry.” Viktor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul, From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1965), p. 270.

[49] See *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, pp. 7-11.