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# From Unification Thought to Unification Philosophy

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Unification Thought (UT), as systematized by the late Dr. Sang Hun Lee, is currently the only “philosophical” exposition of the Divine Principle (DP or the Principle) in the Unification Movement.[1] The Divine Principle, or simply the Principle, contains the core teachings of Unificationism and it is explored in *Exposition of Divine Principle* under theological themes.[2] While the *Exposition* presents the Principle through the interpretation of Biblical narratives, UT presents the Principle in non-biblical language through standard philosophical lenses such as ontology, epistemology and ethics. The attempt to reconstruct the Principle in natural language by asking standard questions of philosophy is a worthy endeavor. Yet, this approach has a fundamental problem. While almost all major philosophies were developed with an element of critical self-examination, UT was not; thus, UT appears as a reiteration of truth-claims without a significant effort in justifying those claims.

The difference in approach is far more important than it seems. By imposing a critical self-analysis, a thought system can clarify its own presuppositions, process of argument, and methodology of analysis. Rigorous self-critique is at the heart of the philosophical endeavor, which intellectuals appreciate regardless of the theistic or atheistic positions of the author. UT has not gained much appeal and acclaim by intellectuals, and in my view the primary reason is because of this lack of self-examination.[3]

This critical position further has the advantage of opening up questions regarding faith and reason, determinism and freedom, the existence of God and the afterlife, and more. Through this process, we can identify the philosophical characteristics of Unificationism and its unique contributions, if any, to the conversations occurring in the philosophy of religion and philosophy generally. Without an element of self-examination, UT’s key concepts and philosophical position remain unclear; without this clarity, UT cannot have a serious dialogue with other philosophies. Developing a critical self-analysis is a necessary step in order to engage with other philosophies and ideas generally.

In my view, in order to cultivate the Principle’s potential, we need to see it as an open system rather than a closed, rigid, system of ideas guarded by religious authority. By making self-critique an inherent stance, one can approach the study of the Principle not simply an apologetic, guided primarily by instrumental rationality, but as an open critique, led by communicative rationality which seeks dialogue with others and an open exploration of its own ideas.[4]

Nevertheless, the attempt of exposing the Principle in non-Biblical natural terms is the notable accomplishment of UT and was an important first step. A philosophical study of the Principle, however, must develop to the next level, and the shift from UT to Unification Philosophy can set the stage for a philosophical study of the Principle in the future.

In this essay, first, I will articulate the reason why we should move to a critical approach. By extending Plato’s “Euthyphro Dilemma,” I articulate the reason why even “revelation” requires interpretation to establish itself as revelation. Second, I will discuss a philosophical methodology of Unification Philosophy and raise questions about the concept of “unification” in Unificationism. I suggest hermeneutics as a possible method in light of developments in the philosophy of sciences.

The primary focus of the essay is the first part, the need to shift from UT to Unification Philosophy. Defining a philosophical methodology of Unification Philosophy requires a thorough analysis of the nature of religion, which is outside of the scope of this essay. My proposal of a hermeneutic method is preliminary and non-exclusive. One may certainly attempt other methods such as logical analysis of language, phenomenology (Husselian) or deconstruction.

# The Principle and Rational Critique: The Need for a Unification Philosophy

The essence of philosophical discourse is critical self-examination. The critique and justification of its own presuppositions, points of departure, reasoning processes, truth-claims and conclusions are inherent to the discipline itself. Non-philosophical disciplines do not necessarily examine the nature, limit, and the basis of justification of their own knowledge.[5]

Beside standard fields of philosophy such as ontology, epistemology and ethics, philosophical analysis is carried out along with each field of knowledge: philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, philosophy of history, and so on. Philosophy is by its own nature self-reflective, examines itself, and therefore includes a meta-philosophical layer in itself.

The critical inquiry is indispensable to a philosophy as it allows one to reveal hidden presuppositions and explore new horizons, thereby cultivating the philosophy's potential. Consider the major breakthroughs in the history of thought. From antiquity to the present, the critical inquiry has disclosed unrecognized presuppositions of the age and given birth to a series of new ideas, discoveries, social and cultural developments. For this reason, philosophers appreciate radical (meaning "root" in Latin) questioning, which uncovers the unnoticed presuppositions held by the people of that era and opens up new horizons of thought. Uncovering invisible presuppositions applies to the activity of philosophy itself. The philosophical discourse demands the critical examination of its own starting point, process of reasoning and conclusions. In order to break the bondage of the past, philosophy has to liberate itself from the ground from which it arose.

Further, self-critique is necessary because it touches upon the nature of understanding itself. Every understanding presupposes some pre-understanding. Without understanding what one is looking for, even in a vague or implicit way, one cannot even ask the necessary questions. For this reason, the process of inquiry can be best understood as a circular process.[6]

Philosophy does not arise from vacuum. It arises from some understanding which is rooted in the past. Various conceptual tools and languages are inherited from a philosophy's predecessors. Noticeable and unnoticed presuppositions, habits and customs of thinking, and unexamined biases are buried deep within this heritage. Yet, philosophy is tasked to move beyond the past in order to open new ways of thinking, which requires a critical analysis of its own ground it arose from.[7] Great thinkers have shown various ways in which to make a breakthrough by disclosing hidden presuppositions from the past and presenting new ways of understanding the world.

We learn how to think from those thinkers and appreciate their endeavors even if we disagree with their assumptions, beliefs and substantive claims. For this reason, atheists appreciate Augustine's works and theists learn from works by avid atheists such as Nietzsche and Sartre. In my view, works of great thinkers exhibit certain elements of undeniable truth and readers learn both from those insights and how they arrived at those insights. Regardless of one's religion or beliefs, readers can appreciate the merits of philosophical insights. Conversely, if a work lacks the rigor of critical analysis, its merits are limited for those who share the same beliefs.

UT lacks this critical element and the work is basically a reiteration of truth-claims of the Principle with additional truth-claims. Key concepts of the Principle remain ambiguous. This lack of self-examination is the glaring deficiency of UT. There is nothing harder than digesting a cluster of truth-claims which lack a critical analysis and an attempt at justifying those positions. In order to make a breakthrough in the study of the Principle, we must turn from an uncritical reiteration to a serious examination of the Principle.

## *Is Reveled Truth Subject to Rational Critique?*

Some may argue that the Principle and UT are not subject to critical analysis because the Principle is revealed truth and UT is its reiteration; the authority of revelation lies on God and the revealed truth is beyond reason. This argument, however, often presupposes separating revealed truth from natural truth and dividing our cognitive faculties between faith and reason. This categorical separation would insulate revelation from rational critique.

I argue that revelation requires critical examination and matters of faith must be subject to rational critique for three reasons. First, as demonstrated by the Euthyphro dilemma, even revealed truth carries the burden of establishing its truthfulness. Second, as revealed truth requires interpretation, the content and framework of that interpretation must be subject to critical examination. Third, social and historical aspects of identifying and authenticating revelations necessitate a critical examination of revealed truth.

In his dialogue *Euthyphro*, Plato articulated the Euthyphro dilemma: "Is the pious (τὸ ὅσιον) loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?" (10a). In Ethics, the question is formulated as: "Does God command x because it is good, or is x good because God commands it?" The latter position is called God Command Ethics. It holds that whatever God commands is good by virtue of the fact God commands it. There is no account of why something is good except that it is God's will. The former position, on the other

hand, demands an explanation of why and how x is good.

The Euthyphro dilemma can be extended to the relationship between revelation and truth contained in the concept of “revealed truth”: “Did God give revelation x, because it is true, or did x become true because God revealed it?” If the latter is the case, no discussion is necessary to explain why and how something is true. The concept of truth, however, loses its meaning in ordinary sense of the term. The former, however, requires explanations of why and how x is true; truth carries the burden of establishing its truthfulness.

The Principle seems to take the former position. Thus, the Principle claims to have solved biblical enigmas and contradictions in traditional Christian interpretations. The Principle itself is the attempt to establish the truthfulness of the Principle by presenting a consistent and coherent account of traditional theological issues. Similarly, the Principle has the burden of establishing its philosophical truthfulness.

Second, the mode of interpretation of revealed truth must be subject to critical examination. Revelations generally involve interpretation on multiple levels. In order to identify information as revelation in contradistinction with imagined images or even unconscious desires or hallucinations, the receiver must demonstrate its truthfulness. Furthermore, because revelations often involve images and symbols, the receiver must interpret their meanings so as to make sense of them. In order to make the correct interpretation of a revelation, the interpretation itself requires some valid criteria or interpretive schema that constitutes a framework of interpretation. Since the process of interpretation is circular,<sup>[8]</sup> one must examine both the contents of interpretation and the framework of interpretation within which interpretation is carried out.

Further, revelations are a one-time occurrence that happens to a particular individual at a particular time. In this way, revelations are unlike scientific theories that are repeatable or subject to experimentation. Therefore, the burden of proving the truthfulness of a revelation is arguably greater than a scientific truth as one who claims the truthfulness of a revelation cannot establish its authenticity by proclamation alone. Anybody can claim to be a “messiah” or a “messenger of God,” even those who hallucinate or have delusions. How does one distinguish revelations from delusions? The meaningfulness of the message may be one criterion. Where a delusion can be meaningful only to an individual person, a revelation demands meaningfulness as recognized by people other than the claimant.

The meaningfulness of the message can be established by layers of hermeneutic work. In the case of the Principle, the message can establish its validity and meaningfulness by responding to intellectual challenges. The text *Exposition of Divine Principle*, be it successful or not, attempts to show how the Principle can resolve problems of traditional biblical interpretation. It is the convincing rationale of the message, if any, which establishes the authenticity of its “revelation.” Similarly, it is the convincing philosophical arguments that can establish the meaningfulness of the revelation. Without such an exposition, revelations remain as philosophically meaningless, self-proclaimed private experiences which no one has access to. Hermeneutic activities are thus indispensable to show why and how the given knowledge is meaningful.

Third, revelations have a social, historical and political dimension. It requires acknowledgement by people in the faith tradition and communities. In organized religions, it is often the case that those who gain political power determine what counts as “revelation” and what the “authentic” interpretation is. Rational critique at this level has social and political dimensions, even though the legitimacy of revealed truth is another issue. Nevertheless, that which is put forward as the authentic interpretation requires a convincing rationale.

## Hermeneutics: A Methodology of Unification Philosophy?

Then, if the Principle requires a critical approach, one such approach may be an open, dialogical, and challenge-and-response approach. This approach presents itself as an exploration, rather than an apologetic. A dialogical method is slightly different from deductive or inductive reasoning. Apologetics often utilize deductive and inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning attempts to draw all possible conclusions and implications from the set premises. Inductive reasoning in apologetics tries to collect supportive evidences to justify the premise. Apologetics often uses reason as an instrument to achieve the ends or goals.

The task is to explore the premises and its presuppositions themselves. The process, therefore, takes a circular path, as would any hermeneutic work. This type of approach would pose a challenge to the Principle, to which the Principle responds. Key concepts of the Principle can be examined through an open dialogue with the questions of philosophy, and the potential of the Principle can be discovered through this tension between the Principle and the problematics of philosophy generally.

The question remains, however, what would the methodology of Unification Philosophy entail? This is a critical yet difficult question. A methodology is often closely tied with the characteristics of the philosophy that it is applied to. Therefore, in Unificationism the method can be derived from the characteristics of the Principle itself. For this reason, an inquiry into methodology is, at the same time, inquiry into the nature of the Principle itself. As such, the concept of “unification” provides a first step in this examination.

## *The Idea of Unification in Unificationism*

The term unification is symbolic in Unificationism. In the “Introduction” of *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, the unity of all religions and philosophies is listed as the “mission” of “new truth” that refers to the Principle: “This new truth must be able to embrace all historical religious, ideologies and philosophies and bring complete unity among them.”[9] Among all types of knowledge, the Principle highlights the unity of science and religion as the mission of new truth:

What missions must the new truth fulfill? The new truth should be able to unify knowledge by reconciling the internal truth pursued by religion and the external truth pursued by science.[10]

Referring to the Principle, the text notes, “There must emerge a new truth which can reconcile religion and science and resolve their problems in an integrated undertaking.”[11]

In practice, the idea of the integration of science and religion was also implemented as a series of academic conferences. Rev. Moon initiated and sponsored International Conference on the Unity of Sciences (ICUS) in 1970 and continued its annual conference for twenty-two times until 2000. Participants included prominent scholars including Nobel Laureate such as Lord Adrian (Physiology), Robert S. Mulliken (Chemical Physics), Sir John Eccles (Physiology and Biophysics) and Eugene P. Wigner (Physics). The consistent theme in these ICUS conferences was the relationship between science and values within the overarching theme of the unity of science and religion.[12]

Throughout these ICUS conferences, UT was presented as the “philosophical” text of the founder, Rev. Moon.[13] Although UT texts were distributed to conference participants, it attracted almost no one.[14] In my opinion, the lack of a critical position of UT was one reason why UT did not gain much attention amongst the participants.

The Unification Thought Institute was established in 1972 in both Korea and Japan, and international conferences on UT have been held since 1983. In 1999, the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought was established at the University of Bridgeport.[15] Rev. Moon specifically proposed the term “integration of world thought” rather than “unification thought” with intent of developing an integral approach for the study of the Principle. The research at these conferences and institutes has been conducted within the framework of UT. However, the philosophical study of the Principle must extend beyond the current framework of UT if it is to encompass the integration of world thought.

### *Integration: Substantive or Methodological?*

The idea/concept of unification is far more complex than we suppose. Each discipline has its own methodology, norms and standards appropriate to its subject matter. As Aristotle noted, rigor in mathematics and logic is different from that of political science and ethics.[16] Each type of phenomena demands its own type of rigor and specific methodologies. The unity or integration of diverse disciplines or sciences necessarily has to consider a question of a methodology of methodologies, that is, a question of meta-methodology. Since philosophy has a meta-methodological element, we can view philosophy as an attempt at the unification or integration of knowledge. Thus, the idea of the integration of knowledge is not new; the concept of unification is, more or less, inherent to philosophy since antiquity.

Pre-Socratic thinkers developed a substantive theory in order to give a better account of the world than the mythical explanations that were based on the arbitrary will of the gods and a variety of ad hoc hypotheses. Plato attempted to integrate the naturalistic explanations put forth by the Pre-Socratics and socio-ethical approaches of Sophists[17] and Socrates. His metaphysics, a theory of Ideas, which is a substantive theory, is the theory he came up with as the result of his efforts at integrating natural theories and social-ethical theories.

Plato built his theory from an essentialist perspective, which presupposed reality to be unchanging and eternal. Aristotle further developed the most comprehensive theory of his time, or arguably in the history of philosophy. Augustine adopted Plato and Aquinas used Aristotle to develop Christian philosophy. Christian thinkers attempted to integrate their faith with the naturalist explanations of Plato and Aristotle. Thus, Greek and Medieval thinkers both attempted to develop a substantive theory to account for diverse natural, social and human phenomena.

Although methodological concerns were always present in the works of Ancient and Medieval thinkers who focused on a substantive metaphysics, Modern thinkers began to shift their focus to methodology and epistemology.[18] Contemporary philosophers generally take a methodological approach, yet they often question the meaning of the method itself as well as explore underlying issues such as rationality, subject-object framework, and the notion of truth. The integration of knowledge is a continuing issue in philosophy, because philosophy is a discipline that seeks a perspective with which to view all phenomena within a set of principles.

Wittgenstein, for example, took the logical analysis of language as the task of philosophy, which became the source of inspiration for analytic philosophy. Since all ideas and thoughts are presented in language, he argued,



philosophical problems arose from a confused way of using language. Analytic Philosophy, which is dominant in the English speaking world, takes the logical analysis of language as the way to do philosophy. Philosophers who take this approach explicitly reject developing any substantive theory. For them, philosophy is essentially critical reasoning; hence the focus on developing a consistent methodology and logic.

Husserl, on the other hand, developed phenomenology as the way to articulate the human experience. He developed phenomenology as the method of doing philosophy and characterized it as the science of all sciences.[19] Phenomenology became the major source of subsequent philosophies developed by Heidegger, Gadamer and others, leading to the philosophical grouping known as Continental Philosophy. While the methods of philosophy employed by Continental philosophers vary, generally they see ideas and thoughts as contextualized in layers of social, cultural, political and historical contexts. Within this tradition, philosophers have taken a variety of approaches in analyzing and articulating the complex mechanisms of contextualization.

The question of a method and a substantive theory is not a clear cut choice as it appears. This is particularly true for Continental Philosophy. Husserl, for example, set phenomenology as the methodology but developed a substantive theory called Formal Ontology. Heidegger used hermeneutic phenomenology as the method but developed an ontology which he called Fundamental Ontology. What distinguishes them from pre-modern speculative metaphysics is a clear awareness of methodology.

The question of the approach or method of the Principle, together with the concept of unification, requires further investigation. No matter what kind of theory one develops, one cannot present it without articulating its methodology.

## The Development of the Philosophy of Science: from a Positivist Model to a Hermeneutic Model

As the history of philosophy directs Unificationism to the direction of a meta-methodology, an inquiry into the development of the philosophy of science can shed new light on what tasks this meta-methodology must undertake. Although imperfect, the modern scientific approach has been highly regarded by the vast majority of people as the most reliable body of knowledge. As the philosophy of science progressed, however, philosophers have recognized the interpretive dimension of this approach and form of knowledge. Thus, the task for a Unificationist methodology becomes not only a hermeneutic one, but a meta-hermeneutic one that encompasses incommensurable systems of thought.

### *Logical Positivism*

In the twentieth century philosophy of science, the way philosophers understood science went through important changes. Logical positivism, which flourished around the 1920s and 1930s, viewed science as un-interpreted, “verified” or “verifiable” knowledge, in sharp contrast to interpreted, un-verified or un-verifiable knowledge in such fields as religion, ethics, arts and literature. They took a linguistic approach and focused on distinguishing verifiable from unverifiable knowledge.

Logical positivists divided knowledge into three categories: First, formal knowledge such as logic and mathematics, whose truthfulness is presupposed; second, knowledge verifiable by empirical sciences; and third, the rest of knowledge including ethics, religion, literature and other knowledge in the humanities. They established the “verifiability thesis” as the criterion of meaningfulness: cognitively meaningful knowledge is limited to knowledge that is verifiable by empirical sciences. Cognitively meaningful knowledge is a kind of knowledge we can determine its truth or falsity. If we cannot, in principle, determine truth or falsity, the knowledge is cognitively meaningless. They argued that cognitively meaningful knowledge is limited to the first two kinds. Knowledge in the third category, such as religion and ethics, is cognitively meaningless. Knowledge in religion and ethics can be “subjectively” meaningful just like poetry and music, but they are “cognitively” meaningless because their truth/falsity is not determinable by empirical sciences. Under this “verifiability thesis,” claims in religion and ethics are understood as expression of subjective preferences or likes and dislikes. In the early twentieth century, a group of philosophers and scientists established the Vienna Circle and their radical scientism dominated communities of philosophers of science.

Logical positivists also attempted the “unity of sciences.” They viewed physics, which led the development of modern sciences, as the most reliable model science and attempted to build a hierarchy of knowledge on the basis of physics, upon which chemistry, physiology, psychology and other “fuzzier” or “less rigorous” sciences are built.

Because they approached science from the perspective of the “meaning” of terms, they attempted to develop a translation mechanism to translate all terms/concepts of various sciences in terms of physics.

Despite subsequent challenges to the verifiability thesis, logical positivism significantly influenced our way of thinking. The thesis of logical positivism entails a sharp distinction of knowledge in science and religion:

scientific knowledge is un-interpreted, neutral, verifiable (thus, cognitively meaningful) knowledge; religious knowledge or knowledge in humanities are interpreted, unverifiable (thus, cognitively meaningless knowledge). Once we face the question of truth or falsity of knowledge, we tend to turn to empirical science as the basis to validate the knowledge. Although logical positivist had to abandon their initial position, their verifiability thesis is a clear and radical formulation of what many think about knowledge.

### *Critique of Logical Positivism*

As the philosophy of science developed, however, the verifiability thesis was challenged by subsequent philosophers; in particular, Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn challenged the verifiability thesis of logical positivism.

Karl Popper presented “falsifiability” as the essential characteristics of scientific theory as opposed to “verifiability.” Scientific knowledge is, Popper argued, open to falsification whereas non-scientific knowledge or pseudo-science is not, in principle, falsifiable because it can bring in other ad-hoc hypotheses and circumvent contradiction or counter-example.[20]

Popper argued that religion, Marxism and psychoanalysis all fall into the category of “closed” (non-falsifiable) systems. Scientific knowledge, on the other hand, is open to refutation and falsification. Scientific knowledge is tentative and open to change. Religious knowledge is “absolute” and “closed” because the theory is immune to falsification. While Marxists presented Marxism as a “scientific” theory, Popper viewed it as pseudo-science because of its closed structure. Technically speaking, while logical positivists approached the question of science from the perspective of identifying the criteria of meaningful propositions, Popper approached the issue from the perspective of the demarcation between science and pseudo-science or non-science.

Thomas Kuhn, who is known for his “paradigm” concept, criticized logical positivism for its view of science as ahistorical, interpretation-free knowledge. It had been long held by philosophers and others that scientific theories are universal, ahistorical, neutral and free from interpretation.[21] Kuhn’s criticisms of logical positivism led to the realization that scientific theories include hypotheses that are not necessarily testable by empirical methods, and the “valid” methods are those accepted by the scientific community at a particular stage of history. In other words, scientific theories are in fact far more indefinite and loose than they were once believed to be. Kuhn articulated the presence of social, historical dimensions of scientific theories and highlighted their interpretive dimensions.

Kuhn was a historian of science. In his detailed analyses of the development of scientific theories, he pointed out that there are two distinct stages: first, the refinement of scientific theories by “puzzle solving” in “normal science”; second, a radical “paradigm shift” of fundamental assumptions of scientific theories such as a shift from Newtonian Physics to Einsteinian Theories.[22] Pre-Kuhnian philosophers of science viewed the development of science as a linear process. They believed that there are certain standards or ways to falsify an old theory and validate a new theory, and thereby assuming that competing theories are “commensurable.” Kuhn rejected this commensurability thesis and argued that there is no common standard or a way to determine which theory is valid and which one is invalid between competing theories (competing theories are thus “incommensurable”). A shift from one theory to another takes place as a paradigm shift. According to Kuhn, this shift is not a matter of theoretical reasoning but a practical decision comparable to a religious conversion. Thus, rationality takes different forms at these two stages of reasoning. In the former stage of normal science, rationality progresses linearly; in the latter stage, scientists make a practical decision to choose or shift from one rationality to another. Put differently, the former form of rationality in the normal science stage of a theory progresses within the same hermeneutic framework, whereas reasoning shifts from one framework to another during a paradigm shift.

Post-Kuhnian philosophers of science further challenged the neutrality of scientific data and observation. They argued that scientific data is not neutral but is loaded with scientific theory as the framework of interpretation.[23] For example, the ampere, a unit of electric current, is meaningful and derived from electromagnetic theory. Amps, volts and other units are meaningful and loaded with a theoretical framework. Data or observational language is not neutral, but is loaded with a theoretical framework.

Then, if natural science, which was believed to be interpretation-free, objective knowledge, has in fact a hermeneutic dimension, the gap between natural science and human and social science is smaller than previously believed. Later in his career, Kuhn recognized hermeneutics as the common base amongst all disciplines of science. In his essay "Natural and Human Sciences,"[24] he rephrased his concept of paradigm as “hermeneutic core,” and explored the extension of his thesis in the natural sciences to social, human sciences.

Although Kuhn recognized hermeneutics as the common framework for all sciences, this approach does not easily lead to the “integration” of knowledge. One of Kuhn’s theses is “incommensurability,” that is, there is no common standard to compare competing paradigms and determine which is better than others. Each paradigm has its own standard, norm and rigor. If there is one common standard by which we can compare the superiority of one paradigm over another, these theories are “commensurable.” Just as we cannot determine the superiority

of one language over another for the reason that they are “incommensurable,” Kuhn argues, competing paradigms are “incommensurable.”

We can understand the incommensurability thesis if we consider various religions. Each religion forms a particular hermeneutic system. Although we can see the strength and weakness of each religion and compare them, we do not have one set of standards by which we can rank their superiority. Kuhn’s incommensurability thesis can be applied to religions, languages and scientific theories. It can also cast a new light on the idea of the “unification” of knowledge in Unificationism.

As we see in the Kuhnian and post-Kuhnian development in the philosophy of science, unity or integration of knowledge is like a meta-hermeneutic work among diverse hermeneutic systems. Each theory, be it scientific or religious, is a hermeneutic system with its own rigor, rules, norms and practices. If Kuhn is right, they are “incommensurable.” The idea of integration or unification of competing theories is like a hermeneutic of “incommensurable” hermeneutic systems.

Kuhn and post-Kuhnian philosophers of science are pluralists. From their perspective, the integration of various sciences/religions is not possible, just as the integration of languages is not possible. Thus, the task of unification and developing an appropriate methodology must engage in a meta-hermeneutic work that can encompass diverse hermeneutic systems. As critics of Kuhn argue, the incommensurability thesis may entail radical relativism. Juxtaposing competing theories is not integration. Yet, we cannot ignore challenges Kuhnian philosophers are posing. Unificationism is tasked to find a new ground which makes it possible to deal with the relationship between unity and diversity at a new level.

## Conclusion

The concept of “unification” or “integration” is symbolic to Unificationism. The Principle discusses all kinds of unity: unity of mind and body; unity of religions; unity of science and religion; unity of communities and social groups, etc. In spite of the rampant use of the concept, it has not been clearly defined and articulated. This article approaches the issue from the need for a critical stance and a methodology, and observes issues such as incommensurability and rationality. Closely tied issues, which I did not discuss in the essay, are concept of truth and subject-object framework, as raised by Heidegger.[25]

The task of the unity of thought remains even in specific areas of philosophy, such as ethics. UT discusses a family-based virtue ethics; however, ethical concepts of justice, moral autonomy, consequentialism and others raised in the Principle have not been consolidated into an ethical theory in UT. More broadly, there is no theoretical model that can integrate the three major modes of ethics today: utilitarianism, deontological ethics and virtue theory. The former two theories take a formal approach (they define moral duty by formal rules without discussing a moral good), the latter takes a substantive approach (define moral duty based on a specific moral good). A critical approach to the Principle can open up new questions and allow Unificationists to explore the Principle and its task of unification, as applied to the concerns and questions of philosophy generally.

The idea of “integration” of theories/positions necessarily leads Unificationists to the underlying issues that divide competing theories. As a dialog with philosophy of science showed challenges that demand responses from the Principle, similar challenge-and-response is unavoidable in each and every field of knowledge. A shift from UT to Unification Philosophy is certainly a challenge to Unificationism. It is, however, the challenge that draws the potential of the Principle. In order for Unificationism to flourish or even to keep it alive, self-overcoming is the necessary process, as an avid atheistic thinker suggests: “The snake that cannot slough its skin, perishes.” (Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, Aphorism 573)[26]

## Notes

[1] The most complete text of Unification Thought is *New Essentials of Unification Thought: Head-Wing Thought* (Tokyo: UTI-Japan, 2005). For the full text, see <http://www.unification-thought.org/neut/nEssentials.pdf>. Accessed March 23, 2015.

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

[3] Glenn Strait, a key organizer of the ICUS, notes that contrary to Rev. Moon’s expectation, Unification Thought did not gain appeal and acclaim by intellectuals. See “Lessons from Reverend Moon’s New Cultural Strategy,” *Applied Unificationism* (Blog), October 6, 2014. <http://appliedunificationism.com/2014/10/06/lessons-from-reverend-moons-new-culture-strategy/>. Accessed March 29, 2015.

- [4] I am referring to Jürgen Habermas for the contrast between “instrumental rationality” and “communicative rationality.” See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). For a critique of “instrumental rationality,” see Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).
- [5] Edmund Husserl, for example, distinguished philosophy from other sciences as the self-reflective discipline, in “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” trans. in Q. Lauer (ed.), *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (New York: Harper 1965).
- [6] The paradox of inquiry is formulated by Plato and it is known as “Meno’s Paradox” (Meno 80d-e). If you know what you are looking for, the inquiry is unnecessary. If you do not know what you are looking for, the inquiry is impossible. Plato’s solution to this paradox is the theory of recollection. Another way to understand the process of knowing is to view it as turning what was implicitly understood into an explicit understanding. Thus, understanding itself has a circular process, which is a part of the “hermeneutic circle.”
- [7] Heidegger elaborated the necessity of heritage for any human understanding and Gadamer further clarified how tradition and authority work in any interpretation. They both argued against the Enlightenment concept of rationality as prejudice-free or tradition-free knowledge. They argued that human understanding or interpretation is possible based upon the past. Thus, a critical analysis of its heritage is inevitable for any discourse. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper, 1962), and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).
- [8] Hermeneutic circles exist at multiple levels: part and whole; pre-understanding and understanding. For example, to understand the words in a given language, one must know the relationship between the part (word) and the whole (language) on a number of levels. In this way, the hermeneutic inquiry is circular.
- [9] *Exposition of the Divine Principle*, p. 8.
- [10] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- [11] *Ibid.* pp. 6-7.
- [12] For themes of ICUS, see <http://www.icus.org/index.php?cat=info&top=history>. Accessed March 29, 2015.
- [13] UT was discussed as the central theme in the philosophy session beginning with the 13th ICUS, and Dr. Sang Hun Lee became a permanent honorable chair on the committee beginning with the 18th ICUS.
- [14] Strait, “Lessons from Reverend Moon’s New Cultural Strategy.”
- [15] See the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought website for information. <http://www.unification-thought.org/index.html>. Accessed June 1, 2015.
- [16] Exactitude is the rigor in mathematics and logic, whereas prudence is the norm in practical discipline such as politics and ethics. Aristotle is the first intellectual to classify various disciplines according to the nature of phenomena and its proper methodology.
- [17] As the term “sophistry” implies, Sophists are known as morally decadent relativists or even nihilists. This image was created primarily by Plato’s negative depiction of the Sophists as opponents of Socrates. Their perspectives, however, can be comparable to those of social scientists by today’s standard. They argued not based upon moral idealism, such as Plato did, but from realistic assessment of human behaviors driven by power, incentives, and appearances.
- [18] I am using “methodology” in a broad sense. Strictly speaking, some are critical of “methodologism.” Gadamer, for example, developed his philosophical hermeneutics against modern methodologism.
- [19] Husserl developed phenomenology as the science of all sciences. He attempted to develop a philosophical discipline which can encompass human, social, and natural sciences. Analytic philosophy, on the other hand, took logical analysis of language as the approach to discuss all philosophical issues and problems.
- [20] A classic problem of empiricism is that no matter how many experiences one may have, one can never reach universal statement, and one piece of counter-evidence can falsify a universal statement. The most one can expect from empirical knowledge is “probable” knowledge. Thus, Popper argued that no scientific experiment can “verify” a theory once for all; knowledge in science is limited to “probable” knowledge. For his “falsifiability thesis,” see Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959).
- [21] The idea of interpretation-free rationality can be traced back to the Enlightenment. Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).
- [22] For Kuhn’s account of the development of science, see T.S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).



[23] The thesis is known as “theory-ladenness” of observation and data. Beside Kuhn, Norwood Russell Hanson and Paul Feyerabend are known for this thesis. See Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery; An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: NLB, 1975).

[24] Kuhn’s essay “Natural and Human Sciences” can be found in David R. Hiley, James Bohman and Richard Shusterman, *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) and in Thomas S. Kuhn, James Conant and John Haugeland, *The Road Since Structure: Philosophical Essays, 1970-1993, with an Autobiographical Interview* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 216-223.

[25] If we take a hermeneutic approach, we will have to examine the concept of truth and the ontological framework of subject and object. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argued that proper hermeneutics is not possible within a modern subject-object (mental-physical) ontological framework. Within this framework, “meanings” become psychological events in private mind (subject; less real) outside of physical reality (object; real). He presented the world as a teleologically organized matrix of meaning and argued that a physicalist subject-object framework is derived from our projection of the theoretical framework of the originally meaningful world. Heidegger also rejected the correspondence theory of truth (truth is defined as the correspondence between idea and reality) that is presupposed by the subject-object framework. He defined truth as “disclosure,” “unconcealment,” or “uncovering.” Unificationism views the world as teleological. In order to establish the “reality” of purposes, Unificationists will have to re-examine the modern physicalist subject-object framework and their concept of truth.

[26] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, *Daybreak Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 569.