

The Presuppositions of Modern Science and Unification Thought

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I am deeply honored and highly delighted to be able to speak in the 12th International Symposium on the Unification Thought, which is being held at Chien Tan Overseas Youth Activity Center, Taipei, Taiwan. The topic for the Keynote Speech is: "*The Presuppositions of Modern Science and Unification Thought.*"

I . The Strategy of Modern Science

We can now address the issue of presuppositions more directly, Bertrand Russell confessed his dismay when his brother explained that in Euclidian geometry there were axioms which had to be taken for granted. We cannot help using certain terms which have definite implications. The important point is to be fully aware of one's assumptions and starting points. I want to note first, Newtonian mechanism as a presupposition, which has a strong influence on modern science.

Newton thought the main feature of natural philosophy was "to argue from phenomena without feigning Hypotheses, and to deduce Causes from effects, till we come to the very quiet cause, which is certainly not mechanical..."

This remarks shows his impatience with hypotheses which outrun facts, and his conviction that God is the quiet non-mechanical Cause of phenomena who is immanent in nature. His discipline has proven tremendously influential, underlying as it does modern reductionism and appeals to Occam's razor.

In Newtonian physics, Darwinian biology and Freudian psychoanalysis we may see a common thread of causality. Everything must be analyzed and its cause investigated. Some scientists' success in explanation has emerged from this determined and principled stand. Newtonian physics unified most of the external universe under the general principle of physical science. It was remarkable that gravitation could unite falling apples, the orbiting of the moon around the earth, the orbiting of the planets around the sun, and even the tides in the oceans. The multitude of species and their biological strategies for survival through fitness, duplication and reproduction found an explanation in the theory of evolution.

With the increasing success of science and science-based technology conflicts arose between organized religion and science. With Copernicus, who dethroned the earth as the Center of the Cosmos, Galileo Galilei was persecuted by the Church. Science seemed to give no room for a creator-god to directly intervene in the functioning of the universe. Science's headstrong style is illustrated by the story of Laplace developing a theory of the cosmos in which God has no place. The trend has continued and late 20th science has combined Laplace's ambition and Darwin's ideas to produce a picture of an evolving universe endowed with no purpose and developing without any specific divine intervention. Man is not necessarily the crown of creation, but just one of the products of evolution.

I want to note second, the genesis of materialistic reductionism under Newton's Rules of Reasoning, and the preference of science for natural explanations which exclude the 'supernatural.' Even if the physical universe does require a different kind of theory, so-called scientific explanations have become the materialist viewpoint that matter is thought to be the basis of all phenomena, including consciousness. In cases of doubt, the dogma of Occam's razor is invoked.

In practice the razor is used to excise inconvenient mental data, and has a built-in bias towards materialistic reductionism, itself the reducing of the complex to the simple. The important point to note is that Occam's strategy implicitly supports a meta-scientific discipline, just like the proposition that all truth is scientific. Since the 17th century there has been a progressive merging of the spiritual dimension into the physical, a reversal of the traditional properties of being.

I want to note third, anti-teleological determinism. We saw Galileo abandon the teleological approach for efficient causality, neglecting the 'why' for the 'how.' Thus, anti-teleological determinism refers to the triumph of the mechanistic view over the animistic, of matter over spirit. Newtonian physics and astronomy laid down mechanical

laws, and, though the rigor of the determinism has been somewhat weakened by quantum indeterminacy, still mind is regarded as dependent on the brain. Very few neurologists have dared take a mentalist or dualist position, which does justice to the intentionality of consciousness or mind.

Finally, I want to note the influence of positivism. Logical positivism has been discredited by the Popperian replacement of verifiability by falsifiability as a demarcation between science and non-science. In explaining his criterion of falsifiability, Popper distinguished scientific and non-scientific or metaphysical theories. Yet logical positivism still remains powerfully influential on ways of thinking. Positivism came about as a reaction against theology and metaphysics. It laid down verification principles which prohibit seeking for ultimate causes beyond the material realm which is the domain of natural science. Scientific investigation is seemed as the triumphal march of materialism toward a complete explanation of life.

II . The Strategy of Unification Thought toward Science

Scientific knowledge is essentially objective knowledge, which has been perceived to eliminate the subjective element of observation. Therefore scientific knowledge is a knowledge derived from the reasoning mind of man. Value judgment, metaphysical theory and aesthetic consideration may be merely personal, but they may also be supra-personal. Religion, metaphysics, ethics, and the arts are objective in the sense that they seek both to understand and know about the world. Scientific theories are in principle testable and therefore reasonable, while metaphysical theory can be repeatedly redefined and criticized. Spiritual knowledge is knowledge about the spirit as object which can be gained by the reasoning mind of man.

In the Unificationist view, science and religion have a common share in the pursuit of truth. The object of scientific pursuit is external truth in order to move mankind from outer ignorance to outer knowledge, while religion searches for internal truth to move from inner ignorance to inner knowledge.

Scientific knowledge is characteristic of pure knowledge-orientation, whereas Unification epistemology is characteristic of knowledge-orientation together with a purpose-driven end (telos). Paradigmatically, though western scientific epistemologies are fact-laden, the Unificationist one is value-laden. It may be correct to say that Unification epistemology is characteristic of soteria-oriented

teleology.

Generally speaking one could say, 'science is value-neutral,' but this value-neutrality of science is itself a value-judgment. Maxwell equates such value-neutrality with value-blindness, or value-insensitivity. In western philosophy in general, any conflation of fact and value brings about a confusion of categories and value assertions bring about empty-talk in the sense of logical positivism. But, because of the conceptual model related to value orientation in Unification Thought, this category mistake is avoided because "value and fact cannot be separated." Two different paradigms-the western and the oriental-are implicitly contained in Unification Thought. That is, a non-contradictory possible fusion of fact-value is the case.

Against the positivist background, we might quote the following from Essentials of Unification Thought: "Absolute truth refers to the universal eternal truth. Therefore, without having the Absolute Being as the standard, the concept of absolute cannot be established." The word of absolute truth in Unification Thought context cannot be verifiable in the sense of positivism. Contrary to positivism, absolute truth in the Unification context contains two aspect of truth, the one is value-laden truth with a kind of supermundaneness, the other is fact-laden truth (knowledge) with a kind of mundaneness. Thus, value and fact cannot be separated even in this case.

We reject the presuppositions of modern science, which lead to mechanism, reductionism and materialism, not because they threaten religion but because they are fallacious strategies which, by demolishing all metaphysics, demolishes the very science they set out to account for. Both science and religion are human enterprises, which pursue truth, arising from puzzlement about this world. In the light of Unification Thought, we can see a prospect of harmonizing science and religion.

It is my hope that through this symposium, Unification Thought will be developed into a movement of science. The centripetal point for shaping science is Unification Thought, and we need to tap the possibility of unifying the various thoughts with Unification Thought as the axis.

Thank you very much!