

The New Epistemology by Unification Thought

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Introduction

The ideal of all academic learnings is the clarification of being.

For through the true knowledge, we can direct the right way of all fields in life. With philosophy, we study the universe, nature, God and human being in essential and total aspects, the epistemology which is related with the origin, the right way, and the validity of knowledge, is radical and essential. So in the history of philosophy, epistemology has been studied as a matter of great interest long time. However we couldn't arrive at the ideal goal of it. I think the epistemology of Unification Thought(here after, it is abbreviated as Unification Thought) satisfy us this goal in some degree. We can find the peak of epistemology in Kant's, but I think the epistemology of Unification Thought surpasses Kant's.

As we know, Kant's epistemology is the constitutive theory of knowledge and it was the synthesized theory of rationalism and empiricism. Kant's view was that we can get knowledge from the constitution of the objects by our subjects. But we doubt how we can constitute the objects without the precognition of the objects. I think, in order to constitute the objects before we recognize the objects, the objects already had to be. On the other hand, Marx argued that our cognition is originated from the reflection of objects, but he neglected the subject's activity of cognition.

Especially, it is very sorry that Kant gave up the understanding of thing-in-itself as the first cause of Being, God, and dropped down into agnosticism of transcendent world.

I. A Reflection of traditional epistemology

(1) The cognition as the copy of objects

Generally speaking, traditional epistemology was the copy theory of objects. That is, our cognition is originated from the copy of objects. Judged from our experience, such the view seems like valid. Most of the empiricists believed firmly that theory. For them the truth comes from the correspondence of the idea and facts. This view continued from Aristotle till Kant's appearvvs.

In the cognizing of truth, we can ask two questions. First is "what we can know", and

the second is "how we can know whether we can know or, not." Former is the question about the limit of cognition, and the latter is the question about the criterion of truth. And both of them are interdependent. If we are to elucidate the criterion of truth, we can afford to have the method to determine the limit of cognition, if we can know the limit of cognition, we could determine the criterion to clarify the facts that we are convinced of, from the things that we are not aware of.¹

Assuming that there can be the answer to criterion of cognition, the attempt to give the answer to the limit of cognition is the character of empiricism. Here, experience is told to provide the valid argument for knowledge in various meaning, and it satisfy a criterion of an experience, then it is used to determine our limit of knowledge.

The simplest form of traditional epistemology was the theory that we perceive the copied image of the objects reflected to our sense organ. Protagoras, the representative sophist, thought that perception is the relation between our sense organ and the outer things. They could not but recognize the things as the copied image to our sense organ without consideration of the true nature of the things. Accordingly, for them truth was varied in dependence on person. So, "man is the measure of all things." Consequently, since the cognition was varied according to person, all we know was only relative truth and we could not get the objective and absolute truth. Therefore, Socrates, who knew the defect of their theories, tried to get universal and objective cognition and offered conceptional knowledge.

One of the important view to elucidate the nature of cognition is "a cognition is the description of objects." This view started from Aristoteles and completed by Aquinas and was accepted by empiricists. Aristoteles said that the action of cognition starts with the perception of sense organ.²

By him, the final source of knowledge is experience. Consequently, he said that they should obviously understand the first one through the help of experience³ and the universal are always originated from individual thing. Furthermore, he said that we can't know even soul without sensitive presentation, because all cognition start from sensitive perception. For Aristoteles, ideas are not originated from sensibility, they preceded to sensibility. In Plato, all the knowledge about essence is innate, the things existing most and the truest things are the cause of all beings and true one.

On the other hand, T. Aquinas said that the origin of knowledge is sense-perception, since a man's mind is originally empty plate like empty paper(tabula rasa). So, for Aquinas,

¹ vgl. R.Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, Prentice-Hall, Inc.(New Jersey 1977), p.120

² Aristoteles, *De Anima II*. 5

³ vgl. Aristoteles, *Analysis II*, ch. 19 100. b.4

"that which there was no in sensitivity, there is no in intelligence."⁴

According to him, sensibility is a compound action of both, that is, the soul and body. And soul is the figure of body and the natural object of knowledge, and it has the nature of material object. Then sensitivity is the compound action of soul and body, but reasonable spiritual soul is not affected by material thing and visuality. So to speak, it progresses to higher dimensional cognition from the material objects through the sense. And he said "the first object of understanding is not all being and all truth, but the being and truth in material object, and human mind progress to the cognition of all other beings from this object."⁵

Therefore, to recognize a thing is to abstract the essential figure from the individual material that presentation show us. Explaining the Aquinas' epistemology, Baumgartner said that recognition is the assimilation of the subject of cognition and the object of cognition, according to the essence, and the copy of object in subjectivity.⁶

The view which try to reach the recognition through the copy of object belongs to empiricism one of the mainstream of the history of epistemology with rationalism.

(2) The recognition as the production of object

While the recognition from Aristoteles to Kant was the copy of objects, Kant's recognition was the production(constitution) of objects by subjects. Obviously this was a revolution in the history of epistemology. Copernican revolution of epistemology was this. While according to Aristoteles, the essence of things is copied in the course of cognition, according to Kant, it is constituted. While for the former, the object is the determiner, for the latter, the subject is the determiner. While for the former, in the cognizing consciousness, subject takes and receives, for the latter, it acts and makes the form. However, the cognizing consciousness takes and acts. It is valid to the objects, hence the objects determine and are determined. Therefore, the cognizing action is reciprocal action between the subjectivity and the objectivity, the consciousness and the objects.⁷ No matter how the reciprocal action between the subject of recognition and the object of recognition may be accepted, if the concrete process of it is not provided, the certainty of recognition can't be guaranteed. The legitimacy of cognizing consciousness is universal and superindividual. Kant's so-called "general consciousness"(Bewusstsein überhaupt) acts in individual deepest consciousness as superindividual one, hence truth is the

⁴ F. Coplestone, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. II(The Newman Press 1960), p.392

⁵ Thomas von Aquin, *Summa contra gentiles*, II. 96

⁶ vgl. M.Baumgartner, *Thomas von Aquin*, in *Gro Denker*, E.v. Aster(Leibzig, o.J.) I, s.298

⁷ J. Hessen, <<Erkenntnistheorie>>, in *Wissenschaftslehre II* (M nchen: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag)

correspondence between individual and superindividual presentation ⁸ In Kant, recognition is not the copy of objects, but it is formed through the constitution of objects by subject. Then, how could Kant constitute the objects? If it is possible, an idea of objects should be previously in the inner part of the subjects of cognition. And in Kant the form and the principle which makes cognition possible is ideal one and it is the form of consciousness, not the form of being, and the regulation of thought, not the regulation of objects. While Berkley's idealism settled things as the contents of consciousness, Kant's idealism belongs to not the existence of things but the field of essence(Sosein) of things. For Kant, the real things are independent upon consciousness, but what we say about things are regarded to belong to our consciousness and to the accounts of innate form of this consciousness. So to speak, we can recognize things only in the area of appearances. In even Kant, thing-in-itself must be behind the appearances, but we can't know it. Furthermore, we can only know the facts that things exist, but we can't know what it is.

Kant noticed that hitherto epistemology remained on the cripple recognition, since it stressed the one part of the cognition process, maintaining that the reason as the subject of cognition and the experience as the object of cognition are the origin of recognition respectively. It is sure that Kant got up on the peak of the history of western philosophy, compensating the defects of both, through the unification of rationalism and empiricism, but he remained under the limit of epistemology, withholding the recognition of thing-in-itself.

(3) From the constitution of objects to give-and-receive action with objects

S. S hngen stated properly that objects are not taken as a completed one in one's mind, accordingly that spirit has the task that it must make objects or aspects of affairs from the material state as the given uncompleted. According to him, epistemology has the task that it should derive epistemological conclusion from a metaphysical premise. But Kant tried to start to bring the epistemology without a metaphysical premise. Therefore, he denied the relation with metaphysics and expelled metaphysics from epistemology. S hngen criticized that Kant passed over the facts that we can't start the epistemological discussion unless we have the relation with the minimum of metaphysics. This proves that we can't arrive at the goal of the epistemology, unless we make relation with the minimum of metaphysics, so long as we premise a rational prescription of being itself and prescribability of being itself. In spite of the criticism, Kant understood that to resolve the conflict between rationalism

⁸ vgl. W.Windelband, *Die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*(Leibzig, 1922) II, s.80

and empiricism is the right way to lead to the goal of epistemology, attempted the synthesis of both. In the preface of first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, he declared that we shouldn't cling to the metaphysics like a tyranny as dogmatists, and go deep into indifferentism like a skeptics got tired of his own failure. After that he enhanced the epistemology from the recognition theory through the copy to the recognition theory through the constitution, synthesizing the sensibility as receivable capacity and the understanding as spontaneous capacity.

The reason why Kant tried to synthesize the rationalism and empiricism was that he needed to get the setting up the proposition of universal validity and necessity from rationalism, and the reality of sensible experience from empiricism. In other words, since the sensible data, the content of recognition is only various sensitivity, chaos of sense, the matter of sensible impression, it is guaranteed the possibility of recognition only by working through the innate form. Therefore, recognition starts with experience(B 1, B 351).

Consequently, Aristoteles and Kant all postulated the elements of rationalism and empiricism as the two origin of recognition. The former proposed "experience" and "thought", the latter "sensitivity" and "understanding". While Aristoteles seeks the source of rational elements from experience, Kant mixes innate form with experimental matter. Therefore, Aristoteles leaned to empiricism, and Kant leaned to rationalism. The category, the form synthesizing and unifying what is given through the sense and transcendental apperception are the subjective action, but those have objective validity, accordingly, those do not reshew what we felt subjectively, but the being itself, In Kant, the objects do not exist previously, the recognition is set up through the thinking form of subjects. Therefore, the understanding as subjective cognitive ability carry the action of recognition, making a base on objectivity itself in the legality of itself. Hence it is said that ontology must be transcendental.

As mentioned before, much criticism were raised against Kant's subjectivism. The ground that those criticism were raised was how we can get the cognition without objects, and that understanding confer a law to the nature was to have exaggerated the human spirit. Furthermore, it is doubted that we can recognize the objects without confronting certain objects in the process of recognition. But his phenomenological theory of cognition confused us more.

His first critique stress that human cognition is limited to the area of sensuous phenomenon and we can't recognize what goes over this area with any means, intuitive form, thinking form, reasonable idea. But in later period, he didn't exclude the phenomenon as well as the thoughtful and thing-in-itself(B291 ff). In Kant, the imaginable

is not the assumed concept but inevitable one. This imaginable world is noumena, and all things themselves exist in it. That is irresolvable problem. Since Kant's position is that we can't possess the objects themselves, this objects must be only thought idea. Notwithstanding, Kant didn't abandon the positive view about thing-in-itself and in spite of his thought that the concept of understanding can be applied only to phenomenal world, he couldn't but refer the concept about thing-in-itself. It is sure that Kant said, "substance is thing-in-itself and agnostic"⁹ Kant couldn't but imagine thing-in-itself as substance and hold over the conceivability of it. In fact, if we notice the ontological meaning of thing-in-itself, we can't but admit it, and if we deny that the ontological matter of phenomenon can be supplied from outer part of cognitive subject, we should regard human intuition as creative intuition, it is irrational, and if we deny the fact, we lose the ground to divide the phenomenon and the imaginal.¹⁰

Therefore, M. Schlick criticized Kant's argument that phenomenon isn't related with thing-in-itself on the ground of the meaning of the word phenomenon, and maintained that the ordinary use of the word phenomenon only shows the relation between cause and effect.¹¹

So to speak, we can say that "phenomenon" must be to get "essence" on the back of it, and thing-in-itself correspond to the essence.

The unique substance of Spinoza can be compared to Kant's thing-in-itself, *natura naturans* can be compared to the world of supreme intelligence, *natura naturata*, the world of appearance. Consequently, Kant's only comprehensive thing-in-itself can be understood as God. In fact, Kant comprehends this unique thing-in-itself as God.(B 608) Furthermore, this unique thing-in-itself is the original being, the primary being, and the being of beings(B 606~7), and means the unified substance of all archetypes. In the point of view, Kant's thing-in-itself takes a point in advance of prototype of the subject of cognition in Unification Thought If the concept of thing-in-itself is interpreted into Platonic idea, thing-in-itself is naturally the archetype of things, and the appeared things are the model of it. This is to be the important clue of certainty of cognition.

Of course, Kant won the magnificent result in the history of epistemology, but his constitution theory can't be satisfactory epistemology. For Kant was not sure of being of thing-in-itself as archetype. The epistemology of Unification Thought surpass the Kant's

⁹ I.Kant, *Reflection* Nr., M.Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Ph nomenologie*(Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt a/M, 1975), s.211

¹⁰ cf. Sunghak Monn, *Kant's Philosophy and Thing-in-itself*, (Woolsan Univ. Publishing Co 1995), p.115

¹¹ cf. Jongsoo Ahn, trans. M.Schlick, *Problems of Philosophy related*, Korea Won(1922), pp. 226~7 p. 9

epistemology, conferring the origin and method of cognition with the prototype and give-and-receive action. I can say that the epistemology of Unification Thought approached the peak of epistemology

II The characteristics of epistemology of Unification Thought

(1) The epistemology of Unification Thought as the total structure

The epistemology of Unification Thought is a part of the system of Unification Thought and it is related to <theory of the original image> and <theory of the original human nature>. And Unification Thought seek to arrive at the goal of "resolution of contemporary issues" with the logic system related to all the fields of philosophy. In other words, Unification Thought stands for synthesis of theory and practice. Accordingly, Unification Thought proposes the principles of action to penetrate into the actuality of human life as well as the theory of idea system. Unification Thought includes the origin of cognition, the objects of cognition, and the method of cognition. Also, Unification Thought accept the dialogue with hitherto epistemology. While Kant raised the level of epistemology, synthesizing the modern epistemology, rationalism and empiricism, the epistemology of Unification Thought not only concretize the epistemology of Kant and deepen it, but also approached the certainty of cognition. As we know, the most difficult problem is the clarification of Kant's thing-in-itself, or the first cause as the origin of being. Unification Thought places the ground of human being's goal on the first cause of being and approach the epistemology, connecting the subject of cognition and the object of cognition with the first cause. For ontologically, God, human being, and nature are the central object that philosophy is based on. In order that epistemology comes to exist, the object as well as the subject of cognition should exist. If the object of cognition is obvious reality, it must be independent of our cognition and the subject of cognition must furnish with the basic frame to be able to cognize the object. Cognition can't come into existence between no related ones. So to speak, for the subject of cognition, the elements of cognition to know the cognition object must pre-exist. The epistemology of Unification Thought premises God, nature, and human. Recognizing such this relations, Hegel said, ""that we should once doubt the belief of human being about the world before we cognize the world, seems like that scientists need to examine the instruments to use before they start their intentional work.""¹²

Then, is the sequence between epistemology and ontology recognized? Hegel denied

¹² Hegel, *Enzyklop die I*, § 10

Kant's position that epistemology precedes ontology.¹³ Epistemology is the products of society and it is established socially as a product of social activity. Since social activity is realized in the nature, we can say that the elements of nature are included in social activity. Therefore, cognition is accomplished through the information gotten by the perception with the cause in the system of being things. And cognition always grows up and develops and lead from ignorance to knowledge. Accordingly, Unification Thought epistemology is developed with the premise of 'theory of the original image' discussed the essence of being and 'theory of the original human nature' discussed the nature of being.

(2) The characteristics of Unification Thought epistemology

Even in the epistemology of Unification Thought, the content, form, and method of cognition are discussed. But they have many characteristic different from hitherto epistemology.

1) The prototype of subjects

Cognition is the reciprocal action of the subject cognizing and the object cognized. The contents of objects are the various attributes which things have and even subjects have the same contents. For cognition, give-and-receive action¹⁴ should be made, in inner part of subject, exists prototype having protoimage appearing in the protoconsciousness.¹⁵

This prototype is a spiritual image in subject which is the criterion of judgement in cognition.

How can the prototype exists? According to, Unification Thought, the universe consists of the relation between God, human being, and nature, and God is the origin and source of human being and nature. And God is the designer of this world. According to the divine principle, God created human beings along the shape of God, and all things(creature) symbolically.¹⁶

Therefore, the prototype in the subject of human being is originated from God. Even Kant said, "the ideal(of reason) is the archetype of all things. And all things are all

¹³ vgl. M.J.Inwood, *Hegel*, Routledge & Kegan Paul(London 1983), p.115

¹⁴ All beings, taking after God, have the reciprocal relation between subject and object, the ground of being is based on the relation of giving and receiving each other.
cf. H.S.A., *Divine Principle*, Sunghwasa(Seoul 1988), p.37

¹⁵ The protoconsciousness is potential consciousness which organism has

incomplete model, and they bring the stuff to be able to accomplish from the archetype"(B608) What is the ideal here? It should be God as the imaginable first being. But notwithstanding he supposed the archetype of things, he didn't relate it with the God. So, he couldn't go over the limit of constitution theory

2) Give-and -receive action

One of the most prominent and important characteristics in Unification Thought is the theory of give-and-receive action. Of course, it is applied to the epistemology of Unification Thought. For in the course of cognition, the give-and-receive action plays an important role, because even cognition is made from the relation between subject and object.

According to Unification Thought, cognition is the result of give-and-receive action between the subject of cognition and the object of cognition. The subject having the prototype with content and form of cognition and interested in the object, and the object having the form of being and the content as the attribute, the subject and the object give and receive each other. In this case, the prototype is the criterion of judgement. Therefore, cognition is the course that the contents and forms of subject and the contents and forms of object compose and unify each other through the give-and-receive action.

III. The philosophical meaning of epistemology of Unification Thought

Aristoteles said that most of learning are nothing but analyzing the essence of things. Therefore, the starting point and foundation of strict knowledge was the essential cognition in him, and Hegel also stressed that the essence of learning was to see the relation of essence with thorough knowledge no matter what it may be.

If learning presents a necessary something, it should be something intuiting the essence. In point of such a view, the epistemology of Unification Thought may be one approached the nearest pot of such the intuition of essence. For the epistemology of Unification Thought does not start from "I", but God, origin of cognition. As we know, the epistemology of Unification Thought starts from the ontological relation between God , human being, and nature. The Theory of Original Image is the starting point of Unification Thought In the theory, the existence of God is no object of discussion because he(he) is the designer of this world. In the Theory of Original Image, the object of question is not whether God exists or not, but how God exists. Even in Kant, thing-in-itself

¹⁶ H.S.A., op.cit.

was the very God, the God was only agnostic. So to speak, Unification Thought presents the existence of God through the method of hypothetic deduction, clarifying what God is, that is, the essence of god.

(1) Cognition as harmonious union of subject and object

According to the epistemology of Unification Thought, every being can exist in relation between subject and object. In cognition the subject is human being and the object is all things and universe. Here it is noticed how human being and the universe are related each other. According to divine principle, human being is the encapsulated substance of all creatures and created as a microcosmos and the dominator of all things.

Reasoning on the base of this view, human beings as the subject of cognition take the contents of all things(the objects of cognition) as the form of experience through the subjectivity of cognition. Therefore, this is the unification of reason and experience. In order that human being and all things unify harmoniously, an identified condition should be furnished. The condition is that the prototype as inner quality(internal nature) which is the criterion of judgement for the subject of cognition and outer shape(external form) for the object of cognition are unified. This appears as the form of idea for the subject and the form of reality, and the union of the idea of subject and the reality of object becomes a cognition. Consequently, such a cognition can be called the union of idealism and realism as well as the union of experience and reason.

Considering it in the point of content, the protoimage to subject and the attribute to object make a condition that can give and receive each other, considering it in the point of form, the form of thinking to subject and the form of being are furnished. Both are ready to unite, having relation each other, and the union of these two form is very a cognition.

(2) The method of cognition as collation theory

As we discussed before, the method of Unification Thought cognition theory is that of give-and-receive action. In cognition, firstly, the subject is sensibility and the object is all things. The content and form which all things have are given to the sensibility which has content and form as outer image, as the form of reflection, at last this outer image is recognized to the understanding of the subject of cognition. The outer image of sensibility taking give-and-receive action of form of comparison with inner image(prototype), a cognition is made. Because this process comprehend Kant's transcendental method and Marx' theory of reflection, we can say that both were unified by the method of give-and-

receive action. So, we call this the method of collation.

(3) The cognition as the process of 3 stage

The epistemology of Unification Thought has the process of 3 stages for completion of it. That is similar to Kant's. The first stage is the one of sensibility. In this stage, when the subject of cognition having sensible mind takes give-and-action with the object centering a common purpose, the content and form of object produce sensory image by the prototype and interest of subject. This case is the form which the content of object is reflected to subject.

The second stage is the one of understanding. The sensory image made from the stage of sensibility builds the encapsulated outer image by the give-and-receive action with prototype, and this outer image, in position of inner shape, taking give-and-receiving action with the inner quality(internal nature: Sungsang) of spiritual apperception of understanding as subject, get a cognition. This is the cognition of understanding. The give-and-receive action in this process is collation as unifying action.

The 3rd stage is the process of reason. In this stage, reason as inner quality(internal nature: Sungsang) taking give-and-receive action with the image of understanding centering a common purpose, get a cognition. Especially, in this process, the form of operating ideas appears. By this operation of ideas, this process produces new knowledge through new cognition.

Therefore, the epistemology of Unification Thought surpassed Kant in 2nd stage of cognition. Furthermore, the epistemology of Unification Thought comparing this process of cognition with the condition of organic body, shows the possibility of practice. It is an epistemology accompanying scientific ground, thus it has enough validity in scientific meaning.

Conclusion

As I stated on preface, Unification Thought manifests the catch-phrase, "resolution of actual problems." The epistemology of Unification Thought not only supplements the defects of hitherto epistemology, but overcame the limit of it and proves the possibility of practice.

Nevertheless, the epistemology of Unification Thought can't be said that it resolved completely the crux of cognition. For In the point of ontology, it held back the clarification of God. The epistemology premises the existence of God instead of clarifying it. If we

reserve to prove the clarification of God, we can't say that the epistemology of Unification Thought is perfect. In some points of view, the proof of God may be eternally impossible, for God is unlimited being, that is, the Infinite. The concept of Infinite implicate 'can recognize nothing.' In spite of it, I am sure that the epistemology of Unification Thought presents a certainty of cognition, for it has the possibility of practice in actuality.

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