

## Presentation Papers

### UNIFICATION THOUGHT AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CONSCIOUSNESS

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#### I. Introduction

The following is a study of the relationship between the issue of the soul as perceived in unification thought and psychological theories of human consciousness, especially of the soul and the psychical world.

#### II. General Theories of Consciousness

##### 1. The Philosophical Perspective

In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant perceives the development of human consciousness as occurring in the three stages of sensibility (Sinnlichkeit), understanding (Verstand) and reason (Vernunft). Sensibility according to Kant is a passive faculty for receiving sensations, understanding an active faculty for forming judgment, and reason the level of the soul that rests on a high level of objectivity.

In his *Discourse on Method*, Descartes does not distinguish between consciousness on one hand and idea and spirit on the other, but divides consciousness between active will or volition and passive perception.

Empiricists took a different approach from these idealists. Locke interprets human cognitive function in terms of sensible organism and reflex thinking, while Hume spoke of consciousness as “an inner part.”

##### 2. The Psychological Perspective

###### 1) Freud's Psychoanalytical theory

Freud proposed that the human psyche could be divided into three dependent parts, the id, the ego and the superego. The id consists of irrational instincts in the realm of the subconscious. These instincts (ex: sexuality = libido) appear through sensory stimuli as egoistic motivation based on the 'pleasure principle'. The ego, on the other hand, is the rational agency of the psyche, governed by the "reality principle," while the superego, as the ideal self, is governed by both reason and morality.

## 2) The Behaviorist Theory of J.B. Watson and Skinner

Watson's behaviorist theory explains human mental processes in terms of behaviors which are determined primarily by the environment. Based on Pavlov's S-R Theory, Skinner also saw human mental processes in a mutual relationship with environmental factors.

## 3) J. Piaget's 4 Stages of Development

The famous Swiss child-psychologist Piaget perceived the development of the human "structure of cognition" in four stages. The first is the Sensorimotor Stage, which is from approximately birth to 2 years of age. In this period the child's mental faculties consist primarily of reflexes that are motivated by biological needs; Piaget called this "reflex thinking." From age 2 to 6 the child perceives the external world egocentrically, with an insufficient perception of space, and this perception is extremely illogical and irrational; Piaget therefore calls it "magic thinking." Since the child begins to shape the external world at this stage Piaget calls it the "preoperational stage." The third stage, which extends from about age 7 to age 12, sees the child transcending egocentric thinking while remaining incapable of abstract thought and the comprehension of hypotheses. In this period the child can think about acute physical objects and begins to reason logically. The fourth stage is the "formal operational stage," which starts from age 12. Only in this stage does the child achieve the ability to think abstractly and rationally. This stage is characterized by "symbolic thinking."

If Kant perceived the development of consciousness as *a priori*, Skinner saw it as based on experience, while Piaget saw it as taking place in interaction between *a priori*, genetic factors and experience (environment).

### 3. The Religious Perspective

#### 1) Consciousness and Buddhism

Buddhism interprets consciousness in terms of the five senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell. Since these senses are the sources of discomfort, sadness, dislike and desire that lead to suffering (the 108 sorrows), escaping from them by sacrificing the self is seen as the Way or Tao. Arriving at the Tao requires right seeing, right thinking, right speaking, right acting, right living, right striving and right deciding.

Therefore the right consciousness as seen by Buddhists is paradoxically the “consciousness not to be conscious.”

#### 2) Consciousness and Confucianism

Confucianism sees consciousness as arising in a “you and I” relation, and therefore in a mutual relationship with society. As the keyword “benevolence (仁)” shows, the content of consciousness is the individual and society, in other words the ruler–subject and other central relationships, model behavior and the preservation of order.

#### 3) Consciousness and Taoism

In the *Dao De Qing*, Lao Tzu characterizes the content and method of his teaching as follows:

- 1) Human language and concepts are insufficient to grasp and describe the irregular and transcendent reality of the Tao.
- 2) Real knowledge, in other words a true grasp of the essence of the Tao, is not sensory knowledge of external appearances.
- 3) Real knowledge is not knowledge that derives from reasoning or

classification.

- 4) In order truly to grasp the essence of the state of things, it is necessary for moral nature and consciousness to resolve themselves into the pure condition of the state of things.
- 5) Resolving our moral nature and consciousness into the true state of things means freeing them from all forms of discrimination and classification.
- 6) Resolving our moral nature and consciousness into the true state of things does not mean emptiness or blindness. It means achieving true wisdom and awareness.
- 7) This true wisdom or awareness is not something that is attained through reason, but only in connection with the Way. (*Christianity and Eastern Thought*, Chapter 5)

### III. Theories of the Afterlife

#### 1. Traditional Philosophical Views of the Afterlife

In ancient Egypt it was believed that the dead were reincarnated as eagles or swallows, and both Buddhism and India's Vedic teaching assert that people are reborn in various animal forms in accordance with how they lived their lives as humans. As for Greece, Plato asserts in the *Phaedros* that those who have lived a good life are granted eternal contemplation and freedom from bodily birth, while evil ones must be born again as people or animals.

#### 2. Traditional Religious Views of the Afterlife

1) Buddhism distinguishes between former life, present life, and the world beyond. The cycle of rebirth is known as *samsara*, and involves the idea that upon death we can be reborn in one of six realms, depending on how we lived our lives.

##### The Result of Bad Works:

The hells, or the world of suffering

The animal world, or the world of beasts and insects

The world of the hungry ghosts, i.e. the world of hunger

The Result of Good Works:

The *asura* world, i.e. the world of the ghosts of strife

The human world

The heavens or paradise

2) Confucianism was a worldly oriented doctrine, as expressed in the words, “You don’t know life, so how can you know death?”, but as a doctrine that emphasized rites of ancestor worship it admitted of an afterlife.

3) In Christianity, the spiritual theory of Germany’s Meister Eckehart is famous. For Eckehart, belief was a mystical spiritual element that transcended the self, something that existed beyond human limitations. Mysticism distinguishes between God-mysticism, Soul-mysticism, Christ-mysticism, nature-mysticism and love-mysticism; these five kinds of mysticism are referred to as spiritual mysticism. Eckehart’s ideas were further developed by modern theologians such as R Otto and P Tillich.

In modern theology, the afterlife is attested to and explained by Hebrews (11:1): “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The concept of resurrection is to be seen as additional confirmation of an afterlife.

#### **IV. Consciousness and the Afterlife in Unification Thought**

*Essentials of Unification Thought* deals extensively with human conscience in the chapter “Epistemology.” After a criticism of the epistemological theories of Kant, Hegel and Marx, a new epistemology is offered from the perspective of Unification Thought. Kant’s *a priori* epistemology is criticized for neglecting the relation between man and the world of phenomena and for his exclusive emphasis on the subject (man), while Hegel and Marx are criticized for their emphasis on the

material world.

Unification Thought encompasses both the subject (man) and the object (the world of matter) in an epistemology defined as “the original image.” On the one hand, it replaced Marx’s relationship of thesis x antithesis = synthesis with a new theory positing the relationship thesis x co-thesis = synthesis, and replaced Marx’s concept of “class struggle” with the concept of “class harmony.”

## 2. The Afterlife in Unification Thought

*Divine Principle* moves beyond traditional transcendentalism and mysticism to a concept of personal spirituality. Personal spirituality consists in grasping the nature of God in a twofold structure consisting of personal essence and spiritual essence, as explained in the *Theory of the Original Image*.

Proof of the existence of God is offered in a way that differs from fundamentalist theology. Even though God exists in the realm of formlessness, man is with form, but just as man cannot deny the existence of a formless mental realm in the relation between mind and body, neither can the formless realm of God be denied.

Actually, Dr Sang Hun Lee, the Chairman of the Unification Thought Institute who died in 1997, has said in a spiritual message sent to Unification believers that the afterlife is the same as this world, thereby giving firm logical basis to the view of the afterlife contained in Unification principles and Unification thought.

## V. Conclusion and Discussion

In the above I have looked mainly from philosophical, psychological and religious perspectives at Unification Thought and the issue of human consciousness as seen by psychology, as well as at the theological approach to the afterlife and the spiritual world. At the same time I have surveyed Unification Thought’s approach to these issues in the effort to show what is unique in this theory.

Transcending the confines of religious research, Unification Thought, as a comprehensive science, analyzes all major ideas from all of the social sciences – philosophy, logic, educational theory, aesthetics, ethics, the study of history and so on – and therefore constitutes a new theory that has overcome Marxism; this is seen as opening up a new perspective in academic inquiry.

In *Surviving the Future*, the famous historian A.J. Toynbee writes, “Modern science and the information society may give mankind sensory gratification, but are unable to satisfy mankind’s highly developed spiritual needs; the way to resolve this is for modern man to restore the religion that has been lost.” He adds that religion must proceed to “a unified world religion.”

In writing on the afterlife, Toynbee says “I personally do not believe in the immortality of man either in the form of life after death or reincarnation. But I do believe that at about the time of death the soul is reabsorbed into the spirituality that underlies the universe.” This shows that while he was skeptical about the traditional oriental religious concept of the soul and the spiritual world, he did accept them as a theological absolute and as a philosophical meta-reality.

Like the philosophical interpretation of consciousness, the psychological interpretation has divided into idealist and materialist viewpoints, and the issue of the afterlife has naturally been interpreted accordingly, either as existing or not existing. In this respect Unification Principles and Unification Thought offers a critical analysis of both the historical materialism of Marxism and the moral relativism of the capitalist tradition, establishing a unified thought of “Headwingism” that will be seen as a milestone in the future history of mankind.