

As a knight embleme he has chosen the oriental symbol of Yin and Yang. In the last year of his long life, he tried to explain the idea of complementary concepts to the professors at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Copenhagen: concepts may look contradicting each other in spite of the fact that they all contain seeds of truth: they all may help us to catch the totality of Nature, the unity of Culture. He asked: "What is the complementary concept to justice?" And he gave the answer: "Love."

Session V

Ethics in Unificaton Thought

Thomas G. Walsh

Ph. D. in Ethics, Director of I. R. F., USA

Introduction

This essay seeks to provide a general introduction to the theory of ethics presented in Unification Thought (UT). The UT text that I will be referring to throughout is an unpublished volume from 1988 called *Fundamentals of Unification Thought*. This text builds upon earlier versions of UT entitled *Unification Thought* and *Explaining Unification Thought*.¹

What follows here not only provides an exposition of UT Ethics, but also seeks to relate UT ethics to the general theories of ethics in Western thought. In addition I identify what I take to be the salient contributions of UT ethics to our contemporary situation. On the one hand, UT provides a formidable challenge to moral

relativism, presenting a call for normative order without sacrificing human creativity and freedom. On the other hand, UT, by centering itself on the norm of the family, has brought to our attention the social and psychological significance of the family, a point lost to many modern and contemporary ethical theorists.

The first section below contains a general survey of Western ethical theory; this reading will not be necessary for persons already quite familiar with ethical theory, and such persons may want to skip ahead to the straight exposition of Unification Thought's Ethics in section two, which is followed by a brief summary of its relation to other major positions in Western philosophical ethics. The final section seeks to elaborate on the major contributions which the Unification Thought perspective brings to Ethics. UT provides an ethical perspective which can guide humanity through and beyond the moral crisis we face in this postmodern and postmarxist age.

I. A Brief Survey of Western Ethical Theory

Ethics is that branch of philosophy or theology which concerns itself with knowledge of and practice of the good and/or the right in human affairs. As reflection and analysis of various moral claims and practices, ethical inquiry seeks to bring clarity and normative direction in response to several basic moral questions. What is the good and how is it to be acquired or preserved? What are my basic moral obligations? Why should I pursue goodness or honor my moral obligations? Are there any secure epistemological or metaphysical foundations for my perceptions of goodness or moral obligation; that is, can morality be considered objective and absolute, or is it only subjective and relative?

Ethical theories can be characterized according to certain general types. First of all, there are theories rooted in religious traditions. Thus we often speak of Christian ethics or Buddhist ethics, indicating that the ethical perspective has its foundation in a religious worldview. In such cases the ethical claim on the person takes its authority from the prior authority of the religion. While religion may

respect the viability of natural reason or conscience (for example, the natural law tradition of Thomas Aquinas),² natural morality remains insufficient and in need of some infusion of information (revelation) and support (grace) from a transcendental source. Revealed truths and super natural experience play significant roles in religious moralities; at times, in fact, natural morality is ignored or overruled by religious imperatives. For example, was Abraham morally correct in his willingness to slay Isaac? Kierkegaard has insightfully reflected on such a "teleological suspension of the ethical," wherein the requirements and goals of faith overrule the requirements of and goals of morality.³ Or, in the thought attributed to Socrates in Plato's "Euthyphro," do we consider an act good because the gods will it, or do the gods will an act because it is good?⁴ In many instances indeed religious morality differs from natural morality.

But although religious moralities may be the most popular worldwide (when one takes account of all Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, etc.), the philosophical rationalist tradition in ethics has been a strong competitor. The tradition of seeking to establish an ethical theory on the foundation of human reason emerges in part due to the history of moral failure in religion, e.g., abuses of authority and the tendency to justify the violation of persons' welfare by appeal to religious authority. In addition, the philosophical tradition in ethics stands as a compelling alternative to religious ethics by reason of its promise to rise above the irreducibly plural and competing claims of religious moralists, each of whom appeal to some not easily reproducible spiritual experience as the basis for their claims. The rationalist tradition in ethics gained full force at the time of the Enlightenment, emerging in the wake of a century of moralistic religious wars. Kant, for example, assumed that religion could not provide an adequate basis for any morality which was to be binding on a universal community.

Within the rationalist tradition in ethics there are differing approaches. One general distinction is made between a theory which is governed by some valued goods which are to be pursued (consequentialism) and a theory which does not relate moral

obligation to any goods which are to be produced (deontological). In the case of the former, which includes teleological, utilitarian and consequentialist perspectives, ethical theory concerns itself with identifying and maximizing the goods that are to be pursued. Such goods might include a good character, in the case of Aristotle's virtue ethics,⁵ or the greatest happiness for the greatest number, in the case of John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism.⁶ As a rule, utilitarian and consequentialist theories tend to operate a posteriori, i.e., by observation of the historical circumstances, in the attempt to ascertain the good and the best means of producing it. Similarly, such consequentialist theories are future oriented, looking to provide the guidelines for moral judgement that, if followed, yield the desired goods. Acts which produce benefits, while minimizing the costs, are good acts.

There are several weaknesses in this approach. First of all, consequentialism offers no criteria for determining what the good is that ought to be pursued; it only tells us that if we know the good already, then those acts that promote it are good. Since people disagree about what the good is that ought to be pursued consequentialism begs an important question. Secondly, some goods may be best produced by such means as dishonesty or exploitation. For example, if I could prevent a destructive race riot by arresting and convicting an innocent man, shouldn't I do so? Thirdly, consequentialism's force weakens by reason of the inexact nature of the science of predicting the future. We simply have no guarantee that the events we expect to occur will in fact come about as a result of our action. Fourthly, a person whose character is dispicable, manipulative and vicious can do actions that produce apparent goods. Are such acts moral?

In contrast to consequentialism, there is the deontological perspective. Here the moral norm does not derive from the anticipation of any particular goods to be produced. Morality is not about production of good consequences, but about acting according to obligation and out of respect for law. Kant, the premier proponent of deontology, has said, "the purposes which we have in view in our actions, or their effects regarded as ends and springs of the will,

cannot give to actions any unconditional or moral worth."⁷ For Kant the will is to be determined a priori, simply by checking to see if my proposed action complies with the categorical imperative, which permits me to act only if I can rationally will the particular action to become a universal law. If the considered action cannot be universalized (I cannot will that all people also necessarily engage in the same kind of action) then it is simply rationally unwillable and a good will or moral will cannot consent. In effect, my moral obligations are not determined by the products that I ought to bring about, but they are determined by the logic of my own rationality. Consequences do not figure in the moral equation, for goodness is restricted to the life of the will. Hence, under the deontological regime I cannot lie even if by lying I would produce good results; I cannot enslave a minority group even though I might be able to improve the lives of 99% of the world's population; I cannot violate the logic (moral requirements) of the pure will even though I promise to produce great goods in the world by violating the will.

Like consequentialism, deontology has its weaknesses. First of all, by divorcing obligation from its effects, deontology may promote a world that is both moral and miserable. That is, morality is divorced from happiness. Secondly, ultimately unwillability has to check itself in relation to the imagined effects of particular types of actions, were everyone to do them, e.g., lying, wasting one's potential, committing suicide, refusing to help someone in distress. In other words, at some point along the way of deontological purity, consequentialist interests will kick in. Thirdly, while Kant held that the universalizability criterion would provide a sound basis for moral decision-making, he was unable to provide a basis for ranking moral priorities. For example, in the case where only my lying can prevent the death of an innocent person, is it more unwillable to lie or to assist in the death of an innocent person.

Having made these very general remarks in regard to religious, consequentialist and deontological approaches to ethics, mention needs to be made of that great nemesis to moral aspirations, relativism. One cannot deny that, on the empirical level, there has existed and still exists a vast plurality of moral perspectives and practices in

the world. Despite the attempts of numerous theologians and philosophers, the observer can easily recognize that giant intellectuals and pious men disagree profoundly on matters of morality. While there is agreement in the abstract about the desirability of peace, justice, goodness and happiness, the battles line are drawn when it comes to advocating specific policies and practices.

The relativist essentially argues that, even if there are objective moral absolutes (and most relativists would say there are none), we have no access to the knowledge of them, any more than we have access to knowledge of God. But while there may be no objective and absolute foundations of morality, there are customs, conventions, traditional practices, and personal feelings. A moderate relativist, for example Aristotle or David Hume, would seek to affirm the best practices of a particular society, making no claims for their relevance to humanity at large. One thinks not of morality as such but only of the morality of particular cultures. A radical relativist, for example Machievelli or Nietzsche, would see morality as a pretense useful only in the advance of power.

If one wishes to morally denounce anything one must have some basis for making the denunciation. In tribal societies, particularist communities, or some voluntary associations there may exist a moral consensus. That is, people may generally agree and speak the same language of good and bad as applied to particular kinds of practices. In large cosmopolitan societies, however, pluralism overrides consensus. Consensus, insofar as it does exist, is reduced to a shared fear of penalizations that come with breaking the law. Because of the radically plural nature of the various moral cultures that inhabit modern cosmopolitan societies, no single moral culture is permitted to take dominion of the moral idiom. As a result, moralities are on display like shoes in a shoestore, trying to attract consumers, most of whom are looking for a shoe that fits the size of their foot.

II : Ethics in Unification Thought

How do we best understand Unification Thought (UT) as it relates to Ethics? Can we classify UT Ethics according to the general

theories described above? What does it contribute to the understanding of ethics?

A. Ethics and Worldview

First of all, UT Ethics is embedded in a philosophical worldview. That is, UT Ethics is developed within the context of a general system of thought that includes ontology, epistemology, theology and anthropology. In this sense the ethics is a part that derives from and takes its place within the whole. UT, then, makes a significant departure from ethical systems which seek to operate independently of any worldview, or which seek to establish themselves by appeal to some generic principle such as utility, in the case of Mill, or by appeal to a claim of pure rationality and universalizability, as in Kant.

While the Ethics component of the UT system may stand intelligibly alone, it is best understood in relation to a variety of prior presuppositions and arguments. For example, UT presupposes and seeks to explain the existence, purpose and goodness of God, human beings and all creation. The Ethics of UT is understood in relation to each of these prior components of the entire system of thought.⁶

But while Ethics is a part of the whole, there is a distinct sense in which UT is fundamentally and in its entirety an ethics. That is, its purpose is essentially practical, having to do with a kind of this-worldly and universal salvation: "Unification Thought seeks to resurrect collapsing traditional values and unify them through lasting and unchangeable values based on God's absolute love, namely absolute values. Unification Thought seeks to realize the world of peace and goodness that has been pursued by all religions and thought systems."⁹

B. Theism and Ethics

Given the role that God (Original Image) plays in UT, we are obliged to say that UT ethics is essentially theocentric or theistic. At the same time, God is essentially ethical, or good. God is characterized by a heart of goodness and the creation of all things has been designed for the sake of goodness. Goodness exists in God,

the Original Image, in relation to and as an expression of God's Heart. God created the world in order to multiply the experience of joy through true love. The function of reason, law, principle, etc., as they operate in God, humanity and nature is to serve the realization of that purpose. Ultimately, just as goodness is an expression of heart, reason and law (and ethics) serve the purpose of the realization of love. It can be said that ethics exists in the Original Image as both the intention (the purpose or telos of creation being the shared experience of joy through love) and the norms (principles of creation or logos) for the realization of true love.

C. Philosophical Anthropology and Ethics

The human being, according to UT's "Theory of the Original Human Nature," is a being with Divine Image, Divine Character and Position¹⁰ As a being with Divine Character, man is endowed with Heart, Logos and Creativity. Heart is the ground of the will and the will is the motive toward goodness. Heart, "the emotional impulse to seek joy through love,"¹¹ is the basis of character, and if it be understood as a virtue, then it is the supreme virtue, standing in a position like faith might in Luther or love (caritas) in Augustine.

Created in God's image, man's essential nature is heart. In addition, human beings are "created through logos" and are made to "live according to logos." Logos is defined in UT as "the unity of reason and law" (reason-law) and the unity of freedom and necessity.¹² Through Logos the human being recognizes both the law of value and the norm of the family. That is, the human being has a basic capacity, comparable to the Roman Catholic understanding of natural law, to recognize the laws and values according to which men and women are to live. The central norm of the law of value is to live for other people.

D. The Norm of the Family

The norm of the family, wherein the "conjugal union implies the manifestation of God,"¹³ indicates that moral fulfillment requires the creation of an ideal family of parents and children united with God. The UT ideal is represented in a saying from Confucius, "Even if

I may follow what my mind desires, I will not violate the laws of nature."¹⁴ The human ability to recognize the law of value and the norm of family, however, has been crippled due to the Fall.¹⁵ As a result of this impairment, some special knowledge is required. Hence, the importance of the teachings of Reverend Moon, for he has discovered the basic norm of the family.

The aim of the UT theory of ethics is "the perfection of the family."¹⁶ Somewhat similar to Confucianism, the family is the center point of Unification ethics. As stated by Phillip J. Ivanhoe, "Confucius described the moral life in terms of a harmonious and happy family, a family whose different members contributed to the common welfare, each according to his or her role-specific obligations."¹⁷ Moreover, family in Unification Thought refers to a quadruple base consisting of God, parents (husband and wife) and children.

Family is the place of origin for human life, human love and human order. In UT, Ethics is defined as the norm for the perfection of family: "The law penetrating the entire universe is indeed the Way of Heaven, and it is also called reason-law. The norm in the family, namely ethics, is the Way of Heaven governing the universe, directly manifested through the family (system)."¹⁸ The family norm is analogous to the physical laws according to which a solar system exists and moves. Ivanhoe states, "For Confucius, the structure and activities of the ideal society were like the terrestrial constellations; they were Heavenly patterns that moved with the stately regularity of stars."¹⁹ Both families and constellations have what UT refers to as a vertical and horizontal order. For the family there is an order of parents and children (vertical order) and an order of husband and wife (horizontal order). Each order, the vertical and the horizontal, has corresponding virtues; benevolence (parents toward children) and filial piety (children toward parents), for the former, and harmonious love (between husband and wife or between brothers and sisters) for the latter.

E. Individual and Social Ethics

In UT Ethics a distinction is made between individual ethics and public or social ethics. Individual ethics is identified by the term

morality and social ethics is identified by the term ethics. While this terminology is unique to UT, the distinction is conventional²⁰ In UT all beings are both individual truth bodies and connected bodies. There are norms for individuals and norms for the family and society. Individual ethics is the foundation for social ethics. Stated differently, the individual stands as the inner quadruple base, consisting of mind and body united with God, and the family as the outer quadruple base, consisting of husband and wife united with God²¹ UT also explains that social ethics is an extension of family ethics. Family love and family virtues (vertical and horizontal) are applied to various spheres of social existence such as business and government. UT states that, "The fundamental cause of the chaotic state [of our world] is that the family ethics as the foundation of all ethics has become obsolete. Therefore, the way to save society...is to establish a new family ethics, that is to establish a new view of ethics."²² By creating harmonious families we can save the world. According to UT, "for husband and wife to be harmoniously united is equivalent to the unity of the world."²³ Ivanhoe states that in Confucianism, "The traditional family served as the paradigm for the moral life, but the moral life did not end with family obligations. There were obligations to society as well: obligations modelled on the structure of the family."²⁴ Social ethics, then, is a kind of extrapolation from family ethics. In contrast to Marxism which focussed on the primacy of labor as the root cause and basis for the solution to human misery, UT stresses the primacy of the family.

F. Order (Hierarchy) and Equality

UT Ethics values both order (hierarchy) and equality, and holds that the two can be unified in a harmonious way. According to UT, societies that stress order have tended to be oppressive and authoritarian. Egalitarian societies, of course, have also tended toward authoritarianism. UT, however, associates egalitarianism with individualism and, consequently, relative disorder and chaos.

In UT the Principle of Equality is rooted in the ideal of the equality of (God's) love. Such an equality is emphasized as the true goal

of humanity. Equality exists when love is replete and therefore happiness is full in individuals, regardless of their position in society or family. There will always be inequality in the sense of a division of labor or position (hierarchy); yet there can at the same time be an equality of satisfaction and joy (eudaemonia). The model for the harmonious unity of order and equality is the family, where there is to be both horizontal order (role differentiation) and equality (of love) in the conjugal relationship, on the one hand, and vertical order (hierarchy) and equality (of love) in the love of parents for their children.

G. Family and Society

UT espouses a familial model of politics and economy. That is, the political system is fashioned after the horizontal and vertical norms and virtues of the family. Leaders are benevolent, and citizens are respectful, both embodying a kind of "object consciousness," i. e., a filial attitude of responsiveness to God. Self-interested individualism is rejected as a basis for a political system. The same is true for business and the economy. In both the economy and politics there is to be a harmonization of individual purposes with whole purposes.

While love is the purpose or telos of UT Ethics, UT speaks of "love directed toward definite goals," i.e., the realization of parental, conjugal and children's love. In UT love is not an abstract sense of fellow feeling or compassion for humanity or love for many significant others. A love that is both joyful and stable is realized in the family, and from this base moves outward. In effect there is a close link between love and sexuality (and reproduction):

"The order to love is closely related with sexual order. Thus ethics is the order of love and at the same time the order of sex too."²⁵

When the order of sexual love is broken, destruction follows; hence, UT expresses the Divine Principle's understanding of the Fall.

III. UT's Criticism of Ethics in Western Thought

UT Ethics is contrasted with the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham

and the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant. Kantian ethics is criticized from the UT perspective for its lack of a consequentialist dimension. Kantianism fails to grant any moral relevance to human desires, purposes or ends. UT holds that pure reason is not utterly independent of historical concerns. That is, not only our purely abstract motives, but the effects of action are basic to reason's interests. Kant, in a very Lutheran mode, saw human purposes as essentially self-serving and unfree.

Kant is also criticized from the UT perspective for overemphasizing duty and law, to the neglect of love and human fulfillment. Kant's ethics is cool and legalistic, while UT relates ethics to the pursuit of happiness; that is, goodness is inextricably related to happiness.

Bentham's crude utilitarianism is criticized for having too base and narrow a view of happiness.³⁶ UT states that "there is a problem in his grasping happiness centering on material pleasure. For man's true happiness cannot be realized only through material pleasure."³⁷

This was the basis for Mill's criticism of Bentham. Mill sought the cultivation of human sensitivity to the highest and most sublime pleasures possible.

Analytic philosophy is criticized in general by UT for leaving an unbridgable gulf between matters of fact and matters of value. Secondly, analytic philosophy views the good as undefinable. UT seeks to bridge the gap between fact and value, and it offers a specific theory of the good that ought to be pursued.

Finally, pragmatism is criticized because of its relativist implications both as applied to its theory of truth and its theory of the good. The true, or the good, are simply related to whatever seems to be agreed upon for the moment and to whatever seems to work best for the moment.

IV. A Short Reflection on Some Ethical Questions

Having presented a description of UT Ethics in the context of general ethical theory, I turn to address a few prominent questions in the field of ethics, offering in each case a reflection on the UT position.

A. What Is the Good?

UT is essentially a teleological ethical system. That is, according to UT, the essence of value is fundamentally related to the purpose of creation and the give-and-take harmony between correlative elements (e.g., mind and body). Moreover, for man, this purpose is not automatically realized but requires effort and discipline, i.e., human responsibility. Ethics, grounded in the idea of fulfilling the purpose of creation, is goal-oriented, with the goal being complete human fulfillment and joy. The telos in terms of which ethics has its intelligibility is the full experience of God's absolute love through the experience of parental, conjugal, and children's love. Virtues are those aspects of character and relationality without which the telos cannot be achieved. Deontological moral obligations, moreover, whether they issue from the individual logos (reason-law) or a divine command, are never unrelated to the teleology of the moral life. The moral life is always purposeful.

UT differs from any vulgar utilitarianism insofar as the telos, or its view of those goods which have utility, is at odds with conventional materialism, consumerism, self-indulgence and hedonism. In fact, UT's definition of the good (utility) has perhaps more in common with religious visions than with Anglo-American pursuits of comfort. Most conventional self-interested pursuits of the good are actually hindrances to the realization of the Good, which in UT is absolute love.³⁸

B. How Do We Know the Good?

UT describes the good life in terms of love and joy. But love and joy are not experienced through random adventure, general indulgence or individual choice. Love and joy, rather, are experienced by living in accordance with the vertical and horizontal norm, i.e., through the creation of love in the family. How do we know this? How is the objectivity of this assertion determined? The objectivity of the claim is grounded in UT's ontology. That is, all things, including ethics, derive from the "law of resemblance;" all things are created to resemble the Original Image in one respect or another.

There is no general attempt at the proof of the ontology. As I see it, the force of the ontological claims derive from two sources: 1) the overall plausibility and coherence of the system, and 2) the theoretical and practical force of the ideas.

To some extent, the true is known by a kind of Platonic transcendental experience. For example, Dr. Sang Hun Lee the President of UTI, tells students of his spiritual experiences during long periods of fasting. In this sense the good is known, at least in part, through a kind of a priori experience, and not necessarily through observation of the world. UT, then, shares an affinity with idealistic philosophies such as we find in Plato and Kant. UT is not easily compatible with Aristotle's empirical quest for the good, even though there exists an appreciation for Aristotle's teleological emphasis on happiness and his recognition of the importance of virtue, human responsibility, and a good society (good laws) for achieving happiness.

C. How Is the Good Acquired?

We acquire the good through a process of knowledge or education and a process of practice. Formation begins in the family. Without the benefit of a loving, nurturing and stable family proper formation is extremely difficult, but not hopeless. For along with the familial/social formation of the self, there is personal responsibility. The individual is responsible to cultivate through practice those virtues which are essential to the realization of the good.

D. Why Be Moral?

Plato, proposing the idea of a ring that granted invisibility ("Gyge's Ring"), asked his listeners why it would be necessary to be moral if one had no fear of being caught. Plato argued against those who viewed morality as grounded solely in the fear of punishment that morality is basic to our becoming true human beings. To be immoral, in effect, even if we are not caught, would be self-defeating. Kant also argued that to engage in rationally unwillable action would be to deny one's autonomy and one's membership in the human community. UT would concur. Without morality we

cannot fulfill our human purpose. Moreover, perfect joy and love will always escape us.

V. Conclusion: UT's Most Significant Contributions to Ethics

I want to turn to a presentation of what in my estimation are the chief contributions which UT brings to ethics, I will focus on the following: 1) UT's ability to overcome relativism through a foundationalist ethics; 2) UT's establishment of the norm of the family as the basis of ethics.

A. Securing the Foundations of Ethics and Overcoming Relativism

In UT's chapter on Axiology there is a section entitled, "Establishing the Absolute View of Value." There the following is stated:

Today as views of value are collapsing, it is more important than anything else to establish a new view of value. It will be impossible to prevent this phenomenon of collapse by means of any relative view of value. Therefore, the new view of value is the one that will be established on the basis of the clarification of what kind of attributes the absolute God possesses, and with what purpose (purpose of creation) and laws (Logos) He created man and the universe.²⁶

The "new view of value" is necessary due to the decline of theism, the rise of materialism, the conflict among religions and among philosophies, and the inability of religion to compete with science in its hold on the mind of modern man.²⁷ The "new view of value," moreover, is to be built on a secure theological, philosophical and historical foundation. The new view of value developed in Unification Thought serves to establish a foundation for education, ethics and art.

The attempt to establish a rational foundation for ethics is a central concern of any philosophical system. If we are to grant any real force to moral claims, then there must be a distinction between

a moral obligation, on the one hand, and preferences, personal opinion, strong emotion or inclination, on the other hand. However, despite the need for a secure foundation, its discovery has proven evasive. In this respect, and particularly in the twentieth century, relativism has been a convincing philosophical position.

As stated earlier, relativism argues that norms have no absolute foundation. Rather our norms are simply the products of our social and cultural environment; norms have no absolute or objective reality apart from the particular historical periods and social locations they emerge out of. What is normative in one context, is taboo or forbidden in the next. Such at least is one of the lessons that the social scientists, particularly the cultural anthropologists, have taught us, i.e., that on the empirical level at least one finds little evidence of universally shared norms, except at the most general level.

The great German social scientist, Max Weber, argued that while facts had a secure epistemological foundation grounded in the observation of empirical events, values had no such foundation. Our values were simply chosen, the product of our decisions to hold them; nothing more. Weber adopted the neo-Kantian understanding of the split between fact and value or between the phenomenal and noumenal realms. Weber's relativism allowed only that our values be revised as we discovered the empirical consequences which followed from them. If the consequences were in opposition to the intended effect, then our norms should be revised.⁸¹

The contemporary American philosopher, Richard Bernstein has made a study of the debate between "objectivists and relativists." He describes the objectivist as one who believes in some "permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness or rightness." In contrast, the relativist holds that all knowledge is "relative to a particular cultural scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society, or culture."⁸² Like Protagoras, a founding father of relativism, knowledge can never find a secure foundation in the evermoving stream of history.

The history of philosophy narrates a tale of the attempt to secure a foundation for ethics. That is, philosophy carries out the human

intuition that the human urge to declare some things wrong and other things good has some basis apart from my own personal preferences. There is some basic sense we share as human beings that the statement, "Rape is wrong." has some stronger basis than cultural conditioning. Human beings also generally share the view that a prohibition against rape has a stronger basis than a prohibition against eating with one's hands. We also distinguish between someone's moral failure and someone's clumsiness or stupidity.

Relativism, as a philosophical argument, has always been unable to make its own case very persuasively. Simply put, relativism's claim that all knowledge is without foundation applies even to the claim that "relativism is true." Therefore, relativism abandons the epistemological foundations upon which it would build even its own case. The same applies to ethics. One cannot abandon the idea of the objectivity and universality of norms in one breath and then with the next begin getting indignant about genocide or apartheid; unless, in the third breath, one clarifies that one's indignance has the same force as one's dislike of the practice of wearing a plaid shirt with a plaid sport jacket.

Despite the lack of a secure epistemological foundation for relativism in ethics, the lack of any secure foundation for objectivism leaves the gate open to relativism, and many walk through. Philosophers through the ages have attempted to build a dyke of rationality to prevent the flood of relativism from destroying civilization and tradition.

Plato, and his teacher Socrates, eschewed the Sophists who taught that ethics had only to do with conventions, or that success was best insured by adopting popular conventions. Plato taught that only the Idea of the Good was real, and that all historical goods were inauthentic imitations. Aristotle, while departing in significant ways from his teacher, sought to establish a foundation for ethics by appeal to the perceived excellences he observed in the comparison of specific persons and specific political societies. Ethics, for Aristotle, had to do with the cultivation of virtues, without which happiness would not be possible.

We live in an age in which intellectuals speak of

antifoundationalism, indicating that truths, norms and taste are without secure metaphysical and epistemological foundation. According to this argument, we dwell in the perpetually changing world of time and language, and we can never gain any perspective which transcends our own finite, parochial, psycho-social, class-conditioned, and personal points of view. Systems of thought which make absolute claims of knowledge or normativity are inherently authoritarian and totalitarian. In this way, relativism becomes attractive, for relativism in science or ethics makes only soft, tentative claims which are open to change. Admitting the loss of foundations one dare not make strong claims about knowledge or norms.

But is relativism really any nicer than foundationalism. Relativism, after all, provides us with no moral authority to criticize what we take to be wrong or unjust. Relativism allows us to ground our moral decisions only in choice; a chosen obligation is very different from an absolute obligation. The former becomes revisable and remains inherently tentative; the latter remains binding independent of my personal choice. I can choose to shirk my responsibility, but not without great cost to myself and others.

Relativism (*noncognitivism, emotivism, historicism*), manifested in utilitarian individualism, is the dominant moral perspective in operation in the western world. While relativism may work well for several generations among those shaped by local traditions that foster discipline, hard work, and self-development, over time relativism erodes the foundations of prosperity, hard work and discipline. Radical pluralism seems to assure the victory of relativism, since any assertion (value judgement) about a good culture or a good tradition is characterized as racist, imperialist, ethnocentric or authoritarian.

UT seeks to revive a foundationalist ethics and has provided a framework or worldview in relation to which its ethics makes sense.

While the weakness of such an approach may be that adoption of the worldview becomes a prerequisite for an appreciation of the ethics, this approach has the advantage of presenting a full account of the nature of reality in terms of which ethics becomes intelligible. Within the liberal tradition, that includes the thought of persons such as Bentham, Mill, Kant and Dewey, an attempt is made to uncouple

ethics from any worldview. This uncoupling has force in that moral obligation may still hold even though there exists a plurality of differing and competing worldviews. That is, if worldviews are things about which there is no agreement, then we had better hope that morality can exist independently of worldview. Liberalism has essentially held that ethics can be independent of worldview, except the general worldview of liberalism, wherein ethics has to do either with private affairs which are no one else's business or legal (public) affairs which represent a minimalist moral vision.²⁹

Liberalism aside, ethics has remained linked to worldview primarily within the great religious traditions of the world, e.g., Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, or within Marxism. In Marxism ethics has been largely judged to be a bourgeois invention; in turn all morality is reduced to acts which serve the revolution.

In Marxism there has been a tendency toward a clear teleological suspension of the ethical; the good is defined solely as those actions which are efficacious in helping to realize the goal of world revolution, i.e., the success of the communist party.

Among religions there has been a great tension between loyalty to ancient texts, including laws and prescriptions, and the demands of modernization. The traditional values of the religious worldviews have often been eroded by the flood of modernization, leaving fundamentalism as the most visible and forceful attempt to hold the line against the corrosive effects of modernization. Many religious people are themselves torn between their loyalties to their premodern roots, on the one hand, and the demands of a radically plural and generally democratic global culture, on the other hand.

What is UT's contribution to this situation? By boldly putting forth its ontology and worldview, UT improves upon the liberal worldview's inability to secure a foundation for anything but its minimalist moral vision. UT improves upon the traditional religions' uneasy and even incompatible relationship to modernity. In part this is simply because UT posits an ideal of the human being, an Original Human Nature, which is a telos toward which we are to responsibly move; this telos, moreover, has no fundamentally incompatible relationship to modernity's pursuit of universal morality, global

prosperity, world peace, human happiness, scientific and technological mastery which is environmentally sensitive, and the unity of nations and cultures.

In addition, UT improves upon Marxism's counterproductive hostility to both political) economic liberalism and freedom of religion.

Like Marxism, UT provides a fully articulated framework for the development of an ethical theory; unlike Marxism its dialectic is not based on struggle and resentment, but constructive interaction and love.

B. The Moral and Social Significance of the Family

UT's greatest contribution to ethics lies in its formulation of a family ethics as the central pillar of its moral vision. The family is understood as the basic unit of social reality, and essentially the locus for the reproduction of the species.

However, despite the position of the family and sexuality in the formation of human life, ethical systems in the West have emphasized either the centrality of the individual (liberalism) or the state (Marxism or socialism). The family has been treated as largely an unmanageable private sphere of reality, a sphere dominated by romance and irrational sexuality. While the great religions have sought to stress the importance of the family, the family was often disparaged as a worldly institution having little eternal value. In Marxism, moreover, the family was once again viewed as simply a bourgeois institution.

By highlighting the family as the central place for formation of the self and for the order and joy of the social world, UT both simplifies and intensifies the importance of sexual ethics as a public affair. The management of sexuality in the order of the three kinds of love-parental, conjugal, children's-becomes the central responsibility of the moral agent. As a result ethics is no longer simply the treatment of puzzling moral quandries such as surround debates about abortion, fetal research, affirmative action, etc., rather ethics is given a telos grounded in a theory of the nature of the human being.³⁴

In modernized societies, where sexuality is understood as a private affair unrelated to any permanent moral obligations, the family (a

permanent, monogamous, reproductive relationship) declines. Promiscuity abounds, and is even promoted by capitalist consumerism, since sexual licence is the paramount example of indulgence and consumption. A further externality of sexual randomness and disorder is the mass production of unwanted, and only tentatively related (to the parents) children. Governments and advocates of welfare programs seek to compensate for family disorder with education programs and welfare programs. But problems only escalate. Sexual randomness and a self-centered "personal choice" model of pleasurable marriage eventually erode the idea of family as a moral obligation that far exceeds the bounds of mere choice. Individuals are formed in the family in ways that no education program, and no foster care program, and no government assistance program can compensate for.

In UT family life is not a choice. It is an absolute value grounded in the very nature of the human being as destined to exist in a permanent, harmonious, and monogamous relationship between a man and a woman. This pattern of life is rooted, not in culture and choice, but in the Original Image. Love itself, that which human beings exist for, is fully possible only in the family.

Family, moreover, is the internal foundation of all social institutions, political and economic. Without the harmony of love in the family, other communities of social interaction will never operate with an adequate degree of altruism, concern, and respect for the value of life.

UT ethics holds promise in being tied to a vital, concrete historical movement. Its power will have to be expressed in its fruits. The UT system has significant practical power and its ethics provide resources absent in the major systems of thought, particularly Marxism and liberalism.

NOTES

1. *Fundamentals of Unification Thought* (Unification Thought Institute (UTI): New York, 1988). This is an unpublished text that builds upon earlier texts: *Unification Thought* (UTI: New York, 1973) and *Explaining Unification Thought* (UTI: New

- York, 1981).
2. The theory of natural law, basic to traditional Roman Catholic moral theology, presents the case for the ability of natural human reason to have cognizance of our basic moral requirements. That is, human beings are *not* utterly dependent on revelation or the infusion of grace for knowledge of and power to do the good.
 3. Soren Kierkegaard's discussion of Abraham and Isaac and the "teleological suspension of the ethical" occurs in *Fear and Trembling*, Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1983) pp. 54-68.
 4. Plato's *Euthyphro* has Socrates dismantling the pretentious moralism and arrogance of Euthyphro. See Plato: *The Last Days of Socrates*, Translated by Hugh Tredennick (Penguin Books: New York, 1984) pp. 17-43.
 5. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* represents the classic version of an ethics of virtue. Virtue is the development of an excellence which stands between an excess and a deficiency of character. Virtue makes happiness and the good society possible. See the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Translated by Martin Ostwald (Dobbs-Merrill: Indianapolis, 1979).
 6. With his essay, "Utilitarianism," John Stuart Mill attempted to defend utilitarianism against its critics, many of whom took Bentham's vulgar hedonic calculus as the standard expression of utilitarianism. Mill argued for the quality against the quantity of utility, and coined the phrase, "better a Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied." Society had the responsibility to educate persons in those goods which only a cultivated sensibility could appreciate. See, "Utilitarianism" in *Ethics: Selections from Classic and Contemporary Writers*, Edited by Oliver A. Johnson (Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1974) pp. 258-284.
 7. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Translated by Lewis White Beck and Edited by Robert Paul Wolff (Dobbs-Merrill: Indianapolis, 1969.)
 8. UT can be compared perhaps more with Thomism than with

- modern and contemporary western philosophy since Descartes. UT may be likened to what has been called "Christian worldview philosophy." As described by Alvin Plantinga, Christian philosophy starts from the presupposition that Christianity is true or that God exists and created the world. Christian philosophy seeks to offer "satisfying accounts of some of the main philosophical topics from a Christian perspective." From "On Christian Philosophy," in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (Fall 1989) pp. 617-621.
9. *Fundamentals of Unification Thought*, (UTI: New York, 1988) Unpublished. Introduction, p. 6.
 10. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Three, "Theory of Original Human Nature," p. 5.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 15. The *Divine Principle* presents an account of the Fall whereby humanity is separated from God due to the misuse of love and the violation of the basic norm of the family and sexuality. See *Divine Principle* (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity: New York, 1973) pp. 65-98.
 16. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Six, "Ethics," p. 3.
 17. Phillip J. Ivanhoe, *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition*, (Scholars Press: Atlanta, 1990) p. 5.
 18. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Six, "Ethics," p. 6.
 19. Ivanhoe, p. 8.
 20. The terms ethics and morality can be understood as synonymous with the same basic meaning; the only difference being that ethics has a Greek root and morality has a Latin root. In the West, in academic circles, ethics refers to the systematic study of morality. It is conventional to distinguish between personal ethics and social ethics.
 21. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Six, "Ethics," p. 3.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 23. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Three, "Theory of Original Human

Nature," p. 10.

24. Ivanhoe, p. 5.
25. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Six, "Ethics," p. 5.
26. Jeremy Bentham is one of the fathers of utilitarianism. In his work, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, he built a moral and legal philosophy on the basis of man's general preference for pleasure over pain. See *Ethics: Selections from Classic and Contemporary Writers*, Edited by Oliver A. Johnson (Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1974) pp. 226-240.
27. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Six, "Ethics," p. 17.
28. In commenting on this section of my paper, Dr. Sang Hun Lee offered some extremely helpful comments. He points out that for UT, goodness, along with truth and beauty, are the three great values that come into being based on God's love. Goodness, in particular, corresponds to the volitional function of the human mind. Quoting directly from his comments, "goodness is the content (value) expressed by subjectively harmonizing with one's own action the objective attributes (Sung Sang and Hyung Sang, and Yang and Yin)." I am very grateful to Dr. Lee for this clarification.
29. *Fundamentals*, Chapter Four, "Axiology," p. 25.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
31. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber*, Edited by C. Wright Mills and H. H. Gerth (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1958) pp. 77-129.
32. Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1983) p. 8.
33. Of course, liberalism's affirmation of tolerance and liberty is itself a worldview, one which claims to stand above the others on a kind of tower of neutrality. Liberalism, as a worldview, is in a state of near collapse insofar as its tolerance risks becoming oppressively intolerant of strong commitment and its regard for liberty has given rise to wild decadence and the free pursuit of ends fit only for pigs. Liberalism has failed to create Mill's cultivated individuals; rather one might argue

that it has spawned only a population of Benthamian pigs in pursuit of pleasure.

34. In Marxism, and socialism in general, the family has been understood as extremely important and socially relevant, albeit as an obstacle to liberation. The Communist Manifesto does call for the abolition of the family, viewing it as an extension of the private property system of capitalism. This is to say that any social movement cannot dismiss the import and social relevance of the family, even if, as in Marxism, one wants to eliminate it.