



DISCUSSANT RESPONSE

by

Jennifer P. Tanabe
Director of Institutional Research
Unification Theological Seminary
Barrytown, New York, USA

to Frederick Sontag's

ORIGINAL IMAGE

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Response to "Original Image" by Frederick Sontag

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Dr. Sontag has succinctly summarized the main points of the theory of Original Image and comments that it may be theoretically unobjectionable. Appropriately, his paper deals with questions which underlie the whole of Unification Thought, rather than quibbling over the details.

his first section summarizes the theory of Original Image, and concludes by asking whether this theory can unite humanity and move us to achieve our original purpose. More generally, he poses the question, "What can theory, any theory, do and not do?" In subsequent sections he addresses the question of a global transformation of consciousness, raising several issues including: whether theory alone can produce change; whether theory can unite or does it tend to divide, and whether unity is necessary to bring about a global transformation of consciousness; and finally whether such a transformation can actually bring us closer to salvation.

In this paper, I shall begin by discussing the nature, source and function of theory, and in particular describe the status of Unification Thought and the theory of Original Image. In the second section I shall address the issue of whether the theory of Original Image can produce a global transformation of consciousness and bring about human restoration.

I. The Function of Theory

A. What is Theory?

In his popular book A Brief History of Time, Stephen Hawking describes scientific theory as:

. . . just a model of the universe, or a restricted part of it, and a set of rules that relate quantities in the model to observations that we make. . . . A theory is a good theory if it satisfies two requirements: It must accurately describe a large class of observations on the basis of a model that contains only a few arbitrary elements, and it must make definite predictions about the results of future observations.¹

Hawking comments that even a good unified theory of the universe would still be limited to:

just a set of rules and equations. . . . The usual approach of science of constructing a mathematical model cannot answer the questions of why there should be a universe for the model to describe."²

This is because scientists have been too concerned with answering the questions, what is the universe and how did it come into existence, to ask the question why does it exist. Dr. Sontag is correct in questioning whether such theories are capable of mediating a global transformation of consciousness.

B. Unification Thought

1. The nature of Unification Thought

Unification Thought is the thought of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, who has described it as follows:

This is a new view of life, a new view of the world, a new view of the universe, and a new view of the providence of history that has never before existed. It is also a principle of integration that can encompass the whole into one unity, while at the same time preserving the individual characteristics of all religious doctrines and philosophies. I have named this truth Unification Thought or Godism.³

Dr. Sang Hun Lee was directed by Rev. Moon to develop a philosophical systematization of Unification Thought. Consequently, Unification Thought has been published in English in two texts: Unification Thought⁴ and Explaining Unification Thought⁵, and a third text, Fundamentals of Unification Thought⁶ is being prepared. Dr. Lee⁷ has described the character of Unification Thought as follows:

It is the thought of Rev. Moon, based on direct revelation. . . .
It is Godism in its theoretical nature. . . .
It has a philosophical aspect . . .
It assumes a theological nature . . .
It is a theory of standards. . . .
It is a reform theory. . . .
It is also a complementary theory. . . .
It is also a theory for cultural revolution. . . .
It is also the true liberation theory. . . .

This is a formidable list! Clearly, Unification Thought is claimed to be more than just a set of rules and equations.

So is Unification Thought what it is claimed to be? And does that very nature, that would allow it to be what it claims, give it a different status from theories developed through the scientific method, i.e. does it become a matter of faith to accept Unification Thought?

In a paper entitled "The Proof of God's Existence," Dr. Lee argues that the theory of God's existence, as described in the theory of the Original Image, can be seen as the application of the hypothetical method in science:

The hypothetical method refers to a method of proving that the hypothesis is true (making it a true theory) by verifying it through scientific observation or experiment.⁸

Dr. Lee shows that two major hypotheses in the Theory of the Original Image are verified by scientific observation. These are that God is the harmonious Subject of the dual characteristics of Sung Sang and Hyung Sang, and of the dual characteristics of Yang and Yin (correlative attributes). Since all things created according to the "law of resemblance" resemble God, they should reflect these two dual characteristics in God. By examining the characteristics of human beings, plants, animals and minerals, these hypotheses are verified. Thus, we should accept the Theory of the Original Image as a "good theory," which makes accurate predictions about future observations and which also could be disproved by scientific observation.

2. The Source and Purpose of Unification Thought

Rev. Moon has explained the source of Unification Thought:

God's truth is sent to earth as revelation given through certain providential persons. God's truth is the absolute truth, which is an almighty key capable of solving any problem, no matter how difficult it may be. I have encountered the living God through a lifetime of prayer and meditation, and have been given this absolute truth. Its remarkable contents clarify all the secrets hidden behind the entire universe, behind human life and behind human history.

Thus Unification Thought is claimed to be revelation from God, for the purpose of solving the problems of humankind. As Dr. Lee has said:

Unification Thought begins with God in its logical development. That is to say, this thought system starts with the theory of the attributes of God and the theory of His creation. Thus the first premise in the establishment of Unification Thought is the clarification of the attributes of God. The second premise is the creation of the universe, and the third premise is creation according to the law of resemblance. The reason

why these three points are chosen as the premises for its logical development is that Unification Thought is revealed for the salvation of mankind through the settlement of actual problems.¹⁰

Clearly, Unification Thought does not have the same source as the scientific theories discussed by Hawking, and therefore does not suffer from their limitation of failing to explain why there should be a universe for the model to describe. Unification Thought begins with the existence of God, as creator of the universe. The question of why the universe exists is then answered by understanding the attributes of God.

II. The capability of Unification Thought to produce change

Dr. Sontag has questioned whether knowledge in itself is capable of producing salvation, suggesting that God's divine power may also be necessary. He also questions whether knowledge of the Original Image and Original Human Nature is helpful in producing change, or would rather lead only to division and depression among fallen people who are far from this ideal. Finally, Dr. Sontag has contrasted religion with theory, commenting that while religions may have world-wide influence, they do this through institutionalization, in which their transforming power is lost. Thus, he concludes that unity of theory may not lead us closer to salvation.

Here I would like to give some examples of ways in which the Theory of the Original Image can be the basis for producing change.

A. Knowledge of God

Unification Thought begins with the attributes of God and the theory of His creation. If we know the answer to the question why

something exists, we are motivated to repair it. If we only have a description of what it is in its broken state, we are not likely to do much to change it. Thus, knowledge given by scientific theories which merely describe the nature of the universe do not lead to change; however, the knowledge given by the theory of the Original Image gives us understanding of why this universe exists and why we exist, and therefore can move us to fulfill that ideal.

For example, knowledge of the structure of the Original Image leads us to understand the priority of values in our life. Intellect, emotion and will are functions of the Inner Sung Sang of the Original Image, and they lead to the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Inner Sung Sang is subject to Inner Hyung Sang as object. Thus the invisible values of truth, beauty and goodness are in the subject position to external values of food, clothing, shelter, etc. The conclusion is that in our daily life we should priority on ethical values not external needs.

Knowledge of God is essential for us who live in the world and need to have the consciousness that everything is related to God. Without knowledge of God our creator how can we fulfill the purpose for which we were created? As Dr. Sontag points out, knowledge alone is not sufficient to save us from our fallen state. However, the theory of the Original Image is not just a set of rules and equations, it is knowledge of God's attributes and our relationship with God. Thus, Unification Thought brings together knowledge and God's power, and can be the basis for producing change.

B. Heart

In the theory of the Original Image the most central of God's attributes is heart:

That which lies deeper than intellect, emotion, and will is Heart, which in Unification Thought, means the emotional impulse to seek joy through love. This impulse wells up from the bottom of the mind; it is irrepressible, even for God Himself. In order to obtain joy, there must be an object of love, related to the subject. God, therefore, having Heart, seeks objects, in order to fulfill His impulse for joy. This explains why God created man and all other creatures.¹¹

The theory of the Original Image shows that God created based on heart; subsequently human creativity should also be based on heart not reason. Thus, the Theory of the Original Image concludes with the statement that:

Life alone could never be the basis for an ideal world, for life without heart and love can easily take a destructive direction. . . . The fact of struggle, however, illustrates the point that life (force, will) that is not based on heart and love inevitably leads to conflict and strife. We maintain, therefore, that the philosophies of life, force, and will should be connected with, and supplemented by, the philosophy of heart and love.¹²

And, as Wilson has pointed out,

It is the nature of true love to embrace difference, even difference in reason or doctrine, whereas it is the nature of reason to make distinctions and set off one doctrine against another.¹³

Thus the divisiveness of theories may be a function of their being based on reason rather than heart.

Dr. Sontag questions whether theory can move us to action. Theory based on reason probably cannot; theory based on heart, the source of love, the strongest force in the universe, can.

C. Harmonious Relationships

Give and take action in the Original Image is based on heart, the source of love, which is harmonious. Thus, the characteristic feature of give and take action in God is harmony.¹⁴ This provides a standard for recognizing errors of existing society¹⁵: wherever human beings are not loving, harmonious and united, there is no resemblance to God's nature, and therefore we are not fulfilling our own purpose of creation.

Thus, although Dr. Sontag questions the need for unity in order to achieve a global transformation of consciousness and human salvation, the position of Unification Thought is that:

What is most necessary in eliminating the cause of the confusion of the world is the unity of (existing) values. And in order to unite world values, it is necessary to unite (existing) thought systems (philosophies, religions) which are quite diverse.¹⁶

D. Union not Identity

The theory of the Original Image shows that unity is based on harmonious relationship between different attributes. Dr. Sebastian Matczak concludes:

It seems, therefore, that the proper term for the Unification position is very special. Its new position can be called unionism rather than monism, rejecting separatism rather than dualism. Unionism expresses the distinctive union between different objects, but maintains that the objects are different and separate, whereas monism signifies a basic identity of beings with the whole of reality. Unificationism accepts union but not identity.¹⁷

Thus, the unity of theory proposed by Unification Thought should more correctly be called a union of theories. This is what is meant by calling Unification Thought a "complementary theory":

Even though all religious doctrines and philosophies could not be free from the limitations of their times, they will still be able to retain their everlasting character (everlasting truths) by being complemented by Unification Thought.¹⁸

E. Rights of the Individual

The theory of the Original Image provides the foundation for individual rights. The source of individual differences is found in the individual images in the Original Image.¹⁹ God created each person as a unique individual, who would be a unique source of joy to Him, just as each child is a unique source of joy to their parents. Understanding that there is an individual image for each person within the Original Image provides the basis for respect for each individual in society.

III. Conclusion

This paper merely illustrates some of the points that can be taken from the theory of the Original Image to solve problems. I believe that Unification Thought has the potential to do much more than these few examples - it can transform our world from the fallen society to the ideal world of God's original plan. As Hawking concludes his book, "if we do discover a complete theory . . . then we would know the mind of God."²⁰ Unification Thought is the beginning point of that complete theory. And if we know the mind of God will that not produce a transformation of global consciousness?

End Notes

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9. Moon, p.28.
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19. Explaining Unification Thought, p.18-19.
20. Hawking, p.175.