



DISCUSSANT RESPONSE

by

Andrew Wilson
Editor, World Scripture
International Religious Foundation
New York, New York, USA

to Klaus Rohmann's

**CREATION IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EVOLUTIONARY WORLD VIEW: A JUXTAPOSITION
OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF CONTINUAL CREATION AND UNIFICATION PRINCIPLES**

The Eighteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Seoul, Korea August 23-26, 1991

©1991, International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences

RESPONSE TO KLAUS ROHMANN'S
CREATION IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EVOLUTIONARY WORLD VIEW: A JUXTAPOSITION OF
THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF CONTINUAL CREATION AND UNIFICATION PRINCIPLES

Andrew Wilson

Klaus Rohmann regards Unification Thought as one of the modern theological attempts to bridge the gap between science and religion. The assumption of an absolute distinction between religion and science, enshrined since Kant, is now being challenged by many theologians, and rightly so. Yet Rohmann is aware of many pitfalls in attempts to find compatibility. In particular, he is critical of theological discussions of nature for their careless use of analogy and facile correlations between the laws of science and the anthropomorphic language of human hopes and meanings. He does not believe that Unification Thought gives serious attention to these problems. Yet Rohmann's conception of philosophy, as a mediator between scientific laws and the universe of human meanings, raises the larger issue of what is the task philosophy, and particularly ontology, in bridging the gap between science and religion.

According to Rohmann, the 19th century separation of science from religion is being bridged both from the side of science and from new Christian theologies. Theories of quantum mechanics and evolution yield a view of nature in which the dichotomy between matter and mental phenomena is overcome, where determinism and causality are replaced by probability and openness, where time is irreversible, where all things are in the process of evolution from simple to complex. Furthermore, since this process of complexification must overcome the limitations of entropy--in a closed universe, complex systems will quickly collapse--the universe must be open, perhaps admitting the possibility of a transcendental realm.

Of Christian theologians who grapple with science, Rohmann chooses Jurgen Moltmann. He argues that God is that transcendent reality to which the universe is open; the fact of evolution to complex and intelligent beings is itself evidence for the presence of God's spirit in the world. God continually guides and lures the evolution of matter according to purpose. God has been revealing himself in creation by degrees: higher, more complex beings more completely reflect God's glory. The providence of God is at work in the continual evolution of matter and history, which is forever open. The Kingdom of God is not the end of nature: time and history continue into an open future of ever-greater abundance and glory.

For Moltmann, God creates both by producing things at the beginning (creation ex nihilo) and by dwelling in and working through his creatures in the process of continual evolution. For all matter is enlivened by Spirit:

He [God] is present even in the structures of matter. For only informed matter exists. These informations [sic] must be called Spirit. In human beings they come into consciousness (p. 9).

Yet Moltmann avoids the pitfall of pantheism by distinguishing how God may reveal himself in the diverse creatures by degrees; God being ever transcendent of his creatures. This position he calls panentheism, and it is a familiar discussion to students of Unificationism. In addition, Moltmann asserts that the doctrine of the Trinity helps maintain God's transcendence by uniting the activities of a transcendent Source and an indwelling Spirit into oneness. Unification Thought's understanding of the Original Image as a Quadruple Base can function in an analagous way. But the point I want to stress in Moltmann's position is that the indwelling Spirit is present in matter as information and potential consciousness. Consciousness, and other anthropomorphic terms such as intention, freedom, and spirit are qualities inherent in matter itself. We shall return to this point shortly.

We now come to the heart of Rohmann's argument. It can be summarized, I think, in two propositions. First, one should be suspicious of careless analogies from the mathematical language of science to the anthropomorphic language of human life. Second, in no way may religious truths be deduced from natural science, for that would compromise the transcendence of God and the truths of revealed religion. Based on these two sentences Rohmann critiques Moltmann, for improper use of analogy, and Unification Thought, for improper analogies and for invalid deductions about God from nature.

Scientific statements are not like ordinary human language. Mathematical descriptions of scientific law are different from the language of choice, love, and purpose. The latter are analogies, necessary in order that science coheres with the human world, even though it must inevitably remain distinct from it. The task of making proper analogies is, Rohmann asserts, for philosophy, specifically anthropology (the place ontology is not discussed), since the purpose of these analogies is to give nature meanings for human beings. If thus I have correctly stated his first proposition, then it is plagued by several weaknesses.

Rohmann laments that science will always objectify the natural world as fundamentally non-human (pp. 10-11). But must science necessarily present us with such an objectified, non-human world? If it must, then indeed, analogies are required in order to bridge the gap between the world of nature and the world of humans. But can philosophy successfully paper over the split between these two worlds by recourse to analogies after conceding that it is, at the ontological level, beyond repair? We are dealing here with the split between fact and value. Is it a given? Or rather, is that very distinction the creation of philosophy itself? Much new thinking in philosophy traces the origin of this split to Descartes, whose dualism severed the subjective from

the objective world. I would argue that Rohmann may misconstrue the task of philosophy here; rather than perpetuate a flawed foundation, philosophy should critique the philosophical basis for the dualism of fact and value, of the language of objective mathematical description and the language of subjective mental phenomena.

If philosophy need not be wedded to the dualism of subject and object, must science insist upon it? Again, I would answer in the negative. Quantum Mechanics clearly suggests that the observing subject and the observed object cannot be kept separate. There is room within theoretical physics for such mental notions as decision, freedom, memory, etc. Thus Moltmann is in accord with the sentiments of contemporary physics when he speaks of matter as imbued with spirit; he is not necessarily speaking analogically. Rohmann is correct to say that how one construes these notions is a task for philosophy, but what kind of philosophy? Is philosophy a matter of interpretation and analogy only, as if the scientific explanation were complete in and of itself and needed only to be made intelligible to humans? Or does the philosophical task penetrate to the foundations of science itself? Philosophy in the latter sense need not be timid about relating the subjective phenomena of human minds to the objective phenomena of matter, since their relatedness is sui generis.

Let us be concrete by examining how Rohmann critiques one of the positions of Unification Thought, specifically the correspondences between physical force and love and between natural law and ethics (p. 17). He says, "Laws in natural sciences are the result of the operations of reduction and abstraction. The warmth of heart has been taken out. There is no place for human values." Thus he regards the parallel between love and physical forces to be without any philosophical basis. These statements betray his own philosophy as fundamentally dualistic; fact and value are completely sundered. But from the philo-

sophical standpoint of Unification Thought, the unity of fact and value, of the subjective realm and the objective realm, is established from the outset in the relationship between Sung Sang and Hyung Sang. According to Unification Thought, agreeing with Moltmann and many philosophers of the New Science, consciousness (intention) is inherent in material force, and physical force is present in subjective phenomena of consciousness, intentionality and love. Its ontology denies Cartesian dualism; the fabric of nature is entirely relational. It is not necessary to retreat to a realm of analogy to arrive at human meanings which are established only secondarily on the foundation of cold facts.

There also seems to be some confusion here about the nature of reduction and the scientific method. Reduction and abstraction are absolutely essential in science. But to say that the laws which are discovered by these means are also purely reductive and abstract is possibly to confuse means and ends. All science, including the human sciences psychology, sociology, etc., use reduction and abstraction in order to formulate theories. But the theories themselves may deal with phenomena that are concrete, complex, and even subjective. It does not follow from the reductionist methods of scientific investigation that the results need be reductionist. The discovery in Quantum Mechanics of the interaction between the observer and the observed phenomena was made with highly abstract mathematics, yet the result opened the way to overthrow conventional reductionist theories of a mechanistic universe.

Let us turn to the second of Rohmann's critical principles: that the nature of God and religious truth cannot be properly deduced from natural philosophy. He cites with approval Teilhard de Chardin, who asserts that no direct path leads from nature to Jesus Christ. Finally, the nature of God and Christ is a revelation, which can neither be proved nor disproved by science or the "book of nature." This is the Aquinas' venerable theological distinction

between general revelation and special revelation. I would want to affirm this proposition, which I think is fundamental to all Christian theology. But Rohmann, following Teilhard, apparently makes a much stronger disjunction, denying that there is any direct path from nature analyzed at the philosophical level "to theology in general" (p. 13). Do we have here the Barthian position of a God who is wholly other and incommensurate with creation? If so, than this assertion has not gone unchallenged by theologians.

Again, Rohmann would distinguish three levels of reasoning, and woe to the theology which mingles these levels, for it commits "a mortal sin": (1) explanation by physical models and mathematics; (2) interpretation of physical explanations into human terms by philosophy--by which he means anthropology; (3) theological reflection on the meanings of natural philosophy in relation to revealed religion. In this scheme, philosophy has a mediating role, relating the given explanations of nature as established by science to human life, and thereby providing the meaning of nature for theological reflection. Theology is not to relate directly to physics; it must be addressed from the perspective of human self-understanding. If I understand this correctly, there is no place for ontology at all. Nature is presented to us by science; God is presented to us by revelation; they meet only in human reflection. Ontological statements about God's creation, as in Moltmann's theology, are mere "anthropomorphisms" that are forever ancillary to scientific investigation. The Kantian schism between God who can be known subjectively through the human mind and the cold, heartless world of nature stands unchallenged, untouched.

I do not see how this position can stand. The fundamental issues which are raised in the current discussions of philosophy of science and theology cannot be solved by philosophical anthropology alone. A unified ontology that spans all three levels is required. Take, for example, the question of

teleology in evolution. A theory of evolutionary creation must ultimately deal with the question of whether change takes place by accident or by the interplay of probability with some force that conveys intentionality. Thinkers disagree on this issue: Rohmann cites Weizsaker, who speaks of evolution as "based on a chain of accidents" (p. 5), and Moltmann, who describes evolution as guided by God who "allures it in the intended direction by His Spirit" (p. 7). Clearly these are contrary positions, and no reasoning about analogies and human meanings can obscure or resolve this fundamental dispute.

But perhaps it is better for theology if these issues are left obscure. For if Weizsaker's position is correct, if science can prove that nature evolves through a series of accidents without any teleology, then a thoroughgoing ontology which was based on such "science" would have to deny any role for God as Creator. Thus Rohmann's concern is warranted, that philosophy function in such a way that "the dignity of the gospel remains untouched" (p. 13). But the consequence of ignoring ontology is to implicitly acquiesce to the priority of science in areas which are properly the concern of philosophy. By relegating Moltmann's bold discussion of "choice at a ramifying point of evolution" (p. 13) to an anthropomorphism, is not Rohmann implicitly siding with the ateleological position, with all its disturbing consequences for the doctrine of Creation?

On the contrary, ontology is essential for scientific explanation. Current science cannot by itself generate an adequate ontology because it is pushing against the limits of ontological questions which are beyond the purview of physical and mathematical models. Furthermore, theology is an essential ingredient for an adequate ontology; the question of God is fundamental. Science provides certain information about nature; revelation provides certain information about God; then what is needed is a mediating philosophy

that can unify both levels through an ontology that is consistent with both. That is, as I see it, one purpose of Unification Thought.

Having dealt with the most interesting issue raised by the paper, I turn to its treatment of Unification Thought. On the whole, this treatment is marred by the facile assumption that Unification Thought, a philosophy developed by Sang Hun Lee in such books as Explaining Unification Thought, is "ultimately not different from the exposition in Divine Principle" (p. 15). As I see it, Lee has put considerable effort into a philosophical systematization and development out of a doctrinal text which in itself suffers some serious philosophical flaws. Thus when Rohmann, correctly in my judgment, points out the problem in Divine Principle's doctrine that God can be known through resemblance to the created world (p. 18), he is not critiquing Unification Thought, which wisely avoids that position. Unification Thought begins with the theory of the Original Image--the nature and attributes of God--as the starting-point for ontology and natural philosophy, not vice-versa. Similarly, Lee, in Explaining Unification Thought, does not say that one can know the original human nature by observing the external world. He merely remarks that because human nature has been marred by the Fall, some aspects of man's original nature can be seen in the principles of the external world more clearly than they can be known through introspection. Analogy does not govern the ontology; it is rather placed alongside a set of deductions from a theological starting-point: the doctrine of the Fall and the theory of the Original Image.

Analogies are indeed slippery things and liable to misuse, as shown by other remarks on Unification Thought. Rohmann cites Nils Bohr on the misuse of the particle-wave analogy when applied to phenomena of classical physics (p. 18). But I question whether Unification Thought would ever make such an error. For in Unification Thought, all beings exist as "individual truth bodies"

comprising a structure, the Quadruple Base. Creation consists of myriad levels of quadruple bases, interrelated and ordered. The specific relations within a quadruple base at the quantum-mechanical level of a particle-wave need not hold for a sound wave in classical physics, since the levels are different. Yet at each level on its own ground, the polarity of yang-yin can be found. At the level of a sound wave as an individual truth body, the oscillations in time set up a polarity of yang-yin by the laws of classical physics; one need not misapply quantum mechanics to find polarity. Furthermore, within the sound wave are individual molecules which exhibit their own polarities as individual truth bodies at a microscopic level, which are in turn composed of atoms and particles which comprise individual truth bodies at the level of atomic and particle physics.

I think it is a mistake to regard Unification Thought as a system of analogies at all. Here is a suggestion: Perhaps a more fruitful analysis of Unification Thought might begin with comparisons with philosophies of mathematics, beginning with Pythagoras. Mathematics operates not by analogies, but by defining symbolic representations to which reality coheres. Although mathematics is a deductive system, its power is manifest empirically in its application to actual phenomena. Unification Thought has likewise been described as a theoretical model whose validity should be judged not by critiquing its methods of deduction on external grounds (science, hermeneutics, etc.) but rather by seeing how well it deals with actual problems, when applied to human life and nature according to its own internal logic.

A brief remark on O-D-U action (Lee's Chung-Boon-Hap action) misunderstands it to be a circular process (p. 19), because no attention is given to the aspect of individualization in Unification Thought. In fact, since every relationship constitutes an individual truth body, the Chung-Boon-Hap action is

a process of creating new individual entities in time. The concept of Chung-Boon-Hap action defines time as irreversible and nature as generative of abundance and ever-greater complexity. Unification Thought attempts to explain both stasis and change, existence and development, through the open-ended dynamism of harmonious development.

Finally, is science really so predisposed that "we are today debarred from thinking of balance and harmony within closed systems" (p. 19)? Is not the concept of the ecosystem, with its balance among organisms within the boundaries of a (practically) closed environment, still a valid model for contemporary science? Likewise, is it not correct that the great majority of chemical reactions and ecological variations are reversible within the limits of equilibria, giving pause to the notion that all natural phenomena are irreversible? I come away from this paper wondering if some of the descriptive terms used in philosophical discussions of science are not every bit as skewed by analogy and human projection as are the so-called anthropomorphic analogies critiqued here.

I am more than ever convinced that Unification Thought's ontology, which systematically overcomes the dualism of matter and spirit, subjective and objective, fact and value, is on the right track as we move to overcome the classical dichotomy between religion and science. Perhaps many philosophers think it is foolhardy to propose a new ontology in an age when we have learned to have no epistemological confidence in our knowledge. But I am persuaded that it is the habits of philosophy, not the results of science, which have become the greatest obstacle to progress. Descartes, who established the dualism of objective and subjective, also set up the priority of anthropology, and particularly epistemology, in philosophical method. Since then, serious work in ontology has been difficult to sustain. But in my view, this anthropocentric, epistemological methodology has reached a dead-end. It can neither

cope with the ontological questions raised by science, nor with those raised by religion. Unification Thought's ontology cuts through this Gordian knot by reasserting the primacy of ontology, one which avoids the epistemological quandaries inherent in the Cartesian dualistic world-view.

Religion, meanwhile, has continually retreated from the field of nature as it has sought to safeguard the gospel from the inroads of natural science. Finally theology reached the point where it had to declare a complete disjunction between God and nature. Religion's proper sphere, where it could remain immune from scientific questions, was the subjective realm. Thereby was sacrificed the Christian creed that God created the universe and has ordered the cosmos for our good--such statements could no longer have any empirical support. But in an age when materialistic science was aggressively expanding, this sacrifice was deemed an acceptable price to pay for the preservation of faith. As a result, much theology came to be allied with dualism, which at least protected the autonomy of the subjective realm and the realm of human experience as a foundation for faith in God. But if dualism cannot stand, whither theology? In this situation, the only way forward that can safeguard religion is to develop a theological ontology such as that proposed by Unification Thought.