



**DR. SANG HUN LEE'S PRESENTATION OF UNIFICATION THOUGHT  
AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

by

**Gene G. James**  
Department of Philosophy  
Memphis State University  
Memphis, Tennessee, USA

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## ABSTRACT

### DR. SANG HUN LEE'S PRESENTATION OF UNIFICATION THOUGHT AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

GENE. G. JAMES

This article is a discussion of the extent to which Unification Thought, as presented in the book Fundamentals of Unification Thought by Dr. Sung Hun Lee, offers any help in resolving the growing environmental crisis. The article presupposes a general familiarity with the crisis on the part of the reader and goes on to discuss some of its causes, especially the role commitment to the Biblical injunction to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth and anthropocentric views of nature may have played in its development. Next the fundamental assumptions of Unification Thought as it is developed by Dr. Lee are discussed and some of their practical applications considered. Several criticisms of Dr. Lee's position are then stated, especially criticism of his commitment to an anthropocentric theory of value which seems to deny any intrinsic worth to nature and the other creatures who share it with us. In the final section several aspects of his thought are mentioned which seem to provide the basis for the development of a more detailed environmental ethics than has yet been developed by Unificationists.



# DR. SANG HUN LEE'S PRESENTATION OF UNIFICATION THOUGHT AND PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to explore the extent to which Unificationism, as presented in the book Fundamentals of Unification Thought<sup>1</sup> by Dr. Sang Hun Lee, offers any help in resolving the growing environmental crisis that confronts humanity. I shall not describe the crisis in this article, but shall presuppose a general familiarity on the part of the reader with such things as pollution, the destruction of tropical rain forests, exhaustion of scarce resources, extinction of species, global warming and other problems which contribute to the crisis. Presupposing familiarity with these problems seems a safe assumption, given the world-wide publicity they have received. However, although the problems that constitute the crisis seem to be familiar to most people, the causes of the problems do not seem to be as immediately apparent to the general public. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is not an especially difficult task to identify the primary causes of the problems, and I attempt to do this the first section below. After stating what I take to be the major causes of the current environmental crisis, I outline in the next section some of the fundamental assumptions of Unificationism as presented by Dr. Lee, especially those assumptions which seem to determine the way he thinks about nature and the role of human beings within it. In the third section I then assess the extent to which thinking and acting in the ways he recommends, would or would not aid us in dealing with the environmental crisis.

## PRIMARY CAUSES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

A primary cause of the environmental crisis is without doubt the unprecedented population growth that has taken place in the modern period, especially in the twentieth century. Most of the time human beings have been on earth their numbers have grown slowly. World population has been estimated to have increased less than 0.1 per year from the beginning of civilization until about 1650. But shortly after 1650 population began to increase dramatically. By 1750 the rate had doubled to around 0.2 per year. From 1750 until 1900 it averaged 0.5 per year. From 1900 until 1950 the rate was 1.7 per year. World population is currently growing at more than 2% per year. Two per cent population growth per year may not seem very much, but it results an astounding yearly increase in the number of people who must be fed, housed, educated and employed. If there had been only two people alive at time Christ, and their offspring had increased at the rate of 2% per year, there would now be 100 people for every square foot of the earth's surface. This would have occurred because a population growing at 2% per year doubles every 35 years. During the twentieth century world population has not doubled but has tripled, going from 1.6 billion in 1900 to more than 5.4 billion today. At the current rate of increase, world population will triple again in the next 75 years resulting in a total of almost 16 billion people.

Growing population creates increasing consumer demand. To meet this ever increasing consumer demand, additional resources are required, including scarce and non-renewable resources. In the period from 1950 until 1970, more of the earth's resources were consumed than in all previous history; and the rate of consumption has increased dramatically since 1970. To take only one example, the world's forests are being cut and burned at an almost

unbelievable rate. Tropical rain forest is disappearing at a rate in excess of one acre every second. One consequence of this destruction of rain forests, which took centuries to grow, is that many plants from which valuable medicines and other resources could be obtained, are vanishing, and the wondrous God given diversity of animal species is disappearing never to return. Soon only domestic animals and animals that can survive in zoos will remain. A second consequence of the destruction of tropical rain forests is an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide which both reduces the level of oxygen available for animate life and accounts for as much as twenty per cent of the build up of gases in the atmosphere that leads to the green house effect.

Increasing consumer demand not only leads to increasing use of scarce natural resources, but the manufacturing, packaging and distribution processes which turn these raw materials into consumer goods, necessarily result in pollution, as does the consumption of the goods. As a result, our air is filled with poisons, our streams and lakes with industrial by-products and sewerage, and we are running out of places to dump our garbage.

A second primary cause of the environmental crisis is the affluent standard of living enjoyed by many people in the twentieth century, especially people in North America, Europe, and more recently, Asia. A rough measure of affluence is the amount of energy utilized, and the volume of garbage generated, per person. Automobiles, air conditioners, dishwashers, prepared foods, disposable containers, and thousands of other products that did not exist a century ago, all play a role in producing an affluent life-style that would have been

inconceivable to earlier generations. Thus, it is not just the fact that there are many more people living than in previous times that has produced the environmental crisis, but also the fact that the level of consumption per capita is far greater than previously. The drain on the earth's reserves of fuels, minerals, water and the atmosphere to produce all the products to satisfy these contemporary demands is tremendous. And the resulting oil spills, smog, polluted water sources, mountains of garbage, radio-active wastes, poisoning of food chains and other by-products are familiar to all.

The affluent living standards achieved by many countries in the twentieth century would have been impossible without the development of modern science and technology. Because science and technology have produced such a steadily increasing standard of living for the last several hundred years, many people seem to take it for granted that such material progress can continue for ever. Indeed, the rise of modern science from the time of Francis Bacon to the present has been accompanied by a belief in progress, which unlike earlier views of progress based on divine providence, rests on faith on science and technology as self-correcting systems. This type of belief in progress, sometimes called technological optimism, concedes that progress brings certain problems with it, but maintains that every problem created by technology can be solved through the development of additional technology.

Since technological optimism sees human beings modifying their environment through the use of science and technology as the primary agent that insures, or makes progress



inevitable, it typically takes a humanistic form. Marxism is one example of this type of humanistic technological optimism. However, technological optimism may also be combined with traditional theistic beliefs, so that the development of modern science and technology is seen as part of God's plan for the salvation of humanity.

Theistic technological optimism is usually accompanied by a favorable attitude toward population growth, and the two are frequently defended by appeal to the Biblical injunction to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth. The development of science and technology are thus seen as consequences of the command to subdue the earth. This appeal to Genesis to defend technological optimism is also frequently accompanied by a anthropocentric interpretation of creation which claims that God made all other things on the planet for human beings to use as they choose. However, both the doctrine that human beings were given a divine mission to subdue the earth and that all other things were made for the benefit of human beings have come under sharp attack by people writing on environmental ethics as embodying attitudes that are major causes of the current environmental crisis. Similar charges have been brought by Heideggerians who see the attitude of treating nature as mere standing reserve and the desire to dominate or control it as the essence of technology. Feminists, pointing to the change from conceiving nature as mother to seeing it as a mere machine to be indifferently exploited, have brought related charges against the theological blessing of modern science and technology.

Some of the foregoing arguments will be developed in greater detail in the last section. For

now let it be noted only that if commitment to the Biblical injunction to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth has been a dominant feature of Western culture, and the practices of that culture have lead to the environmental crisis, then there is at least a prima facie case that commitment to those values is a primary cause of the crisis. Indeed, if human behavior is a function of the values and beliefs people hold, then such commitments would have to be considered deep underlying causes of the environmental crisis. The desire for affluent living, and greed, which has often been promoted under the name of capitalism can no doubt be added as additional deep causes of the crisis.

#### FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS OF UNIFICATIONISM AS PRESENTED BY DR. LEE

The opening sentence of Chapter One states what Dr. Lee considers to be the most basic assumption of Unificationism.

Unification Thought begins with God. Its fundamental postulate is that God has created humankind and the universe in God's own likeness. (15)

Since humans and the universe were created in the likeness of God it follows that they must resemble one another. Now, if one thing resembles another, then by observing one of them, one can learn something about the other. Thus a second fundamental assumption of Unificationism as presented by Dr. Lee is that by observing human beings and nature we can know something about the nature of God. He claims, e.g., that "if we examine created beings, we can observe that they have the dual aspects of mind (or spirit) and body (or matter), or of instinct and body, life and body, and so on. From this we can infer that God, who is the causal being, is, likewise, of dual characteristics." (24) Dr. Lee cites Romans 1:20 in support of this claim, interpreting the passage to mean that "one can understand the

invisible nature of God by observing created beings." (24)

Given these two basic assumptions it might seem that the primary thrust of Unificationism, as Dr. Lee presents it, would be to develop a natural theology, i.e, to undertake an investigation of visible nature to see what it could tell us about the invisible nature of God. Instead Dr. Lee proceeds in exactly the opposite manner. That is, he takes the project of stating what God is like as unproblematic, and presents a rationalistic account of God's nature which he then uses as a basis for not only describing nature but for developing guidelines for human conduct.<sup>2</sup> He says, for example: "Since God created humankind and the universe in His own likeness, in order to solve actual problems, we must ask what kind of being God is; in other words, we must start with the attributes of God." (15) This claim that to solve practical problems we must begin by saying what God is like, may be said to be a third fundamental assumption of Unification as presented by Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee refers to God's attributes as the "Original Image," and to his theory of what those attributes are as the theory of the original image. I shall not go into great detail regarding this theory, both because I have discussed it at some length in a previous paper and because space will not permit it. However, because Dr. Lee holds that it is impossible to solve practical problems without beginning with God's attributes, some discussion of his theory of the original image is necessary.

As noted above Dr. Lee maintains that if we observe created beings, we can see that they

have the dual aspects of mind and matter, and from this we can infer that God must have similar dual characteristics. These characteristics, which Dr. Lee refers to as Sungsang and Hyungsang respectively, are according to him two of the most basic of God's attributes. Still more basic, however, is the attribute of Heart which is described as "an irrepressible emotional force and desire that wells up from within God." (32) Heart is also said to be the desire to obtain joy which comes about through loving an object. Since God's desire to obtain joy through loving an object is an irrepressible impulse, Dr. Lee says it was absolutely necessary that He create the universe and human beings to serve as objects for the desire. Furthermore, in Dr. Lee's opinion, if an object resembles the person or subject loving it, then "the subject feels even greater joy." (32) This explains, he says, why God made the universe and human beings in his own image. (32-33)

According to Dr. Lee, Sungsang and Hyungsang enter into a give-and-receive relation to one another, centered on or motivated by Heart. This in turn leads to Logos or God's plan for the universe, and the laws which determine its operation according to that plan. These four attributes of God, i.e., Sungsang and Hyungsang interacting with one another in a give-and-receive relation, centered on Heart, and giving rise to Logos, together bring about another body, the created world.

In addition to the primary attributes of Sungsang, Hyungsang, Heart and Logos, God has the secondary attributes of Yang and Yin. (27) Yang and Yin, also referred to as the attributes of positivity and negativity, are primarily described by Dr. Lee as they characterize

nature and human beings, rather than as attributes of God. One of their primary roles is in helping to differentiate objects from one another, playing a central role for example in determining sexuality. However, they are also correlated with mental and emotional states, Yang bringing about clearness of mind, reasoning ability and creativity, Yin resulting in confusion, weakness of mind and lack of creativity; Yang producing joy and excitement, and Yin sorrow and unhappiness. They are further correlated with being a subject or an object. Entities with a predominance of Yang are subjects; those with a predominance of Yin are objects. Subjects are active, dynamic and intended by God to have dominion over objects; while objects are passive, submissive and in need of direction. (47) However, it is possible for an object to temporarily take on the position of a subject. For example, "the wife may sometimes take on the responsibility of the husband." (75) Furthermore, something that is an object in one relationship may be a subject in another. Thus, although it would apparently go counter to divine command for a wife to be a subject toward her husband, she naturally has that role toward her children.

In addition to Sangsung, Hyungsang, Heart, Logos, Yang and Yin, God has what Dr. Lee calls Individual Image. The individual image of anything is constituted by those features which distinguish it from everything else. According to Dr. Lee this is determined by the particular way Sangsang, Hyungsang, Yang and Yin are mixed to form a given individual. For example, although having a predominance of Yin over Yang is sufficient to make one female rather than male, it is the precise manner in which Yang and Yin are mixed together with Sungsang and Hyungsang that determine individual features.(30) It should be noted

also that although some things are composed of more Sungsang than others, and others of more Hyungsang, there is always some of each in every thing. For example, according to Dr. Lee, even minerals which are primarily Hyungsang or material beings, nevertheless contain some Sungsang and thus have some consciousness or awareness.

Since mind and matter have been the most basic ontological categories of Western thought, and Yang and Yin the most basic ontological categories of Oriental thought, Dr. Lee claims that his theory of the Original Image unites Western and Oriental ontology. He also claims that as a result of this unification of the two ontologies, a unified culture can be built that will bridge the differences between the East and West. (28) He maintains, in addition, that unlike all previous religious or philosophical theories, his theory is the first to explain why God created the universe. Chinese philosophy held that Yang and Yin were generated by the Supreme Ultimate but gave no reason why this occurred. Christian theology, on the other hand, attributed omnipotence and omniscience to God, but likewise gave no reason why such a God would stir to create the universe. Furthermore, God can not be said in Christian theology to act from love in creating the universe, Dr. Lee contends, because love in Christian theology has meant primarily agape or self-sacrificial love such as that exhibited by Jesus in voluntarily undergoing crucifixion. (37) Love in Unification Thought, on the other hand, is the desire to find an object that will satisfy the irresistible impulse of Heart to obtain joy. Unlike agape, this kind of love is driven to find an object, leading God to create the universe and human beings as the objects of his love.

Dr. Lee also claims that:

The Heart Motivation Theory puts an end to the controversy between Creation Theory and Emanation Theory. Creation Theory asserts that God created the world, but leaves unclear God's motivation for creating it; besides it has the additional problem of asserting that matter was created from nothing. On the other hand, Emanation Theory asserts that everything existed within God and flowed out of God; hence this theory has blurred the distinction between God and the world and has led to pantheism. In contrast, the Heart Motivation Theory explains that all the causes of the world exist within God, but the world itself did not flow out of God. (37)

According to Dr. Lee: "In creating the universe, what God first thought about was the human being; yet the human being was the very last to be created." (83) More specifically, "God first formed the idea of a human being as a being of united Sungsang and Hyungsang." (63) He then "formed the idea of animals, plants, and minerals by lowering the dimensions of, and subtracting specific elements from, the Sungsang and Hyungsang of human beings." (63) Since all existing beings were created in the image of God, and God is composed of the attributes of Sungsang, Hyungsang, Logos, Heart, Yin and Yang, it follows that these attributes can be found in all things. However, because human beings exhibit a higher degree of Heart, Logos and Sangsung, or consciousness, than other things, they made be said to have been made in the direct image of God, whereas other things were made in only the indirect image of God. Because human beings are made in the direct image of God they also exhibit a higher degree of individuality and have greater worth than other things.

God's Individual Image manifested in a human being is that human being's individuality. Thus, human individuality is so precious that it should be respected absolutely. With regard to things, their originality originates from God as well and must be respected; but the preciousness of their individuality cannot compare with the preciousness of human individuality. It is for this reason that the human being is the Lord of Dominion over all things. (30)

Since human beings were created in the direct image of God and share the attribute of

Heart, they also have an irresistible emotional impulse to obtain joy through love. For the same reason they also share God's capacity for creativity. The fact that human beings are like God in possessing Heart and the capacity for creativity constitutes their original nature. All other things were created by God to serve as objects of human love and creativity. Everything in the universe is in fact a "connected body" or object intended to serve a dual purpose, a purpose for the individual and a purpose for the whole. "The purpose for the individual is to maintain and develop its own existence as an individual being. The purpose for the whole is to contribute to the existence and the development of the whole." (86) "In the created world, the highest purpose is to exist for the sake of human beings. For human beings, the highest purpose is to exist for the sake of God. Thus, all created beings, from elementary particles to the universe and to human beings, exist as connected bodies with dual purposes." (86)

Dr. Lee contrasts his view that all things exhibit give-and-receive actions, and serve a dual purpose, with dialectical materialism which he says "asserts that within every being there exist 'opposites' or 'contradictory elements,' and that things can develop only through a struggle between these opposites." (80) He attributes the latter view in particular to Engels. "Marx asserted that things develop through the dialectic, but he only dealt with social problems, and did not cite a single example that could indicate that natural phenomena develop through the struggle of opposites. Thus, in order to compensate for that weakness in Marx's thought, Engels studied the natural sciences and compiled his conclusions in....Dialectics of Nature and Anti-Duhring. In the latter book, Engels announced he had



reached the conclusion that 'nature is the proof of dialectics.'" (80) "If, however, one carefully examines the natural phenomena cited by Engels, one finds that what is occurring in those phenomena is not struggle, but rather harmonious actions centered on a common purpose." (81) "Accordingly, nature cannot be said to be the 'proof of dialectics'; instead nature is the 'proof of give-and-receive action.'" (81) The primary flaw with dialectical materialism as an account of nature, in Dr. Lee's opinion, is that, unlike Unificationism which sees all things as interrelated in order to serve a common purpose determined by God, it cannot account for harmonious interaction. Dr. Lee maintains to the contrary that "the entire universe can be regarded as an immense, organic body consisting of innumerable individual beings, all of which are mutually interconnected." (90)

God's plan or Logos is present in the universe as law. Inanimate objects conform to this law by means of mechanical interaction with others objects, plants conform to it through autonomous growth, and animals through instinct. Human beings are unique in being able to grasp God's plan for the universe and voluntarily patterning their life in accordance with it. A life of this type that is based on a conscious attempt to live according to God's plan for the universe is one in accord with Divine Principle; other lives are not. (160) Such a life may also be described as one whose goal is to build the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Although human beings were created in the image of God, "this does not mean...that people resemble God the moment they are born." (201) This is the case, according to Dr. Lee, because all creation, including the creation of human beings, is a temporal process involving

three stages -- formation, growth and completion. (201) The first human beings, Adam and Eve were given three great blessings, to be fruitful, to multiply and to have dominion over all things. (159) The giving of these blessing meant that Adam and Eve and their descendants were intended to "inherit God's perfection, multiplication, and dominion after they have grown." (201) More specifically, Adam and Eve were intended by God to first perfect their characters by modeling them on God's, then create a perfect family centered on love, and finally to take dominion over creation.(144,178) But because Adam and Eve were immature, they fell from grace when Eve entered into an illicit love affair with Satan and she and Adam then formed a family before they had perfected their characters. Thus, as a result of their, and their offspring's, failure to fulfill the conditions for the blessings to be realized, the blessings have remained promises rather than actualities, and God's purpose for humanity and the universe has never been realized. (201)

In promising humanity dominion over all things God intended them to exercise authority over nature with creativity and love. This means, says Dr. Lee, that "a person is qualified to have dominion over all things only when he or she grows to maturity, perfects his or her personality, forms a couple through marriage centering on God's love, and perfects his or her family." (42) Growing to maturity means here not just becoming physically mature, but perfecting oneself spiritually. This requires that one place more value on spiritual development than on satisfying physical needs. But because of the fall this has not happened. Creativity has not been employed to realize God's plan, but instead to satisfy material and selfish desires. Science, for example, has been motivated by the desire for

private profit and nationalism thereby helping bring about destruction and wars. However, it is not just human relationships which have been disrupted by the fall, but also the relation of humans to nature. Romans 8: 19-22 states that all of creation is groaning. "This means," according to Dr Lee, "that because of the Fall, human beings have failed to manifest true creativity centered on love, having instead been cruel and destructive to nature." (42-43)

Legitimate domination, whether of others or nature, requires true love. "True love tries to please the object first, for by so doing, one can obtain joy for oneself as well." (35) It also requires knowledge and management skills. For example, dominion over nature requires both scientific knowledge of natural law and technical skills such as farming, forestry and mining. Thus both such activities as politics, art, and science, as well as all industrial and commercial activities are types of dominion.(200) Properly conducted these activities require love, knowledge and creativity.

Since genuine dominion requires scientific and technical knowledge it presuppose education. Thus, scientific and technical education are also included in dominion. (214) However, since proper dominion requires that one love that over which one is exercising dominion, education for dominion cannot be purely scientific and technical. To the contrary it must be accompanied by ethical and moral training. That is, it must be centered on Heart. "Only through such balanced education can science and technology be guided in the proper direction." (216)

The need for such balanced education for human beings to exercise proper dominion reflects the fact that God's plan for humanity embodies not one but two goals: restoration and development. By restoration is meant recovery of the world of love and peace that was lost in the fall. By development is meant the participation of human beings in the completion of the universe through the continued growth of science, technology and culture. (322) Thus Dr. Lee looks forward to a future society which will be both highly developed and at the same time one of ethical harmony between human beings. Despite the overwhelming importance of restoration, there is a sense in which it may be said to be a less eternal or enduring value than development. For "development will continue forever, whereas restoration will come to an end when the original ideal world is restored." (322)

Exercising altruistic dominion based on love, instead of the current selfish forms of domination, will also bring happiness to those who are engaged in ruling and managing others. "More precisely, when a person engages in economic, political, or scholarly activity, while at the same time loving others and being loved by others, he or she will obtain joy from the heart." (35) Such dominion will also result in not only peace for human kind, but "if humankind comes to exercise dominion with love, even greater harmony will be realized in nature." (107)

Dr. Lee maintains that the current disorder that characterizes both humans' relations with one another and their relation to nature is due to the fact that human behavior no longer reflects cosmic harmony as God intended. The primary task facing those who seek to

exercise dominion with love is, therefore, to try to bring harmony into human affairs by taking the natural world as their guide. This effort must start with the family, because given the principle of resemblance, "the family is a miniature of the universe, and the universe is an enlargement of the family." (103) According to Dr. Lee, just as the universe exhibits a hierarchy of positions in which everything exists both for itself and for the whole, "the human family... should also have...an orderly system like that of the universe." (102) This means that the parents should perfect their character centered on God and then exercise proper dominion over their children who should in return recognize parental authority and obey out of respect and love. Similar respect for position and love should characterize relations among brothers and sisters, etc.

Since the relations which ought to exist in the family reflect the cosmic harmony intended by God, all other organizations should be modeled on the ideal of the family. Just as God intended for husbands to occupy the subject position and wives the object position in the family, citizens and members of corporate enterprises should take the object position toward government and their superiors in organizations. (127) "Object consciousness toward the sovereign or chief of state is loyalty. Children's object consciousness toward their parent is filial piety. Subordinates' object consciousness toward the whole is a heart of service. What these various types of object consciousness have in common is an attitude of living for others and a heart of meekness and humility." (127-8)

The primary cause of the world's troubles is that people do not accept the meek roles

demanding by the object position, but instead selfishly assert individual rights. "In today's...society, subject consciousness has become too strong. Taking little notice of the rights of others, people assert their own rights excessively, which results in unavoidable conflicts." (132) Indeed, instead of seeing the long fight that has been waged by humanity to obtain respect for the rights of others as ethical progress, Dr. Lee states that: "If all people were completely equal in their rights, then there would be no difference between the rights of those who govern and the rights of those who are governed. Such a society would become disordered and would be in a situation of anarchy." (240) Given this view, an individual occupying a political position such as the Presidency of the United States presumably not only has special privileges required to carry out his or her job, but has superior rights to those he or she is elected to govern, and any questioning of this by the people is a source of chaos in society.

However, the root cause of all the world's problems is to be found in the family. In particular, "the cause of all these problems is that husband and wife do not have a proper relationship. That is why families break down, societies are in disarray, nations become disorderly, and the world is chaotic." (118). Since the husband was intended by God to be in the subject position and the wife and children to be in object positions, the cause of the disorder in the family must be that the latter fail to accept their proper role. This appears to be especially true of the wife, for unlike most Western thinkers who see lack of respect for women's rights as one of the primary causes of divorce, Dr. Lee blames the high divorce rate in the United States on the women's right movement. He says that "in advanced

countries such as the United States, where the women's liberation movement is very active, [the] divorce rate is increasing and family breakdown is widespread. Such social ills came about because [of] the excessive emphasis on equal rights between men and women....If the wife stands in the subject position as the husband does...the relationship...will become as that between subject and subject which necessarily causes the phenomenon of repulsion." (240-241) Thus, as in the beginning, it is apparently Eve who is the source of all the world's problems.

### ASSESSMENT

Any assessment of Dr. Lee's view's must begin with the principle of resemblance since all his other doctrines presuppose it. Is it true as Dr. Lee claims that by observing the natural world we can know something about God's nature? In particular, can we infer that because human beings are a mixture of mind or spirit and body or matter, God must be so as well? There are several problems here. The first is that mind or spirit does not seem to be an observable property at all. Thus it does not enter into any scientific descriptive accounts of the world. Dr. Lee claims that because his account combines the attributes of mind, matter, Yang and Yin, that it unifies the ontologies of East and West. However, the mind/matter dichotomy has been under constant attack in twentieth century Western philosophy and is rejected by the vast majority of present day philosophers, including pragmatists, analytic and continental philosophers. Any ontology that employs such dichotomous terms therefore requires a defense against the numerous arguments which have been employed against them.<sup>3</sup> Another difficulty is that Dr. Lee himself seems to concede that the visible world cannot be legitimately taken as a basis for describing God's nature when he says: "Strictly

speaking, the idea of a structure can apply only to the created world and is not appropriate for the description of God, who transcends time and space." (43) But if God is not literally composed of mind/matter, how is the theory of the Original Image to be verified? That is, what assurance do we have that some other description of God's character might not be more accurate? How, if at all, are we to decide between competing accounts?

Dr. Lee maintains that: "If it can be shown that the attributes of God are universally manifested in all things, then the truthfulness of the theory of the Original Image becomes ascertained." (59) But this way of verifying the theory of the Original Image is circular. For as we have seen, the evidence cited to establish the theory of the Original Image, to show, e.g., that God has the dual characteristics of Sungsang and Hyungsang is that if we observe nature we find that these are characteristics of all objects. But, if that is true, then the supposed fact that nature exhibits such characteristics cannot be taken as additional confirming evidence that the theory of the Original Image is correct. Another way of stating this is that ontology, conceived of as the theory of the most basic features of nature, can not be presented as the basis for inferring what God is like, and the theory of the Original Image or what God is like, then be used to explain used why nature has certain features and not others. Such an argument is clearly circular, ontology being used as evidence for the theory of Original Image, and the theory of the Original Image being used to explain ontology. The circularity is apparent when the following two remarks are taken together: (a) "Unification ontology is a theory in support of the theory of the Original Image." (59) and (b) "[I]n order to ascertain that a given theory concerning the phenomenal world is correct



and truthful, one must go back to the starting point of creation, and find its standard in the Original Image." (416)

Dr. Lee contrasts his view that all things exhibit give-and-receive actions with that of Engels' who he says maintained that all things develop through a struggle between opposites. However, there are several problems with Dr. Lee's remarks in this regard. The first is that Engels does not seem to have held the position attributed to him. This can be seen in the following quotation in which Engels is discussing Darwinism.

Until Darwin's time the very people who now see everywhere only struggle for existence...emphasized precisely cooperation in organic nature, the fact that the vegetable kingdom supplies oxygen and nutriment to the animal kingdom and conversely the animal kingdom supplies plants with carbonic acid and manure....Both conceptions are justified within certain limits, but the one is as one-sided and narrow-minded as the other. The interaction of bodies in nature -- inanimate as well as animate -- includes both harmony and collision, struggle and cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

Similar, although less explicit, remarks occur elsewhere. For example in Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, he states that if one examines the two poles of an antithesis one discovers that they are "as inseparable as they are opposed, and that despite all their opposition, they mutually interpenetrate."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Engels' intent in the statement that nature is the proof of dialectics does not seem to have been to claim that nature exhibits only strife and not cooperation, but was to contrast the evolutionary perspective to which he was committed with older metaphysical views that did not take change seriously. Thus the statement that Nature is the proof of dialectics continues "modern science...has furnished this proof,...has shown that...Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in

the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution."<sup>6</sup>

A second problem with Dr. Lee's comments on natural order is that in places he comes close to denying the obvious fact that nature contains struggle and destruction as well as cooperation and generation. He states for example:

Communism asserts that things develop through the struggle of opposites, but in reality, there is no such phenomenon in the universe...[I]t is only through maintaining harmony that the universe has been developing. If one observes the universe, one may find phenomena, such as the explosion of stars, that appear...partially destructive, but which in reality are not destructive. These phenomena are not different from what happens in a living being. When the cells of a living being become old, they are replaced by new cells. Likewise, when stars become old, they disappear, and new stars are born -- and in this way the universe, which is an enormous organic body, has been maintaining itself. (106)

And to the objection that in the animate world the stronger prey on the weaker, he replies while it is true that there are struggles between animals of different species "there is hardly a case in which animals that belong to the same species fight at the risk of their lives." (107) He also says that "though in nature we may find phenomena in which the stronger prey upon the weaker, more often than not it is the case that different animals cooperate with one another and coexist." (107) The reason he goes to such great lengths to deny that nature exhibits violence is, no doubt, that it calls into question another aspect of the principle of resemblance, viz., the claim that "since all things were created in the likeness of human beings, it is possible to know about the original features of human beings and society through observing the natural world." (60) For if we can know original human nature through observing nature, and it exhibits violence, this suggests that human beings are by

nature violent beings. Having conceded that nature does indeed contain instances of violence, Dr. Lee therefore immediately stresses that cooperation is more frequent, and denies that competitive behavior should in any way serve as a standard for human behavior. Thus, he warns that we should not "rationalize the struggle between human beings, thereby making a law out of it on the basis of the phenomenon of the stronger preying on the weaker." (107)

I agree with Dr. Lee that we should not engage in violence simply because it is present in nature. However, if one takes nature as the model to show us how we ought to behave, as Dr. Lee does, and then concedes that there are cases when we should not follow its example, one should either give up the claim the nature provides a model for behavior or provide some criterion for determining when we should or should not take it as a guide. As far as I can determine Dr. Lee has not provided such a criterion. Instead, when the order of the natural world seems to support practices that fit in with his general ethical theory, it is appealed to in justification of those practices; but when order or relationships in the natural world do not seem to support practices that fit in with his overall ethical position, the significance of the relationship is played down. For example, he says that:

in the natural world, positive electricity and positive electricity (or negative electricity and negative electricity) repel each other, but this is an action to strengthen or complement the give-and-receive action between subject (positive electricity) and object (negative electricity)....Therefore, in the natural world, order is not disturbed through the action of repulsion. In human society, however, the action of repulsion between subject and subject appears in the form of conflict between two leaders....Accordingly, in human society, the action of repulsion between one subject and another subject becomes the struggle between good and evil. (301-302)

This kind of reasoning is then used to justify the husband always being a subject and the wife his object, on the grounds that if both were subjects they would "repel" each other resulting in conflict. But if it is true that nature can serve as a guide to ethical action by revealing original human nature, and the repulsion of subjects in nature does not lead to conflict, it would seem that based on the principle of resemblance, it should not do so in human affairs either. On the other hand, if interaction between two human subjects does lead to conflict, while the natural actions they are said to resemble do not, this calls the principle of resemblance into question.

But it is not only his ethics that falls if there is reason to doubt that resemblance holds between God, nature, and human beings. Since he relies on the principle of resemblance to insure that inferences from one of these to the other are correct, all his claims to know one, as a result of observing or thinking about the others, crumble as well. There is also the further problem that the epistemology of resemblance which is implicit in his thought, but not explicitly argued for or developed, has been severely criticized by a number of contemporary Western philosophers.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Lee claims that his theory of the Original Image which makes Heart the central attribute of God resolves the dispute between the Creation and Emanation theories of creation. However, the central point of dispute between the two theories has always been the charge by Creation theorists that the Emanation theory makes God into a being that seems to function in an automatic and mechanical, rather than in an autonomous, manner.

Round with the Sun-illuminated Lantern held  
In Midnight by the Master of the Show.<sup>8</sup>

That this is not Dr. Lee's position is apparent from his discussion elsewhere of God having given human being co-responsibility for creation. The problem, however, is that the doctrine of co-responsibility seems to be inconsistent with the type of remark cited above. Thus, one or the other of the two doctrines would seem to need to be abandoned.

Although Dr. Lee's anthropocentric perspective is apparent throughout his book, it is especially notable in his account of creation and his theory of value. According to Dr. Lee, in creating the universe the first thing God thought about was human beings, although they were the last to be created. All other things were created for the benefit of human beings. They are "connected bodies," intended to not only maintain their own existence but to serve the purpose of creation which exists for the sake of human beings. This is true of all beings including animals. Thus, in explaining how God fashioned individual images, Dr. Lee speaks of God as creating birds for the sake of human beings. Unlike other things, human beings were created in the direct image of God. Thus, unlike other things, their individuality should be respected absolutely. This is why they have been appointed Lord of Dominion over all things.

Human beings are in fact seen by Dr. Lee as so essential to the scheme of things that if they did not exist the universe would have only potential, not actual value. For according to Dr. Lee:

It is pointed out, e.g., that the metaphors used to support the theory in both Eastern and Western thought (Vedanta and Neo-Platonism are examples), such as springs that spontaneously overflow or spiders that spin webs out of themselves, seem to leave no room for choice on God's part. This type of language also appears in Dr. Lee's account. He says, e.g., that Heart is "an irresistible emotional force...that wells up from within God" in such a fashion that it was "absolutely necessary" for Him to create objects He could love. If this is true it would seem that God had no choice in creating the universe. His own divine nature forced him to do so. Choice or free will seems to play a role in Dr. Lee's account only insofar as God decides what things shall be made.

Some of Dr. Lee's statements about God and creation also seem to be incompatible with belief in human freewill. For example, he says:

The structure of the Original Image exists in oneness in the world transcending time and space. This can be compared to a roll of motion-picture film. The role of film can be said to hold the contents of a story in a way that transcends time and space. When projected onto the space of a screen, the images are developed according to a time sequence, and the story unfolds as if it were reality. God's creation can be thought of in a similar way. (51-52)

Although the characters portrayed in a motion picture film may seem to be making choices, in actuality they are not, since as Dr. Lee points out, they exist in only a non-temporal and non-spatial way. But if from God's perspective, creation is similar to projecting a film on a screen, and we are part of creation, then it would seem that we too lack free will. It would be the case as Omar Khayyam stated that:

We are no other than a moving row  
of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go

Value refers to a quality of an object that satisfies a desire of the subject. That is, when an object has a certain quality that satisfies a desire or a wish of the subject and which is recognized as such by the subject, then that special quality of the object is called value. In other words, value is something that belongs to an object; and yet, unless it is recognized as a value by the subject, it does not become actual. For example, even though there may be a flower...unless someone (the subject) perceives the beauty of that flower, the value of the flower does not become actual. In this way, for the value to become actual, a subject must recognize the quality of the object, and must appraise that quality as valuable. (157-158)

It seems to follow from this account that flowers, birds, other animals, and nature in general, have no value in themselves. Their only value is in serving as a potential objects of use or enjoyment for human beings. Unlike human beings who have intrinsic worth which dictates that their individuality be treated as inviolate, other beings have only extrinsic value determined by the extent to which they serve human purposes.

One problem related to Dr. Lee's anthropocentrism is the manner he draws on the book of Genesis to support it. According to him the first thing God thought about was human beings, but they were the last to be created. Now, as is generally recognized among Biblical scholars, there is not a single, but two creation stories in Genesis. In the first, said to be by the P writer who uses the term Elohim for deity, and which runs from Genesis 1:1 through 2:4a, human beings are indeed created last. But in the second, said to be by the J writer who uses the term Yahweh for deity, and which runs from 2:4b to 2:25, human beings are created before a number of other things, including animals. In this account Adam is created before the animals which are created afterwards and then brought to him to name. Eve is not created until after that event. Thus, if the basis for Dr. Lee's claims that God thought of

human beings first, and that all other things exist for their sake, is that humans were the last to be created then these claims need rethinking.

A far more disturbing aspect of his anthropocentrism, however, is that animals and the rest of nature are seen as lacking actual value unless they serve human purposes or afford humans enjoyment. This belief is certainly in accord with the practices of contemporary society. Wild animals throughout the world are facing extinction because of mushrooming human population whose insatiable need for minerals, timber, and grazing and farmland to grow food, is destroying the habitats of wild animals everywhere. Others creatures, even those such as Penguins who live in remote Antarctica, are facing extinction because of the pesticides we dump into the environment in the never ending quest to wrestle more production from the land. Still others, such as certain species of whales, are facing extinction because of a combination of ruthless hunting and new threats such as the recently discovered 6% reduction of plankton in the southern polar region which is their and many other species' primary food. A reduction apparently caused by the green house effect which is a consequence of expanding industrial output to keep up with population growth and the desire for affluent living. The prevalent attitude seems to be that it is unfortunate that Penguins are dying because they do afford human being entertainment in watching their antics in zoos, but since they serve no more important human purpose and have no intrinsic worth of their own it does not matter that they might vanish from the face of the earth so long as the human population can continue to increase and people enjoy the benefits of contemporary technology.



To avoid misunderstanding I wish to emphasize in the strongest possible way that I am not accusing Dr. Lee of condoning such practices. I am certain that he is as concerned as I am about such things. What I am maintaining is that support for them does seem to follow from some of his basic assumptions and that this calls for a rethinking and further elaboration of his position on these matters, for the development of a Unification environmental ethics. For example, is it necessary in fulfilling the second blessing by establishing a family centered on God that the children in the family be one's biological offspring? Or could one aid in reducing the world's population by refraining from having children and at the same time contribute to a reduction of human suffering by adopting disadvantaged children? And must one have succeeded in establishing a family centered on God before one can exercise proper dominion over nature, as Dr. Lee's remarks sometimes suggest, or must we not attempt to realize all three blessings simultaneously? Is it really the case that the rest of creation has only potential value apart from human beings? Did not Elohim in the first creation story, after he had created the animals, but before He created Human beings, judge creation to be good? Does this not then impose certain limitations on use in appropriating nature on our behalf? If restoration is our goal then should we not ponder the facts that Elohim also says in the first creation story that it is only the plants of the earth which are given to us for food, and it is only after the Fall that animals are said to live in fear of human beings? In short if one attempts to restore the condition described in the P creation story, would one not have to become a vegetarian? Ought animals and the rest of nature to be considered as mere resources for an ever expanding human population? Is it right, for example, to slaughter animals so people can wear fur coats when cotton coats would keep them just as

warm? Is it right to continue to destroy tropical rain forests depriving wild animals of their habitats and reducing the oxygen in the environment because it is useful and profitable to do so?

One problem Dr. Lee might have in responding to such issues is that protest against activities of the type mentioned are usually undertaken on the grounds that animals as well as people have rights which ought to be respected. Since Dr. Lee seems to consider rights talk as at least in part nothing more than a justification for selfish behavior, this way of dealing with the issues mentioned would seem to be closed to him. Thus, for Dr. Lee to take a strong stand on environmental issues it would seem that he would have to rethink his position on rights. Since almost all attempts to do something about the environmental crisis have been initiated by individuals protesting detrimental governmental and corporate policies, taking a stance on environmental issues would also seem to require rethinking the doctrine that the proper attitude of people toward organizations of which they are a part should be that of submissive loyalty. Along these same lines, although not directly related to the environmental crisis, since two males can cooperate in business ventures without this interaction between subjects resulting in conflict, I suggest that the doctrine that equality in marriage necessarily leads to conflict needs rethinking as well. As for the claim that because the women's rights movement rejects the doctrine of female submission to male patriarchy, it is somehow responsible for high divorce rates, as well as for the majority of world's other troubles, I can say only that I find both evidence and moral justification for this claim to be lacking.

Another doctrine that might have to be rethought in order to develop an adequate Unification environmental ethics is the optimistic attitude toward technology that sees it as a sign of the coming kingdom of God. In light of the fact that today's massive technology is a major factor in bringing about the environment crisis, perhaps a less technologically developed society might be closer to the ideal God had in mind than one that is constantly expanding at the expense of the other creatures with whom we share the earth. In this case it would not be the development of technology per se, but the development of technology to prevent human activities from destroying the rest of creation that would herald the approach of the kingdom.

Although Unificationism teaches that all three blessing must be realized before restoration can be achieved, it seems to me that most of the emphasis in the Unification movement up to this point has been placed on the first two blessing rather than on our obligation to exercise proper dominion over nature. My purpose in this article has been to challenge Unification Thought as developed by Dr. Lee to address itself in a more systematic manner to what would be involved in realizing the third blessing and exercising proper dominion over nature. Although I may have seemed excessively critical in doing this, I believe that in emphasizing proper dominion as one of our fundamental obligations, Unificationism has greater promise for the development of an adequate environmental ethics than almost any other religious tradition, provided its anthropocentrism can be overcome. I also believe that the only way such promise can be realized is for Unification thinkers to hear and respond to the best criticisms that can be brought against it. In my opinion one of the

greatest virtues of Unificationism is that, unlike the other religious traditions with which I am familiar, it stands ready to do this. Consequently, although my paper has been primarily critical, the spirit behind it is nevertheless one of positive contribution. In closing then let me mention some of the resources within Unification Thought that I think could be drawn upon and expanded in working out the ideas of the third blessing and proper dominion in greater detail. The most important of these, in my opinion, is the emphasis in Unification Thought that love and creativity must be combined with knowledge in order for proper dominion of nature to come about. It is not enough to merely seek scientific knowledge of nature. Nor is it proper to subject it to technological control without any concern for what this does to the rest of the creatures with whom we share the earth. Dr. Lee makes these points at a number of places, but perhaps most strikingly when he quotes Reverend Moon's Fourteenth ICUS address that true dominion over nature would require scientists and others to "love nature, to reconsider the dignity of human beings, to seek love among all humankind, and to search for God as the origin of love." (127) Other doctrines that provide a basis for working out a more detailed account our obligation to fulfill the third blessing are the fact that in Unification thought as developed by Dr. Lee, the universe is several times referred to as an organism. Unlike the view of the universe as a machine which accompanied the development of early modern science, such a view is compatible with contemporary ecological and environmental thinking. However, the details of understanding the universe as an organism are not worked out by Dr. Lee. Another doctrine that could play an important role in developing such an ecological organic perspective is the claim that consciousness can be found at all levels of being. (66, 498) Dr. Lee even cites Clive



Backster's The Secret Lives of Plants to show that plants can not only experience pain but anticipate it. (472) Although I would question the evidence on which this claim is based, I applaud the concerned attitude toward nature that is implicit in it. A number of other remarks also provide a foundation for working out a proper conception of dominion in greater detail, but I cannot develop this here because it would require another paper to do so.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Sang Hun Lee, Fundamentals of Unification Thought (Unification Thought Institute, Miyasaka Bldg., 37-17, Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan, 1991). Since all quotations from Dr. Lee in this article are from this book and it seemed a greater convenient for the reader to give page references in parentheses after quotations, rather than list a string of endnotes citing a single text, I have followed the former practice.
2. In saying that Dr. Lee's account of God's nature is a rationalistic one, I do not mean that he make reason the most essential characteristic of God, but rather that he presents a theory that explains God's nature in great detail leaving little room for mystery as to why God might act one way rather than another.
3. Some of the reasons Western philosophers question mind/matter and similar dualisms are explained in Nona Bolin's discussion of Michel Foucault in the article "Ontology, Origin and Epistemology" presented at the 1992 ICUS conference.
4. Frederick Engels, "Letter to P. L. Lavrov," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence, pp. 366-69. Reprinted in Howard Parsons, Marx and Engels on Ecology ( Westport Conn. and London England: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 142.
5. Frederick Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 618.
6. Ibid., 618-19.
7. For a discussion of this see the article by Nona Bolin cited earlier.
8. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (New York: Avon Books, 1967), Stanza LXVIII.