

## ON THE PURPOSE OF THE MIND STUDY FOR JOINT WITH THE PERSPECTIVE OF BIOCOSMOLOGY

Kwon Jong YOO

**ABSTRACT.** *This article is a kind of comparative study about Biocosmology from the viewpoint of mind study. Aims of this study are to open a possibility of communication between Biocosmology and mind study, and to grope the matching point for co-work of each of them. The mind study is not limited to philosophical study or psychological one, but instead it is open to all the fields of researches, for example, humanities, social sciences, natural science, arts, medicine, etc., and therefore it is not hard to try to do so. One of the aims of the study is to make a methodology for communication and mutual understanding between different cultures or between different religions or between different languages, what is more, between different sciences. And the other important aim is development of self-solution of the problems which are caused by the troubles of the mind. The strategy of the study is comparative humanities and re-interpretation of Asian traditions of wisdom, for example Buddhism and Confucianism. This article suggests questions and critics about biocosmology from the viewpoint of mind study.*

**KEYWORDS.** *Mind study, Biocosmology, Aristotelism, comparative humanities, communication, mutual understanding, Confucianism, Buddhism*

### 1.

The Biocosmology Dr. Khroutski suggested on the basis of Aristotle's idea shows a new philosophical insight and purpose. It looks a timely remark which accompanies with a progressed methodology aiming at an amicable settlement of uncountable contemporary problems of the global society. And it must be designed after due consideration searching for the comprehensive paradigm which can involve and harmonize many antipodes existing in the traditions of the philosophical thoughts as like physical world and nonphysical world, mind and body, and West and East. It is very agreeable that philosophy will be able to be accepted only in the case when it is based on evidence as he insisted. It is understood that the knowledge of philosophy will not be able to run about only in the abstract side any more from now on, but it will have to include in its thinking boundary the both sides of the abstract and the concrete, and a philosophical conclusion will have to be realized meaningfully or to be verified in the actual world. The other point of the Biocosmology is that the academic studies should heal kinds of human sufferings, for example sickness at heart or mind as well as disease of body, conflicts between social strata for example between the rich and the poor, environmental disruption, etc.. So it necessarily laid

stress on the importance of biomedicine which would mix Western medicine and Asian medicine. His intention makes sense so much.<sup>1</sup>

The Biocosmology or the mind study is now unfolding itself on a new situation of scientific researches or on a new context of humanities studies. Let me enumerate them shortly. Now in 21<sup>st</sup> century, it becomes so important to make communications between civilizations or between cultural contexts since the time when cold war ended and civilization crashes increased here and there on this globe. And new truths that had been too complex to be approached have begun to be revealed by interdisciplinary researches or integrated studies, for example cognitive science and the theory of complex system. Viewpoints to the essences of human knowledge that had been caught on the basis of strong realism since the modern era change toward including constructivist ideas for example Michel Foucault or radical constructivists, and so many scholars notice the relations between language and our ideas rather than between ideas and reality. Especially in East Asia discourses about how to construct the East Asian community began and ethics for co-existence of many nations that have been living on each different context of culture, religion, and history should be an important subject of the discourses.

These changes ask change not simply of viewpoint but also paradigm of thinking in a scientific research or discourse of humanities. The Biocosmology seems to reflect these changes and asks of this time. I would give my assent to his way of Biocosmology, and add some discussions for the development of the Biocosmology from the perspective of the mind study. The mind study is not simply philosophy of mind or psychological perspective, but a kind of multidisciplinary perspectives of studying mind. It is now developing its methodology or paradigm, but it can mention some ideas about the Biocosmological perspective.

## 2.

The mind study I told above is a research that has a target, that is, composing a new system of knowledge through a synthetic cognition of human mind, and thus it naturally needs to change the existing approaches to mind. The mind study is not limited to philosophical study or psychological one, but instead it is open to all the fields of researches, for example, humanities, social sciences, natural science, arts, medicine, etc., because there is no research field that has no relation with the mind. And at the same time it is striving for authentic solution of many pathological problems of personal being and social being that have their origins in mentality. According to the Asian traditions of Confucianism or Buddhism all the results of human affairs has the beginning in one's mind. From the viewpoint of European philosophy it seems a simply attitude based on a kind of spiritualism, but Buddhism or Confucianism has led Asian people into ethical thinking and behavior what is more

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Konstantin S. Khroutski, "On Biocosmology, Aristotelism and the prospects of becoming of the universal science and philosophy". *Electronic journal «Биокосмология (Biocosmology) – neo-Aristotelism»*. Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 4–18.

into an un-shakable view of Human being and the universe and therefore it has been a kind of strong faith and a knowledge-productive system.

The departure point of mind study is just on the ground of cognition that human mind is the knot of the world that still keeps mysteries from the outer world and so the study of the mind will be the last key to solve the mysteries of human beings. If the mind were once understood clearly, human beings and the world could be explained also more distinctly than ever, and ultimate solution could be looked out. However in reality the things which veil the mind are very thick and in many folds. The folds could be languages or paradigms or cultures. Even though people use their mind in their ordinary life according to their own way of understanding or thinking mind, and there often happen misunderstandings or miscommunications in talking or acting with others, they couldn't realize the ways of understanding mind could be different from others'. And this affair could be right in the scientific fields, too. Even though psychologists used to research about human mind by using the word 'mind' and philosophers also used to think and reason something relating to the mind by using the very word 'mind', each understanding of mind of the two groups could not be placed in the same spectrum of the meaning. What is more, even though the English word 'mind' should be translated into Korean word 'ma-um', all the spectra of 'mind' and 'maum' could not be in the same range. There exists a very deep and wide gap between the two languages. As well there are such gaps between Russian and Chinese, between Slovenian and German, and between Japanese and French. Worst of all, most translations in all nations have been produced without any filtering of this language differences. This language difference is not simply difference of meaning but difference of structure of meaning production. And this structure roots in every cultural context. Therefore it seems so big a chaos to understand mind.

Many fields of science i.e., philosophy, religion, arts, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology, artificial intelligence, brain science, cognitive science, and so on, have been approaching the mind, and the scientific perspectives of human mind have become more various than before modern times. And some of them have made a league for close examination of human mind or cognition, namely cognitive science. Seemingly human being's understanding mind now gets more abundant knowledge. If so, is contemporary understanding mind more correct than the past?

Roughly speaking, however, the more variety the knowledge gets, the more confusion rises in understanding. And it does not seem that the contemporary human beings could live and do, morally or spiritually, better than the past ones. The root cause of this may be in the fact that understanding mind of every field is alienated and not communicated each other. However we can guess that more knowledge about the mind could not guarantee the development of the inside of human being or of the attitude of one's whole life. From the viewpoints of Buddhism or Confucianism, the most important thing for one's good life is not the much knowledge but the true self-awakening. Therefore self-cultivation has been regarded as very significant way leading one to the self-awakening. The self-cultivation seems to be establishment of the One that has power to control all the activities inside. It should be a principle or

inner agent of a human being's whole life.

At present we should consider how to integrate and communicate such many kinds of knowledge. However most sciences have little interest in doing so but only have interest in the diffusion of new knowledge. In other words, it becomes more apparent that any field of current mind studies will not be able to combine the whole multifarious knowledge of mind and make into one integrated system, nor be able to suggest a synthetic vision on the understanding or manipulating the mind. On reflection, contemporary mind studies fall in some inveterate and not productive debates, for example, between physicalism and non-physicalism in philosophy of mind, between the idea that mind is nature and the other that mind is nurtured, between realism and constructivism in epistemology, between third-person methodology and first-person one, between Humanities that adopt mind as the object of interpretation and practice and empirical sciences that adopt mind as the object of scientific elucidation, between cognitive-neural sciences that detect the neural basement of the mind and would not abandon a theoretical position of reductionism and cultural psychology that takes notice of reciprocal action of mind and culture and hold a theoretical position of constructivism, and so on.

The situation of Academic circles in Korea looks more complicated because the contemporary studies originated from (Western) Europe, since late of the 19th century, have rooted into a cluster of mixed contexts of shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. And understanding mind from the Confucian perspective or Buddhist perspective is by no means simple, and it as a root metaphor for thinking mind, always intervenes in translation or interpretation of the contemporary knowledge into Korean language. Therefore the situation of mind studies in Korea shapes a complex strata of knowledge of different nature, and it is naturally not easy to communicate mutually nor facilitative to make a synthetic and comprehensive knowledge system of mind which will make a desirable practice.

The second point of the mind study is on the cognition that most of human sufferings are caused by the problems of mind not only in consciousness but in unconsciousness. Cognitive science adopting the methodology of neural-science has come to kinds of unconsciousness that is continuously developing at the level of neural network. According to F. Varela the contents of the unconsciousness is not inherent but embodied through one's whole life.<sup>1</sup> And the unconsciousness controls so much of one's whole inner activities like as thinking and action, and this fixes a typical pattern to one's behavior and thinking or to whole life through numberless repeats. However, so called rational thinking can show its real ability only at the case when the one's behavior and thinking within one's own pattern cannot be useful or admissible any more to cope with situations. Therefore what is important is not only thinking but also how and what to embody.

According to him someone's embodiment could be the basis of Autopoiesis. The autopoiesis means self-organization or self-production.<sup>2</sup> Namely this means that

<sup>1</sup> Francisco J. Varela, 1999, *Ethical Know-how: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition*, Stanford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to John Mingers, 1995, *SELF-PRODUCING SYSTEMS: Implications and Applications of Autopoiesis*, Plenum Press, New York and London.

through perturbation with environment one, person or society, constructs one's own organization, life, activities including consciousness and unconsciousness, and spiritual range and the nature of the spirit. In other words, the autopoietic scope ranges from a level of a single cell to one's whole life or the human society or from the flesh to the spirit or soul.

From such a viewpoint Varela insisted that one must ultimately embody the emptiness, which is the teaching of Buddha, for the personal accomplishment as an ideal being and the ultimate peace of the world.<sup>1</sup> He and his master H. Maturana did that one must awaken the ethics of coexistence for the same purpose in their joint work, *The Tree of Knowledge*. And Maturana insisted that the essential solution of contemporary philosophical or ethical problems should be taken at the moving from 'Being' to 'Doing'. The 'Being' he told is no more than ontology and its peer epistemology which have been two main fields in philosophical tradition, and it is related to the knowledge as know-what. But the 'Doing' is related to the knowledge as know-how, and is a process of practice to produce one's world of meaningfulness. From this viewpoint, one's embodiment of culture in one's society is a very important foundation of one's whole life, and at the case the embodied culture lived within one's body and mind actually becomes one's own system of know-how and at the same time it plays as an inevitable method for one's survival. And the value of the know-how we could distinguish must be relate not to truth or false but to usefulness. And we could valuate the quality of one's know-how. The usefulness or quality of such know-how can be evaluated by the standard of the world peace that makes coexistence and co-prosperity feasible.

### 3.

Then, what are the targets of the mind study? This study ultimately pursuits to make a methodology for communication and mutual understanding between different cultures or between different religions or between different languages, what is more, between different sciences. From the viewpoint of the study, the most difficult thing in making the methodology is surely language that is always depending to the context of its culture. Every language has its own rule and this rule has its long context of cultural history. Even the words of a language which are used to express one's inside cannot be interpreted exactly the same meaning into another words of other language. This difficulty of interpretation also rises at between the different sciences in the same language. Phenomena of this difficulty could be observed in our daily life and every place. But what the mind study methodologically focuses on is the difficulty in academic category. For example between Western philosophy and Asian traditional learnings, or between Humanities and Natural sciences including medicine very often happens no understanding or no communication. Under the no understanding or no communication is a serious barrier of language or idea, even if the researchers speak the same language. Therefore one of the tasks of this study is to downsize the barrier and to promote communications between the Natural sciences and Humanities or between the modern sciences and the old traditional learnings.

<sup>1</sup> Francisco J. Varela, *ibid.*, the third lecture.

The mind study also aims at development of self-solution of the problems which are caused by the troubles of the mind. The kinds of the troubles are also very diverse. A wrong view of the world misleads one's thinking and action. A narrow and egocentric attitude could neither be harmonious with other beings nor co-exist. According to the words of mind disease which has been used so long time in Asia very universally, most people who are in normal mental state could be in state of the mind disease very usually. The mind disease is actually in situations of troublesome mind. The troubles of mind actually lie on the gap between the normal mentality and the psychopathic situation or the mentally deranged. The person who has some troubles in its mind does not always seem odd or queer in daily life, but the context of its decisions and actions frequently shows a wrong direction or disharmony with the neighborhood. From the perspective of the mind study the causes of mind troubles or mind disease are due not only to a wrong view of the world but also due to a distorted context of embodiment through one's lifetime. Of course a sound view of the world or rational thinking is a very important for giving a direction to one's normal thinking and behavior, but it could be regarded as more decisive and important activity only on the normal and sound embodiment of culture. In other words, the view of the world or rational thinking should be involved into a kind of contents of the embodiment or it could be embodied in one's consciousness and unconsciousness through one's life.

In relation to embodiment the mind study attaches importance to each teaching of Confucianism and Buddhism which has each high regard for self-cultivation of mind and body or of body and soul. Each of the Confucian Mind learning and Buddhist Vijnanavadin had developed its own understanding mind and constructed typical mind model. What should be specially emphasized is the mode of their treating the mind. For example, the Western psychology has treated human mind as *modus operandi*, the Asian Confucianism and Buddhism have done human mind as *modus vivendi*. The methodology of the cultivation in Confucianism or Buddhism maybe belongs to a voluntary embodiment or awakening autopoiesis which could lead one to an internal situation without any selfish desire or prejudice, so as a necessary consequence one will be able to realize the co-existence with all neighboring people and nations.

Once more speaking the mind study attaches importance to understanding the kinds of difference mentioned above and to communication with the others rather to establishment or vindicating a philosophical opinion. Toward this the mind study keeps an attitude there has been no absolute truth which could be free from some context which is cultural or academic. This attitude forms a league with the constructive realism Friedrich Wallner developed and the radical constructivism H. Maturan and F. Varela joined to. According to Maturana and Varela one's idea and attitude holds one's own standpoint and the context of one's embodiment cannot be the same with other's one. And every context of the embodiment necessarily has its own blind point biologically and culturally, one should realize the blind point and its

limitations.<sup>1</sup> If one makes efforts to co-exist truly with neighbors, one must overcome the limitations which come from the blind point, for example cultural prejudice, interests of social class, religious prejudice, racism, etc. To overcome these is to open the way to co-exist peacefully. We must accept this as a necessary and absolute ethics for the human beings continuous survival on the globe.

Therefore the mind study pursuits the way how to share the ethics for co-existence.<sup>2</sup> The ethics is not simply a kind of know-what but also of know-how. The former is related to applying moral rules to one's thinking and decision at the level of consciousness, but the latter is related to embodiment setting patterns at the level of one's daily life, what is more at the level of unconsciousness of neural network, morally good and appropriate for co-existence. And the mind study does not only pursuit to store objective knowledge in mind, but pursuit to correct attitudes and patterns which are managing one's life.

In order to create an academic basis, the mind study primarily tries to make communication among many fields of the studies and to construct a wider knowledge network about human mind. In contemporary society various approaches to the mind unveiled so many mysteries of the mind, and it is sure that the newly informed knowledge of the mind has increased the potentiality of understanding mind. Nevertheless the abundant knowledge discovered by new sciences, for example neural science and brain science, cannot ensure the happiness resulting from one's active and subjective life. The most important reason is that the sciences cannot make use of the first-person methodology, but only be dependent on the third-person methodology. The sciences with third-person methodology treat the mind only as the object. However the mind is the self-awakening subject as well as the object of the observer. If these two approaches could not be carried out complementarily each other, the studies of the mind cannot be satisfied and the matters of the mind still remain unsolved. For example, Varela insisted the necessity of the neuro-phenomenology which adopts the both methodologies to study the mind.<sup>3</sup> By the first-person methodology one could make a self-examination and self-introspection. And from the traditional methodological view of self-cultivation in Asia it is more important and decisive to establish a central pole in one's mind which could control all the activities of one's body and mind and cultivate oneself toward the direction of the ideal being. That establishment should belong to the first-person methodology. And without this method there will be little progress about unveiling the truth of the human being and solution of the problems of the mind.

<sup>1</sup> Humberto R. Maturana & Francisco J. Varela, 1992, *THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding* Revised Edition, Shambala, 1992, pp. 18–23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 239–250.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Francisco Varela and Jonathan Shear ed., 2002, *THE VIEW FROM WITHIN: First-person approaches to the study of consciousness*, Imprint Academic, UK.

## 4.

How could the Biocosmology and the mind study communicate mutually? How could these two ideas make a co-evolution in contemporary academic circles? From the viewpoint of the mind study, there are some points of contact on which the both ideas can communicate each other depending.

The first is that the system of the mind study could hold the standpoints of the Biocosmology in common. Neither more nor less, the first is that the evidence based philosophy. The second is harmonization of the antipodes diverged in the tradition of philosophy. The third is the viewpoint that observes all the things are together in an organic system. And the last is healing kinds of human sufferings.

Biocosmology is a new version of Aristotelism, because it is trying to adopt the Aristotle's aetiology as its basic paradigm. Aristotle's aetiology is really a paradigm for observing this world as an organicist world. And in order to explain the world as an organic network, the Biocosmology could be a very useful method. It is said that Biocosmology naturally integrates all the material and non-material substances of the real world, as well as its physicalist and mental forces. And it is said that Biocosmology is a direction of the real integration of both scientist and humanist paradigm, as well as of both philosophy and science. In these ideas important mark lies on integration, in other words communication and mutual understanding. And the reason why the integration is possible is that it has a dynamic and organic thinking.

The mind study also keeps the importance of integration of kinds of academic researches. It lays importance on the results of the scientific research, for example neural science, biological approach, or socio-cultural approaches and at the same time it keeps humane studies, mainly philosophy at the same time with other humanities, as the pivotal approach. However the more important thing for the mind study is to take the comparative humanities as its basic methodology. In order to acquire the comprehensive and advanced knowledge system of the mind and to bring up substantial solution of the problems and sufferings, the comparative humanities is now trying to compare and integrate many knowledge systems of the mind. By this methodology an integrated ontology (that is a rigorous and exhaustive organization of some knowledge domain that is usually hierarchical and contains all the relevant entities and their relations in computer science) of the mind will be built and so the comparison of the dissimilarity between the different knowledge systems of the mind will be easy, because the integrated ontology will be the useful criteria itself.

From the viewpoint of the mind study, the socio-cultural context of a science is regarded as a key to understand the essence of the science. As mentioned above a theoretical truth of a science or a philosophy as well should be regarded not as a correspondence to the reality in the objective world but as a constructed reality by a personal philosopher or a group of scientists.<sup>1</sup> And it is also regarded as a result of a scholar's self-organization of its learning along its personal life in the socio-cultural environment. Therefore at this case the important thing between the sciences or

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Wallner, Fritz G. & Thomas Slunecko, 1997, *The Movement of Constructive Realism*, Purdue University Press.

philosophies or cultures should be communication and mutual understanding in order to widen the potentiality of the co-existence. Like this viewpoint, the Biocosmology and the mind study have to communicate each other and make efforts the other's socio-cultural context.

From the viewpoint of the mind study, the adoption of Aristotle's world view in the Biocosmology seems very useful and effective to persuade the European people, especially trained with philosophical thinking. However in the East Asian society or academic circles is it still useful and effective? It is not easy to answer. Among East Asian societies and academic circles there are ones that still keep the traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism, and their scientific methodologies would not be the same with the European's and the socio-cultural context they have constructed is the same neither. And most academic methodologies since modern time in Europe pursuit the third-person methodology except phenomenology as the first-person methodology. But the traditional methodologies of Confucianism and Buddhism have taken the first-person style as the main. These both methodological traditions of the globe should be integrated and advanced to a developed one.

It is a matter of course that difference always comes into existence between scholars or cultures. The difference must be result from the context of one's life and socio-culture. Therefore what is important is not the making the two of difference uniform but broaden the horizon of understanding and promote the feasibility of co-existence. Now what is significant is to approach the other's world of thoughts or the other's inner world, because the otherness is the ultimate zone of being hard to understand.

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