

The Theology of Change in the Context of Derridean Deconstruction and Postmodernity

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I. Introduction

We are living in the global village of religious and cultural plurality, in the post-Christian era. The Third World is trying to do its best to trace the track of Western civilization through industrialization and urbanization in the infinite competitive system of capitalism. Westerners, however, have long been warning that the basic structures of

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Western civilization are showing signs of rupture. In the light of this situation, what can we expect to encounter between an East Asian world view and Christianity?

A new paradigm of theology is urgently needed for the third millennium. The Theology of Change is an attempt to reformulate Christianity based on an East Asian cosmo-anthropological viewpoint.² I expect that Christianity can be born again in East Asian thought and East Asian thought will then be empowered in Christianity. The relation of the Theology of Change with other theological trends (process theology, new physics, and new cosmology) has already been discussed to some extent.³ It will be extended to the discourse of postmodernism, especially that of Derrida's deconstruction, one of the most important trends in postmodernism. In Derridean deconstruction, text emerges as a new postmodern interpretation. Through a Derridean birth of text, aesthetic can appear as a new form of theology.

Within East Asian religious thought, there is no special and proper methodology by which to correlate quite different traditions. In a sense, methodology itself is the property of the Western academic tradition. East Asians have always emphasized the holistic approach which is a way of life. According to Derridean insight, all things are

² The Theology of Change firstly designates Jung Young Lee's (a Korean American theologian), theological works. He has worked through interpreting the *I Ching* from a theological perspective in order to construct a theology based on an East Asian worldview. The *I Ching* has provided the basic foundation of East Asian culture as the prototype of philosophy and science, in which Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism developed their ideas for East Asian indigenization. As the *I Ching* provides the unique worldview for East Asians and East Asian religious thought, a Christian theology based on the *I Ching* is very meaningful and significant, especially, in postmodernity. In this paper, the Theology of Change is used as designating a theological construction based on an East Asian worldview in a postmodern perspective.

³ Concerning process theology and the theology of change, see chapter 1 of Jung Young Lee's *The Theology of Change*. Concerning the *I Ching* and the postmodern worldview, see chapter 6, *Embracing Change: Postmodern Interpretations of the I Ching from a Christian Perspective* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1994).

interwoven in textuality. The universe is the manifestation of textual movements which is consequently led to harmony and makes possible the coexistence of differences in the *I Ching*, the East Asian worldview. As an East Asian, I want to approach the radical and fundamental questions of Derrida's deconstruction in order to construct an East Asian theology which seems to be a construction in the age of deconstruction.

II. Derridean Text and Deconstruction

The departure of Derrida's philosophy is to read the text of prominent philosophers, for example, Husserl, Heidegger, Lousseau, Levi-Strauss, and Saussure, in quite a scandalous way. Habermas describes Derrida as an anarchist and notes, "Derrida stands closer to the anarchist's wish to explode the continuum of history than to the authoritarian admonition to bend before destiny."⁴

Derrida describes the Western philosophical tradition as logocentrism, ontotheology, phonocentrism, or ethnocentrism which represents the fundamental structure of metaphysics as violence to despise differences and alternation and to make all differences merge into sameness. These phenomena are possible in the Western tradition because God as the absolute is presupposed and reason as absolute capacity is presupposed in epistemology.

1. The Birth of Text

⁴ Habermas quotes the following as the clue of the anarchist, "It (*difference*) governs nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority. It is not announced by a capital letter. Not only is there no kingdom of *difference*, but *difference* instigates the subversion of every kingdom" (*Margins of Philosophy*, 22). Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Fredrick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 183.

Since the time of Descartes, philosophy has focused on the subject of understanding and epistemology rather than on ontology and metaphysics. Reason had been the absolute authority by which to construct any philosophical discourses.

According to Mark C. Taylor, a fundamental feature of modernism is the death of God and one of the chief characteristics of postmodernism is the death of selfhood. Consequently, these two dimensions of contemporary experience are closely related: the death of God has been completed in the death of selfhood.⁵

In Derrida, the death of selfhood is demonstrated by the closure of the book. He describes the meaning of the book in four facets:

- 1) The book is a dialogue or dialectic.
- 2) The truth of the book is decidable.
- 3) The value of the book (true/false) is not intrinsic to it.
- 4) The element of the thus characterized book is the *image* in general (the icon or phantasm), the imaginary or the *imaginal*.⁶

Through point one, we come to know that the comparison of the soul to the book is presupposed in the book. Therefore, the book is the dialogue or dialectic with our soul.⁷ Through point two, the book within the soul, can either be true or false according to what the writer in us says and, as a direct consequence, writes down things that are true or false. Through point three, the truth or falsity is only decided by the writer, whether he/she transcribes an inner speech exactly or distinctively, when he/she copies into the book a discourse. The inner nature of the book is not a factor to decide truth or falsity. Point

⁵ Mark C. Taylor, *Deconstructing Theology* (NY: The Crossroad Publishing Co. 1982), 89.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 184-8.

⁷ Derrida, *Dissemination*, 187.

four teaches us that “the book imitates the soul or the soul imitates the book, because each is the image or likeness of the other.”⁸

However, if there were no self as the author of the book, the book itself would not be formed. The death of selfhood represents the closure of book. Consequently, the death of the author or absolute/ultimate meaning implies the birth of text.⁹

We have discerned writing: a non symmetrical division designated on the one hand the closure of the book, and on the other the opening of the text. On the other hand the theological encyclopedia and modeled upon it, the book of man. On the other a fabric of traces marking the disappearance of an exceeded God or of an erased man. The question of writing could be opened only if the book was closed. The joyous wandering of the opening into the text was adventure, expenditure without reverse.¹⁰

The text is byproduct of the destruction of the author which makes possible the proliferation of textual differences. In order to explain the text, Derrida introduces the figure of Thoth, the god of writing, who cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of signifiers.

...The figure of Thoth is opposed to its other (father, sun, life, speech, origin or orient, etc.), but as that which at once supplements and supplants it. Thoth extends or opposes by repeating or replacing. By the same token the figure of Thoth takes shape and takes its shape from the very thing it resists and substitutes for.¹¹

Thoth, the messenger-god of writing, is truly a god of the absolute passage between oppositeshe is precisely the god of nonidentity ... He cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences. Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of joke, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play.¹²

⁸ Derrida, *Dissemination*, 188.

⁹ Taylor, *Deconstructing Theology*, 96.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 294. Cited in Mark C. Taylor, “Text as Victim,” in *Deconstruction & Theology* (NY: Crossroad, 1982) 71.

¹¹ Derrida, *Dissemination*, 93.

¹² Derrida, *Dissemination*, 93.

Derrida's text is committed in principle to an interminable play of signifiers in the interpretational process.¹³ But this is not merely an arbitrary game. Derridean interpretation must proceed from its own rules to the "logic of play."

"The text," Barth stresses, is "plural. This does not just mean that it has several meanings, but rather that it achieves plurality of meanings, an irreducible plurality. The text is not coexistence of meanings but passage, traversal; thus it answers ... to an explosion, a dissemination. The text's plurality does not depend on the ambiguity of its contests, but rather on what could be called the stenographic plurality of the signifiers that weave it."¹⁴

Consequently, Derrida proclaims; "There is nothing outside texts."

2. *Différance*

In the book, the existence of the author is indispensable to make the book. Then, what constitutes text as text? In Derrida, what makes text is *différance*, which is not an ordinary word in French. The fact that *différance* is not an ordinary term but an invention by Derrida, is very significantly important.¹⁵

Différance is the most important and most central notion in Derrida's critique of language and his challenge to traditional European metaphysical thinking. Derrida constantly insists that "*différance* is neither a word nor a concept."¹⁶ However, *différance* is not Derrida's unique invention, which is scattered and has been most

¹³ David A. Dilworth, "The Critique of Logocentrism, or (Else) Derrida's Dead Line," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 17 (1990): 7.

¹⁴ Mark C. Taylor, *Deconstructive Theology*, 93.

¹⁵ I want to see the limit of Derrida's philosophy in the term of *différance* which is the symbol of alienation of all philosophical discourses of Derridean texts which are not harmonized in the ordinary language. The no-referential discourses will come to the end of philosophy. How can the end of discourses be the point of departure? It is the *koan* (Zen Buddhism's password to experience the ecstatic liberation) of postmodernism.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 159.

decisively inscribed in the thought of our epoch. Derrida, in his essay entitled “*Différance*,” tried to draw together in some sort of web (he calls it an “assemblage”), various uses of the term (not concept!) *différance* including Nietzsche (the differences of forces), Freud (detour of unconscious, impression and delayed effect), Saussure (principle of semiological divergence), Hegel, Levinas (the irreducibility of the trace of the other), and Heidegger (the ontological difference).¹⁷

Derrida points out the Latin verb *differe* and the French verb, *differer* have two meanings: firstly, it designates the temporality through the mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of “desire” or “will.” Secondly, it refers to spatiality to be at variance, to be unlike, apart, dissimilar, distinct in nature or quality from something.¹⁸

As a matter of fact, *différance* is older than Being itself. French has no name for such a difference. It is not nameable.¹⁹ *Différance*, which itself is never actually present or is present only as absence or abyss, establishes the difference which defines whatever it is. “*Différance* is the nonfull, nonsimple, ‘origin’; it is structured and differing origin of differences.”²⁰

Différance is play and movement according to immanent autonomous logic, although there is no absolute ruler or God or self. The concept of play [*jeu*] remains beyond the

¹⁷ David Wood, “Beyond Deconstruction,” ed. A. Phillips Griffiths, *Contemporary French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 184.

¹⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 82, 129-33.

¹⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 159.

²⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 14.

opposition; one the eve and aftermath of philosophy, it designates the unity of chance and necessity in an endless calculus.²¹

Without *différance*, the text cannot exist. *Différance* makes text possible. The play and movement of *différance* gives meaning to language, world, and thought in a quite different way in comparison to the traditional ontological ways.²² The fountain of meaning is no identity, nor correspondence, nor presence. Rather, meaning emerges from difference, distance and interval. Derrida wants to suggest that *différance* in this sense works in language formation, meaning formation, world formation, as well as thought formation. He regards *différance* as “an operation which is not operation,” and hence, a passion which is not passion, an action which is not action, a world which is not a word, a notion which is not a notion.²³

We can easily find that the Derridean *différance* has the same foundation as Taoism. However, in East Asian tradition, there was no time when Taoism could stand alone. Taoism is textually interwoven with Confucianism. Therefore, we cannot see exactly the Derridean *différance* only from a Taoist perspective. We have to return to the *I Ching* in which Taoism and Confucianism have their common ground.

²¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 135.

²² Jacques Derrida, *Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 143.

The work of writing and the economy of *différance* will not be dominated by the classical conceptuality, this ontology, or this epistemology. On the contrary, these furnish its hidden premises. *Différance* does not resist appropriation, it does not impose an exterior limit upon it. *Différance* began by broaching alienation and it ends by leaving reappropriation breached until death. Death is the movement of *différance* to the extent that that movement is necessarily finite. This means that *différance* makes the opposition of presence and absence possible.

²³ Chung-Ying Cheng, “A Taoist ‘*Différance*,’” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 17 (1990): 21.

3. Deconstruction and Construction

What is the purpose of Derrida's text and *différance*? Of course, Derrida does not want to presuppose the teleological purpose. Without presupposing the purpose, how do we understand his deconstruction? May deconstruction be a returning of *Tao* to the origin of text and *différance*? There is not place [*u-topos*] from which text and *différance* emerge. According to David Wood, deconstruction has been the object of a fantastic desire, something that explicitly marks out its distance from philosophy and should none the less fulfill the traditional philosophical role of providing a reassuring foundation for life, meaning, action and so on.²⁴ Deconstruction was born from a mediation of the limits of philosophy. It represents the most sophisticated attempt to deal with the question successively posed by Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, and Heidegger.²⁵

Derrida wants to deconstruct logocentrism, phonocentrism and ethnocentrism of the metaphysical tradition through an analysis of the phenomenology of Husserl and the structuralism of Levi-Strauss. The basis of Derrida's critique of presence is most accessible in his early book, *Speech and Phenomena*.

Husserl's phenomenology is no more than a variation of the metaphysics of presence. At the heart of Husserl's analysis of internal time consciousness lie tendencies which, if developed, would lead to the self-negation of this phenomenology.²⁶ The ideal form of a written signifier, for example, is not in the world, and the distinction between grapheme

²⁴ David Wood, "Beyond Deconstruction?" *Contemporary French Philosophy*, 184.

²⁵ Wood, 175.

²⁶ Mark C. Taylor, *Deconstructive Theology*, 95.

and the empirical body of the corresponding graphic sign separates an inside from an outside, phenomenological consciousness from the world.²⁷

Deconstruction itself has extended far beyond the limits of philosophical gates. To return deconstruction here to the history of philosophy is to revert to its place of formation as textual reading. In other words, deconstruction is the reading of texts in terms of their markers, traces, or uncertain features, in terms of margins, limits, or frameworks, and in terms of their self-circumscriptions or self-delimitations as texts. Deconstruction is not related to seeking out its meaning but to marking off its relations to other texts, its contexts, and its subtexts.²⁸

III. What Can I Find in the *I Ching*?

1. The Universe as the Text of Yin-Yang

There are necessarily connected chains between the inner structure of modernity and deconstructual discourses of postmodernity. It is described as the following: a myth of absolute subject which is a shadow of God, an almighty reason on which all scientific constructions stand, and a book in which the author controls all parts within consistent logical structure. However, the world of text comes out of the closure of the book and the death of the author through deconstruction. On the other hand, as Robert Corrington points out, these contemporary academic discourses are obsessed with non-referential signs.

²⁷ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 76.

²⁸ Ed. Hugh J. Silverman, *Derrida and Deconstruction* (NY: Routledge, 1989) 4.

This sheer symbolic plenitude, while not without its own aesthetic power, veils the deeper traits of reality and, in turn, alienates the human process from those impulses and potencies that give shape and meaning to life.²⁹

I think that all these results come out of loosing cosmology which basically supports reasoning processes and all kinds of human process. However, in East Asian thought, there is no God as an absolute ruler who controls all situations in the world. There is only a certain autonomous power which is basically immanent in nature and cosmos. Myriad things are byproducts of change which are the moving of *Tao*. The principle of change emphasizes differences rather than sameness or identity. We can discern change only through grasping differences which are demonstrated as transferences of position, transformation of shape and quality, and reformulation of relation. In the long run, identity and sameness are no more than a temporary correspondence in differences. The *I Ching* fully approves the priority of differences.

Heaven is high, the earth is low; thus the Creative and the Receptive are determined. In correspondence with this *difference* between low and high, inferior and superior, place is established. Movement and rest have their definite laws; according to these, firm and yielding lines are *differentiated*. Events follow definite trends, each according to its nature. Things are *differentiated* from one another in definite classes. In this way good fortune and misfortune come about. In the heavens phenomena take form; on earth shapes take form. In this way, change and transformation become manifest.³⁰

Richard Wilhelm explains that a distinction is made between three kinds of change: nonchange, cyclic change, and sequential change. The Chinese sages could

²⁹ Robert S. Corrington, *Nature & Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), ix.

³⁰ *The I Ching*, trans. Richard Wilhelm, English trans. Cary F. Baynes, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 288. The emphasis is added by the writer.

obtain all kinds of cosmological texts, through observing differences demonstrated in nature.

Looking upward, we contemplate with its help the signs in the heavens; looking down, we examine the lines of the earth. Thus we come to know the circumstances of the dark and the light, going back to the beginnings of things and pursuing them to the end, we come to know the lessons of birth and of death.³¹

In the *I Ching*, there are not metaphysical and sophisticated concepts. All situations are explained by the textual interwovenness of eight trigrams. Conclusively, the *I Ching* explains that our universe represents texts of change which are interwoven by Yin-Yang. Further, the eight trigrams make texts through interweaving which demonstrates sixty four *Kuas*. There are alternation, displacement, and establishment of which good fortune and misfortune come out; “Therefore the eight trigrams succeed one another by turns, as the firm and the yielding displace each other.”³² “Succeed one another by turns” and “displace each other” are certainly the movement of texts as the process of interweaving and cosmological textualization. Therefore, “as the firm and the yielding lines displace one another, change and transformation arise.”³³

These phenomena are expressed in the movement of text. However, these cosmological texts are concrete, simple, not sophisticated and never alienated from nature. The cosmological text manifests the beauty of nature which is the eternal foundation of East Asian arts and aesthetics of texts. We do not have to reconstruct nor deconstruct cosmos. We have to just let the world be as it is.

³¹ *I Ching*, 294, *Ta Chuan*.

³² *I Ching*, 283, *Ta Chuan*.

³³ *I Ching*, 288, *Ta Chuan*.

The *I Ching* is composed of *Ching* (the main text) and *Chuan* (the supplementary texts: the Ten Wings (*Shih I*). *Ching* has both hexagrams (Kua) and judgment (T'uan). The hexagrams are symbols which are composed of two trigrams – the Yin-Yang symbols. The judgments are fragmentary and intuitive divinational poems which are not filtered by reasonable sophistication. The main text is not “the book” but it is like the Derridean texts as archewriting and traces. The supplementary texts which were written later are a kind of book focusing on philosophical reasoning and through which one can find that a consistent meaningful system is interwoven. The *I Ching* embraces both “a book” and “texts.”

In the *I Ching*, we can find deconstruction and construction occurring simultaneously. The hexagrams always reject any fixed interpretation, which is always open to diverse possibilities. We can apply the hexagrams to diverse situations. The *I Ching* is open toward the journey to the aesthetics of hermeneutics, because it is not fixed but flexible and open-ended.

2. Eternal Nostalgia: Returning of *Tao* and Change

Linearity cannot be eternal. Eternity must embrace the returning movement of change, and change is not a linear movement. Eternity in the linear movement is an illusion. Eternity can exist only in circularity in which beginning and end are intermingling in the process of returning.

Change is the ultimate agent which is spreading, permeating, and floating into the whole universe. In Derridean understanding, *difference* is no more than shadows of

change. In change, there is growth and depth: internalization. The change is not only external transformation but also an internal embodiment.

In the *I Ching*, the term, *change*, has three meanings: 1) the easy as simplicity, 2) the change as variability, 3) the constant as invariability. Change is an eternal intention of movement as nostalgia, but there is neither telos nor direction. It embraces both progress and regression, both moving and resting. Moving tries to change into resting and resting tries to transform itself into moving. In this movement, there is no linear advancement but only circular movement as returning. The returning itself is the movement of Tao. Change moves toward recycling and recycling makes eternal movements into change itself.

The concept of change is not an external, normative principle that imprints itself upon phenomena; it is inner tendency according to which development takes place naturally and spontaneously.³⁴

Eternity is made by mutual interaction which comes out of the polarity of Yin-yang. Yin innately intends for Yang and Yang innately moves for Yin. We can find this polarity in the same thing. Therefore, there is no substance except becoming in the *I Ching*.

3. Three Constants: Heaven, Earth and Human Beings

In East Asian thought, the death of God and human beings as selfhood are not needed, because human beings, heaven and earth are not an artificial invention in the human process. They are only focal points which have been formulated by relational position and textuality of the grand universe. They are three categories which formulate the sixty-

³⁴ *I Ching*, 19.

four hexagrams in the *I Ching*. On the other hand, their power is not authoritative. To kill these three constants is impossible, because they are byproducts of relation and harmony. They participate in the creative transformation of the universe for cosmological textualization as three constants.

The whole universe is permeated by the fulfilling and immanent *ch'i*. Therefore, the universe is an appropriate place and the earth is comfortable for our living in principle, in spite of the fact that there is no partiality to human beings. Heaven, earth, and human beings are the three categories which may function as inter-subjects in the movement of change. None of the three can be an absolute subject who exercises sovereignty all over the universe and makes logos as the absolute meaning. They are byproducts of relational interactions. All hexagrams of the *I Ching* are interpreted by these three categories. Human beings are located at the center but the position of the center is not the position of the ruler but rather one of harmonizer or conciliator. In the long run, human nature (*hsing*) is given to humankind by heaven. The *hsing*, human nature, must be directed toward the state of cosmological harmony.

The state in which joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure have not yet made their appearance is called that equilibrium (*Chung*). When they have appeared, but are all in accordance with the proper measure, this is called the state of harmony.³⁵

We can find the status of human beings from East Asian paintings of landscapes; human beings belong to the grand harmony of heaven and earth. In the *I Ching*, the great man as the archetype of an ideal human being is nowhere designated as leader; the nature of his influence nowhere described. In a series of situations, however, it is advised to

³⁵ Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 1:374.

search for the great man[sic] with the words; “it furthers one to see the great man.”³⁶ In dangerous or difficult situations, waiting for the great person with perseverance is emphasized. Then, the perseverance brings good fortune. Human beings can bring good fortune through their own patience and endurance to encounter the fulfilled and focal times as *kairos*. The archetype of the human being is the reconciler who can change a difficult situation into one of harmony.

IV. An East Asian Theology for a Postmodern World: Fragments of Natural Insights

Theology has described itself as “the Queen of the Sciences” since the era of Thomas Aquinas. However, Philip Toynbee suggests that theology might have done better if it had tried to be “the Queen of Arts.”³⁷

Historically, theology, as the queen of sciences has had especially two servants: philosophy and science. However, as a matter of fact, theology is dependent early on philosophy and later on science. In reality, theology cannot escape from the slave of philosophy and science. However, in postmodernism, the traditional discourses of philosophy and science are no longer efficient. Norman O. Brown suggests “Dionician Christianity,” in which “meaning is not fixed, but ever new and ever changing.”³⁸

The Arts include free projects of signs and intentions. Theology as Arts can portray the projections of God revealed in nature as textual forms. Of course, God may

³⁶ Helmut Wilhelm, *Heaven, Earth and Man in the Book of Changes* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 158.

³⁷ Philip Toynbee, *Towards the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1982), 64.

³⁸ Mark C. Taylor, “Text as Victim,” in *Deconstruction & Theology* (NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 75.

be “the begetter of all begetting.”³⁹ In the *I Ching*, God does not exercise sovereignty externally but immanently participates in the creative transformation. The universe is no more than the textual movement of *Yin-Yang*. The *I Ching* is reading on the cosmological texts through constructing and deconstructing of sixty four hexagrams. All scientific attempts are reduced to reading the texts of the universe and interpreting its reading. Through the birth of the text, as noted earlier in this study, aesthetics emerges as a new framework of theology. Now, theology needs not seek an absolute truth any longer but rather, it tries to find beauty, aesthetically, that is, floating in nature.

All sciences have to be focused toward the open horizon of hermeneutics. They are, in reality, partial attempts to grasp the holistic reality. The *I Ching* shows the reader the aesthetics of hermeneutics. The microcosm corresponds to the macrocosm in cosmological textual movements. Heaven, earth and human beings make creative harmony through cosmo-textual movements.

All East Asian Arts obtain living power through the notion of the void. That is, the void is manifested by the unpainted space and non-sounding interval. The unpainted space and non-sounding interval represents the void, out of which all aesthetic harmony and beauty emerge without artificial maneuvering. *Wu* (not to be) is older than *Yu* (to be). *Wu* is not nothingness but the void, from which all differentiations are emerging.

Without the void, no civilization would function but would be destroyed. The movements of the cosmological text are possible in the void. All cultural achievements are finite projects within the void. The void is prior to *Tai Chi* (the Ultimate). *Wu Chi*

³⁹ *I Ching*, 299.

(Non-Ultimate) is another nameless name of the void. The void is prior to *Tai Chi* and *Wu Chi*. Theology as Arts is renamed as the aesthetics of the void.

East Asians have intuitively understood the role of language for centuries. They have not tried to communicate their meaning and intention through language itself. Therefore, phonocentrism has not predominated in East Asian culture. When they try to communicate only through language, they think that the communication itself is not possible. They try to use the logic of excess which goes beyond language. Therefore, the *I Ching* was not written by language but by signs, symbols, and images, which we can understand as examples of Derridean text or writing.

In the *I Ching* God is revealed not through language but through writing. Therefore, all understandings of God are texts or traces of writing.⁴⁰ The *I Ching* is deconstructed and constructed by a system of signs, symbols, and images. The *I Ching* contains the logic of excess. Therefore, the *I Ching* can embrace the grand universe through sixty four hexagrams.

The *I Ching* is vast and great. When one speaks of what is far, it knows no limits. When one speaks of what is near, it is still and right. When one speaks of the space (the void – added by the writer) between heaven and earth, it embraces everything.

Jung Young Lee cited the logic of excess which underlies the *I Ching*. The logic of excess represents the word “beyond.”

The hexagrams never become objects in themselves, for they always serve as symbols beyond themselves.⁴¹

⁴⁰ In the *I Ching*, God does not appear. However, according to Jung Young Lee’s perspective, God is the change itself, the begetter of begetting, who is revealed through the arrangement of hexagrams.

⁴¹ Jung Young Lee, *Embracing Change*, 113.

Symbols or hsiang in Chinese, should not be understood as images, for images do not point beyond themselves. The symbol never becomes its own object, while the image does. The symbol always points beyond itself, just as the hexagram points to the invisible potential, or the germinal situation, the hexagram as the primary symbol points to the invisible realities of the universe.⁴²

The logic of excess embraces the logic of both-and and neither-nor. Therefore, in order to understand the hexagram as a whole, one must also acknowledge the existence of the hidden hexagram as the counterpart of the revealed hexagram. The relationship between the revealed and the hidden hexagrams can be compared with the relationship between yin and yang.⁴³

Where can we find the model of co-habitation in a religious pluralistic society? Out of the *I Ching*, Taoism's and Neo-Confucianism's main ideas emerged, through which the Buddhist tradition planted its deep root in the Chinese soil. Many Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist commentaries on the *I Ching* have constantly been written. Jung Young Lee demonstrated the possibility of a Christian theology which evolves from the *I Ching*. In the *I Ching*, we can find most of the world religions have cohabited without any conflicts in East Asia.

The cosmology of the *I Ching* has still a spatial place to contain the model of co-habitation for religious pluralism. Change sometimes appears as a source of problems for those who do not want to change. However, those who want to accord with the normal process of change can find peace and tranquility in life. The religious pluralism and the paradigm-shift of theology are the shadows of change which currently permeate into all

⁴² Jung Young Lee, *Embracing Change*, 114.

⁴³ Jung Young Lee, *Embracing Change*, 102-03.

religions. The trends of change that are irreversible will make everything return to its original place.

The pain of laboring is the symptom for the sake of delivering a new baby. According to the theology of change, the end presupposes the beginning. The end and the beginning are inseparable, like *yin* and *yang*. Postmodern discourses are not the end of modernity, God, and the book, but a new beginning for new religion and new theology.

V. Conclusion

Modernity, in which Westerners tried to establish the universal standard based on human-centeredness, has collapsed in today's world of postmodernity. Without conceiving God and human beings' own self-centeredness, the world looks like a wilderness in which the shadow of nihilism is wandering away and all meaningfulness has evaporated.

Derrida has preached the world of textuality in which différance is floating and slipping. There are traces, dissemination, and writings which we cannot know the meanings and significances. In the *I Ching*, we find the aesthetics of the void and spacious beauty which emerges as traces in nature. Change is the transforming power to motivate the movements of cosmological texts. The world of texts goes beyond that of words, logos, reason and book. The whole universe is the textualization of change: the ultimate significance in chaos and the unnamable chaos in the textualized beauty. Theology must try to launch an art project to create the space to embrace diverse religious ideas and to make them co-habit in peace and harmony without conflicts. The

theology of change shows us an example of aesthetics of the void and excess in which Western Christianity and East Asian Christianity can live together.

Tao is returning. Every end is not the end in the sense that it still contains a new beginning. Thus, it gives hope to human beings. In the postmodern world, we are waiting for sacred humanity and a new civilization for creative transformation with perseverance and furthering. The theology of change is a new way of theological thinking based on the East Asian worldview, which is a sign for emerging a world Christianity.

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ABSTRACT

The Theology of Change is a new constructive theology which is based on the East Asian world view represented by the Book of Changes. This theology was originally written by Korean American theologian Jung Young Lee. I want to use this term to designate an East Asian theological construction for a new theology toward World Christianity in the postmodern situation. The *I Ching* has been the basic grammar of East Asian culture for most areas such as art, philosophy, sciences, medicine, architecture and so on. Therefore, the Theology of Change is not only a sort of indigenous theology but also an alternative theology for World Christianity in the postmodern age.

Jung Young Lee finds a very useful tool for constructing East Asian theology in the *I Ching*. I want to explore the relationship of the Theology of Change with Derridean deconstruction and textuality. *Différance* is not far away from the change in the *I Ching*. Rather they are very close and interrelated. Yin-yang is the cosmological textual movement which is very close to Derridean textual movement. *Kua* (trigram) is the manifestation of textual movement of yin and yang. The *I Ching* is clearly explained by Derridean deconstruction and construction. *Différance* is the movement of the Change from the perspective of the Theology of Change.

In this kind of textual and cosmological movement, a new theology is emerging as the aesthetics of the void in art work. The Theology of Change is transformed from ontological theology toward aesthetical theology in an East Asian worldview. God is renewed from the transcendent being to the immanent nonbeing. Theology is more inclined to cosmos and creation rather than history and salvation, which opens a new way

toward ecumenism and ecology. That is, the Theology of Change is positioned as a construction in the age of deconstruction.

Key Words

The *I Ching*, Derrida, *différance*, textuality, deconstruction, construction