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Transforming the Myth of Oneness for Korean Christianity

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ABSTRACT

Transforming the Myth of Oneness for Korean Christianity

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This thesis interprets and critiques what is termed the ‘myth of oneness’ within the western philosophical and theological tradition, seeking to help transform South Korean Christianity, especially its perspective on other religions, and its attitude toward the reunification of Korea. Whitehead’s process philosophy and its resulting theology, and the yin-yang paradigm of Asia are presented as alternative paradigms to help transform the myth of oneness.

This project develops a relational and transformative Asian hermeneutic incorporating Gadamer’s hermeneutic of the fusion of horizons, Habermas’ critical hermeneutic of communicative action, Korean Minjung theology’s concern for the oppressed, C.S. Song’s transpositional methodology, and Jung Young Lee’s interpretation of marginality.

The myth of oneness is defined and critiqued as a problematic paradigm based ontologically on the neo-Platonic understanding of being as static, changeless, perfect, and absolute, superior to all other existences and claiming soteriological superiority over all other religions. This philosophical myth of oneness has historically been reflected in the theologies of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, with their predominant influence on all western theology. As the core theological expression of the myth of oneness, the doctrine of God in classical theism is presented and critiqued. Jürgen Moltmann’s panentheistic Trinitarian perspective and Alfred North Whitehead’s dipolar theism are articulated as modern alternative modes of theism more

akin to Asian modes of thoughts.

As an Asian alternative to the myth of oneness the yin-yang paradigm is introduced and analyzed, emphasizing its relational (changeological) and dynamic character. The yin-yang paradigm is seen as helping Korean churches to transform the myth of ontological and soteriological oneness toward a more organic, dynamic, and relational understanding of God..

Finally, this project develops and envisions a more dynamic, relevant praxis for Korean churches in two areas: (1) inter-religious dialogue and (2) the reunification of North and South Korea.

Advisor/ Committee Chairperson: James E. Will

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS	11
PROLOGUE	12
INTRODUCTION	15
A. Why South Korean Christianity?	15
B. The Unique Context of Korean Christianity	17
1. Korea is a fully multi-religious community	17
2. Korean Christianity's Relation to Korean Religious Conflict	19
3. Korean Combination of Christianity and Western Culture	21
4. Korean Christianity as Contextualized Christianity	22
CHAPTER I. METHODOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS: TOWARD AN AUTHENTIC ASIAN THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY	27
A. Introduction: Methodological Challenge in Asian Context	27
1. Influence of Western Christianity on Korean Christianity	27
2. Necessity of Korean Contextual Methodology	29
B. Gadamer and Habermas for Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics	32
1. Gadamer's Hermeneutics of Conversation	32
2. Habermas' Critique of Ideology and Response to Gadamer	36
C. Methodological Challenges From Asia	40
1. Korean Minjung Theology	41
2. C. S. Song's "Third Eye Theology"	43
3. Jung Young Lee's Theology of Marginality	45
D. Cross-Cultural Methodology of Yin and Yang	47
1. Textual/Contextual	50
2. Dialogical/Ethical	52

3. Anthropological/Cosmological (Ecological)	8
4. Theoretical/Practical	52
5. East/West	53
CHAPTER II. MYTH OF ONENESS: CHALLENGED PARADIGM	55
A. Definition	55
1. Mythological Form	57
2. Ontological Oneness	59
3. Soteriological Oneness	62
B. Historical Origin and Development	67
1. Plato and Aristotle	68
2. Neo-Platonism: Plotinus	72
3. Augustine and Aquinas	74
C. Challenges	80
CHAPTER III. CLASSICAL AND DIPOLAR THEISM	87
A. Biblical and Early Religious Background	87
B. Classical Theism	89
1. Classical Definition	89
2. Critical Definition	93
C. Trinitarianism	98
1. Ancient Trinitarianism	98
2. Modern Trinitarianism of Moltmann	100
D. Liberation Theology	104
E. Whitehead and Dipolar Theism	106
1. Philosophy of Organism	106
2. Alternative Notion of God: Dipolar Theism	112
F. Whitehead's Dipolar Theism: Its Contribution and Limitation	120

	9
CHAPTER IV. YIN-YANG (陰陽) PARADIGM IN I-CHING (易經)	124
A. The Book of Change (I-Ching, 易經)	124
1. I-Ching as Wisdom of Asia	124
2. Structure	129
3. I-Ching (易經) and Tao-Te Ching (道德經)	131
B. Yin (陰) and Yang (陽)	132
1. Basic Concept & Meaning	132
2. T'ai Chi Diagram (太極圖)	135
C. Change (易)	144
1. Traditional Understanding of Change (易)	144
2. Change as both “Self-Creating (生)” and “Self-Emptying (空),” therefore “Self-Returning(道)”	148
3. Holistic Understanding of Change and Trinity	151
4. Change (易) and Tao (道)	155
D. Yin-Yang Paradigm and its Contributions and Limitations	159
1. Significance of Yin-Yang Paradigm for Classical and Dipolar Theism	159
2. Whitehead and I-Ching	160
3. Possibility and Limitation of Yin-Yang Paradigm	167
 CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION: TRANSFORMING KOREAN CHRISTIANITY	 172
A. Suggestions for the Praxis of Inter-religious Dialogue	177
a) Inadequate Praxis: Exclusivism and Inclusivism	178
b) Toward Adequate Praxis: Pluralism	180
c) Dynamic Transformational Pluralism	185
B. Korean Christianity’s Role in the Reunification of Korea	190
1. Suffering and Division of Korea	191
2. Learning from Failed Praxis in Recent History	194
a) Dong Hak Movement	194
b) Independence	195
c) Democratic Movements and Military Dictatorship	200
3. Theology and the Praxis of Reunification	201

EPILOGUE	10
	209
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	211

LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

<Table I-1> Habermas' Categorization of Science	38
<Table III-1> Comparison of Dipolar Nature of God	119
<Diagram IV-1> T'ai Chi Diagram	135
<Diagram IV-2> "One" in T'ai Chi Diagram	136
<Diagram IV-3> Yin and Yang	138
<Diagram IV-4> T'ai Chi with Two Dots and "S-Shape"	139
<Diagram IV-5> Movement of Yin and Yang to Each Other	141
<Diagram IV-6> T'ai Chi according to Times of Day	145

PROLOGUE

When Jürgen Habermas visited South Korea in 2004, one newspaper reporter asked him a question during a news conference. “You are the philosopher of this era. Thus, tell us what South Korea has to do!”¹ In this reporter’s question, the common attitude of Korean society toward western thought was clearly revealed. Since its liberation from Japanese colonization in 1945, South Korea has admired the advanced power system of the West and has faithfully followed the Western way in rebuilding its nation. This Westernization has commonly been perceived as modernization. Westernization has also meant liberation of Korea from its painful and disgraceful history in the 20th century.

The recent religious history of Korea also has not been exempt from this tendency towards uncritical admiration of the West. Rather, Korean Christianity especially has pioneered the way and concretized westernization as a national phenomenon. It claimed that Koreans needed to respect what the Western countries have done and should eagerly learn from them. Based on this “must follow” process of westernization, Korean Christianity still insists that all Koreans should leave their inferior and undeveloped traditional religions, and follow the superior religion of Christianity from the West. Carefully considering the complex social-economic-political dynamic of the world, this approach may be seen as not so much chosen by Korean Christians, as given and forced by the power dynamic of this era.

This uncritical acceptance of the West, however, has contributed to and accelerated oppression and division in Korea: between South and North, between Christianity and the

¹ Won-Shik Hong, “Toward a True Encounter of East and West,” *For East and Beyond East* (Seoul: Yemoonseowon, 2002), 13.

indigenous religions, between educational elites and the uneducated, between the rich and the poor in its capitalist economic system, and finally, between Koreans and their traditional culture and values. When the “West” is regarded as the absolute way, it causes serious problems.

This uncritical acceptance of western culture and its religion is rooted in the perspective of “Euro-centrism,” that the culture of the West, led by Europe is the center and standard to interpret the rest of the world. For example, if we analyze when people started to call Asia the East, we find it originated with Europeans, because Asia is to the East from their point of view. This designation makes sense when looking at a world map that has Europe as its center. When, however, we use a map which has America as its center because America is clearly located to the east of Asia. Asian countries never called themselves “Eastern” countries before Europeans gave them this geographical designation. Since then, though, Asia has been called “the East,” with a level of permanency because powerful Europeans used this word. The relatively powerless Asia, simply received its new name: the East. This is an example of how a Euro-American centered approach has dominated the recent world, especially since the 17th century.

The belief that Western philosophy, culture, political system, and economy are rationally advanced influences the rest of the world to follow the West, because its presumed superiority sets the standard. The question, then, that the Korean newspaper reporter posed to Habermas clearly reflected this popularized but misdirected view within South Korea.

The answer from Habermas, however, gave South Koreans a significant insight: “Why do you ask me that? You must find it within yourselves, in your beautiful tradition as I did from my own tradition.”² Habermas gave an insightful direction which South Korea, especially South

² Ibid., 13-14.

Korean Christianity, must consider in the 21st century. Koreans must realize how heavily their current oppression and injustice are influenced by their uncritical and unbalanced acceptance of western systems during the last century. With recognition of what has caused current struggles, it is time for Koreans to reexamine the western ideology's limitations and to seeks a more critical and balanced position in interaction with their own rich and valuable traditions, which have been neglected for the last centuries.

INTRODUCTION

A. WHY SOUTH KOREAN CHRISTIANITY?

In 1997, there was a shocking incident in South Korea which alarmed all Korean religious communities. One night, a “fundamentalist”³ Christian believer cut off the heads of over two-hundred Buddhist statues around his area. It was religious murder. When the believer was later arrested and interrogated, he claimed that it was his mission as a true Christian to convert other religious believers to Christianity and to prove that Christianity was the only true religion, superior to all others. While, at the time, some Christian leaders did express deep remorse for the incident, most Christian leaders did not comment on the occurrence at all, and a few extreme fundamentalist Christian leaders even praised the man for what he did in the name of God and Christianity.

This is not an unusual incident in many multi-religious communities. It is rather an extreme expression resulting from an age-old battle for religious hegemony. Those living in

³ Christian fundamentalism is normally defined as a movement which arose mainly within American Protestantism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by conservative evangelical Christians, who, in a reaction to modernism, actively affirmed a "fundamental" set of Christian beliefs: the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and the authenticity of his miracles. These fundamentalists regard their evangelism with great seriousness because they believe that the salvation of the world depends on them and their type of faith. For more detailed information on Fundamentalism, see Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, ed. *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). My use of fundamentalism also includes the remnants of this fundamental faith, powerfully existing in South Korea. The dominant group of missionaries who brought Christianity to Korea was influenced by this fundamentalist movement, and their faith was transmitted to the majority of Korean Christians. Since it was the first type of Christianity for many Koreans, they still believe this fundamental faith is the only pure Christian faith, even though Fundamentalism in the United States has declined. The most problematic attitude of fundamentalism is their view of other faith groups including both Christians and other religions. The fundamentalists believe their mono-cultural understanding of God and interpretation of the Bible are absolutely true, and therefore nonnegotiable. It is in great danger of idolatry by not admitting God's diverse revelations in various moments of history and in diverse cultural contexts.

multi-religious societies are all in danger of suffering a fate similar to that of those living in South Korea. Thus, a critical question must be raised. How did Christianity, “a religion of love and forgiveness,” cause such a murderous incident? Does God, through the Christian faith and in the name of evangelism, allow and even endorse this kind of hate crime? The answer elaborated in this dissertation, plainly and clearly, is “no.” God did not and does not endorse such hate crimes. Even toward the violence of evil and sin, God’s power patiently seeks transformation by love and forgiveness, rather than, through such hate crimes. Yet, what has led some Korean Christians into such a violent misunderstanding of God? Is there a hidden but powerful paradigm that supports these types of incidents within Christianity?

Throughout the history of Christianity and even into the present, there have been many occurrences of religious tyranny: the Crusades, Puritan witch hunts, the religious courts of the Middle Ages, modern colonialism and fundamentalist missionaries, or even the current religious conflicts in South and Middle East Asia. For this reason, religious leaders of the world are rightly challenged when confronted with the declaration supporting inter-religious dialogue promulgated by the World Parliaments of Religions, “No world peace without peace between the religions”⁴

Although the religious conflict and violence caused by the exclusive and idolatrous understanding of God held by many Christians is a world-wide dilemma, the particular context of South Korean Christianity gives it added significance for two reasons. First, South Korea was a multi-religious country before Christianity was introduced two-hundred years ago, and remains so even though it is the only country in Asia in which Christianity has become one of the major religions. Second, the Korean peninsula is the only country still divided and suffering from

⁴ Hans Kung’s Declaration in the World Parliament of Religions, 1990.

political colonialism and neo-colonialism. The majority of South Korean Christians, still under the influence of fundamentalist missionaries' exclusivist teaching, and an earlier military dictatorship's interest in maintaining its political hegemony, has uncritically supported the division of Korea. Therefore, this dissertation limits its discussion to the context of South Korea.

These characteristics of South Korea reflect similar struggles within much of our world. The particular discussion of the South Korean context, therefore, may provide insights for similar worldwide problems.

B. THE UNIQUE CONTEXT OF KOREAN CHRISTIANITY

The unique South Korean religious context needs critical analysis because of its long and complex multi-religious history and its dramatic socio-political changes in the last two centuries, as well as its experience with a rapidly growing Christian community, not duplicated in any other Asian country.

1. Korea is a Fully Multi-Religious Community.

Unlike most other countries, where one religion maintains a dominant position, as is the case with Europe and Christianity, Japan and Shintoism, India and Hinduism, and Arab countries and Islam, Korea is truly a multi-religious community. Thirty-percent of Koreans are Buddhists, twenty-percent are Christians, twenty-percent are nonbelievers, and the remaining thirty-percent

are divided among Confucians, Taoists, Muslims, and Shamanists. This multi-religious context, then, gives some significant insight into the issue of inter-religious dialogue. In countries where one religion is dominant over the others, the dominant religion usually acts in one of two ways: 1) either favorably toward the minority religions because they pose no life-threatening challenges to the religion of the majority, or 2) hostilely toward the minority religions until they have no freedom for their own religious practices.

For example of a religious majority acting favorably toward a religious minority, we need only to look at most American Christians. Though members of a dominant religion, they have a somewhat soft and open attitude toward other religions. Most American Christians do not feel bothered by adherents of other religions, and they even adopt rituals from “outside” religions in their own acts of worship, such as the Buddhist practice of meditation and African indigenous music. At the same time, minority religions usually do not confront the religion of the American Christians.

An attitude of hostility, though, is often found in countries that have no right of religious freedom, as in many Arab countries and even many Christian countries until the 19th century. In this context, inter-religious dialogue does not exist, but neither does serious inter-religious conflict. Such countries, however, often create conflicts with neighboring countries of different religions, as is the case with Israel and Palestine, and Pakistan and India.

However, in a country like South Korea, where there is no dominant religion and several religions coexisting in one country, religious struggle often takes place. In this situation, the religions naturally compete with each other. Religions then make their beliefs “solid” by

distinguishing themselves from and attacking the other religious belief systems. This is what Korean Christianity has done in the name of missions and evangelism. The incident of cutting off the heads of Buddhist statues is one extreme example of an individual trying to demonstrate the superiority of his Christianity over Buddhism. This was not a rare or unpredictable incident within South Korea, where competition among religions is live and hostile.

2. Korean Christianity's Relation to Korean Religious Conflict

Traditionally, Korea has been a multi-religious community with three main religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Mu-Kyo (Shamanism). These religions have influenced the Korean people's religious life for over fifteen-hundred years. Of course, there have been several conflicts among them. Buddhism was first accepted and contextualized as the national religion for the *Ko-rea* dynasty, while Confucianism was later accepted during the Chosun dynasty. Despite the conflicts, different religions within Korea did find a peaceful coexistence. Throughout Korean history, it is clear that there never was a war caused by religious conflicts, but wars were caused by territorial hegemony and political leadership.

It is also crucial to note that the particular beliefs of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism not only became engrained in Korea's "religious realm," but they exist inextricably in the daily lifestyle of the Korean people. In his book, *The History of Korean Religious Thought*, Dong-Shik Yoo, names this harmonious coexistence of the three traditional religions in Korean history with the term "po-ham-sam-kyo (包含三教)," meaning "the assimilation of three

religions.”⁵ He goes on to quote one of the oldest historical documents in Korea, *Sam-Kuk-Sa-Ki*, that Korean spirituality has usually sought to include all three religions and has developed into its current mode because of the religions’ joint contribution.

There has been a deep and mysterious(玄) spirituality in Korea... that includes all three religions: Confucianism(儒), Buddhism(佛), and Shamanism(仙). Its goal was to make humankind human in daily life.⁶

Yoo believes that Korea has developed, beyond the boundaries of the three religions, a unique spirituality that stems directly from the wisdom of coexisting for over 1500 years, or at least until Christianity was introduced two-hundred years ago. In the early stages of Christianity, when led primarily by Catholic priests, Korean Christianity followed the traditional path of harmony and coexistence with the other religions. However, with the arrival of Protestant missionaries sent primarily from the United States, Christians in Korea started criticizing the failures of the traditional religions and proclaiming Christianity’s superiority.⁷

This ultra-exclusive form of Korean Christianity, strongly influenced by fundamentalist missionaries bearing a classical theistic slant, has continued to claim its absoluteness and superiority based on their biblical understanding that 1) there is no other God and 2) salvation is “only through Jesus Christ.” From this perspective, the majority⁸ of Korean Christians considers all other religions as obstacles to the way of salvation. The other religions are not just considered to be poor ideologies which lack the true way to salvation and, therefore, needing to be evangelized, but they are branded by the majority of Korean Christians as satanic traps blocking innocent people from God’s “true way,” which, therefore, must be destroyed. Yoo laments this

⁵ Dong-Shik Yoo, *The History of Korean Religious Thoughts* (Seoul: Yonsei University press, 1992), 190.

⁶ Ibid., The translation from Korean is mine.

⁷ Ibid., 185-187.

⁸ Although the exact percentage of this group has not been objectively researched because they did not publicly reveal their perspective, they are the majority within Korean Christianity in my opinion.

exclusivist attitude of Korean Christianity, as well as the fact that, the challenge of “contextual theology” from the late 1960’s and the “Minjung theology” of the 1970’s failed to affect the majority of Korean Christians.⁹

On the other hand, Korean Buddhists, who constitute the country’s largest religion, have not adopted a hostile attitude toward Christianity. They do not aim to prove their superiority, but for the most part, express their natural, soft attitude toward newly-accepted religions. Their tolerance is focused by a traditional emphasis of Buddhist spirituality on the pursuit of inner peace and individual well-being.¹⁰ In the recent religious history of Korea, though, it has become increasingly obvious even to Buddhists that Christianity has proven problematic. Therefore, it is becoming an urgent task to transform a hostile and exclusive Christianity in order to stop conflicts in Korea, and to once again recover fruitful dialogue between Korea’s religious communities.

3. The Korean Combination of Christianity and Western Culture

Another unique fact of Korean Christianity is that it was received jointly with western culture. In the view of many Koreans, Christianity and western culture are genetically intertwined. This is one of the main reasons why the majority of Koreans still reject becoming Christians. Shin, Bok-Ryung rightly articulates that only 14 percent of the 85 percent of Koreans who were introduced to Christianity became Christians during the last two decades. He explains that the main reason of this result is because Korean Christianity came combined with many non-

⁹ Ibid., 306.

¹⁰ In the respect that it pursues the well-being of believers, Korean Buddhism seems very individualistic. The engagement in social issues is lacking in Korean Buddhism. I think this is due to the lingering influence of traditional Shamanism.

essential western cultural influences.¹¹ When South Koreans look at Christianity, they also always see western democracy, technology, rationality, capitalism, and so on. In the same way, everything that Korea accepts from western “Christian” countries has simultaneously been labeled as Christian byproducts. When Christianity came to Korea, it brought all of the western cultural benefits with it. Nearly everything considered “modern” in Korea has been brought by Christian missionaries. South Koreans identify Christianity with the benefits they have received from Western countries. Given the devastating situation of Korea under and after Japanese colonization, western “modern” culture was perceived in almost messianic terms, able to deliver Korea from its previously dreadful situation.

This is one of the critical reasons why only Korean Christianity experienced a dramatic growth almost never found elsewhere in Asia. The entanglement of Christianity and western culture in Korea played a critical role in supporting and legitimating the superiority of Korean Christianity over the other indigenous religions. Christians disvalued the other religions as superstitious, pre-modern and irrational, insinuating that they had led to the unforgettable shame of the Korean people under Japanese colonization and the neo-colonization of the First World.

4. Korean Christianity as Contextualized Christianity

Despite its exclusivist attitude toward other religions, Korean Christianity, ironically, has been influenced by the indigenous religions, however much fundamentalist Korean Christians do not want to admit it. It is a critical mistake to believe that the Christianity brought to Korea is the

¹¹ Bok-Ryung Shin, “Formation and Limitation of Korean Christian Church,” *Korean History and Christianity* (Seoul: Korean Christian Publication, 1984), 160-161.

pure and original Christianity preserved from the age of Jesus and the early church. Despite its claims to such purity of origin, Christianity in Korea has gone through a process of assimilation. Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" obviously has taken place in its formation. For example, the "dawn prayer service," a unique staple of the Korean Christian Church, is a direct descendant of the "dawn prayer" found in traditional Shamanistic rituals; and the Korean Bible translates "bread and wine" as "rice-cake and wine" in the account of the last supper. Thus, Jesus is symbolized for Koreans as the "rice-cake of life," not the "bread of life." There are countless more evidences of Korean Christianity being influenced by the traditional religions, regardless of the constant denial of this fact by some fundamentalists. Jung Young Lee's acknowledgement of the influence of other religious traditions in his Christian life is an exemplary witness to this reality:

I am a Christian in terms of my faith, I am a Confucian in terms of my moral life, and I am a Buddhist in terms of my spiritual life.¹²

Other religious traditions played a key part in the development of Korean Christianity, just as the soil plays a significant role in the rooting and growth of a tree.

These four unique characteristics of Korean Christianity and the problems and conflicts described previously, arose when the religious mutuality traditionally existent in Korea was replaced by the exclusivist paradigm of Christianity. The classical theism¹³ of the Protestant missionaries led to overturning the traditional inclusive paradigm of Korean culture.

¹² Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 9.

¹³ Classical theism is the traditional understanding of God developed and concretized by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas under the influence of Hebraic monotheism and Greek metaphysics. It understands that God is perfect, with the characteristics of immutability (not changing), impassibility (not suffering), aseity (not dependent),

Many Korean people began to deeply question their traditional values after painful clashes with imperialistic superpowers, finally accepting them as attractive, new and powerful systems. Perhaps many Koreans even saw their powerful paradigms as providing a way not to repeat their recent painful colonization. Christianity's exclusivist understanding of God as an absolute, powerful, ruler who is the highest principle of moral energy was readily welcomed and praised by many hopeless Koreans. This form of faith was messianic, especially when it carried such advanced cultural feature, as a new educational system, scientific medical benefits, the freedom of democracy, and the power of a capitalistic economy.

This dissertation seeks to help Korean Christianity to become more inclusive of, and dialogical with, its rich cultural and religious traditions, and also more critical of the causes responsible for the suffering of its own people. Korean Christianity may be transformed in part by rediscovering and revitalizing especially one of Korea's most beautiful traditions, the yin-yang paradigm, with its inclusive and transforming power, too long neglected and alienated by fundamentalist Korean Christians.

But there shall be no attempt simply to replace or disvalue what western-dominant theology and the western missionary-based Korean Christianity have contributed to the religious and social life of the Korean people.

To accomplish this task, this dissertation focuses on one of the foundational paradigms received by Korean Christianity from the West, '*the myth of oneness.*' This paradigm of the myth of oneness has been granted an uncritical philosophical and theological ground to absolutize a system or ideology for the powerful. The myth of oneness is a paradigm based on the 'false'

omnipotence(all powerful), and omniscience (all knowing). Classical theism's idea of God's perfection is often misused to define a perfection of a certain type of faith. For example, the Christian fundamentalism's exclusive and somewhat hostile attitude toward the other believers was grounded and strengthened by this classical theism. Detailed discussion on classical theism and its influences is found in Chapter III of this dissertation.

belief that there is a perfect One, immutable, impassible, omnipotent, and omniscient; therefore all in the universe must be subjected to the One, or controlled and ruled by the One. This paradigm has been misused constantly to justify supremacy, even oppression, when the powerful identify themselves with the absolute One. Under this myth of oneness paradigm, any relational effort is un-necessary because the absolute One is self-sufficient. The only possibility is a one-sided relation from the absolute to the contingent.

This paradigm, brought into Korea by western missionaries, has had a long and complex history within western philosophical and theological traditions. It, therefore, requires a thorough analysis of its background, development and influences. This dissertation, thus, will (1) examine the limitations of a classical theism formed by a conceptual synthesis of the Greek neo-Platonic ontology and Hebraic monotheism in the myth of oneness, and (2) to seek transformation of its weaknesses and dangers through two significant alternative paradigms: Whitehead's philosophy of organism from the West and the yin-yang paradigm from the East.

In Chapter I, Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutic and the yin-yang paradigm will be discussed, with attention also to Habermas' critical methodology, in order to develop a cross-cultural contextual methodology for Korean Christianity. In Chapter II, the neo-Platonic ontological understanding of being will be critically analyzed as the philosophical basis for the paradigm of the myth of oneness, and its continuing influence throughout the western tradition will be examined. In Chapter III, the influence of the myth of oneness in Christian theology will be discussed, focusing on the notion of God. Traditional classical theism, rooted in Greek

metaphysics and Hebraic monotheism, the Trinitarian doctrine, focusing especially on Moltmann's formulation, and the panentheistic understanding of God rooted in Whitehead's dipolar theism, will be examined. Whitehead's dipolar theism grounded in his philosophy of organism will be presented as a transformative philosophical system from the West. In Chapter IV, the yin-yang paradigm from the East will be presented as another transformative perspective. Since the I-Ching is less well known in the West, a more detailed explanation of the yin-yang paradigm will be presented. In Chapter V: Conclusion, two critical issues of Korean Christianity, (1) inter-religious dialogue and (2) the reunification of Korea, will be presented as new modes of praxis made possible by transformation of the myth of oneness through the influence of these alternative paradigms.

CHAPTER I
METHODOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS:
TOWARD AN AUTHENTIC ASIAN THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

**A. INTRODUCTION: METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE
 IN ASIAN CONTEXT**

1. Influence of Western Christianity on Korean Christianity

For critical and analytical arguments that may transform Korean Christianity, it is crucial first to understand some essential facts, which penetrate to the core of Christianity in most Asian countries. Unlike most western countries, it was only 200 years ago when Asians first faced the religion of Christianity. The late form of Christianity they received from mostly western missionaries was quite different from that most western countries received from the Mediterranean world, which also had been changed by its interaction with various cultures. Through the influence of Hellenization¹⁴ found in Pauline and Johannine literature, and Augustine's and Aquinas's synthesizing efforts with Plato and Aristotle, early Christianity received a different philosophical dress from the biblical canon. Through Luther's reformation, medieval Catholic Christianity was transformed by protestant German spirituality.¹⁵ Christianity has been actively transformed through interaction with its encountering cultures and philosophies throughout its history.

¹⁴ The term, "hellenization" here means the influences of Greco-Roman philosophy in the theoretical development of Christianity since the Pauline and Johannine community.

¹⁵ Kazo Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (Richmond: John Knox press, 1965), 30. Kitamori quotes Seeburg that the Reformation represents "Christianity in the understanding of the German spirit."

The Christianity that all Asian countries received was not the original or authentic Christianity that especially many Korean churches claim it to be.¹⁶ It was a Christianity changed by and mingled with western cultures. Is it possible or necessary to discover or reconstitute the original form of Christianity? My judgment is that it is neither possible nor necessary.¹⁷ The essential point that Koreans should understand is that the Christianity it received is westernized Christianity, which in its history also had changed, and thus Korean Christianity needs to be also transformed constantly through creative interaction with its Korean culture. Korean churches must understand this actively evolving characteristic of Christianity because it is a dynamic entity endlessly transforming as the way of God's revelation is also constantly changed in time and space.

However, what has happened to Korean Christianity? Despite its sometimes hidden interaction with Korean culture, major Korean churches deny and even strictly oppose any possible attempt at contextualization. They condemn that effort as heretical syncretism that threatens the core message of Christianity that "Christ is the only Way." It is the main reason why Korean Christians disrespect their own culture and claim to be the pure followers of genuine Christianity. This earlier rejection of its traditional religions by Korean Christianity can be understood as a usual route of contextualization, leading from an early radical break and opposition of the past to later more mature and healthy fusion and transformation. If so, a transitional step and effort quickly needs to be considered seriously and must be appreciated and

¹⁶ Many Korean churches tend to claim what they believe is the only and pure form of Christianity free from any cultural or historical distortion. They insist it is original and authentic.

¹⁷ Consider what Tillich said about Bultmann's theory of demythologization: there is only "re-mythologization," no "demythologization" in his unpublished manuscript entitled, "The European Discussion of the Problem of Demythologization of the New Testament," 1952.

encouraged rather than rejected and condemned as a heretical attempt that threatens the growth of Korean Christianity.

To transform this dominant westernized Christianity in South Korea it is essential to understand the pro-western tendency of Korean Christians. Unfortunately, there have not been many scholars who have developed an Asian based methodology,¹⁸ especially among Korean theologians who have tried to challenge westernized Korean Christianity. A methodology must be developed that is not only closely related with Asian and Korean culture, but also dialogically interrelated with western theories.

2. Necessity of Korean Contextual Methodology

K. K. Yeo explains the importance of a cultural tradition for contextual theology:

Contextual theology is a particular and culturally oriented theology that acknowledges human beings as cultural beings. We can only interpret the world as we perceive it from a given situation. Contextual theology seeks to name the presence and love of God in a particular culture.¹⁹

We must therefore critically examine the alienation of Korean Christianity from its own culture, which will be later analyzed by critically examining a western-based paradigm of the ‘myth of oneness.’ Korean Christianity’s rejection of its interaction with its own culture must be transformed in the light of the dynamic contextualizing character of Christianity and its message of God’s plan for all humanity beyond all historical and cultural boundaries. God’s universal grace and love cannot be exclusively limited to certain chosen people or cultures. God penetrates into Asian people’s lives in the same way as those of western people. Uncritical adoption of the

¹⁸ A Chinese-American scholar, Yeo, Khiok-khng provides an insightful cross-cultural methodology in his book, *What Has Jerusalem To Do With Beijing* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998).

¹⁹ Yeo, *What Has Jerusalem To Do With Beijing*, 13.

Christianity developed in the West, ignoring or even excluding Asian culture and religions, is a denial of God's presence within, and God's continuing renewal process for, the Asian context and history. Asian culture and its resources should be treated with the same importance as those of western Christianity, especially by Asian Christians.

The methodology should therefore be dialogical, mutually and constantly interactive toward transformation, using both western and Asian methodologies. With deep appreciation for western hermeneutical traditions and its accomplishments, we should enrich our methodology with valuable traditions from Asia. If we are not constantly dialogical in understanding the dynamic and changing character of Christianity and culture, we might fall into a destructive misreading of the real message of God intended for a particular context. Korean theological methodology must be developed on the basis of deep appreciation of all the rich cultural and religious traditions we have inherited from East and West.

The methodology presented in this dissertation is both dialogical and critical. For the dialogical, I follow Hans Georg Gadamer's theory of the fusion of horizons through the interaction of Asian and Western traditions; for the critical I follow Jürgen Habermas' critique of distorted communication to reveal the danger in the power of tradition. James Will articulates how Gadamer at the end of his life's work also recognized the significance of both dialogical and critical hermeneutics going beyond his earlier emphasis only on traditions. Will calls this approach, "a hermeneutic for creative and free participation in traditions."²⁰

If no completed reflection is possible for our finite, historically conditioned spirits, then we must give ourselves to a dialectical and dialogical process within and beyond our traditions. This requires, however, a creative and critical participation in our own traditions that enables us to give up any attempts at their absolutization.²¹

²⁰ James E. Will, *Universal God* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox: 1994), 37-38.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

Will also points out that Habermas, beyond his emphasis on human rationality as the basis for his project, also differentiates himself from Hegel's more absolutist "sublation of civil reality into the state" by affirming "the proper alternative is the relationality and rationality of communicative action."²² Will judges that Habermas' position is similar to Gadamer's, and even to Whitehead's emphasis on dialogical community.²³

The contextual methodology proposed in this dissertation is informed by Will's interpretation of Gadamer and Habermas as we develop dialogical and critical methodology as the essential direction for our hermeneutics. The significance of this approach will be even more clear when we understand the yin-yang paradigm, to be fully explored in Chapter IV, and use it to transform Korean Christianity's alienation from its own culture and other religions.

The methodology that will be developed here has diverse sources. Beside the influence of the yin-yang paradigm, it also interweaves diverse theories from the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Habermas with Asian perspectives from Korean minjung theology, C. S. Song's third eye theology,²⁴ and Jung Young Lee's theology of marginality.²⁵

²² Ibid., 116.

²³ Ibid., Will writes, "Habermas's project also rejoins Gadamer's and Whitehead's at exactly this point of understanding *phronesis*: "The issue could now again become one of meaning in history, not in terms of a single tradition alone ... but in terms of the general human condition of living within cultures and their histories." The moral task facing persons living within the particular histories of their various cultures, in Gadamer's terms, is the "concretizing of a universal in a particular good" or, in more Whiteheadian terms, "the actualization of God's initial aim in the concrescence of persons internally related to particular social processes."

²⁴ C. S. Song, *Third Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Setting* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979).

²⁵ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: the Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

B. GADAMER AND HABERMAS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL HERMENEUTICS

The critical dialogue between Gadamer and Habermas lifted western hermeneutical theory to another level. Gadamer's hermeneutical challenge of inadequate scientific methodologism and Habermas' ethical challenge to Gadamer's emphasis on tradition direct our attention to "prejudice" in Gadamer, and "liberation" in Habermas. The hermeneutics of both help open the door for a cross-cultural hermeneutics.

1. Gadamer's Hermeneutics of Conversation

Gadamer introduces, in *Truth and Method*,²⁶ his famous hermeneutics of retrieval, alternatively named also a or hermeneutics of conversation.²⁷ Among his many concepts, the metaphor of the "fusion of horizons" has great significance for the transformation of Korean Christianity. For an adequate understanding of this metaphor, it is necessary to examine carefully (1) his critique of method, (2) his notion of "*Dasein*", (3) "prejudice," (4) "history of effect," and finally (5) "fusion of horizons." Then, it becomes possible to understand how the use of his hermeneutic illuminated by the metaphor of the fusion of horizons might effectively transform Korean Christianity.

Unlike some traditional understandings of hermeneutics as a methodological art and universal science, Gadamer explains hermeneutics as a process of understanding meaning:

²⁶ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

²⁷ Although Gadamer, himself, does not name his hermeneutics, later scholars call his hermeneutics a "hermeneutic of retrieval," based on his emphasis on tradition (Anthony Thiselton), or a "hermeneutics of conversation," based on his metaphor "fusion of horizons" (David Tracy). See David Tracy, "Theological Method," *Christian Theology: An Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, (Minneapolis, Fortress: 1994), 38-43.

Even from its historical beginnings, the problem of hermeneutics goes beyond the limits of the concept of method as set by modern science. The understanding and the interpretation of texts is not merely a concern of science, but obviously belongs to human experience of the world in general.²⁸

Against positivistic methodologism, he emphasizes that the hermeneutical concern is not developing a “method” to find “the truth.”²⁹ He challenges the method-oriented hermeneutic tradition and introduces existential and ontological hermeneutics. One understands something by participating in and experiencing it, not by having a right method for it. For example, how can we understand water in a lake? Traditional scientific hermeneutics develops many good methods to understand or define water. They lead to formulations like water is “H²O” or “water boils at 100°C.” However, Gadamer insists that a person should also jump into the water, feel, and enjoy how good it is, to understand what water is. Gadamer’s hermeneutic is a critique of the scientific critique of previous modes of understanding. In this sense, his critique of methodologism is understood as “meta-critique.”

Gadamer’s meta-critique is based on his understanding of Heidegger’s concept of, “*Dasein*,” which represents the “in-worldness of human being.”³⁰ With the idea of *Dasein*, he criticized Enlightenment-influenced hermeneutical structures, such as Descartes’ subject-object structure and the “objectivity” of the interpreter.³¹ Against the subject-object dichotomy, Gadamer sees that an interpreter is not a centered or separated subject facing an object. True understanding does not happen in the subject-object structure because there is no ontological

²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xxi.

²⁹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 314.

³⁰ Gadamer, “Truth and Method,” *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, (New York: SUNY, 1990), 203.

³¹ Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 319. Will reveals the limitation of Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am,” with Keiji Nishitani’s Buddhist perspective: Descartes “... allowed a narcissistic satisfaction with the self and an objectification of all else that is deeply problematic for religion. And especially problematic for Buddhists and Christians who know the consequence of “an ego that is self-centered on itself and clinging to itself.”” Will, *Universal God*, 89-90.

separation between a subject and an object; rather, they are all parts of the world. Moreover, Gadamer criticizes the enlightenment myth of human subjectivity,³² the neutral, unbiased, and unconditioned nature of an interpreter. For Gadamer, an interpreter is not a neutral agent. He strongly criticizes the Enlightenment myth of being rationally free from presuppositions. Human interpreters are not timeless beings beyond history; they are historically conditioned beings. Gadamer writes, “In fact, history does not belong to us; we belong to it.”³³ He understands the conditioned nature of an interpreter as “*Dasein*.” Without traditional presupposition, no understanding is possible. Presupposition, sometimes misunderstood negatively as prejudice, is crucial to bring an interpreter into the process of understanding.

Gadamer defined prejudice positively as:

... a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined. prejudice does not necessarily mean a false judgment, but a part of the idea is that it can have either a positive or a negative value.³⁴

The process of understanding begins with prejudice, which usually appears in the form of “tradition,” and “authority.” In this sense, an interpreter is a historically conditioned being, not a being beyond history. Gadamer emphasizes that “the concept of prejudice is where we can start.”³⁵ Affirming the necessary prejudice of an interpreter is the key difference between Gadamer and the traditional hermeneutics of the Enlightenment. One of his key ideas is the encounter of the moving horizon of tradition (prejudice) and a contemporary situation constitutes the process of understanding.

³² Kim, Kyung Jae, *Hermeneutics and Theology of Religion* (Seoul: Korean Theology Association, 1997), 54.

³³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 276. Also see Paul Ricoeur, “Critique of Ideology,” *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, ed. Ormiston and Schrift, 303.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

Gadamer's rehabilitation of prejudice and tradition, however, is different from the romantic idea of an uncritical "restoration" of the past.³⁶ While Romanticism emphasized returning to the great tradition and restoring the value of the past, Gadamer's understanding of prejudice does not aim simply to restore traditional value without fusion with the contemporary situation. Rather, for Gadamer, prejudice as the basis of understanding is always open to reformation and transformation.

Gadamer's concept of prejudice relates to another of his concepts, the "history of effect."³⁷ He defines it as "the reality and efficacy of history demonstrated in hermeneutics"³⁸ Gadamer is opposed to any naive effort to understand history without considering our own historicity. In the process of understanding, history always plays a constitutive role. The historicity of an interpreter affects his/her understanding. This is what Gadamer means by the "history of effect." Interpretation is not a matter of stating timelessly what a text means, but of participating in a historical tradition of interpretation. The process of understanding is always affected by history and affects history. As life is a hermeneutical process, history is a hermeneutical process.

On the basis of these concepts, Gadamer characterizes the process of understanding with his famous metaphor of the, "fusion of horizons"³⁹: "The fusion of the horizon in which the person seeking to understand lives and the historical horizon within which he places himself."⁴⁰ I think, however, that "fusing of horizons" is a better term, because Gadamer's concept is not static. His metaphor of "horizon" has three important meanings: (1) A horizon has its boundary.

³⁶ Ricoeur, *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, ed. Ormiston and Schrifft, 302.

³⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300-302.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 304-306.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 304.

It represents that each prejudice has its own historicity and limitation within its time and space. Therefore, it cannot be universalized. (2) A horizon changes. Prejudice is always open to change. As a horizon changes according to the viewer's changing position, prejudice may always change its own boundaries. (3) A horizon is made when two different spaces meet, like a horizon between the sea and sky. It always requires an encounter and a relationship. Encounter and transformation are genuine characteristics of horizons. Gadamer's hermeneutic thus is a dynamic process of understanding through a "fusing of horizons."

2. Habermas' Critique of Ideology in Response to Gadamer

Habermas, the leading philosopher of German critical theory in the Frankfurt school, developed a theory different from most postmodern thinkers. Supporting the continuing value of enlightenment thinking, Habermas, in his "Modernity--An Incomplete Project," criticizes the postmodern accusation of the enlightenment and suggests that the modern project is not inappropriate or over but only incomplete.⁴¹ He holds that the main cause of its failure does not lie in the enlightenment project itself, but in its misdirected and uncritical procedure and expectation. He rather criticizes the quick and simple rejection by postmodernists who neglect the self-modifying ability of human rationality, which he later develops as "communicative rationality." Habermas' concern is to correct distorted ideology and social systems by human rationality. Because his thought is too vast to summarize here, I will focus only on his critical response to Gadamer's hermeneutics.

⁴¹ Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity--An Incomplete Project," in Hal Foster, ed. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 13.

Habermas' main critique of Gadamer is of his rehabilitation of pre-judgment and the defense of authority and tradition.⁴² Habermas also rejects Gadamer's notions of "the ontological priority of linguistic tradition," the claim of universality, and especially the lack of social critique.⁴³ When we use pre-judgment as the basis for understanding without seriously considering the power factors in the structure of social labor and production, we also accept the world view and the patterns of consciousness which can be oppressive and manipulative. For instance, when a Christian reads uncritically Romans 13:1, "obey the high authority," this passage can become the justification for the oppressive rule of a dictator. As a Korean example, during the Japanese colonization, pro-Japanese missionaries preached that the Korean people should not resist the higher authority of the Japanese government. Habermas criticizes Gadamer for uncritically accepting the system of power in pre-judgments, which ethically distorts the understanding. Habermas calls this "systematically distorted communication." As the origin of this distortion, Habermas suggests the colonization of a "life-world" by a "system." Money and power are the means to control and maintain the colonization, which distorts the communication in a life-world.⁴⁴ In this oppressive situation, we can only rely on human rationality.

Habermas' categorization of sciences helps us to understand his critique of Gadamer. He distinguishes three different interests of human beings and relates them to types of action and types of science.⁴⁵

⁴² Jürgen, Habermas, "Review of Truth and Method," tran. Fred Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy, *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, ed. Ormiston and Schrift, 237. Also see Thiselton, 329.

⁴³ Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 203-205.

⁴⁴ Thiselton, 388-389.

⁴⁵ Jung Ho Park and Wun Duk Yang, eds. *Streams of Modern Philosophy* (Seoul: Dong Nyuk, 1997), 207. Also see Ormiston and Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, 315.

<i>Interest</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Type of Science</i>
1) Technical (Instrumental)	Instrumental	Empirical-Analytic
2) Practical	Communicative	Historical-Hermeneutical
3) Emancipatory	Communicative	Critical Social

<Table I-1> Habermas' Categorization of Science

Among these three interests, Habermas is primarily concerned with emancipatory interest, which is facilitated by critical social sciences. For Habermas, what is missing in Gadamer's hermeneutic is the emancipatory interest. Therefore, Gadamer's hermeneutic is not a universal hermeneutic because it is restricted to a domain of science which only deals with practical interest.⁴⁶ In Gadamer's hermeneutic, there is no critical evaluation of the ideology in a 'pre-judgment.' Gadamer's hermeneutic, for Habermas, repeats distorted structures. There is no ethical concern. For Habermas, the emancipatory interest as the goal of critical social sciences may only be achieved through "communicative rationality and action in the ideal speech situation." Communicative action concerns human liberation from oppressive socio-political structures. The ideal speech situation means a communicative situation where a free and mutual dialogue among people who have communicative rationality happens without structural distortions by power and interest. This is optimally generated when one does not know whether he/she will gain or lose social advantage by adopting a certain position as true or right.⁴⁷

Gadamer's concept of the "fusion of horizons" and Habermas' critique of the retrieval of tradition make strong contributions to the methodology we seek in terms of dialogical/mutual

⁴⁶ Ormiston and Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition*, 316.

⁴⁷ Thiselton, 386-388.

and critical/ethical dimensions. Gadamer enables us to understand that everything in history, including Christianity, has been formed and transformed by the continual encounter of its historically effective tradition with new phenomena in the present context. This transformative process is neither avoidable nor deniable. Korean Christianity, no matter how it denies the fusion that gives it being, results from an ongoing fusion of western culture with the effective traditions of Korean culture. However, the discussion should go beyond recognizing the presence and influence of these two factors. As Habermas suggests, traditions should be critically examined and ethically evaluated. An oppressive system, which Habermas calls a “distorted structure,” should be exposed and transformed out of emancipatory interest. The distorted structure we are concerned about in this project, is ‘the myth of oneness’ transmitted from the western tradition, which needs to be transformed by a mutual fusion with Korean tradition.

The myth of oneness is a system of thought influenced by neo-Platonism and developed in the western philosophical tradition that believes the existence of the static, changeless, absolute One is more perfect, more powerful, more superior, and more God-like. Thus all other existences are ontologically invalid or inferior, and must be soteriologically submissive to the One. The ‘myth of oneness’ influenced the understanding of God given in Hebrew monotheism, and significantly contributed to classical theism in Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and later theologians. The western Christianity brought by the missionaries that contained the myth of oneness created a distorted communication structure that prevented a creative fusion with Korean traditional culture by absolutizing Christianity’s superiority. We will further develop this concept of the ‘myth of oneness’ in Chapter III.

C. METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES FROM ASIA

Asian theologians have struggled to find their own theologies based on methodologies from their own culture. There has been no such complex methodological or hermeneutical effort like Gadamer's or Habermas' because Asians seldom have theorized their way of understanding. Some distinctive Asian theologies, however, show there have also been methodological and hermeneutical efforts in Asia. Korean minjung theology, C. S. Song's Third Eye Theology, and Jung Young Lee's theology of Marginality show us significant dimensions of Asian culture. Minjung theology turns our attention to the socio-political situation of the oppressed minjung as the core message of theology. Song's third eye theology attempts to make a "transposition" of Christianity from western to Asian culture. He understands Euro-American Christianity as a marriage of Christianity and western culture, suitable only for westerners. Thus he tries to reinterpret Christianity for Asia from the womb of their own culture. His transpositional theology reflects the influence of the yin-yang paradigm of the I-Ching. Lee's theology of marginality criticizes the traditional western paradigm of "either-or" of a "centralist" perspective, and proposes the Asian paradigm of "both-and" of "marginalist" thinking, based on his distinctive experiences as a marginalized Asian-American in the USA.

1. Korean Minjung Theology

Minjung theology is a contextual Korean theology produced in the special socio-political context of Korea in the 1970's, led by Suh Nam Dong, Ahn Byung Moo, Kim Yong Bok, Suh Kwang Sun, etc. Despite some criticism of its politically oriented social theory and its religious syncretism within the Korean minjung tradition, it has opened a door toward a new theological vision for Korean Christianity. As a frontier of third world theology, minjung theology has played a key role in the de-westernization of Korean Christianity.⁴⁸

Minjung theology focuses on the suffering of the minjung as the central theme of theology. Like liberation theology and black theology, which describe God's preferential love toward economically and racially oppressed people, minjung theology focuses on God's love toward the minjung. The concept of minjung is not defined as a class of people, but as a condition of people under diverse oppressions.⁴⁹

A crucial methodological challenge of minjung theology is its reconsideration of the minjung as the subjects of history.⁵⁰ Critiquing previous theology, which treated the minjung as the object or undesired results of history, minjung theology places the oppressed experiences of the minjung at the heart of theological discourse. The minjung are not interpreted as seeking mercy and cheap grace from the privileged, but as the active subjects of history. The cry of the minjung out of their suffering is the beginning of historical transformation. It awakens God's

⁴⁸ Chan Won Suh, *The Third World Theology: New Horizon of Modern Theology* (Seoul: Korean Christian Book, 1993), 346-7.

⁴⁹ The literal meaning of minjung in Korean is "the mass of the people." Wan Sang Han defines "minjung as socio-culturally alienated, economically exploited, and politically suppressed people" in CTCCA(Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia), ed. *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983).

⁵⁰ Committee of Theological Study, KNCC, *Minjung and Korean Theology* (Seoul: Korean Theological Study Institute, 1982), 290-1.

love for the oppressed people. It is identified with the cry of Jesus on the cross, who is identified with the minjung as one of them. The ministry of Jesus in his life, suffering, death, and resurrection, is identified with the life and vision of the minjung. Minjung liberation is identified with salvation through Jesus.

The minjung are thus seen as the text of theology, not just its context. This is a revolutionary challenge to most hermeneutical theories, which seek the hermeneutical circle of Text (the Scripture) and context. "The condition of the minjung is no longer seen as context, but as a text beside the Scripture."⁵¹ This radical interpretation of the minjung as another text significantly insists on the importance of a people's existence for theology. The condition of people is no longer a conceptual object for interpretation by the Scripture, but another scripture for our theology.

Another methodological challenge of minjung theology is its praxis-oriented approach, supplementary to religious or cultural approaches. Minjung theology is a hermeneutical struggle to find the true message of God in history, not an abstract or metaphysical conversation. Although minjung theology has later been developed from its original socio-political approach to a religious-cultural approach, its emphasis on praxis continues to teach that theology should be not only a theoretical discussion, but a practical effort to change the daily life of people.

⁵¹ Minjung Theology, ed. Minjung Shinhak Yeonguso (Seoul: Hanul, 1995). P.128.

2. C. S. Song's "Third Eye Theology"

In his books, *Third Eye Theology*⁵² and *Theology from the Womb of Asia*⁵³, C. S. Song uses two distinctive methodologies for his theology, (1) external "transpositional" methodology and (2) internal yin-yang methodology. His methodology is clearly opposed to a common missionary approach of "speaking to" Asian culture. He insists that Asian theology should be "speaking out of" Asian culture.

His concept of transposition has a two-fold meaning. First, transpositional theology is an attempt to transpose Christianity from the basis of western culture to an Asian cultural tradition. As western Christianity has been developed through constant interaction with its culture, Asian theology should be constructed and developed through interaction with its culture. Song's commitment is to develop "a program set up to encourage Asians to use their histories, cultures, religions, social and political struggles as the data for doing theology."⁵⁴ His rich usage of Asian traditions, stories, legends, religious teachings, along with biblical stories, provides good examples of how he treats Asian resources for theology.

Second, his theology is an attempt to transpose Christianity from being "logos-centered" to "heart-centered." By rejecting western logos (rationality)-based tradition, which has enabled western Christianity to develop metaphysical theoretical theology, he insists that Asian theology should be built up on the basis of our heart. His theology is therefore not an attempt to set up a concrete system of thought, but to express "God-experience" within ordinary life. The basis for

⁵² C. S. Song, *Third Eye Theology: Theology in Formation in Asian Setting* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979).

⁵³ C. S. Song, *Theology from the Womb of Asia* ((Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993).

⁵⁴ Chang-Won Suh, *The Third World Theology: New Horizon of Modern Theology* (Seoul: Korean Christian Books, 1993), 315-6.

understanding Christianity in Asia is Asian cultural traditions, which reflect the heart-felt life of Asians.

While Song uses transpositional methodology externally, there is another methodology immanent in his theology.⁵⁵ It is yin-yang. By making his core theological thematic the doctrine of “incarnation,” he effectively adopts the yin-yang paradigm into his theological discussion. It is not an exaggeration to call Song’s Third Eye Theology, ‘Incarnational Theology.’ Through the incarnational event, he explains God’s divinity in relation to humanity. The yin-yang balance of divinity and humanity within Jesus is the starting point of Song’s theology. Two significant characters fuse and interact within Jesus. This yin-yang relation in Jesus is the best example of how God relates to His/Her creation.

The yin-yang methodology is more vividly seen within Song’s discussion of creation and redemption. He insists that we cannot understand creation without redemption. God’s creation cannot be separated from God’s redemption because it is a yin-yang relation. If creation is the start, redemption is the completion of creation. He severely criticizes the common western perspective treating creation and redemption separately. God’s redemption and salvation begins in the creativity of a woman’s womb. There is no creation without redemption. There is no redemption without creation. They are not the same, but crucially interrelated as in the yin-yang paradigm.

His use of yin-yang methodology is evident everywhere. By pairing many theological concepts as in yin-yang, he discovers new meanings for them: Pain/Love, Death/Resurrection,

⁵⁵ While his transpositional methodology is apparent in this book, he does not use the term “yin-yang,” in any section of his books. However, his way of approaching all theological themes is clearly yin-yang methodology. For the influence of yin-yang paradigm in Song’s theology, check Suh, *The Third World Theology: New Horizon of Modern Theology*, 317-319.

God/Human, and Suffering/Hope are good examples. We will return to these examples of yin-yang in greater detail in a later chapter.

3. Jung Young Lee's Theology of Marginality

In *Marginality*, Jung Young Lee suggests that the theological paradigm should shift from the centralist view of the dominant western theology to a new view of marginality. He states, "I propose in this book a new theology based on marginality, which serves not only as a hermeneutical paradigm but as a key to the substance of the Christian faith."⁵⁶ Throughout Christian history, theology has been developed from the viewpoint of the "center" where power, oppression, and exploitation are located. Against this centralist view, Lee insists on a new paradigm: thinking from the margin. Feminist and Womanist theologies, as well as the Liberation theologies of Latin America, Africa, the United States, and Asia can be considered as variations of theologies of the margin, each with its different emphasis and conceptuality. However, Lee does not identify himself only with the critical positions of Feminist or Liberation theologies; rather he develops an inclusive and holistic theology by analyzing three different definitions of marginality: in-between, in-both, and in-beyond.

Among various determinants of marginality, such as gender, race, class, culture, economy, or religion, Lee primarily focuses on race and culture because of his experience as an ethnic minority Asian American in the US. His first definition of marginality is from the perspective of the center defining as negative the experience of being "in-between" two or more

⁵⁶ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 1.

groups without belonging to either of them, and thus being alienated and rejected by the dominant central group.⁵⁷ The second definition of marginality is the positive experience of being “in-both” cultures and affirming oneself “in-both.” While the first is a self-negating and self-rejecting definition of marginality, the second is self-affirming and self-defining. While the first presupposes separation, a hierarchy of the center and the margin, the dominant and the alienated, and the powerful and the powerless, the second presupposes a genuine pluralism of ethnicity where all ethnic groups can claim to be “co-equal.”⁵⁸

Lee’s third more compelling definition of marginality is his own holistic definition: the dialectic of the first (in-between) and the second (in-both). Although it may seem illogical from the centralist way of thinking to reconcile two different and opposing definitions, Lee affirms that “they are two different aspects of one reality.”⁵⁹ Thus, in Lee’s marginal thinking, both “in-between” and “in-both” experiences should be valued equally and reconciled in his holistic understanding of “in-beyond.” If the negative definition of centrality is eliminated by the positive understanding of marginality, we just create another exclusive center. The margin and the center, however, may be mutually related, no longer defined by a hierarchy of centrality. Lee characterizes the meaning of being “in-beyond” as the harmony of “in-between” and “in-both,” where a person become “a new marginal person who overcomes marginality without ceasing to be a marginal person.”⁶⁰

Based on this holistic definition of marginality, Lee develops how his marginal thinking can be applied to theology as a new hermeneutical paradigm. Differentiated from western dominant theology and liberation theology, both of which Lee finds exclusive “either/or” ways

⁵⁷ Ibid., 42-47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 54, 58

⁵⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 62.

of thinking, he characterizes the theology of marginality as an inclusive, open-ended, and creative nexus that uses both “neither/nor” and “both/and” ways of thinking.⁶¹ For Lee, “neither/nor” thinking, categorized by the negative definition of marginality (in-between) has negative meaning from the centralist viewpoint but creative meaning from the marginal perspective. Nothingness, non-being, and silence in Asian culture express the power of receptivity over dominance, the overcoming of suffering by suffering. “Both/and” thinking, thematized by the positive definition of marginality (in-both), has positive and active meanings for self-expression. For Lee, the new definition of marginality (in-beyond) as the dialectic of “in-between” and “in-both,” is the dialectical perspective of marginality as total negation (neither/nor) and total affirmation (both/and). Lee’s new marginal thinking is characterized by “inclusiveness” in which paradoxically “neither/nor” and “both/and” thinking interpenetrate each other. This marginal mode of thinking forms a new theology, characterized by reception rather than dominance, inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, love rather than justice, and wholeness rather than duality.⁶²

D. CROSS-CULTURAL METHODOLOGY OF YIN AND YANG

The methodological effort in this dissertation is a critical and dialogical fusion of the western methodologies of Gadamer and Habermas with the Asian methodologies found in Minjung theology, Song’s transpositional theology, and Lee’s theology of marginality. To understand the reality of most Korean Christianity, where a creative and ethical methodological fusion has been denied, it is crucial to develop a reliable, inclusive and ethical methodology. As

⁶¹ Ibid., 65.

⁶² Ibid., 73-74.

Gadamer's notion of "meta-critique" suggests, the methodology developed in this dissertation is not a static or fixed form of methodology. Rather, it seeks to reveal the limitations of previous methodologies and to suggest new possibilities for cross-cultural methodology to be found in the yin-yang paradigm of Asia.

We need to summarize the significant contributions of the methodologies discussed above and the necessity of a new methodology. First, a new methodology must be solidly based on Gadamer's ontological phenomenon of understanding. As his fusion of horizons suggests, understanding does not come out of nowhere. It comes from the fusion of one's previously embodied horizon and the horizon which one newly encounters. Second, a new methodology must be ethically sensitive, as Habermas requires. Without critical sensitivity to the power and oppression hidden in traditions, it cannot be a responsible methodology envisioning the liberation of the Asian people. Third, a new methodology must be praxis-oriented⁶³ and minjung-focused. With Jesus' heart seeking one lost sheep, it must find the hidden voices of the minjung and energize them as a central source of theology. It must also lead theories toward praxis. Fourth, a new methodology must be transpositional in Asian cultures. It must include Asian stories and experiences as sources of its theology. Without massive interaction with Asian cultures, Asian theology cannot be valid for the Asian context. Fifth, a new methodology must be based on a genuine Asian paradigm. Asians have experienced the limitation of the western methodology for their theology. As Lee's concept of marginality suggests, it must be both/and

⁶³ There is a strong critique against minjung theology because of its excessive emphasis on social action. Some argue that minjung theology is not a theology anymore but a social political theory led by theologians. Although minjung theology is a socio-politically oriented theory that lacks some part of traditional theological issues like the Trinity and salvation, it also has rich understanding of many new theological issues like liberation, Christian responsibility for social justice, and so on. Thus, I understand this type of critique is not valid because it already has its boundary of theological issues on the basis of a given form of traditional systematic theology.

and neither/nor, not an either/or methodology. These five dimensions are essential to explore the possibility of cross-cultural methodology.

The concept of “cross-cultural methodology” on the basis of the yin-yang paradigm needs more explanation. First, the notion of “culture” here includes the macro level of European, Hispanic, African, or Asian, but also the micro level of daily cultural differences experienced between male and female, father and mother, parents and children, pastor and parish, teacher and students, etc. Second, “cross” means not only the mere interaction of cultures, but also a strong affirmation of the distinctiveness of each culture. Therefore, “cross-cultural” means constant transformative interactions of cultures without ignoring their unique identities at both their macro and micro levels.

In his discussion of cross-cultural biblical interpretation, Yeo leads the meaning of “cross-cultural” to a deeper level suggesting the dynamic tension between the universality and particularity of cultures:

Cross-cultural hermeneutics is related to universal, cosmic unity through diverse and ambiguous context. In biblical reading, the role of culture is significant as a variant – the freedom of God’s love and contingency involved in the world. The two basic grids of culture are time and space, which makes one culture different from all other cultures. Culture as an instrument of adaptation, the learned behavior of persons, indicates the dynamic quality of cultural formation. ... but at the same time the constant or invariant character of truth should not be ignored; in fact it is this invariant that makes the hermeneutical bridge possible and makes the biblical message universally meaningful.⁶⁴

Yeo’s emphasis on the dynamic tension between variant contexts and invariant truth provides the heart of cross-cultural methodology of this dissertation based on the yin-yang paradigm.

James Will makes a similar point, but set within a more philosophical discussion of the

⁶⁴ Yeo, *What Jerusalem has to do with Beijing*, 13-14.

nature of God. In his discussion of "the universal relationality of God," based on process metaphysics, Will adds an important dimension to cross-cultural hermeneutics. He teaches that cross-cultural efforts in theology should be based on an understanding of how the universal God fully actualizes his love, peace and justice in all of the struggles and sufferings of this relative, because relational, world. He sees the solution to many of our hermeneutical problems in coming to understand the universal God's creative and redemptive relation to the ongoing interaction of the cultural dynamics of our whole world. Using concepts taken from a long discussion of the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, he articulates a panentheistic understanding of God,

The universal we apprehend at the base of our experience as causal efficacy and seek to synthesize at the apex of our metaphysical conceptualizations in presentational immediacy is a *relational universal*. Because relational, it cannot be fully known in the completed reflection (Gadamer) of any one. It can only be increasingly known in the dialogical process that is passing into and bringing God's very being into fuller actualization. Our capacity to discern meanings in the sign-events of our commonly experienced cosmos or to communicate meanings in the syntactical relations of our various symbol systems is grounded in our participation in this relational universal, which is both the creative primordial ground and created consequent eschaton of our spatiotemporal process – God as conceived panentheistically in relation to our world.⁶⁵

1. Textual/Contextual

The yin-yang paradigm will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter IV, therefore this discussion will be limited to its methodological challenge and potentiality. To explain its challenge and potentiality, the following five core methodological dimensions will be discussed within the yin-yang paradigm: 1)Textual/Contextual, 2)Dialogical/Ethical,

⁶⁵ Will, *The Universal God*, 62.

3)Anthropological/Cosmological, 4)Theoretic/Practical, and 5)East/West. Basically, these opposite and contrasting concepts are creatively harmonized within the yin-yang paradigm.

From the very beginning of Christianity, the conflict and dialogue between text and context has been an important factor for the meaning of the Gospel. Until the challenge of various forms of liberation theology, the Biblical text had dominated all contexts because of its authority as the holy canon.⁶⁶ Any challenge to this text was interpreted as a threat to the whole doctrine of Christianity. However, a new understanding of context, such as experiences of oppression in liberation theology, provides a new horizon for the importance of context in doing theology.

Juan Luis Segundo describes his liberationist concept of the “hermeneutical circle:”⁶⁷ first, the text should be newly interpreted in a contemporary reality of both individual and communal life. Second, the new interpretation should transform the reality. Third, this transformative engagement leads to another re-interpretation of the text. The circle should continue with the text’s on-going encounter with new contextual realities.

Song criticized the notion of circle in Segundo, because Segundo assumes a circle with a closed and limited boundary.⁶⁸ A context should not be seen as a mere place or situation to which we apply the text, but requires a new interpretation of the text through a mutual hermeneutical circle in which both the text and a context achieve new meanings and identities through transforming each other. Song adds one more significant dimension to Segundo by denying the tradition of the ‘closed’ text beyond the interpretation level: Song believes a context gives the text more than a new meaning; the text is also reborn with new identity.

⁶⁶ Although historical criticism of liberal theology pays attention to contexts to interpret the text, it only focused on the context of biblical writers, not the context of readers.

⁶⁷ Juan Luis Segundo, S. J., *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976), 8.

⁶⁸ Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, 97-100.

Cross-cultural methodology influenced by yin-yang, therefore, holds two crucial poles of text and context in balance for its understanding. As the text is applied to a context, a context is applied to the text. As context finds its meaning out of text, the text also renews its meaning out of context. Revitalizing the importance of context for understanding and opening the new horizon of the text are the goals of cross-cultural methodology.

2. Dialogical/Ethical

Cross-cultural methodology is dialogical in itself, as “cross” denotes. Although its dialogical character is imminent, it does not guarantee its ethical dimension. As Habermas’ critique of “distorted communication” shows, a power dynamic plays a key role in dialogue. Mere acceptance and uncritical reception of the other has a danger of creating another oppressive system. The Asian encounter with western Christianity is a good example of how an oppressive structure ruins the other’s identity. Therefore, both sides influenced by the yin-yang paradigm must have an attitude open to transformation. Challenges from each should enrich both. In this sense, being dialogical means being ethical and being ethical means being dialogical.

3. Anthropological/Cosmological (Ecological)

Cross-cultural methodology influenced by the yin-yang paradigm understands humanity as a small part of nature, not as the center of nature. Rather than insisting on human ownership of

nature, it promotes human stewardship with nature. Within the interdependent web of living on earth, human beings cannot be separated from nature, because they have the same destiny. In this new understanding of nature, anthropocentric thought is transformed. Therefore anthropology and cosmology become complementary. To save the earth from its ecological crisis, anthropology supports cosmology by analyzing the human mistakes causing the ecological crisis. Cosmology also supports anthropology by analyzing the human status within the whole cosmic structure of being.

4. Theoretical/Practical

Cross-cultural methodology using the yin-yang paradigm holds theory and practice together with its emphasis on “praxis.” It must be theoretically responsible and practically active. The struggles of Asian Christianity are not only with a distorted theoretical system but also an ethically distorted reality. Neither theoretical reformulation nor practical applications by themselves can be the solution for this complex situation. A praxis-oriented holistic approach is crucial. Theory without real practice is meaningless scholarly speculation. Practice without valid theory is irresponsible. Theory and practice give birth to each other and complete each other.

5. East/West

Cross-cultural methodology practiced by Asians does not aim to exclude or destroy either

the West or East. It envisions mutual transformation for and by each other. Despite many perceived limitations of the West revealed in recent history, and many newly recognized potential contributions of the East, both need to be critically affirmed and criticized. I do not advocate eastern concepts because the East has a better paradigm than the West. Heavy focus on the eastern paradigm in this dissertation is, however, an effort to open a possibility for new, essential interaction and dynamic transformation by discovering and strengthening the voice of the oppressed, who have been too long alienated in their own cultures and churches. This cross-cultural methodology envisions eventually a locally valid and globally responsible methodology.

In conclusion, David Tracy's hermeneutical phrase, "mutually critical correlations"⁶⁹ emphasizes the essential points we must seriously consider. First, Korean Christianity cannot neglect the western influence in its Christianity, while again including its own traditional horizons, because both have led to the current reality. Gadamer's emphasis on prejudice and Song's attention to Asian stories teach that the different traditions we receive are not always contradictory or adverse, but complementary, enriching and empowering, providing the possibility of a 'fusing of horizons' as Lee's yin-yang approach shows. Second, this new methodology, however, needs also to be critical of distortions and oppression carried by these traditions, as Habermas' critical theory and minjung theology repeatedly insist.

⁶⁹ Tracy, "Theological Methodology," 56.

CHAPTER II

MYTH OF ONENESS: CHALLENGED PARADIGM

D. DEFINITION

One of the most significant discussions in western academia in the last century was how to transform the problems and mistakes caused by enlightenment-based modernism. There have been two important efforts toward this issue: (1) German critical theory led by Habermas and the Frankfurt school,⁷⁰ and (2) postmodernism⁷¹ mainly led by French structuralists and post-structuralists, such as Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, and so on.⁷² Despite their differences, the main issues and concerns that they both struggled to transform were: the ‘oppression of the powerful over the powerless,’ the ‘subject-object dichotomy,’ the claim of ‘human supremacy over nature,’ the ‘Euro-American centric world system,’ the ‘male dominance over the female,’ a ‘naive trust in human rationality,’ and so on.⁷³

Korea did not go through these complex debates of modernism and postmodernism. Korean society and its Christianity have, however, struggled with similar issues: the ‘oppression of the rich and powerful (military dictatorship) over the poor and the powerless,’ the exclusive attitude of Christianity toward its traditional religions, the ‘naïve admiration of westernization

⁷⁰ Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978). For a more detail history and description of German critical theory including Habermas and the Frankfurt School, see Young Shik Huh, “Passion for Humanization and Communicative Relation,” *Habermas: His Project for Rational Society and its Logic and Ethic* (Seoul: Nanam, 1997), 409-435.

⁷¹ Postmodernism is a movement of ideas popularized mainly in U.S.A and France in the 20th century as a response against modernism, which dominated the western philosophical tradition with its belief on human rationality, objectivity, and progress since the 18th century Enlightenment movement. Postmodernism is heavily influenced by French structuralism and post-structuralism, which emphasize the importance and power of ‘structures’ for social transformations more than the rational and positivistic ability of human individuals.

⁷² Won Duk Yang, “Structuralism and Post Structuralism,” *Streams of Modern Philosophy*, 239-246.

⁷³ Won Duk Yang, “Jacques Derrida,” *Streams of Modern Philosophy*, 347.

and rejection of its indigenous culture,' the 'adversary attitude of South Korea against North Korea,' and so on.

To discover the core of this global debate concerning the fallacies of modernism and these South Korean problems, this dissertation focuses on a very influential paradigm termed the 'myth of oneness.' Discerning this paradigm helps us recognize the cause of these complex issues. It may be defined as *a system of thought that believes the static, changeless, absolute One is more perfect, more powerful, more superior, more God-like, and more real than all other reality, and thus all other existences are ontologically invalid or inferior, and must be soteriologically submissive to the One.*

This definition of the myth of oneness is heavily influenced by the neo-Platonic tradition. In Aristotle's notion of the "unmoved mover,"⁷⁴ the perfect is the One, the changeless one, uninfluenced by any other. In Plato's notion of "ideas," no existence has an essence in itself because it is the mere reflection of the One and, thus, it is submissive to the One. As the neo-Platonic understanding of being by Plotinus suggests, all existences are in an ontologically hierarchical structure reaching from Being (the One) to non-being. The level of each being on the ontological ladder is determined by how close each is to the One (through the One's emanation and one's participation).

Under this system of the myth of oneness, all existences are defined, understood, interpreted, and characterized in the light of the One. This ontological hierarchy naturally means all others must soteriologically seek to become the One or One-like. If there is an unbridgeable gap or impossible difference between the One and others, the ontological hierarchy of the perfect

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *Physics VIII*, trans. Daniel W. Graham (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 260a: "But the unmoved mover, as has been said, since it remains permanently simple and unvarying and in the same state, will cause motion that is one and simple." Also see Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 342. "The notion of God as the unmoved mover is derived from Aristotle, ..."

and the deficient is applied, which often can be developed into a good-evil dualism. This ontologically absolute dualism often justifies oppression over and violence against the other.

Why do we need to use the term ‘the myth of oneness?’ Two significant challenges may be raised: First, the term ‘myth’ is not always interpreted as negative, so why is it always used negatively in this discussion? Second, the concept of ‘oneness’ may have various meanings according to many circumstances. Acknowledging these limitations, the term ‘myth of oneness’ needs careful and detailed explanation for which we need to separate the terms, myth and oneness.

1. Mythological Form

According to the Oxford dictionary, myth has two definitions;

[1] a story that originated in ancient times, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining natural events, such as the seasons: *a creation myth*, [2] a thing or person that is imaginary or not true.⁷⁵

The use of the term “myth” in this dissertation comprehends both these definitions and goes beyond them, since the ‘myth of oneness’ is not a story but a system of thought that powerfully influences our understanding. The ‘myth of oneness’ as used here is a thought paradigm, heavily embedded in western ways of thinking that originated in ancient times on the basis of Greek philosophy and later Christian theology, which is used to explain concepts such as creation, world, human being, etc. Yet, it is no longer accepted as historical truth or rationally comprehended reality. The myth of oneness may thus be understood as a hypothetical paradigm

⁷⁵ Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, ed. Jonathan Crowther (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

inaccurately created and developed by human thought.

There is another important dimension of myth, however, that should not be underestimated, the communal and influential dimension of myth, often described as “*mythos*.”⁷⁶ Throughout history, myths have had an extremely powerful influence on our way of thinking. Despite questions regarding their validity and even proven falseness, myths have powerfully influenced, and are still influencing, our thinking at the very foundation of our understanding. Myths’ power is like the ‘air’ we breathe; we don’t always recognize it but it reaches the bottom of our thinking process consciously and unconsciously, influencing our understanding.

In his *Kerygma and Myth*, Rudolf Bultmann provides an existential understanding of myth and its power:

The real purpose of myth is not to present the objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man’s understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth speaks of the power or the powers which man supposes he experiences as the ground and limit of his world. The real purpose of myth is to speak of a transcendent power which controls the world and man, ...⁷⁷

Bultmann, however, insists that we, the enlightened modern humans, must liberate ourselves and theology from the powerful influence of the primitive myth because it is based on limited human speculation historically and scientifically. He calls this liberation process toward the true meaning of his age the project of “demythologization.” The use of myth in this dissertation is closely related to Bultmann’s understanding of myth, which powerfully influences us but also needs to be carefully reexamined and possibly transformed or deconstructed.

⁷⁶ Mythos is found in Aristotle’s *Poetics* referring a false but influential story about mysterious things before the work of logos.

⁷⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch (New York: Harper Torch books, 1961), 10-11.

2. Ontological Oneness

The term, 'oneness,' contains even more complicated issues because (1) it has a broad spectrum of meaning, ranging from singularity to unity and (2) it has been commonly used in a positive sense to overcome a chaotic disorder of differences. Despite this complexity, this dissertation uses the term "*oneness*" because no other term better comprehends the complex issues we seek to address. In order to overcome possible confusion, we must provide a detailed boundary and clear definitions.

Oneness in this dissertation has two basic dimensions: (1) ontological oneness and (2) soteriological oneness, which cannot be separated from nor identified with each other. They are correlated but also differentiated.

The meaning of oneness in the ontological sense is 'singularity,' and it has two important aspects for our discussion. First, It presupposes ontologically there is only one (single) true being (A), and all the others are not true being (-A) or are inferior beings (less A). For Plato in his allegory of the cave, there is only one form of true being, *ideas*, and all temporal realities are just mere reflections of *ideas*.

In this ontological understanding of being, the perfect 'ideas' become the essential ground for others. They are the beginning and end. All other beings have their existence and value based on their relationship with the realm of ideas. On this basis, an ontological dichotomy or hierarchy is formed.

Plato's notion of the 'true' form of *ideas* and their 'incomplete' reflection in temporal existence provided the philosophical basis for this ontological dichotomy. Plotinus systematized Plato's thought in his neo-Platonic ontological ladder, which became a philosophical basis for ontological hierarchy. Neo-Platonism presupposes an ontological hierarchy from the one (A) through less one (less A) to not-one (-A): from Being – angels – humans (men – women) – animals – matter – to non-being. This dualistic and hierarchical structure based on ontological oneness may not be dangerous or problematic in itself, but it becomes problematic when connected with soteriological oneness and influenced by power.

The traditional understanding of man and woman in western philosophical history is a good example of this relation of ontological and soteriological oneness. Man has been traditionally understood as one-like in contrast to woman. Ontologically, man is interpreted as more holistically human than woman. Man is viewed as rational and spiritual, while woman is seen as emotional and physical, grounding man's supposed ontological superiority. Under this ontological dichotomy and hierarchy, man's dominance over woman is justified and woman's submission to man has been traditionally expected and accepted.

Another good example of ontological oneness is our understanding of the relation of human beings and nature, which is also closely related to the previous example. Under the influence of Aquinas and Hegel, nature was interpreted as less than human, because it was understood not to have 'spirit' like human beings. The understanding of humanity over nature on the neo-Platonic hierarchical ladder of being is concretized when its human rationality-focused paradigm widely influences not only philosophical and theological traditions, but also economic

and technological systems.

Humanity's ontological superiority to nature is interpreted as having a full right to use, control, and even exploit nature for human purposes. During the enlightenment era, the consequences of this uncritical admiration of human rationality and the associated ideological affirmation of human manipulation of nature were vividly revealed, especially during the First and Second World Wars. It resulted in the serious ecological crisis of today.

Though these two examples admittedly have been caused and influenced by various factors, when their ontological foundation and the resulting problems of oppression and alienation are carefully examined, we can discern the significant influence of the pervasive myth of ontological oneness.

Another aspect of ontological oneness is 'independence' and 'changelessness.' Ontological oneness presupposes that the perfect One is ontologically independent and changeless. This ontological determination does not change in time and space because it is ontologically established from the beginning and persists to the end. Plato's ideas, Aristotle's form, Plotinus' One, and God understood by Augustine and Aquinas are not ontologically dependent on any other, nor subject to change in any circumstance.

This understanding of ontological oneness easily develops an exclusive attitude toward others because one is not dependent on any other. In a passive sense, it may separate one from others and lead to an unwillingness to work or exist together. In an aggressive sense, this attitude may cause serious conflicts with inferior others one does not need.

The missionary church leader and theologian, Lesslie Newbigin correctly articulates this danger of ontological oneness when connected with power by quoting Langdon Gilkey's judgment claim about any absolute truth,

... Gilkey suggests that a claim to absolute truth must be oppressive. It is certainly true that any community which claims to possess absolute truth must inevitably, if it gains power, become oppressive.⁷⁸

Ontological oneness in itself does not automatically create a superior one's oppression and manipulation of inferior ones because it is limited as an ontological context. When it becomes joined with the notion of soteriological oneness, it becomes seriously problematic because it can then justify concrete manipulation and oppression.

3. Soteriological Oneness

Oneness in its soteriological sense derives more from its meaning as 'unity.' It represents that many different ones should become One.

Soteriological oneness is a theological term to describe God's salvation process, where God eventually brings all God's people into the original goodness of creation. It is concerned more with how God works and saves, rather than who God is and who we are ontologically. The meaning of soteriological oneness in this dissertation goes beyond this Christian theological meaning. The soteriological oneness in this dissertation refers to how a superior One brings other inferior ones into its desired oneness. Influenced by neo-Platonism, Augustine understood the history of the individual and the world, in his *Confessions*⁷⁹ and *The City of God*, based on

⁷⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapid: Geneva WCC Publications, 1989), 163.

⁷⁹ *The Confession of St. Augustine*, book 3, trans. Edward B. Pusey (New York: Harvard Classic, 1909) and Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1958).

soteriological oneness. He believed that everything will eventually be brought into God's final goodness.

Soteriological oneness, especially in Jewish and Christian perspectives, has been used in a positive way because it was understood as God's saving work to restore all sinners to God's goodness by faith. In the Jewish tradition, it has been used to overcome chaotic tribalism surrounding the land of Palestine and to affirm God's superiority over all other deities. In the Christian tradition, it has been used to overcome alienation between Gentiles and Jews and to affirm universal salvation. On the other hand, it has also been used to justify oppression over others. The Israelites' invasion of the Canaanites has later also been used to justify the Puritans' invasion of native-Americans. The medieval crusades and modern colonialism are other good examples of misused soteriological oneness.

The core cause of these positive and negative results of soteriological oneness is often interpreted as the use and misuse of "*power*." German critical theorists like Habermas believe the fundamental problem causing oppression and distortion is the misuse of power, and they think it can be prevented by enlightened rational individuals.⁸⁰ Postmodern scholars, despite their difference from critical theorists, agree that the oppressive misuse of power is a core problem. Their solution, however, takes a different turn. They find a more fundamental problem causing the misuse of power within the ontological hierarchy of being, therefore, emphasizing ontological "plurality" and some going so far as rejecting any ontological understanding of existence.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity--An Incomplete Project," 13.

⁸¹ Woon-Duk Yang, "Derrida," *The Flow of Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. Jung-Ho Park and Woon-Duk Yang (Seoul: Don-Nyuk, 1996), 347-9.

The concept of the myth of oneness in this dissertation follows the postmodern perspective more than that of the critical theorists. The cause of the oppressive misuse of power lies on more complex ground than that is discussed by those who affirm the critical human rationality. Unless we transform the fundamental paradigm which powerfully influences our rationality, the misuse of power will not cease. In this respect, we must challenge not only soteriological oneness with critical sensitivity of the issue of power, but also ontological oneness. The ‘myth of oneness’ in this dissertation focuses more on ontological than soteriological oneness because the oppressive misuse of power in soteriological oneness is heavily based on ontological oneness.

Newbigin’s missionary understanding of the Christian gospel for a pluralist society interestingly takes a different approach, but reaches a similar conclusion. He claims that the Christian gospel must have another Copernican revolution that supports a “soteriocentric”⁸² view of reality beyond the “theocentric” view suggested by John Hick. Newbigin’s soteriocentric claim which centers in the common quest for salvation, is closely related to Paul Knitter’s ethical solidarity on social issues that different religions must build to transform the human injustice of this world.⁸³ Newbigin’s approach may seem different from our critique of soteriological oneness, but when we understand his christological basis for his soteriocentric view of reality we gain a common ground.

The Christian gospel has sometimes been made the tool of an imperialism, and of that we have to repent. But at its heart it is the denial of all imperialism, for at its center of human unity is the One who was made nothing so that all might be one. The very heart of the biblical vision for the unity of mankind is that its center is not an imperial power but the slain Lamb.⁸⁴

⁸² Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 168.

⁸³ Paul Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions,” *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987), 178~197.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

Newbigin's approach may seem to support soteriological oneness, but centering his theology in the slain Lamb, the weak and suffering servant that Jesus showed on the cross,⁸⁵ challenges the fundamental ground of ontological oneness. From this perspective, Newbigin's claim is that soteriological oneness is central to the Christian gospel only when the affirmation of ontological oneness is transformed from an absolute and oppressive center to that of a humble and serving center.⁸⁶

Further questions remain even after the above discussion of ontological and soteriological oneness. We might still ask, what is wrong with 'oneness?' Is the claim of oneness oppressive in itself? Is the oneness, for instance, represented in 'unity in diversity' also wrong? Is not this oneness better than a chaotic disorder of differences? Can Christianity really be free from its monotheistic tradition of oneness?

The answer is three-fold. First, when the oppressive aspect of oneness in itself is questioned, we must analyze whether the claim of oneness is from and for the powerful or the weaker side. If it is from and for the powerful, oneness is interpreted as positive only to and for them, not to the other. The claim of ontological and soteriological oneness can never be neutral because it contains an oppressive agenda of one side.

Second, the issue of oneness in terms of 'unity in diversity' is apparently a question about soteriological oneness, but it is also closely related to ontological oneness in a deeper sense. Soteriological oneness expressed through unity in diversity, presupposes the existence of others at the same level. Unity in diversity, however, is not realistically possible when there is misuse

⁸⁵ Ibid., 163.

⁸⁶ Newbigin's approach will be discussed at length in Chapter V.

of power, because it is influenced by the hierarchy grounded in the myth of ontological oneness. Without transforming this myth, unity in diversity based on the equal balance of power, seldom happens in our world. Challenging the myth of oneness, therefore, does not intend to replace or devalue the beauty of unity in diversity, but to make true unity in diversity possible.

Third, when Christianity moves beyond a monotheistic tradition based on ontological and soteriological oneness, it may not only enrich its understanding of God and the world, but also more responsibly transform the oppression and injustice of the world. The ontological oneness of God has already been challenged by the Trinitarian notion in Christian history, and it has enriched our understanding of God. The challenge of the ontological oneness of God by Whitehead's dipolar theism and the yin-yang paradigm will also enrich our understanding of God by showing how relational and dynamic God is and how God relates to the world. These ontological challenges will also provide a transformative possibility for soteriological oneness.

James Will in his discussion of "the universal relationality of God," insists that a new understanding of God must have both continuity with and transcend the monotheistic Christian tradition. He articulates how the western tradition has been heavily inclined to the neo-Platonic understanding of God despite the relational Trinitarian perspective earned within its own tradition. He therefore contends that contemporary Christian Theology must attempt coherently to understand God as universally relational on the basis of comprehensive cultural, scientific, and religious experience."⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Will, *The Universal God*, 3.

E. HISTORICAL ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

To clarify the meaning of the myth of oneness, it is essential to understand its philosophical and theological background and historical development. We begin with Plato and Aristotle⁸⁸ because the myth of oneness became vivid and concrete in the philosophies of these two great thinkers. Plotinus' creative synthesis of their philosophies in neo-Platonism strengthened the hierarchical paradigm of the myth of oneness. The neo-Platonic ontology of the "great chain of being" should be interpreted as a "great hierarchy of being," which articulates the ladder reaching from "The One" to non-being.

Augustine was influenced by neo-Platonism, which provides the philosophical foundation of the myth of oneness in Christianity. His concept of evil as the deficiency of good is a Christian reflection of Plato's understanding of this world as the shadow of "*idea*." Thomas Aquinas, despite his transformation of Augustine and neo-Platonism under the influence of Aristotle, also failed to escape the myth of ontological oneness because he drew a sharp line between God and the world on the basis of Aristotle's logic of the "excluded middle."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Francis M. Cornford (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941). Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, trans. Christopher Kirwan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971). Plotinus, "The Good or the One," *The Essential Plotinus*, tran. E. O'Brien (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1964).

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1010b-29. "...for the necessary cannot be in this way and also in that, so that if anything is of necessity, it will not be 'both so and not so.'" 1011b-23 "But on the other hand there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories..." Aristotle's law of an excluded middle refers to his logic of "A cannot be both A and not A."

1. Plato and Aristotle

There is no doubt that Plato and Aristotle are the most significant thinkers in the western philosophical tradition. Thus, the relation and influence of this tradition to the myth of oneness should start from these two great fathers of Greek Philosophy. Plato's contributions spread over the whole field of western philosophy, mathematics and science. However, it is not easy to discover Plato's philosophical structure because he wrote no systematic book, but a number of dialogues in the form of conversations. Despite the difficulty of discovering his systematic views, the fundamental aspects of his thought can be summarized in the theory of “ideas” or “forms” which penetrates all his works. In response to pre-Socratic philosophers such as Heraclitus, who claimed that ‘there is nothing certain or stable except the fact that things change,’ Plato developed his thought of how this world is composed on the basis of his famous concept of “forms.”

The Republic is one of the most influential works of Plato in western philosophy. It mainly deals with the ethical problem of how a person is to live a just life, but in discussing the main problem, Plato reveals his understanding of the world in several sections. The passage containing the allegory of the cave and the divided line is the core of his notion of “forms” as related to his discussion of justice. For Plato the world may be divided into (1) the world of visible things and (2) the world of intelligible things.⁹⁰ The world we experience with our senses as the world of visible things is characterized by change and uncertainty. The other world of invisible and intelligible things is the world of the abstract arising from pure human reason such

⁹⁰ Plato, *Republic of Plato*, VII, 222-224.

as mathematics. Plato believes this abstract intelligible world is characterized by certainty and changelessness. Whitehead distinguishes Plato's two worlds in terms of their character of permanence and flux:

Plato found his permanence in a static, spiritual heaven, and the flux in the entanglement of his forms amid the fluent imperfections of the physical world. Here I draw attention to the word 'imperfection.'⁹¹

For Plato this invisible world is, therefore, the real world because it contains the eternal "Forms (in Greek, *idea*)" of things, which are true and real. The world we experience is the visible world, the world of the imperfect and ever changing manifestations of the eternal and changeless forms. In other words, everything existing in our visible world and all we are experiencing in it are not its true essence, but the temporal manifestation of the essential "form." His famous allegory of the cave in *The Republic* clearly summarizes Plato's understanding.⁹² Plato suggests this allegory of the cave in a form of dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon. Hooker describes its importance:

... far and away the most influential passage in Western philosophy ever written is Plato's discussion of the prisoners of the cave and his abstract presentation of the divided line.⁹³

In this allegory, prisoners are captive within a cave from their childhood and set to see only the wall which reflects the shadows of the real world. Because they see only the reflection, they believe it is the real world. Although one prisoner escapes from the cave, finds the truth of the outside world, and comes back to tell this shocking truth to the cave prisoners, they do not accept his witness and even kill him.⁹⁴ Plato explains that all the people in this world are like these

⁹¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 209.

⁹² Plato, *Republic of Plato*, VII, 222-224.

⁹³ Richard Hooker, "Plato," *Greek Philosophy* (1996) available at <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/GREECE/PLATO.HTM>.

⁹⁴ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, VII, 222-224.

prisoners in the cave. What they see and experience is not true and real. It is only a reflection or shadow of the essential “forms.” For Plato, the true and real essence is not found through our senses, but only in intelligible “forms.”

Therefore, this experienced world is a mere reflection of the realm of “ideas.”⁹⁵ This shadowy experienced world of visible things absolutely depends on the real world of “ideas.” In terms of the relation between ideas (A) and this world (B), this world is not a different, unique, or independent reality. B is the shadow and the reflection of A. Without A, there is no B. B is under total control of A. B is nothing other than “less A.” Thus, all things known by sense are less true, less valuable, less real, less “ideas.” What is true, original, authentic, and real is the “ideas” beyond the measure of this world. Nothing in the world can be the same as “ideas.” At the same time, it is dependent on the “ideas.” The relation between “ideas” (A) and this world (less A) is hierarchical. In terms of this hierarchy between the “ideas” and its shadow or reflection, the myth of oneness vividly found its firm ground in Plato. Later, Plato’s analysis provided the foundation for Plotinus’ understanding of the One and his distinction between the realm of ideas (noumena) and the realm of this world (phenomena) in what came to be called neo-Platonism.

Plato’s theory of “forms/ideas” and the world as its shadow, is inherited and also criticized by Aristotle, with his concepts of “Form and Matter.” Aristotle critiques Plato’s distinction of two worlds: the world of “*idea*” and our world, and the hierarchical relation between the two. While Plato understands this sensible and experienced world as the mere reflection of the eternal “forms,” Aristotle understands the partial presence of “forms” in the

⁹⁵ The concept of Plato’s “*Ideas*” is also found in *Republic*, Ibid., 172-175.

world of visible matter.⁹⁶ For Aristotle, ultimate essence is ‘form’ as Plato understands, but the difference between Plato and Aristotle is that Aristotle accepts form’s partial presence within matter, unlike Plato who understands matter as only shadows and reflections of form.

Aristotle, however, clearly distinguishes the realm of form from matter. For him, God is ‘form without matter’ and ‘perfect and ultimate form.’ There is an inaccessible gap between perfect form and temporal matter. Form is not affected by matter at all. Thus he calls God “the first cause” and “unmoved mover.”⁹⁷ This hierarchical understanding of form and matter becomes a fundamental basis for the neo-Platonic system of the “great chain of being,”⁹⁸ which should be correctly called the “hierarchical order of being.”

Plato and Aristotle, despite the difference in emphasis on ideas and matter,⁹⁹ both develop their understanding of the reality of the world through a speculative process. Though Aristotle was the great scientist of his age, the science he practiced was not the science practiced now. Although Aristotle believed he scientifically determined the nature of things, and thought that essence gives form to matter, his theory cannot be called scientific from a contemporary point of view. What Aristotle did scientifically at that time is more speculative than scientific. Though he observed the biological world with all the means available in his age to discern the essence that unites species, etc, it was more speculation based on reason than discovery based on fact.

⁹⁶ This difference of Plato and Aristotle is reflected in the theologies of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, vii. trans. Hugh Tredennick and G. Cyril Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 147-151.

⁹⁸ Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 20

⁹⁹ Aristotle is often understood as the philosopher of “matter,” in comparison with Plato’s emphasis of “*Ideas* (forms)” because of Aristotle’s new emphasis on the importance of matter. In this respect, it is often understood that Plato and Aristotle are different and even opposite to each other. However, they share the same paradigm of a hierarchical order of Form and Matter under the myth of oneness, despite their major differences.

This speculative process developed a paradigm which enabled them to understand the world and beyond. They created the concept of “Ideas” and “Form.” Placing themselves in relation to their created concepts, they understood everything conceptually. It is very ironic that the philosophical myth of oneness, created by and developed after Plato and Aristotle, imprisoned much of the rest of western philosophy in Plato’s ‘intelligible’ cave.

2. Neo-Platonism: Plotinus

While the beginning of the myth of oneness is found in both Plato and Aristotle, it becomes more vivid and structural when Plotinus later develops neo-Platonism by synthesizing the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. His neo-Platonism provided a paradigm of the myth of ontological oneness that later powerfully influenced the notion of God in Christian theological tradition, especially in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

The encounter and interaction between Greek philosophy and Christianity strongly influenced both. By the early third century, Greek philosophy had become a form of religion, while Christianity became a form of mystical philosophy. Philosophy and theology started to intermingle. This tendency accelerated as both philosophers and Christians developed their relation through amalgamation and resistance. The result of this interaction appeared as “religious philosophy” in philosophy and “philosophical theology” in theology. The central religious philosophy of his age was the classical “neo-Platonism” of Plotinus.¹⁰⁰

Influenced by Plato’s concept of ideas and Aristotle’s unmoved mover, Plotinus

¹⁰⁰ Paul Tillich, *History of Christian Thought* (London : SCM Press, 1968), 83-84.

explains that God is “the One,” who is absolutely transcendent over ‘the many’ of the world. The One is unmoved, unchanging, and eternal, thus the only true Being. The world as the many is not true being because it changes and, therefore, is not eternal.¹⁰¹ Plotinus develops a fixed ontological chain of being from the One to non-being and places the soul (psyche) in the middle. This hierarchical order of being stretches from the One (eternal ground of being) at its apex to non-being at the bottom. Angels, the human soul, the animals, and nature are hierarchically placed in the chain between the One and non-being. The soul is the principle of all life forms, both human and natural. Souls are ambiguous because they participate in both being and non-being. Plotinus sees the soul’s participation in “nous,” the emanated spirit of the One, as ‘good’ and its participation in non-being as ‘evil.’ Evil is considered neither an actual reality nor an eternal power.¹⁰² Rather it is just denial of ‘nous’ and lack of the soul’s will toward the One. Thus, evil is interpreted as either “not-good” or “less-good.”¹⁰³

It is obvious that the myth of oneness is expressed in Plotinus’ neo-Platonism. First, he posits the souls of the world between the One, the eternal source of being, and non-being.¹⁰⁴ This duality of being and non-being is influenced by the Aristotelian logic of “A and not A,” as his logic of “Excluded Middle” requires.¹⁰⁵ Second, the neo-Platonic understanding of Evil as the deficiency of Good is Plato’s and Aristotle’s logic of B as “less A” or “not A.” Third, the One is the never-changing source of being, the unmoved mover, and the first cause of all life forms. The One is a static, eternal, real, powerful, original, and perfect being in contrast to

¹⁰¹ Plotinus, *The Good or the One*, 72-80.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 76-77.

¹⁰³ Tillich, *History of Christian Thought*, 85-88.

¹⁰⁴ Plotinus, “The Three Primal Hypostases,” *The Essential Plotinus*, tran. E. O’Brien (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1964), 92-98.

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, 1010b-29 and 1011b-23.

all others, which participate in non-being, and are changeable, finite, unreal, powerless, produced, and imperfect.

Classical Christian theology developed under the influence of neo-Platonism. The theology of Augustine, the Christian churches' greatest early father, was heavily indebted to neo-Platonism.

3. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas

Diogenes Allen affirms the influence of Neo-Platonism in Augustine, "Augustine was one of the great Christian Platonists."¹⁰⁶ A clear manifestation of neo-Platonism is found in Augustine's understanding of Evil. He accepts the neo-Platonic understanding of Evil as less Good, and the negation of Good, not as another existing force opposing Good. Under the influence of Manichaeism, Augustine earlier had struggled with its dualistic understanding of good and evil, closely related to the Gnostic systems, which believed good and evil to be two independent forces engaged in ceaseless conflict. Gnostics thought that both good and evil are material; one is material light and the other material darkness. This material world is interpreted as a kingdom of evil and darkness created by the evil principle.¹⁰⁷ To Augustine, however, God could not be material. The existence of evil with a power of being similar to the good cannot be accepted. Augustine's later encounter with Plotinus' neo-Platonism enlightened him and produced a new way of thinking. He finally interpreted God as an immaterial God, who alone is the only source of all being and good. Therefore, evil for him is

¹⁰⁶ Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 82.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

“nothing but the privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be.”¹⁰⁸ Evil is not the opposite force of good, but is interpreted as less good, the “privation” of good, hierarchically inferior.

Augustine’s understanding of Evil as the privation of good reflects the myth of ontological oneness begun with Plato. It presupposes the perfect One as articulated in Plotinus, while all other reality is ‘not’ One or ‘less’ One. When applied only abstractly to the understanding of Good and Evil, it may not seem problematic. However, this paradigm of the myth of oneness in Augustine is also applied more concretely to his understandings of men and women, humanity and nature, and spirit and matter. Augustine understands that women are less than and inferior to men; nature is less than and inferior to humanity all because fundamentally material being is less than and inferior to the spiritual.¹⁰⁹

In his *Confessions* and *City of God*, Augustine also uses the neo-Platonic paradigm in terms of soteriological oneness to explain the teleological processes of personal beings and world history. Reflecting on his personal life struggles, he understood a person’s life as a journey toward God’s goodness within this ungodly world. A human being is not capable alone of achieving the goodness of God because of his/her physical desires leading toward non-being. Therefore, human salvation understood as return to the original goodness of God is possible only by God’s grace, which Augustine saw as “irresistible.”¹¹⁰ It leads us to the original and perfect One, the ideal and eternal form of life.

¹⁰⁸ *The Confession of St. Augustine*, 37.

¹⁰⁹ Rosemary R. Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Feminist Theology of Earth Healing* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 135-139, 185-186. Ruether clearly explains how the neo-Platonic influence of Augustine on evil developed his hierarchical understanding of man over woman and human over nature.

¹¹⁰ Augustine, “On Nature and Grace,” *Selected Writings of St. Augustine*, ed. Roger Hazelton (New York: Meridian Books, 1962), 195-204.

The City of God is Augustine's account of the journey of the world toward God's original creation. First, he says that there are two different cities: the city of earth and the city of God. The city of earth makes its way toward non-being due to the fall of Adam. Thus, it is destined to perish, based on its material desires and self-love. The city of God, however, is eternal and based on God-love.¹¹¹ His notion of Evil as a privation of Good is also shown in this understanding of the two cities. Despite turning away from God and its misdirected self-love, the city of earth is still able to pursue the common good. He notes,

... it reaches such happiness by sharing a common good... the aims of human civilization are good, for this is the highest end that can be achieved.¹¹²

However, he also clearly states that it only achieves a 'temporal' well-being 'imperfectly.' While the city of God is eternal and perfect, the city of earth is temporal and imperfect. Augustine's moral vision is that human beings, living in the city of earth should seek the eternal and perfect love of God and return to God's original goodness in the city of God.

In both books, Augustine explains that the ultimate goal of both an individual and the world should be returning to its original, perfect, ideal being in God, saved from this world's meaningless, imperfect and deficient being infected by non-being. The myth of oneness in neo-Platonism, with its hierarchical dualism between the One (A) and phenomena (less A), is directly related to Augustine's understanding of good and evil in the city of God and city of earth. For Augustine, there are (1) Being: the good in the city of God, which is original, perfect, and ideal and (2) non-being: evil (as less good) in the city of earth, which must be subjected to original Being.

¹¹¹ Augustine, *The City of God*, 321.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 327.

While Augustine is called the great Christian Platonist, Thomas Aquinas is considered the great Christian Aristotelian. Augustine, on the basis of Plato's "ideas," emphasized God's absolute grace as the only way to salvation to overcome the sinfulness of the world.¹¹³ Aquinas, on the basis of Aristotle's ontology of form and matter, emphasized God's presence in the midst of the world. For the natural theologian Aquinas, God is the order of the cosmos. God as the infinite and eternal being, is the ground of potentiality of all particular actualities in the world. God as the First and Final Cause of the cosmos is omnipotent and unchangeable perfection. Although Aquinas does not understand the world as providing a full and saving revelation of God, he affirms that God is able to be discovered in the world in an "analogical way."¹¹⁴ Although God is known in the world through 'natural revelation,' human salvation requires the 'special revelation' of Jesus Christ.

Aristotle's idea of the "excluded middle," which is basic to Aquinas' theology, interprets the gap between God and the world. Aquinas' affirmation of God's presence in the world must be taken seriously, but his emphasis on the differences between God and the world should be taken more seriously. On the basis of his teleological understanding of the process from potentiality to actuality, Aquinas describes the gap between God and the world as the gap between being and non-being. For him, all actualized being is considered good, but only that Being who actualizes its potentiality perfectly is 'Good.' Aquinas notes,

The essence of goodness consists in this that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher (Aristotle) says: *Goodness is what all desire*. Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect, for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it is being; for being is the actuality of everything, as is clear

¹¹³ Augustine, "On Nature and Grace," 195-204.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, I, Q. 13, art. 5, 10, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Anton C. Pegis, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1945), 118-121, 129-131.

from the foregoing. Hence it is clear that goodness and being are the same really.¹¹⁵

Only God is freely actual and thus perfect; this world, however, is imperfect because of its unfulfilled actualization of its created potentiality. It is closer to Evil, not because of a misdirected love toward non-being as Augustine understood, but because it fails fully to actualize being.

For Aquinas, “evil consists...in the fact that a thing fails in goodness.”¹¹⁶ Despite his effort to revise Augustinian theology by revising its Platonic basis, Aquinas’ thought still reflects the ontological hierarchy of the myth of oneness. The difference between Augustine and Aquinas is their methodological approaches. Augustine understands evil existentially as misled love toward non-being, while Aquinas understands evil teleologically as unperfected and non-actualized true potentiality. The misdirected love of Augustine and the imperfectly actualized potentiality of Aquinas, however, are the same in terms of their affirmation of ‘Perfect Being’ differentiated from an imperfect world. For both of them, the ‘ultimate reality’ of God is the only perfect Being. Existential or teleological separation from this Perfect Being is evil. The existential privation of Good and the teleological imperfection of Good are the basis of evil. The theology of both fundamentally includes a dualistic system of perfect being and imperfect non-being. This is the myth of oneness of A and less A.¹¹⁷

This system is a dualism in which two components are understood as A and not A (or less A). People, however, are pre-determined to choose A. The world as ‘not A’ must seek to become

¹¹⁵ Ibid., I.I, Q. 5, art 1, 42.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., I.I. Q. 48. Art. 2, 467.

¹¹⁷ Despite this similarity in terms of the myth of oneness, the difference between Augustine and Aquinas is that Augustine seeks to understand the God-world relation through a human soul’s (Confessions) and human history’s (the City of God) journey toward God, while Aquinas seeks it through revealing God’s cosmological presence within the world.

A. A human soul may seem to have a neutral and free choice of either A (Good) or B (Evil), but there is actually only one right choice; the soul must choose A in order to be fully actualized and therefore good.

While Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus try to explain the reality of the world and its relationship to their speculative concept of Idea, Form or the One, Augustine and Aquinas as theologians adapt this philosophical understanding of the world to interpret its relation to its Creator God. As Greek philosophers articulated a hierarchical ontology of being, Augustine and Aquinas used it to articulate a Christian concept of God in a hierarchy of being from divinity at the top to non-being at the bottom. They understood that returning the world to its original goodness (God) is possible only by God's intervention through transcendent 'irresistible grace' (Augustine) or God's mediated grace in the world. (Aquinas). Regardless of their effort to understand how the world might be returned to its original home (God), the basic philosophical paradigm they used suggests the limitation of the neo-Platonic myth of oneness. Their theological solution promotes the complete rejection and denial of material non-being and returning to the only real One.

Humans are the only creatures who might participate in the process of salvation, but even they are not capable of doing so because they are under the bondage of original sin. God's help is indispensable. The only possible solution is the action of God, by God, through God, and even for God. God is the One, who does all. All creatures exist hopelessly and meaninglessly apart from God's salvation. The myth of oneness, inherited from neo-Platonism, was not transformed within the theology of Augustine and Aquinas.

C. CHALLENGES

We now have examined the concept of the ‘myth of oneness,’ its definition, historical origin, and philosophical and theological development. Recognizing the risk of over generalizing diverse western philosophies and theologies, I, nevertheless, claim that the myth of oneness is the dominant paradigm that has powerfully influenced the main flow of western philosophy and theology until the challenge from post-modernity.¹¹⁸ Post-modernity’s critique is one of the most serious challenges to the myth of oneness in western philosophical and theological history. The postmodern emphasis on plurality challenges the claim there is a universal standard for right existence, which everyone must follow. The postmodern critique of power and violence, which have claimed to be used for progress and modernization,¹¹⁹ has uncovered the oppressive intention of the myth of the universal and absolute One, which often has supported an ideology of domination over others.

Jacques Derrida, a leading postmodern philosopher, tries to deconstruct the modern paradigm of the perfect and universal one in western philosophy. He interprets the foundation of oppression and injustice within western philosophy as grounded in modernity’s dualistic structure of essence/phenomenon. He understands that western philosophy has claimed ‘rationality against irrationality,’ ‘unity against difference,’ and ‘being against non-being’ as its

¹¹⁸ I intentionally distinguish *post-modernity* and *post-modernism*. Although the term, post-modernism, usually refers to a school of thought challenging the traditional European rationality-oriented theory of modernism mainly from post-structuralism since the mid 20th century, I intentionally use this term to refer to a broader spectrum of thought challenging the spirit of modernism from various origins. Because I presuppose the myth of oneness to be the core foundation of modernism, “post-modernity” here includes all efforts to transform the dangers of the myth of oneness. Therefore the Asian yin-yang paradigm and western process theology are also included in this concept of post-modernity.

¹¹⁹ This modernization is also interpreted as colonization and neo-colonization in terms of its international relation.

basis of truth.¹²⁰ He also argues that this claim earns its legitimacy by negating and oppressing the ‘other’ where he emphasizes ‘differences.’ There has been ‘immanent violence’ in human history because of its oppressive negation of the other. Thus, Derrida’s intention is to liberate the others’ asserted irrationality, difference, and non-being from oppressive rationality, unity, and being. The violence present within this dualistic structure derives from the idea that essence is always superior, primary, and central over phenomenon, which is always inferior, secondary, dependent, and marginal. Essence has the power and privilege to define, control, and oppress the phenomenal “other.” This dualistic structure of essence/phenomenon is found everywhere in our society: intellectual/emotional, good/evil, true/false, heaven/earth, capital/labor, male/female, white/black, and so on. The first of these pairs is understood as primary, superior, therefore valuable, while the other is secondary, inferior, derivative, and therefore valueless.¹²¹ Derrida emphasizes the urgency of this problem of modernity by saying:

... in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of two terms governs the other, or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment. To overlook this phase of overturning is to forget the conflictual and subordinating structure of opposition.¹²²

Derrida’s recognition of ‘immanent violence’ within western philosophy also reveals the danger in the myth of oneness, when a powerful group identifies themselves with the One. The ideological position of the powerful is then misused to legitimate their oppression of the others, because the superior, primary, and more intellectual one naturally should lead and control the inferior, secondary, and nonintellectual one. Patriarchy, racism, ecological degradation, and

¹²⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

¹²¹ Yang, “Derrida,” *Flow of Contemporary Philosophy*, 347.

¹²² Derrida, *Positions*, 41.

socio-economic-political oppression are examples of the forms of oppression that may be caused by the myth of oneness when a powerful group takes and uses this paradigm.

This paradigm has ruined the daily life of the oppressed and underprivileged throughout human history. When embodied within a Christian faith system, it has caused the notion of God without the image of the suffering servant, which is essential for the true meaning of God's love, acceptance, and grace, but also the hostile attitude for inter-religious dialogue. Thus, they fail to act responsibly in the conflicts and injustice in their world by creating a hostile and exclusive position toward other religions. This consequence of the myth of oneness within the history of the notion of God will be discussed in chapters III and its affect on inter-religious dialogue in chapter V.

Some scholars, including Derrida, have argued that the most problematic characteristic of modernity is its "dualism," which affirms human vs. nature, God vs. world, men vs. women, white vs. colored people, rationality vs. emotion and mystical spirituality, Christianity vs. other religions, and so forth. Although the importance and influence of dualism in modernity cannot be denied, the result and intention of dualism must be also understood in the light of the paradigm of the myth of oneness. Dualism itself does not contain or cause a serious problem, because simple and value-free dichotomies are not dangerous or oppressive (such as blue and red, south and north, and even and odd numbers). What makes dualisms problematic is an ontological hierarchy caused by the myth of oneness. Dualism becomes dangerous when joined with the myth of oneness to become 'hierarchical dualism,'¹²³ adding the fixed hierarchical value-judgment to two objects as 'perfect and imperfect,' 'good and evil,' or 'superior and inferior.'

¹²³ A hierarchical dualism, in contrast to relative/complementary dualism, refers a dualism, in which its two principles have absolute (unchanging) hierarchical substances. Plato's ideas/reflection and Aristotles' form/matter are good examples of this dualism.

Jung Young Lee's critique of the "either-or" way of thinking as a core problem of western philosophy similarly misunderstands dualism. If we choose one for this time and the other for another time, 'either-or' thinking does not necessarily create a problem. The problem of "either-or" thinking arises only when we choose always one and never choose the other on any occasion. What really makes "either-or" thinking problematic is, therefore, the myth of oneness which always provides one's superiority over the other.

Unlike the hierarchical dualism, a 'relative' dualism¹²⁴ that affirms the distinctiveness and different value of each and allows their mutual interaction does not cause oppression or violence. When it becomes an hierarchical dualism, however, the oppression and control of the superior over the inferior follows inevitably. Especially when the dualism of good and evil is affirmed, unimaginable destructive violence can be justified for the good's victory over evil. Thus, postmodern scholars reject the false universality of the One which has caused such oppression and injustice in the world. Rather, they affirm responsible particularity and plurality which confirms the distinctiveness of each. We shall see that this postmodern position is similar to the yin-yang way of thinking in Asia, which presupposes the mutual coexistence of yin and yang for liberating the oppressed from their oppressors. Those solutions, however, differ slightly in the emphasis on plurality by post-modernism and interdependency by the yin-yang paradigm.

When we incorrectly place modernity's understanding of dualism as the fundamental cause of the problems we are discussing, fundamental problems may not be solved. The critical cause of the problems, as we have stressed, is not in the structure of dualism but in the myth of oneness at the basis of dualism. Therefore, an uncritical postmodern emphasis on plurality over

¹²⁴ Jung Young Lee calls this relative dualism "complementary dualism."

universality cannot be a sufficiently transformative solution, because it fails to correct the myth of oneness at its base.

Although the postmodern challenge led by European structuralism and post-structuralism is important for the transformation of the myth of oneness, often precursors must also be recognized. This dissertation focuses on two of them: (1) The philosophical challenge from Whitehead's philosophy of organism and his dipolar theism¹²⁵ and (2) The cultural and ideological challenges from non-European cultures not heavily influenced by a western philosophical and theological background, especially the Asian concept of the yin-yang paradigm.

Post-modernity challenges two core dimensions of the myth of oneness. It focuses its critique on (1) oppressive socio-economic-political structures and (2) their misuse of power to dominate the powerless. It challenges the oppressive claim of the superiority of unity/oneness over the difference/other, as discussed earlier with the theological term "*soteriological oneness*." Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm, however, focus more on a relational understanding of existence in organic structures, which provide significant challenges to the being-oriented understanding discussed earlier with the term "*ontological oneness*." The difference between post-modernism and the philosophy of Whitehead affects their methodologies to achieve transformation. The former emphasizes only the value of particularity, the latter emphasizes both organic relationality and the value of particularity. For this reason, this dissertation focuses more on the latter than the former.

¹²⁵ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*. The final chapter on God and the world made a significant impact on Process Theology.

Whitehead's philosophy of organism challenges the understanding of ontological oneness by revealing the failure of the dominant ontological tradition in the understanding of being. His philosophy emphasizes that no particular beings independent and atomistic, but are organically related actualities. Whitehead's notion of these relational actual entities also rejects the character of changelessness of ontological oneness because actual entities are perpetually perishing and becoming.

The yin-yang paradigm found in I-Ching also challenges the notion of ontological oneness in the myth of oneness. It illumines a 'changeological' understanding instead of the western traditional ontological understanding. It articulates an exactly opposite view from the neo-Platonic perfect unchanging, ultimate Reality. While the myth of oneness views the One as independent and changeless, the yin-yang paradigm views the Ultimate as immanently dependent (relational) and changeable. Change is interpreted not as imperfect, inferior, or deficient, but as perfect, powerful, and creative.

We are clearly living in a transitional era in which the traditional norms of modernity are shaken, although there is still ongoing controversy about the definitions of modernity and post-modernity. Although some Asians and other indigenous people in non-western countries fail to recognize their transition from modernity to post-modernity,¹²⁶ the western world is clearly struggling with its various related issues. This dissertation focuses only on one of those significant issues, the 'myth of oneness' that has determined the dominant western perspective

¹²⁶ Some non-western people insist that Western dominant modernity based on its "Enlightenment" has not influenced their cultures. However, the world structure dominated by an Euro-American oriented way of thinking, based on its economic and political imperialism - so-called neo-colonialism - deeply influenced not only other countries' economics and politics but also their cultures and traditions. South Korea is not an exception in struggling with issues similar to post-modernism.

from the classical to the modern period under the continuing influence of neo-Platonic philosophy. Since the myth of oneness is deeply embedded in the dominant western system, its influences are everywhere.¹²⁷

The Christian notion of God is also affected by the influence of the myth of oneness. After Augustine, the father of Christian theology, accepted the neo-Platonic hierarchical ontology of being for the philosophical basis of his Christian theology, it strongly influenced all later Christian theology. If the Christian notion of God is influenced by the myth of oneness and has dominated the history of Christian theology, it now needs to be, and has been, critically reexamined by both Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm from Asia. This dissertation will, therefore, interpret and evaluate two theological issues: the notion of God in Christianity in chapter III and the issue of inter-religious dialogue in chapter V. These issues are chosen because (1) they are the two most distinctive examples of where Christian theology was influenced by the myth of oneness, (2) the notion of God is the most fundamental doctrine which affects all other theological dimensions, and (3) the Christian perspective on inter-religious dialogue continues to cause some of the most serious problems in human history.

¹²⁷ Jung Young Lee, in his book, *Marginality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), denotes it as the problem of “centrality (30-33)” and that of “either-or thinking (64-70).

CHAPTER III

CLASSICAL AND DIPOLAR THEISM

A. BIBLICAL AND EARLY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

This chapter turns to a discussion of classical theism as the context for the development of the myth of oneness. We will look at theism's biblical basis, historical development, and recent exposition before examining the critique by and alternative of dipolar theism, formulated by Alfred North Whitehead. The Asian yin-yang paradigm as another alternative resource to transform theism and enrich the Christian understanding of God will be presented in the next chapter.

Langdon Gilkey has traced the Christian understanding of God from the biblical accounts through Greco-Roman influences to the early Christian fathers. He identifies in this long discussion in certain dialectical tensions in the understanding of God: absolute-related, impersonal-personal, eternal-temporal, changeless-changing, actual yet potential, self-sufficient or necessary and yet in some manner dependent.¹²⁸ In the biblical understanding of God, these paradoxical tensions and are consistently found,

God and Yahweh is “undeniably” and “jealously” one and transcendent to all the limited and special forces and powers of our experience of nature, society, or self. On the other hand, Yahweh's central characteristic ... or self-manifestation is a concern for and relation to history. ... God is revealed as a moral or righteous God, the source of law, and quick to punish ... Yahweh is, however, also a God of mercy, patience, faithfulness, and grace, ...¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Landon Gilkey, “God,” *Christian Theology: An Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (Minneapolis, Fortress: 1994), 91.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Although the Old and New Testaments strongly emphasize different characteristics of God - the transcendent ruler in the Old, and the patient and gracious lover in the New – both of these modes of God’s being are revealed in both of the Testaments.

This biblical tension in understanding God is also reflected in the traditional Jewish and Christian theologies. God is the Supreme Being or ground of being, the Creator and ruler of all, transcendent of all creaturely limitations. God as the Creator of time and space, is not affected by time, space, and any finite reality. Thus, God is the transcendent absolute: necessary, impersonal, unrelated, independent, changeless, eternal. On the other hand, God in Jewish and Christian witness, piety, and experience is personal, loving and gracious, concerned with all creatures and people’s lives, thus deeply related to and active within the natural world and the course of history.¹³⁰

Both of these modes of understanding God in the biblical witness and early religious traditions have continued in the philosophical and theological developments of Christian history. Their creative tension, however, often became unbalanced, causing problems. The first and most important historical occasion when this biblical tension was lost was caused by Christianity’s encounter with Greco-Roman philosophy, especially neo-Platonism. The strong influence of neo-Platonism broke the previous balance in the biblical tension and created an understanding of God heavily emphasizing the transcendent absolute (primordial in Whitehead’s term) characteristic of God.

... transcendent and absolute aspects or implications of the biblical creator and ruler were, in the developing conceptualization of God from A.D. 150~400, enlarged and extended: God became eternal in the sense of utterly non-temporal, necessary in the sense of non-contingency, self-sufficient in the sense of absolute independence, changeless in the sense of participating in and relating to no

¹³⁰ Ibid., 90-91.

change, purely spiritual instead of in any fashion material, unaffected and thus seemingly unrelated and even unrelatable to the world.¹³¹

Although this new understanding did not completely reject the relational side of God, it was faint and shadowed under the strong emphasis on God's transcendence. The influence of neo-Platonism continued and strongly contributed to the development of classical theism.

B. CLASSICAL THEISM

1. Classical Definition

Despite the common usages of the term 'classical theism,' its scholarly definition contains the wide range of meanings, because it has been formed, developed and revised by various philosophical and theological trends in Christian history. To reduce possible confusion found in these various discussions and conceptions of classical theism, we need to clarify the definition used in this dissertation.

Classical theism means the traditional understanding of God developed and concretized by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas from Hebraic monotheism, and concretized by Hellenistic metaphysics, especially neo-Platonism. It continued in the reformation and was strengthened by Martin Luther and John Calvin, and by later neo-orthodox theologians like Karl Barth. It understands that God is perfect, with the characteristics of immutability (not changing), impassibility (not suffering), aseity (not dependent), omnipotence (all powerful), and omniscience (all knowing).

¹³¹ Ibid., 38-43.

Having already discussed Augustine and Thomas Aquinas as the founders of classical theism and their relation with the myth of oneness, we here focus on three later pillars of this theology; Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Karl Barth, who made significant contributions to the continuation of theism in Christian theology.

The Reformer, Luther insisted on the Word of God and faith (*sola scriptura and sola fide* – scripture and faith alone) as the basis of his theology.¹³² Against the Roman Catholic Church's focus on the sacraments as the only access to God, Luther held that fallen humanity could neither understand God's redemptive word nor see God face to face. He also criticized the Catholic Church's theology as heavily influenced by speculative and philosophical principles. Luther thought that God could not be discovered in nature by human effort because of the fallen condition of humanity. Our access to God is, therefore, only through God and the revelation known in the Scripture. For this reason, faith is required as humanity's only resource. Any human efforts through sacraments, moral activities or philosophies are meaningless because humans are fallen and God is in a transcendent realm.

Luther's approach liberated Christianity from some of the shadow of Greek-Roman philosophical influences, which were carried since Augustine and Aquinas. God in Luther was not any longer described with philosophical terms like the First Cause of Aristotle and Aquinas or the One of neo-Platonism. God became a figure of personal faith, not a figure of speculation.¹³³ Despite this reformation effort, the biblical tension of the transcendent and relational modes of God was not fully recovered. Their pietistic rejection of the institutionalized religious practices and philosophized theology of the Catholic Church, rather, strengthened the transcendent characteristic of God. Luther does not articulate God in the philosophical dress of

¹³² Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Press, 1957-1986).

¹³³ Gilkey, "God," 95-96.

omniscient, impassible, omnipotent, immutable, and independent. Nevertheless, God is the totally other, not knowable, and separated from the world and thus much like the transcendent Absolute. It is not correct to say Luther's God was not relational because God was not knowable by fallen humans, but it is clear that the transcendent God did not interact with the world. Luther successfully rescued Christianity from the danger of possible institutional and philosophical manipulation of God for our sakes by insisting on humanity's fallen condition and God's transcendence. Luther weakened and somewhat negated God's relational mode by creating a more serious gap between God and creation.

While Luther's project was the liberation of Christian faith from the Catholic Church's institutional and philosophical manipulation through returning to a pietistic mode based on the scripture and faith, Calvin's project, with the same reformation spirit, was a more systematic approach based on his strong belief in the sovereignty of God.¹³⁴ God is perfect and therefore God's plan is perfect. It may not be understandable or sometimes not reasonable to sinful humanity, but all creatures must obey God's sovereign direction for the world. This is clearly shown in Calvin's teaching on predestination. Everyone is predestined on the basis of God's sovereignty, which cannot be changed by any human effort, even religious or moral activities. God's plan never changes and humanity is simply to understand, accept, and follow it for the glorification of God.

It was the 20th century theologian, Karl Barth who revitalized the tradition of classical theism shortly after the First World War. In his commentary on the Epistles to the Romans,¹³⁵ he insisted on a radically transcendent understanding of God as a corrective to the more immanent

¹³⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. F. L. Battle (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

¹³⁵ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from the 6th German edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

view held by liberal theologians. Although he later somewhat revised his position, reaffirming God's relationship to humanity, from a strictly christological perspective, his strong emphasis on God's transcendence remained and contributed to the stream of neo-orthodox theology.¹³⁶

Barth's core understanding of God is that God is totally Other from the world. In his criticism of liberal theology, he argues that what matters for Christian theology and practice is the revelation of a God who is completely Other than human beings. He insists,

...the Gospel proclaims a God utterly distinct from men. Salvation comes to them from him (God), and because they are, as men, incapable of knowing him, they have no right to claim anything from him.¹³⁷

Barth therefore claims that there is no natural revelation in the world and history, but only special revelation found in Jesus Christ. God reveals himself once, in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That revelation is ongoing, continuous, and permanent.¹³⁸

Following the tradition of classical theism, Barth insists on the complete separation of God as totally Other from the world. Despite his strong emphasis on the God revealed in Christ, God's revelation must be interpreted only through the special revelation in Jesus Christ. God is, therefore, more transcendent than immanent and separated from than relational with the sinful creation. While Barth's emphasis of God's transcendence and the sinfulness of humanity defends God's righteousness and Christianity's validity in the presence of the destruction caused by the World Wars, it weakens God's relational dimension in which God powerfully and continuously works within the world and together with God's creation.

¹³⁶ Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, ed. *Reading Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 78. Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, trans. J. N. Thomas and T. Wieser (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), 47-52.

¹³⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, Harold Knight, and J.L.M. Haire. ed. G.W. Bromiley and G.T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1977), 28.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 262.

2. Critical Definition

After tracing the definition of classical theism according to the classical theists, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth, we now turn to how classical theism has been interpreted in critical perspective. Whitehead sees the God of classical theism as reflecting the myth of ontological oneness:

God [in classical theism] is an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came to being, and whose imposed will it obeys.¹³⁹

This description clearly reveals the problems in the core of classical theism. First, Whitehead explains that classical theism states that God is “aboriginal,” which means that God is not created by or derived from, therefore not influenced by, any other reality. Second, God is “eminently real,” which means that God is not in the process of formation or change, but perfectly and completely the ultimate reality. Third, God is the “transcendent creator,” which means that God is “totally the other,” separated from the created world. An impermeable gap exists here. God is at the other level of every imaginable aspect of the created world. Fourth, through “God’s fiat the world came to being” means that God is the original source of the world and the commander to whom the world owes everything. It clearly reveals the hierarchical relationship between God and the world. Fifth, that the world obeys God’s imposed will means that God is the first ‘Cause’ and the world merely follows. God is always the initiator. There is no mutual interaction or relationship between God and the world. There are actions, influences, or plans only from God to the world, not from the world to God. God does everything from

¹³⁹ Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, ed. David R. Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978), 342.

beginning to end. The world is created, maintained, influenced, changed, and even doomed by God.

Whitehead sees classical theism has its deep root in the myth of ontological oneness. Classical theism resulted from the marriage between neo-Platonism and Hebraic monotheism, reflecting the paradigm of the myth of oneness.

The God of classical theism is defined as the changeless, separate, eternal, and ultimate One: Creator, not created; influencer, not influenced. It is God who does everything from creation to salvation. The role of the created world, including human beings, is limited to receiving or responding to what God has done. If God and the world are A and B, there is no ontologically independent B, because B is created by, defined by, and commanded by A. A does not need B to exist at all, because A is not created, defined, or influenced by B. Therefore, B is not B, but inferior A or Plato's shadow of A.

This analysis of God and the world, as analogous to the A and B of the myth of ontological oneness, has a myriad of biblical and theological bases. God is creator and the world is a creature. God existed before the world, while the world came to exist by the word of God. God commands the world to follow and obey God's will. God is the omnipotent, ultimate being, who knows everything from beginning to end. There is an inaccessible gap between the Creator God and the created world. The world is, thus, better called "not God (-A)," especially when it is sinfully disobedient to God. Only humans are created in the image of God, but they are also separated from God because of their sinful nature. Although sinful humans had a small portion of God-likeness, they lost it (inferior or less A). This is the understanding of God and the world in

classical theism as its critics see it, which is reflected in this dissertation.

The clearest notion of classical theism's God is as the "Father almighty," the head of the Trinity.¹⁴⁰ It implies that Jesus the son and the Holy Spirit by themselves without the Father can hardly be considered to be the true God. Even if the Trinitarian doctrine is traditionally accepted, the true meaning of the Trinitarian God based on mutual relationality can hardly exist because of classical theism's immanent ontological hierarchy of the superior Father over Jesus the son and the Holy Spirit. This non-Trinitarian monotheistic notion of God, commonly found in Judaism and Islam, still remains in classical theism. This God is the ultimate reality infinitely transcending the world.

More traditional Christians may ask, "What is wrong with classical theism? It is the perfect ground for my faith. Why do you say classical theism is problematic?" The answer developed in this dissertation is: classical theism cannot fully interpret the meaning and necessity of the suffering and struggle happening in the world because the traditional understanding of an ontologically separated and changeless God cannot relate fully and redemptively to the world. If God is totally separated from and not influenced by the world, remaining only as the Creator, God is not able to respond to what is constantly happening in this ever-changing world. If one suggests that the omnipotent God knows everything from the beginning, then the everlasting goodness of God must be challenged because of God's silence before the demonic destruction happening in the world. If God is the imperial ruler, the ultimate philosophical principle, and the personification of moral energy,¹⁴¹ why does God not act immediately? Why do innocent people suffer? Why does the God of justice keep silent in the face of injustice in the world? Why does

¹⁴⁰ Douglas John Hall, *Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 92-101.

¹⁴¹ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 342-343.

God seem so powerless before the evil of the world and not act against it? How can God still be an ultimate ruler, a moral energy, and ultimate principle?

Traditional classical theism tried to answer these questions with its concept of the fall of human beings who have free will to do good and evil. If so, the omnipotent God, who knew humans' potentiality toward evil, allowed them to choose evil. Moreover the powerful imperial ruler is still silent before the suffering caused by the human evil-tendency given or at least allowed by God. Does God perhaps allow evil forces to control the world with a certain intention? If so, how can we trust God as a good, caring, and loving God?

A North American theologian, Douglas Hall, in his chapter on "Questioning the Father Almighty," articulates how this theological weakness of classical theism's ontologically transcendent God is revealed in the power-oriented attitude of Christians, especially in the First World. Hall describes it as a faith based on a resurrection or triumphalist theology, in which Christians always identify themselves with the Father Almighty, who is a ruler, standard, and triumphal conqueror overcoming the bondage of evil and non-being that are finite, weak, suffering, vulnerable, inconclusive, ignorant, and changing.¹⁴²

In order to answer these questions about God's silence before the suffering of the creatures, classical theism emphasizes the concept of a loving God shown in Jesus and the cross. It claims God not only omnipotently rules but also loves the wounded creatures of the world. This understanding of omnipotence and love in classical theism possesses an immanent contradiction. If God is also love, in which God understands and responds to the suffering of the world, how is God still immutable and impassible, remaining separated and uninfluenced? Using

¹⁴² Hall, *Professing the Faith*, 95-97. Hall insists that in order to change this power-oriented attitude of Christians, this "Father Almighty" theology must be transformed by a "Suffering God" theology crystallized in the death of cross of Jesus. *Ibid.*, 133-180.

this logic, the God of classical theism cannot fully explain the issue of the suffering of the creatures. The critical core of this problem lies in classical theism's belief in God's ontological oneness.

James Will contrasts this one-sided view of God in dialogue with other theologians' views. Comparing how some Africans understand God as Father, Grandfather, Mother, and Son within their traditional relationship-oriented culture with the western ontology-oriented structure, Will points out that God could be better understood by such Africans,

Though this polytheistic mode of relating the Sacred to the multiple realities of their life-world may indicate inadequate theoretical reflection, I think it far more important as revealing that Africans experience and express God as universally related to the various dimensions of their life world. The contrast with the classically Western monotheistic concept of God as absolute, unconditional Subject or Substance, infinitely transcending the world, is strong – and I think important.¹⁴³

The conclusion that classical theism has a weakness is vivid. Classical theism cannot fully describe the true God because it cannot give up the ontological oneness of God, excluding or at least limiting the relational God of love and compassion. With full awareness of these concerns, Whitehead describes an alternative understanding of God who is relational in an organic structure of the universe and “who slowly in quietness operates by love.”¹⁴⁴ In his dipolar theism, he emphasizes a new relational aspect of God that is represented by what he calls God's consequent nature, completing God's primordial nature that represents classical theism.

¹⁴³ James E. Will, *The Universal God: Justice, Love, and Peace in the Global Village* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 43.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

C. TRINITARIANISM

1. Ancient Trinitarianism

Challenges to classical theism have also come from within Christianity itself. One of the early challenges within Christianity was the Trinitarian controversy leading up to the ecumenical councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. The possibility of full humanity in Jesus Christ together with his full divinity was the key issue in those councils. Their conclusion ‘paradoxically’¹⁴⁵ defined God as Trinitarian by affirming: 1) the finite human Jesus in the infinite Trinity, and 2) both the full humanity and divinity of Jesus. Because the full humanity and divinity in Jesus was crucial to define the God in whom they believed, the Trinitarian doctrine was defended and continued despite its paradoxical character.

The key word to understand this historic decision within Christian tradition is “paradox.” Why and how did the scholars debating the Trinitarian controversy come to a conclusion which appears not to be logically valid and rationally right? Why did they use the term “paradox,” which basically means “contradictory and irrational,” and decide to accept it?¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ I use the term, “paradoxically” here because it is traditionally accepted to describe the conclusion of the two councils. For me, it seems paradoxical because people are influenced by the ontological understanding of the myth of oneness. However, if we interpret the Trinity through Whitehead’s philosophy of organism or the yin-yang paradigm, it is no longer paradoxical. Rather, it is harmonious and natural.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Tillich discusses this meaning of paradox in his treatment of “logical rationality” as the second principle of the rational characters of theology. By differentiating dialectical thinking (dynamic ontology) from formal logic (static ontology), he articulates that the paradoxical account of Christianity (the Trinity, Incarnation, justification of sinners) must be understood within dialectical thinking transcending the finite human logical thinking. Although he defines the meaning of paradoxical as “against the opinion, namely the opinion of finite reason,” he believes that “it [paradox] expresses this fact in terms which are not logically contradictory but which are supposed to point beyond the realm in which finite reason is applicable.” Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 57-58.

Perhaps it was a difficult decision for those who had to accept what they could not logically describe or rationally define. However, it was truly a historic decision which made it possible to save the notion of God from classical theism. It was a brilliant breakthrough, opening the possibility in the Christian concept of God for dialogue with other religions, philosophies and scientific discoveries.

What made the Trinitarian scholars see the doctrine as “paradoxical?” The answer is the ontological understanding within the myth of oneness. From its perspective, the Trinitarian doctrine must be seen as paradoxical for two reasons. First, it cannot explain how God, the ultimate reality above all creatures, could become immanent within creatures, and how the infinite divine being might live and experience like a finite being. Under the myth of oneness, which fundamentally separates God and the created world, God could not dwell or live in the world as a created human being. The Trinitarian scholars, nevertheless, could not reject or minimize the significance of God’s incarnation in the human Jesus. Under their understanding of the ontological oneness of God, it was a paradox.

Second, the Trinitarian doctrine is paradoxical because it contains a concept of relational and dynamic two-ness (relationality) of divinity and humanity rather than absolute oneness. Using the understanding of the ontological oneness of Jesus, two-ness of Jesus’ humanity and divinity must be seen as an illogical contradiction. Within the myth of oneness, Jesus must be either divine or human, not both. Under the myth of ontological oneness that ultimately understands everything absolute A and other B as not A or less A, the doctrine that Jesus is fully divine and fully human must be understood as Jesus is fully A and fully not A or less A. It is,

however, not ontologically possible because Jesus' divinity and humanity are at opposing poles.

Theological respect, however, must be given to the Trinitarian theologians' decision to affirm what God means to them in heart and experience, not only what logic requires. Despite its irrational paradox, they could not deny the God they believed in and experienced through faith in Jesus as the Christ. In this sense, the Trinitarian doctrine, which was developed in the early stage of Christianity and faithfully continued in Christian theological tradition, was the first authoritative correction of the myth of oneness in classical theism.

2. Modern Trinitarianism of Moltmann

It is the contemporary theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, who most radically challenges classical theism with the Trinitarian model. He believes that the dominant theology of western Christianity, despite its early affirmation of the Trinitarian doctrine, did not fully follow and develop the heart of Trinitarian doctrine. Instead, western theology heavily followed the track of classical theism under the influence of the myth of ontological oneness. To critique the traditional tendency of classical theism, Moltmann focuses on the issue of "suffering," the suffering of the world and the suffering of God.

In *The Crucified God*¹⁴⁷ and *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*,¹⁴⁸ Moltmann sets the paradoxical Trinitarian understanding of God against the dominant classical theism. Recovering the dynamic tension of the transcendent and relational God in the biblical account, he explains

¹⁴⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. Wilson and Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

¹⁴⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God*, trans. Kyun Jin Kim (Seoul: Korean Christianity Press, 1993).

God in dipolar terms as both the “Creator God” and the “Crucified God.” God is both A and B, both the Creator and the Crucified.

In terms of God’s relationship with the created world, Moltmann affirms both God’s transcendence and immanence. In contrast to classical theism, his understanding is “panentheistic,”¹⁴⁹ in which God both transcends and fully relates to the world. He insists that classical theism has an inability to fully understand the true meaning of God’s relationship and love for the world. Even though Trinitarian scholars found this evident in the event of God’s incarnation in Jesus, Moltmann finds it most evident in Jesus’ crucifixion. He writes:

The death of Jesus on the cross is the *centre* of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth. All Christian statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have their focal point in the crucified Christ. All Christian statements about history, about the church, about faith and sanctification, about the future and about hope stem from the crucified Christ.¹⁵⁰

If God is fully incarnate in Jesus, the suffering of Jesus on the cross must be the suffering of God as well. The death of Jesus on the cross must be also the death of God. For this reason, he claims we need to reconstruct Christian theology on the basis of the death of God.¹⁵¹ For Moltmann, the moment of Jesus’ crucifixion on the cross is the most vivid example of God’s sacrificial love for the world. While classical theism interprets the crucifixion only as Jesus’ faithful obedience to God in suffering and death, Moltmann claims that God in Jesus suffered and died on the cross.

Moltmann’s powerful claim about the crucified God is a strong challenge to classical theism. In contrast to the earlier American controversial “Death of God theology” of Altizer and

¹⁴⁹ Although the term, “panentheism,” usually refers to process theism developed by Hartshorne, Moltmann’s theism emphasizing God’s suffering dimension is also a kind of panentheism. Moltmann, himself, explains his understanding of God’s relationship to the world as panentheistic. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 277.

¹⁵⁰ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 204.

¹⁵¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 200~201.

Hamilton,¹⁵² Moltmann claims that the moment of God's death in Jesus on the cross is the most powerful event revealing how much God loves creation and how closely God works within it.

A God who is conceived of in his omnipotence, perfection, and infinity at man's expense cannot be the God who is love in the cross of Jesus, who makes a human encounter in order to restore their lost humanity to unhappy and proud divinities, who 'became poor to make many rich'. God conceived of at man's expense cannot be the Father of Jesus Christ.¹⁵³

It is the crucified God who deeply wants to save the world by all means possible, including the death of Godself. God's death is not an evidence of the powerlessness or end of God's sovereignty, but the evidence of new possibility and the beginning of new history. Therefore, within God's death on the cross, there is "hope."¹⁵⁴ God opens a new possibility to the world. God gives us hope for the eschatological kingdom of God in our history. Against those who insist on the impassibility of God, Moltmann claims:

... (classical) theism removes man (Christ) from his humanity and alienates him from his freedom, his joy, and his true being.¹⁵⁵

The importance of Moltmann's theology is that his theology is based on the most significant early Christian tradition, the Trinitarian doctrine. By re-emphasizing its true meaning - that Jesus is fully human and fully divine, and that God is immanent in Jesus even at the moment of his death on the cross, - the neglected and hidden aspect of God within classical theism is revealed again. Moltmann's intention is not to create or modify, but to rediscover and reclaim what was accepted and authoritative. His significant claim, grounded in tradition, challenged both classical theism and the myth of ontological oneness within the Christian tradition.

¹⁵² T. Altizer and W. Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (Indianapolis/ Bobbs-Merrill, 1966)

¹⁵³ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 250.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 200-219. also see Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis/Fortress, 1993).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

However, his contribution within the Christian Trinitarian tradition also becomes his limitation. Although he successfully defends a more holistic understanding of God by emphasizing the humanity of God embodied in Jesus, he fails to overcome three critical weaknesses immanent within the Trinitarian doctrine itself. In short, Moltmann revised the myth of God's ontological oneness but not God's *soteriological* oneness.

First, Moltmann does not question the dominant symbol of the Father in the model of the Trinity, even though he reformulates the relationship of divinity and humanity in Jesus. While he clearly transforms classical theism, he fails to challenge God the Father's role as the powerful center of the Trinity.

Second, his theology lacks dialogical interaction between God and the world. In his model, God is the alpha and omega in relationship with the world. God creates, God guides, and God saves. God does everything. There is no place where God and the created world work together or where God is affected by the world. Although God is not separated from the world as in classical theism but is related to the world, God does everything. Even in Moltmann's theological discussion of the current ecological crisis and eco-political oppression of the world, God's role is presented as the only ultimate solution.¹⁵⁶ In this respect, Moltmann's view is still influenced by Barth and he remains a reformed theologian.

Third, the presence and work of the Holy Spirit is not developed fully. If God did that important work on the cross as the crucified God, what is the role of the third person of the Trinity? What is the importance of the Holy Spirit? Even within his discussion on the

¹⁵⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Christianity*, trans. Kyun Jin Kim (Seoul: Korean Christianity Press, 2002).

eschatological Kingdom of God, the role and work of the Holy Spirit is very minimal.¹⁵⁷ Instead, he describes many traditionally understood roles and the work of the Holy Spirit as the extended roles and work of God the Father. When he explains his central term, the “eschatological kingdom of God,” he emphasizes the continuing revelation of God throughout history and the eschatological hope found in the crucified and resurrected Christ, not that of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁸

D. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Both the contributions and limitations of Moltmann’s Trinitarian model of God are vividly discovered in many Third World Liberation theologies, which are powerfully influenced by his theology. Liberation theologies developed by Juan Luis Segundo and Gustavo Gutierrez find their theological foundation in an image of God with sorrow and tears, responding to those oppressed in the world economically, politically, socially, culturally and ideologically.¹⁵⁹ Liberation theologians, also claim the image of God suffering together with the oppressed, whose justice no longer can endure not only individual sin but also the social injustice of the world.¹⁶⁰ For the oppressed, God becomes a liberator in the biblical image of Moses, who could no longer stay in Pharaoh’s palace because he knew of the injustice suffered by his own people under slavery. Liberation theologies grasp the key image of the crucified God in their contexts of oppression. If God was fully present at the moment of Jesus’ innocent death and began the renewal of the world from that experience, God is believed to be present in the midst of

¹⁵⁷ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: the Doctrine of God*, 151-158. Despite Moltmann’s dealing with the whole concept of the Trinity in this book, the small section describing the Holy Spirit’s role is only 8 pages.

¹⁵⁸ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 69~84.

¹⁵⁹ Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976).

¹⁶⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983), 36-37.

contemporary oppression when the innocent are discriminated against, isolated and exploited.

The formation of liberation theologies is deeply indebted to Moltmann's crucified God theology.

Liberation theologies, however, fail to overcome classical theism, especially the myth of soteriological oneness in their theology of transformation. By failing to think panentheistically and relationally, they return to the traditional concept of God as an omnipotent ruler who does everything from beginning to end as in classical theism, not to the relational God whose love transforms the world. Although God suffers with the oppressed, God's liberating power is still conceived only in terms of the almighty powerful God, who delivers the oppressed from their various captivities as a liberator. God's commands are still absolute and unquestionable. God rules and the world obeys. This classical theism and the myth of oneness can also be found in their paradigm of good and evil. The paradigm of the myth of oneness, A and not A (or less A), is revealed. The only difference between the two approaches is who is identified with God, good, and A. Whoever is brought into God's soteriological oneness is considered as good. For traditional Western theism, the oppressors (the rich, the successful, the privileged) were too often identified with God; liberation theology, however, overturned this interpretation by claiming God for the side of the oppressed working for the eschatological kingdom of God where the oppressed find their social freedom and liberation.¹⁶¹

As liberator, God works for the oppressed, not the oppressors. Where traditional theism legitimated the privileges of the oppressors, liberation theologies affirm the oppressed as the good. In their dualistic concept of good and evil, the good simply changes sides from the oppressors to the oppressed. The myth of oneness still actively works in liberation theologies.

The position of good and evil are exchanged, but the paradigm is the same. Liberation theologies

¹⁶¹ Juan Luis Segundo, "Socialism versus Capitalism: Crux Theologica," *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed. Rosino Gibellini, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), 240-259.

partially transform the myth of God's ontological oneness with God's suffering with the oppressed, but do not fully transform the myth of soteriological oneness and the traditional theistic paradigm of Christianity. Their insight that God shares the painful experiences of the oppressed is, however, crucial for doing theology today.

The next section in this chapter and chapter IV consider two important paradigms for transforming the myth of oneness and the limitations of classical theism. One is Whitehead's dipolar theism, and the other is the yin-yang paradigm of I-Ching. As noted earlier, what we need is an alternative paradigm and meta-critique, not a reversal of positions within the same paradigm. We need to shift the traditional one-sided, exclusive, and possibly manipulative paradigm to a both-sided, inclusive, and critically-responsive paradigm.

E. WHITEHEAD AND DIPOLAR THEISM

1. Philosophy of Organism

The key concepts in understanding Whitehead are 1) organism and 2) process. These two major concepts intermingle in his philosophy of organism, especially in his concept of "actual entity."¹⁶² They are significant contributions which make the shift from the traditional paradigm of an absolute static Being to a new paradigm of dynamic relative organism. By developing these concepts, Whitehead intends to transform the "being-oriented" paradigm of the traditional western understanding. He provides an alternative paradigm that overcomes the myth of oneness

¹⁶² Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 83-87.

and its theological derivative, classical theism.

While the theologian Moltmann began his crucified God theology on the basis of the traditional Trinitarian doctrine, the philosopher Whitehead bases his philosophy of organism on the scientific discoveries of his age. As a mathematical physicist, he recognized the breakdown of Newtonian physics, which believed the atom to be an unbreakable and unchanging fundamental basis of all being. The scientific quantum theory, which explains the dynamic interaction of particles composing atoms, enlightened Whitehead's revised understanding of the universe. The scientific discovery of quantum physics led him to discern the limitations of the traditional being-oriented understanding of the universe and to conclude that a changing universe cannot be understood by the static being-oriented paradigm reflecting the myth of ontological oneness.

After recognizing that Heraclitus' saying 'all things flow' is the first generalization of Greek philosophy, Whitehead, nevertheless, finds that there has been a continuing tension between two paradigms: 1) the flux of things and 2) the permanence of things¹⁶³ and their metaphysics of 1) flux and 2) substance.¹⁶⁴

Whitehead stresses the importance of holding both lines of thought by citing Plato:

But, in truth, the two lines cannot be torn apart in this way; and we find that a waving balance between the two is a characteristic of the great number of philosophers. Plato found his permanence in a static, spiritual heaven, and his flux in the entanglement of his forms amid the fluent imperfection of the physical world.¹⁶⁵

Whitehead also recognizes the ontological and hierarchical limitation of Plato's thought, which believed the permanence of heaven is perfect and the flux of this physical world is imperfect. He,

¹⁶³ Ibid., 208.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 209.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

nevertheless, seems to agree with Plato, whose philosophy embodies the tension between permanence and flux. The history of Western philosophy, however, took a different path for those who followed Aristotle, whom Whitehead characterizes as “the apostle of ‘substance and attribute’ and of classificatory logic.”¹⁶⁶ This philosophical tendency of following Aristotle’s notion of substance, rather than Plato’s holding substance and flux in tension, has shadowed the Western philosophical main stream until today.¹⁶⁷ This has suggested the myth of oneness and classical theism.¹⁶⁸

Whitehead’s philosophical transformation of the dominant Aristotelian understanding of the universe is developed in his philosophy of organism. He transforms the Aristotelian understanding of substance by interpreting how all things in the universe, including God, are mutually and organically interrelated. Nothing in the universe is isolated. Everything is affected by others and affects others. It only exists and may be understood through its participation in the organic system. Nothing is a static or fixed entity. Rather, it is constantly becoming in relation with others.

To recover the tension between permanence and flux, Whitehead struggled to find proper terms to explain his thoughts in a philosophical world under the dominant influence of the opposite paradigm. Thus, he created a unique vocabulary for his philosophy of organism, such as ‘actual entity,’ ‘prehension,’ ‘extensive continuum,’ ‘presentational immediacy,’ ‘eternal objects,’ and so on.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Although Whitehead understands Plato in his effort of holding both permanence and flux, Plato’s position presupposes an ontological hierarchy between the two. His ideal concept of ‘idea’ is related to permanence, and his concept of ‘shadow’ is related to flux. Permanence represents ‘perfect’ and flux represents ‘imperfect.’

Whitehead claims that all entities are conditioned and limited by their prehension of the past within the process of concrescence. In the process of constant becoming, ‘prehension’ means the effect of past entities on an actual occasion. An actual entity prehends the superjective past of other actual entities in becoming a new actual entity. This process of becoming through prehension is called “concrescence,” meaning “becoming concrete.” If prehension means being affected by external encounters, concrescence means an internal becoming by the integration of prehensions. To Whitehead, these complex terms are indispensable in explaining his complex idea which holds two lines of thought together: permanence in the midst of flux and flux in the midst of permanence.

This effort is clear in his concept “actual entity,” with which he interprets the reality of the whole universe, even God. This new paradigm replaces the substance-oriented static ontology derived from Plato and Aristotle. Everything in the universe, for Whitehead, is understood as an “actual entity,” which is known only in its own ‘actual occasion’ because it perishes after its process of ‘concrescence.’ Whitehead summarizes his notion of an actual entity as follows:

Thus an actual entity has a threefold character: (i) it has the character ‘given’ for it by the past; (ii) it has subject character aimed at in its process of concrescence; (iii) it has the superject character, which is the pragmatic value of its specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity.¹⁶⁹

In his concept of the threefold character of an actual entity as givenness, subject, and superject, Whitehead adopts Locke’s understanding of time as “perpetual perishing.”¹⁷⁰ “In the

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 87.

¹⁷⁰ Although Whitehead borrows the term “perpetual perishing” from Locke, he criticizes Locke’s understanding of time as still a substance-oriented idea, which neglects changing of the substance itself. See Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 29, 147. When he borrows this term from Locke, it seems to me that he strongly emphasizes the “perishing”

organic philosophy an actual entity has ‘perished’ when it is complete.”¹⁷¹ That is, it perishes when its process of concrescence has been completed. Each process of concrescence generating an actual entity is unique and temporal, but it must also be understood in the light of the temporal continuity and organic interaction of various processes of concrescence in the universe.

To interpret and understand the continual process of actual occasions, the term *extensive continuum* is introduced. Continuum shows how an actual entity is perceived in a broader process of the concrescence of actual entities. As a temporal occasion, it is fully an actual entity with its unique existence. At a more extensive level, it is, however, an actual occasion in a process, in which countless actual occasions rise and perish. Although an actual entity is an actual occasion, it is interpreted as an actual entity with temporal permanence as a superject, and interpreted as an actual occasion in terms emphasizing flux. Thus, an actual entity is the experiential form of an actual occasion. Whitehead also explains how the extensive continuum is experienced by us:

The extensive continuum is that general relational element in experience whereby the actual entities experienced, and that unit of experience itself, are united in the solidarity of one common world.¹⁷²

It means that the extensive continuum vividly exists as the general system, even though we experience it only in the particularity of actual entities. In other words, we must understand the world in terms of a more general principle of universal process even though we experience only static-looking entities.

Whitehead gives a more detailed conception of the subject-superject nature of actual entities:

part to correct the previous understanding of the substance’s immortality. However, he has not limited himself in Locke’s level by saying “perish and yet live for evermore.” See Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 351.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 81-82.

¹⁷² Ibid., 72.

An actual entity is to be conceived both as a subject presiding over its own immediacy of becoming, and a superject which is the atomic creature exercising its function of objective immortality. It has become a 'being'; and it belongs to the nature of every 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming'.¹⁷³

This understanding of the dynamic relation of the subject and superject dimensions of an actual entity clearly shows that Whitehead intends to transform the "misplaced concreteness" of Western philosophy. He wants to keep the dynamic relation between being and becoming within an actual entity, the dynamic relation between its immanence and transcendence, the dynamic relation between potentiality and actuality, and the dynamic relation between the Creator and the created. Within and beyond all these dynamic relations, the actual entity God becomes the new 'rightly-placed,' and correctly understood, fundamental ground of the universe.

With his concept of actual entities in the process of continual becoming, Whitehead successfully transforms the classical philosophy focused only on static being/substance. He, therefore, also corrects the fallacy and danger of the philosophical theology of the absolutized One, who is ultimate, changeless, perfect and infinite. Cobb and Griffin write on the religious significance of this philosophical transformation that understands the process character of being as becoming:

The bare assertion that the actual is processive has religious significance even by itself. Since the world as we experience it is a place of process, of change, of becoming, of growth and decay, the contrary notion that what is actual and fully real is beyond change leads to a devaluation of life in the world. Since our basic religious drive is to be in harmony with the fully real, belief that the fully real is beyond process encourages one or another form of escape from full participation in the world. But to understand that the process is the reality directs the drive to be "with it" into immersion in the process.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Ibid., 45.

¹⁷⁴ John B. Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: an Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 14.

Therefore, in this process of constant becoming entities are actual occasions, not eternal entities. There is nothing eternally real and unchanging because all entities temporarily become and perpetually perish. No hierarchy is presupposed in this process of being and becoming. Whitehead understands God, however, as we shall see in the next section, as an everlasting occasion that does not perish. God is a changing actual entity, but does not perish. God is the ‘one’ principle of limitation and the ‘one’ ground of all being and becoming. We now turn to Whitehead’s explanation of this concept of God.

2. Alternative Notion of God: Dipolar Theism

Whitehead’s theism is gradually developed through his books; *Science and Modern World* (SMW)¹⁷⁵ and *Religion in the Making* (RM) in 1926, and *Process and Reality* (PR) in 1929. What is widely known as his dipolar theism is his latest version in *PR*. To understand his notion of God more accurately, it is essential to check the development of his theism in his philosophy of science. In *SMW*, Whitehead explains God as “the principle of concretion¹⁷⁶ and the supreme ground of limitation”¹⁷⁷ God is that attribute of the substantial activity that explains why a course of events is that particular course.¹⁷⁸ In this stage, Whitehead’s notion of God is simply the principle whereby all things find their ground and order.

¹⁷⁵ Although he published *Science and the Modern World* in 1926, it is earlier than *Religion in the Making* because SMW is based largely on the Lowell Institute Lectures delivered in Feb., 1925. Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology*, 136.

¹⁷⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free, 1926), 174.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 178-9.

¹⁷⁸ Randall C. Morris, *Process Philosophy and Political Ideology* (New York: SUNY, 1991), 34.

The notion of God as the principle of limitation is modified and developed further in *RM*. God is newly understood not only as a ‘principle’ but also an ‘actual entity.’¹⁷⁹ It was one of the most significant shifts in Whitehead’s development of theism. While God was regarded as the fundamental unchanging ground and principle in *SMW*, God as an actual entity is now identified with temporal entities sharing a common ontological status in the universe.¹⁸⁰ Cobb explains that Whitehead, in this stage, recognizes that only something ‘actual’ could perform the role of the principle of limitation.¹⁸¹ Only something in the process of both being and becoming is able to be the basic principle for all things. There is, however, not yet a place in *RM* for the dipolar nature of God. If we observe his theism at this stage in terms later developed for his dipolar theism, only the primordial nature of God is evident. God is not yet understood as an actual entity influenced by the temporally changing world.

Although he does not deviate from his earlier emphasis in *SMW* upon the metaphysical necessity of some principles of order, it is only in *PR* where Whitehead fully develops his dipolar theism in the concept of the consequent nature of God. Unlike *SMW* and *RM*, where only the primordial nature of God is envisioned, God in *PR* is no longer only a complete and ideal realization of the eternal objects.¹⁸² At the stage of *SMW* and *RM*, Whitehead’s notion of God is still at the level of the myth of oneness, although he understood other entities organically. God, as the principle and supreme ground of limitation, is still very similar to the God of classical theism. He finally fully developed his alternative notion of God only in *PR*.

¹⁷⁹ Cobb, *A Christian Natural Theology*, 157.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Morris, 35-36. The definition of ‘eternal object’ is “any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world. It is always a potentiality for actual occasion.” Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 44.

His theism in *PR* is commonly called panentheism or dipolar theism. Although he has some panentheistic dimension in his earlier understanding of God, it is only in *PR* that he fully develops ‘dipolar theism,’¹⁸³ whereby he transforms the limitations of classical theism, relating God to the world process through his primordial and consequent natures. Whitehead describes the threefold character of God as analogous to the threefold character of all actual entities:

God has also threefold character: (i) the ‘primordial nature’ of God is the concrescence of a unity of conceptual feelings, including among their data all eternal objects. ... (ii) The ‘consequent nature’ of God is the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe. ... (iii) The ‘superject nature’ of God is the character of the pragmatic value of his specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal instances.¹⁸⁴

Although in this earlier chapter of *PR* God is explained as having all three modes of an actual entity, Whitehead later describes only two natures of God in the last chapter of *PR*, which focuses on God and the world. Though their critical difference may seem questionable, it can be interpreted in light of his focus in that section. In the earlier chapter, he emphasizes the common ground of God being an actual entity like all other actual entities, with the same threefold nature. In the later chapter, he develops only the dipolar nature of God, especially the consequent nature, to emphasize his transformation of classical theism, which is more akin to the primordial side of God. By introducing the consequent nature of God with the primordial, he transforms the myth of oneness in classical theism. Whitehead’s notion of the consequent nature of God is his greatest contribution to a more adequate contemporary understanding of God.

¹⁸³ Although God and the world, in his dipolar theism, are organically interrelated, it is still not clearly panentheistic, God in the world and the world in God. It is clear when he says “there is reaction of the world in God. The completion of God’s nature into a fullness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God.” Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 345. God and the world are separated but through God’s consequent nature, God prehends what happens in the world.

¹⁸⁴ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 87-88.

At the beginning of Whitehead's chapter on 'God and the World,' where he articulates the dipolar nature of God in relation with the world, Whitehead again expresses the problem of classical theism:

The notion of God as the 'unmoved mover' is derived from Aristotle, at least so far as Western thought is concerned. The notion of God as 'eminently real' is a favorite doctrine of Christian theology. The combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose fiat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys, is the fallacy which has a infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and of Mahometanism.¹⁸⁵

Classical theistic philosophy developed three popular images of God: 1) God in the image of an imperial ruler, 2) God in the image of a personification of moral energy, and 3) God in the image of ultimate philosophical principle.¹⁸⁶

Whitehead laments that this theistic understanding of God critically lacks 'the Galilean vision of humility' and 'Galilean version of Christianity,' which,

... dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals.¹⁸⁷

While the three images of God in classical theism may be related to God's primordial nature, the missing essential notion of God, which emphasizes love and humility, may be ascribed to the consequent nature of God. By interpreting God with this apparently paradoxically dipolar nature, Whitehead aims to transform the fallacy of classical theism.

To examine whether he is successful or not, it is crucial to carefully understand his definitions, especially his definition of God's primordial nature:

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 342.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 342-343.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 343.

Viewed as primordial, he(God) is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this aspect he(God) is not *before* all creation but *with* all creation.¹⁸⁸

This primordial nature is not totally different from the God of classical theism or the God earlier described in *SMW* as the supreme ground and principle of limitation. The primordial nature of God has many classical theistic dimensions as “non-derivative actuality, unbounded by its prehensions of an actual world.”¹⁸⁹ It is the primordial nature that makes God ‘Godly:

God’s existence is not generically different from that of other actual entities, except that he is *primordial*.¹⁹⁰

Whitehead, however, goes beyond the traditional theistic understanding of God within his discussion of the primordial nature when it is described in its relation with the consequent nature. It is essential for him that God is primordial, not only before and above the universe, but primordial within the characteristics of an actual entity in this organic universe. In this aspect, God’s ‘conceptual’ realization is ‘deficiently actual’ due to the lack of integration of physical feeling, which is the main function of the consequent nature. Morris explains this development in Whitehead’s thought by saying that God’s nature is no longer simply that of a complete, ideal realization of the eternal objects. God is now dipolar and stands in need of completion, the same as other actual entities. God is no longer the ultimate changeless principle of order, but the truly living entity.¹⁹¹ However, God is still primordial because,

He [God] is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things; so that, by reason of this primordial actuality, there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation. His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things. ...

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 75. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁹¹ Morris, 36.

it merely presupposes the *general* metaphysical character of creative advance, of which it is the primordial exemplification.¹⁹²

Thus God's primordial nature is "the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire."¹⁹³ On the basis of this philosophy of organism, which presupposes the primary action of God on the world, it is indispensable to have another side of God, which is "the principle of concretion." Thus, Whitehead finally concludes, "God, as well as primordial, is also consequent."¹⁹⁴

The consequent nature of God is "the weaving of God's physical feelings upon his primordial concepts."¹⁹⁵ In short, it is the world in God. It is God's experience of what's happening in the world. It is how the extensive continuum of the universe affects God. It is how the conceptual principle receives its objects and resources. It is God's loving heart for the world.

Whitehead says:

... there is a reaction of the world on God. The completion of God's nature into a fullness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God. He shares with every new creation its actual world; and the concrescent creature is objectified in God as a novel element in God's objectification of that actual world.¹⁹⁶

Whitehead distinguishes the consequent nature from the primordial nature by saying,

God's conceptual [primordial] nature is unchanged, by reason of its final completeness. But his derivative [consequent] nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world.¹⁹⁷

God's dipolar nature also enables Whitehead to understand how God as infinite is in the fullness of the finite at the same time. The consequent nature of God is interpreted with three different images; 1) God's perfect wisdom in terms of his subjective aim, 2) God's loving heart

¹⁹² Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 344.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 345.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

for the world, and 3) God's infinite patience. First, God with "the wisdom of subjective aim prehends every actuality for what it can be in such a perfected system-its suffering, its sorrow, its failures, its triumphs, its immediacies of joy."¹⁹⁸ This shows how God accepts what is happening in the world into God's heart. God loses nothing from the world because of God's tender care for the world.

Second, the consequent nature of God is his judgment on the world, not in destructive punishment, but in the tenderness of God's saving act. God loses nothing that can be saved, but not all can be saved.

Third, the consequent nature of God is revealed in God's infinite patience toward the world. God is not a ruler or moral principle who gives an order and imposes quick punishments. Rather, God is Jesus' image of the father patiently waiting for his prodigal son to realize his love for him. Whitehead writes:

... it lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. He (God) does not create the world, he saves it; or more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness.¹⁹⁹

The consequent nature completes the primordial nature and transforms the theistic one-sided God into the true God in Whitehead's sense, which is deeply based on the 'love-based Galilean origin of Christianity.'²⁰⁰ James Will as a Christian theologian, interprets this Whiteheadian understanding of the relational God as expressing philosophically the gracious and

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 346.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 343. Whitehead uses this term to explain the tender element of God's work in the world, which slowly and in quietness operates by love.

just relationality of Jesus.²⁰¹ Whitehead as a philosopher, however, explains his concept of God's consequent nature as deriving from physical prehensions of derivative actual entities²⁰² realized in unity with the primordial nature without specifying Jesus or relating this concept to Trinitarian Theology.²⁰³ Whitehead summarizes his conception of the relation and function of God's two natures:

God is to be conceived as originated by conceptual experience with his process of completion motivated by consequent, physical experience, initially derived from the temporal world.²⁰⁴

Through the interaction of God's two natures, God and the world have 'interrelatedness,' coexisting in relation with each other. What makes this relationality possible is God's consequent nature. Morris, therefore, interprets the consequent nature of God as the "ultimate *unity*" of the primordial nature and the world. The consequent nature synthesizes the primordial nature and the world.²⁰⁵

Primordial	Consequent
Conceptual	Derivative
Infinite	Finite
Free	Requires Integration with the primordial side
Unconscious	Conscious
Complete	Incomplete
Eternal	Everlasting
Actually deficient	Fully Actual

<Table III-1> Comparison of Dipolar Nature of God²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Will, *The Universal God*. 143-182. His chapter on "the interpersonal relationality of love" articulates this point thoroughly, though the whole book is dedicated to articulating the related comprehensive concept of the universal relationality of God.

²⁰² Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 31.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 345.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Morris, 38-9.

²⁰⁶ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 345.

F. WHITEHEAD'S DIPOLAR THEISM: ITS CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Despite this revolutionary transformation which Whitehead brought into Christian theology by suggesting another dimension of God, his dipolar theism still leaves two critical questions. First, why is the consequent nature of God 'derivative'²⁰⁷ (originated), while the primordial nature is 'originating'? What does it mean that what makes God more "Godly" is not the consequent nature but the primordial nature? Second, in relation between God and the world, what does Whitehead mean by "God is the beginning and the end"²⁰⁸ through God's primordial and consequent natures? What is the contribution of the world to this relation? These questions will be discussed in the next section as the contributions and limitations of Whitehead.

The original question must be asked again: does Whitehead successfully transform the problems of classical theism through his philosophy of organism and dipolar theism? The same question can also be asked in another way more relevant to this dissertation: is Whitehead liberated from the danger of the myth of oneness? The answer is 'yes,' but not completely. His transformation of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness through his critical concept of 'actual entity' successfully corrects the myth of oneness, especially its ontological oneness with its absolute and hierarchical dualism. In his discussion of God and God's relation with the world, which relates to the myth of soteriological oneness, however, he is only partially successful. Whitehead clearly makes a significant step with his philosophy of organism in transforming the myth of ontological oneness and classical theism, but not soteriological oneness.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. He describes the distinction of the primordial and consequent nature of God as, "God's conceptual nature is unchanged, by the reason of its final completeness. But his *derivative* nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world."

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 345.

Although he suggests an alternative paradigm with his philosophy of organism, in his philosophical theology he remains a descendant of the dominant, Greek-originated, western thinking. In his dipolar theism, the myth of soteriological oneness remains and is deeply embedded, because God is the only one who brings the whole universe to its original and relational goodness. Whitehead says “the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.”²⁰⁹ Whitehead remains one of those footnotes.²¹⁰

As noted in the previous section, Whitehead’s notion of God developed. Dipolar theism was the later and maybe final development, found only in *PR*. The concept of God’s consequent nature was added to overcome some limitations in his concept of the primordial nature. For this reason, as the meaning of the terms primordial (original) and consequent (derivative) suggests, he understands the consequent nature is *derivative*.²¹¹ It completes the primordial nature, and eventually his interpretation of theism. In other words, in his dipolar theism, the consequent nature is supplementary to the primordial nature. In this respect, the relation between the primordial and consequent natures may be interpreted as ‘*soteriologically hierarchical*.’

When carefully analyzed, one may conclude that the primordial nature is the original nature of God, while the consequent nature functions to make the primordial more complete by delivering the temporal world into it. Radically stated, although God’s primordial and the consequent natures are mutually interrelated in their relation to the world, the original ground of

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹⁰ There are many factors in which Whitehead depends on Plato and also criticizes him. In this dissertation, I limit myself to his dipolar theism and its dependency on Plato.

²¹¹ The consequent nature is interpreted as derivative because the consequent is derivative from the temporal world directed by the primordial nature. See Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 88; “The ‘consequent nature of God is the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe. His primordial nature directs such perspective of the objectification that each novel actuality in the temporal world contributes such elements as it can to realization in God free from inhibitions of intensity by reason of discordance.’”

reality, which calls for the consequent, is the primordial. The purpose of the consequent is to make the primordial nature ‘more’ primordial. God can be considered as God in God’s primordial nature without the consequent, but not in the consequent without the primordial. God as primordial includes the consequent, but God as consequent cannot include the primordial. God participates in and accepts the suffering of the world, not only because God is organically correlated with the world, but also because God needs to know and understand the suffering of the world to become more primordial, for example, conscious and complete in Whitehead’s term.²¹² The soteriological hierarchy based on the myth of oneness is reflected in Whitehead’s dipolar theism although it is true that his dipolar theism is very different from classical theism.

This myth of soteriological oneness in Whitehead’s dipolar theism becomes clearer when we examine the relationship between God and the world. The inter-relatedness between God and the world seems mutual. However, if you ask what or who makes this inter-relatedness possible, the answer is simply “God.” It is God who gives the initial aims to the world. It is also God who receives reactions from the world. As Whitehead writes, “God is the beginning and the end” in God’s primordial and consequent natures.²¹³

In summary, there are two complex and crucial weaknesses in Whitehead’s dipolar theism from the standpoint of my critique of the myth of soteriological oneness. First, his dipolar theism still remains under the influence of the neo-Platonic hierarchical structure. Although Whitehead does not clearly articulate the hierarchical relation between God’s primordial and consequent nature, the relation is closer to the hierarchical relation of A and less A than the

²¹² Although it is impossible for the already primordial God to become ‘more’ primordial, I intentionally use this sentence to emphasize the superiority of the primordial nature to the consequent. What the consequent nature does for the primordial nature is to make it conscious of what happens in the world.

²¹³ Ibid., 345.

complementary relation of A and B, because, although the two natures differ from each other, the consequent nature is added to complete the primordial.

Second, Whitehead continues to understand the relationship between God and the world in a way very similar to Aristotle's idea of God as 'prime mover.' What relates God and the world through the dipolar nature is directed only by God, not at all by the world. What makes the world and its activities available to God is not initiated by the world, but by Godself through God's primordial and consequent natures.²¹⁴ God is still the principle of concretion and the supreme ground of limitation for all in the universe.

Despite Whitehead's great contributions to contemporary theology, the myth of oneness, especially soteriological oneness, still remains in his thought. Although Whitehead's philosophy of organism was a significant beginning step in transforming God's ontological oneness in classical theism, his dipolar theism did not successfully resolve all of the dangers of classical theism. He did not successfully overcome the myth of soteriological oneness.

In the next chapter, we turn to very ancient North-East Asia, exploring another alternative paradigm in the Chinese classic, I-Ching, to enable further critique and transformation of classical theism with its problematic basis in the myth of oneness.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

CHAPTER IV

YIN-YANG (陰-陽) PARADIGM IN I-CHING (易經)

A. THE BOOK OF CHANGE (I-CHING, 易經)

1. I-Ching as the Wisdom of Asia

In their translation of I-Ching, *I Ching: the Classic Chinese Oracle of Change*, Rudolf Ritsema and Stephen Karcher introduce this book in a significant way:

The *I Ching* offers a way to see into difficult situations, particularly those emotionally charged ones where rational knowledge fails us, yet we are called upon to decide and act. It gives voice to a spirit concerned with how we best live as individuals in contact with both inner and outer world. The *I Ching* is able to do this because it is an oracle.²¹⁵

I-Ching as an oracle means it is a source of knowledge, wisdom, or prophesies. This understanding of I-Ching as an oracle underscores the meaning and significance of I-Ching in this dissertation.

The authorship and period in which the I-Ching²¹⁶ was written are unknown, even though there are many scholarly assumptions on these issues. It becomes more complex when we consider its rich oral traditions, which are the original sources for the later written form of I-Ching. Although its exact author and time is untraceable, there is a well-spread knowledge that I-Ching was supposed to have been formed and developed by “three” historic figures of Chinese history. Ritsema and Karcher explain that it has been created by three sage-kings who founded

²¹⁵ *I Ching: the Classic of Chinese Oracle of Change*, trans. Rudolf Ritsema and Stephen Karcher (Shafresbury: Element Books, 1994), 8.

²¹⁶ I use the term, “I-Ching,” to refer not to its final written form, but its rich traditions.

Chinese culture: Fu Hsi who is the legendary First Emperor and led China into its first Golden Age, King Wen (1099-1050 BCE) and the Duke of Chou, his son, who founded the Chou dynasty.²¹⁷ Slightly different from Ritsema and Karcher, Shaughnessy explains that it is supposed to have been created by three of China's greatest historical figures: King Wen, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius (551-479 BCE).²¹⁸ These two slightly different opinions support the meaning and significance of I-Ching that we previously affirmed: I-Ching is an oracle and wisdom of China.

Modern scholarship, including Ritsema, Karcher, and Shaughnessy, accepts both opinions as mythically true, which means that they are not a factual account, but have a significant role in understanding the core character of I-Ching. Modern scholarship affirms that the origin of I-Ching must start from the words “made up of omens, images and magical spells from an oral shamanistic, divinatory tradition,”²¹⁹ not diagrams or systems created by the few legendary sage-figure individuals.

This ancient form of I-Ching was first assembled between 1000 and 750 BCE, and the process of the symbolization (Hexagrams) gradually emerged later. Scholars agree however that it was in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 200 CE) when this divinatory system and tradition reached its rather complete written form during an effort to consolidate and re-define Chinese culture.²²⁰ Together with the descriptions of 64 hexagrams, the commentaries (傳), which are called “10 books/wings” (十翼), became available. It is a collective composition of a deep oral tradition produced by numerous people with rich, real-life experiences.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

²¹⁸ *I Ching: the Classic of Change*, trans. Edward L. Shaughnessy (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 1.

²¹⁹ *I Ching*, Ritsema and Karcher, 12.

²²⁰ Ibid., 13.

I-Ching, in this respect, has characteristics similar to the Bible in the West. Like the Bible,²²¹ I-Ching may be rightly understood not as one of the oldest books written by a famous philosopher, but as a condensed collection of the Chinese people's experiences and self-reflections, which took over 1000 years to reach its present written form. As Whitehead says that western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato, the North-East Asian philosophies and religions are footnotes to I-Ching, because it is I-Ching that provides a distinctive "Asian-ness" in their understanding of the universe.

Although later metaphysical analyses of this divinatory text have broadened its importance, its original divinatory character should not be ignored or devalued, because it must be interpreted as a core part of its significance. The accumulated knowledge from their numerous experiences turns out to be wisdom to understand how the whole world is living its own life. This acknowledgement creates insight into its divinatory character.

We now understand one of the basic differences between I-Ching and most western philosophies, especially the neo-Platonic tradition. I-Ching is based on people's long and careful observations of the world. It is "collective" wisdom, not an individual or a school's speculative efforts. It understands the cosmos from their experience and careful observation. *Ta Chuan*, 大傳 (the Great Treatise to the Book of Change) says:

The sage is complete in order to see heaven's enterprise and [imitates] it in its form and appearance in order to give image to the propriety of its being. [This] is why it is called image. The Sage is complete in order to see the movement of heaven and observes their coming together in order to move their canons and rituals.²²²

²²¹ See *I Ching*, Shaughnessy, 1. "For the last two thousand and more years, the *Yijing (I Ching)* or *Classic of Change* has been, with the Bible, the most read and commented-upon works in all of world literature."

²²² *Ibid.*, 192-195. Also see Jung Young Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 25.

This starting point shows why most Asians think a human being is not the center of the universe, but a little part of it. The writers of I-Ching try to understand themselves and the whole universe in their relationship with others. They realize the inter-relatedness of all things by observing how nature, including humans, exists and changes. On these careful observations of the world, they find there is a certain pattern in the movements of all things in the universe. This pattern is sharpened and theorized later in the form of the yin-yang paradigm.

In contrast, some western philosophies beginning in Greece have a different starting foundation for their understandings of the universe. The Platonic tradition, which became the mainstream of western thought, tries to define and explain the universe through human rationality in a form of “ontological metaphysics.”²²³ To explain the universe through metaphysics, Plato develops the concept of the ultimate ground as *Ideas* from which all things are created or illuminated. Here is the basic difference of their beginning point. While the neo-platonic-influenced western philosophical tradition tries to understand the universe based on an absolute and unchanging substance, I-Ching tries to understand it based on relationships.²²⁴ These different beginning points reflect the differences of their worldview. While the neo-Platonic tradition views the world as an object to be understood and explained by humans as subjects, I-Ching views the world, including humans, as a self-contained dynamic universe, in which all beings find their existence in relation to others. While the neo-Platonic tradition considers ontological being preceding cosmological relationship in its ontologically focused worldview, I-Ching views dynamic cosmological relationship preceding ontological being. This

²²³ Is Whitehead also in this paradigm? I would say no because he grounds his organic philosophy on relationship preceding ontological being according to the scientific discovery of his age.

²²⁴ In this respect, the yin-yang paradigm is also different from Paul Tillich’s dynamic ontology. While Tillich insists on being’s participation in dynamic correlations, the yin-yang insists on dynamic relations constructing and deconstructing situational and changeological being. While Tillich’s starting point is being, the yin-yang’s starting point is relationship.

relational and dynamic worldview of Asians becomes a ground for the wisdom of I-Ching, which also provides a good basis for transforming the myth of oneness.

Roger Ames, a comparative study scholar on Greek and China, articulates the difference of their beginning points,

In contrast to the more analytic Western philosophical dialectic, beginning its career with the decontextualizing metaphysical sensibilities of the classical Greeks, and later reiterating these assumptions with the Cartesian objectivism, the philosophical dominant with the Chinese tradition is resolutely historicist and genealogical. As such, it is resistant to articulation in theoretical and conceptual terms that presupposes unfamiliar notions such as objectivity and strict identity, notions that have underwritten dualistic thinking as a Western cultural dominant. Conceptualization requires principles, univocal meanings, correspondence between propositions and state-of-affairs, and a sense of reference – assumptions that, while of central importance in Western epistemology, have had minimal relevance in the axiologically driven Chinese traditions of ethics, aesthetics, and religion.²²⁵

Ames, in his comparison of Plato and Confucius, also insists on the difference of the ontological and relational view to understand realities,

First [Plato] is the analytical approach to defining terms in the pursuit of the *whatness* of things and events: the reality behind appearance, the univocal aspect behind the many instances, the literal behind the metaphorical, the root meaning behind the history of a terms usage. Second [Confucius] is the narrative approach to defining terms that attempts to locate things and events within a web of semantic and phonetic associations.²²⁶

Ames' understanding of Chinese culture, especially in his emphasis on the relational character of realities, closely relates to Whitehead's understanding of an actual entity in his organic philosophy.

Persons are not perceived as super-ordinated ready-made individuals, as agents who stand independent of their actions, but are rather ongoing "events" defined

²²⁵ Roger T. Ames, "Thinking through Comparisons: Analytical and Narrative Methods for Cultural Understanding," *Early China/Ancient Greek: Thinking Through Comparisons*, ed. Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant (New York: SUNY Press, 2002), 96.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

functionally by their constitutive roles and relationships as they are performed within the context of their specific families and communities...²²⁷

2. Structure

To understand the structure of I-Ching,²²⁸ it is indispensable to rely on the commentaries. Among the commentaries, The Great Treatise especially contains many significant concepts, such as T'ai Chi (太極), yin(陰) and yang(陽), and change (易). They teach that there is chaos in the beginning. As order develops in chaos, two forces, yin and yang, are born. This movement from chaos to order and the relation of yin and yang are understood as "T'ai Chi." The dynamic interaction of yin and yang and its development, so called "change," produces all things.²²⁹ The Great Treatise explains this as follows:

This is why the *Changes* have great constancy. This gives life to the two properties; the two properties give life to the four images; the four images give life to the eight trigrams; the eight trigrams give life to auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, and auspiciousness and inauspiciousness give life to the great enterprise.²³⁰

One yin and one yang is called the Way (Tao, 道). What is tied to it is goodness; what completes it is life.²³¹

²²⁷ Ibid., 108.

²²⁸ There are two parts in I-Ching; one is Ching (the text) and the other Chuan (Zhuàn) (the commentaries). Ching is the descriptions of 64 hexagrams and the meaning of 384 lines in the hexagrams. The text of I-Ching is simply 64 hexagrams and their descriptions, which are very abstract and difficult to understand due to their symbolic character. Therefore, many later explanations of I-Ching are based on the commentaries (十翼), such as "the Great Treatise of I-Ching," "Treatise of Remarks on the Trigrams," and so on.

²²⁹ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 24.

²³⁰ *I Ching*, Shaughnessy, 199.

²³¹ Ibid., 193.

Park also explains T'ai Chi as follows:

Primordial stage before universe is T'ai Chi. Two bipolar forces (spirits) of yin and yang are from T'ai Chi. Yin and yang are opposite forces and complementary forces, and fundamental basis producing ten thousand things of the world.²³²

The process to produce all things is presented: T'ai Chi is composed of yin, symbolized as the divided line (- -) and yang, symbolized as the undivided line (---). The dual combination of these lines becomes four Diagrams (the great yin, the lesser yin, the lesser yang, and the great yang). The triple combination becomes eight Trigrams, which represent heaven, lake, fire, thunder, wind, water, mountain, and earth. Finally, the multiple of the Trigrams become 64 Hexagrams, containing 384 lines, (6 lines in each Hexagram). These 64 hexagrams represent all the events in the universe.²³³

Beyond the commentaries, the meaning of T'ai Chi and yin and yang needs more explanation because I-Ching lacks a systematic or comprehensive structure and uses highly condensed and obscure symbols like numbers. Another main reason why I-Ching is not easily understood is it has a different philosophical basis than common western ways of thinking. Lee points out why I-Ching is mysterious to most westerners:

To understand the meaning of yin and yang (T'ai Chi), we must alter the basis of our thinking from an ontological to a changeological assumption.²³⁴

Accepting the limitations of our own background, we open our horizon for new possibilities. In addition, it is fortunate that these concepts of T'ai Chi and yin and yang are widely discovered in early Chinese texts such as Tao-Te Ching.

²³² *I Ching*, trans. Il Bong Park (Seoul: Kyomoon, 1997), 19.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Lee, *Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 27.

3. I-Ching (易經) and Tao-Te Ching (道德經)

Julia Ching in her *Chinese Religions*, relates the influence of I-Ching to Confucianism and Taoism:

We may associate Confucianism and its emphasis on action with the yang force, and Taoism and its preference for peace and quiet with the yin force.²³⁵

This indicates how heavily these two great schools of thought are influenced by I-Ching. Lee also explains that both Confucianism and Taoism are developed on the basis of I-Ching, although with a little different approach toward the concept of T'ai Chi. Confucianism accepts it as a moral principle of relationship that must be implanted in the order of society by human efforts, and cultivates people to practice this moral principle in their everyday life. Taoism accepts it differently as a cosmological principle of the universe and lives with it and learns from it by being unintentional.²³⁶

However, the Taoist thought of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu should be separated from the religion of Taoism, as developed and widely spread late in the 3rd century CE. Some religious sects of Taoism compromised and somewhat reversed its original thought to earn popularity by only focusing on its characteristics of divination and physical eternal life.²³⁷ If we consider this historical distortion of Taoism, it is possible to see that Taoist thought contains the core meaning of I-Ching in a compelling way and structure, especially in Tao Te Ching. Jae-Hyuk Yang points out:

The meaning of Tao as the 'original and eternal way' of Tao Te Ching is the same as the meaning of 'change' (T'ai Chi) of I Ching.²³⁸

²³⁵ Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 95.

²³⁶ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 23.

²³⁷ Ching, 102.

²³⁸ Jae-Hyuk Yang, *Eastern Philosophy: How Is It Different From Western Philosophy?* (Seoul: Sonamu, 1998), 79.

T'ai Chi, yin and yang, and change (易) are best known in the Tao Te Ching. Han also argues that the structure of the Tao Te Ching is intentionally formatted in accord with the structural distinctiveness of I-Ching.²³⁹

Chapter 25 of the Tao Te Ching describes the concept of Tao (道) as the “self-transforming universe,” also exactly known as T'ai Chi (太極) in I-Ching.

There is something featureless yet complete,
born before heaven and earth;
Silent, it stood alone and unchanging.
We may regard it as the mother of heaven and earth.
Not knowing its name, I style it the “Tao.”
If forced to give it a name, I would call it “great.”²⁴⁰

B. YIN (陰) AND YANG (陽)

1. Basic Concept & Meaning

In this section, we limit our discussion to the meaning of yin and yang, not the yin-yang paradigm, which is a much broader and more complicated issue. That will be dealt with later in this chapter. What are yin and yang? According to the commentaries of I-Ching, they are the first generation from T'ai Chi, the Great Ultimate. They are the first things acknowledged in the universe. It is popular to think that yin and yang are + and – of electricity, or man and woman. This popular understanding is both right and wrong. It is right in terms of their bipolar character, but it is wrong in terms of its presupposition of their being only opposite to each other. It is right

²³⁹ Han, 107.

²⁴⁰ Lao-Tzu (老子), *Tao Te Ching* (道德經), trans. Victor H. Mair, (New York: Bantam, 1990), 90.

in terms of being paired together, but it is wrong in terms of their substance-oriented, being-oriented presupposition that electrical + and man are always changelessly yang.

According to the original source of yin and yang, I-Ching, yang is represented or symbolized by (---) undivided line and yin by (- -) divided line. All 4 diagrams, 8 trigrams, and 64 hexagrams are the combination of these two lines.²⁴¹ This description of I-Ching gives us significant clues to understand the meaning of yin and yang. First, yin and yang are not substantial being but invisible force or energy which only appears in the relationships of the universe. They are only understood by “symbols” like the divided and undivided line. There is nothing in the world that can be identified with yin or yang. They can only symbolize yin and yang.²⁴²

Second, yin and yang must be understood in the form of pairs of something representing yin and something representing yang, because yin and yang are defined by the “relationship” between the two. When the pair breaks, neither any longer represent yin or yang. The yin and yang concept is only possible when they remain as a pair. In this respect, yin cannot exist without yang, just as yang cannot exist without yin. Some pairs representing yin and yang are: earth and heaven, moon and sun, cold and heat, female and male, night and day, downward and upward, feminine and masculine, negative and positive, rest and motion, quiescence and activity, death and life, etc.²⁴³

²⁴¹ *I-Ching*, Noh, 232.

²⁴² In I-Ching, yin and yang are described as a symbol: the divided line and the undivided line. I think there is an important reason why I-Ching uses symbols rather than objective things such as sun and moon or male and female. When we name something, we tend to be limited to the name rather than the distinctiveness of the real thing. This is also what Lao-tzu insists on in the first sentence in Tao Te Ching: “The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao.”

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Third, there is no ultimate, static, and changeless yin or yang, even within the form of their pair. A pair representing yin and yang can be reversed according to their relationship and situation. For example, a woman and a man may represent yin and yang, but only in pairing as male and female agents generating another human being. If the relationship changes, this form of the yin and yang structure changes. In a relationship of female teacher and male student, yin and yang are reversed. In this relationship, a man as a student is yin and a woman as a teacher is yang. Moreover, if this man (student) and woman (teacher) attend a meeting where the principal speaks, both become yin (recipients) because the principal is yang (addressor).

Fourth, the yin and yang pair does not always stay as it is. It constantly changes and changes. A man or a woman cannot be bound to “a” yin-yang pair. The relationship breaks down endlessly. At the same time, it multiplies endlessly. In this respect, it is not completely right to understand the relation of yin and yang as only “dualistic.” It is both dualistic and non-dualistic at the same time, because the yin-yang contains multiplicity and plurality immanently and systematically.

Again it is crucial for those educated under the influence of the Aristotelian ontological concept of ‘unchanging substance’ to understand these 4 characteristics of yin and yang as philosophically revolutionary:

The yin and yang way of thinking reverses our Western ontological assumption that change is a function of being.²⁴⁴

Under this “changeological,” understanding of the universe, the absolutization of one or the constant domination of one over the other is impossible. This logically leads to the conclusion that there is no “perfect (in a completed form) One” or superior one, who/which

²⁴⁴ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 27.

becomes the origin or the ultimate ground for others. Rather, the universe is filled with uncountable relationships on the basis of yin and yang, which create, affect, move into, influence, and are interdependent with each other. They “co”exist. It is the only way they can exist. Yin and yang cannot be represented by either A and not A, or A and less A. They are totally complementary A and B. Moreover, A and B are completely interrelated, not by a fixed form of hierarchy, but by dynamic interdependency. The yin and yang relationship therefore has an ever-changing “*situational and changeological*” hierarchy, not a “*static or immutable*” hierarchy.²⁴⁵

2. T'ai Chi Diagram (太極圖)



<Diagram IV-1> T'ai Chi Diagram

The meaning and dynamic of yin and yang is interpreted powerfully in the “Tai-Chi Diagram (太極圖)” although this diagram was discovered and introduced much later by the Sung dynasty scholar, Chou Tun-yi in the 11th century.²⁴⁶ It is a circle divided by an “S-shape” line which separates the circle into two portions representing yin and yang <Diagram IV-1>. It is believed that Chou Tun-yi made the diagram on the basis of the teachings and traditions regarding yin and yang and T'ai Chi. Then his successor, Chu Hsi, philosophically developed the

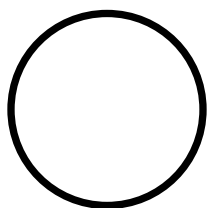
²⁴⁵ To understand this situational and changeological hierarchy, the meaning of “I (易)” as a “chameleon” is helpful because the yin-yang hierarchy just like a chameleon changes according situations.

²⁴⁶ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 39.

theories around it.²⁴⁷ Chu Hsi's synthesizing approach within the Confucian tradition took a more metaphysical approach by combining the Buddhist and Taoist cosmological understandings.

This more philosophically developed understanding in the "T'ai Chi Diagram" is what I call the "yin-yang paradigm." It differs from the understanding of the religion of Taoism that developed later, which focused on divination and the mystical way for eternal life. It is also not the understanding of the yin-yang school, popularized later as a sect of Taoism and Confucianism.

The T'ai Chi Diagram has a multi-dimensional meaning despite its limitation as a two-dimensional diagram. It explains ingeniously the complex Chinese philosophy of understanding the universe and human beings. The yin-yang paradigm is fully embodied in this diagram. It clearly hits the center of the target (中) by penetrating the core message of the Chinese way of thinking. Thus, it should be analyzed carefully, not to miss any single dimension within it. When we fully understand the structure and meaning of the "T'ai Chi Diagram," our eyes will be opened to the new horizon of the yin-yang paradigm.



<Diagram IV-2> "One" in T'ai Chi Diagram

First, it is in "One" circle as <Diagram IV-2> shows. It is the "Unity" of two parts (yin

²⁴⁷ Ching, 158. The diagram is popularized and philosophically discussed first by Chou Tun-yi and Chu Hsi.

and yang). This represents that there is clearly “One” origin, universality, commonality, and unifying power (structure) that fundamentally ties yin and yang together. But do the T’ai Chi diagram and the yin-yang paradigm lend themselves to a “dualistic” understanding? The answers are “Yes” and “No.” The most fundamental and original structure of this diagram is “One” circle. For example, if a man and a woman make a pair representing yang and yin, there is a commonality of a man and woman in “human being.” Yin (woman) and yang (man) are unified in the concept of the universality of human being. If the yin and yang represented the humanity and divinity of Jesus, the circle represents that Jesus was one person. There is an original form or commonality in all things in the universe.²⁴⁸ The oneness of the yin-yang paradigm should be the starting point and fundamental basis for understanding it.

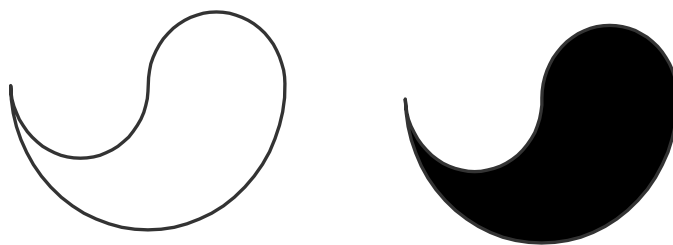
This “Oneness” does not completely differ from the “Oneness” in our earlier discussion of the “myth of oneness.” The differences between the western myth of oneness and the oneness of yin and yang is that the former emphasizes Oneness as the only ontological foundation for all things, while the latter emphasizes oneness not only as a foundation but also a beginning which contains the dynamic interaction of yin and yang within it. The oneness represented in the yin-yang paradigm has neither a *fixed* ontological nor soteriological hierarchy, but a dynamic (relational and changeological) hierarchy because neither side has a *fixed* higher ontological value or superiority to others. The fact that a man and a woman are both human does not mean that their common humanity is more important than their differentiation as man and woman. Rather, it strengthens the point that they are interrelated. In this sense, it is differentiated from the Neo-Platonic *fixed* ontological notion of the “One.” There is “One” in every yin and yang paradigm. However, there are dynamics and differentiations within “One.”

²⁴⁸ The Greek concept of “Being” is found in this understanding of one circle in T’ai Chi. But it is essential that this concept of circle is seen as only one of many factors to understand the yin-yang paradigm.

Chu Hsi's understanding of T'ai Chi, though it is rationalistic interpretation, gives a helpful insight concerning the oneness of the yin-yang paradigm. Wing-Tsit Chan explains:

Chu Hsi held that the Great Ultimate (T'ai Chi) has no physical form but consists of principle in its totality. All actual and potential principles are contained in the Great Ultimate, which is complete in all things as a whole and in each thing individually. The relationship between the Great Ultimate in the universe and the Great Ultimate in each individual thing is not one of whole and part, but one similar to moonlight shining on objects. Each object has its own moonlight but this moonlight is moonlight as a whole.²⁴⁹

This understanding of the oneness of T'ai Chi by Chu Hsi creates a clear distinction from the ontological and soteriological oneness of the myth of oneness. T'ai Chi is not ontologically separated being from all other, but is a principle through which all things may rise and cease. At the same time, T'ai Chi may be found in a concrete being. In this respect, wherever there is oneness, there is twoness (multiplicity). Wherever there is twoness (multiplicity), there is oneness. The oneness of the yin-yang paradigm cannot be interpreted in a fixed ontology based on an absolute and static being as a starting point, but a dynamic relational ontology based on relationships because it is at one and the same time two and multiple.



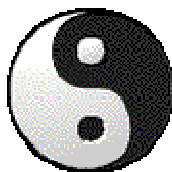
<Diagram IV-3> Yang and Yin

Second, there is also two, the darker grey and lighter white portions representing yin and

²⁴⁹ Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 590.

yang.²⁵⁰ These “two” have an opposite character, which is complementary of each other. The one (T’ai Chi) contains/produces two (yin and yang). The one changes into two. The one has two in itself. Although the one is not two in an ontological sense, the one is two in its dynamic relation. The yin-yang paradigm is oneness containing “two-ness.” It is also “two-ness” containing oneness. A person is yang as a man in his relation to a woman as yin. Although he is yang in the specific relation with a woman, his ontological identity as a man (yang) changes according to different contexts of relation when the yang and yin are found within him as his body and mind, his skin and flesh, his outer and inner personality, and his father-ness and son-ness. Jesus’ humanity and divinity in Christian theology is a good example of the “oneness” and “two-ness” of the yin-yang paradigm. Jesus is oneness as God, and Jesus is two-ness as divinity and humanity. Lee accurately explains the influence of the yin-yang paradigm in the Asian people’s mind.

The cosmology of East Asian people can be summarized best in the bipolarity of nature, which operates cyclically in terms of growth and decline or the waxing and waning of the moon. Everything in the world has its opposite. The opposites are necessary but also complementary to each other. These opposites are known in terms of yin and yang, which constitute the basic principle of the universe.²⁵¹



<Diagram IV-4> T’ai Chi with Two Dots and “S-Shape”

²⁵⁰ Yin and yang are relative terms, literally the shadowed area and the sun-lit area of the mountain slopes.

²⁵¹ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 24.

Third, these two are inter-related with each other. Yin and yang are not an unrelated, independent two. They are inter-connected, complementary, coexisting, and co-arising. The two small dots in <Diagram IV-4> represent this interconnectedness of yin and yang. Yang explains the difference between the yin-yang paradigm and western dualism.

This yin-yang dualism is different from the western good-evil dualism. The latter is the absolute dualism focusing on “adversarial conflict,” choice of either one or the other, or the domination of one over the other. The former is more harmonized and complementary focusing on one’s existence in relation with the other. The fundamental basis of yin-yang dualism is “nature-dialectic,” which presupposes all things are from dialectics (dynamic) of yin and yang.²⁵²

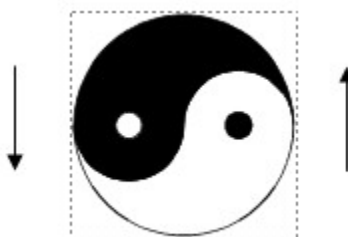
There are two dots in the centers of yin and yang, a yin-dot in yang and a yang-dot in yin. These dots represent that yin is in the center of yang and yang is also in the center of yin.²⁵³ In the core of yin, there is yang. In the core of yang, there is yin. Moreover, they need each other to exist. Their interrelatedness is the firm ground of their existence. Neither can exist without the other. For example, a man only exists because his mother gave him birth. A woman exists because her father was there. In a man’s heart, there is naturally a woman, and vice versa. It means not only the sexual attraction between a man and a woman, but also a feminine side found in a man and a masculine side in a woman. A human being is created from the relationship between a human egg and a sperm. We call neither an egg nor a sperm an individual human being. The relationship is prior to an individual being.

Fourth, the yan-yang has an S-shape. <Diagram IV-4> This S-shape symbolizes that yin and yang do not remain stationary in a circle. There is a constant dynamic movement of yin and yang into each other. Yin and yang are not static, dead, completed, changeless, but they are

²⁵² Yang, *Eastern Philosophy*, 76-77. The translation from Korean is mine.

²⁵³ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 28.

dynamic, alive, in-process, and changing. This S-shape movement between yin and yang is called “Change (易),” which is one of the most important concepts of the yin-yang paradigm.²⁵⁴



<Diagram IV-5> Movement of Yin and Yang to Each Other

<Diagram IV-5> shows the yang (lighter white) is moving, pushing, and expanding up, as the right arrow shows. This pushing up movement of yang, however, helps the yin (darker grey) to push down, as the left arrow shows. Then it comes back to the yang itself. One movement affects the other, but it also affects itself. Yang’s expanding action is its self-diminishing action and the yin’s diminishing action is its self-expanding action. This means the yin-yang paradigm understands the universe and its life and death as organically interconnected and the relationship is prior to an individual being. My action on the other eventually comes back to myself. For example, in terms of the yin-yang of humanity and nature, we often manipulate nature for the sake of our comfort and interest. It may seem appropriate to utilize “things” in the world. Eventually, however, we experience the consequences of the human manipulation of nature. Ecological crises are not only a global or national concern anymore, but affect our life at a daily level. It also may move in the other direction. Natural disasters can have a devastating affect on human life. In response, humans develop technology to prevent their deadly impact and

²⁵⁴ The concept of “Change” will be discussed in the next section in detail.

results. Then this human-developed technology is used to control and sometimes manipulate the natural cycle of nature.

This kind of movement between yin and yang (humans and nature) can be negative and destructive, but it is also positive and creative. In the midst of this destructive chain of ecological crises, the efforts to prevent and break the destructive chain and recover the interdependency of humans and nature also emerge. Park articulates this interconnectedness in I-Ching by stating:

Primordial stage before universe is T'ai Chi. These two bipolar forces (spirits) of yin and yang are from Tai-Chi. Yin and yang are opposite forces and complementary forces, and the fundamental basis producing ten thousand things of the world.²⁵⁵

Another significant characteristic in this S-shape is that it also represents the “stillness” of yin and yang. Despite their constant movement toward each other, the portion that each occupies (the darker area and lighter area) remains spatially constant. Their locations change but their spatial area does not, because the expanding action automatically leads to its own diminution. This characteristic of the yin and yang paradigm represents “changelessness” in the midst of “change.” Everything changes, but everything does not change. For instance, my marriage life changes everyday by interaction with my partner and by the encounters with others (friends, books, and so on). However, the fact that I am in my marriage does not change. My love for my partner changes moment by moment, but the fact that I love her does not change. Love changes, but love does not change.

Fifth, it multiplies. This is an important characteristic of the yin and yang, which is expressed in the T'ai Chi Diagram. It shows how the yin and yang is one, two, and many but

²⁵⁵ *I Ching*, Park, 19. The translation from Korean is mine.

neither one, two, nor many. It represents that the Diagram and the yin-yang paradigm is one within two, two within many, but also many within two, two within one. For example, I am a man as one. But within me, there are two, a masculine side and a feminine side, body and mind, right hand and left hand, and so on. However, within me and my two sides, I am a father, student, pastor, teacher, son, husband, patient, counselor, church member, exerciser, trainer, leader, follower, and so on. I am a complex, dynamic, and relational entity within a process of constant change and changelessness. As we find yin and yang within one circle (characteristic no. 1), each yin and yang can be divided into another pair of yin and yang, yin and yang, yin and yang, yin and yang, and so on endlessly. It multiplies. However, it does not break apart, go away, and disappear. It comes back and remains as it was in the beginning as yin and yang. It cannot be imagined in a two dimensional diagram. This characteristic will be discussed thoroughly in the next section on the concept of “change.”

These five characteristics of the yin-yang paradigm shown in the “T’ai Chi Diagram” are the key to understanding the core message of I-Ching, which is one of the dominant and influential paradigms in East Asian culture. Kim’s observation is right:

While the western philosophical tradition is the footnote of Plato, Chinese philosophical tradition is that of I Ching.²⁵⁶

The yin-yang paradigm therefore will be a main tool to examine the critical issues in the concluding chapter of this dissertation. There is another way, however, to approach the concept of the yin-yang paradigm. The concept of “Change (易),” which means the relation and movement between yin and yang in the yin-yang paradigm, is critical and significant for our understanding of Asian wisdom.

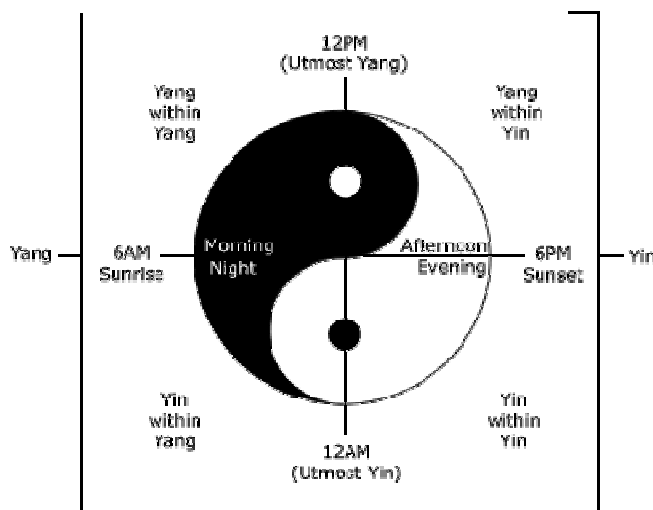
²⁵⁶ Yong Ok Kim, *Dong-yang-hak Uh-tuk-ke Hal-gut-in-ga (How to do Asian Studies)* (Seoul: Tong Na-mu, 1990), 288.

C. CHANGE (易)

1. Traditional Understanding of Change (易)

In the term I-Ching, “I” is translated by the English word, “Change.” In Chinese it is “易.” Although there are many different opinions about the origin of this Chinese word, two answers are most often accepted. The first is based on its visible “shape.” Those who understand this Chinese character as a hieroglyph explain that it comes from the shape of a “chameleon (𪛗).”

The second is based on the two components that form this character. If we divide it into two parts, “日” means “sun” and “月” means “moon.” I find the second explanation more acceptable, because it not only has more meaning but also is based on the ancient Asian practice of careful observation of the universe. According to the second theory, “change” represents what is observed from day to night and night to day, the movement and change of sun and moon (see diagram VI-6). Sun and moon always exist. They keep following and replacing each other. When the sun becomes brighter and brighter, the moon is actually getting closer and closer to rising on the horizon. The day of the sun is only meaningful because there is the night of the moon, as a human being can be energetic only when he/she has enough rest.



<Diagram IV-6> T'ai Chi according to Times of Day

Using another illustration, if the sun represents the shiny side, the moon represents the shady side of a mountain. The two sides are determined by the reflective positions of the mountain and the sun. The shiny side is not always shiny, as the shady side is not always shady. It reverses. This change produces life and death. If one place is only shiny, no plants can grow because of heat and dryness, just as there are no plants on the shady side. This is the basic understanding of change as seen in its origin in the Chinese character “I (易).”

Beyond the interpretation based on its hieroglyphic character, “I (易, change)” has been traditionally understood in three different ways²⁵⁷: 1) “change,” 2) “changelessness,” and 3) “many dimensions of universe through 64 hexagrams and 384 lines (plurality).”

The first understanding of “I” means that everything in the universe is constantly changing. Who I am today is different from who I was yesterday. I am changing physically, mentally, and spiritually. All parts of me are changing and there is no question of it. A shiny side

²⁵⁷ Lee and Choi, *Joo-Yeak with Cartoons*, 35.

changes to a shadowy side. A dry side changes to a moist side. A baby changes to a child, a youth, and an adult. All things in the universe are in a constant process of change.

The second means that there is something changeless in the midst of change. To understand this second meaning is rather complicated. If we look at the symbol of yin and yang, there is an S-shaped line between them. It represents the constant inter-action between two forces, as already discussed above. Yin is constantly moving toward yang and yang is also moving toward yin. They are constantly changing. However, the S-shape boundary between yin and yang and their portion of space are not changed. There is “changelessness” in the midst of “change.” Who I was yesterday and who I am today is different. I have changed. However, in the midst of this change, a person’s identity remains. There is “changelessness” in “change.” The meaning of change in the yin-yang paradigm includes this “changelessness” within “change.”

The third meaning presents the concept of “change” in the universe as known through the movement from T’ai Chi to the 64 Hexagrams and their 384 lines in I-Ching. It is the process from one to two, two to four, four to eight, eight to sixty four. The Great Ultimate (T’ai Chi) is divided in yin and yang.



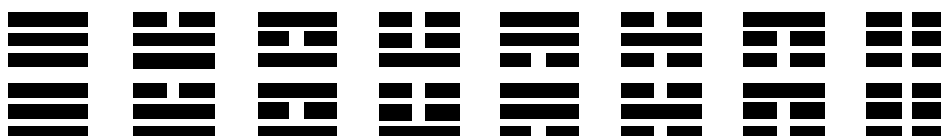
Combining the two, we have the four stages of Yin and Yang.



With the addition of an extra line, the Eight Trigrams were formed, illustrating all the directions.



The Combination of two Trigrams forms the 64 hexagrams, symbolizing all possible phenomena of the Universe.



This movement (change) to form the hexagrams represents the third meaning of change. The 64 Hexagrams themselves and the 384 lines by which they are composed contain the meaning of change because they represent all the changes possible in the universe. It is not limited to the numbers 64 and 384, which represent “multitude” and “plurality.”

Lee describes this movement from the T'ai Chi of yin and yang producing 4, 8, 64 with the term “procreation.” “The process of change requires “procreation.”²⁵⁸ Although he calls it “procreation,” this process is not only “creating” but also “dividing, breaking, and changing.” T'ai Chi is divided, changed, and broken into yin and yang; yin and yang are broken into 4 diagrams; 4 diagrams are broken into 8 Trigrams; 8 Trigrams are broken into 64 hexagrams. In this sense, “procreation” is “being broken.” The meaning of “being broken” here represents “being changed” and therefore “emptying” itself, as the yin’s expansion (procreation) toward

²⁵⁸ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 62.

yang is simultaneously the yin's reduction (emptying) of itself. I-Ching describes,

When yang has reached its great strength, the dark power of yin is born within its depth; night begins at midday when yang breaks up and begins to change into yin.²⁵⁹

This creating and emptying of the yin and yang show another significant aspect of the meaning of change: “returning.” This dialogical interaction of the yin and yang from one through the 64 Hexagrams to 386 lines (many) is understood also as the process of “returning.” It means that all changes from One to multiple hexagrams and also from the multiples to One have the dynamic of yin and yang. It is called “the perfect change of yin and yang in Tai’ Chi.” This traditional understanding of change leads to a deeper level of discussion in the next section. The traditional meaning of change from One, through diagram, trigram, to hexagram will be interpreted as “self-creating, “self-emptying,” and therefore “self-returning.”

2. Change as both “Self-Creating (生)” and “Self-Emptying (空),” therefore “Self-Returning(道)”

There are several points that need to be clarified at the beginning of the discussion: first, the usage of the term “self” here needs to be differentiated from the western understanding of self as (1) an individual as a basis of sole existence, (2) the center of the universe, and (3) only a psychological dimension of a human being. None of these correctly represents the Asian meaning of self. The term “self” here is a communal self found in Asian culture, which emphasizes its inter-connectedness with others. This self is a humble part of the universe, not the center of the universe. It also includes all things, not only human self. James E. Will in his

²⁵⁹ The Secret of Golden Flower, trans. to German by Richard Wilhelm, with the commentary of Carl G. Jung (1929), rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD, 1932), 85.

Universal God, writes a significant account of the ‘relational self,’ which is correlated with this Asian self understanding. In order to understand human wholeness, he claims that a person should be understood as both individual and social self, with both external and internal relations. He writes,

In terms of relational ontology, this means persons must have both external relations that limit and affect but do not constitute them and internal relations that are constitutive of their own being. Some relations may be objectified because they are external. They may be experienced and understood in the scientific mode of subject-object relations, for such relations tell us only something of what we are. But other relations may not be objectified and abstracted from the concreteness of our personal being, for they tell us who we are.²⁶⁰

Second, using the verb “creating” rather than the noun “creation” emphasizes the endless processes (movements) of change that never stop. Given these clarifications, we may understand change as “self-creating” and “self-emptying,” therefore, “self-returning.”

The first meaning of change is “self-creating.” It is what Jung Young Lee calls “procreation.” The actions of yin and yang in relation to each other are the movements of expansion. Yin is constantly expanding toward yang just as yang is also expanding toward yin. They are expanding into each other. They are constantly self-creating. It is the self-creating of T’ai Chi, the self-creating of change.

The second meaning of change is “self-emptying,” which was previously expressed as “being broken.” This is not a dimension separated from self-creating, but is the other side of self-creating. The term self-emptying is chosen because it signifies a clear meaning under the influence of Buddhism.²⁶¹ In terms of yin and yang, yin is diminished when it expands itself to yang. In the same respect, yang is diminished when it expands itself to yin. In this sense, the

²⁶⁰ James Will, *Universal God*, 163-164.

²⁶¹ Although I borrowed the term ‘emptying’ from the Buddhist term “emptiness” to understand change in Tao, this meaning of self-emptying cannot be identified with the original Buddhist meaning of “emptiness.”

expansion of yin and yang is also the diminution of yin and yang. When they gain, they also lose. When they lose, they also gain. Relating yin and yang to the concept of change, they keep emptying themselves and breaking into diagrams. The diagrams keep emptying themselves to break into trigrams. The trigrams keep emptying themselves to break into the hexagrams. This is a process of “self-emptying.” In this respect, self-creating and self-emptying are not the same, but they are essentially correlated as the two sides of a coin. Without self-creating, there is no self-emptying. Without self-emptying, there is no self-creating. The change of each is influenced by the other. In the midst of self-creating, there is self-emptying, and self-emptying is in the midst of self-creating.

The third dimension of the meaning of change is “self-returning.” By understanding the interdependency of self-creating and self-emptying, the third meaning is clarified. What is the result of self-creating and self-emptying? Is something new being made out of them? Are they different at the end from their beginning point? Yes and No! Yes, they were creating, influencing, and producing a myriad of different things. They are all new! They are uncountable. However, all of them is not totally new. They all have the same dynamic of yin and yang, the dimensions of self-creating and self-emptying within them and their dynamic interaction with others. In this respect, they are self-returning: they are not creating, but self-creating, and they are not emptying, but self-emptying because they are all returning to their fundamental ground, which is the relation of yin and yang and the constant dynamic of yin and yang. Although they are constantly creating and emptying themselves, they are staying within the boundary of themselves, which is the dynamic of change.

Yin and yang are self-creating and self-emptying, therefore “self-returning.” The usage of the term “therefore,” however, does not mean that self-returning expresses a synthesis or dialectic of self-creating and self-emptying. Rather, self-returning is the goal or aim, while self-creating and self-emptying emphasize the process of change. What is the aim of change in yin and yang? Self-returning is the answer. In contrast to the western linear understanding of history, the change in I-Ching does not assume “progress.” Rather, it pursues “self-returning.” In terms of yin and yang, two forces keep interacting with each other. However, their interaction is circular, they keep returning to themselves. In this sense, the change of yin and yang as self-creating and self-emptying is self-returning. In terms of the change from T’ai Chi to the hexagrams, although it seems to move toward other goals, all diagrams, trigrams, and hexagrams aim to return to the perfect change of T’ai Chi. Change in I-Ching is, therefore, “self-returning” through “self-creating” and “self-emptying.”

3. Holistic Understanding of Change and Trinity

Despite the long and complicated discussion of the yin-yang paradigm and the meaning of change, it may still be difficult for us to grasp the clear picture of them. There are two reasons. First, there is a language gap. The language of English is heavily influenced by the western way of thinking. Thus, we tend to presuppose that we know the meaning of something when a certain word is used. It often blocks understanding of the real meaning within the particular context of this discussion.²⁶² Second, there is a thinking process gap. Most of us are influenced by a

²⁶² Because of this, Process philosophers and post-modern scholars created new words to explain their ideas instead of using the terms already known to people.

western education that focuses on human rationality and its logical process. In terms of the usually accepted formal logic, this discussion simply makes no sense.

To overcome the limitations caused by these gaps, we need to find widely used terms in an established form of western discourse to explain the meaning of change. The terms used in Trinitarian discussions have strong analogies to yin and yang.

The traditional Christian Trinitarian discourse about God provides an example where the meaning of change can be discovered. Throughout Christian history, after many painful theological conflicts and even religious persecutions, the Trinitarian doctrine has been interpreted as a “mystery,” which cannot be understood rationally but needs to be believed with faith. The concept of Trinity and the yin-yang paradigm share many characteristics. First, they are both symbols of realities, not the realities themselves. As “the Trinity may be not a reality of divine nature, but our description of how God is known to us in Christ,²⁶³” the yin-yang paradigm is not a reality of nature, but a description of how nature is perceived by us. Second, the Trinity is a doctrine that teaches that God is “Three in One and One in Three” and that “Jesus has both humanity and divinity.” It is a paradox which we cannot understand with our ordinary formal logic. Our normal logical process does not accept that one is three or that God is human. However, the Church has claimed it as its established doctrine, and it has been interpreted as a mystery beyond logical measure. The yin-yang paradigm similarly claims that one is two and one is both yin and yang, which like the Trinity contrasts with our common logic.

We now must face fundamental hermeneutical questions. Why is the Trinity a mystery? How can a divine being be a human being? All of these questions are raised because we in the

²⁶³ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 50.

West use the dominant “dualistic, either-or way of thinking,” which derives from the ontology-based neo-Platonic thought. Lee explains that this way of thinking is fundamentally grounded in Aristotle’s logical axiom of the “excluded middle.”²⁶⁴ There is no place for “in-between.” Our first point is that the Trinitarian way of thinking and the yin-yang way of thinking are “both-and” ways of thinking. Secondly both the Trinitarian doctrine and the yin-yang paradigm are based on a “relationship-oriented” paradigm rather than a “being-oriented paradigm.” They claim that relationships are the fundamental mode of reality. Suchocki, in the section interpreting her relational model of the Trinity, articulates this characteristic clearly:

To summarize the model, existence is through and through relational, with every actuality, whether a subatomic particle or God, demonstrating relational dynamics. In turn, relationality constitutes reality as becoming, as change.²⁶⁵

In his discussion of the universal relationality of God, Will also interprets how the theistic concept of God was transformed by the relationality of Jesus:

The gracious and just relationality of Jesus...had become so religiously ultimate that it opened Christian theology relationally to include Jesus as “God from God, light from light, true God from true God.” The process of reinterpreting the holy and transcendent God as relational began by fusing a traditional ontological horizon with the Jesus horizon of the Christian community in the concept of the Trinity.²⁶⁶

As the Trinity focuses on how God is interrelated within Godself with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the yin-yang paradigm focuses on the relationship within themselves. The Trinitarian doctrine desires to show how God is revealed in Jesus Christ through the incarnation event and how God remains with us through the Holy Spirit. It does not have an interest in how God, Jesus

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 61.

²⁶⁵ Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *God Christ Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology* (New York: Cross Road, 1995), 253.

²⁶⁶ Will, *Universal God*, 171.

and the Holy Spirit are different and similar. It only concentrates on how Jesus was closely related to God and how they relate to each other, as expressed in such biblical accounts as the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.

Third, both the Trinitarian doctrine and the yin-yang paradigm transform absolute dualism, which presupposes that infinite Being is beyond time and space. They seek reconciliation of the infinite and the finite. They overcome the limitation of the ontological static understanding and suggest a "changeological" understanding that interprets all realities as consistently changing and organically inter-connected within complex relationships. Lee calls this a complementary dualism in which Jesus' humanity does not conflict with his divinity, just as yin and yang are harmonized in T'ai Chi. This transformation from absolute dualism to complementary dualism gives a new perspective that helps understand something that we had thought to be paradoxical and contradictory, but now see as harmonious. Under absolute dualism, if Jesus was once human, he is a human, who cannot be a divine being at the same time. However, in complementary dualism, Jesus' humanity and divinity are harmonized, and Jesus is more meaningful to us and to God.

Fourth, both the Trinitarian doctrine and the yin-yang paradigm have self-creating and self-emptying characteristics. As the yin-yang paradigm emphasizes procreation from the dynamic relationship between yin and yang, the Trinity produces salvation for everyone from the dynamic relationship between God and Jesus. They are creating something out of their relationship. However, if we closely examine the salvation act in the Trinity, it also has a self-emptying aspect. Jesus was crucified. Jesus was giving up himself. Jesus was self-emptying on

the cross. God's creating act of salvation was Jesus' emptying act of sacrifice. God's yang was Jesus' yin. This yin-yang relation of God and Jesus reveals who the true God is! It is the "self-returning" God of the Trinity. The Bible beautifully expresses this self-emptying and self-returning of God through Jesus.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11, NRSV)

If the symbol of the Trinity explains how we experience God's immanent relationships within Godself, we can expand our discussion to the economic Trinity, God's relationship with God's creation. How are God and the world related? How does God reveal Godself to the world? How is the world accepted by God? Do God and the world mutually change each other? These important questions will be dealt with in the next chapter.

4. Change (易) and Tao (道)

How has this meaning of the yin-yang paradigm and the core principle of change been accepted, developed, and interpreted in Asian cultural history? Lee articulates how this concept

of change in T'ai Chi and the yin-yang paradigm have been integrated in popular Chinese religions. Both Confucianism and Taoism are closely related with it as their core principle, though Confucianism received and interpreted it as a moral principle while Taoism did as a cosmological principle.²⁶⁷

Lee claims that the concept of T'ai Chi and the concept of Tao are the same. Sang Il Kim understands that Tao is the meaning of "change" in the yin-yang paradigm.²⁶⁸ Yang also clearly affirms the relation of "Change" and "Tao" in the Tao Te Ching,

The meaning of Tao as the 'original way' in Tao Te Ching is the same as the meaning of 'change' in I Ching.²⁶⁹

Then, what is the meaning of Tao? Sang Il Kim writes that Tao in the Tao Te Ching is the "self-developing (transforming) universe," and he adds that Tao is the "collective name of plurality."²⁷⁰ This definition has several significant meanings; 1) Tao is not a fixed reality but a process, because it is self-developing and self-transforming. It is in the process of change. It is change itself. 2) Tao is the universe. Tao is neither the creator existing before the beginning of the universe nor the savior coming at the end of the universe. Tao is the universe. Tao is "one." 3) Tao is a collective name of plurality. Tao is one, the universe. However, at the same time, Tao is a collective term of plurality. It means that Tao is one including plurality. It represents the yin and yang of Tao.

²⁶⁷ Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective*, 23. Since the concept of change is significantly vivified and discussed in Taoist thought, our discussion will be focused more on it than Confucian thought, which indirectly accepts it as its moral and invisible principle.

²⁶⁸ Sang Il Kim, *World Philosophy and Han: A comparative study of Eastern and Western Philosophy in the light of One and Many* (Seoul: Jun Mang Sa, 1989), 89.

²⁶⁹ Jae-Hyuk Yang, *Eastern Philosophy: How Is It Different From Western Philosophy?* (Seoul: Sonamu, 1998) 79.

²⁷⁰ Kim, *World Philosophy and Han*, 89, 93, 95.

Kim further develops this concept of Tao as both transcendent and immanent.²⁷¹ Tao is transcendent of everything and Tao is present in everything. Tao cannot be determined, described, or categorized by anything, but it penetrates everything.

Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao. (TTC 1)

Eternal Tao is flowing over here and there! (TTC 42)

The concept of Tao is also described as the cyclic universe. It is producing (creating), dying (emptying), and reproducing (returning).²⁷²

Returning is the movement of Tao. (TTC 40)

The concept of Tao as the self-transforming universe is starkly different than the being-oriented understanding of neo-Platonism. How can the ultimate origin conceived by neo-Platonism be transformed? If it needs to be transformed, it cannot be the ultimate origin, the neo-Platonic One. However, the concept of Tao reverses this neo-Platonic concept and suggests a “dynamic origin,” rather than the fixed and unchangeable origin.

This concept is similar to process theology’s understanding of God, especially Whitehead’s dipolar theism and Hartshorne’s notion of a panentheistic God, who suggest God’s dynamic relation with the world.

The Tao Te Ching (TTC) admits that Tao cannot be defined in words, but it gives numerous metaphors to describe the character of Tao: Water, mother (woman), deep valley, mystery, nature, a huge empty bowl are terms used. The metaphor of nature is most widely used in the TTC and also by scholars dealing with Tao. The term nature here does not mean the world, creatures, the earth with trees, ocean, land, sky, or animals in the common western sense. Nature

²⁷¹ Ibid., 91.

²⁷² Ibid., 89.

in Chinese means “自然” (self-so). It is not things or beings but a condition and principle, although it points to things or beings in the world. The Chinese “自然” (self-so) is a creating and penetrating principle of all existing things. Moreover, this principle is embodied in the world. It is the self-transforming and self-contained universe. It is Tao and T'ai Chi.²⁷³

Another implication to be learned from the concept of nature as self-so is Tao as “nothingness (Wu, 無).” This “negative principle” is exactly the opposite of the neo-Platonic tradition of the West which disvalues “non-being.” In Taoist thought, non-being is not understood as the stage or condition of evil or negativity. Rather, it is a source of being, the beginning of the universe, and the mother of all things. It is Tao. “Nothingness” is expressed in only negative terms in common western thought, such as chaos, darkness, the unreasonable, and the undeveloped. In Taoist thought, these negative principles are considered equivalent to positive principles. Furthermore, they are the origin and foundation of the positive principles. Yang writes of Tao with this negative principle,

Tao is not categorized as the principle based on human reason and its speculation. But nature itself as “such-so” is the fundamental ground of the human and the world.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Ibid., 89, 93.

²⁷⁴ Yang, 82.

D. Yin-Yang Paradigm and its Contributions and Limitations

1. Significance of Yin-Yang Paradigm for Classical and Dipolar theism

Can the yin-yang paradigm provide a helpful step for a better understanding of God beyond the problems of classical theism and its philosophical foundation in the myth of oneness? Yes. More clearly, the yin-yang paradigm helps us to discover the hidden side of the myth of oneness that makes classical theism possibly dangerous. In the yin-yang paradigm and its movement of 'change,' which emphasizes the relationality of the universe, there is no perfect/absolute One or fixed hierarchical superiority that governs or controls everything from above. Rather, there is mutuality, relationality, dynamic transformation, and interdependence. One may argue that the Tao is the 'one.' However, Tao is not an entity, but a symbol which represents the changes of yin and yang. When one looks at Tao, a person sees one, yin and yang, then 4, 8, 64, thousands of things, and finally nothing. Tao cannot be described by anything. It can only be experienced in the process of yin and yang, 'change.' For this reason, Tao is not a static reality, but a dynamic symbol of change.

When God is described with both yin and yang and their movement in change, classical theism's limitations and its problematic character are illuminated. Classical theism fails adequately to interpret God because in relation to the world it emphasizes and even absolutizes only the yang side of God, which is active, ruling, initiating, powerful, absolute, changeless, masculine, and infinite. It misses the other side of God, which is passive, receptive, affected,

relative, changing, feminine, and finite. The God of yin and yang in the relationality of change presents not the “either-or” exclusive God, but the “both-and” relational God who is the God of love, based on God’s interrelatedness with God’s creation. This God is not the God of classical theism who cannot suffer with the world because God is impassible and ontologically separated from the world as the “totally Other.” God in the yin-yang paradigm is a relational God who can suffer together with the world, and who even receives all suffering into God-Self because God is organically interconnected with the world. This understanding is also found in Whitehead’s consequent nature of God and especially Moltmann’s understanding of the crucified God for the world.

2. Whitehead and I-Ching

Although there are many similarities and differences between Whitehead and I-Ching, I will limit myself only to the discussion of the notions of God, especially Whitehead's dipolar theism and the yin-yang paradigm in I-Ching. In the earlier discussion, two possible limitations of Whitehead’s dipolar theism were articulated: 1) the fixed soteriological hierarchy between the primordial and the consequent natures of God, and 2) the fixed soteriological hierarchical structure between God and the world, wherein God is understood as the only primordial initiator. These problems indicate that Whitehead’s understanding of God was also not completely free from the shadow of the myth of oneness, although he made a most significant step in his relational understanding of God and the world. Whitehead tried to keep both God’s organic

relationality with the world and God's otherness beyond the world. He grasped the central point of the tension between transcendence and relationality, but left some possible limitations in his system of thought. This boundary and limitation was, I believe, set by the power of the traditional paradigm with which he was inculturated, the myth of oneness. He tried to transform this limitation with process philosophy, making a significant contribution to an alternative paradigm of organic relationality. I believe that he accomplished the highest level of transformation possible within the limitations of the traditional western being-oriented philosophy and structure. Despite his revolutionary efforts, however, he remained an heir of the western way of thinking, especially to the eyes of non-westerners.

The two possible limitations in Whitehead's philosophy are closely related to the influence of the myth of oneness.²⁷⁵ First, Whitehead was not fully able to articulate that God is both transcendent of the world and immanent in the world. Although he tried to solve this fixed ontological understanding of classical theism with his concept of God's dipolar nature, he left a soteriological fixed hierarchy with God's primordial nature over the consequent nature. What made him think that the true God is the primordial nature perfected by the consequent nature? Why is he not able also to understand the consequent nature as perfected by the primordial nature? Why in his dipolar theism is the primordial nature primary and the consequent nature secondary? It was because the myth of soteriological oneness continued to influence his thought.

The second limitation derives from the same source. Although Whitehead interprets God and the world as a relational organic structure in his process philosophy, he claimed that the first cause only originated from God, never from the world. His concept of the "initial aim," which

²⁷⁵ Some process theologians disagree. See Marjorie H. Suchocki who reads Whitehead's dipolar theism with her emphasis of mutual relationality. See Suchocki, *God, Christ, Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 246-255.

provides the potentiality for all interactions, is from God only. The world only responds to the initial aim from God. If his relational God is organically interconnected with the world, why should the initial aim that guides the concretion of every actual entity be provided only by God?²⁷⁶ Can an initial aim come from within the world, organically interconnected with God? Whitehead's position on these questions results from his linear understanding of process and God's fixed soteriological oneness over the world. It is a soteriologically fixed hierarchy from the myth of oneness, which even this great transformer could not completely overcome.

These two limitations are highlighted when we see them with the yin-yang paradigm. First, if yin and yang are correlated with the consequent and primordial natures of Whitehead's God, even though he introduced yin into the yang-dominant classical theism, we recognize that his dipolar theism interprets 'yang' as primordial over 'yin.' Through the relationality of yin and yang, the dynamic relation of Whitehead's conception of God's two natures can be enriched. God's primordial and consequent nature can be interpreted, not with a fixed hierarchical relation but a complementary relation. God's primordial nature does not remain as God's primary nature. God's consequent nature can also be interpreted as God's primary nature. Since yin and yang are not fixed realities or entities but relative symbols based on contexts, God's two natures can be interpreted in terms of the relational and dynamic change of yin and yang. When the physical prehensions of the consequent nature affect the primordial nature, the consequent is yang and the primordial becomes yin. In the same way, when the primordial nature gives "initial aims," it becomes yang and the consequent becomes yin. What makes God the true God for Whitehead

²⁷⁶ Whitehead, as a philosopher of science, might answer this question that there must be a principle of order and of limitation, which becomes the primordial nature when God is conceived as an actual entity. I think that his understanding of God as the only principle of order and limitation is a proof that he still understands the principle must be only in divine nature, not in worldly nature. What makes God a divine being (whether absolute or relational) for Whitehead is the primordial nature, not the consequent nature, and also God's transcendence, not God's relational immanence with the world.

should not be the primordial nature, but the dynamic relation (change) of both primordial and consequent natures as the yin-yang paradigm shows.

When we see dipolar theism in the light of the yin-yang, the possible limitation of Whitehead becomes clear. If yin (consequent) completes yang (primordial), does yang (primordial) also completes yin (consequent) in Whitehead's dipolar theism? The answer is not quite. Although Whitehead understands God as a relational being through the interaction of two natures, there is a soteriological fixed hierarchy within this understanding. This hierarchy defines their role, which seems to be still affected by the ontological influence of the myth of oneness. The primordial nature has a soteriological hegemony (leadership) over the consequent nature. Whitehead holds that the consequent completes the primordial nature, which is the primary nature of God, but the primordial nature does not complete the consequent nature, which is the secondary nature of God.²⁷⁷ In this respect, Whitehead's theism diminishes mutual relationality in the soteriological process of actual entities, despite his successful transformation of the ontological oneness of God in his relational process philosophy.

If God the Creator is initiator, God the Servant of the world must also be initiator. Whitehead's interpretation of God's soteriological work in the world, however, reflects the influence of the myth of soteriological oneness. When Whitehead's dipolar understanding of God is interpreted with the yin-yang paradigm, it opens another possibility beyond the soteriological hierarchy within his dipolar theism, and enables an understanding of God as more living, mutual, merciful, and loving.

²⁷⁷ Suchocki may disagree again with my interpretation because she understands that God's primordial and consequent natures are not separated but two poles of an actual entity. See Suchocki, 254. Although they are inseparable poles, the hierarchy between them may cause a problem, as classical theism's emphasis of God's transcendence over immanence has caused problems.

When the yin-yang paradigm informs Whitehead's understanding of the relation between God and the world, God is no longer the only initiator. Both God and the world become initiators. The interaction of the primordial and consequent natures must be realized not only in God, but also in the world. Although Whitehead insists on the interaction between God and the world, it happens 'within,' 'by,' and 'for' God's dipolar nature, but not within, by and for the process of the world. When God gives all possibilities for the world, God is only yang and the world only yin. When the suffering in the world affects God, the world becomes yang and God becomes yin. If this dynamic happens both in God and in the world, they are truly inter-related. God is freed from the one-sidedness of classical theism. God is now understood as more inclusive and more persuasive. In the paradigm of yin-yang, the distortions of the myth of oneness are transformed into a fully relational, not fixed hierarchical, reality.

The meanings of change have heretofore been interpreted as threefold: (1) self-creating, (2) self-emptying, and therefore (3) self-returning. In understanding 'change' for God, we do not differentiate the yin-yang of Godself from the yin-yang of God's relation with the world, which must be seen as interrelated.²⁷⁸ When 'change' is understood in the yin-yang paradigm, both God and the world constantly create themselves through the relationality of yin and yang. According to Whitehead, physical feelings from the world keep raising Godself to new levels. By receiving possibilities from God, the world also keeps evolving to new levels of consciousness. God becomes more aware of what happens in the world its sufferings, joys, struggles, etc.-while the world becomes more aware of God-God's love, compassion, hope, plans, and patience. Through the self-creating process, both God and the world keep constantly moving closer to each other.

²⁷⁸ My judgment is influenced by Karl Rahner, who insists on the unity of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity.

The self-creating process is also the self-emptying process. The world keeps emptying its evil, oppression, dominance, sinfulness, hierarchies, discriminations, and abuses. At the same time, God also keeps emptying Godself by pouring out God's grace and saving love into the world. One of the perfect examples would be God's incarnation in Jesus, who is Godly being poured out into the world. Through the self-emptying process, both God and the world keep moving closer to each other. Therefore, both 'self-creating' and 'self-emptying' become 'self-returning.' God keeps returning to Godself and the world keeps returning to the world-self. God becomes more God-like and the world becomes more world-like. Being God-like and world-like, from this perspective, means to return to their original relationality.²⁷⁹ Whitehead's dipolar theism can thus be correlated with and enriched by the yin-yang paradigm.

Yeo's discussion, as a biblical scholar, of the yin and yang of God and humanity reveals how the yin-yang paradigm could enrich the meaning of fundamental Christian concepts beyond the limitations of traditional western hermeneutics, although he does not intend to criticize the western perspective.²⁸⁰ For the yin and yang understanding of God, Yeo focuses on the scriptural account of "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14). In his interpretation of this text, he arrives at two complementary meanings of God – (1) God as the incomprehensible and indefinable "Wholly Other" and (2) God as the "dynamic, active, living being of God, thundering and acting in human affairs"²⁸¹ – and claims that God may be interpreted with the Chinese traditional understanding of yin and yang. His point in his third interpretation of the text is:

Third, the interrelationship between the first and the second point can be linked by the faithfulness (*hesed*) of God. That is, "I am" declares the unchangeable,

²⁷⁹ My meaning of returning can be somewhat clearer when we understand Taoistic teaching (Lao tzu and Chuang-tzu) of "tzu-jan, 自然 (self-so or self-like)." It means also "nature." Being natural, for me as a Korean, means the rediscovery of relationality, being one in the web of life.

²⁸⁰ Yeo, *What has Jerusalem to do with Beijing*, 51-64.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

constant faithfulness of God to live, to interact with, and to react to the people of God.²⁸²

Yeo relates this third interpretation with the concept of “change” in the yin-yang paradigm.

Within God’s constant faithfulness with the world, Yeo shows how God in the Bible *changes* to accomplish this *unchangeable* faithfulness. Yeo thus represents the yin-yang concept of change: within changelessness and changelessness within change.

For his discussion of the yin-yang of humanity, Yeo focuses on the biblical text of the “image of God” (Genesis 1:26-27). Rather than the traditional ontological understanding of the *imago Dei* that is substantive, functional, and static, he insists on a relational understanding. Here, the image of God is interpreted as “*relationality*” found within two fundamental relationships of humanity: (1) the vertical interrelationship between God and person and (2) the horizontal interrelationship between persons. This image of God as relationality can be enriched in the yin-yang paradigm.

The yin-yang relationship is relevant to illustrate this vertical relationship, because vertical relationship is highly organic and intimate. ...the yin and the yang are always in complementary relationship to one another. In other words, God and humans, though different, can always be in relationship, a relationship, which can culminate in the wholeness represented by the Great Ultimate circle of the T’ai chi emblem.²⁸³

In a Chinese perspective, this is when the yin and the yang meet to become whole. The male and the female are in mutuality, interdependence, reciprocity, interrelationship. This fusion not only gives rise to co-humanity, it also differentiates what is yin and what is yang. ... For it is through that encounter with the yang that the yin knows and becomes the yin; and vice versa.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Ibid., 55.

²⁸³ Ibid., 60.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 61.

As Yeo reveals, the yin-yang paradigm can enrich the message of the Bible and our understanding of God and the world, and can transform the limitations of the traditional western perspective in the myth of oneness.

3. Possibility and Limitation of the Yin-Yang Paradigm

We already have reviewed and criticized two important understandings of God in Christianity, classical theism and Whitehead's dipolar theism, in the light of the yin-yang paradigm. We concluded that the yin-yang paradigm may enrich and even transform some traditional Christian perspectives. We must now also consider the limitations of the yin-yang paradigm for Christian theology. These limitations are seen only as limitations when we emphasize fundamental differences between the yin-yang paradigm and Christian theology, or simply pursue a synthesis. These limitations can, however, also be seen as significant possibilities when we emphasize the relational transforming process of the yin-yang and Christian life, and pursue constant interactions. Differences provide new possibilities. Opposites may be complementary.

The first limitation comes from the difference of worldview. The yin-yang paradigm suggests a relational worldview fundamentally different from the being-oriented Christian theological tradition. The yin-yang paradigm understands the world as a natural universe, a self-contained universe, in which all possible realities rise and diminish within the universe; Christianity, from its beginning in its biblical account, understands the universe as created by the

Creator. This difference of worldview seems impossible to be harmonized, especially because the yin-yang worldview has no place for a transcendent Creator in a self-contained universe, where the God-figure is the ultimate immanent principle of Tao.

This understanding of a self-contained universe was developed in Confucianism to build an ideal social system through human contemplation of the ultimate principle within the universe. This Confucian social system emphasizing high morality (禮) for all possible relations becomes problematic when it is absolutized. Under the Lee Chosun dynasty of Korea, for instance, which accepted Confucianism and its social ideal for its national religion and social direction, the mandated relationship principle unfortunately was developed as a tool to control people for the sake of the upper class. The social principle justified and concretized the oppression of the poor and the patriarchal submission of women to men.

What does this historical evidence teach us? Why did this principle in Confucianism support oppression despite the beautiful relational paradigm of yin-yang? This reveals one of the crucial limitations of the yin-yang paradigm. When this dynamic and relational paradigm of yin-yang becomes concrete in a social structure, it loses its power and original value.

An important evaluation must be made. The yin-yang paradigm is impossible to concretize as a social, political, and ideological structure. Because it is based on organically complex relationality and dynamic unintentional spontaneity, it cannot be concretized in a structural form. The yin-yang paradigm is a way of life flowing naturally and spontaneously, not a systematic ideology that can be concretized in a real structure. The Confucian attempt to build an ideal social system in the Lee Chosun dynasty of Korea failed because it concretized a non-

concretizable paradigm.

This limitation, however, can be interpreted as a significant possibility for Christian theology. It is clear that we cannot build a Christian theology based on the yin-yang paradigm. Such an attempt violates the principle of the yin-yang paradigm, because its spontaneous and dynamic character prohibits such an attempt. The yin-yang paradigm, however, can be clearly beneficial for Christian theology and western ways of thinking by empowering its mystical and meta-rational dimensions. This mystical dimension of the yin-yang paradigm with its dynamic spontaneity assumes the mystery of immanence within the self-contained universe. The Christian understanding of the mystery, however, has traditionally been based on God's transcendence. This possibility of immanent, earthly, mystery helps liberate theology from absolutizing any ideological view over others by creating dynamic and spontaneous room within mystery.

The second limitation of the yin-yang paradigm for Christian theology, again results from the difference between a self-contained universe and a created universe. Christianity pursues the salvation of sinful humanity through the divine Savior; the yin-yang paradigm pursues a dynamic process of wholeness overcoming chaos. Within the relational and dynamic process of the yin-yang, the Christian concepts of evil, sin, and salvation have no place. Christianity understands this created world to be fallen and sinfully turned away from God to evil. Christian salvation is God's action in a linear eschatological process to bring the sinful world back to God's original created goodness. In contrast, the yin-yang paradigm does not affirm original or absolute good or evil. Everything is understood to be relational, and its self-contained universe is a cyclic process of transformation from chaos to wholeness. There is neither a divine Savior nor sinful creatures

who need to be saved. There is no progressive plan, thus no historical hope.

This yin-yang cyclic understanding of time and the absence of an intentional vision to heal the suffering of the world has caused most Asians to be silent for a long time toward the oppression and injustice in their midst. The admiration of naturalistic and unintentional processes, especially emphasized by Taoism and Buddhism, has led many of their adherents not actively to participate in social transformation. The concept of 'self-so (自然)' and 'without-desire (無爲)' have blocked any enthusiastic transforming efforts. The long history of many Asian oppressive class systems and patriarchal social structures are closely related to this characteristic. The rapid transformations, which happened in most Asian cultures only after their encounters with western culture and especially Christianity, point to this limitation of the yin-yang paradigm. Korean Christianity's harsh rejection of its people's natural acceptance of their traditional culture also relates to this limitation.

The third limitation of the yin-yang paradigm is closely related to the emphasis on relational wholeness found in its second limitation. The yin-yang's relational understanding in contrast to the western being-oriented understanding has led to a totalitarian view of society neglecting the importance of individual persons. It has supposed the hierarchical superiority of social groups, such as country, society and family over individual members. This characteristic has strongly educated people to sacrifice him/herself for the sake of the group. The accepted predominance of a group over individuals has legitimated and justified the oppression and injustice of a ruling party silencing the freedom of expression and action of individuals.

Reflecting on these limitations of the yin-yang paradigm, we conclude that it is neither a

perfect nor ideal tool for any attempt at transformation. It also has a clear limitation to be developed in a concrete social structure, because it loses its relational and dynamic spontaneity in the concretizing process. The yin-yang paradigm, however, can significantly brighten the dark side of many western philosophical and theological traditions and social structures. Christianity cannot be reconstructed on the basis of the yin-yang paradigm. Christianity can be enriched and empowered by the transforming light of the yin-yang relational paradigm.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

TRANSFORMING KOREAN CHRISTIANITY

We have discussed the limitations of the paradigm of the myth of oneness, which has influenced and is still strongly present in Christianity, and especially in Korean Christianity. To analyze the limitations caused by the myth of oneness and its misuses and for its possible transformation, we discussed relational and dynamic paradigms shown in Gadamer and Habermas' hermeneutical dialogue and suggested by Whitehead's process philosophy, and the yin-yang paradigm.

Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" and "prejudice" emphasizing the importance of the relational process of understanding, and Habermas' "critical communicative rationality" preventing the systematic distortions of power – with their possible enrichments in relation with Song's Asian stories as his theological womb and minjung theology's concern for the suffering of minjung, become the methodological and hermeneutical basis for our conclusion. Whitehead's organic process philosophy and his relational dipolar theism reveal the limitation of the ontologically fixed and being-oriented paradigm of the myth of oneness and contribute to how we must analyze and transform the problems we face. The yin-yang paradigm's dynamic relationality provides possibilities to create the dynamic tensions and fruitful balances between west/east, being-oriented/relationality-oriented, transcendence/immanence, Father Almighty God/Suffering Jesus, Christianity/other religions, South/North Korea, and

so on.

We now return to where we started our discussion – Korean Christianity. This concluding chapter, among many related issues, only focuses on the two most significant issues that South Korean Christianity is facing today: (1) the inter-religious conflict in its religious communities and (2) the issue of reunification of its two political communities. These two issues will be analyzed as to how and why they are related to the “myth of oneness,” the influence they have had on, and received from, Korean Christianity, and the way they may be transformed by the alternative paradigms developed in this dissertation.

In order to diagnose the problems of South Korean Christianity and to suggest possible alternatives of inter-religious dialogue, the historical backgrounds of Korea’s multi-religious context, especially before Christianity came, will be discussed. Possible transformative models of inter-religious dialogue will then be explained in comparison to Daniel Patte's three traditional models.²⁸⁵ The work of three leading Christian thinkers on inter-religious dialogue - Karl Rahner, John Hick, and John Cobb Jr. - will be discussed. Finally, a meta-critique, based on Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm will provide possibilities for an alternative model.

After its devastating defeat by Japan, Korea fell into deep political, social, and spiritual chaos, and looked for strong leadership and vision. The western political and social system and Christianity’s classical theism introduced by the missionaries provided a possible vision that

²⁸⁵ Daniel Patte, "Acknowledge the Contextual character of Male, European-American Critical Exegeses: An androcritical Perspective" in *Reading from the Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, Vol. 1, Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 41-47.

easily and rapidly accepted. The dramatic rebuilding of Korean society based on the western system, with the success of Christianity was possible because of this needy context of Korea. It was a necessary and indispensable fusion at that time, leading to contributions that cannot now be disvalued despite the limitations they may have had.

These limitations, however, did not arise only because of an imperialistic western system, or even because of the theistic understanding of Christianity based on the myth of oneness. The problems were rather caused because neither Korean society nor Korean Christianity realized the dynamic relational process needed in the process of transformation. The critical mistake Koreans made was that they wanted simply to replace their traditional culture and religions with the newly introduced western culture and Christianity, instead of pursuing the dynamic process of fusion and transformation. This failure of dynamic interaction led to critical problems. Under the strong influence of the myth of oneness and its fixed being-oriented paradigm, the cultural systems and the Christianity that came to Korea were accepted as absolute, fixed, perfect, and unchanging, akin to the hierarchically always superior One of neo-Platonism and the almighty God of classical theism. There was all too little of Gadamer's creative fusion, Habermas' critical examination, Whitehead's organic process of relationaity, or dynamic change informed by the yin-yang paradigm. When Koreans did not actualize a process of dynamic change, refusing critical fusions, the social and religious system replacing the traditional easily became oppressive and unjust.

There is no doubt that the evangelization of Korea was a saving act of God to provide hope and vision to the disappointed and hopeless Korean people. The modernization of Korea,

with its Western cultural benefits, was also a fruitful transformation. In this respect, the passionate and loving service of the missionaries must be honored. The role and attitude of the western missionaries, and the Korean Christianity influenced by them, however, ought to have changed as Korea went through different stages in their religious and social transformation. The problems were caused and became serious because they failed to open themselves to a possible transformative process of continuing dynamic change beyond their exclusive paradigm of the myth of oneness.

For example, Korean religious communities were hungry for a new and powerful challenge capable of transforming their corrupted religious authorities that has been protected and supported by the government. When Christianity first came, the traditional religions had lost their role in transforming people and society, because they were focused on maintaining the privileges of their religious leaders while manipulating traditional rituals which had little relation to the contemporary struggles that had made life difficult and oppressive for its Korean people. These religions needed the challenge and transformation the Christian faith brought, and they certainly benefited from Christianity. The religious communities of Korea awakened and started to repent and actively engaging in the real struggles of their people.²⁸⁶ Most Korean Christian groups, however, not only sought the transformation of the other religions but also their destruction. In other words, Christianity thought itself the only “savior.” When other religions challenged Christianity, it refused to dialogue with them. Christianity claimed to be absolute modeled on the myth of Oneness, not the “yang” of the yin-yang paradigm which needs the “yin” to coexist, finding complementary through mutual transformation.

²⁸⁶ Sung-Bum Yoon, *Han-Kuk Juk Shin Ha: Theology of Korean Context* (Seoul: Sunmyung Munhwa Sa, 1972), 11-12. Yoon, insisting on the transformation of Korean Christianity through Korean Confucius tradition, criticizes the theology of Korea as having simply been an imported theology from the West without critical interaction with the Korean context.

Sun-Hwan Byun, the Christian pioneer of inter-religious dialogue in Korea, asked penetrating questions about the shortcomings of Christianity in the 1960~70's:

How can a foreign religion, Christianity, with its short history in Korea, exclusively say against this multi-religious community that has lived with Shamanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism for more than 1500 years? How can Christianity claim it is the one and only religion able to give gospel of freedom and liberation?²⁸⁷

Despite appreciation for Christianity's positive contributions to Korea, its refusal to admit its own need for contextualization and transformation when challenged by the traditional religions was a serious mistake. Christianity, asserting its ontological and soteriological oneness, informed by the static paradigm of the myth of oneness, failed actively to interact as a part of the dynamic process of Korean religious society.

The data of the Korean Gallop poll, led by Lee Hyejung and Eun Kisoo in 1997, showed that this exclusive attitude toward other religions is still dominant in Korean protestant Christians. 62.7 % of Korean protestant Christians approved the statement that their own religion is the 'only' true religion, while only 13.4% of Korean Buddhists approved it. 33.6% of Korean Protestants agreed that there is a way to salvation outside of their own religion, while 80.7% of Korean Buddhists agreed with this statement. 30.5% of Christian Protestant pastors still think the other religions must be 'destroyed,' while 0.3% of Korean Buddhist monks thought in these terms.²⁸⁸

Although this exclusive attitude of Korean Christianity has been challenged by 'Korean contextualization theologians' – Yoon Sung Bum with Confucianism, Yoo Dong Shik with

²⁸⁷ Sun-Hwan Byun, "Other Religions and Theology" in *Shin Hak Sa Sang* (1984), 47. The translation from Korean is mine.

²⁸⁸ "Koreans Protestant Christians have a Strong Exclusive View" *The Korea Times (The Hankook Ilbo)*, 20 December 2001.

Shamanism, Byun Sun Hwan with Buddhism the exclusive attitude of Korean Christians, especially protestant Christians, is still dominant.

To challenge and transform Korean Christianity's attitude to the other religions, we must carefully raise these questions: What is a possible and proper paradigm for inter-religious dialogue in the complex context of South Korea? How can Korean Christianity coexist meaningfully with the other religions? What paradigms have been suggested for inter-religious dialogues, and which paradigm should be accepted for the Korean context? The next section deals with these questions.

A. Suggestions for the Praxis of Inter-religious Dialogue

There have been several different Christian approaches to other religions. Daniel Patte analyzes how Christianity has related to other cultures and religions in three distinctive ways: (1) speaking for (the benefit of) others, (2) listening to others, and (3) speaking with others,²⁸⁹ John Hick similarly names these three approaches as (1) exclusivism, (2) inclusivism, and (3) pluralism. All of these types have existed in the Korean religious context, but none of them has played crucial and appropriate role in Korea. For this reason, another approach must be developed, based on correcting the mistakes of the myth of oneness with contributions from the relational and dynamic paradigms of Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm." This fourth approach added to Patte's previous three is 4) "transforming each other," which Hick might name 4) "dynamic pluralism." This approach is also based on John Cobb Jr.'s *Beyond*

²⁸⁹ Patte, 41-47

Dialogue,²⁹⁰ which emphasizes an inter-religious dialogue that mutually transforms its participants. It intends the dynamic interaction and transformation of the interacting religious horizons, a ceaseless exchange of the “yin” and the “yang.”

a) Inadequate Praxis: Exclusivism and Inclusivism

Although Christianity’s exclusive attitude to the other religions was heavily influenced by Jewish monotheism, it began to take a more exclusive position toward other religions when Christianity gained power by becoming a legal religion supported by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. It claimed the absolute revelation of Jesus Christ as the only way to know, reach, and understand God, who is the Ultimate Being. Christianity, then, is considered the only true religion, while other religions are dismissed as mere ideologies.²⁹¹ The other religions, accordingly, are not seen as valid belief systems nor as partners for dialogue, but as ideologies that need to be evangelized and converted. They may even be judged as demonic ideologies that need to be destroyed by the power of Christianity. Patte designates this as Christianity’s “speaking” the supposed real and true good news of Jesus Christ “for the others.” Any mutual relationship is excluded, because Christianity will only speak to the other religions, not listen to them. Hick names this approach “exclusivism,” because Christianity excludes every other religion.

²⁹⁰ Cobb, John B. Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a mutual transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

²⁹¹ W. C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 68-69. The current names of other religions, such as Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, etc, were named by this exclusivist position in the 19th century. It considers other religions to be “—isms,” like Platonism or existentialism.

This exclusive approach is deeply influenced by classical theism and the myth of oneness. Since the Christian God is the absolute Ultimate Reality, Christianity is interpreted as superior to all others. It does not need to be changed by relationships with others because it already knows the ultimate and perfect. No other religion can be valid; they are all ‘not religion (not A)’ There is neither respect nor a willingness to coexist. The majority of Korean Christians still have this exclusivist attitude toward other religions.

After Vatican Council II, Roman Catholicism, officially accepted the significance of other religions’ messages in a way that may be called “inclusivism.”²⁹² The development of transportation and globalization has further accelerated encounters between world religions. The result of these inter-religious, encounters is that other religions are beginning to be understood as important and valid entities, with which Christianity must work for the sake of the peace and well-being of all humanity. Christians have started to open their eyes to other religions and admit they present possible alternative ways to truth. However, this change has not usually recognized of other religions on the basis of their own truth, but only when they reflect Christian perspectives. Karl Rahner’s notion of the “anonymous Christian” most lucidly presents this inclusivist position. An “anonymous Christian” is a person who unknowingly receives the grace of Christ outside the church.²⁹³ Thus, non-Christian religions may play a positive role in making God’s grace available to their adherents.

²⁹² Although the official recognition was made in Vatican Council II, constant interactions with other religions and cultures has been history of Christianity from the Old Testament with Near eastern cultures to the Johannine and Pauline literatures use of rabbinic and Greco-roman sources.

²⁹³ Karl Rahner, “Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 5 (New York: Seabury Press, 1966) quoted from John B. Cobb Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a mutual transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 23.

Rahner made a significant step in accepting other religions messages, but he fails when he interprets other religions only through the church's superior Christian perspective. To Rahner, it is possible to see a faithful Buddhist as an anonymous Christian, but impossible to admit that a faithful Christian is an anonymous Buddhist. Hans Kung exposes Rahner's limitation by accusing him of arrogantly imposing the category of Christian on those who do not want it.²⁹⁴ It is another form of religious imperialism. So-called 'inclusivist' Christians may appear to be "listening to others," but in actuality their listening is not open to genuine encounter with a new horizon. This is what Jürgen Habermas calls "distorted communication."

While exclusivism perceives other religions as 'not religions,' inclusivism perceives them as "less or inferior religions (less A)." In this respect, the inclusive approach also reflects the myth of oneness, bearing classical theism's presupposition that the Christian understanding of God is superior to any other religion's god-figure.

b) Toward Adequate Praxis: Pluralism

We now turn to more adequate understanding of inter-religious dialogue based on the recognition of pluralism. There are two main streams of pluralism in inter-religious dialogue. First is a radical pluralist position, expounding religious differences rather than commonalities. It is usually rejected as a position leading to inter-religious dialogue because it recognizes no need for dialogue among religions. Originating mostly from early radical postmodernists, this position

²⁹⁴ Cobb, *Beyond Dialogue*, 23.

has no strong religious adherents because it rejects any attempt to build up relationships among religions. However, it obviously exists in today's philosophical community.

This radical pluralist approach affirms that all religions are unique, with different ways and different goals. Therefore, we need to honor each of their ways to their own truth. We must not attempt to bridge their distinctive ways toward salvation, nirvana, union with Tao, eternal life, and so on. In this respect, any form of inter-religious dialogue is simply rejected. This position is a radical reaction to the myth of oneness as a source of injustice and oppression in the world. Influenced by postmodernism, it insists that each religion must do its best within itself, unrelated to other religions.

Its rejection of dialogue and its strong emphasis on the particularity of each religion must be seriously considered because the historical interaction between religions has often been more negative than positive. Despite respect for its emphasis on plurality and its recognition that each religion has its distinctive and unique way and end, this position needs to be critiqued. Some fundamental questions need to be asked; does the world need inter-religious dialogue? Is it possible to refuse dialogue with each other? The answer to both questions is "no." The global world is organically inter-connected, just as Whitehead insists. Post-modernist pluralism still reflects the myth of oneness by neglecting the inter-dependence of existence and ignoring the reality of the world. Inter-religious dialogue is not a conversation among religious intellectuals, it is an unavoidable experience of people in a real world. Thus, inter-religious dialogue becomes the responsibility of all religions that aim to save its people and make for a more peaceful world.

Although this radical pluralist position has worked against inter-religious dialogue,

there have been active inter-religious dialogues led by other kinds of pluralists. John Hick, Paul Knitter, Ramundo Panikkar, and W. C. Smith²⁹⁵ try to overcome the limitations of Christian exclusivism and inclusivism. They call for Christians to enter into dialogue with other religions without presupposing the superiority of Christianity or the uniqueness of Christ.²⁹⁶ Hick and Knitter hold that the major obstacle to truly effective dialogue with other religions is that Christians have a domineering belief that Jesus Christ is the absolute.²⁹⁷

In order to transform the exclusiveness of Christianity, Hick and Knitter propose a “Copernican revolution” from “christo-centrism” to “theo-centrism” in inter-religious dialogue. To achieve this paradigm shift, Panikkar distinguishes between “the universal Christ” and “the particular Jesus.” He claims that the Christian belief that “Jesus is the Christ” is not identical with the belief that “the Christ is Jesus.” The concept of Christ extends beyond the particularity of the historical Jesus. Panikkar emphasizes that the traditional interpretation of the historical Jesus as the unique absolute is idolatry.²⁹⁸ Christianity needs to be liberated from idolizing the particularity of the historical Jesus. The exclusive claim that “the historical Jesus is the only way” is not right. By refuting such a claim, Panikkar opens the door to a pluralist approach toward inter-religious dialogue.

As Panikkar distinguishes the concept of “Christ” from “the historical Jesus,” Hick likewise suggests that a new concept of “the Real,” should be substituted for the concept of

²⁹⁵ Although all of these scholars developed “religious pluralism” in various ways, I chose John Hick to explain the pluralism model, not only because of his well-known concept of “the Real” but also because of how clearly distinguishable his theory’s character is when compared to my fourth model of “transforming each other.”

²⁹⁶ John Hick, “The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity,” *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religion*, ed John Hick and Paul Knitter (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987), 16-36. Also see Cobb, *Beyond Dialogue*, 41.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. Also see, John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions: the Rainbow of Faiths*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995), 1-30 and Cobb, *Beyond Dialogue*, 37.

²⁹⁸ Paul Knitter, *No Other Name?: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), 156.

“God.” He claims that Christians need to expand the concept of God beyond the Christian boundary in order to open the door to other religions. By substituting “the Real” with the concept of God, Hick develops a theological pluralism that recognizes,

... different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to the Real or the Ultimate from within the different cultural ways of being human.²⁹⁹

The full development of Hick’s theory can be found in *An Interpretation of Religion*,³⁰⁰ where he presents a comprehensive theory which attempts to explain all religious phenomena. Hick’s hypothesis is that all major world religions are culturally conditioned responses to the Real. The philosophical term “the Real” replaces other terms, such as God, Ultimate Reality, or the Transcendent.³⁰¹ Hick, then, distinguishes between “the Real” *in itself* and “the Real” as it is *for us*. There are many ways in which “the Real” appears to us, which Hick calls *phenomena*:

... the ultimate ineffable Reality is capable of being authentically experienced in terms of different sets of human concepts, as Yahweh, as the Holy Trinity, as Alla, as Shiva, as Vishnu, and again as Brahman, as the Dharmakaya, as the Tao, and so on ...³⁰²

What Hick tries to achieve a concept of Ultimate Reality—in his term, “the Real”—that surpasses individual religions’ descriptions, such as the Christian concept of God.

Although Hick, Panikkar, and other pluralists must be appreciated for broadening the Christian concept of God, we also need carefully to examine their limitations as Christian

²⁹⁹ John Hick, “On Conflicting Religious Truth Claims,” *Religious Studies*, 19 (4), 1983, 487.

³⁰⁰ John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1989).

³⁰¹ John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions*, 18. Here, he explains, “it is not because the term is adequate - there is no adequate term - but because it is customary in Christian language to think of God as that which is alone finally real, and the term also corresponds to the Sanscrit *sat* and the Arabic *al-Haq* and has parallels in yet other languages.”

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 25.

thinkers. Although Hick seeks a neutral, universal term for the Ultimate which all religions can accept, he fails to find a truly inclusive word. His notion of “the Real” excludes religions that do not have an Ultimate figure at the center of their faith, such as Buddhism and Confucianism. Hick’s notion of “the Real” does not fully overcome the limitations of the Western metaphysical concept of God. Furthermore, in his effort to separate “*numina*,” from “*phenomena*,” Hick assumes that the different *phenomena* are “one” in the *numina*. All of the different god-figures in the world, then, become temporal expressions of the same “Real.” Like exclusivism and inclusivism, he too assumes that there is “one” Real which becomes the basis for inter-religious dialogue.

Against pluralists who concentrate on developing a universal concept of Ultimate Reality to overcome the differences among religions, an important question must be raised. Do we really need a concept of “one,” “unity,” or “universality” to make inter-religious dialogues possible? My answer is both “yes” and “no.” “Yes” because we need a commonality in which all religions are organically inter-connected. However, it is also “no” because we do not need the commonality of an Ultimate being, such as is found in Hick’s concept of “the Real” or Panikkar’s “universal Christ”. We do not need a universal, changeless ground of being above all religions. Rather, we should affirm the differences among religions and start from there.

Theocentric scholars who call themselves pluralists remain in an inclusive position. Although they reject any exclusive understanding of Christianity against others, they continue to reflect the myth of oneness. Their presupposition that a universal, ultimate reality exists above all the particularities of different religions finally gives all religions one beginning and one end.

Though they philosophically overcome a static hierarchy among religions, and suggest equality among differing belief systems, they still end with the absoluteness and superiority of one ultimate universal. In this respect, they are not true pluralists, but, rather, “advanced inclusivists” because they pursue “universality” more than “plurality.”

Our previous discussion of Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm reveals the limitation of this advanced, inclusivist position. In terms of Whitehead’s dipolar theism and the philosophy of organism, Hick’s concept of “the Real” still expresses classical theism. There is no possibility that “the Real” is inter-related with the organic universe, where the process of being and becoming occurs. The prehension of “the Real” by the world is only phenomenal because “the Real” is above the organic structure of the universe. “The Real” has Whitehead’s primordial nature without the consequent nature.³⁰³ It still reflects the myth of oneness. In terms of the yin-yang, the concept of “the Real” has the yang without the yin, because it never allows transformation through dynamic interaction with other religions. It stays beyond the yin-yang dynamic of change.

c) Dynamic Transformational Pluralism

There is yet another mode of inter-religious dialogue, which acknowledges both the differences of religions and the necessity of creative and mutual dynamic interactions among them. After carefully noting the contributions and limitations of the three above approaches, an alternative position needs to be developed. It is the “transforming each other” position which

³⁰³ In its details, Hick’s concept of “the Real” does not clearly fit into dipolar theism because the primordial nature itself has room for prehension and concrescence. However, in terms of the distinctiveness of the two natures, it is possible to explain this view as only the primordial nature without the consequent.

may be called ‘Dynamic Transformational Pluralism.’ The scholar who most closely espouses this position is John B. Cobb. In his book *Beyond Dialogue: Toward Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism*, Cobb explains his theory of inter-religious dialogue that aims at mutual transformation. He agrees with Hick and Knitter in “their rejection of the deep-seated tendency of Christians to absolutize their tradition in some way,”³⁰⁴ and strongly affirms the insight of Hick and Smith that “Christianity is a constantly changing movement.”³⁰⁵ However, Cobb insists on going beyond theories which do not presuppose ‘self-transformation’ through ‘authentic dialogue.’ Cobb explains what he means by “authentic dialogue”:

...authentic dialogue will necessarily carry us beyond itself. That is, authentic dialogue changes its participants in such a way that new developments beyond dialogue must follow. A statement of how Christians enter dialogue and what kind of outcome they might expect from it will clarify this point...*beyond* dialogue, I suggest, lies the aim of mutual transformation.³⁰⁶

The critical difference between inadequate dialogue and authentic dialogue lies in the participants’ willingness to be transformed through it. Genuine dialogue, as Cobb emphasizes, requires openness on the part of the participants for mutual transformation.

Cobb explains that this position occurs in two steps: 1) “passing over” and 2) “coming back.” As a Christian who grew up in Japan, Cobb demonstrates his approach in the dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism. First, he fully “passes over” from Christianity to Buddhism with an open-mind and without any intention of evangelization. He engages what Buddhism is and how Buddhists practice their belief. Then, in a creatively mutual interaction, Cobb “comes back” to his Christianity on the basis of what he learned from Buddhism,

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 41.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 46.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 47-48.

transforming his Christian faith. This same transformative process also occurs in Buddhism, in what Cobb designates as “authentic dialogue based on mutual transformation.”

Cobb’s position is clearly distinguished from the three previous positions. Unlike exclusivism, dialogue participants do not intend to convert to or to pursue the conversion of other religions. The participants do “pass over” to the other, but they do not stay there. They “pass over” in order to “come back.” They come back to their original position, however, with new experience and a transformed religious perspective. Unlike inclusivism, Cobb’s position does not seek to understand others by using its own categories. Dialogue, rather, is mutual interaction. Cobb’s authentic dialogue happens when participants do not impose their power structures on others. It is akin to Gadamer’s fusion of horizons informed by Habermas’ critical communicative rationality. Unlike Hick’s kind of pluralism, Cobb’s view does not focus on a theoretical interaction to find a metaphysical common ground (universality) among participants. Rather, it aims for productive transformations of all participants.

Cobb’s model in *Beyond Dialogue*, however, does not fully explain why this dialogue should happen among religions that do not feel any need for transformation. After all, without a religion’s willingness to participate in dialogue, transformation cannot happen.

Unfortunately, most religions that currently exist in the world have neither a desire for inter-religious dialogue nor a wish to be transformed through it. In this sense, Cobb’s model lacks definition of motivation as to why religions should participate in the act of transformational dialogue.

Cobb’s position needs to be modified by Whitehead’s philosophy of organism and the

yin-yang paradigm. Of course, Cobb's theology has already been strongly influenced by Whitehead, but needs more fully to recognize that inter-dependency is a 'given reality' that must be acknowledged and accepted. As societies of actual entities, religions constantly become and perpetual by perish in an endless process of transformation. Each religion affects other religions, and in turn, is also affected by them. In terms of the yin-yang paradigm, this dynamic pluralism presupposes the equality and uniqueness of each religion, rejecting any hierarchical relationship. It affirms that all religions are immanently related to each other within this inter-related global world, just as the yin and the yang are immanently related within T'ai Chi. Most importantly, it demonstrates how each religion dynamically transforms the others, just as the yang transforms the yin and the yin the yang. In this respect, each religion can rightly be perceived as experiencing the constant dynamic of the yin-yang relationship within itself as well as in its interaction with others.

Having traced the historical developments of inter-religious dialogue from exclusivism, through inclusivism to dynamic transformational pluralism, we can now call on Korean Christianity to engage in the process of liberating itself from the myth of oneness through authentic dialogue with other religions. To achieve a transformational praxis of inter-religious dialogue in Korea's multi-religious society, the following three steps for Korean Christians are proposed:

First, Korean Christianity must acknowledge that a religion, including their Christianity, is not a static absolute set in a perfect and complete form, but a dynamic actual entity, which

needs to be challenged, transformed, and thus enriched constantly in response to new historical horizons. These horizons include newly emerging scientific discoveries, social-economic-political contexts, and encounters with other cultures and religions. As Christianity has historically reformed itself and been recreated into enriched and relevant new forms, Korean Christianity must give up the myth that its own Christianity is a perfect and absolute religion. Korean Christianity is not a static, dead structure, but a loving community constantly reformulating itself to be responsible for its unique Korean context.

Second, Korean Christianity must participate in this dynamic inter-religious process actively and intentionally with repentance and humility. This dynamic process is not an option, but an indispensable path necessary to remain a relevant and responsible religion. Participation in such a dynamic transformational process has been intentionally negated under an arrogant attitude influenced by the myth of oneness. To overcome the wide-spread understanding of Christian exclusivity, Korean Christians must intentionally open their hearts to the calling from its multi-religious society and confess its previous mistakes.

Bishop Leslie Newbigin's repentant confession of the aggressive, imperialistic missionary attitude of Christianity in India and elsewhere during the last 100 years provides a significant model. I believe it is a dynamic process of self-emptying of Christianity's sin and self-returning to its original message of Jesus. Newbigin claims that Christianity in this pluralistic age must overcome "the imperial expansion of the western Euro-American power under the name of evangelization"³⁰⁷ and return to "the very heart of the biblical vision for the unity of humankind is that its center is not an imperial power but the slain Lamb."³⁰⁸ The Christian mission and evangelism in Korea must find new meaning, focusing on humbly serving

³⁰⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 155.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

people following the love and sacrifice of the crucified Jesus, not on dominating and arrogantly teaching a triumphalist theology of resurrection that obscures Jesus' sacrificial love.

Finally, Korean Christianity must work beyond the static attitude found in the theoretical approaches of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism whatever their value may have been in the earlier stages of moving to authentic dialogue. If we understand the importance, indeed necessity of dynamic transformational process, is dynamic, none of these static attitudes serves our purpose to be relevant and responsible. With a humble acknowledgement that Korean Christianity is organically related with other religions in Korea's multi-religious context, Christians must work relationally and dynamically. This, of course, also will require sometimes working critically, for instance supporting the God-given equality of women against the patriarchal oppression heavily influenced by Confucianism similar to how minjung theology claimed God's love the minjung suffering under the Korean military dictatorship.

Korean Christianity is at a critical point of decision whether to remain as an arrogant and privileged religion for certain chosen people separated from the real needs of most Koreans, or to repent and be transformed into responsible religious participants in a dynamic transformational process of Korean society. This important choice is in the hands of Korean Christians.

B. KOREAN CHRISTIANITY'S ROLE IN THE REUNIFICATION OF KOREA

While inter-religious dialogue poses as one of the most critical problems of the Korean

religious community, the reunification of Korea is one of the most critical problems for the Korean social and political community. The half-century division of Korea has deeply influenced the current Korean society and its ideology. The future of the nation will be determined by how the two divided Koreas deal with this issue.

1. Suffering and Division of Korea

Suffering, Suffering, Suffering. Suffering means the people. People are suffering. Past, present, and future, they are one in their suffering. Despite differences in their lives and situation, suffering is what they all share in common. The sighs of the oppressed people are still there, and maybe will be here forever, unless liberation and salvation come to them: the politically oppressed people, the economically exploited people, the socially culturally alienated people, the educationally deprived people, and the differently labeled people, who were called disabled by immature and insensitive persons. They are the ‘minjung’ in Korea.³⁰⁹

Jong-Sun Noh, in his book, *Liberating God for Minjung*, quoted above, depicts the experience of the Korean people as one of ‘suffering,’ and that such suffering has led to the birth of a special group of people in Korea called the “minjung.” Yet, what made the Korean people suffer like this, and why has the Korea of the 20th century been understood as having a history of suffering? Noh finds the answers within Korea’s history of division: the splits between North and South Korea, the colonizers and the colonized, the dictators and the minjung, the economically privileged and the economically unprivileged, men and women, humans and nature, and, finally, God and the Korean people. In order to understand Noh’s claim of “suffering and minjung,” we must carefully examine the recent history of Korea, particularly focusing on how it is divided, how this division is maintained, and how the division directly impacts the lives of the Korean

³⁰⁹ Jong-Sun Noh, *Liberating God for Minjung* (Seoul: Hanul, 1994), 11.

people.

Noh's theological interpretation of the divisions which caused the suffering of the Korean people can also be interpreted as an ideology resulting from the myth of oneness. We must understand this division ideology in two dimensions, external and internal. First, one of the main reasons resulting in the division of Korea needs to be interpreted in the complex international politics surrounding the Korean peninsula. Although the division was officially began as the result of the Moscow Three Nations Summit of Japan, USA, and Russia in 1945, it was actually started under the Japanese colonization of Korea (1910-1945). After defeating China in their war in 1895, Japan gradually began its control of the Korean peninsula. The ideological basis of Japan's imperialism was their vision of a Great Japanese Empire, supported by their absolute belief that Japan is the greatest and perfect nation mandated by heaven, in Japanese terms, the sons of sun. This imperialistic ideology was based on its ontological oneness, for instance absoluteness. This absolute ontological uniqueness legitimated Japan's occupation of Korea.

This imperialistic occupation of Korea was shifted from Japan to the USA and the Soviet Union after the defeat of Japan in 1945. The important geographical and political location of the Korean peninsula accelerated these two countries' struggle for hegemony over the land and finally led to splitting the nation into two parts, North and South. Although both the USA and the Soviet Union publicly claimed their occupations only temporary, until Korea was able to rebuild its own working government, their real intention was to hold the Korean peninsula under their own control. Their ideological justification was their assumed ontological superiority over the inferior Koreans, who had no ability to govern themselves and therefore required the control of

superior nations.

Another reason for the division of Korea was internal. The internal political and social chaos of Korea leading to the devastating Japanese colonization resulted mainly from the arrogant policy of the Lee dynasty rejecting all new cultural and political challenges. Their 'closed' foreign policy rejecting any type of international interaction caused Koreans to fall behind the rapid cultural technological transitions and occurring. This 'closed' policy was based on the arrogant ideology that Korea did not require any outside contribution because it was already perfect, which could be interpreted as based on a myth of ontological oneness. This rejection of dynamic interactions with the outside world cost Korean people suffering of the 35 years of colonization and 60 years of division.

After the Japanese colonization, the ideological clash between the Korean communist group supported by Russia and the democratic group supported by the USA resulted in the same mistake. Based on the either-or thinking of the myth of oneness, each group rejected a shared dynamic process to rebuild the nation. Their internal conflict and external negation of the other finally caused the division of the Korean nation.

These external and internal influences of the paradigm of the myth of oneness are still actively present today. Time has passed, but the paradigm has not changed. This oppressive paradigm was even deepened and empowered by the dictatorships, North and South, which strengthened their hegemonies by enlarging the hostile attitudes against each other.

If Whitehead's philosophy of organism or the yin-yang paradigm had been considered

and became influential during these significant historical moments, the present two Koreas would have been different and their sufferings would have been decreased perhaps even largely resolved. In his work, Noh recognizes that Koreans have had several great, God-given opportunities to reverse the causes of their division and the suffering they have experienced over the past one hundred years.³¹⁰ He claims, however, they failed to use any of them. We turn now to examine the great opportunities in Korea's recent history and the possible contributions Whitehead's philosophy and the yin-yang paradigm might have made to them.

2. Learning from Failed Praxis in Recent History

a) Dong Hak Movement

In the late 19th century, the ruling Lee dynasty in Korea, was extremely corrupt in its cooperation with rich merchants. This privileged class maintained a luxurious lifestyle based on the sacrifices of the poor farmers and laborers. In this circumstance, the imperialistic power of Japan overshadowed the Korean peninsula. To resolve this national crisis, angry farm workers rose up against the oppressive ruling class. This so-called "Dong-Hak" minjung revolution of 1894 was intended to save the nation from failure and from Japanese colonization. However, the minjung movement was violently put down by its corrupt government, which had the help of a Japanese military force. This Japanese military, which had been invited to help quell the Dong-Hak movement, eventually colonized Korea in 1910. The oppressive division of minjung

³¹⁰ Jong-Sun Noh, *Toward the Theology of Reunification: The Third World Christian Ethics*, (Seoul: Hanul, 1988), 17.

and anti-minjung,³¹¹ and the violent rejection of the effort for transformation led to the more violent and oppressive colonization, which later led to the division of the Korean people.³¹²

The Dong-Hak minjung movement was the oppressed yin reacting to an oppressive and overpowering yang. The revolution aimed for a healthy coexistence by seeking to prevent the abusive division of a ruling class versus the common people. It was the cry from the earth to the sky, as its leaders claimed. However, this yin effort was totally destroyed by the Japanese military, another extreme yang power. The ruling government of the Lee dynasty should have accepted the challenge of the Dong-Hak movement and undergone transformation. Unfortunately, it refused to do so, and lost a great opportunity. Its rejection of the dynamic relation of the yin and the yang cost the nation thirty years of colonization. The more oppressive government of Japan later devastated the Korean peninsula.

b) Independence

The second transformative opportunity came when Korea was finally liberated from Japanese colonization in 1945. If Korea lost its first opportunity because of the internal division of the minjung and the anti-minjung within the country, the second opportunity of independence was ‘given’ and lost by the foreign powers involved. The independence movement against the Japanese was cooperatively organized, raised beyond the division of class differences, and highly instrumental in achieving national independence. However, the main forces for Korea’s independence came from the outside, chiefly the United States. The Japanese submission to the United States after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nakasaki led to Korea’s independence. Independence given by the United States, however, did not represent a true liberation from

³¹¹ The term “anti-minjung” refers to a ruling or privileged class of people that oppresses the minjung.

³¹² Ibid., 21.

colonization, but served as an entry into neocolonialism. This primarily economic form of colonialism came directly from the First World countries, primarily the United States.

Korea's second great opportunity, its independence from Japan, was destroyed by two influences, one from outside its borders and the other from within. The external influence came from the USA and the Soviet Union, who jointly decided in 1945 to divide the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel into two territories: North and South. This decision was made without any prior notice to or consent from Korea.³¹³ Bruce Cumings points out that, the policy of the United States has continued to divide the North and the South.

Nowhere else in the world has the United States backed one side of a conflict so exclusively, with such minimal contact with the other side. Nowhere else does the United States directly command the military forces of another sovereign nation, as it continues to do in South Korea.³¹⁴

The 'inside influence' that cast its shadow over the future of Korea was the failure to pursue freedom from United States' domination because of internal political struggles. After Korea acquired its independence, and while North Korea was led by the communist group, two strong political groups gained the public attention of most South Koreans. The first was led by Kim Ku with the members from the interim government which had stayed and acted in China during the Japanese occupation. This group emphasized national Korean identity, Korea's total independence from every other country, and the strong rejection of Korean division for any reason. The second group was led by Rhee, Seong Man and other political leaders who had mainly stayed and acted in the United States. It emphasized the rapid rebuilding of the nation in

³¹³ Noh, *Liberating God for Minjung*, 35. Bruce Cumings, *Divided Korea: United Future?* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1995), 25. "American officials consulted no Koreans in coming to this decision [division on the 38th parallel] ..."

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

cooperation with the United States. The pro-American group, led by Rhee and strongly supported by the United States, became the first government of South Korea because the sudden collapse of its chief opposition after the mysterious assassination of Kim Ku.

Rejecting any who opposed the idea of two Koreas and of a government approved only by one side, Rhee's group ignored the political situation of North Korea and in 1946 quickly proclaimed that a new government and president had been elected in Korea, though the election had been held only in South Korea. This decision by Rhee's government, influenced by the United States, made the division of North and South permanent. The political group led by Kim Il Sung in cooperation with the Soviet Union also proclaimed a new government for North Korea. Many people believe that Korean history would have been much different if Kim Ku's group had taken leadership in South Korea and worked for liberation from the dominating influence of the United States and the Soviet Union. It was the division between two political groups in South Korea, and their failure to work together that eventually led Korea to the most painful division in its history, the continuing division of North and South.

Another important aspect of this historical process is the role of Korean Christianity. During the period of Japanese colonization, Korean Christians, despite constituting only two percent of Korea's population, played a critical role in the push for independence. For example, sixteen of the thirty-three signers of the "Declaration of Korean Independence," and twenty-two of the forty-nine national leaders of the largest anti-Japanese demonstration - the "March 1st Independence Demonstration," - were Christians.³¹⁵ Moreover, local Christian churches were

³¹⁵ Byung Kik Ahn and Sung Soo Park, *A Modern History of Korea People's Movement* (Seoul: Dol-Bae-Kae, 1980) 456.

key places where political gatherings, for the discussion of the future of the nation, were held.³¹⁶

After Korea gained its independence, however, most Christians began supported Rhee's government because of their positive associations with American missionaries and the United States. Eventually, such Christians also came to support the division of Korea.

This mistake of Korean Christianity continued and strengthened as its numbers grew. Combined with the western concepts of capitalism and pro-Americanism, it started to claim that the communist, anti-American government of North Korea was demonic and needed to be totally destroyed. Since they first supported Rhee's government, the majority of Korean Christians have supported the anti-communist and pro-American party. Noh calls this theological perspective the 'theology of division' and strongly criticizes its influence on Korean Christianity. First, he argues that Korean Christianity had a significant role in concretizing the division. Second, he points out how Korean Christianity worked together closely with the United States and Japan in doing so.³¹⁷

Another great opportunity for reconciliation and true independence had been lost because of (1) the political agendas of surrounding countries, including the USA. (2) the uncritical support of South Korean Christianity for Rhee's oppressive pro-American party, and (3) the inner political conflict and failure of South Korean political leaders. The division was made, and much suffering ensued.

There was no historical justification for Korean division. There were no internal pretexts for division, either: the 38th parallel was a line never noticed by the people ... And then it became the only line that mattered to Koreans, a boundary

³¹⁶ Ibid., 455-458. see also Kyung Bae Min, *The History of Korean Church* (Seoul: Korean Christianity Press, 1987), 304-316. Min differentiate his position from Ahn and Park and emphasizes the role of Christianity in the "Marth 1st Movement," not as leaders and organizers but as supports and routes to bridge the whole nation.

³¹⁷ Noh, *Liberating God for Minjung*, 55-57

to be removed by any means necessary. The political and ideological divisions associated with the cold war were the reasons for Korean division.³¹⁸

If we consider this history in the light of the yin-yang paradigm, two analyses are needed:

(1) the yin-yang dynamic within Korea and (2) the yin-yang dynamic between Korea and the United States. In reacting to the yang dimension of the oppressive Japanese rulers, the rebellions of the yin-like Korean minjung became stronger. Finally, the extreme yang of Japanese power was overcome by the yin of Koreans, and Korea won its independence. In this way, the yin-yang dynamic created a transformative force that overcame the yang domination of the outside nation.

What the new Korea needed was an inner yang group that could work independently with national pride and identity that would take the place of the formerly extreme yang of the Japanese leadership. Korea's independence brought with it a great opportunity for Korean political groups to lead their nation into a new era. Kim Ku's group realized this and presented itself as a powerful yang force completely native to Korea. Unfortunately, Kim Ku's group experienced a sudden collapse, and a healthy yin-yang dynamic within Korea was never achieved.

When Korea searched for another source of yang leadership after the assassination of Kim Ku, Rhee Seong Man introduced another yang force from outside of Korea. Koreans who sought strong yang leadership to rebuild their devastated community perceived the power of the U.S. as perfect. The quick success of Rhee's government and the dramatic rebuilding of South Korea demonstrated the yang power of the United States. Korean Christianity's proclamation that might be summarized as America is an angel country sent by God. The affirmation of western culture originated in the United States added greatly to the empowering of this external

³¹⁸ Cumings, *Divided Korea: United Future?*, 24-25.

yang with subsequent loss of yin-yang balance in Korea.

The yang leadership of the United States isolated the comparable yang national group of North Korea. To have prevented the permanent division of Korea, the yin-yang relation needed to have been established. However, the two yang forces of the North and the South became increasingly hostile toward each other. When both sides refused to function as yin and respond to the other to breach the division, the possibility of one Korea finally disappeared. The Korean War of 1950, may be interpreted as the battle between two extreme yang forces. The tension between the two countries, with each wanting to destroy the other, led to violent war.

c) Democratic Movements and Military Dictatorship

The division of the nation added to the overall sufferings of the minjung, and the theology of South Korean Christianity concretized this unbalanced structure of a divided nation by promoting endless hostility toward North Korea and complete support for the United States.

Despite suffering from the division, the Korean minjung have constantly constructed minjung democratic movements. The first nationwide minjung movement against the corrupt, pro-American Rhee government took place in 1960, the “April 19th Revolution.” Rhee’s government stepped down and a pro-minjung party, approved by the majority of Koreans, took national leadership. This great opportunity, however, was completely ruined by the military revolt led by Park Jung Hee in 1961, followed by his eighteen years of military dictatorship. After the assassination of President Park in 1979, two more military governments, led by Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, took power. Under these military dictatorships, student

democratic movements, such as the Kwangju Democratic Revolution and Massacre in 1980 and the June Democratic Movement in 1987, ensued.

When reflecting on the history of the Korean minjung democratic movements against both Korean military dictatorship and the neocolonialism of the United States, they can be understood as movements against the oppression caused by the myth of oneness. The myth of oneness ideology that tempts the powerful to identify themselves with the perfect, superior one who must rule, control, punish, and even destroy the other who are against or inferior to them, was vividly present in both the military dictators and the United States.

During the period of military dictatorship, the ideology of the myth of oneness appeared as the ideology of division, which did not admit the legitimacy of the other or even the existence of the other. South Korea did not admit there was a valid government or a constituted nation in North Korea. It claimed for 60 years that the South Korean government was the only legitimate government in the Korean peninsula. Finally, however, when Kim Dae Jung was elected president, he accepted the dynamic of the two Koreas and took a reconciling approach toward North Korea.

3. Theology and the Praxis of Reunification

The year 1998 was a historic time in Korean history, especially for the minjung who had suffered under military dictatorship. Their longtime leader, Kim Dae Jung, was finally elected president of South Korea. His presidency, of course, did not change the fact of the minjung's suffering under neocolonialism nor of the United States' dominant capitalism in South Korea.

However, he did make a historic transformation of South Korea's policy toward North Korea.

Kim Dae Jung proclaimed his "Yen Bang theory" (coalition theory) as the government's official policy toward North Korea. The new policy presupposed acceptance of the North Korean government and of North Korea as a partner coexisting with South Korea.

It was a rejection of the myth of oneness and liberation from the ideology of division. It perceived South and North Korea, not as 'A and not A (less A),' but as 'A and B,' sharing the same destiny within the Korean peninsula. From Whitehead's perspective, the two Koreas are recognized as organically interconnected, constantly transforming and being transformed by the other. Thus, South Korea must hear and understand the painful cry of North Korea during times of natural disaster, and offer humanitarian support. North Korea also needs to look at South Korea's experience and wisdom when it comes to matters of economic revival. South Korea can also learn from North Korea's strong Korean identity. Kim Dae Jung's new policy presented a true dynamic of the yin and the yang that had been refused for a long time, a dynamic where each mutually transforms the other. Kim Dae Jung's coalition approach finally bore fruit with his historic visit to North Korea in 2000.

After its active role in overturning Japanese colonization, Korean Christianity, lost its calling and shirked its responsibility by remaining silent in the face of minjung suffering. It was guilty of supporting the neocolonialist economic domination of the United States and the hostile policy of the military dictatorship against North Korea. Korean Christianity became a shamanistic religion, focusing on personal well-being and individual fortune rather than on

strong social responsibilities that transform communities characterized by suffering and oppression. Its false pride, based on the myth of oneness, strengthened its arrogant attitude toward other religions and developed a theology of division. Identifying with the powerful and the privileged of its time, Korean Christianity became a religion of the oppressors, contributing to many forms of division: the divisions of South and North, the anti-minjung and the minjung, the rich and the poor, the socially-privileged and the socially-alienated, the First World and the Third World, and worst of all from a theological standpoint, God and the suffering world. Jong Chun Park, in his *Theology of Inter-Dependent Co-Arising*,³¹⁹ wrestles with these problems of division in relation to Korean Christianity. He sees the real problem was not the division of the country, but the division of its national identity, culture, emotion, and spirituality.

Korean Christianity, with deep repentance for its past, needs to participate in its own transformation and the transformation of the Korean community. It needs to experience liberation from the myth of oneness and reaffirm the dynamic transformational process suggested in the relational understanding of reality found in Whitehead and the yin-yang paradigm. Unless it gives up its oppressive paradigm of the myth of oneness, Korean Christianity's transformation will not be successful. Korean Christianity must develop a theology of reunification, rather than of division, based on and exemplifying the following four characteristics.

First, the theology of reunification must acknowledge that we are all organically related and therefore interdependent. No existence in the universe can stand by itself. As Whitehead's philosophy of organism teaches, all actual entities influence, and are influenced by, others. In terms of the issue of reunification, the South must admit its interdependence with the North.

³¹⁹ Jung Chun Park, *Theology of Inter-Dependent Co-Arising* (Seoul: Korea Theology Research, 1991), 38.

North Korea is not simply an anti-South Korea (not A), which needs to be eliminated, but a valid country that coexists with South Korea within the Korean peninsula.

Second, the theology of reunification must acknowledge the constant dynamic process of being and becoming. There is no absolute and changeless being. Rather, there are only ever-changing realities. As the yin-yang paradigm teaches, all existence is in a constant process of change. South Korea must recognize that North and South Korea have coexisted and changed together for sixty years. The future of both countries will continue to be changed on the basis of how the two countries interact with each other. In this respect, the theology of reunification focuses more on the dynamic process leading toward reunification than the idea of reunification itself.

Third, the theology of reunification must recognize and support both oneness and plurality. As the yin-yang paradigm changes from one, two, three, eight, to multitude, it supports both commonality and particularity, both unity and diversity. North and South are one in the sense that they are one people, share one history, and exist in one peninsula. At the same time, they are two governments and have two social, political, and economic systems. The life and culture of the two nations are enormously different after sixty years of division. Moreover, there are multiple ideologies and opinions concerning reunification. This is a fact that the theology of reunification must recognize and strongly support. A naïve and emotional approach that insists only on the oneness of Korea cannot solve the complex dynamics surrounding this issue of reunification. Likewise, a passionate approach that emphasizes the differences of the two Koreas and the difficulties of reunification will not help transform the sufferings and oppressions caused

by the division. What is needed is a critical approach that confirms both the unity and the difference.

Fourth, the theology of reunification must be a dynamic transformational process emphasizing a praxis that comprehends both theoretical and practical transformation. In his book, *Contextualization and Hermeneutics*, Kim Kwang Shik supports this approach when he analyzes the history of Korean contextual theology. He writes that this approach is "... a 'realistic and contextual' dialectic creating both real reconciliation and transformation differentiated from the western 'conceptual' dialectic of Hegel and Kierkegaard."³²⁰ Kim emphasizes two dimensions: First, the approach must come out of real and contextual 'bottom-up' struggles rather than conceptual top-down theories. Second, the approach must be praxis-oriented to transform the real sufferings of people rather than synthesizing another theoretical solution.

A realistic and contextual dialectic must also follow the yin-yang based relational approach. It cannot support a better or stronger nation taking over another, nor support a reunification that focuses on the political and economic interests of one nation over another. It will not support a reunification forced upon nations by neighboring countries, whether Japan, China, Russia, or the United States. Rather, it aims at the fruitful transformation of both North and South Korea. Reunification will only become possible when positive transformations mutually contribute to both countries. The two Koreas and the surrounding countries must be transformed by the reunification of Korea, and the sufferings historically caused by its division must be transformed through forgiveness and reconciliation. The theology of reunification aims at a dynamic transformation of all interconnected countries.

³²⁰ Kwang Shik Kim, *Contextualization and Hermeneutics* (Seoul: Korean Christian Press, 1984), 45. The translation is mine.

Guiding by these four characteristics of reunification theology, Korean Christianity must immediately begin a praxis of a dynamic process of reunification. First, Korean Christianity must accept the fact that the division of its people is the most serious source of suffering in Korean society, and reunification is its most urgent mission given by God. This process must be started with Korean Christians' deep repentance for their sins that supported and concretized the division.

Second, Korean Christianity must start to educate its believers about the complex backgrounds of how and by whom the division has been made, supported, and misused in its recent history. Korean Christians also need to be educated about how the paradigm of the myth of oneness was developed and has influenced our understanding of God, and how it contributed to the division of Korea ideologically.

Third, Korean Christianity must reexamine its definition of mission and evangelism to refocus on both personal salvation and communal salvation/liberation. This reexamination process must begin the transformation of our understanding of God from classical theism based on the myth of oneness to relational theism based on Whitehead's dipolar theism and the yin-yang paradigm. The next step must center a new definition of mission and evangelism in Jesus' sacrificial love on the cross, which will transform any arrogant attitude toward those for whom Christ died.

Fourth, after redefining and educating its people on a mission and evangelism based on humbly serving and loving others, Korean Christianity must creatively develop multiple relationship routes with North Korea. These multiple routes should not be limited to religious

relationships, but include humanitarian support, social, sport, and cultural exchanges, political relationships, and so on.

Fifth, Korean Christianity must actively engage its national foreign policy to prevent any misuse and abuse of the continuing national division by hegemonic interests. Korean Christians must insist that the only way to a peaceful and successful reunification is by mutual trust and sacrificial love, which will gradually transform the adversarial attitudes to each other. Extreme social, political, or economic sanctions on North Korea will only accelerate the danger of harming each other and neighboring countries.

Finally, Korean Christianity must focus on patiently creating a constant and gradual dynamic process empowering internal moods of forgiveness and reconciliations in North and South Korea, rather than encouraging quick external results. While many people, especially politicians and business men, hope for a quick and external happening of reunification, the crucial foundation for real reunification rests on constant and gradual reconciling processes, not quick or final results.

The reunification of the two Koreas is one of humanity's most challenging contemporary projects. It might be less difficult if one powerful country takes over the other by military force, as we have often seen in history. We do not want another instance of that kind of reunification based on the paradigm of the myth of oneness. The reunification Korean Christians should long for is a peaceful and mutually beneficial and transformative one. In order to achieve this type of successful reunification, the organic and relational paradigm of Whitehead and the yin-yang

must provide the core foundation for Christian praxis. The fact that must never be forgotten is that both North and South Korea are interdependent and complementary actual entities within a dynamic process of transformation and reconciliation.

EPILOGUE

“Here is a story that says,
there were two pretty fishes
living in a small pond by the path,
deep in the mountain.

One clear summer day,
two pretty fishes fought each other.
One fish was killed and floated on the water,
its flesh was decayed,
its flesh was decayed,
and the whole water was polluted at the same time.

Finally ,
in that small pond by the path,
deep in the mountain,
no life can survive any more.”³²¹

These lyrics belong to one of the beloved songs sung by South Korean participants during the democratic movement in the 1970-90’s. It was a way of resisting a military dictatorship that insisted they foster a hostile and aggressive attitude toward North Korea. What is meant by the “small pond” was the Korean peninsula, and the “two fishes” symbolize North and South Korea. The song proclaimed that neither South nor North Korea would survive if they kept fighting each other.

The core message of this insightful song expresses the heart of this dissertation. The destruction of life lamented in this song is caused by the “the myth of oneness. Although the song is contextualized to Korea and the issue of reunification, its message is relevant to the entire world. The history of humanity has suffered from the oppressions of the First World over the Third World, Christianity over other religions, the rich over the poor, men over women,

³²¹ Min-Kee Kim, “Two Fishes in a Small Pond” in Noh, *Liberation God for Minjung*, 55. The modification of the song is mine.

humanity over nature, God over the world, and so on. Unless we transform these dangerous implications and manifestations of the “myth of oneness,” which still powerfully influence our everyday life, all life on earth is endangered. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to provide an analysis of, and an alternative to, this destructive paradigm.

With the goal of transformation, two alternative paradigms: (1) Whitehead’s philosophy of organism and (2) the yin-yang paradigm were introduced, analyzed, and interpreted in terms of their possibilities for, transformation of the idea of God, inter-religious dialogue, and the reunification of Korea.

The more complete the globalization of the world, the greater the power and the deeper the danger of the “myth of oneness” becomes. Life in this critical era requires the passionate advocacy of the alternative paradigm that all existence is inter-connected, inter-dependent, and therefore endlessly transformative of each by all. It is past time that we more fully practice God’s commandment,

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”³²²

³²² Matthew 22:39, NRSV.

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