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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Yamona J. Leback for the degree of Master of Arts in English, presented April 23, 2003. Title: *Book of Changes*.

Abstract approved:

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Lin S. Lee

I have elected to write a creative nonfiction thesis because it serves to demonstrate my proficiency in the areas of rhetoric and composition. This thesis consists of a series of personal essays based on my effort to reclaim my voice as a writer. In order to organize these essays, I used the eight trigrams, or universal elements, found in the ancient Chinese I Ching: Book of Changes. They are *Jacques-Thunder, Water, Mountain, Fork, Wind, Fire, and Lake*. One by one, I interpreted each element in an effort to create a transformation narrative, my own *Book of Changes*. Despite the chaos of my real story, the universal elements offered a grounding for each essay. Each essay illustrates my growth as a woman and as a writer. Although the essays grew out of a deeply personal experience, this thesis is about crafting an essay—reclaiming my voice and my body of writing.

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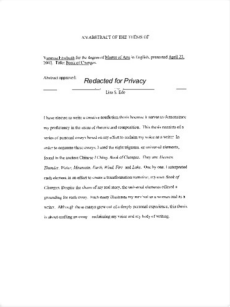
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The I Ching or Yi Jing, usually translated as Book of Changes or Classic of Changes, is an ancient Chinese divination text and among the oldest of the Chinese classics. With more than two and a half millennia's worth of commentary and interpretation, the I Ching is an influential text read throughout the world, providing inspiration to the worlds of religion, philosophy, literature, and art. Originally a divination manual in the Western Zhou period (1000–750 BC), over the course of the Warring States « At the outset, the Book of Changes was a collection of linear signs to be used as oracles. In antiquity, oracles were everywhere in use; the oldest among them confined themselves to the answers yes and no. This type of oracular pronouncement is likewise the basis of the Book of Changes. “Yes” was indicated by a simple unbroken line , and “No” by a broken line . However, the need for greater differentiation seems to have been felt at an early date, and the single lines were combined in pairs.

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