

## Two Stories in Confluence

Jin Kwan Kwon\*

### Abstract

It is story that makes minjung theology unique. The author begins the discussion by claiming that stories affect the subjectivity of an individual or people. People usually hear stories from others, and time to time tell their own stories. Hearing and telling stories contribute to creating our consciousness and unconsciousness. Then stories need to be reviewed and interpreted critically. The author selects two stories, one from Korean tradition, and the other from the Hebrew Bible: the story of Shim-chong and the story of the daughter of Jephthah. The confluence of two stories is one of the major methods of minjung theology by the late minjung theologian Suh Nam-dong. The author here promotes the encounter or confluence of the two stories and tries to discover the converging point at which the

---

<http://dx.doi.org/10.26590/madang..37.202206.30>

\* Retired professor of Theology at Sungkonghoe University, Seoul, Korea. Presently Director of Academy of Minjung Theology. Ph.D.

two stories interrelate, intersect and affect mutually. In this paper, the author suggests that the converging point of the two stories is justice and that justice can be seen as a metaphor for resurrection. In the story of Shim-chong, resurrection takes place. In the story of the daughter of Jephthah, the commemoration of the victim has the vestige of resurrection, because in the act of commemoration the victim is made alive. The author here argues that metaphor as a figure of speech can express aspects of new reality alternative to the present dominant reality.

• **Keywords**

Story, Narrative, the Confluence of two stories, Metaphor, Suh Nam-dong, Jacques Lacan

## I. Story and Narrative

It is story that makes minjung theology unique. Story is a compact whole that has a beginning and an ending. Story as a complete whole is transmitted orally. It is later written and printed. Stories are already with us before we are born into this world. By living in the world, we enter into the world where stories have already existed. Stories make a world. Stories are like air that people breathe in and out. Stories make us as we are. We also create and produce new stories, but only very few of them find their audience in history. We are more in the position of being listeners and readers of stories than tellers. Stories occupy a pivotal place in our mind. Stories affect our consciousness, subconsciousness, and unconsciousness. Minjung theology has long had an interest in stories, especially stories in the tradition of the Korean minjung and in the Bible. Story makes minjung theology take root in our culture and tradition and in the Bible.

“The confluence of two stories” is a catch phrase of minjung theology. This phrase was coined by the late minjung theologian Suh Nam-dong (1917-1984). According to Suh, there are two types of stories; one is in the tradition of the Bible and the Church, and the other in the tradition of minjung (ordinary people, oppressed people) in Korea. The outcome of the confluence of the two stories does not take a form of story, but of narrative, and narrative is one of various types of discourse. To my understanding, there are numerous types of discourse including, e.g., theoretical, prescriptive, analytic, and narrative discourse. Thus, I take story as different from narrative, following the trend of academic usage of these terms.

Suh Nam-dong did not use the term discourse. Theology is not of a story, but discursive and theoretical. Theological discourse includes, as its constitutive parts, stories. Theology, furthermore, attempts at creating a confluence between two (or, possibly more) stories. We can use either discourse or narrative interchangeably. For the sake of convenience, I will use discourse rather than narrative, but when narrative makes better sense for my discussion, I will use it.

In connection to story, I understand discourse as a conscious attempt to make definite meanings out of stories and other signifiers. A story does not create one single meaning like a concept, but it can create different meanings depending on the context of discourse/narrative. In this sense, story is a signifier, while discourse is like a signified that carries a definite meaning. A story as a signifier has a potential for diverse meanings. Discourse is a trial to construct a definite meaning and understanding, like a signified. In order to reach a definite meaning and authentic understanding, discourse engages itself in a dialogue between different stories. Discourse needs to leave its end open so that it can correct itself as the dialogue between stories proceeds. Authentic discourse keeps its end open, so that a different, possibly better, new understanding continues to be achieved. But most of discourses are employed simply to attract as many people as possible.

There are many stories and narratives currently being told in our times, but why our life does not change? So many stories and narratives are being told, but still the neo-liberal market-ism are rampaging. Why? Because the dominant narratives presently are tuned to the neo-liberalism, the master discourse in our times.

As we know, the world is created by stories and narratives told. Those stories and narratives are part and parcel of the present world. We need different stories and narratives being told, if we want to change the world, since this world is created by stories. God created the world by words. God created the world out of speech, which is the summary of Genesis chapter one.

I should like to show major differences between story and narrative. “A story has an arc with a definitive ending, whereas a narrative is endless.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, narrative is open-ended and open to change for a better completion, while story does not change. A story is complete as it is, while narrative, as a discourse, has to be open to revision until it reaches a satisfaction. Stories are to be heard and received, while narratives tell stories in a persuasive way, and are to be responded and honed. Also, “narrative is the glue that connects stories and gives them context and meaning. Stories are the tales that exist within a narrative.”<sup>2</sup>

Story does not have a plot in it, or, we may well say that story is scantily plotted. Story composes an event according to its sequences. Novels and dramas are strongly plotted, compared with stories. Novels and dramas tell stories in the most dramatic way. A good narrative is open to change and develop, although at some moment it must stop and be definitive. The minjung theologian Suh Nam-dong tells us many stories including minjung stories such as the story of An-dong Groom Kim An-kook, the Legend of the Stone Gate, a Tiger Sliding on Cow Dung, Unjin Maitreya, Emille Bell, Hong Gildong story, Choonhyang story, and Sister Mongsil, and Biblical stories such as the Daughter

---

1 Ann Badillo, Tim Donovan & Tobin Trevarthen, *Narrative Generation: Why narrative will become your most valuable asset in the next 5 years* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 50.

2 Ibid. 15.

of Jephthah, the Good Samaritan, and the woman caught in the act of adultery.

Story is a language of minjung. Minjung loves to tell stories rather than abstract discourse, propositions, and doctrines. Minjung theologians try to discover, select and collect stories that contain wisdom and truths for minjung. This task is not easy; minjung theologians must take pains to find and tell them. Thus, Suh's minjung theology maintains a high narrativity.

Subjects in history are, at least partially, in-formed by stories and narratives. Subjects hear and tell stories. Ordinary people most of time are on the side of hearers. Stories construct and inform subjects and the world where they exist. Speech has such a formative power. But speech is always shaky. Most narratives are attuned to the neo-liberal ideology. Their language and words are those of the power elite. Theology has the task of finding and creating authentic stories and narratives that help create authentic subjects of history.

Then where and how can we find and collect authentic minjung language? Is such a language existing? The minjung theologian Suh Nam-Dong distinguished the language of minjung from that of baeksung, a Korean word for the ordinary people who are indoctrinated by the dominant elite. Suh Nam-Dong once mentioned the language of the body as opposed to that of the head (ideas, concepts), which is a language of dominance and rule. He seems to use the language of the body as an authentic language of, for, minjung. Suh is rather simplistic when he equals the language of the body to stories as opposed to abstract concepts.

The language of the body may not be an audible language. But

when the body speaks, it mostly speaks of truths. The language of the body is a language that reveals truths, on the situation, and expresses real needs and aspirations, of minjung (the subaltern). The absolutely oppressed are often mute. There is silence or murmuring. There is a famous, provocative phrase that has rocked the minjung-oriented scholarship: “Can the subaltern (minjung) speak?” They are silent, but their body speaks. Ordinary speech is untrue and misleading, but the body speaks the truth in a mysterious way. A psychoanalyst such as Jacques Lacan says the real located outside the symbolic constitutes “the mystery of the speaking body.”<sup>3</sup> The voice here is that of the unconscious. The body, I understand, stands for a personified body or a real person that can be imagined to exist consistently underneath the vicissitude of the possible subjectivity of the body.<sup>4</sup> The body refers to a person in the primordial state, who has flesh, blood, and bones. Thus, I understand the language of the body not in terms of its formality such as story, but of its truthfulness and its capacity to reveal the real.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus was a good story teller. He used to teach minjung by telling short stories and parables. Jesus was good at answering difficult questions by telling stories and parables. Following

---

3 Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar Book XX, Encore, 1972-1973* (New York: Norton, 1998), 131. “The real [...] is the mystery of the speaking body, it is the mystery of the unconscious.”

4 Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2009), 453. Badiou states here: “a body is what can bear the subjective formalism.” For Badiou, I think, a body refers to the primordial state of an individual or collectivity before it attains a certain form of subjectivity.

5 I borrow the term of the real from Jacques Lacan. Refer to footnote 20. Lacan claims that there are three major structures that construct our psyche. They are the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. While both the imaginary and the symbolic are fantastic and limited in dealing with our lives, the real continues to exert its influence and break up our fantasies and linguistic restrictions. “The real for example continues to erupt whenever we are made to acknowledge the materiality of our existence, an acknowledgement that is usually perceived as traumatic (since it threatens our very “reality”), although it also drives Lacan’s sense of jouissance.” Refer to: <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacanstructure.html>.

Jesus, minjung theology loves to tell stories. Jesus helped reveal crucial aspects of life by telling stories and parables. He did not use doctrines and concepts to disclose truths of life. For example, when an expert in the law asked Jesus who his neighbor was, he answered by telling the Good Samaritan story.(Luke 10:25ff) He did not define neighbor by abstract concepts or religious doctrines, but he just told a story about the robbed who was half dead lying on the highway. A Samaritan, a despised alien to the Jew, became the helper and neighbor for the robbed Jew. Such a story has the power to affect hearers. Abstract definition of the concept of neighbor does not carry such power.

Stories and narratives are overflowing in the internet and mass media. But the problem is their quality and integrity. Fake news, instigations, wrong knowledge, and lies are outpouring. Such narratives of lies and fakes thrust our society into danger and crisis. Crisis of our times is the crisis of story and narrative we hear and tell. To use the term of Jacques Lacan, it is a crisis coming from the Symbolic Order. It is a crisis caused by speech. The quality of our speech, stories and discourses determines that of the world we are in.

Current social and political narratives which are not firmly based on the real socio-economic base or infrastructure, but based on vested interests, create the crisis and instability of our society and politics. If ideological narratives, which lack a firm base of the real infrastructure of the society, go viral in a society, crisis and division will be deepened. Such narratives are outpoured nowadays by the right-wing Protestant churches and their pastors in Korea. The rightist Christians became the core of anti-democratic movement. The campaign to eradicate

progressive theologians and conscientious ministers from seminaries and churches, who advocate a due respect for other religions and faiths, and for the human rights of minorities such as homosexuals, is strong in the Korean conservative Protestant churches and seminaries.

## II Confluence of Two Stories: Shim-chong and Jephthah's nameless Daughter

I would like to tell two stories and see if some sort of confluence takes place from them. The stories are from two traditions: Christian and Korean. One is the story of Shim-chong, the other of a nameless girl called the daughter of Judge Jephthah. Each of the two stories has a long history, first orally transmitted, and then recorded in the Hebrew Bible in the case of the daughter of Jephthah, and in a folktale book in the case of Shim-chong. Each is complete as a story; it has a beginning and an end. A story includes characters and events. It tells events in a sequential manner. Here, we are talking about the possibility whether we can arrive at an enhanced understanding of the two stories by the method of the confluence of two stories. The two stories are distinct and different from each other, but there are some similarities, which is why we do not only juxtapose them, but interlace them into a discourse/narrative.

Then, what does confluence do by the two stories? Are the two stories expected to become one, like two streams merging into one wider stream? The late minjung theologian Kim Yong-bock used the term convergence. Convergence by definition

refers to the act of coming together and moving toward union or uniformity. Examples: convergence of three rivers, or two different technologies merging into a unified whole, e.g., the convergence of the internet and mobile phones. I think that when we interlace or interpret two stories together, the idea of convergence can be helpful. Kim Yong-bock's understanding of convergence is as follows:

Convergence preserves the divergence and diverse identity of actors who participate in the convergence process. Convergence of divergent actors leads to a new horizon or reality at the point of converging. ... In this sense convergence is the creative and transformative dynamics of life.<sup>6</sup>

Kim Yong-bock employed the idea of convergence for his later discourse on conviviality and the study of life, for which he coined a neologism, *zoosophia* (wisdom of life). I think the idea of convergence can help resolve the intricate problem of how two stories from different cultures and traditions can interact and create an elevated and deeper understanding of them. Each of the two stories will be vibrant and resonant on the other when they encounter each other. The two stories have some similarities, for which the stories are connected. But the two stories are wholly different in terms of time, place, motives, and characters. The differences let the encounter be dynamic. Readers have to find a point of converging, or a point of condensing from the encounter

---

6 Yong-bock Kim, "Spirituality and Social Economy from the Perspective of *Zoosophia*: Transformative Convergence of Spirituality for Conviviality," Unpublished paper, 4. (This paper is carried in the present volume of *Madang: Journal of Contextual Theology*)

of the two stories. Sensitive readers can turn that point into a signifier, which arises out of the stories. Such a signifier can give rise to a new horizon. Following Lacan, we can call that signifier a metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech that transcends its conventional usage and meaning to point to something else and very different. Metaphor can function as a tool, not perfect but useful, to approach the real. Ordinary language has a limit to get to the real. In the tradition of Christian theology, this function of metaphor is carried by analogia. Language creates the reality, not the real which exists outside of the symbolic order created by language.<sup>7</sup>

Two stories in the confluence are not expected to become one or unified. The two stories remain the same, but the understanding of each of the two is expected to be elevated and sublimed by inter-penetrating. New insight is expected to arise out of the interstice between the respective sublimed apprehensions of two stories by inter-dialoguing and finding a metaphor.

I will start with a Korean folk tale.

Long long ago, there was a girl called Shim-chong. No sooner had she given birth to Shim-chong, the mother died. Shim-chong was raised by the blind father. He wandered around the village to beg for the breast milk for the baby from one house to another. When Shim-chong grew up as a teen, she began to work for a living and for the father. One day as her father was out, he fell into a ditch and was struggling to get out. At that time, a monk passed by. The monk pulled him out, and enticed him that if he contributed 300 bags of rice to his temple, the monks would offer

---

7 Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 25.

prayers to the holy Buddha, and his sight would be returned. Excited by the thought of having his sight restored, the father accepted the monk's offer and promised to pay him the rice.

The father returned home and told Shim-chong all that had exchanged between himself and the monk. But, upon telling it, he realized that not only did he not have any money to buy the rice he had promised, but he would have to break his promise to the monk as well. Having heard this, Shim-chong, now in the mid-teens of age, said to the poor father, "Don't worry. I will find way out."

The next day while she was at the market she overheard several sailors lamenting that the sea was displeased with them, blowing up storms and wreaking havoc on their boats. They needed a maiden sacrifice to appease the waters, but none of the families were willing to part with their precious daughters, leaving the men unable to sail. Shim-chong approached them, and quickly struck a bargain: her life, in sacrifice, for 300 bags of rice.

The following is the usual plot in which the story is unfolded.

*Shim-chong hurried home, and told her father that she procured the rice. She lied to him and told him a tale of a wonderful rich lady she came to know that she would provide the rice. But the father came to realize that she would leave him and die. Despite the father's insistence that Shim-chong should not go, she took her leave and headed to the docks to meet her fate.*

*The sailors rowed Shim-chong out to the deepest parts of the water, and pushed her overboard into the deep blue ocean. She felt the icy fingers of the waters close around her, and then, nothing, until she was suddenly awoken by the bright lights of a magnificent underwater palace, home of*

*the Sea King. The palace was a bustling, happy place, and the Sea King was both gracious and kind.*

*Back on land, her father fared no better. He had given the rice to the monks, and then cruelly learned the true fate of his daughter from the local gossip. This was a double blow, since despite the monks' sincere prayers, his vision remained un-restored.*

*The Sea King took pity upon her. After being moved by her story, he gently placed her inside a giant lotus blossom and sent her floating up towards the surface. The beautiful flower was plucked from the ocean by the same sailors who had sent her to her watery fate. Unaware of its contents, they took it home with them as a gift to their King. As the glorious blossom was placed in front of the throne, the delicate petals began to unfurl, revealing Shim-chong. The King was entranced by the miraculous flower girl, and asked her to marry him.*

*Shim-chong agreed, and made the King promise that in celebration of their vows, they would host a public banquet where all the poor, disabled and blind beggars would be welcomed. The King agreed and on the night of their wedding opened the gates of his palace for the helpless and downtrodden. The new Queen waited behind a curtain, watching in hopes that her father would arrive. Finally, he appeared, and Shim-chong called out to him, 'Father, it is me'.*

*The old man looked up on hearing his beloved daughter. Somehow, in that magical moment, for the first time in many, many long years, he opened his eyes. All other blinds also opened their eyes following him.*

This is an abridged version of the Shim-chong story. It skipped some important parts of the story. So, I will recover some of them to look into some issues.

*Having heard that Shim-chong would be sold as a sacrifice to sailors for the rice, Lady Chang, who was the wife of a high official in the country, and who had long seen her as like a daughter, interrupted, with a deep grief, Shim-chong and told her not to do that way, and suggested that she would pay for the rice for Shim-chong. But the reply to the lady: "I am very sorry for having not consulted you. But I have promised with the sailors that I would give my life, and I must keep my word so that my earnest wish may reach the God-heaven. Therefore I am sorry I cannot accept your kind offer. I am afraid my action may hurt my parent(오)호 상호, 以孝傷孝, hurting filial piety by practicing it), but I believe it is the will of the heaven and I must keep my promise so that my wish be fulfilled. You are so gracious and kind to me, and your kind words will not be forgotten, I will surely compensate for your love even after death." Having realized that she could not persuade Shim-chong, the lady asked her, "Please wait for a while so that I can ask a painter to draw a portrait of you, your face and look so that I may keep it for the rest of my life."*

Let us look at the conversation between the blind father and the poor daughter, as she said to him a final goodbye. "Father, do I wish to go away apart from you? Would I like to die? Because I am your daughter, I must not leave you. But it is the will of the heaven, how can I help? Father, please forget me and I wish your sight be restored and you see the bright light of the world, and meet a good woman and start a new family, and live well with your sons and daughters." This unthinkable and unbelievable remarks were spoken out from the mouth of a young girl! How could a girl give her life for her old father and wish him to live well and get a new wife and new children? Here the heaven refers to God; then it was God's will that Shim-chong must die to

recover the sight of her father. The story of Shim-chong has been employed to teach children about moral values including filial piety.

A similar conversation took place in the Hebrew Bible. There was a judge called Jephthah in Gilead, one of tribes of ancient Israel. Jephthah was an outlaw in Israel communities. He was an illegitimate son and was driven out by his half-brothers and elders. Around him outlaws gathered; and he became a powerful man. Gilead was threatened by the neighboring nation called Ammon. The elders of Gilead came and asked him to be their leader in the struggle with the Ammonites who began campaigns against Gilead. Before he waged war against the Ammonites, Jephthah made a pledge to God, saying "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's, to be offered up by me as a burnt offering."(Judges 11:30-31) The first one that came out to welcome Jephthah with tambourine and with dancing was his only daughter! In the text she is nameless. History remembers her as the daughter of Jephthah. Having realized what would happen to her, she said, "My father, if you have opened your mouth to the Lord, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites."

We are not so sure whether she was burnt to death as a sacrifice, because her death was not mourned but her eternal un-marriage. Eternal un-marriage can include death, because death also means the termination of a chance for marriage. But the text does not report her innocent death but only the fact that "she would never

marry.”(Judges 11:38) For a girl to marry and form a family is more important than her becoming a burnt offering? Her innocent sacrificial death was not mourned, but her remaining a virgin was. She and her girl-friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry.(11:38) “From this comes the Israelite custom that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.”(11:40) But why did she come back after two months of weeping in the mountain? Was it the result of the urge mandated by the belief system of the patriarchal world, or of her voluntary free will? Like Shim-chong she voluntarily accepted her situation. We may equal the namelessness and the ever virginity to death. The namelessness and death together were imposed on her, which seems equivalent to a total death and nothingness.

In our reading of the two stories together, there occurs an encounter between the two. Shim-chong and the daughter of Jephthah were killed in the name of the will of the heaven! Both were killed, because that was vowed to God or the heaven. Both were girl-virgins and sacrificed in the androcentric world. The story of Shim-chong is more of a fairy tale and has a happy ending. The story of the daughter of Jephthah is more historical and it implies a strong critique and accusation of a cruelty of a patriarchal world. “Do it according to what has gone out of your mouth!” What a bullshit!

We cannot detect such a bitter criticism in the story of Shim-chong. It takes such a world for granted. However, if we read it with the story of the daughter of Jephthah, the meaning of the story of Shim-chong is transformed. When we read both stories together, there arises in us both indignation about systematic

injustice inflicted on, and sympathy with, the girls. And meaning of the stories to the reader changes. An encounter between two different stories creates a focus of converging. There can be several points of converging.

### III. Some Points of Converging

I would like to suggest three converging points of the two stories that will lead our readings of them.

First, virtue of submission or filial piety. Something like virtue or filial piety is involved in the two stories. One of converging points is the virtue of filial submission of the children to the patriarchy. So, we may say that the two stories can be read as stories for education for virtues that young girls (and sometimes boys) are trained to practice. In the case of Shim-chong, it has been employed to promote the virtue of filial piety. Ordinary preachers advocate the submission of the daughter of Jephthah to the will of the father who (mis)represents the God. This is the most popular reading of the two stories. Submission to the will of the father and filial piety is justified as the will of God or the heaven.

If young girls go through all the risk of practicing such a virtue they will be rewarded. Shim-chong was rewarded by becoming the queen and her wish come true, and the daughter of Jephthah by being remembered by the Israeli girls in the following generations.

The patriarchalism and religious/superstitious obsession, which end up killing innocent young girls, are considered normal. Dominant patriarchal and andro-centric world is not questioned

in this reading. The normality of such a system is restored by executing the sacrifice and by rewarding the victim-heroines. However, such a reading is misleading and uncritical, although it is predominant one.

Second, the sacrifice of the body of two young girls, not boys and other adults. we can focus on the fact that both are young girls. They are virgins and they are sacrificed to resolve the problems of a society or a family. This reading would lead to a question, why girls have to die? Their bodies are dedicated to the false (?) gods. Because of the dedication of the body, Jephthah's daughter's permanent chastity must be maintained, which is what was mourned for. Violence on the girl's body was not interrupted by any religious and civil leader. Nobody cared about the injustice of the sacrifice. The sacrifice looks like an execution by the whole system of the community.

It is not simply a murder of anyone, but a murder of young girls. Virgin girls were regarded as of the least value in the family. If not cattle, goats, and sheep, a girl is the next to become the victim. The body of young girls is valued low, so is the humanity of young girls. The body of young girls is the object of exploitation in an inhuman civilized society. In a highly capitalist and unequal world, the body of young girls is fallen to the object of sexual exploitation and trade for money. When they buy sex, they do not buy the humanity, but the body. In such a situation the humanity of young girls is minimized and fallen to nothing but the body.

Here, the question of 'what is a body' arises. Body is an organic substance that can be affected by language, which has the power to build human civilization. Culture and technique are produced by the human ability of speaking and using the language. Thus,

body is first of all an object of human language and discourse. The degree of the dignity and humanity of a body depends on language, whose major constituents are story and discourse. Dominant stories and discourses determine the apprehension of the body in the world.

Thus, feminist discourse discloses and critique the current androcentric discourses that create a world where female body and femininity is considered inferior and depreciated. A feminine body has been a battle ground where diverse discourses clash. The feminist discourse is necessary to counter the androcentric and patriarchal discourses. The above stories on the two girls' body shows clearly that body and language are inseparable but the latter can harm the former. In return, the body by pain and suffering can become a motive to transform the current dominant discourses.

Third, the action of suffering by heroines. If we read the story only as a story of murder committed by the senselessness of an androcentric world and superstitious religions, we may lose the heroic and courageous acts of the girls, which deserves our attention. Of course, the feminist perspective cannot omit this aspect. It does not only critique androcentric discourses that inflict harm upon the humanity and body of girls, but also calls upon their heroic actions for justice and liberation. The two girls suffer without remorse and hesitation. Shim-chong could have escaped from death because Lady Chang offered to pay for the offerings promised with the Buddhist monk. The daughter of Jephthah could have saved her life if she did not return home after wandering in the mountain.

But the two daughters did not escape, but confronted

courageously the fate before them. For what purpose? Shim-chong for the restoration of the sight of a poor father; the daughter of Jephthah for the fulfillment of a father's unthoughtful vow to God. When we read the two stories together, we arrive at a thought that their actions are heroic, and they are pursuing something greater while risking their lives.

The converging idea emerging from the two stories, I contend, is justice. When I read the two stories, an odd feeling of injustice is felt in my guts. What would be justice to the innocent victim-heroines? In the story, Shim-chong was resurrected, and justice was restored. Justice is connected with resurrection, when it comes to an innocent death. Resurrection takes place in the memories of innocent victims. In memory, the innocent dead come alive. Commemoration is a collective memory. The nameless daughter of Jephthah is commemorated by young Israelite women. Death is not the end, there is something beyond death. These stories tell us this.

Then, through justice, we can think of a new reality that transcends the present reality. The new reality is not yet visible, but dawning upon a new horizon. Justice becomes a key idea, or I would say, a metaphor by which we envision a new reality, a world of resurrection. Again, justice here functions as a metaphor for resurrection. If we can say that resurrection is justice, then justice plays the role of a metaphor. As God is my shepherd, then shepherd becomes a metaphor for God.

#### IV. A Conclusion: Resurrection is Justice for the Innocent Dead

The result of the confluence of Biblical story and minjung story

is a theological narrative/discourse. From the above discussion we have reached a tentative conclusion. It is that the innocent death can be used to justify cruel deed of dominant groups in society. The most representative example is the death of Jesus on the cross. The crucifixion of Jesus was an execution of an innocent man as a political criminal.

The sacrificial death is glorified, but in the Bible the stance against the power system that caused the sacrificial death, is continued. It is seen as anti-Christ power. That is the reason why Apostle Paul contrasted Jesus Christ with the earthly and religious powers and dominions (Eph. 6:12, Col.2:15). Later Roman Catholic Church compromised with the empire and earthly powers, and lost its critical stance on them. We witness many sacrificial deaths that have taken place during the last decades in Korea, including over a hundred Samsung semi-conductor workers who died of cancer caused by the chemicals at work places, over 4 hundred Sewol Ferry victims, many a Kim Yongkyoon, a irregularly employed worker whose body was trapped and torn by fast running conveyor belts, many delivery workers who died of overwork, and many others. These victims were killed by the senselessness and apathy of the dominant system.

Stories are universal, and two or more stories regardless of their origins can be read together and interlaced to discover a point of converging. Something must emerge to become a point of converging through which stories can be reread and reviewed. The right converging point in this case is, I would contend, justice. Then, if we state that justice for the innocent dead is first of all resurrection, what is the relationship between justice and resurrection? In this context of reading the two stories, justice is a

metaphor that has multiple meanings and but points to another reality: resurrection.

Resurrection turns everything around. It changes even the past events. The past acts of the daughter of Jephthah are turned heroic and right, and remembered permanently by many. In the fairy tale, justice directly points to resurrection. Shim-chong is resurrected and everything is turned around. From lowly status she becomes a queen, and her father's sight is recovered. Together with him, all other blind people gain the sight.

## Bibliography

Badillo, Ann, Tim Donovan & Tobin Trevarthen. *Narrative Generation: Why narrative will become your most valuable asset in the next 5 years*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

Badiou, Alain. *Logics of World*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2009.

Fink, Bruce. *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*. N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Kim, Yong-bock. "Spirituality and Social Economy from the Perspective of *Zoesophia*: Transformative Convergence of Spirituality for Conviviality." Unpublished paper.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar Book XX, Encore, 1972-1973*. New York: Norton, 1998.

Received 2022. 06. 03. Revised 2022. 06. 26. Accepted 2022. 07. 02.