

## **Reading Church Women hybridity From the Perspective of Postcolonial Feminism**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, I would like to criticize the view that tries to generalize Korean church women.

I would like to do this from the point of view of Gayatri Spivak and Trinh T. Min-ha. Both theorists do not look at the female subject in common but try to imagine it in various and hybrid ways. Korean church women cannot be called Asian women or even European women because they resemble American Christianity in terms of Christianity, but belong to Asia in terms of race. Theology or sermons conducted in Korean churches are not for women's equality and liberation. Rather, interpretations and contents that demand obedience from women are the main ones. Theology of Korea needs to be widened by gender sensitivity which addresses the issues related to 'women and their lives.' I believe Gayatri Spivak' and Trinh T. Min-ha's ideas can help expand the perspective of looking at

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church women. Church women are the majority of those who hold conservative views, but some young women and women have views that are different from traditional Christian positions if they are equipped with femininity.

Therefore, in this article, I would like to briefly discuss how to listen to the voices of women in the church who have become more complex and diverse from the perspective of postcolonial women's studies and through the voices of women in resistance.

## I. Introduction

In this paper, I would like to examine Korean women as hybrid existence who are neither Asian nor European women. Korean church women are Asian in terms of race, but close to American Christianity in terms of Christianity. The discourse of 'Korean feminism' has implied the caution that Korean women have hybrid subjectivity which is differentiated from both Western feminism and Asian feminism. Korean feminism has not grown as 'theoretical' feminism only. In many cases, there are many faceted Korean women. Some of them are still very conservative and some of them are very radical. Korean church women have a complicated view of feminism. In this paper, therefore, I would like to emphasize the complicated and hybrid characters of church women and in what ways resistant voices of church women can emerge. I will examine this issue from a postcolonial perspective such as Gayatri Spivak and Trinh T. Min-ha's. Both theorists do not look at the female subject in common but try to imagine it in various and hybrid ways.

As a womanist theologian, Delores S. Williams, points out, when womanist theologians seek womanist liberation, they find some differences and gaps which cannot be shared with black liberation theologians. Of course, there are some areas that womanist theology has in common with black theology. They share the view that there is some racial bias in the bible and theology. The common viewpoint is that black people cannot read Hebrew Bible without socially criticized viewpoints: some biblical verses justify slavery. However, when black theologian, such as James Cone, suggests that the liberating work of God in the bible is related to all the oppressed, we are not sure whether he is concerned with black women in slavery. When black liberation theologians read the bible, they strongly agree with the biblical message, that is, the liberation and the salvation of the oppressed. However, they have not so thoroughly identified with the most oppressed black people such as the poor homeless, jobless, and economically 'enslaved' women.<sup>1</sup>

In the same vein, Korean theology needs to be supplemented with more gender sensibility that can examine the real life of women. I believe Gayatri Spivak' and Trinh T. Min-ha's ideas can help widen feminist theology on gender issues. Spivak's implication of 'Subaltern' and Trinh- Min-ha's writing of women make us realize church women occupy various positions. They are making their voices heard in situations that force them to remain silent.

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1 Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-talk*(New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 148-149.

## II. Gayatri Spivak's "Subaltern" and their silence

Spivak has a postcolonial critical mind, but when dealing with women's issues, she has a perspective of simultaneously looking at deconstructionism, postcolonialism, and Marxism. What the post-colonial theorists like Spivak deal with is not simply the specificity or oppression of a nation, but the dichotomy structure of the center and periphery of the West and the East, male and female (in Spivak's case). It pays attention to revealing the colonialism that appears in numerous ways and the differences buried within it.

Spivak makes use of Derrida's deconstruction to question the texts which authorize and justify the colonial desire. Spivak suggests the notion of 'epistemic violence' that exaggerates and serotypes others. When the colonial authority speaks for the other (the native), then the other eventually becomes 'the other' of the self. The non-European world is represented as a monolithic entity captured by the colonist's view. All these representations happen following the desire of the European self, and the powerful. For this reason, Spivak has been persistently critical of the simplified claims of Western feminist thoughts to represent all women whose realities have been unknown to them. Spivak warns Western scholars including feminists to acknowledge their culturally partial and privileged position.<sup>2</sup> By re-considering Marx, Spivak deconstructs the Marxian dichotomy between proxy and representation, which is the dilemma of representation. Spivak criticizes scholars for the idea that the oppressed know themselves well. and they can

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2 Spivak *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 132.

articulate their voices politically. She challenges the idea that scholars can accomplish their scholarly and political fulfillments by representing or speaking for proletariats. This also happens in the discourses of liberation-oriented theology such as Minjung theology and feminist theology. When theologians try to articulate the subjectivities of Korean (church women), many times they are represented. by being simplified and essential.

For Spivak, the concept of 'subaltern' is fundamental. Spivak's use of the term subaltern is primarily informed by the work of the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci used the term, meaning 'any group that is collectively subordinated under the hegemonic control of the ruling elite'<sup>3</sup> For him, this category points to the subordinates—the marginalized, the farmers, the unorganized laborers, the minorities, the women, etc. The difference between Spivak and Gramsci, however, is that for Spivak, there is no such essential and stereotypical 'subalterns' that might be explained and represented in universal ways. Arguing against the Subaltern Studies group, Spivak contends that there cannot be an 'essentialized subaltern subject' to speak against colonial or postcolonial representation. It is out of this epistemological violence that Spivak's thesis arises: 'The subaltern cannot speak themselves.'<sup>4</sup> For Spivak, the voice of the subaltern cannot be heard, because there is no appropriate language for them within the dominant discourse. It is difficult to find a context suitable for them in the discourse written by intellectuals.

Another aspect of Spivak's subaltern is that she extends the

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3 Gramsci A Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Hoare Q. Nowell GS (ed). NewYork: International publishers,1971): 120.

4 Gayatri Spivak *Imperative to Re-imagine the Planet* Goetschel W(ed). (Vienna: Passagen, 1999), 273.

‘unspeakability’ of the subaltern further to the question of gender. By focusing on women as subalterns, Spivak argues that within this frame of epistemological violence, ‘the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced.’<sup>5</sup> Spivak explains this doubly deleted female subjectivity by entering into the discussion of Sati in pre-colonial India.<sup>6</sup> According to Spivak, women’s voices have been silenced between imperialistic England and patriarchal Indian perspectives. She argues that the voices of widows were lost first by the ‘liberating abolishment’ of Sati by the British government. Secondly, the patriarchal insistence of India to see Sati as a ‘heroic act’ made women’s voices simple and clear. They interpreted that the women voluntarily chose death. Spivak explicates this thesis through the story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, a young woman who hanged herself in her father’s house in Calcutta in 1926. She was menstruating at the time, which would indicate that she was not pregnant. Years later it emerged that she had killed herself because she had been unable to conduct a mission for a revolutionary group of which she was a member. Spivak understands that Bhaduri’s suicide was an act of subaltern re-writing of Sati-suicide. People assumed that she had a love relationship outside of marriage. In this misunderstanding, her death has represented a practice of ‘Sati.’ Bhaduri, however, tried to prove that she was not pregnant. Yet the ‘message’ self-inscribed on her body not read. She attempted to speak but we cannot hear her voice. Spivak here problematizes the subaltern women’s silenced voices. For Spivak, the non-audibility of subaltern women is not the result

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5 Ibid., 274.

6 Gayatri Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 305.

of failed articulation but that of failed representation. India's male-centered liberation movement group did not closely pay attention to Bhaduri's life and death.<sup>7</sup> The subaltern speaks but cannot be heard. Spivak argues that while the intellectuals claim that the subaltern can speak for themselves, what they speak for is their illusion. The intellectuals assume the possibility and the impossibility/absence and presence/voice and voiceless coincide with each other. The imperialistic and omnipotent scholars consider they can fully understand and represent subalterns (women). For Spivak this gap and aporia is a political position—a 'decolonized space' where colonial perspective cannot reach out. According to Spivak, this space is not a synonym for the word 'oppression.' It is a 'rhetorical space,' that cuts across any essentialist position in terms of class, gender, and race. I believe that Spivak's subaltern can widen theologians' viewpoints. If 'women' means the name of the oppressed, 'subaltern' can be women, sexual minorities, and children. Subaltern subjectivity cannot be determined fully by economic and political oppression.

### III. Why are the voices of church women not being heard easily?

If we look at the church through the eyes of gender justice, what would we see? Are women in the church oppressed? How the Bible describes gender? Are women equally practicing their

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7 Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 308.

rights and choices in the church? And these kinds of questions should be asked in diverse ways. The answers to this can be different depending on what kind of perspective the women of the church have. To answer the above questions through the lens of gender equality in the church, we might ask: These questions might help us find why church women are supposed to be ‘Subaltern.’: One. The position of women in the church. Two. The portrayal of women in the Bible.

### **1. Women’s roles in the church and how their voices are silenced**

If we come to church, we would see the roles of adults in the church. Many of the members are women and many of the leaders are men. Ordination of female pastors has been allowed, but there are still not many female pastors, and not many female elders work in the church.

Many Korean church women, however, believe that this situation is “God’s will,” and several Bible verses would be quoted to prove the point. These texts are then used to infer something about the characteristics of women and their roles. Gender roles are therefore thought to be set by God and fulfilling these assigned roles is proof that one is a good Christian. The problems associated with this also happen in the context of sexual violence against women. In the Korean church, there has been sexual violence against women quite a lot continuously. Many times, pastors were not exceptional. Sexual abuse by pastors exhibits a dynamic that takes place between an authoritative and powerful person (a minister) and a person who is vulnerable to and trusting of that power. Victims often feel



responsible for the abuser's activity and so are bound in secrecy by a double burden of guilt and shame. Even if the victim does speak up, she may not be believed. Churches are hesitant to admit sexual assault, even if the victim speaks up because the pastor has more power.

Whenever sexual violence happens in the church people including women, blame the victims. Pastors claim to be humble, but exercise the mighty protection of the church.

Traditional obedience to ministers and the sheer confidence that ministers could not have done such a thing are two elements of that protection. Often congregations are remarkably ready to believe the woman involved deserves all the blames. Women who become sexually involved with the pastors are frequently considered to be the guiltiest party -- and it is she, not he, who is put on trial. In many cases, we do not acknowledge that a pastor possesses a unique amount of power. Like a doctor or a therapist, pastors see people at their most vulnerable, but unlike the other two, divine authority empowers their positions. A sexual encounter between a pastor and a layperson(woman) is a profound violation not only of the body but of the spirit as well. It is difficult for women to speak out because of the atmosphere where power is concentrated on male pastors, and they indoctrinate female laity.

The psychological state that lay people have about pastors (since most pastors are male) is at an infantile level. A pastor called three women to his apartment, had sex with them, and demanded a massage, saying that it was God's permission, just as Moses chose a goose woman. (They persuaded them that if they love God, they should offer their most precious

possessions.) Even in this situation, the victim, a female disciple, was sexually assaulted without fully recognizing that the situation was related to sex. Because she refused to deny God within her theological system, she had no choice but to obey the pastor.<sup>8</sup>

This is because they do not criticize or question what the pastor says. This phenomenon tends to appear more among lay women. Some victims spoke of their experiences of being irresistibly powerless even when assaulted because they were male “pastors,” not ordinary men. Moreover, if a pastor quotes a Bible verse or gives religious advice and forces sexual assault, he either does not recognize the fact that it is sexual assault, or even if she recognizes it, she cannot take action. In severe cases, they do not even notice that the male pastor’s behavior is wrong. (Because he is not just a man, but a ‘pastor.’)

## **2. Women as Subalterns in the Bible**

Let us turn now to the Bible: we need to examine how the writers of the Bible portray women and how church congregations follow the texts that oppress women without question. If we look at the heroes of the Bible, there are not many women leadership figures. It seems that men are the key role players in the work of God starting from Adam to the apostles in the New Testament. Most of us can argue that there are women heroes such as Deborah, Ruth, Rahab, Mary, etc. but the reality is that their stories and contributions are represented by fixed gender roles and characteristics such as ‘sacrifice, obedience, and silence.’

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8 Heesung Jung, 「Women and Pastoral care」 (Ewha womens university, 2014), 118.

In the bible, women are represented as “background,” so in some cases, their names are not even mentioned. We are told in Genesis that God is the God of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” and there is no mention of their wives, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

There are not many women in the Bible, but there are many women who appear as wicked women. Women are pictured as negative characters which are harmful to men. Infamous women who are remembered for their negative effect on men such as Delilah, Jezebel, Bathsheba, and Eve are consistently blamed for the “fall” of the men before God. How women have been portrayed in the bible plays a crucial role to examine the positions of women in the church today. If we do not question the wrongly represented women in the bible, we will force women to stay within the boundary of the representation.<sup>9</sup>

One more thing we need to consider from the perspective of women is that the bible tends to justify violence against women. The tendency to scapegoat and blame women is contained in the Christian faith. This understanding of women in the Bible paralyzes the ability of women victims to correctly interpret and judge their experiences of sexual violence. Without knowing that the biblical passages that justify violence against women are wrong, women do not have the capacity to criticize sexual violence as wrong. In many cases, women who have been sexually assaulted are said to be more frustrated or depressed than looking for answers in the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

Ephesians 5:22-24 is one of the most quoted verses in the Bible

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9 Musa W Dube, *Postcolonial Feminists Interpretation of the Bible* (chalice press, 2000), 13.

10 Kuesik Kim, “A Study on Female Sexual Violence and Positive Functions of Christian Resources”, 68.

and is used to define the space of women in the home. These verses are often cited when advising that women should stay at home and submit to their husbands even in the face of domestic violence.

Even if you are experiencing sexual violence, this is often interpreted as a spiritual realm, and pastors often advise that you should never leave your husband or partner, no matter the consequences. Glorification of the family or family ideology where the family as an institution takes priority over the lives of people and this is the case in domestic violence where the home has become a dangerous, unsafe place. Bible verses are quoted to ensure that marriage is preserved at all costs even the death of the abused partner. In many cases, the Bible is quoted to fix women's family boundaries and the role of wife and mother.

In most the Korean church, women are supposed to prepare the meal for the congregation on Sundays. And there are not many women elders and leaders. Although there are new types of families where couples share their house chores equally in society, Church women need to be obedient to male pastors to be taking care of their families because this kind of work (mother and wife) is their faithful duty. The Bible is not women-friendly for women to interpret and decide their own lives, and there are still too many male leaders who force women to obey and sacrifice based on the Bible.

What is significant in the discussion of theological methodology about Spivak's notion of 'subaltern' is that it problematizes 'positioned knowledge. Unlike modern theological methodology, which provides a privileged position for the powerful, Spivak promotes the gap and silence of the

subaltern (the powerless) and affirms its heterogeneity and infinity. There is no 'true' and finalized subjectivity of Women. For Spivak, it is the significant position where the self(I) is deconstructed and the other(Minjung/subaltern) is re-visited. I think both Korean theology and feminist theology can learn from Spivak's this 'un-representable subaltern.' There are so many faces of subaltern that exceeds my prejudices and narrow knowledge.

#### IV. Trinh T. Min-ha's Question on Writing: What Does It Mean to Write as a Non-White Woman?

Trin T. Minh-ha is a filmmaker and a postcolonial theorist who questions the imperial gaze of the Western Self. In criticizing the homogeneous representation of the racial other of white feminism, Trinh emphasizes the multiple and hybrid subject positions of non-white women. Trinh's strategically goes against representation and categorization when she describes her subject position as well as the subjectivity formation of non-white women. In her works, Trinh portrays herself as an "inappropriate Other" and a disrepresentable foreigner." (From the standpoint of the West, she exists as the 'other' who is difficult to explain)

Trinh is continuously alerting the reader not to essentialize and caricature herself as simply a "Third World woman" or "Eastern woman." Her resistance against this categorization is a well-thought-out strategy to defy the "recuperation of her writing into a set of maxims colonizable within the terms of Western

theory.”<sup>11</sup> Trinh’s elusive and complicated writings show vigilant resistance against the master’s language, which characterizes authoritarian clarity and demarcation. When we read the writings of Trinh, we begin to realize that even though she builds her argument from her own experience of being an “outsider,” she does not highlight herself as a representative speaker for the outsider, but rather emphasizes the radical fluidity of a speaking subject and her/his non-objectifiable object. In this way, she resists any attempt to reify or essentialize non-white women as ‘the Other’ who can be objectified and represented by Western Self. Even though her strategy lies in the ceaseless disposition and displacement of subjectivity as that of Derrida’s deconstruction, Trinh does not only emphasize undecidable negation and ongoing deconstruction. Rather, Trinh’s emphasis has been put on “subject– in –making.”

Contrary to Derrida’s self and others, Trinh’s self and others are continuously influential and relational. For Trinh ‘I’ am unceasingly affected and being complicated by others in her/himself. For this reason, any single voice cannot authorize itself as a representative voice but, at the same time, the unique voice of ‘self’ can influence each other among multiple and various voices.

Trinh does not stabilize and aim herself toward “pure negativity” or the continuous deferral of meaning. As in her “storytelling,” which is articulated in her book *Woman Native Other*, “despite the differences in characters or subject matter, their stories closely interact and constantly overlap,”<sup>12</sup> her

11 Linda Alcoff, “On Mastering Master Discourses,” *American Literary History* 5, no.2 (Summer 1993):343.

12 Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 144.

strategy provides the reader with a non-binary space that cannot simply be reduced to either negativity or positivity. Sometimes it is Trinh herself as a non-white woman who speaks, but at other times, the voices come from many different authors, as if their voices were the speaking subject. "Her selection and collection of these other voices thematize precisely the difficulties of representing otherness by refusing the fictions of both unities and polarities, in or between the West and the non-West,"<sup>13</sup> or between subject and object. This refusal to buy into unity and polarity initiate "a non-binary understanding of difference, and meditations on paradox, dynamic and simultaneous heterogeneity, and multiple inscriptions."<sup>14</sup>

By naming and separating "us" and "them," we, the natives, incorporate and categorize the natives as "them," "the outsider as the one who needs help ... the barbarian, the pagan, the infidel, the wild man ... and underdeveloped."<sup>15</sup> To write well means to name and signify and to categorize, sort out, and control the inappropriate and barbarous. Critically pondering this world of writing, Trinh asks the question: "Can any one of us write ... *like* a woman?" The answer is not simple and easy. For women, writing is like stealing the tools of the powerful.

To express and situate herself, the woman uses the language of a man; however, "a man's sentence is bound to be unsuited for a woman's use," and no matter how hard she tries to shape her identity through the language, all she can find is nothing but a "clumsy weapon in her hands."<sup>16</sup>

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13 Lisa Lowe, "Trinh T. Minh-ha," *Substance* 62/63, (1990): 215.

14 Ibid.

15 Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other*, 54.

16 Ibid.

As we have seen, the strategy of Trinh's writing is not for putting (non-white) Women in the master's language. Rather it is to show the uniqueness and singularity of minority women, that is, Korean Women (Minjung) are caught up among 'defined identities.' They are not Western, nor Asian. Church women are not understood from a typical male Christian perspective nor by feminist Christians. Sometimes Minjung theology can be a master's language if its perspective is centered only on masculine experiences.

In the case of Trinh, however, what is ultimately needed for marginalized people such as non-white women is the very disruption of the assumption that there is an autonomous and clearly defined self that can perceive and objectify the presence of the other. While for white feminist theologians, there still exists a distinction between a white woman and a non-white woman. Even if the difference and division cannot be created out of binary opposition, for Trinh, there are no clear distinctions between/among women because "we — you and me, she and he, we and they — differ in the content of the words, in the construction and weaving of sentences."<sup>17</sup> For Trinh Min-ha, the difference between subjects is something that cannot be represented.

## V. Conclusion: Theologically speaking from a diverse women's perspective

For Trinh, there is no clear boundary between "I" and "the

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17 Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other*, 2.



other” because one’s encounter with the other does not happen “face to face” or “once and for all.” This realization that the other cannot be apprehended once and for all makes us realize that “the other” cannot be the one whose name and presence can be captured by the subject’s short glimpse of her/him.

With the aid of Trinh, the key point of human apophysis, that is, that there is something inexpressible and unnamable in every human being, can be further emphasized and enhanced.

Derrida’s continuous caution against ‘self-centered subjectivity’ as an anthropologist and observer has made important and influential contributions to feminist and postcolonial deconstruction against general and essential definitions of women’s subjectivity. It is, however, Trinh T. Minh-ha who reveals the limit and the danger of the master’s norms and language, which continuously capture and code “the exotic and erotic feminine ethnic minority” per their boundaries and categories and universalize and essentialize them as ‘the other.’ Another outstanding aspect of Trinh’s fight for differences can be found in the fact that her strategy is not just limited to critical engagement with the so-called “Western” or “The First World.” In arguing against the influence of the master’s language, Trinh elucidates the problems of “Eastern” or non-white people who are easily caught in the net of fishermen or become fishermen themselves. If one is not cautious against this dangerous desire to place her/himself ‘all-knowing subjectivity’ and the other as the objects, no one can stop or escape from this vicious circle of representation.

In my view, before we seek liberation from neoliberal capitalism, the differences between people from different classes,

gender, education, etc. need to be addressed. Otherwise, their reality is supposed to be “represented” from the viewpoint of a scholar who intends to introduce “who Minjung is.” As Trinh argues with delicate cautions, apophatic differences of women are supposed to be hardly addressed. There are many Korean (women) minjung whose reality and sorrows cannot be expressed by representative scholar’s viewpoint. The problem of representation is produced at this point. Feminist theology is, unlike any other theology, the theology which emphasizes women’s reality rather than theological norms, how to understand each woman’s situation is very important. I believe that rather than categorizing the concept of Korean women and their reality, it would be better for scholars to hear from Korean women themselves. How they face their reality and how they interpret their lives and reality in theological terms could be viewed as important theological points.

Korean church women can think independently as they have a more reformist perspective as their age group gets lower. The biblical interpretation that women want is gender equality, but preachers still interpret misogynistic texts. Rather than interpreting biblical passages like “Women be silent” literally and preaching to women to accept them, we should explain the circumstances in which they were placed and ask our audience how they should be interpreted today. Increasingly young church women are reading the Bible to honor themselves, not to oppress them. Rather than interpreting Mary as an obedient mother, we must also provide a perspective that interprets Mary as a comrade who started the movement for the kingdom of God with Jesus. Rahab should be interpreted as a woman who

made a better choice to save her family rather than interpreted as betraying her people and becoming an Israeli believer for the sake of the Israeli religion. A growing number of women prefer a biblical interpretation that reads women as subjects rather than as someone's mother or daughter.

There are also movements among church women who are trying to make their voices. The movement of the mothers of the bereaved families of the Sewol ferry tragedy can be seen as a movement in which women themselves voiced their voices. There was an unforgettable tragedy which has happened in 2014. 4.16 (Sewol ferry tragedy). It has been 9 years since the families have been protesting. Unfortunately, the victims of the Sewol ferry tragedy and their families have been categorized and misunderstood by conservative parties. They categorize and criticize them as if they fight for their political interest. All they want to know is the truth about why this tragedy happened: Why did the government fail to rescue so many lives from the sinking vessel?

The most important thing to remember, however, is that the tragedy has not happened as some exceptional accident but as the foreseen tragedy that can happen to any Korean people. Considering this situation, we begin to realize that in this tragedy, we are influential and relational. We are influencing each other. As Trinh indicates if we objectify and separate ourselves and them, we will be still in the boundary of 'master's language. Will we become fishers who will continuously categorize and dichotomize the victims(families) and us? Or will we become many 'i's who co-experience the victims' sorrows and agonies?

Another important aspect to call our attention to is that the mothers who lost their loved children in the tragedy have made their voices. I have had the chance to hear from the mothers. They were Christians who attend church. However, nowadays they do not feel to go to church anymore. They have felt that God they have known in the church has abandoned them. The reason they feel the absence of God is because conservative pastors interpret the Sewol tragedy as a punishment from God. A pastor said that God made the ferry sink because there are many non-Christians. Some of them say that God had some purpose to leave them to suffer and die. That is not a theological opinion but very violent nonsense. Conservative Christians still firmly believe in a God who punishes us with suffering. This kind of ironic and violent theological interpretation made the victim's families leave the church.

However, among the victim's families, some people still believe in God. The reason why the mothers still believe in God is because there were people who have come to them and have been with them while they were suffering. They confess that they have experienced their God through the people who have been with them. I can say that the mothers who are suffering from the tragedy can be the voices of Korean women minjung. They are not representative of Korean women. There are many Korean women minjung who are suffering and surviving during their different situations. In their singleness and uniqueness, they cannot be categorized as 'the woman minjung.' However, the tragedy itself is not singular and separate. It could happen to anybody and all of us have and share the deep scar from 2014. 4.16. tragedy. In this tragedy, we are different but connected. All

terms of identities are complicated when we face their reality. However, amid their situation, and their suffering the mothers are making their theological voices and we learn from their voices. As Spivak and Trinh indicate, the voices of subalterns and the voices of women cannot be represented in general and representing terms. However, we must continuously listen to and be awakened by the suffering singular women of Korea. We should pay attention to the women who read the Bible to respect themselves and the women who discovered and voiced their own God through the Sewol Ferry tragedy as beings who are voicing their voices even in the oppressive atmosphere of the Korean church.

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