

WOMEN'S NARRATIVES FROM JEJU ISLAND: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to establish a postfoundational practical theology and the corresponding narrative approach to the contextual experience narratives of Jeju women. Its approach helps the readers to understand the co-researchers' interpreted experience and to open their future narratives. This research attempts to discover the privileged values, themes, and social-constructed meaning of the co-researchers' narratives. The postfoundational epistemology, which is proposed by Van Huyssteen and the "Seven movements" proposed by J.C Müller, has been used as a guideline.

The research begins with the co-researchers' storied experiences as a basic source of context. The co-researchers' context of Jeju Island has a very unique tradition, culture, religion and history. In order to investigate how they interpret their experiences situated in their own contexts, the researcher not only considers Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of three mimesis, composed of pre-figuration, configuration, and re-figuration, alongside social constructionism, but also employs Michael White's narrative therapy theory of deconstruction and re-authoring conversation for delineating thickened and alternative stories.

The examination of the research context of Jeju Island, its history of *Sasamsageon*, as well as its tradition and culture in chapter four are conducted for the purpose of understanding and discovering the necessary meaning of the co-researchers' narratives and values.

In order to listen to the Jeju women's experience narratives in their contexts, I have

chosen four people who have lived in Jeju Island for a long generation. According to the perspective of the narrative approach, an attempt is made to focus on the personal meaning-making that the co-researchers assign to specific events in their lives and on how the co-researchers tell the story of these meaning-making and interpret their experiences. These co-researchers' stories are to say about their relationship with their families and communities. The stories also include some background of their lives, particularly concentrating on the recent struggles they experienced and their understanding of their own relationships with God.

Based on the co-researchers' narratives and the process of the research, in regard to the goal of this postfoundational narrative research, i.e., looking for the meaning of the co-researchers' narratives and creating new meaning through discourse, in chapter six, I present not only the interpretation of what they say, but also the meaning and understanding of the co-researchers' own stories that are developed by means of discoursing with the given context. This research is presented for how to cultivate the alternative interpretations, which allowed the co-researchers to explore preferred views of their futures through discourse and conversation. And then I explicate the three interventions and interactions used for empowering and opening to the better future.

Key Terms

1. Narrative research
2. Postfoundationalism
3. Social constructionism
4. The Threefold Mimesis
5. Narrative therapy
6. Jeju Island
7. *Sasam Sageon* (The Jeju April third incident)
8. Jeju women's Narrative

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHATER 1 RESEARCH INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS.

.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The research origination.....	2
1.3 Context of this research	4
1.4 Epistemology of the research: postfoundational rationality	6
1.5 Methodology and methods of the research: post-foundational narrative research of Seven movements.....	1 5
1.6 Research aims and purpose.....	1 9
1.7 Research resource	2 1
1.7.1 The qualitative interview and discourse.....	2 1
1.7.2 The role of researcher and co-researcher	2 4
1.8 The plane of the thesis	2 5

CHAPTER 2 A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES	2 8
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2.1	Introduction.....	2 8
2.2	Modernity and Postmodernity.....	3 1
2.2.1	Modernity	3 2
2.2.2	Postmodern thought.....	3 5
2.3	A theological anthropology perspective	4 1
2.4	The Christian feminist perspective	4 5
2.5	Concluding Remarks	4 9
CHAPTER 3 PERSPECTIVES OF THE NARRATIVE TURN TO SUPPORT THE		
JEJU WOMEN’S NARRATIVES		5 1
3.1	Introduction.....	5 1
3.2	Paul Ricoeur’s theory of hermenutics: a way to interpret co-researchers’ narratives.....	5 3
3.2.1	Ricoeur’s theory of interconnection of text, author and reader	5 7
3.2.2	Narrativity through threefold Mimesis: prefiguration, con-figuration and refiguration	5 9
3.3	Social-constructionism	7 1
3.3.1	A social constructionist view	7 2

3.3.2 Social-constructionism and narrative research resources	7 5
3.4 Narrative approach to thicken and alternative story	7 8
3.4.1 Deconstruction conversation	8 2
3.4.2 Re-authoring conversation	8 4
3.5 Concluding Remarks	8 7
CHAPTER 4 THE NARRATIVE RESEARCH CONTEXT OF JEJU ISLAND: HISTORY, TRADITIONS AND CULTURE	8 8
4.1 Introduction	8 8
4.2 Jeju women’s narratives reflected in the female deity	9 2
4.2.1 The Jeju Island myth of <i>Segyeong-bonpuri</i>	9 5
4.2.2 The story of <i>Segyeong-bonpuri</i>	9 7
4.2.3 The interrelationship between the myth’s characterisation of women and the Jeju women’s narratives	1 0 4
4.3 The narrative of <i>Sasam Sageon</i>	1 1 2
4.3.1 The historical background and development of <i>Sasam Sageon</i> ...	1 1 3
4.3.2 The narratives of traumatic experience of <i>Sasam Sageon</i>	1 1 8
4.3.3 The psychological impact of <i>Sasam Sageon</i> on Jeju Island people	

.....	1 2 4
4.4 Concluding Remarks	1 2 8
CHAPTER 5 THE STORIES OF JEJU ISLAND WOMEN	1 3 0
5.1 Introduction.....	1 3 0
5.2 Min’s story	1 3 5
5.2.1 Min’s story of her family	1 3 7
5.2.2 Min’s experience of God	1 4 6
5.3 Sook’s story.....	1 5 2
5.3.1 Sook’s story of identity.....	1 5 2
5.3.2 Sook’s family story.....	1 6 0
5.4 Jin’s story	1 6 3
5.4.1 The story of Jin: Responsibilities and burdens	1 6 4
5.4.2 Jin’s experience of the presence of God	1 7 1
5.5 Young’s story	1 7 2
5.5.1 The story of her life with family	1 7 2
5.5.2 The story of the experience of God	1 7 7

5.6 Concluding Remarks 1 7 9

CHAPTER 6 A REFLECTION ON AND INTERPRETATION OF THE JEJU

WOMEN'S NARRATIVES: THE DISCOVERING OF MEANINGS.....

..... **1 8 0**

6.1 introduction..... 1 8 0

6.2 The reflecting and interpreting of the co-researchers' narratives..... 1 8 3

6.2.1 Min's narratives 1 8 3

6.2.2 Sook's narratives 1 9 0

6.2.3 Jin's narratives..... 1 9 5

6.2.4 Young's narratives 2 0 0

6.3 Finding values and themes in the Jeju women's narratives..... 2 0 3

6.3.1The value of the community for the co-researchers 2 0 4

6.3.2 The meaning of self-sacrifice for the family or community 2 0 6

6.3.3 The responsibility for family and community versus the selfish person
..... 2 0 8

6.4 Interdisciplinary process 2 1 1

6.4.1 Concerns and reflections..... 2 1 3

6.4.2 Unique perspectives on Jeju women’s stories	2 1 7
6.4.3 Feedback to the responses	2 1 8
6.5 Concluding Remarks	2 2 0
Chapter 7 THE CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH	2 2 4
7.1 Introduction	2 2 4
7.2 The self reflection of the whole process of the research according to the postfoundational narrative research of “Seven Movements”	2 2 5
7.3 Limitations of the research	2 2 7
7.4 Suggestions for future research	2 2 8
BIBLIOGRAPHY	2 3 2

CHAPTER 1.

RESEARCH INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the South Korean women on the island of Jeju, whose life narratives are interwoven with socially constructed values and themes. These stories are used as a case study to explore how the privileged socially-contextualised narratives and socially-constructed meanings of such narratives influence the Jeju Island women's identity narrative as well as their views of and relationships with God. Their narratives are influenced by the co-researchers' past experiences and future narratives. This research thereby attempts to understand the Jeju Island women's past and present, trying to open up a better future for them. According to the research method of qualitative research design, the research has employed the post-foundational practical theology of Seven Movements and a narrative therapy framework for exploring the above issues.

This research understands practical theology as the locus of encounter between narrative therapy and Wentzel van Huyssteen's philosophy of post-foundationalism. It will investigate how the co-researchers' narratives are built from their own personal experiences and how such experiences influence the culturally and traditionally interpreted meanings of the co-researchers' narratives.

1.2 THE RESEARCH ORIGATION

This research emerges from the interest in my own personal narrative, where the specific meanings of self-sacrifice as well as the values of my personal character of strength respectively come from. I was born and grew up in Jeju Island, located some fifty miles below the southernmost tip of the South Korea peninsula. Jeju Island is my ancestral land. The story of the origin of my family name goes generally as follows: about 4,300 years ago, the three original families - the family names of “Ko”, “Yang” and “Bu”- were brought into existence from a central opening with three cavities formed in the earth.

As a Korean citizen, specifically a native of Jeju Island, I have been raised to identify myself in terms of my position in relation to my family and kin. Being true of most Korean women including myself, we Korean women have struggled between individual identity narrative on the one hand, and cultural ones at large on the other. I have lived in a society where “we-ness (communal identity)” has greater weight than “I-ness (individual identity)” (Jeong, 2006). Inferred from most Korean women’s personal stories, it is clear that traditional Korean women are profoundly affected by the values and norms of the community to which they belong. This means that the Korean people’s personal stories are decisively influenced by the social environment, customs and traditions as a constituent part of their identity. Stroup (1981: 110) said that, “personal identity requires the use of memory to interpret personal history, but it also depends on the framework in which personal history is interpreted and that framework is shaped by a person’s location in a particular community.” So far, I have

built my identity through the interpretation of experience and an interaction between the individual and the social milieu.

In my personal story, I frequently see 'strong-ness' in the conquering of suffering, sorrow, and difficulties, especially at the new phases of life. Not only have I been occasionally interpreted as positive, but also this has been construed as negatively affecting my life. I am able to understand and appreciate this, my personal value of 'strong-ness', by comprehending the broader stories of the culture in which I live. A lot of Jeju women have developed their story as strong and independent persons. More often than not, the Jeju women are depicted in Korea as the arch-type of strong and independent personalities. I assume this is because of the stories developed from all the struggles and deep agonies throughout the painful experiences of their life circumstances. They had to overcome their harsh environment and their aftermath in the *Sasam Sagoen* (April, 3 incidents)¹. I wonder how they would describe and interpret their life experiences and how the community's norms and values are accordingly affected.

The co-researchers and this researcher have lived in a Confucian patriarchal Korean culture, particularly in Jeju Island's unique cultural atmosphere, with the aftermath of the traumatic event of the *Sasam Sageon* (4.3 incidents). My mother grew up as an orphan. Her father died in the *Sasam Sageon*; her mother also passed away five years later. I have attempted to explore the Jeju women's narratives of experiences in relation to their contexts and to find out the interpreting resource of their narratives.

¹ It is Korean language. *Sasam* refers to the date, April the third, and *Sageon* means an event. In this thesis this incident is called *Sasam Sageon*.

1.3 CONTEXT OF THIS RESEARCH

Employing post-foundational narrative research, I would like to focus on the South Korean women in Jeju Island. Jeju Island has a very unique tradition, culture, religion, and history, compared to those of other regions of Korea. It is a volcanic Island located some fifty miles below the southernmost tip of the Korean peninsula. The Island is blessed with good weather and a wonderful natural environment. The island was created by volcanic movements that left *Halla* Mountain with 360 *Orums* or parasite volcanoes and caves on it. The gigantic *Halla* Mountain of 1,950 meter dominates the topography of the island of 700 square miles (Son, 2006: 51-2).

There exists the particular faith of Dang. Myths still circulate vividly around Jeju Island. More than 500 myths have been handed down from generation to generation through shaman lyrics of Jeju's traditional female deities – goddesses - and the Dang faith exists in Jeju with its religious culture (Cha, 2007:1). The peculiar religious culture of Jeju involves its women's harsh lives. Jeju women have had to support their family by farming and gathering seafood in Jeju's tough surroundings. They had to overcome countless hardships caused by Jeju's adverse nature. These various hardships made these women economically strong and independent, for they engendered unyielding willpower within the women to overcome harsh realities. Even though the Jeju women had taken on the role of the local labour force to a much greater extent than women in other parts of Korea, they are still not only living within the confines of a patriarchal social structure but also have not received sufficient honour for what they have contributed to the well-being of the people of

Jeju.

In addition, the *Sasam Sageon*, which happened between 1948 and 1953, has made a huge impact on almost every part of the island. The Jeju resistance led to an increase in the number of widows inhabiting Jeju province and changed its family structure. The *Sasam Sageon* was guerrilla warfare. The South Korean armed forces and the guerrilla units under the control of North Korea clashed with each other on the island. The Jeju guerrillas and the government force exchanged violence without mercy, causing countless civilian casualties. All Jeju Islanders were influenced by this traumatic experience of the *Sasam Sageon* directly or indirectly from then on. The traumatising seems to have been a central factor in their difficulty in caring and building intimacy with their own children. Many Jeju people who met me said with a sad and poignant voice, “it is seriously hard to recognise my emotion and put it into expression. However, sometimes I become sad for no identifiable reason and shed tears in a trifling manner but I do not know why I shed tears and am sad.” The *Sasam Sageon* influenced the Jeju people’s life story. If we wanted to understand the Jeju people’s narrative, the impact made by *Sasam Sageon* on almost every part of Jeju society should not be ignored.

In this research I will listen to Jeju women’s stories and engage with them. The context experience stories of the Jeju women will be the text of this research.

1.4 EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH: POSTFOUNDATIONAL RATIONALITY

We are epistemologically related to our world by the mediation of interpreted experiences (Huyssteen, 2006:15). We construct and share our lives with the stories of experience. The stories about our lives are created through linking certain events together in a particular sequence across a time period (Morgan, 2000:5). If we create our individual stories, we are influenced by our own knowledge, beliefs and values. A person's life story is constructed and interpreted by his or her knowledge and personal epistemology. The perspective and knowledge we have offers a variety of interpretations to our experience. The stories are storied by interpretation to discover meaning in life. The way of thinking, doing and decision-making is all referred to as the epistemological process.

The construction of a methodological framework and the epistemology of research have been the main concerns in post-foundationalism. From the post-foundational worldview, independent knowledge of the women from Jeju Island can be understood as integrity narratives. The post-foundationalism used as a vehicle in this research encompasses feminism, social constructionism and hermeneutic theory. This researcher describes below the post-foundationalist epistemology used by the researcher when listening to the stories. The post-foundationalist epistemology helps the researcher to explore how we think about knowledge. In listening to the co-researchers' stories, I concern myself with what we know and how we know it.

In discussions with other academic disciplines or with non-Christians, as a post-foundationalist practical theologian, I find that we can easily be aware that the idea of a universal rationality inevitably becomes a barrier in the discussion. Furthermore, we genuinely think in a postmodern society, the need for a more affirmative position for the world. Van Huyssteen's (1999) notion of "transversal rationality" not only offers the possibility of focusing on patterns of discourse and action as they happen in our communicative practices, but also explores what position we should take in the debate about rationality in religious and scientific reflection.

From a foundationalist perspective, it is extremely difficult to lead a process of assimilation. The other's point of view is either integrated into one's own domain of knowledge, or is blocked. With a foundationalist approach, the only possibility is to look for a universal perspective of a meta-narrative and work towards assimilation and integration (Müller, 2009:202). This makes any interdisciplinary dialogue almost impossible. While people always come to cross-disciplinary conversations with strong beliefs, commitments, and even prejudices, post-foundationalism enables them to at least acknowledge these strong commitments epistemologically. They can then identify the shared resources of human rationality in different modes of reflection, and also reach beyond the walls of their own epistemic communities in cross-contextual, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen, 1997b:581).

The non- or anti- foundational position obstructs interdisciplinary discussion because of scepticism regarding any effort to create mutual understanding among disciplines. Understanding, or knowledge, according to the post-foundationalist approach, is

always diverse. More tolerance with interdisciplinary differences can be expected here, but constructive discussions are difficult in a situation where everything is relative and subjective (Müller, 2009:203). This leads to a loss of the uniqueness of each discipline. Therefore, without any compelling common ground, interdisciplinary discourse might not be possible in itself.

The post-foundationalist notion of rationality points towards a form of interdisciplinary conversation beyond the confines of the local community, group, or culture. It posits a moderating balance between the alleged objectivism of foundationalism and the extreme relativism of non-foundationalism. In this initial stage this researcher refers to the foundationalism and non-foundationalism for help to understand post-foundationalism.

1.4.1 Foundationalism

Foundationalism has its roots in modernism. Foundationalism refers to the typical grand or totalising meta-narratives which have been central to the legitimisation of knowledge, culture, and social institutions. The modernist notion of foundationalism gives rise to a positivist empiricism or scientific materialism, yet it eliminates any possibility of discovering a meaningful epistemological link between theology and the other sciences. Shults (1999:31) comments on foundationalism as follows.

Human reason could attain absolute and certain knowledge based on self-evident foundational experiences or a *priori* propositions, from which

necessary and universal conclusions could be reached. So reason is seen as *absolute*. The positive intuition here is that some beliefs seem to be based on other beliefs, about which we feel more sure than other beliefs. The problem that led the fall of foundationalism per se is the insistence on apodicticity and the belief that the constant critique of assumptions could be hated.

Foundationalism claims that “our beliefs can indeed be warranted or justified by appealing to some item of knowledge that is self-evident or beyond doubt (Van Huyssteen, 1999:62).” The foundationalist approach is that the absolute truth is available to human beings. A theory built on such a presumption could be referred to as a “universal rationality.” This is a rationality based on the idea of the universe of knowledge functioning as an overarching frame of reference. Accordingly, there is only one theoretical truth which must be pursued (Müller, 2009:202).

Shults (1999:35) states that the failure of foundationalism lies in the fact that its rational beliefs must be based on reason. Reasons are provided by the information we begin with, along with the rules that establish the connection among the propositions believed. The problem of foundationalism is that the basis on which we select the necessary information, as well as that which we select our rules, is unclear. Thus, foundationalism has been problematic in theology (Shults, 1999:35). In this case, it is only possible to look for a universal perspective and thence to seek the assimilation and unification of all the knowledge acquired.

1.4.2 Non-foundationalism

Philosophically speaking, anti- or non-foundationalism can be seen today as one of the most important roots of postmodernism. It is a strong reaction against the modernist and generic notions of rationality. Non-foundationalism refers to the theory claiming that no foundational beliefs are independent of the support of other beliefs. Not only does the non-foundationalist accept the universal truth, they also deny the foundationalist assumption of “universality”, or the so-called “multiversity.” Non-foundationalists offer a picture of human knowledge as an evolving social phenomenon shaped by the practical implications of ideas within a larger web of beliefs (Van Huystteen, 1999:64). Non-foundationalism attempts to maintain coherence for the local praxis. Justifying belief and knowledge is only a matter of determining whether they cohere with all the other beliefs in a particular context. In this view reason is often seen as relative (Shults, 1999:31). The non-foundationalist has a diverse and liberal perspective.

The non-foundationalist denies that there are any affirmed foundations for belief systems, highlighting the fact that in every historical context, cultural and social groups have their own distinct rationality. The notion of non-foundationalism stresses the crucial epistemic importance of community. Such contextualism easily leads to a kind of relativism of rationalities, where every social or human activity could, in principle; function as a framework for human rationality (Van Huyssteen, 1999:63). In its most extreme form, non-foundationalism proves to be fatal for the interdisciplinary status of theology. This kind of relativism makes a dialogue between theology and science impossible.

1.4.3 The epistemology of Post-foundationalist transversal rationality

The post-foundationalist notion of rationality has been enhanced and enriched by the notion of “transversal rationality,” as proposed by Schrag, Van Huyssteen and others. The post-foundational transversal rationality provides the way for a responsible and workable interface between theology and science (Müller, 2009:203). It opens a window of opportunity to observe the wider world of thought and action. As such, this post-foundational rationality makes it possible to oppose any attempts at totalising different forms of knowledge into one unified worldview. In a postmodern society, a practical theologian is open to the possibility and need for theology's interacting with psychology and the sciences. The post-foundationalist notion of rationality presents an epistemic obligation aiming beyond the boundaries of our own disciplines, local communities, groups, and cultures, towards interdisciplinary discourse.

Post-foundationalist conversation allows for the creative fusion of hermeneutics and epistemology (Van Huyssteen, 1997a:4). Barbour (1990:16) states, “If we seek a coherent interpretation of all experience, we cannot avoid the search for a unified world view.” Van Huyssteen (1997a:15) quotes this statement to explain that the post-foundationalist view facilitates the fact that we relate to our world epistemically, only through the mediation of interpreted experiences now. The personal dimension of knowledge does not only hold together its validity and objectivity, but is also warranted by a communally shared expertise. Van Huyssteen (1999:186) contends, “The post-foundationalist does acknowledge that the network of belief informs the interpretation of experience. Our own knowledge of reality represents information that is only yielded in an interpretation of our experience. What is relevant for us

therefore depends on how we go about experiencing our world, and how we interact with what we see as reality.” Our life and our experience of narratives have been constructed within a lived social reality. Van Huyssteen explains how we recognise the rationality by quoting Schrage’s (1986: 87) words;

Rationality thus emerges as a deeply social and historical practice, always embedded in the experiences and narratives of our daily lives, and contextualized by the radical interpretative nature of all our experience. In this rich location of self-awareness and consciousness, rationality is then recognized as not only a socially embedded practice, but a practice that indeed involves the telling of our stories, laden with interpretation, but also containing all-important resources and strategies for critique. Not only the personal narratives of the way we experience ourselves and our worlds, however, but also the patterns, trends, narratives, and paradigms of our various disciplines thus emerge as deeply embedded in narrativity, interpretation, and critique. (Van Huyssteen, 2001:68)

We can realise that our understanding of reality is the co-product of a broader community, and not the idiosyncratic product of theologians with their own isolated rationality (Müller, 2004:300). Since people come from a complex collage of different traditions and cultures, they have different experiential situations, knowledge and ways of interpreting. Therefore, post-foundationalism is seen as a viable third epistemological option. Shults (1999:39) insists “This third epistemological and hermeneutic option avoids the extremes of both dogmatic foundationalism with its emphasis on the basis of experience and the relativist non-foundationalism emphasis on a web of belief.” According to Van Huyssteen (2006:10), a “post-foundationalist notion of rationality help us to acknowledge contextuality, the shaping

role of tradition and of interpreted experience, while at the same time enabling us to reach out beyond our own groups, communities, and cultures, in plausible forms of inter subjective, cross-contextual, and cross-disciplinary conversations.” The post-foundationalist approach is more situational, social, and contextual when embedded in epistemology.

Post-foundational transversal rationality leads to real conversation in which one should not enter solely in order to persuade, but also in order to learn the subjective integrity of one’s own story as well as that of others. Each story is maintained in discussion and conversation. The post-foundationalist approach to rationality does, however, allow theology to remain tied to specific communities of faith without being trapped by these communities (Van Huyssteen, 2006a:12).

Van Huyssteen’s post-foundational transversal perspective is sceptical about both foundational and non-foundational positions. Over and above the objectivism of foundationalism and the extreme relativism of most forms of non-foundationalism, the post-foundationalist notion of rationality helps people to acknowledge contextuality and the shaping role of tradition and of interpreted experience. At the same time, it enables them to reach out beyond their own groups, communities, and cultures, in plausible forms of inter subjective, cross-contextual, and cross-disciplinary conversations (Van Huyssteen, 2006a:10). When listening to the co-researchers’ narrative, as a post-foundationalist, this researcher can acknowledge contextuality, the shaping role of tradition, and interpreted experience, while approaching conversation beyond their tradition and culture. This research will focus

on the co-researchers' contextual experiences and try to investigate their interpreted meanings and values within the post-foundationalist paradigm.

In addition, Van Huyssteen's perspective of transversal rationality opens up the possibility of conversation across the disciplinary boundaries. It offers the possibility of communicating across such boundaries, from one context to another, from one style of life to another, and from one discipline to another. He also stresses the understanding of the uniqueness of each of these discourses and the possibility to reach beyond the boundaries of the different disciplines in cross-disciplinary dialogue. Through the post-foundational notion of transversal rationality, it is possible to achieve a tentative yet shared understanding that is referred to as "a wide reflective equilibrium" (Van Huyssteen, 1999:278).

This study takes the position of a post-foundationalism epistemological theory, which stresses the importance of the interaction of personal experience with communal knowledge. Müller (2009:204) argues, "Firstly listen to the stories of people in real-life situations. It has not got the aim of merely describing a general context, but of confronting us with a specific and concrete situation. This approach, although also hermeneutical in nature, moves beyond mere hermeneutics. It is more reflexive and situational embedded in epistemology and methodology."

1.5 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF THE RESEARCH: POST-FOUNDATIONAL NARRATIVE RESEARCH OF SEVEN MOVEMENTS

Müller (2004) has adapted Van Huyssteen's notion of post-foundationalist theology to practical theology. He attempts to interpret the concepts of post-foundationalist theology in order to develop a practical theological research process. This consists of the "Seven Movements." Due to the epistemic position and the post-foundationalist notion of rationality, stressing the importance of the interaction with personal experience, this researcher can employ practical theology as empirical research using Müller's Seven Movements. These Seven Movements will be used to guide my practical theology research of the stories of the women of Jeju Island. This research is positioned within a practical theology and narrative-based research approach.

This research will be guided methodologically by the post-foundational practical theology of "Seven Movements." The Seven Movements process will be followed in this research exploration. The seven implemented movements are the following:

First, a specific context is described. The context/action field/*habitués* of research positions are described in this section (Müller, 2004:301). It has questions that are asked in relation to the context, such as, "what culture and history is related with the co-researchers and why was this context chosen?" During this stage, knowledge of the context is described. In the narrative research of this dissertation, it is necessary

to consider many sociological contexts in which people are situated. It is important that this stage relates to the practical theological research method.

Second, in-context experiences are listened to and described. In this section, the researcher undertakes an empirical research (Müller, 2004:301). The researcher should listen to the stories of her co-researchers to gain an understanding of the in-context experiences. The co-researchers have daily experiences of events, and in their contexts, their life stories are formed. The context of gender, class, culture and tradition powerfully contributes to the co-researchers' stories. While listening to the co-researchers' stories, the positive and negative effects of their contexts on their lives are uncovered. Each person has a different story, although they all live in the same context, for every human existence is intrinsically hermeneutic.

Third, an interpretation of experiences is made, described and developed in collaboration with the co-researchers. According to this research approach, the researcher is not only interested in the descriptions of experiences, but also, and more importantly, in the co-researchers' own interpretations, for the co-researchers are the primary interpreters of their own experiences. During this phase, the researcher is not looking for data, but focusing on the meaning and interpretation given by the co-researchers. The researcher can employ a multi-angular theory to encounter different cases, sources, means and points of time and people in order to broaden the focus as well as to accommodate the richness of the data (Müller, 2004: 302).

Fourth, a description of experiences is continually informed by theological and other traditions of interpretation (Müller, 2004: 303). The particular community we live in has a specific discourse and tradition that informs our perceptions and behaviour. Discourse can be seen to reflect on a prevailing structure of social and power relationships (Madigan & Law, 1992:33). During this stage, the researcher will have to identify these discourses and try to gain some understanding of how current behaviour is influenced by such discourses, not only by listening to the co-researchers, but also by acknowledging the literature, art and the culture of a certain context (Müller, 2004:303). This is because these discourses are also carried by practices outside one's own field.

The researcher needs to find and study the factors and tradition of interpretation, influencing the development of the co-researchers' stories. The researcher must overcome social constructivism, narrative and interpretation theory in order to be critical of and deconstructing the ways in which such contextualised experiences are informed by tradition. In this, the co-researchers' narratives will be approached with a variety of interdisciplinary insights.

Fifth, reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects – experiences of the presence of God – is undertaken. In this phase, the researcher should not only mention the co-researchers' religious, spiritual understanding as well as their experiences of God's presence, but also integrate them into the social-constructionist process (Müller, 2004:303). During the interview with the co-researchers, the researcher must listen carefully to assess the effort, which is not forced by the researchers to bring God into

the present situation, but rather an honest endeavour to listen to and understand the co-researchers' religious and spiritual understanding and experiences of God's presence. In this stage, the researchers' own understanding of God's presence constitutes a valuable contribution in a given situation (Müller, 2004:303).

Sixth, the descriptions of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigations. Such investigations, a crucial part and parcel of practical theological work, are often complicated and difficult (Müller, 2004:303). As Midali (2000:262) said, "Language, reasoning strategies, contests, and ways of accounting for human experience differ greatly between the various disciplines." Therefore, what we perceive as a common methodology on one side cannot be applied in this dissertation. The researcher has to listen carefully to the various stories of understanding in an attempt to integrate all of them into one (Müller, 2004:303). In this phase, the researcher can use literature studies, interviews with colleagues from different disciplines and focus groups, and participatory observation and action in the interdisciplinary discussions.

Finally, alternative interpretations pointing beyond the local context need to be developed. Practical theological research is not only about the description and interpretation of experiences, but also about "alternative interpretations", which means that such research deals, amongst other things, with deconstruction and emancipation (Müller, 2004:303). Without falling into the trap of generalising, the researcher should try to reach an alternative understanding beyond the local context of research. This task should be undertaken to allow all the different stories of the

research to develop into a new story of understanding. This new understanding develops on the basis of a holistic understanding and as a social constructional process, rather than on the basis of structured and rigid methods. Therefore, all the co-researchers can be engaged in the creation of new meanings of their narratives.

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND PURPOSE

The primary aim of this research is to reach a holistic understanding of the Jeju women's experience stories in their contexts and to find out the specific meanings of language and values in these stories. I listen to the co-researchers' stories, specifically about their experiences in family and community, and the stories of co-research's religious and experiences of God's presence. This is integrated into the social-constructionist process.

In order to achieve this aim, I draw more specific purposes of this research. The first purpose is to explore the experiences of the women in Jeju in relation to their living contexts. For this purpose I listen to the stories of people in real-life situations. That leads us, both the researcher and the co-researchers, to confront a specific and immediate concrete situation.

The second purpose is to find out the co-researchers' narratives embedded in Confucianism, gender, and cultural narratives and the domain of meanings involved in their stories. The meanings are grasped in the social relationships of culture and

tradition. For this I investigate Jeju Island's cultural understanding of who they are through researching the myth and history of the island. And then those narratives are deconstructed in order to empower the co-researchers in such a way as to enable them to tell their own experience stories with rich and thickened descriptions. I strive to use narrative therapy discourse and social construction discourse as well as post-modern theologies beyond hermeneutics.

The third purpose is to listen to the co-researchers' narratives of experiences of God's presence. I investigate their narratives of experiences of God in terms of how to relate such experiences to the present circumstance and their domain narratives as well as how to draw upon alternative stories. According to the post-foundationalist thought, I want to "fully acknowledge contextuality, the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience, and the way that tradition shapes the epistemic and non-epistemic values that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe to be God's presence in this world," (Van Huyssteen, 1997a:4).

The fourth purpose is to be part of the story development process through the exploration of alternative stories. Post-foundationalist Practical Theological research is not only about description and interpretation of experiences but also about drawing upon alternative stories. It tries to elicit alternative interpretations. It starts with deconstructing and breaking their taken-for-granted meaning and values by discussing a variety of stories. Within the new stories, the co-researchers can live out new self-images, new possibilities for relationships, and new futures.

1.7 RESEARCH RESOURCE

This research is methodologically guided by the post-foundationalist practical theology of “Seven Movements.” Due to the acknowledgement of the contextual individual stories of women from Jeju Island, I adopt the post-foundationalist Practical Theology of Seven Movements developed by Müller (2005). As a post-foundational practical narrative research, this research is not only about the description and interpretation of the stories of the co-researchers’ experiences, but also about the deconstruction and emancipation of the co-researchers narratives. The research process is not only about story-telling but also about story-development. For this research process I use the method of qualitative interview and discourses, as well as taking the "not-knowing" position for conversation with co-researchers.

1.7.1 The Qualitative interview and discourse

This research listens to the co-researchers’ stories through qualitative interviewing and discourse. The qualitative interviewing is both an academic and a practical tool. It allows us to share the world of others to find out what is going on, why people do what they do, and how they understand their worlds (Herbert & Iren, 1995:5). Using the method of qualitative interviewing, the researcher is able to find out what the co-researchers’ understanding and thinking is with regard to the world they live in.

One of the methodologies of Practical Theology is qualitative research. The

qualitative research method contributes to the coherence of the discipline of Practical Theology. At the same time, it is helpful to keep in sustained contact with the perspectives of the co-researchers: their experiences in a specific context and their understanding of their experiences.

Browning (1991:111), in his work “Fundamental Practical Theology,” opposes a restricted cultural-linguistic approach to theology. He claims that the analysis of linguistic forms does not sufficiently lead to understand the “thickness of human action and practice.” He also emphasises the importance of experience as an independent source, therefore a postmodern approach to practical theology, and thus pastoral therapy, needs to be holistically integrated with the task of social transformation (Gerkin 1997:74).

This research uses the postmodern context paradigm to understand the co-researchers, embarking on the qualitative research of post-foundational Practical Theology. Through qualitative research, case work will be conducted to understand the experiences of the co-researchers. Heimbrock (2011: 168) says that such case studies, developed in qualitative empirical research, are appropriate: “The case is the product of interpretive research, not the basis. The intention is hermeneutic reconstructions.” Since this research is based on the narrative approach with experiments or experiences, rather than on ideas or theories, this study employs the qualitative empirical research of Practical Theology. The researcher will listen to the stories through qualitative interviewing and conversation and work with case studies. This research attempts to understand and listen to the co-researchers' experiences

of life and to reconstruct the events in their narratives. With this knowledge of how they are reconstructing their story, the co-researchers help to develop alternative stories by conversation and discourse.

The contemporary postmodern theory accentuates “discourse” rather than language itself. Madigan and Law (1992:33) quote Foucault’s idea of discourse referring not only to the actual words and statements themselves but also to their connection with the complexities of social and power relations, which prevail in a given context, and which constrain what is said. Discourse expresses the historical specificity of what is said and what remains unsaid. Similarly, discourse represents all institutionalised ways of talking.

People are born into stories (Freedman & Combs, 1996:42). They tell and make stories in their life contexts. They experience a lot of events, only some of whose fragments are told and remembered, while many events remain untold. Why and how this happens can be explained using the notion of “discourse,” which is a postmodern theory. Freedman & Combs (1996:43) insist “Discourses powerfully shape a person’s choices about which life events can be storied and how they should be storied...our stories have been shaped by a variety of discourses” Within this view the co-researchers are seen and heard through their stories. The aim of the discussion is to serve the co-researchers to make their stories a kind of guideline. Through discourse we draw upon untold stories. Discourse is one of the important notions of the narrative researcher.

1.7.2 The role of researcher and co-researcher

As a narrative researcher, I position myself within post-foundationalist Practical Theology. This has implications not only for the way of seeing and thinking about the co-researchers' stories, but also for the way of doing research. Since the goal of the research is not to try to discover any object knowledge, this researcher does not have any hypothesis as to what should be or might be the case with regard to the research topic. I want to be a part of the revolution of research in order to deconstruct and thicken the co-researchers' stories. Müller, Deventer and Human (2001:78) insist "The narrative research has subjective integrity in mind and strives for participatory interaction." This position is not the same as the so-called "insider" position of the researcher, as opposed to the "outsider" position of the previous models. In that it makes more sense for the researcher to embody the dialectic between the insider and outsider perspectives. When we strive in our narrative approach for participatory interaction, we want to accommodate this paradox or dialectic, which is a prerequisite for research with integrity.

Therefore, I would prefer not to make use of language such as 'research objects', or 'research population', but would rather refer to them as 'research participants' or 'co-researchers'. It is important for the progress of this research that the research is not merely aimed at serving the researcher's objectives but should benefit and be of value to the partners of the research (Müller & Schoeman, 2004:9). The relationship between the researcher and the co-researchers is vital to the result of everything that happens in the conversation and discourse situation.

To allow the co-researchers' stories to be fully told, the researcher works from the position of "not-knowing" rather than asking questions from the position of pre-understanding, from which the researcher wants particular answers. The not-knowing position allows the researcher to ask questions of the co-researchers, which are not "informed by method and demand scientific answers" (Anderson & Goolishian 1992: 28). The "not-knowing" position allows the co-researcher to tell their stories as they live them in everyday life. On the other hand, this position allows the researcher to follow the stories of the co-researchers as they have been constructed within a lived social reality (Müller, 2001:4). However, the not-knowing position is not an "I don't know anything" position. The researcher's knowledge is of the process of research, not the content and meaning of the co-researchers' experienced stories, thereby becoming one of the resources for research. The "not-knowing" position promotes an attitude of curiosity in narrative research. The curiosity leads to unique answers. The researcher's curiosity is an important thing for raising the co-researchers' story (Freedman & Combs, 1996:45). With such curiosity the researcher is able to encourage the co-researchers to develop unique answers and stories more fully. Therefore, in narrative research the researcher will be a passionate participant in order to collaborate with the co-researchers.

1.8 THE PLANE OF THE THESIS

This research will proceed as follows. In chapter two, this researcher will explain the research's interdisciplinary perspectives of theological anthropology and feminist

theology. To help readers understand this method, this researcher will also try to explain modernity and post-modernity. The theological perspectives are reflected in the co-researchers' experience stories which includes the experiences of God, oneself, community, and the world.

In chapter three, this researcher will discuss the three components of hermeneutics, social-constructionism, and narrative therapy approach to create the narrative research process of integrity. According to this research approach, the researcher is not only interested in the descriptions of experiences, but also, and more importantly so, in the co-researchers' own interpretation. During this phase, the researcher is in the first instance looking for meaning given by the co-researchers. Hermeneutics, with post-foundationalism, provides the epistemological foundation and methodological direction. Also, social-constructionism helps the co-creation of the research, while narrative process helps to develop new narratives about the co-researchers themselves.

In chapter four, the researcher presents the history, traditions and culture of Jeju Island. This chapter explains the social background of the co-researchers' narratives. This chapter aims at examining the relationship between the broader social narrative and the personal story in collaborative and multidimensional ways. This chapter provides the background knowledge for understanding the specific context of Jeju Island and the co-researchers' stories. The researcher proceeds in this chapter by explaining the historical traumatic event of *Sasam Sageon*, its culture and myth. The co-researchers will assist the researcher to understand the influence of their

community's narrative on their own narratives as well as to add support in making their own alternative narratives.

Chapter five will describe the interpreted experiences of the co-researchers' stories in their own words. The four co-researchers who participated in this research had a conversation and discourse individually. Since each of the four stories was told in Korean, they were translated into English. This chapter focuses on the co-researchers' accounts of their life experiences in their contexts and their expertise in the meaning and understanding of their own narrative as a narrative process.

In chapter six, I will explain and interpret the co-researchers' narratives according to the epistemological basic method of post-foundationalism and hermeneutics as well as the research process ways of social-constructionism and narrative approach. The aim of this chapter is to present the post-foundational narrative process of research and to look for the co-researchers' values and themes which is integrated with social, cultural and traditional values and themes. This chapter also presents the co-researchers' own interpretation of the meaning of their narratives and the new meaning created by discourse.

In the final chapter, I will do a critical reflection of the research. I will explain not only a reflection of the whole research process according to the post-foundational narrative research of "Seven Movements," but also the limitations of the research, providing suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2.

A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE THE JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The present post-foundational narrative research uses interdisciplinary case study work to confirm and verify Practical Theology. It follows the seven guidelines as the research process, as proposed by Müller. For exploring the traditions of understanding, this research investigates the contextual individual stories of women from Jeju Island. In this research, the researcher adopts the method of post-foundational Practical Theology developed by Müller (2005). It allows and gives the researcher room for an interdisciplinary framework for the research process. This research is representing the co-researchers' narratives of an interdisciplinary method of theology and other disciplines of academic discourse, such as psychology and feminism. The post-foundationalist notion of rationality moves the researcher beyond her position to interdisciplinary work.

As a practical theological research within a postmodern pluralistic society, this research is unable to avoid the thought of religion as being interwoven with culture and everyday life. Van Huyssteen's post-foundational interdisciplinary rationality leads me to deepening awareness of the ways of feminist theology and theological anthropology as perspectives to consider and reflect on the co-researchers'

experience narratives. Even though the turn to postmodern thought is not unproblematic, postmodern thought helps to raise feminist theory and other disciplinary discourses into prominence. Rachel & Jeanne (1994:4) say;

Postmodernism offers ways to theories the connections between scientific knowledge, expertise, and cultural politics. Moreover, postmodern approaches open up space for alternative practices of psychology. Numerous dilemmas and points of resistance arise when feminist psychology and postmodern thinking collide.

In the twenty-first century, Osmer says (2006:330) “an important part of the new approach to practical theology is its extensive attention to interdisciplinary work. Because of its focus on human behaviour, practical theologians have engaged methods and insights of the human sciences in their work.” Such post-foundationalist practical theological narrative research of women’s stories in the specific context of Jeju Island needs to be holistically integrated with the task of social transformation (Gerkin 1997:74). Apart from all the theological disciplines, the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology, are neighbours of Practical Theology (Müller, 2004:297). Therefore, in this research, the interdisciplinary reflection in theology will be achieved with conversations proceeding in terms of inter-subjective agreements (Van Huyssteen, 2001:80).

In this chapter, the researcher provide a literature review of theological anthropological and feminist theological dimensions for the co-researchers’ narrative reflections. This research draws on the insights from both the perspectives of social science, which asks questions about the social meaning and function of the co-

researchers' narratives, and those of theology, which questions how individuals organise their lives such that the divine becomes part of who they are and how they live (Heriot, 1997:48). When reflecting on the co-researchers' experience stories their experience of God, oneself, community and the world will be included.

The researcher will first deal with modern and postmodern thoughts. The diverse voices of modernity and post-modernity will be discussed in order to highlight some significant changes in society. Modern and postmodern paradigms are useful markers of large socio-cultural movements. The shifting boundary of postmodern thinking leaves our society and theology with a significant amount of change. The construction of a methodological framework has been the concern of post-foundationalism. From a postmodern worldview, independent knowledge of the women from Jeju Island can be understood as integrity narratives. The paradigm used as a vehicle in this research encompasses social constructionism, post-foundationalism, and the hermeneutic paradigm, and is referred to as the postmodern paradigm.

Second, I describe the perspectives of theological anthropology in this research and the feminist thought because one of the purposes of this research is to listen and understand the co-researchers' narratives within human existence and their relationship to God. It is used as an interdisciplinary lens and approach to understand the experience of God's presence and to deconstruct the meaning and value of the co-researchers' narratives.

2.2 MODERNITY AND POSTMODERNITY

We currently live in a postmodern era, having passed through the modern era. The terms “modern” and “postmodern” refer to broad social and cultural patterns. They are distinguished for the purpose of highlighting social trends (Seidman, 1994:2). Postmodernism differs from modernism culturally and epistemologically, but while postmodernism was brought into existence recently, modernism continues to exist. Since modernism and postmodernism have deeply affected the present era, the present world cannot be understood without gaining insight into modernism and postmodernism.

For this, at this stage, first, modern and postmodern thoughts are explained, for both constitutes important bases of epistemology and for understanding this research methods, post-foundationalist Practical Theology, narrative, and feminism. The diverse voices of modernity and postmodernity will be discussed to highlight some significant changes in society. Modern and postmodern paradigms are useful markers of large socio-cultural movements.

The merits of modernism and postmodernism will neither be argued, nor will an overview of developments on postmodern theory be provided, as this has already been done by others. As a post-foundational narrative researcher, my purpose of describing modern and postmodern phenomenon paradigm is to understand the epistemological theory of post-foundationalism which relates to the more dialectical or dynamic movement between modernity and postmodernity. Müller (2005:80) says, “The shift of emphasis from individual to social, from subject towards discourses,

which constitutes a new epistemology in the social sciences, is also part and parcel of the post-foundationalist movement.” Postmodern thought is a vibrant and constructive movement integrating all our ways of knowing without totalising them in any modernist sense (Van Huyssteen, 2006:135). It is also related to social constructionism and narrative therapy theory which contributes to the research process and ultimately helps us to better understand the co-researchers’ narratives.

2.2.1 Modernity

Modernity and its conceptualisation of knowledge is a product of the Enlightenment and Renaissance. As most scholars agree, modernity or modernism in western cultural history is typically traced to the period in which culture moved from the so-called Dark Ages of medievalism into the new age of Enlightenment (Gergen, 2001b: 803). Humanity was at the centre of cultural and intellectual concern throughout the Renaissance. During this period, philosophers such as Descartes, Locke and Kant were offering sophisticated stances on concepts regarding the individual and the cosmos (Tojo, 2001:150).

The beginning of the modern period has been characterised as a “turn to the subject.” The principle of subjectivity grounds the human subject as rational and free, liberated from the fetters of tradition (Schrag, 1994:257). It was the era in which epistemology became the centre of philosophy, replacing cosmology and metaphysics. The modern period was the age of scepticism, reductionism, individualism, and a “flight from [traditional] authority” (Murphy, 1990:200). Therefore, principal motifs in

modernity include the autonomy of the human subject, the cumulative nature of knowledge, and the possibility of correspondence between word and object (Dueck & Parsons, 2004:234).

From the field of philosophy, three dominating modern ideas are considered: first of all, modern society is the age of reason. Knight (1997:38) states, “reason is a universal human capacity; what is reasonable for one person should be reasonable to all.” Modern theories tend to see knowledge and truth to be neutral, objective, universal, and vehicles of progress and emancipation. In Foucault’s analysis of knowledge and truth, he claims they are integral components of power dominating modern views about reason (Best & Kellner, 1991:38). Hence, modernity emphasises a search for that which is veridical and finds certainty in the objective notion of reality. Modernists consider the idea of science the same as truth. Therefore “verification” would mean checking words about reality. Science is taken to be more enduringly true than religion, because it is empirically based on observation and repeatable experimentation. (Van Huysteen, 1999:17)

The second pillar of modern thought is individualism (Knight, 1997:38). In modern individualism, an approach to ethics and political philosophy sees the individual as being above the community (Murphy, 1990: 200). The autonomous individual is free to think for herself/himself, released from her/his bondage to community or tradition (Knight, 1997:38). Systematic psychology was influenced by individualism, in that the individual mind became a preeminent object of study. Knowledge of the human mind could be understood as an achievement of the individual minds of scientific

investigators (Gergen, 2001b:804).

Within traditional modernist thinking, a distinction is typically drawn between the inner world of the mind and the external material world. In this sense, the mind is objectively knowable and rationally decipherable. This notion continues today through the broadly shared assumptions that mental processes are available for objective study. Some believe that these assumptions are related to environmental inputs and to behavioural consequences in a causal manner, and that the experimental method is superior to all others in understanding these causal relationships (Gergen, 2001b:804).

The third dominating principle of modern thought is that of the representational or referential theory of language. It proposes that language must gain its primary meaning by representing the objects or facts to which it refers (Murphy, 1990:200). Modern thought considers language as truth bearing. In the Enlightenment view of language words are “signs of internal concepts.” Thus, in the individual mind, language becomes the bearer of truth. In the same way, scientists today treat language (including numerical language) as the main vehicle with which to inform colleagues and society of the results of observations and thoughts. The results of systematic and collective observation should be an array of words and explanations that match or map the world as it is (Gergen, 2001b:804).

The three important contributions of modernism are the emphasis of the individual mind, an objectively knowable world, and language as carrier of truth.

2.2.2 Postmodern thought

Postmodern thought appears to be primarily a reaction to modernity, as it questions what modernists accepted. Postmodernism was addressed by French philosophers during the 1970s, and in the 1980s when the issue of a postmodern age came to the general public's attention (Steinar. 1992:31).

Postmodernity reacts to the modernist faith in its foundations, individuality, the possibility of universal, objective truth, and the inevitable progress of science (Dueck & Parsons, 2004:239). Modernists' idea of unity, totality, sameness, and consensus is radically rejected by postmodernism in all its various constructive and deconstructive forms. Instead pluralism, heterogeneity, multiplicity, diversity, incommensurability, and dissonance become focal issues for the postmodern mind (Van Huyssteen, 1999:24).

Postmodern thought opened a new and further wider space for understanding theology and psychology. Postmodern ideas also led to an increased interest in narrative in the domains of both theology and psychology. Seidman (1994:2) states, "In recent society, postmodern themes seem especially visible in the realm of knowledge. Disciplinary boundaries are blurring and new interdisciplinary, hybrid knowledge such as feminism, lesbian and gay studies, ethnic studies, urban studies, and cultural studies are moving to the centre of the field of humanities."

Knight and Scharg and Van Huyssteen each identify the postmodern world view; Knight (1997:53-56) identifies five characteristics of postmodernity; a move from

individualism to community; from rationalist foundationalism to non-foundationalism; from methodological doubt to traditional belief; from dualism to holism; and from optimism to pessimism. His research revisits modernity so as to better examine problematic emerging postmodernity.

According to Schrag (1989:84), who summed up the following five traits of postmodern changes compared with modernity, which complements and enhances Murphy's thought: (1) the decentring of the subject as an epistemological foundation; (2) a recognition of the social and contextual resources of rationality; (3) the embeddedness of power and desire within the claims of reason; (4) the undesirability of meaning and the inscrutability of reference; and (5) the solidifying of the dichotomy between transcendentalism and historicism.

Van Huyssteen (1998:31) considers postmodernism not as a strong reaction against modernity, but rather as part of it. It is important to view the postmodern challenge as an opportunity for an ongoing and relentless critical return to precisely the questions raised by modernity. From this perspective, postmodern thought is undoubtedly part of modernity. Modern and postmodern thought are unimaginable apart from each other, because the postmodernism shows itself best in the "to-and-fro" movement between modern and postmodern thought (Van Huyssteen, 1999:59).

To provide a full comprehensive definition of postmodern thought is practically impossible. Therefore only brief accounts of the fundamentals were drawn, rather an elaboration of all the postmodern themes. In summation, postmodernism deals with

a move from individualism to community, from private reason and meta-narrative to communal rhetoric, and from the truthful meaning of language to pragmatic practice.

2.2.2.1 From individualism to community

Postmodernity finds the function of the concept of individual rationality problematic. In postmodernity, the autonomous individual of the Enlightenment era is supplanted by a more holistic vision of humanity, emphasising relationality and cooperation. In modernity, the individual is superior to the community, whereas, in postmodernity, the community is superior to the individual. In the latter, the personhood of the individual is constituted by participation in the community, with its network of practices and relationships (Knight, 1997:53).

In postmodern thought the self is considered in relation to its connection with the community. Personal selfhood is constituted by community. Social doctrine defines the self as simply an ensemble and product of societal relations, while the individualist perspective argues for a self-constituting individuality that proceeds independently of relations with other selves (Schrag, 1997:76). Schrag (1997) explains the relation between individual or self and community with the phenomenon of “being-with-others.”

In recent postmodern society, there is more need for interdependency between the individual and the community. Knowledge about a person is determined by social and cultural interrelationships. Therefore, postmodern thought of reality is more

constructed than it is discovered (Dueck & Parsons, 2004:239).

2.2.2.2 From private reason and meta-narrative to communal rhetoric

Postmodern thought in both theology and science centres on the radical rejection of all domination by global narratives of legitimation. As a result, it embraces pluralism and diversity. Postmodern philosophies of science highlight this by both their respect for the local context of inquiry and by a resistance to any global interpretation of science that could constrain local inquiry (Van Huyssteen, 1997a:75). In postmodernism, every thought and knowledge is contextual. Postmodern theory in general rejects the modern equation of reason and freedom and instead regards modern forms of rationality as reductive and oppressive. This theory rejects unifying or totalising modes of theory.

The representational correspondence between words and objects is not to be considered univocal; instead, observations are mediated linguistic performances, socially constructed by communities of speakers. “Reality” is only accessible to individuals in terms of how they understand and interpret it. Thus, if there is no “reality” to be independently compared with a person’s knowledge, all one can do is oppose one interpretation with another, and each of these would ultimately be as well-motivated by the “facts” as any other (Dueck & Parsons, 2004:239).

McGrath (1996:180) quotes Guinness's words and remarks on postmodernism:

Where modernism was a manifesto of human self-confidence and self-congratulation, postmodernism is a confession of modesty, if not despair. There is no truth; only truths. There is no grand reason; only reasons. There is no privileged civilization, or culture, belief, norm and style; only a multiplicity of cultures, beliefs, norms and styles. There is no universal justice; only interests and the competition of interest groups. There is no grand narrative of human progress; only countless stories of people and their cultures now. There is no simple reality or any grand objectivity of universal, detached knowledge; only a ceaseless representation of everything in terms of everything else.

There has been a general collapse of confidence in the power of reason to provide foundations for a universally valid knowledge of the world, including God. And with this collapse in confidence, criteria of truth, relativism and pluralism have flourished. McGrath (1996:184) states, “Postmodernism is generally taken to be something of a cultural sensibility without absolutes, fixed certainties or foundations, which take delight in pluralism and divergence, and which aims to think through the radical ‘situatedness’ of all human thought.”

2.2.2.3 From the truthful meaning of language towards discourse

In the modernist view, language is just a tool to transfer knowledge and information. Anderson (1997:30) says that “The function of language (including words and symbols, verbal and nonverbal), like that of knowledge is to provide a correct representational picture of the world and our experiences of it and to refer to that which is real. Language is used by rational human beings as a means to convey thoughts and feeling or as a means of expression.”

However, postmodern thought moves from a modernist view of language towards discourse as an interface between knowledge and language. Language is an important function to describe knowledge. Postmodernism regards knowledge as socially constructed. It presupposes the interrelationship of context, culture, language, experience, and understanding. We think of our experiences. We continually interpret our experiences and interpret our interpretations. As a result, knowledge is evolving and continually broadening (Anderson, 1997:36). Language and the search for knowledge are practices dependent upon tradition. They are communal achievements (Murphy, 1990:202).

Steinar (1992:35) explains the language and knowledge that is interfaced with contextual interpretation;

Language and knowledge do not copy reality. Rather, language constitutes reality, each language constructing specific aspects of reality in its own way. The focus is on the linguistic and social construction of reality, on interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the lived world.

In the postmodern view, Gergen (2001b:806) proposes that “the language of description and explanation is generated within human relationships with each other and the world, with the emphasis of language as action, and meaning as use. Thus, to tell the truth is not to furnish an accurate picture of what actually happened, but to participate in a set of social conventions, a way of putting things sanctioned within a given form of life.” Listening to the co-researchers’ narratives means that we appreciate what has happened to them and the meaning of their story, which is interpreted and connected to their knowledge and traditions.

2.3 A THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

This Practical Theology research starts to focus on the local contextual experiences and experiences of the presence of God. Practical Theology refers to “experience” in manifold ways (Heimbrock, 2011:169). Swinton and Mowat (2006:3) mention “Practical Theology locates itself within the diversity of human experience, making its home in the complex web of relationship and experiences that form the fabric of all that we know.” Müller (2005:78) addresses that “for practical theology, in order to reflect on a meaningful way on the experiences of the presence of God, it needs to be locally contextual, socially constructed, directed by tradition, exploring interdisciplinary meaning, and pointing beyond the local.” This Practical Theology research, interested in the individual experience, should be significantly supported by theological anthropology.

The research approach to the goal of theological anthropology is not only to understand, but also to facilitate the dynamics of spiritual transformation in relation to ourselves, to others, and to God (Shults, 2003: xviii). The understanding of self is deeply associated with the relation to God. Shults (2003:1) quotes three claims by John Calvin (1960:35-39): first, “without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self”, second “without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self”, third, this mutuality between knowing God and knowing ourselves occurs in the experience of facing “God’s majesty.” When listening to the co-researchers’ story, as part of the theological anthropology, the researcher might not only ask how the co-researchers perceive God in their lives and how their image of God affect their lives, but also explores how the co-researchers experience God’s grace and love. Thereby, in the

research process, the co-researchers' experiences of the presence of God are examined and understood importantly as part of the research's theological anthropology.

This research investigates the co-researchers' understanding of their experience in their context of Jeju Island as part of theological anthropology. In the theological anthropological approach to the co-researchers' narratives, this research focuses on the question, "what constitutes rationality?" It can be a subject of study within the anthropology of theology (Walter, 1997:22). Van Huyssteen, (1999:186) addresses "the post-foundationalist does acknowledge that the network of belief informs the interpretation of experience. Our own knowledge of reality represents information that is only yielded in an interpretation of our experience. What is relevant for us therefore depends on how we go about experiencing our world, and how we interact with what we see as reality." Through the act of knowing, we are caught up irreducibly as knower, and we compose the world in a relational way that mirrors the relational unity of the self. This relationality is built into human experience (Shults, 2003:48).

The researcher draws the relational and experiential view of humanity as a human being. Van Huyssteen (2006:288) writes about human uniqueness itself, "There is no single trait or characteristic that adequately captures the notion of human uniqueness. However there is also no point in denying that we human being do share an identifiable and peculiar set of capacities and propensities that clearly distinguishes us from other animals on the planet." The researcher's focus on that

unique human being is the relational aspects of beings, in order to investigate the reflective perspective of theological anthropology on the co-researchers' experience narratives.

Throughout the historical development of theological anthropology, whether the issue was the nature of humanity, sin or the image of God, relations have been essential to Christian self-understanding (Shults, 2003:1). The Bible tells us that God is our creator and we are His creation. Highlighting the relationship between Creator and Creature, we can quest the anthropological question of what man is, and amidst the theological question of "who is God?" the anthropological question is asked in relation to God, and the theological question is asked in relation to humanity (Camernon, 2005:54). As for articulating a theological anthropology, the relationality is essentially considered and emphasised.

We live in the world created by God and relate to the world with human uniqueness. Van Huysteen's (2006:289) interdisciplinary approach "Human persons nearly universally live in social worlds that are thickly webbed with moral assumptions, beliefs, commitments, and obligations. The relational ties that hold human lives together are glued together with moral premises, convictions, and obligations." We cannot reject this considering the influence of socially-constructed knowledge and meanings for understanding the co-researchers' religious experiences. Shults (2003:48) states "human knowing can do the world of constructing only because human being is so constructed; that is, knowledge emerges out of relationality inherent in reality. It appears that we are made for relational knowing and that the

world is made for being known relationality.” This knowledge contributes toward making the contextual and religious experience narratives. This research is looking for this knowledge, “where is what from?” and “what is it?” and “what is a contribution to forming their narratives?” We experience the world as intentional responses and interpret them with meaning and value. Van Huyssteen (2006:290) argues, “As humans, then we are morally aware being because humans are not only conscious creatures but also self-conscious creatures. In our moral awareness as embedded in self-life consciousness is found the source for our uniqueness, for our understanding life in rational and moral terms.” The possibility of reflective self-consciousness enables human beings to have uniquely human traits.

In this dissertation, theological anthropology, as part of interdisciplinary approach to the research, is concerned with human experience and God. Its purpose is not to make a new theological anthropological claim about the Jeju Island women’s experience of victimisation or powerlessness; rather, the researcher does intend to reveal through this research how they understand and interpret their experiences related to God in their context. Van Huyssteen (1997:231) addresses an important function of religious experience for believers;

In theological explanations, religious beliefs play a central role. Religious beliefs of course have important function for the believer. They describe the rites and practices of believing communities, express in the languages of faith psychological and sociological needs, and also answer philosophical questions in religious terms. In short, religious beliefs help to explain the world and the place of believes in it. In doing this, religious beliefs reflect a general sense of meaningfulness on the part of the

believer, a meaningfulness that extends from an existential level to the level of particular theories and dogmas. But of central importance among the various functions of religious beliefs is that of explanation.

In the process of research, I listened to the co-researchers' experience stories of the presence of God. In developing the concepts of theological anthropology, this research can lead to more adequate understanding of the co-researchers' narrative of humanity and offer alternative interpretations of their experiences. The claim that human beings are deeply imprinted by their evolutionary past can offer new insight and a more adequate explanation of human reality, which would enter into a more profound encounter with the research (Nassan, 1998:443).

2.4 THE CHRISTIAN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Feminist theology, or women's theology is one of the lenses, by that I attempt to use, not only to understand marginalised women, relating with power, but also to disclose an alternative interpretation and bring a new meaning to their experience narratives. This research's approach of narrative therapy is particularly compatible with a feminist orientation because it includes the deconstruction of stories generated by cultural and familial patriarchy (Neuger, 2001:45). The specific context of Jeju Island women's experiences becomes a resource of feminist theology.

As a Korean woman, my way of life has been influenced by the lives of mother and mother's mother. Feminist thinking may be continuing in daily life. For example, I recall an incident, which serves as an opportunity to think of a feminist perspective in

my life circumstances. Once both my parents returned from work, my mother had to cook food for the family while my father watched TV, freed from any domestic responsibility. In addition, at school, the president of the student body was always a boy, not a girl. These experiences made me question what was going on. Now I continually question the societies and cultures that define the self-sacrifice and submission of women as normal. In modern Korean society, we vividly witness how much has changed in the lives of women. We cannot deny the contribution of feminist thinking and feminist-inspired action having influenced these changes. In this research, I attempt to find what kind of issues exist and how they can be changed on the co-researchers' narratives.

This Practical Theology narrative research is witnessing what in the particular cultural context and community the women of Jeju Island do. The co-researchers draw upon their experience stories from differing personal, social locations and circumstances. The feminist theology perspective to their narratives will engage the critique of their own cultural contexts and internalised assumptions and tendencies. Rafferty (2012:91) said "Feminist theologians use the assumption of women's full humanity as the base of the critique of the religious attitudes and traditions that have underpinned the social contexts in which subjection is maintained, and the many forms of violence against women not addressed." Feminist theology is used to critique the co-researchers' experience narratives, which present that privilege, power and patriarchy effect their attitude and relationship with others. The researcher attempts to find out what it means to be women or female in such cultural and familial patriarchy, and also how the culture teaches women about who they are and

what they are to be. We are not able to ignore the effect of cultural contexts of sexism, racism, classism, and hetero sexism.

For encouraging the co-researchers and building alternative narratives, we need the help of theories to empower and to address their real-life dilemmas and struggles safely (Neuger, 2001:40). I thereby take feminist theology as a reflection and interdisciplinary framework. With the perspective of feminist theology, I listen carefully to every marginalised voice of the co-researchers. The pursuit of feminist theology, as a liberation theology, makes women free under privileged power and creates an alternative culture based on identifying female value. Grey (1999:89) addresses that “Feminist theology is a global theology, or rather, a family of contextual theologies committed to the struggle for justice for women and the transformation of society. It is therefore a critical theology of liberation engaged in the reconstruction of theology and religion in the service of this transformation process, in the specificity of the many contexts in which women live.” Feminist theological perspective refers to the more adequate analysis of various women’s experiences, specifically the experiences of oppression and marginality.

In this research, the researcher refers to the feminist perspective of God crucially with the following quotation from Anne M. Clifford (2002). Christian feminist theologians argue that drawing attention to the female imagery for God needs not completely negate its male counterpart (Clifford, 2002:95). We can think of that as an associated understanding with its hermeneutics. It is not speaking of comprehending God in the sense of grasping an absolute truth, but of being engaged in

apprehending God in the context of a meaningful relationship (Clifford, 2002:95). In the Christian and church tradition, God has been called Father as an important role. When women imagine the Christian God to be a male deity only, they tend to have an image of God only as their physical father or male. It makes them feel that God is far away from them. This is one of the reasons to consider God on female terms. Clifford (2002:95) agrees “when women relate to God in female terms, they relate to God as more “like me.” Images drawn from women’s experiences can strengthen the bonds of intimacy that women have with God.” Even though it is true that male symbols can be a meaningful resource for helping people to relate to God, for a deeper understanding of God, we are not limited to God the Father. If we just think of this image of God because of parental language, Clifford (2002:96) draws attention to the limitations associated with all parental God-language. Whether God is addressed as father or mother, it is wise to keep in mind that “parent language must be as a limited language for God. It does not exhaust the way we should image our relationship to God (Ruether, 1984:17).” We use God-symbols for understanding personal experience, societal life, and the world as God’s creation as the ultimate point of reference (Clifford, 2002:124). Clifford (2002:124-5) says God images can be liberating for women;

Images such as Woman Wisdom, Black female Christ, life-empowering Spirit, and triune community of love not only help women to relate to God more intimately, but also assist women in claiming the truth: women themselves image God. Images of God that reflect female reality help to reverse inequality and promote the full human dignity of women. Drawing attention to feminine images for God as a community of mutual love resonates with these words about the creation of humanity.

We experience and interpret our relationship with God, and it is represented in the image of God. Neuger (2001:59) addresses “when the possibilities for those images are limited, especially by what the culture values in term of maleness and power, we are also limited in being able to experience God’s unlimited abundance.” This theological theme of how to understand the images of God is meaningful for my understanding of the co-researchers’ narratives. In this research, the images of God the co-researchers carry are used critically not only for experiencing the presence of God, but also for understanding themselves, their place in creation, and God’s ongoing intentions for their world (Neuger, 2001:59).

Feminist theology lets allows research to think of the truth about the influence of patriarchy and Confucian culture on the co-researchers’ narrative, and the ability to change their privileged values in limiting their lives. The perspective of feminist theology offers the empowerment of women as essential to the growth of human beings.

2.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The need of methodological concern in this research has pushed me to present a position within Practical Theology in the previous chapter. In the introductory chapter, I explain what Practical Theology is, leading the researcher to consider the specific context of Jeju Island. I then discuss a post-foundationalist notion of rationality and Practical Theology as empirical research. When I listened to the co-researchers’ narratives, I considered ways of thinking about knowledge and action, and

consequently take the position of practical theological, epistemological position, which comes from a post-foundationalist theology.

At this stage, modernity and postmodern thought is described, not only because the post-foundationalist notions of rationality come from the discourse between modernity and the postmodernism, but this also is a bridge to understand the recent theological trends, and the perspective of theological anthropology and feminist theology, which is a way to draw upon the alternative meaning and values in the co-researchers' experience narratives.

In the research process, I listened to the stories of people in real life situations. These stories exist not only in a general context, but also in a specific and concrete situation. This research's epistemology of post-foundationalist notion points to a form of interdisciplinary conversation beyond the confines of the local community, group, or culture. The cognitive dimension of post-foundationalism in religious experience also opens up the possibility of interpreting the experiences of God's presence through our manifold experiences of nature, people, thoughts, emotions, and events. These perspectives have allowed me to see how the co-researchers' lives need to be empowered. The perspective of theological anthropology and feminist theology do functionally offer profound commentaries, critiques, and alternative solutions to the problems faced by the co-researchers, Jeju Island women. In this research process, the researcher is interested in who we are, how we relate to various power systems in culture, what our past experiences have been and how they all shape the way we understand reality and the way we construct it (Neuger, 2001:6).

CHAPTER 3

PERSPECTIVES OF THE NARRATIVE TURN TO SUPPORT THE JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The major concepts of this research – narrative, context, social-constructionism, and hermeneutics – undergird the structure of interdisciplinary study. These are complexly involved in this research in order to create a narrative research process of integrity. Here, I explain in-depth how these ideas are presented in scholarly literature. Each of these four concepts is associated with this research. The reason that the researcher is dealing with various disciplines in a limited space is not to integrate various disciplines into the co-researchers' narrative but to support the deconstructing of the co-researchers' interpretations as well as reinterpreting their narratives. In the following chapters, I will utilise these various viewpoints to develop alternative narratives.

Post-foundationalist Practical Theology research uses a narrative therapy method for the research process. It is not only different from a structured metaphor but is also discontinuous with the systems theory paradigm. This post-foundationalist narrative research has been referred to as “postmodernism”, “social-constructionism”, and “the hermeneutics.” It offers some useful theories for how power, knowledge, and “truth” are negotiated in the families of my co-researchers and their larger cultural

aggregations (Freedman & Combs, 1996: 14, 22). It is important to approach the issues at hand of my co-researchers with the attitudes supported by these ideas.

The ideas in this chapter presents current interest in an interpretive and hermeneutic approach to understanding the co-researchers' stories. This move redefined the territory of Practical Theology and pastoral care work. Demasure and Müller (2006:410) says, of the interpretive and hermeneutic approach "most proper as that of "meaning": the experience of meaning, the giving of meaning, the finding of meaning and acting meaningfully." The meaning is constructed or expressed through stories. Within narrative research, I aim to work against the reduction of meaning. Stories are often presented with very thin meaning from the problem perspective. However, in this research, I will work towards "the widening of horizons" (Gerkin, 1986), towards the opening of space for "alternative stories" (White, 1990, 1995, 2000; Freedman & Combs, 1996, 2002) through these two different perspectives of the "narrative turn".

I will adapt the above perspectives to each person's narrative to illustrate that my co-researchers' stories have a beginning (or history), a middle (or present), and an ending (or future). In post-foundationalism, as explained in the previous chapter, the hermeneutic model of "the threefold mimesis (Ricoeur, 1984:52)" and social-constructionism provide a good epistemological basis and methodological direction to this research. The idea of socially constructed interpretations of meaning is part of the post-foundationalist approach. The co-researcher's narratives will be noted and perceived by the hermeneutic paradigms of Ricoeur's (1984:52) "the threefold

mimesis” theory and by social constructionist views in a later chapter. Due to this, I will highlight some significance of these theories and also illustrate narrative therapy theory.

3.2 PAUL RICOEUR’S THEORY OF HERMENEUTICS: A WAY TO INTERPRET CO-RESEARCHERS’ NARRATIVES

Recently, Practical Theology has been inspired by hermeneutics. Gerkin (1984) says that hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, is a very useful and available method to us today for understanding the Practical Theology of pastoral care. His work of “re-visioning pastoral counselling in a hermeneutical mode” is based on “pastoral hermeneutics.” As a post-foundational practical theologian, Müller (2005:74) emphasises “post-foundationalist practical theology should be seen as a way of understanding the paradigm of the hermeneutical approach. And yet, it moves beyond hermeneutics as a metaphor for Practical Theology.” This research with the co-researchers is based on the hermeneutical approach.

However, I use Ricoeur’s exploration of narrative metaphor, specifically his idea of the “mimetic arc” of the narrative representation of human actions to develop further understanding of the meaning-making activities of people within their everyday lives. This passes from the practical field of experience to a semantic level of linguistic meaning, and back again to the practical world of human action. In this way, the parallels between the activities of interpreting written literary narrative and therapeutic practices are perceived.

Ricoeur (1984) stresses the reciprocity between “narrativity and temporality.” In his three-volume work, *Time and Narrative*, he proposes a complex and detailed analysis of interconnectivity between narrative and human experience, emphasising the expression of human experience in narrative structures through the study of hermeneutics. Ricoeur (1984:53) proposes a meaningful connection between narrative function and the human experience of time. He also explicates the mediation between time and narrative by constructing a relationship between three mimetic modes.

Ricoeur relates the structural identity of the narrative function with the temporal character of human experience. He resolves the discordant quality of the experience of time within the emplotment of narratives, saying:

Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience (1984:3).

According to Ricoeur, there is a connection between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience which is not merely accidental but “presents a trans-cultural form of necessity” (Ricoeur, 1984:52). The events of personal and collective stories are formed by a vast diversity because we try to frame a meaningful narrative by ourselves. We take up the received past through the imaginative process of emplotment and give it order and meaning. To understand the co-researchers’ narratives is to accept responsibility for our own past with regard to the hermeneutics of historical time in relation to our present “space of experience”

and “horizon of expectation”² (Ricoeur, 1988:171). As with experience in relation to the present, our relation to the future is inscribed in the present. It is the future-become-present, turned towards the not-yet (Ricoeur, 1988:208).

Ricoeur sketches a general theory of narrative discourse which encompasses both the ‘true’ narrative of historians and the ‘fictional’ narratives of storytellers, playwrights and novelists, by inquiring into ‘the narrative function’ (Ricoeur, 1981:274). Here Ricoeur (1981:276) illustrates how to sketch history as narrative:

The historical event, thus torn from its initial setting, has lost its specificity in order to conform with a general concept of event, itself deprived of any particular relation to the act of narrating. So if we take account of the fact that historical events itself derive their historical status not only from their articulation in singular statements, but also from the position of these singular statements in configurations of a certain sort which properly constitute a narrative, then what we must place at the centre of the epistemological discussion is no longer the nature of historical explanation but its function.

What is being left at the centre of the epistemological discussion is just a historical function, not the nature of the historical explanation. So its characters, events, situations and plots are imaginary (Ricoeur, 1981:288). Therefore it is a mistake to do research for the reality represented in stories. My research is thus more focused on the plot structure of the co-researchers’ narratives than on whether the narratives are true or not.

² Ricoeur borrows this concept from Husserl.

Throughout this research, narrativity is a key concept. The co-researchers express their ideas and feelings in words. Although their experiences are immediate and unique, they articulate them in narrative form, in a particular sequence, and they interpret them. The process of reflection takes place in the form of telling a life history. The history denotes not only an event but also the record of that event. By exposing a “fracture” that exists between cosmological (objective) and phenomenological (subjective) time, Ricoeur(1988) situates the production of a “third time.” Narrative time mediates and “bridges” this gap by “interweaving” “the respective ontological intentions of history and fiction” (Ricoeur, 1988:245).

The construction of narrative identity provides a unity of sameness and difference that bridges the gap between history and fiction, and in turn, between phenomenological and cosmological time (Venema, 2000:95). According to Ricoeur, it is no accident that time and record are joined in the concept of a life history, for the only appropriate articulatory form of the dialectic between objective time and the subjective sense of time is the telling of a story, which describes events and processes from the perspective of the subjects of the action and in this way constitutes the history of the protagonists as a story which can be told (Haker, 2004:137). We single out certain events that fit the narrative plot as important. It becomes our dominant story. The dominant stories co-researchers tell have started to drive their lives.

3.2.1 Ricoeur's theory of interconnection of text, author and reader

Ricoeur (1981) poses the fundamental question of how important the author's intention is for understanding the meaning of a text. He focuses on the text itself more than on the author's intentions for the interpretation of the texts. The text stands on its own. It is available as objective reality, and not as the thinking of the author. All interpreters now have access to more than the author himself. Ricoeur (1981: 108) maintains:

The common feature, which constitutes the text as text, is that the meaning contained therein is rendered autonomous with respect to the intention of the author, the initial situation of discourse and the original addressee. Intention, situation and original addressee constitute the *Sitz-im-Leben* [site-in-life] of the text. The possibility of multiple interpretations is opened up by a text which is thus freed from *Sitz -im-Leben*. Beyond the polysemy of words in a conversation is the polysemy of a text which invites multiple readings.

The written text gives the textual form a kind of "emancipation" from its historical context and the author's intentions. Textual meaning shifts from the world of the original author to the world of the reader by means of the internal dialectic of sense and reference which forms the basic structure of texts (Venema, 2000: 32).

Ricoeur considers the relationship between the reader and the text to be very important. He points out that the interpretive process between the reader and the text is reciprocal. "We interpret texts but texts also interpret us". How does the world of a text interpret us and how does it get into a relationship with the reader and the

world of text? Ricoeur (1981: 202) says that “to understand a text is at the same time to light up our own situation, or, if you will, to interpolate among the predicates of our situation all the significations which make a *Welt* of our *Umwelt*. It is this enlarging of the *Umwelt* into the *Welt* which permit us to speak of the references opened up by text.” The text has thereby “freed us from the visibility and limitation of situations by opening up a world for us, that is, new dimensions of our being-in-the-world.” Thus the text interprets us by lighting up our own situation and “enlarging” it into a world.

Ricoeur (2007: 88) says:

To understand is to understand oneself in front of the text. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self, which would be the proposed existence corresponding in the most suitable way to the world proposed. So understanding is quite different from a constitution of which the subject would possess the key. In this respect, it would be more correct to say that the self is constituted by the “matter” of the text. Through interpretation, the self is constituted by the world of the text.

Then we are no longer confined by the limits of our situation but adapted to the world that has been opened up for us (Cappers, 1984:21). The authors of the texts call the attention of the reader to gaps in the storyline and encourage readers to fill in these gaps by stretching their minds, by exercising their imagination, and by recruiting their lived experience (White, 2007:80). One of the purposes of this research is to help the co-researchers to see beyond the limits of their situation and to come up with alternative stories. In this, texts may serve as models for this research of Practical Theology in family narrative therapy.

3.2.2 Narrativity through threefold Mimesis: prefiguration, configuration and refiguration

Ricoeur (1984) deploys and elaborates two concepts from Aristotle's *Poetics*, emplotment (*muthos*) and mimesis, which he suggests would provide the dual structures for all narrative understanding. Ricoeur takes this concept of "mimesis" to understand narrative and human action, and divides it into the three categories of activity such as prefiguration, configuration and refiguration, which are held in dialectic. Ricoeur establishes a tripartite model of mimesis to expand his thought that the representation of action cannot be understood as merely static imitation or imaginary copying (Rainwater, 1996:104).

Ricoeur proposes to disentangle the concern between time and narrative from the act of textual configuration and to show the mediating role of the time of emplotment between the temporal aspects prefigured in the practical field and the refiguration of our temporal experience by this constructed time (Ricoeur, 1984: 54). The foundation of his mimesis concept is based upon his exploration of the dialogical relationship between the human experience of time and its expression in narrative structures.

Ricoeur, in his work of *Time and Narrative*, introduces and designates a complex tripartite model of mimesis¹, mimesis², mimesis³. Morny (1997: xxix) says "Mimesis¹" is the pre-figured world of action. A reference back to the familiar pre-understanding we have of the order of action. "Mimesis 2" is the creative act of configuration. It refers to the organisation of activities in a comprehensible form by means of plot. "Mimesis 3" refers to the effects of reading or reception, by which a

person can change his or her ideas and behaviour as a result of discovering a new dimension of life. It is the receptive act of refiguration back into the world by spectators or readers.

Ricoeur takes configuration (mimesis 2) as constituting the pivot of this analysis. By serving as a turning point it opens up the world of the plot and institutions, and the literariness of the work of literature. He says that the very meaning of the configuration operation constitutive of emplotment is a result of its intermediary position between the two operations of prefiguration and refiguration, which constitutes the two sides of configuration (Ricoeur, 1984: 53). The three phases of the narrative arc are continually repeated as the arc spirals forward.

The pattern of what occurs in the discourse or conversation situation with co-researchers is manifested well in the three-fold mimetic structure of narrative. I follow Ricoeur's work of the "mimesis arc" of interpretation to understand and to thicken meaning of narrative.

3.2.3.1 The pre-figuration (Mimesis 1)

People act in the world and tell stories about it. For Ricoeur, acting is the pre-figuration which provides the raw material for the construction of stories (Demasure & Müller, 2006:2). A pre-understanding of the world of action is the ground for the composition of the plot. We can see the richness in the meaning of mimesis¹. To imitate or represent action is first to pre-understand what human acting is, in its

semantics, its symbolic system, its temporality (Ricoeur, 1984: 54). He describes these features in succession (Ricoeur, 1984: 54):

First, If it is true that plot is an imitation of action, some preliminary competence is required....Semantics of action makes explicit this competence Next Symbolic prefiguration: If imitating is elaborating an articulated significance of some action, a supplementary competence is required....Finally, Temporal prefiguration: These symbolic articulations of action are bearers of more precisely temporal elements, from which proceed more directly the very capacity of action to be narrated and perhaps the need to narrate it.

To understand a story is to understand both the language of “doing something” and the cultural tradition from which proceeds the typology of plots (Ricoeur, 1984: 57). Ricoeur emphasises the fact that the very term “action,” taken in the narrow sense of what someone does, gets its distinct meaning from its capacity for being used in conjunction with other terms of the whole network. By implication, to identify and understand a specific action is to identify “goals, motives and agents”.

Action implies goals, which commits the one on whom the action depends; refer to motives, which explain why someone does or did something; and have agents, who do and can do things which are taken as their work, or their deed (Ricoeur, 1984: 55).

Moreover the pre-understanding of the practical field implies that to act is always to act “with” others. Interaction can take the form of cooperation or competition or struggle (Ricoeur, 1984: 55). Ricoeur premises that all the members of a group are in a relation of “inter-signification”. To master the conceptual network as a whole, and

each term as one member of the set, is to have competence of “practical understanding”. He explains the relation between “narrative understanding” and “practical understanding” by the relation of presupposition and transformation (Ricoeur, 1984: 55). In passing from the paradigmatic order of action to the syntagmatic order of narrative, the terms of the semantics of action acquire integration and actuality (Ricoeur, 1984: 56). It is set within a meaningful context. The network as a whole is constitutive of the structure of human action.

According to Ricoeur the premise that narrative composition finds in our practical understanding lies in the symbolic resources of the practical field. He explains that if human action can be narrated, human action and experience are always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms and symbolically mediated (Ricoeur, 1984: 57). He views symbolic forms as “cultural processes that articulate experience” and as a meaning incorporated into action and decipherable from it by other actors in social interplay (Ricoeur, 1984: 57). He thinks symbolism confers an initial “readability” in action (Ricoeur, 1984: 58). The symbolic mediation of action legitimates Ricoeur’s mimetic hermeneutic by providing a prenarrative tableau for narrative configuration (Venema, 2000: 99). Action can be read as a “quasi-text”. It is insofar as the symbols, understood as interpretants, provide the rules of meaning as a function of which this or that behaviour can be interpreted (Ricoeur, 1984: 58).

By placing action within the context of a symbolically mediated meaning, Ricoeur (1984: 58) can subsume individual actions under socially regulated “cultural codes” that function as “norms” or “‘programs’ for behaviour. They give form, order, and

direction of life. Meaningful action is characterised as “rule-governed behaviour”.

The pre-understanding of action has the feature of “temporality”. Action takes time to be accomplished, and action temporal structures call for “narration” (Ricoeur, 1984:59). The temporal character of experience is “implicit in” symbolic mediations of action. And we may take the temporal features as the inductors of narrative (Ricoeur, 1984: 60). He explains that this structure of everyday praxis orders the present of the future, the present of the past, and the present of the present in terms of one another. This practical articulation constitutes the most elementary inductor of narrative (Ricoeur, 1984: 60).

Ricoeur elaborately proves that the actions in the world have a prenarrative nature and are therefore available to be converted into stories. One could even say that the actions taking place in time are calling up the story (Demasure & Müller, 2006:2). This pre-understanding of the experience of our lives and culture which we bring to any new situation is what Ricoeur calls prefiguration or mimesis 1. If we start looking at prefiguration from the reader’s point of view, it is about that which a person brings with him/her when he/she starts to read a story. It is his or her understanding of the situation at that certain point in time and from that well-defined place. (Müller& Demasure, 2006:2)

3.2.3.2 The configuration (Mimesis 2)

The theory of configuration describes a common ground of narratives at the level of

emplotment. The construction of the story takes place in the configuration. And narrative configuration presupposes a basic understanding of the practical field which is the “material” of story. It also gradually makes a transformation and breaks with the practical field through the introduction of imaginative distance which is initiated by the act of emplotment (Venema, 2000: 100). This work is the composing of the sequence of events that make up the plot and the underlying theme. These composed literatures are not life, but a representation of life.

Mimesis² (configuration) opens a fictional space of the kingdom of the “as if” (Ricoeur, 1984: 64). Configuration, offering or making a plot or story, does not mean the duplication of reality. It is the creative imitation of human action (Ricoeur, 1981: 293). Narrative representation of the practical field initiates an account of “intelligibility” with practical understanding. However through the imaginative power of understanding one’s world, it takes distance from real life. Therefore it is different from which has been received.

Ricoeur (1984: 65) wants to better understand the mediation function of configuration between what precedes fiction and what follows it by placing mimesis² between prefiguration and refiguration. Mimesis² or configuration has an intermediary position because it has a mediating function. Mimesis² is the configurational aspect of Ricoeur’s theory of emplotment, which he proposes as the mediating function of a plot, which works in three ways (Ricoeur, 1984: 66). First, the plot is the mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole. The plot draws from a diversity of events or incidents to be a meaningful story. The plot

mediates between events and a narrated story. A story must organise events into an intelligible whole, it is not just an enumeration of events in serial order. Therefore, we can always ask what the “thought” of this story is (Ricoeur, 1984: 65). It gives shape to a succession of events. Second, emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances and unexpected results (Ricoeur, 1984: 65). Third, emplotment unites the temporal characteristics of the plot. The plot transforms the events into a story. The configurational role of emplotment is the “grasping together” of heterogeneous factors into a meaningful story. This story has a figure or shape and a “conclusion or end point.” Ricoeur says the “end point” is the point from where the story can be seen as a whole (Ricoeur, 1984: 66-67).

In Ricoeur’s model, configuration is the action of a poet and from that stories and plots are produced and made. The “poetic activity” of experience combines an “episodic” and poetic act. It is the paradox of a solution brought by emplotment (Ricoeur, 1984: 66). Ricoeur also explains the configurational arrangement. It transforms the succession of events into one meaningful whole, which is the correlate of the act of assembling the events together, and which makes the story easy to follow (Ricoeur, 1984: 67). Therefore, the narrative time is mediating between the episodic aspect and the configurational aspect.

3.2.3.3 The re-figuration (Mimesis 3)

Mimesis3 or refiguration completes the circular character of the mimesis model. Refiguration can only be achieved after a configuration. Through the refiguration or reception implicit in mimesis3, we discover something new. It has relevance for understanding the narratives and presenting us with a world where we presently inhabit. Refiguration is like a transformation as an effect of reading a narrative or responding to a person. Refiguration has an interpretative aspect. When narrative is restored to the time of action and of suffering in mimesis3, narrative has its full meaning (Ricoeur, 1984:70). Ricoeur (1991: 27) places a word of hermeneutics at the point of intersection of the (internal) configuration of the work and the (external) refiguration of life. Therefore mimesis 3 addresses what happens to a work when it is given to the world to be read, interpreted or inhabited. This provides readers with many invitations to contribute to the development of the storyline and to live out the narrative of the text. Through refiguration the gaps in the storyline is filled in.

Ricoeur (1991:25) considers the terms of the paradox that “stories are recounted, life is lived” to bridge the gap of fiction and life. Ricoeur (1984: 71) says that “refiguration marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader. It is therefore the intersection of the world configured by the poem and the world in which real action occurs and unfolds its specific temporality.” Through the meeting of the real life of the reader or hearer with the narrative text, they have a new perception of the world and a new manner of standing in the world. The work of creating a new narrative is contained in an intentional world. Ricoeur explains this dynamic between the narrative of the text and the reader’s life and the art of reading

through the refiguration of experience.

According to Ricoeur (1991) the act of reading is in itself a way of reconciliation between narrative and life. The key to understanding the character of the analogical transfer from texts to persons can be found in the similarity between the imaginative act of configuration and the act of reading (Venema, 2000:103). Ricoeur (1984: 76) says that “to follow a story is to actualize it by reading it”. The act of reading is to follow a narrative which is the re-actualising of the configuring act which gives it its form. Ricoeur describes what “the act of reading” is (1991:27):

It is also the act of reading that accompanies the play between innovation and sedimentation, the play with narrative constraints, with the possibilities of deviation, even the struggle between the novel and the anti-novel. Finally, it is the act of reading which completes the work, transforming it into a guide for reading, with its zones of indeterminacy, its latent wealth of interpretation, its power of being reinterpreted in new ways in new historical contexts.

The act of reading produces the sense or the significance of a narrative because it stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader. The reader initiates and brings the refiguration of experience. According to the act of reading we engage in the virtual world of the text from within the (our) reader’s actual world of experience. Narrative therapy work and this narrative research work also participates in this “fusion of horizons” that occurs between the world of the co-researchers’ narrative and the world of the listener, or of the researcher or co-researcher herself who is in the position as a listener or a reader. The reader is given the task of developing and reconciling. This work is essential to the art of

understanding a text.

Ricoeur (1991: 26) explains how to take part in the world of horizon through the act of reading.

To appropriate a work through reading is to unfold the world horizon implicit in text which includes the actions, the characters and the events of the story told. As a result, the reader belongs at once to the work's horizon of experience in imagination and to that of his or her own real action. The horizon of expectation and the horizon of experience continually confront one another and fuse together (Ricoeur, 1991: 26).

According to their own receptive capacity, the listeners or readers receive the horizon. The notion of the horizon brings the importance of the context into play. The person who is telling the story, as well as the person listening, is marked by his or her own context. This context defines the way that the story is told and interpreted (Demasure & Müller, 2006: 4).

It is here that we should consider what life is, or what we call life, and what interaction between narrative, life or experience has. With regard to which life is lived, not told, Ricoeur (1991: 27) stresses the pre-narrative capacity of what we call life. Ricoeur accepts Aristotle's definition of narrative. It is 'the imitation of an action', *mimesis praxis* (Ricoeur, 1991:28). He starts his work with premising the interrelation between narrative and human life. Ricoeur explains how to understand narrative and action. He says that "the narrative can find anchorage in the living experience of action and suffering". Narrative can be found in the living experience of acting and suffering and also narrative, in this experience, demands the assistance of narrative

and expresses the need for it (Ricoeur, 1991:28).

Ricoeur (1991:28) provides the three points of anchorage to assist this opinion. First, the first point of anchorage that we find for narrative understanding in living experience consists of the very structure of human acting and suffering. Life, in its every day experience, has its own narrative structure which is a kind of 'inchoate narrativity', its 'prenarrative structure' (Ricoeur, 1984: 74). Second, it lies in the symbolic resource of the practical field that the narrative finds in practical understanding (Ricoeur, 1991: 28). Ricoeur emphasises the violence of interpretation and its redundancy (Ricoeur, 1984: 74). This feature will decide which aspects of doing, of being-able to do, and of knowing-how-to-do belong for poetic transposition. This feature of action has been heavily underscored by cultural anthropology (Ricoeur, 1991: 28). Finally, the point of the anchorage of narrative in life consists in what could be called the pre-narrative quality of human experience. It is due to this that we are justified in speaking of life as a story in its nascent state, and so of life as an 'activity and a passion in search of a narrative' (Ricoeur, 1991: 29).

Ricoeur (1984: 74) stresses the 'mimesis circulation' because every human experience has a symbolic system already mediated by narratives. Therefore in the sphere of everyday experience, we need to see in a given chain of episodes from our own life something like 'stories that have not yet been told', stories that demand to be told, and stories that offer points of anchorage for the narrative (Ricoeur, 1991:30). From this point of view Ricoeur finds a double analysis. One is that the expression of 'a story not yet told' forces itself upon us with surprising strength

(Ricoeur, 1991:30).

The narrative interpretation of psychological theory implies that a story of life grows out of untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories which the subject could take up and consider to be constitutive of our 'personal identity' (Ricoeur, 1984:74). There is another situation for which the notion of an untold story seems to be well suited (Ricoeur, 1991: 30). The individual can be said to be 'tangled up in stories' which happen to him before any story is recounted.

This entanglement then appears as the prehistory is recounted. This entanglement then appears as the prehistory of the story told, the beginning of which is chosen by the narrator. The pre-history of the story is what connects it up to a vaster whole and gives it a background. This background is made up of the living imbrication of all lived stories. The stories that are told must then be made to emerge out of this background (Ricoeur, 1991:30).

This background is a made up of the "living imbrications" of every lived story with every other such story. The story answers to the person. Since the man is being entangled in stories, narrating is a secondary process grafted on our 'being-entangled in stories' (Ricoeur, 1984:75).

According to Ricoeur, the manner in which facts and events are selected and linked to each other is based on probability and not on necessity. This implies that other constructions are equally possible. Although it is impossible to change facts and events in life, it nevertheless seems possible to construct another story from the same facts, which means giving it another meaning (Demasure & Müller, 2006: 4).

Through the refiguration work relating to a story we can lead not only to a re-description of reality, but also to a change of the reader or hearer's actions. This research aims at the co-researchers' transformation through stories mainly about actions.

3.3 SOCIAL-CONSTRUCTIONISM

Although people living in the same cultural community are unique individuals, they share enough recurrent features to be identified as people belonging to the same community. This fact has motivated me to adopt social-constructionism for this study. In this section, the concept of social-constructionism will be discussed as a narrative construct influenced by the socio-cultural context in which a person lives. This theoretical perspective forms the background to a narrative approach to moral development. In this research, I focus on the social-constructionism which is taken up by psychology and social psychology and borrows ideas from Gergen (1994, 2000, & 2001).

Social-constructionism is also connected to post-foundationalist theology and uses a similar thought of transversal rationality of Van Huyssteen. Shifting the emphasis of social-constructionism from individual to social, and from subjective to discourse, is also part and parcel of the post-foundationalist movement (Demasure & Müller, 2006:10) as well. Social-constructionism is also a basis for narrative research. Müller (1999:46) says, "The insights, namely that we build our realities in a social constructionist manner, opens the way for the narrative approach." Social

constructionist theory can be applied to the processes of narratives data collection and to qualitative analyses of the co-researchers' stories. This will act as a theoretical road map in listening to the co-researchers' stories. Therefore, without some understanding of the social constructionist worldview, it is difficult to use the ideas presented here effectively or appropriately. In order to go on a narrative research journey, it is necessary to be informed by social-constructionism.

3.3.1 A social constructionist view

Social-constructionism can be seen as a source of the postmodern movement. It has moved beyond structuralism and also beyond constructivism (Müller, 2004:298). Social-constructionism begins with radical doubt in the taken-for-granted world – whether in the sciences or in daily life – and in specialised ways acts as a form of social criticism (Gergen 1985:267). Social-constructionism is a new paradigm for understanding and interpreting reality beyond certain ways of understanding such as structuralism, constructivism and objective reality. Social-constructionism is a protest against relativism and an emphasis on the value-driven processes through which preferred realities are socially constructed (Müller, 2004:298).

Gergen (1985:268) believes that “the move from constructivism to social-constructionism is from an experiential to a social epistemology.” Freedman and Combo (1996:27) expound this movement, saying:

That is, this is a shift from focusing on the process by which an individual

person constructs a model of reality from his or her individual experience, towards a focus on the way in which people interact with one another to construct, modify, and maintain what their society holds to be true, real, and meaningful.

Social-constructionism is an integrative vehicle to understanding. The social constructionist position means that people's ideas are ultimately given meaning by their social context. In social-constructionism there is a deep-rooted belief that we, with our rationality, are socially constructed (Müller, 2004:299). When we, the researchers, practice within the social-constructionism paradigm, our work is principally concerned with explaining the processes by which people come to describe, illustrate, or otherwise account for the world in which they live in. It attempts to articulate common forms of understanding as they exist now, as they have existed in early historical periods, and as they might exist, should creative attention be so directed (Gergen 1985: 266). Social-constructionism attempts to integrate the emergence of this new consciousness into a more liberating perspective by widening the scope of the conversation (Boyd, 1996: 217).

Gergen (1985: 266-268), a representative of this movement, presents the outline of the orientation of social-constructionism in his early work. First, he notes that what we take to be the experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood. Second, he says, the terms in which the world is understood are social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people. His third proposition is that the degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspective in question, but on the vicissitudes of social processes, for example,

communication, negotiation, conflict and, rhetoric. Finally, he suggests that the forms of negotiated understanding are of critical significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many other activities in which people engage.

This premise affords an understanding of reality as a multifaceted community rather than as universal communities. If we understood ourselves or our own stories, social-constructionism would interpret itself as relationally storied, and communication as a coordinated action between relational beings. The metaphor of social construction leads us to consider the ways in which every person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed through interaction with other human beings and institutions. It also leads us to focus on the influence of social realities on the meaning of people's lives (Freedman & Combs 1996:1). The social constructionist thinks of the knowledge of the world and our common ways of understanding it as constructed by people (Burr, 2008:4). When people interact with one another, they do so with the understanding that their respective cognitions of reality are related to one another. As they act upon this understanding, their common knowledge of reality becomes reinforced.

The common knowledge is negotiated by people, institutions and meanings. It comes to represent part of an objective reality in our lives. From this view, truth or reality is interpreted, constructed, and socially negotiated by interaction between self and contexts. Therefore, what we regard as truth, which of course varies historically and cross-culturally, may be thought of as our current accepted way of understanding the world (Burr, 2008:5). Truth or reality is a production not of

objective observation of the world, but of social processes and interactions. It is not discovered outside of the context of which it is a part. In this way we realise that our understanding of reality is a co-product of a broader community, and not the idiosyncratic product of theologians within their own isolated rationality (Müller, 2004: 300). The paradigms of post-foundationalism, hermeneutics, and social-constructionism reveal that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. This makes them useful paradigms for understanding and interpreting reality in this research.

3.3.2 Social-constructionism and narrative research resources

In the postmodern world view, Freedman & Combs (1996:22) present four ideas which are alternative metaphors for understanding and interpreting reality, related to this world view: realities are socially constructed, constituted through language, and are organised and maintained through narrative. Finally, there are also no essential truths. These are important premises for using and understanding the co-researchers' narratives. That it is also the worldview to recognise and appreciate from the co-researcher's narratives of their experience. Therefore, in this post-foundational practical narrative research, language and discourses are not only important points with a social-constructionism but also useful tools for the research process.

Language is the important point of interest with a social constructionist approach.

Müller and Demasure (2006: 417) say that “language brings people into being.” Language provides us with a structure that enables us to give form and meaning to our experience. In Anderson and Goolishian’s (1992: 27) words, “All human systems are linguistic systems and are best described by those participating in them, rather than by outside ‘objective’ observers.” Through social-constructionism, we concentrate mainly on how the language that we use constitutes our world and beliefs. It is through language that societies construct their views of reality. The only worlds that people can know are the worlds we share in language. In addition, language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of pre-existing truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996:28). Our language tells us how to see the world and what to see in it. As Anderson and Goolishian (1988:378) puts it, “Language does not mirror nature; language creates the natures we know.”

Languages are essentially shared activities (Gergen 1985:270). We express knowledge through verbal language or linguistic rendering. In this view, a study of the knowledge of people becomes the study of “the performative use of language in human affairs” (Freedman & Combs, 1996:29). Through language, we have discourse with the co-researchers, and they are able to develop new meaning from their life stories, their feelings, problematic beliefs and behaviour. The new meanings give legitimacy to alternative views of reality and create new narratives.

The discourse or dialogue is the focus of social constructionist research. Gergen (1999:147), a prominent representative of social-constructionism, says, “The sense of dialogue serves as the key organizing metaphor for social constructionist theory.”

A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements, and so on, that in some way together produce a particular version of events (Burr, 2008:64). This definition implies that different discourses can exist around the same object or event. The discourse opens the possibility to develop an alternative narrative. The researcher and co-researchers engage in generative conversation and then they co-generate new ideas and meanings. This research is emerged from the consequences of narrative approach. A new range of narrative approaches for the research emerges as informed by social constructionist concerns.

The co-researchers' narratives that evolve through the researchers' conversation and discourse during interviews with them will deal with their predicaments, troubles, resolutions, and attempted resolutions. In this way, the researcher will attempt to understand the co-researchers' actions and narratives in the light of social-constructionism and dialogue. Social-constructionism will be applied to understand how the co-researchers live, and to understand how their living circumstances give meaning and organisation to their experiences. The social constructionist paradigm is used as a vehicle for this research journey, to make sense of the co-researchers' lives and experiences by attributing meaning to their stories. The paradigm arises within social conversations and culturally available discourses.

Social-constructionism theory will be used to investigate the co-researchers' stories in order to gain an alternative understanding. It will help to understand their experiences, which are continually informed by various interpretations. Individual experiences and interpretations are influenced by the wider macro system. This must

be kept in mind when the specific perceptions and behaviour of traditions or discourses in particular communities that the co-researchers are involved in is explored.

3.4 NARRATIVE APPROACH TO THICKEN AND ALTERNATIVE STORY

The methodological process used in this research is based on the narrative approach. Using the narrative metaphor leads us to think about people's lives as stories. This enables us to work with them to experience their life stories in ways that are meaningful and fulfilling (Freedman & Combs, 1996: 1). Blyler (1996: 330) indicates that the narrative research process can only be understood and evaluated in the light of the narrative discourse. He explains that researchers have found that the information they seek is mostly in the form of stories. Therefore the understanding and interpretation of stories have to form part of the research process of making alternative stories.

My co-researchers and I face the task of arranging our experiences and of making our narratives a coherent account of ourselves and the world around us, in an attempt to make sense of our lives over time. White (1990:10) explains how the experience of life events becomes each person's narrative, saying:

Specific experiences of events of the past and present, and those that are predicted to occur in the future must be connected in a lineal sequence to

develop this account. This account can be referred to as a story or self-narrative. The success of this storying of experience provides persons with a sense of continuity and meaning in their lives, and this is relied upon for the ordering of daily lives and for the interpretation of further experiences.

Therefore, in the co-researchers' lives, narrative and the interpretation of present events is not only affected by past-determined, but also influenced by future-shaped narratives.

If someone asks you to "tell your story," the story you tell will probably be one from a number of possibilities, and therefore your life story could never be encompassed by one story. The stories may have personal, psychological, socio-cultural, or biological roots and they are complexly intertwined. Therefore this research draws on postmodern and post-foundationalist Practical Theology as epistemology. The process of research on co-researchers' narratives is done from the perspective of Paul Ricoeur's narrative mimesis method, the social construction of ideas, and the narrative therapeutic approach.

The dominant view of the twentieth century modernism period is typified by structuralism and functionalism. These present the most dominant organising ideas in the development of the culture of family therapy. In order for its paradigm to survive, a therapist must embrace the ideas of expert knowledge and expert language. This act assists in the formulation, clarification, explanation and treatment of the symptoms. It also serves to bestow "professional power" upon the therapist. Professional power is the power to define problems, determine access, set the rules, determine treatment, and influence resources, information and ultimately lives

(Madigan & Law, 1992:31-32).

The narrative approach to therapeutic research changes the hierarchical relationship to subject integrity in therapy conversation. The co-researcher is seen as the expert of her or his life. In the research process, the researcher or therapist should explore and be guided by each co-researcher or client's unique story. Narrative approach is one of the possible approaches which can situate itself within postmodern social constructionist discourse as epistemology.

This research follows Anderson and Goolishian's (1992:27-28) narrative position, which is based on the following premises: first, all human systems are linguistic systems and are best described by those participating in it, rather than by outside 'objective' observers. The therapeutic system is such a system. Second, meaning and understanding are socially constructed. Third, any system in therapy is one that has dialogically coalesced around some 'problem'. Fourth, therapy is a linguistic event that takes place in what we call a therapeutic conversation. Fifth, the therapist is a participant-observer and a participant-facilitator of the therapeutic conversation. Sixth, the therapist exercises an expertise in asking questions from a position of 'not-knowing' rather than asking questions that are informed by method and that demand specific answers. Seventh, problems exist in language and problems are unique to the narrative context from which they derive their meaning. Eighth, we live in and through the narrative identities that we develop in conversation with one another. The skill of the therapist is the expertise to participate in this process. Our 'self' is always changing.

Narrative therapy centres people as the experts in their own lives. It views problems as separate from people, and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives (Morgan, 2000:2). Through narratives in therapy, people express and describe the meaning they attach to their interpretation of their life experiences. During narrative therapeutic discussions, problems that are given meaning by the co-researcher or another person are objectified and metaphorically externalised as problematic and separate from the personality. In this way, the problem itself is seen as the problem, and the person is not regarded as the problem (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Thus, people have the opportunity to reflect on their problematic life experiences. They start to create new meaning from the interpretation of their narrative, and re-claim and re-author their lives from problem-saturated narratives into alternative richer success stories.

Conversation or discourse is important in narrative therapy. During the research conversation with the co-researcher, the researcher concentrates and places emphasis on the stories of the marginalised and the unheard to enrich stories. In the next section, I will illustrate specific discussion ways in which therapeutic conversation enables people to find new meaning from experiences and enrich their own stories.

3.4.1 Deconstruction conversation

Deconstruction conversation is the pulling apart and examining of ‘taken-for-granted’ truths of the story. It helps people to ‘unpack’ the dominant stories and view them from a different perspective. A view can be expanded to consider the context in which the co-researcher’s story exists, in order to accept and understand people’s stories without embodying or heightening the helpless, painful, and pathological aspects of those stories. Through the conversation it can become clear how their culture is negatively influencing their lives.

Michael White (1991: 27) defines deconstruction more clearly. He says,

Deconstruction has to do with procedures that subvert taken-for-granted realities and practices: those so-called “truths” that are split off from the conditions and the context of their production; those disembodies ways of speaking that hide their biases and prejudices; and those familiar practices of self and of relationship that are subjugating of person’s lives.

Following White, the dominant stories can be “subjugating of person’s lives”. Therefore in White’s idea deconstruction conversation help to expose the “so-called ‘truths’”, that subverts and splits off from their conditions and context.

The cultural beliefs and ideas that are assisting the co-researchers' narrative is often regarded as being ‘taken-for-granted’, as unquestionable ‘truths’ and as ‘common-place understandings’. The problematic domain idea or story only survives and thrives when it is supported and backed up by particular ideas, beliefs and principles. Therefore this research is interesting in finding, acknowledging and ‘taking apart’

(deconstructing) the beliefs, ideas and practices of the broader culture that has assisted the problem to come into and sustained the co-researcher's life (Morgan, 2000: 45). We first look for and recognise dominant ideas, then, apart from these dominant ideas, we open new possibilities to challenge them and to open up a new and preferred story or description.

In deconstructive conversations, it is important that researchers do not try to impose their ideas or thoughts, or an outside point of view, on a person in order to "change a person's thinking". Researchers or therapists must ask questions they do not know the answers to, and must remain curious. Through deconstructive conversation, we can trace the history of the problems, how the problems came into the person's life and ask questions to evaluate the effects of these beliefs, whether they are helpful or not (Morgan, 2000: 45, 46).

This research indicates the importance of allowing the "silenced voices" to speak by deconstruction and the consciousness of power. The research context of Jeju island has dominant cultural stories which influence the co-researchers' stories. Through research conversation or discourse the co-researchers realised which stories are dominant in society, how they were created, and what consequences they have. And deconstruction questions can be asked about the legitimacy of these cultural or society stories. In this way marginalised voices can be heard, to open opportunities for alternative stories.

3.4.2 Re-authoring conversation

Narrative research or therapy through re-authoring conversation provides the means to refocus and to reshape a personal life story. Re-authoring conversations focus on how the co-researcher's important stories can be written or said, and then redevelop the subordinate storylines of peoples' lives. People use certain stories like a lens to see the world or themselves. These stories play a part in filtering a person's experience and selecting events which is focused in or focused out. Re-authoring conversation is based on the assumption that one story cannot totally sum up a person's experience, there are always inconsistencies. There are other storylines that can be created from the events of a person's life. We are multi-storied. Re-authoring conversations assist people to describe more fully many of the alternative stories of their lives.

White (2007: 78) draws on Bruner's (1986) exploration of the narrative metaphor to propose that the re-authoring conversation of narrative practice is founded upon a text analogy that represents stories as composed of a "landscape of action" and a "landscape of consciousness". The landscape of action is the "material" of the story and is composed of the sequence of events that make up the plot and the underlying theme. The landscape of consciousness is composed of "what those involved in the action knows, think, or feel, or do not know, think or feel" (Bruner, 1986:14). White (2007:80) is drawn to this dual landscape concept of a story structure on account of his interest in the narrative metaphor and in the activity of meaning-making.

My interest in the narrative metaphor is founded on the assumption that people give meaning to their experience of the events of life by taking them into frames of intelligibility, and on the conclusion that it is structure of narrative that provides the principle frame of intelligibility for acts of meaning-making in everyday life.

In borrowing this dual-landscape White (2007:80) sees parallels between the structure of literary texts and the structure of meaning-making in everyday life. It seems relevant to an understanding of people's meaning-making activities in life and of the construction of personal narratives through everyday acts of life. Further, these concepts seem particularly relevant to the therapeutic task of redevelopment of personal narratives.

White (2007:80) also draws the parallels between the structure of literary texts and the structure of therapeutic practice. He explains that

The authors of texts call the attention of the reader to gaps in the storyline and encourage readers to fill in these gaps by stretching their minds, by exercising their imagination, and by recruiting their lived experience. Rich story development is the outcome.

He draws the role of therapists or the researcher from the role of the author of a text. But the activity of the author of a literary text and the therapist's or researcher's role in conversation are not thoroughly synonymous. The therapist or researcher has the privilege of the voice of the co-researchers in the attribution of meaning to selected events from their lives and in their interpretation of the links between these events and the valued themes of their lives (White, 2007:82). The therapist or researcher

only facilitates the development of alternative stories through questions to encourage people to explore their lived experiences, to stretch their minds, to exercise their imagination, and to employ their meaning-making resources (White, 2007: 81).

White (1995:27-28) explains the process of creating a new story or re-storying. He says;

Life is multi-storied, not single-storied. Apart from the dominant stories of our lives, there are always sub-stories, and these sub-stories are relatively available to us in this work with individuals, couples, and families. Second, people have many experiences of life that are not readily intelligible through the dominant stories or the sub-stories of their lives. It's the sub-stories themselves, and also these aspects of experience that stand outside of dominant stories and the sub-stories, that really provide a point of entry for re-authoring work.

He is really focusing on the experiences outside the dominant stories and sub-stories to open a re-authoring conversation. Re-authoring conversation helps the co-researcher to include or to realise some of the neglected but potentially significant events and experiences that are “out of phase” in their storylines. These events and experiences can be considered “unique outcomes” or “exceptions” (White, 2007: 61). These unique outcomes or exceptions provide a starting point for a re-authoring conversation and a point of entry for the alternative story of the co-researcher's life. By paying attention and attempting to trace the history of the unique outcomes a new plot emerges and an alternative story becomes more richly described. Re-authoring conversations contribute to the thick or rich description of people's lives and of their relationships.

3.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I have attempt to examine the interpreting and understanding way of the co-researchers' narratives. For this, first I present the hermeneutics theory of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration by drawing of Ricoeur. For the Practical Theology of post-foundational process, I point out how the co-researchers' narratives are enriched. During the research conversation, the co-researchers talk about the present struggling story; if we continued to converse, they are re-figured. During the conversation the researcher discovers and realises the background of their story, this is prefiguration. The co-researchers' narratives are enriched. It is a way to create the co-researchers' alternative stories. Second, I explain social-constructionism which is a basis for a narrative approach. It is an integrative vehicle for understanding the co-researchers' narrative. Finally, I describe the narrative therapy theory as a way to create and thicken an alternative story. Those theories are supporting the process of this narrative research.

In this research and specifically the context of Jeju Island, the co-researchers have a unique narrative interpretation. They are giving unique meanings to their life stories. Through the social-constructionism and mimesis theory, I find that it comes from their cultural narrative and background. In the following chapter it will be described.

CHAPTER 4

THE NARRATIVE RESEARCH CONTEXT OF JEJU ISLAND: HISTORY, TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the research context of Jeju Island. It describes the involvement of the co-researchers in the process of this research according to post-foundational Practical Theology's "Seven Movement Model," which begins with the specific context of co-researchers. Since a practical theological framework includes a reflection on practice in the local context, Practical Theology is influenced by cultural and social thinking as it pertains to praxis in society. Gerkin (1986:60) emphasises that Practical Theology emerges from a Christian praxis when he says, "The work of practical theology always takes place in the midst of praxis and is prompted by that situation of being in the midst." Furthermore Müller (2004:296) insists "Practical Theology is only possible as contextual practical theology. Practical theology cannot function in a general context. It is always local, concrete and specific." Practical Theology focuses on the practical situation in which we find ourselves. This chapter discusses the history, traditions and culture of Jeju Island based on the epistemology of post-foundationalist, social constructionist ideas and on Ricoeur's mimesis of prefiguration. In this chapter the context of the co-researchers' will be unpacked and some of the discourses regarding intimate relationships in their culture will be outlined.

We are all born into cultural stories. Freedman and Combs (2002:12) remark that “cultural stories have the power to shape our experience of reality.” In a postmodern society and within the post-foundationalist movement, epistemology focuses more on the community and on discourse than on the individual and the subjective. The post-foundationalist approach and the idea of socially constructed interpretations and meanings aim to contextualise the co-researchers’ narratives. Van Huyssteen (2006a: 25) says, “Because of our irrevocable contextuality and the embeddedness of all belief and action in the network of social and cultural traditions, beliefs, meaning, and action arise out of our embedded life worlds.” Therefore, this research relies heavily on understanding context.

This chapter examines the research context of Jeju Island in a practical manner. Jeju islanders, such as the co-researchers, live in a cultural enclave and are culture-creating beings. Augsburg (1986:58) notes, “Human beings are both inventors of and inventions of culture.” We live like inventors of culture, in a state of cultural creativity. Our thinking and narrative take place within history, tradition and social reality. The narratives articulated by the co-researchers’ are influenced by the broader narratives of the culture in which they live. Each individual’s story is enhanced by the story of others, and grows within culturally embedded influences. The stories of the society can have both positive and negative effects on the personal narratives of their past, present and future. It is therefore important to understand the broader social context of the stories in which we live, in order to make alternative stories.

This chapter also explains the social background of the co-researchers' narratives. Müller *et al* (2001:82-83) refer to background as "the events preceding the story." The co-researchers have a specific religious and cultural background woven into their story. Lamott (1995:62) says, "Background is where you let us see and know who these people are, how they've come to be together, what was going on before the opening of the story." During the first stage of interview they speak of the "now" of the story which is seen as a "thin description."³ As the interview progresses and develops, it becomes clear that the co-researchers' stories reflect their current socio-political and economic background and cultural narrative.

Personal identity and narrative are established on the wide cultural identity narrative. Müller (1999:22) says, "Personal identity is determined by family identity, also which in turn is determined by a wider cultural identity. Every family, clan society, or a wider cultural group or system, has their own core stories from which derive their unique identity." Each personal story develops in the broader narrative of the family, environment, and culture. Therefore, in a personal narrative, there is the unavoidable influence of the individual on his/her family ecosystem and community group.

The co-researchers' individual identity narratives are formed by themselves and by the narrative of their context's identity. In East-Asian culture, particularly in Korean culture, the cultural identity narrative generally has an even greater effect on the co-researchers' narratives than it does on those from the West because there is more of

³ The therapists call this description around the problem and its meaning a 'thin description' (Morgan, 2000: 12).

an emphasis on community than on individuality. According to Jeong (2006:77), “Koreans connect themselves to communities like the bamboo grove. By connecting with communities, they expand the root system (the whole community) as well as develop their individual plants (selves).” He explains that Koreans have difficulty associating themselves with certain independent images or representations (Jeong, 2006:77). Instead, they are more prone to think of themselves in terms of their social roles and relationships. Jeong (2006:28) continues by saying, “Self-realization for Koreans seems to be possible only after the achievement of socio-ethical responsibility.” In the Korean community, individual identity is seen as merged into the communal identity. This is called “*woori-seong*,” or “we-ness discourse.”⁴ In we-ness, “I” and “you” are separated units, but those are united beings within the same communal identity narrative. For example, Koreans generally talk of “our house, our village and our church” rather than “my house, my village and my church.” This “we-ness” is deeply embedded in Korean society. Thus, according to social-constructionism and post-foundationalist epistemology, examining the research context is a precondition to understanding the co-researchers’ narratives.

In this chapter, I aim to examine the relationship between the broader social narrative and the personal story in collaborative and multidimensional ways. This research proposes that in the specific context of Jeju Island, historical traumatic events, their culture and myths are intertwined in the co-researchers’ narratives. This study is not only devoted to obtaining information and knowledge, but also to moving the narrative out of the cultural or sub-cultural domain, and allowing others to cross

⁴ Choi Sang-chin and Choi Soo-hyang (1994) propose that concept as a Korean discourse of collectivism.

the threshold into their world. The co-researchers will be helped to understand the influence of their community's narrative on their own narratives. They will also be supported when developing their own alternative narratives. Within a postmodern and social constructionist world view, it is important to attend to cultural and contextual stories as well as to the individuals' stories.

This research will concentrate on three aspects. First, it will analyse the images of Jeju women from Jeju narratives of fables from a socio-psychological position, through the use of literary criticism. It will portray the general character of Jeju women and their emotional relationship with their parents in the light of the unique and traditional family narrative of Jeju Island. Second, the event of *Sasam Sageon* will be critically examined. This incident, which affected many peoples' lifestyles and mentalities, occurred in Jeju Island on the third of April 1948.

4.2 JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES REFLECTED IN THE FEMALE DEITY

There is a specific traditional ceremony, social system and faith, which reflect the circumstances of Jeju Island's sterile natural condition. This condition came about as a result of a natural disaster and due to the influence of power from outside countries of Japan, China, and Mongolia. With such an unfavourable environment, if the women from Jeju are to attain independence and individuality, the community's support is a precondition for their survival. There are many myths and oral traditions

in Jeju Island. These elements are contained in the historical life style of the people and the world perspectives that convey meaning to them. For the person involved, the substance and structure of the myth narrative is meaningful when connected to the cultural experience of her identity.

Jeju Island has a natural and social background distinct from other districts of Korea. Traditional female deities of Jeju and the Dang faith are integral parts of the Jeju peoples' religious culture. The peculiar religious culture in Jeju has reflected the harsh lives of Jeju women. They find comfort through their particular faith in *Dang* and their gods in village shrines. The shamanic shrine, *Dang*, had been the central religious institution in village societies until the coming of Christianity. However, it is still dominant in some villages. The shamanic epic of *Gut* is a ritual. The term *Simbang* refers to a person who performs *Gut*. The *Simbang* is a psychic of Jeju Island, and is called *Moodang* in Korean tradition. Jeju myths have been handed down from generation to generation through the shamanic epics of *Gut*.

The myths sung by the *Simbang* at the shamanic epics of *Gut* are now written and read. Myths still flourish in Jeju Island. People frequently ask shamans to perform *Guts* to prevent misfortune in their households. The co-researchers frequently witness the performance of friendly *Guts* at home or in their neighbour's house, and they accepted it as part of their natural experience before they started to attend church. This research uses their myths to understand their emotional dimension and identity, and to discover how they make their own narratives.

Psychologist May (1991:15) says that “myths are narrative patterns that give significance to our existence.” Myths are a way of finding the meaning and significance of life. He adds, “The myth is a drama which begins as a historical event and takes on its special character as a way of orienting people to reality. The myth, or story, carries the values of the society: through the myth the individual finds his sense of identity” (1991:26). Following his description, this research accepts myth as a drama and a story that continues to play a role in peoples’ lives and as a living force in the present.

Samuel and Thompson (1990: 20) say that myth is not an archaic relic, but a potent force in everyday life, part of our collective unconsciousness. They claim that “old myths are constantly reworked and new myths are continually created as people make sense of untidy and traumatic memories and give meaning to their lives.” Myth is used to experience traumatic memories and to encourage people by giving meaning to their lives. The people of Jeju island sing and listen to the myths through the *Simbangs*, whose plays encouraged the co-researchers’ forebears to overcome feelings of pain, fear, suffering, sorrow, and anxiety, through their identification with the myth’s heroine.

Campbell and Moyers (1998: 39) insist that myth has a pedagogical function. It teaches how to live a human life under any circumstance. The myth *Segyeong-bonpuri* is used in this study to interpret and understand the humanity of the Jeju woman. This Jeju fable is studied not only to understand the community concerns, their sub consciousness, culture and life style, but also to find the force and meaning

which influences the present life narratives.

Segyeong-bonpuri, one of many myths, is chosen because it has recently been regarded as having a literary function. It has been transferred from the song of *Moodang* to feminine literature, and is now viewed as a novel with a weakened religious function (Kim, 2008:4). It centres on the goddess' ability to overcome many difficulties. This research considers whether the narratives of Jeju women living today are similar to the *Segyeong-bonpuri* heroine's perspective on life. The story of *Segyeong-bonpuri* is relevant to the co-researchers' stories. Their parents farmed for a living all their lives, and the myth of *Segyeong-bonpuri* demonstrates the difficulties of women's lives in such positions and roles.

There has been a great deal of research done on the image of women in *Segyeong-bonpuri*. However, my research attempts to focus on how the Jeju women overcome their pain, suffering and traumatic experiences, and how the identity of these women can be understood by examining the mythical literature of *Segyeong-bonpuri*. Furthermore, this research attempts to understand the co-researchers' narratives by rediscovering the myth through the modern approach of social psychology, Practical Theology and narrative theory.

4.2.1 The Jeju Island myth of *Segyeong-bonpuri*

Segyeong-bonpuri is originally a Korean agricultural myth. It is a story about a *Zacheongbi*, the goddess who distributes buckwheat and all kinds of seeds,

accounting for the process of how *Zacheongbi* came to be a goddess. This story has four parts: first, the meeting and parting of *Zacheongbi* and *Moondooreang*; second, the crisis of *Zacheongbi*'s life and the conquest of this crisis; third, her reunion with *Moondooreang*; and fourth, her transformation into a goddess.

Zacheongbi is a woman with an enterprising spirit in her relationship with men. She was opposed to the traditional position of women and she tries to hew out her fortune with positive activity, wisdom and wit. This emancipated goddess is creative, has a positive attitude and autonomously decides with whom she wants to establish a relationship. She is able to remain independent while still maintaining good relationships within the community.

Segyeong-bonpuri is a myth of Jeju Island society, formed under the influence of its natural environment. Therefore, this story reflects the aspects of Jeju Island women which are different from those of women from mainland Korea. The myth of *Segyeong-bonpuri* will first be described. Then, it will be determined how the features of the heroine's narrative are an active and dynamic influence on the life experience of Jeju women and their cultural values.

4.2.2 The story of Segyeong-bonpuri⁵

The heroine *Zacheongbi* is a goddess of love and agriculture.

Zacheongbi was born female, because her father had offered an inferior sacrifice in a Buddhist temple. At that time her mother and father were almost fifty years old. She was born an only child and into a well-to-do family.

4.2.2.1 The meeting and parting of *Zacheongbi* and *Moondooreang*

When she was fifteen years old, *Zacheongbi* went to a pond to do the washing. At that time she met the son of heaven, *Moondooreang*, who was on his way to study. When he saw her, he immediately fell in love with her and asked for a drink of water. She handed him a gourd of water together with a leaf of willow to prevent indigestion, but he reproved her because he did not understand her intentions.

Zacheongbi also fell in love with him. She decided to go to study with him and persuaded her parents, who did not see the value of her studying. Her parents said, “Hey girl, what is the good of studying?” *Zacheongbi* answered, “Father and mother, let me say, if you die, who could write an ancestral paper tablet on your sacrifice day? I will do.”

She then, disguised herself as a man and, went with *Moondooreang*. At the place

⁵ My translation from Korean into English “*Jejudo musok charyochip* [sourcebook of Jeju shamanism]” (Hyon Youn-jun. 1980) as the main work and reference to literature of “*Jejudo mugaponpuri sajon* [Dictionary of Jeju Island shamanic myths] by Jin Seong-Ki (1991).

they studied, they lived together like friends. They ate together and shared a room at night. After one or two years had passed, *Moondooreang* started to see *Zacheongbi* as a woman. But with her wisdom, *Zacheongbi* handled many tight situations, and displayed greater ability than *Moondooreang* in every way.

One day *Moondooreang* received a letter from his father ordering him to marry a daughter of King *Seosu*. Therefore, he prepared to leave and *Zacheongbi* followed him. On the way to back home, *Zacheongbi* proposed that they both take a bath. Thereafter she left him with a message on the leaf of a willow tree that said, “Why did you not realise that I am a woman?” she then left him. As soon as *Moondooreang* read the message, he followed after her and finally caught up with her. *Moondooreang* then treated *Zacheongbi* as a woman and spent one blissful night with her. The next day, he returned to heaven, leaving behind only a coarse-toothed comb.

4.2.2.2 The crisis of her life and the conquest of this crisis

After *Moondooreang* left, *Zacheongbi* missed him. One day she made a lazy servant called *Jungsunam* go gather wood for her. He went to work with nine cattle and nine horses. The lazy servant slept for a few days, leaving the horses and cattle tied to trees. During this time, the cattle and horses died due to lack of food and water. Unaware of how long he slept, *Jungsunam* woke up. Thinking their deaths were an unavoidable circumstance, he decided to eat all the cattle and horses. When the servant returned to *Zacheongbi*, he lied to her saying that he saw *Moondooreang*.

Zacheongbi was so intrigued and distracted by the thought of *Moondooreang* that she neither doubted *Jungsunam*, nor rebuked him. Instead, she began to plan a meeting with *Moondooreang*. After a few days, *Zacheongbi* prepared food and a horse and followed the servant to meet *Moondooreang*.

Along the way, *Jungsunam* tried to violate her, and *Zacheongbi* realised that all he had told her was a lie. She then killed him in order to protect herself, and returned home to her parents. She told the truth to them that she had killed *Jungsunam*. Her parents were furious and said, “You are so stubborn! You killed our servant. If you marry, you will leave us in the lurch. If the servant was still alive, at least he could work for our food.” And so *Zacheongbi* volunteered to do the servant’s tasks to calm her parents down but it was difficult to do well. After some days had passed, *Zacheongbi* left home, again disguised as a man, because of the hard labour and in order to try to bring *Jungsunam* back to life.

Zacheongbi, disguised as a man, wanted to get *Hoangseagonegan’s* confidence because she knew that there were flowers of revival from death in his field. She conceived an idea. Then *Zacheongbi* caught owls which messed up *Hoangseagonegan’s* field of flowers, the field in which the flower of revival from death grew. Then, having won the goodwill of *Hoangseagonegan*, for protecting his field, she approached him with a bold plan. Still disguised as a man, she asked to marry his daughter. He agreed, and so *Zacheongbi* became *Hoangseagonegan’s* youngest ‘son-in-law.’ *Zacheongbi* avoided the discovery of her true gender by using the excuse of having an upcoming civil examination. Because of the reason of

preparing for an upcoming civil examination, she could avoid having sexual relations with her wife for one hundred days.

Before going to the examination, *Zacheongbi* requested her wife to look after the field of flowers along the West River. *Zacheongbi* had been searching the field, and she then asked her wife where the flower of revival from death was. The daughter of *Hoangseagonegan* pointed to it and *Zacheongbi* quietly picked the flower and hid it. *Zacheongbi* left *Hoangseagonegan*'s home to go to the civil service examination. She then went to bring *Jungsunam* back to life using the flower. She took him to her parents, and said to them "here is the man who you thought to be of more worthy than your own child." Her parents answered, "For a girl, you are too strong. If we let you stay at home, you will ruin our family. Please leave immediately."

And so, instead of appreciating her, her parents insulted her badly. *Zacheongbi* then left home and went wherever her feet led her. She wandered from place to place, tears pouring down her eyes ceaselessly, until the sun set behind the western mountains. Then she heard the sound of the weaving of hemp cloth from a house. She went to the house and befriended *Jumo-Halmang*.⁶ The grandmother who lived there *Zacheongbi* stayed and became like a daughter to her, learning how to weave silk clothes so well that her skill exceeded that of *Jumo-Halmang*.

One day she realised that the silk clothes she had woven were to be gifts for *Moondooreang*'s marriage to a daughter of King *Seosu*. *Zacheongbi* decided to write

⁶ *Halmang* means grandmother. It is a word of Jeju Island.

a letter on the silk clothes to let *Moondooreang* know who had made them.

4.2.2.3 The reunion with *Moondooreang*

When *Moondooreang* saw that *Zacheongbi* had made the silk clothes, he came down to meet her. Seeing him from afar, she was overcome with joy and decided to play a trick on him. She asked *Moondooreang*, “How can I know whether you are he? I have a way. Please put a finger into this hole in the door.” *Zacheongbi* then pricked his finger with a needle. *Moondooreang* was shocked, and judging her to be unchaste, *Moondooreang* ended up returning to heaven.

Jumo-Halmang scolded *Zacheongbi* for her rash act and turned her out of the house. *Zacheongbi* was homeless once again. She decided to become a monk at a Buddhist temple. On the day of Buddha’s coming she was going around to acquire some rice for a blessing. She saw court ladies of the king of heaven crying. They explained that *Moondooreang* was ordered to fetch a vessel of the water in which he and *Zacheongbi* had bathed, but they could not find it, and so were crying. *Zacheongbi* promised to tell them where the water was if they took her back to heaven with them. They agreed and did so.

That night in heaven was the night of a full-moon. *Zacheongbi* sat on the tree in front of *Moondooreang*’s house and sang a song.

Moondooreang heard the song and recognised the singer. He secretly invited her to

his room and she stayed there for a few days, exchanging stories. After a few days, *Zacheongbi* realised that one of the servants knew she was staying secretly there. She realised their predicament and advised *Moondooreang* to go and speak to his parents. He then approached them with her riddles, asking them, “Which are warmer new clothes or old ones?” His parents answered, “New clothes look good to others, but they are not as warm as old clothes.” He asked again, “Is new soya sauce sweeter than old soya sauce?” And they responded, “No, old soya sauce is tastier.” Finally he asked, “Do prefer an old friend to a new friend?” They answered, “To marry a stranger may seem good at the beginning because she comes around like a squirrel. It makes us alive. However, it is not as good as marrying a known person.” *Moondooreang* then said, “If that is true, I will not marry a daughter of King *Seosu*.” His parent’s realised the meaning of his riddles and set *Zacheongbi* a difficult task to prove her worth as a wife to their son. *Zacheongbi* barely finished her task when she was welcomed as a daughter-in-law.

However, some people of the palace were consumed with jealousy and conspired together to kill *Moondooreang*. *Zacheongbi* was aware of the situation and warned him, “If any of the ladies of the court offer you a glass of wine, do not drink it.” *Moondooreang* took her advice and he survived the attempts on his life. But one night a one-eyed grandfather invited him to dinner. There *Moondooreang* unwittingly drank a cup of poisoned wine, and died. *Zacheongbi* had no time to be sad since soldiers would be coming for her next, and so she devised a plan. She carried her husband’s dead body to his room and dressed him in his bedclothes. She then collected as many cicadas and gadflies as possible, tied them with thread to nails on

his wall.

The next afternoon, the soldiers came to capture her. She told them that if they ate her husband's favourite food, she would willingly follow them. The soldiers agreed to it and so *Zacheongbi* gave them *Sujebi* soup. One man tried to eat it but could not because it is made of iron. Then she offered them to sit on one of *Moondooreang's* cushions, telling them to fetch it from the shelf, but nobody could carry it because it was made of metal. This made them believe that *Moondooreang* must be a very strong man. One of the soldiers who was peeping into *Moondooreang's* room to watch his movements heard the sudden sound of all the cicadas and gadflies chirping. Thinking that it was the sound of *Moondooreang's* snoring, and that he was alive and dangerous, the soldiers ran away. *Zacheongbi* then went into the western flower field and picked more of the flowers that were able to revive the dead. She scattered these flowers over her husband's body and he returned to life.

4.2.2.4 *Zacheongbi* becomes a goddess

Meanwhile, there was a rebellion in heaven. The king of heaven publicly announced that if anyone was able to control this revolt he would give them a piece of land and a tract of water. *Zacheongbi* scattered the flowers of death over the army from east to west, killing ten thousands of enemies, and so suppressing the revolt. However, she declined the king's offer of land and water, requesting in return only five kinds of seeds. With these seeds *Zacheongbi* came down to earth with *Moondooreang*. They came across her parents' old servant *Jungsunam*, who was stumbling about in

hunger. She heard from him that her parents were dead.

Zacheongbi decided to plant her seeds, but realised that she forgot to bring one kind of seed. So she had to go back to heaven to collect that particular seed. That seed was buckwheat, and although planted after seedtime, buckwheat can still be harvested in the same season. In this way, *Zacheongbi* became the agricultural god.

4.2.3 The interrelationship between the myth's characterisation of women and the Jeju women's narratives

White (1995:13) says that "the narrative world view proposes that human beings are interpreting beings and that we are active in interpreting our experiences as we live our lives." According to this perspective of narrative, this study examines how Jeju island women have traditionally interpreted their life through the myth of *Segyeong-bonpuri*.

The story of *Segyeong-bonpuri* contains epic stories which reflect the historical existence of the Jeju Island people's autonomous cultural and political lifestyle, a lifestyle they have maintained in part due to their geographical and political isolation. This chapter interprets and analyses the mythical story of *Segyeong-bonpuri's* experience in a historically challenged culture, in order to understand how the untold stories of the co-researchers are influenced by their culture, tradition and community.

4.2.3.1 Discourses embedded in patriarchy and a phallogentric culture

In the first stage of this story, we are told that *Zacheongbi* was born a girl because her father offered an inferior sacrifice in a Buddhist temple. Clearly, the society in which she lived had the negative view of females as imperfect beings, and so sons were preferred over daughters. This phallogentric society marginalised women. Patriarchy was embedded in the culture and traditions of the people of Jeju Island, and deeply-rooted in their religion.

During her lifetime, *Zacheongbi* experienced discriminatory treatment because she was a woman. She was not allowed to study (hence the disguise) and did not receive recognition from her parents in spite of returning with a revived *Jungsunam*. On the contrary, she was expelled from her home and her parents never took into consideration any of the difficulties she experienced. Instead of offering her comfort or sympathy, they were only interested in the servant *Jungsunam*'s death, even though their daughter was almost sexually abused by him. Their only concern was the death of their male servant. The life of a woman was difficult in such a society, and daughters often struggled to communicate emotionally with their parents, especially with their father, who generally did not appreciate females.

There is another story which helps us to understand why Korean parents traditionally preferred sons to daughters.

My grandmother was infertile throughout her life. She had moved into my grandfather's house when my father's mother died, almost 35 years ago. I

discovered that she was my father's stepmother when I was in junior-high school. At the time it became evident to me that my father and uncles did not emotionally accept her as their mother, even though almost twenty years had passed since she moved into their family. My grandmother's first marriage had failed because she could not have children. Subsequently, she lived with another man and made a fortune with his help, before she came to my father's family. She led the kind of life an infertile woman typically experiences in Korean society. She was afraid that if I did not get married, I might have a life similar to her insecure, lonely life and without achieving real membership in a family. She didn't think that she could trust any of her stepchildren. Thus she always worried about her death, particularly about who would perform the ancestral ceremonies for her and sweep her grave. Instead of depending on her step-children, she relied on ghosts by observing shamanic rituals. She believed in the therapeutic efficacy of shamanic rites and the ghosts she had served all her life. She was an enthusiastic client of several major shamans on Jeju Island. Since the oldest son is expected to serve the spirits of legitimate ancestors, she had chosen my youngest uncle as her major heir. It was he who was expected to observe the ancestral ceremonies for her and sweep her grave because the youngest son has no obligations towards his own ancestors. She subsequently left all her property to him so that he would perform these services for her after her death. (Kim, 1998:61)

In Korean tradition, generation after generation, the family is succeeded by the son. If women do not give birth to a son, they have a guilty conscience and are afraid that the family line will be broken. They consider it important to have the ancestral ceremonies performed for them and have their graves swept, and children are required to do this. The stories of their lives are greatly affected by this thought and value.

The co-researchers have similar stories of experiences with sexual discrimination and patriarchal authority in their families, communities and cultures. They have lived in a transitional period between a modern and postmodern society. This research therefore needs to acknowledge the stories told by these women while simultaneously deconstructing the power relationships inherent in their stories. The co-researchers live their lives according to the stories that they have about their lives, stories that constitute, shape and “embrace” their lives (White 1995:14). The co-researchers’ experiences are justified and relevant, and must be interpreted meaningfully in terms of the social relations in the phallogentric and patriarchal social order.

4.2.3.2 The function, role and character of Jeju Island women

The heroine of the myth, *Zacheongbi*, is connected to the themes of cultivation and life. In many myths about cultural heroes, humans are sent to obtain grains. Many myths in the East say that seeds were obtained from heaven and brought down by a man for cultivation. On this point the role of the woman *Zacheongbi* is considered to be special as she started off as a mortal woman (Choi, 2004: 376). Therefore, in this myth, seeds and cultivation are related to women. *Zacheongbi* is also associated with “life,” because she brought back to life both *Moondooreang* and *Jungsunam* using the flowers of resurrection.

Zacheongbi symbolises the procurement of the seeds, cultivation and agriculture. She embodies the enterprising character of women and an independent spirit. This

reflects as the open-hearted and active life-style of women from Jeju, as opposed to traditional Korean views of patriarchy and Confucian ideas.

According to Korean history and tradition, women and men have specific roles. Men are responsible for the productive activities of tending the family livelihood outside of the home, while women for reproductive activities and family care within the home. But according to Jeju Island culture the roles of women and men are not clearly distinguished.

In the story of *Segyeong-bonpuri*, the heroine *Zacheongbi* is a skilful weaver, which is traditional women's work, and actively courts *Moondooreang's* love, but she also undertakes typically male roles, by taking on positions of leadership and suppressing the rebels. She has a major impact on the society around her. This differs from the traditional role of women in Korean culture. It forms part of the unique cultural narrative of Jeju Island.

The cultivator goddess *Zacheongbi* is autonomous and resourceful, has a strong will as well as an adventurous spirit. She is a woman of great wisdom, with extraordinary abilities to control life and death. *Zacheongbi* became the goddess of cultivation through her own ability, and was not bestowed deity by another god. She symbolises a woman's life-style of adventure and victory, in contrast to the self-sacrificial lifestyle of women from cultures that are oppressively patriarchal.

This unique Jeju Island gender story of the relationship between *Zacheongbi* and

Moondooreang explains and influences the island's culture. *Zacheongbi* adopts a positive attitude and conquers many difficulties in order to marry *Moondooreang*. She follows her heart and persuades her parents who do not believe that it is necessary for women to study. She is a top student among her classmates and she handles many critical situations with her wisdom. She finally succeeds in marrying her lover. She brings her husband back to life, as well as the servant *Jungsunam*, suppresses a revolt and returns to earth bringing seeds. *Zacheongbi* is an independent and stately goddess.

Freedman and Combs (2002: 70) quotes McLean's (1992) words, saying:

Men, in general, are thought of as competitive, rational, hierarchical, and valuing separation, autonomy, and strength. Women are said to express feelings and to describe particular experience and to be more interested in conversation as a process of connection and understanding. Men are said to give generalized, 'global' descriptions and to be more goal oriented in conversation.

Some people believe that these differences between men and women are absolute and that they have fundamentally different natures. According to the Jeju women's character and roles these differences are identified as social constructions. Different cultures and sub-cultural groups have a different understanding of gender and its roles. Freedman & Combs (2002:70) believe that social constructs are prescribed and specified through the social interaction of generations of people. They say there are two ways that patriarchal gender stories interfere with men's and women's relationships with each other. The first is by promoting different sets of values and

ways of being, and the second is by maintaining different levels of power and privilege. The Jeju Island women are accorded more respect and power in their domain of work than women on main land Korea.

The culture of Jeju Island values industriousness, practicality and independence. An example is that elderly parents from Jeju Island do not rely on their firstborn sons like most traditional Korean families do. Children live in separate homes after their marriage. Even where married children live in the same house as their parents, they cook separately. Significantly, each family unit maintains financial independence. Jeju islanders honour a separated family system.

The Jeju people foster and encourage the characteristics of industriousness, practicality and independence to endure and overcome their struggles and difficult conditions. The people suffered from harsh natural conditions, poor productivity from volcanic soil and compulsory tributes to the central government. Such destitution and hardship are lifelong trials the people of Jeju needed to endure. This produces a culture with stories of suffering and of conquering pain. The people construct and inhabit stories of conquest and survival in suffering where characters with strong, industrious and independent wills dominate.

4.2.3.3 Cultural schemas reflected on in the co-researchers' narrative framework

Ortner (1990: 63) proposed the notion of “cultural schemas,” which represents “a

hegemonic selection, ordering, and freezing of a variety of cultural practices into a particular narrative shape, by virtue of representation in cultural stories – myths, legends, folktales, histories, and so forth.” This means that the cultural patterns of action or cultural identity and the cultural meaning of life are represented in the cultural stories of myths, which recur over time.

The myth story unfolds to a certain fixed cultural pattern. We can find cultural schemas formed by the enacting heroism and accomplishment of culturally important deeds. The storytellers or readers are positioned as an author and simultaneously a protagonist of these cultural stories. The people of Jeju and the co-researchers become both mythmakers and the audience. They give meaning to their narrative by cultural schemas.

Vanhoozer (1991:46) quotes his antecedent from Ricoeur’s philosophical works of “Time and Narrative” in order to explain ‘public time.’ He says Ricoeur argues that narrative time is ‘public’ time in two senses: first, it is the time of interaction of various characters and circumstances; second, it is the time of a story’s public – its audience. The possibilities it opens up are handed down in a *community tradition*. In short, narrative time, both in the text and outside it, is the time of *being-with-others*. Public time is not the anonymous time of ordinary representation, but the time of interaction. The movement of this time is determined by the nature of our engagement with others (Wood, 1991:118). The narrative time of a mythical event is transformed into ‘public time.’ The lifestyles of Jeju women are manifested and realised through the myth narrative. Narrative time becomes ‘public time.’

Koreans know that in general, Jeju women are strong, industrious, independent and challenging. Their independence, both psychologically and financially, is of prime importance to them. The stories of co-researchers are of a responsible, sacrificial and challenging life, like that of the heroine in the myth.

4.3 THE NARRATIVE OF *SASAM SAGEON*

*Sasam Sageon*⁷ refers to an incidence of genocide in South Korea, which began on April 3, 1948 on Jeju Island, and lasted until September 21, 1954, when the Korean War ended. During the genocide, about thirty thousand people died. The victims comprised of ten percent of the population. Almost all of them were demilitarised civilians (Kwan, 2006:71). This tragedy devastated Jeju islanders and left deep scars within modern Jeju society. Many Jeju Island people lost family members, relatives, homes, farms, and other businesses to the hands of communist guerrillas or government forces (Son, 2008:1). Due to *Sasam Sageon*, the people of Jeju experienced many changes in their view of the meaning of life, their identity, their way of life, and their relationship with society. They experienced indefinable suffering during the *Sasam Sageon*.

After the war, the government suppressed all reports and investigations of the *Sasam Sageon* for forty years (Kwan, 2006:21). The people of Jeju suppressed it and only imparted their personal experiences as victims and refugees to family

⁷ It is Korean. *Sasam* refers to the date, April the third, and *Sageon* means an event. In this thesis this incident is called *Sasam Sageon*.

members or their nearest of kin. Because the issue was not resolved publicly, the pain people experienced remained in a private dimension of their lives. These repressed emotions created conflict in their relationships with others. Their unresolved pain caused them to emotionally separate themselves from their family, friends and neighbours, and live a lonely life in pain and suffering.

Most of the people who lived on Jeju Island during the *Sasam Sageon* had a traumatic experience. They experienced the pain of torture, of seeing their loved ones murdered, and the pain of survivors in whose place others were killed. Many people still live with the after-effects of the *Sasam Sageon*. In the next section, the historical background, causes and effects of *Sasam Sageon* will be described, together with testimonies of the traumatic experience. This will enable a better understanding of the co-researchers' narratives.

4.3.1 The historical background and development of *Sasam Sageon*

The Jeju genocide (*Sasam Sageon*) occurred at the start of the suppression of the armed rebellion on Jeju Island, South Korea. It continued for six years and six months from 3 April 1948 to 21 September 1954. The *Sasam Sageon* saw the collision of two foreign ideologies, Communism and Democracy, in Jeju Island.

This research examines Jeju *Sasam* as genocide rather than a political or ideological conflict. The political power, the military and the police committed violence towards

Jeju civilians. It was called a “scorched-land” strategy on Jeju Island. This perspective is based on the fact that thirty thousand civilians were sacrificed by those who held absolute power.

Not only the punitive force, the constabulary, the government army and the Northwest Young Men’s Association (NWyMA) members, but also an armed communist guerrilla force performed brutal acts on the Jeju people.

They brought the grandfather and the grandson in front of the village people, and gave them each a slap in the face. They killed the grandmother while protecting her granddaughter who was sexually abused. They caught a young and pretty woman who was carrying a baby and tried to abuse her sexually and killed her right there. In addition they killed the crying baby too (Jeamin-ilbo 4.3 reports, 1994:69).

The result of the *Sasam Sageon* was widespread oppression and victimisation of Jeju citizens. The wider impact on Jeju Island society and the immediate families, including the children, was the widespread psychosocial trauma resulting from the events and their effect on the following generation.

4.3.1.1 The background of the *Sasam Sageon*

On August 15, 1945, Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation. But Koreans failed to decide their own destiny after liberation from the Japanese. The United States and Soviet Union troops arrived and stayed in Korean territory. They intervened in Korea and established two separate occupations with separate goals

(Son, 2008:16). The Korean peninsula was separated by them, and trouble arose between the two forces. Before the Korean War, the two ideologies were not so clearly separated; fierce ideological and sometimes physical fighting took place in the cities, villages and countryside. Jeju Island was no exception.

The incident that triggered off the *Sasam Sageon* was a shooting on March 1st, 1947 (Son, 2008:5). The outline of this event is as follows:

On the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Independence Movement Day of Jeju, a meeting was held at 11 o'clock at the elementary school in north of Jeju city. There gathered between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand people. After the assembly, a street demonstration was held. About fifty minutes into the demonstration, a child was hit in the *Gwandockjung* Square by the hoof of a horse on which a police man rode. The policeman continued riding without helping the hurt child. People who saw what happened flocked together and started catcalling, following the police-man throwing stones at him. The military and the police then opened fire on the crowd of protesters. Six people were killed and six severely wounded in this occasion (Kim, 2007: 135).

The people were very upset by this incident, and blamed the U.S. Army, the military government and the police. In several places strikes arose spontaneously among the people. The military government and police declared it 'a riot' instigated and pulled strings by the 'Communists' (*Jeju Sinbo*, March 16, 1947). Through this declaration the Korean government reinforced the police and the Northwest Young Men's Association (NWYMA) with members from the mainland to Jeju Island (*Jeamin-ilbo* 4.3 reports, 1994:321). The police rounded up a large number of people, about two thousand five hundred, for one year's detention on account of the general strike

(*Jeami-ilbo* 4.3 reporters, 1994:445). The police and right wing organisations harshly suppressed the Jeju people with indiscriminate and massive arrests, beating, and torturing that resulted in two deaths after the March first Incident and the March ten general strike (Son, 2008:165).

4.3.1.2 The outbreak *Sasam Sageon*

The Jeju people continued to suffer from bloody clashes between indigenous guerrillas and anti-communist forces during the *Sasam Sageon*. As a result of the suppression, many young people stayed around the *Halla* Mountain. The following story illustrates the situation of the young people at the mountain and in caves.

Even when the police left the village, they were replaced by military men. Although the military did not resort to violence as much as the police did, their presence caused great anxiety among the village people. The military also took away pigs, chickens, and dogs. When a punitive force suddenly appeared in a village to search the houses, it frequently happened that young people were arrested and the houses where they hid were burned by military. Therefore villagers who kept watch put a bamboo sign in a high place. Whenever they spotted military men or the police approaching village, they laid the bamboo down. This served as a warning for the young men to run away. Young men who were arrested by the punitive force were badly assaulted, maimed or killed. For this reason, the surviving young men harboured great enmity against the authorities (*Jeamin ilbo* 4.3 reporters, 1994: 259).

Since many young people were killed and young women were sexually abused, they lived in the mountains and caves. They were not the communists. They just avoided

guerrillas and anti-communist forces in order to survive.

In these times, the police and right wing organisations provoked the hostility of the people of Jeju with their harsh suppression, indiscriminate massive arrests, beating, and torture methods.

Under the cloak of the increasing conflict between citizens and the government with its public officers, the Jeju communists assaulted their planned targets at 2:00 am on April 3, 1948. The communists attacked police substations, boarding houses of the Northwest Young Men's Association (NWyMA), offices of right-wing groups, the homes of prominent rightists, bridges, and communication facilities. Then the rebels moved to government housing for police officers, where they killed a police officer and his wife (Son, 2008:171). They were opposing the separate election⁸ of South Korea which served as a newly adopted reason for the strike. The election provoked a strong resistance, because of the concern that the election would fix a permanent division between North and South Korea.

The rebellion of Jeju developed from a limited local protest into a guerrilla war. Due to the strong response of the government force, the communist leaders made their organisation more centralised and militarised (Kim, 2007:146). The South Korean government sent seven hundred police troops to Jeju Island and five hundred

⁸ Due to the opposition of the Soviet Union, the United Nations Trusteeship Council of Korea (UNTOCK) could not work in northern Korea to organise a general election. As a result, the UNTOCK brought the case to the Interim Committee of the UN General Assembly, and the UN decided to conduct an election, even if only in southern Korea. The election date was rescheduled for May 9, 1948 (Son, 2006:164).

Northwest Young Men's Association (NWYMA) members to reinforce local police to repress the rebellion, which involved only five hundred armed rebels (Kim, 2007:147). During the incident, nearly thirty thousand people were killed and many villages were partially or completely destroyed.

After *Sasam Sageon* the government continued to repress the people of Jeju for a 40-year period. Victim's families were labelled as "Red Guerrilla" and they lived in guilt and fear. The Korea Government officially apologised to the people of Jeju on December 31, 2003. Then the government began to allow doing researches and various ways to make amends to the victims and their families.

4.3.2 The narratives of traumatic experience of *Sasam Sageon*

In order to understand more clearly *Sasam Sageon*, two people's stories are presented. One story is that of a woman's personal experience of *Sasam Sageon*. Because of *Sasam Sageon*, she was physically disabled and she was separated with her parents and lost many of her relatives. The second is the story of *Sang-su*, depicted in the Korean novel of *Soon-hee Samchon*⁹, written by the famous Jeju author Hyun Kee-young (2009). The author describes life-stories of the Jeju people, one of which will be summarised.

The role taken here is that of a storyteller, rather than that of political or official

⁹ The word '*Samchon*' means an uncle in Korean. But in Jeju Island it is used to describe a man and a woman who are married.

witnesses. The focus lies on past experiences of *Sasam Sageon* and the narrative, is not of historical veracity or reality. Therefore, the stories are not intended to be reports of true and objective knowledge. Through these stories of past experience, I explore the depth of the suffering of the victims.

4.3.2.1 The story of a Jeju woman: “I don’t know how I can ever gain favour with my body¹⁰.”

Kang Yang-ja was born in Osaka, Japan in 1942. She was the firstborn child in her family. Right after the war in 1945, she and her parents went back to their hometown on Jeju Island, but her parents returned to Japan, leaving her behind. She then lived with her mother’s family and experienced *Sasam Sageon*. She lost her maternal grandparents (who were like her parents) and her uncle to the genocide, and was also injured falling down a hill.

Her father liked to drink a lot and was an alcoholic. He was in hospital for five or six years. Before he died, she phoned him to tell him she bore no grudge against him for abandoning her.

She describes the time when she was separated from her parents.

In 1945, during *Sasam Sageon*, my father went to look for a ship in order

¹⁰ This story comes from the book of “*Sasam in the shade: the experience of death and living*” (Jeju Sasam institute, 2009). It is Kang Yang-ja’s story. She talks about the experience of *Sasam Sageon*.

to flee to Japan. He left without saying a word to anyone, not even to my mother.

One night soon afterwards, my mother left me with her parents and went out in search of my father. She told me, "I would look for father and would be back to home soon. You have to stay here with grandmother." That was the last time I saw my parents. I was four at the time.

Apparently, when my mother found my father who had already boarded the ship, he told her to go fetch me quietly. But she was wary of the armed police patrolling the area and, deciding it was too late to go back and fetch me in time, my mother returned to my father. When she returned, she saw the ship had already set sail. Hearing gunshots, she leapt into the sea and swam toward the ship where her husband was leaving me behind in Korea. Although the rest of the family waited for news from them for a very long time, my parents never sent word of where they went or what happened to them.

Before *Sasam Sageon*, the village in which I lived was calm and peaceful. The outbreak of *Sasam Sageon* destroyed my village.

One day as a child, I was alone at home. Strange people came and asked where the police or the army was. These strange people who were police men or guerrillas - called the communist Red Guards. They carried rifles and moved from village to village stealing chickens, cows, pigs and eggs, plundering and intimidating villagers. I confronted them, trembling, asking why they were taking away our livestock. They responded by pointing a gun at me and demanding to know where the adults were. I was terrified,

and for many years afterwards lived in fear of being alone at home. To this day I still experience auditory hallucinations of that occasion.

She continuously described her experiences.

One day my grandfather did not return after work, so my grandmother set out to look for him. I followed her because I did not want to be alone at home. It was dark outside and raining heavily. I was hungry and exhausted from searching. My grandmother picked me up and carried me on her back, but along the way, she tripped and fell over a pile of stones. The stones hit hard against my back, and I lost consciousness for a week. I was not taken to hospital because of my grandmother was too poor to afford one. I was in severe pain and ran a high fever, but my grandmother could not stay to care for me because she was searching for her husband. She left me to tend to myself alone, using folk remedies, while she – wandered from place to place. During this time, there was no one to care for me in any way, emotionally or physically.

My grandfather was not found. The neighbours said that he was taken to a place and was shot. After a few months, my grandmother and my uncle were also killed by the police.

She then stayed at another grandparent's house. She is back bent probably because of growth retardation due to the injury that day. The grandparents were ashamed of her, and did not permit her to go outside. She lived through severe suffering without a loving relationship with her family, and always felt lonely and miserable forsaken by

her parents and country. She is still living alone in the village and is still very lonely.

4.3.2.2 Sang-su's story

Sang-su lives in Seoul. He married a woman from Seoul, and they have one son. He experienced *Sasam Sageon* when he was seven years old. A year before the start of the *Sasam Sageon*, his mother suffered from consumption and died. During this event his father fled to Japan, because he was branded a fugitive. In this way Sang-su was orphaned. At that time he had lived with his uncle's family.

I feel in my heart for my hometown on Jeju Island but with a deep sense of depression and destitution. Even though it is only a fifty minute plane trip away, I have turned my back on the place, and feel emotionally and physically distanced from it, as if it is end of the world. I have not visited my hometown for eight years. Despite the fact that Jeju Island is now much changed due to infrastructure development and the travel and tourism industries, in my mind it remains dead village of the past. All I remember is how my village was burnt to a cinder thirty years ago.

When we got married, my wife had to change to my family register. She was surprised to have to change to my domicile at Jeju Island, and I felt ashamed. I was ashamed of coming from Jeju. Living in Seoul now, I do not ever use the Jeju dialect to speak – that old life is like a plague to me.

I remember the day my mother died. I spent it whimpering in secret. But

after that day I did not cry any more, I merely lived in a state of shock. That day, my cousin and I were helping my father's elder brother to gather seaweed from the ocean. At lunch time we returned home to eat sweet potatoes prepared by my grandmother, when suddenly we heard a whistle sounding and loud shouts: "Come and listen to the speech! Everyone without exception, gather in the elementary school yard now!"

Usually the police and NWCYAM went around gathering people, but that day it was different. Scores of soldiers with steel helmets and guns came and pushed villagers around, breaking open windows with bayonets and even forcing out sick old men to the school.

My cousin and I followed my grandmother and uncle to the school. After a while, a military officer went up on to the platform with his gun. On his command every person squatted on the muddy ground. We thought he would deliver a speech, but he called the military families out to the front. In front of the platform, there stood twenty soldiers with guns and about seven NWCYMA members with bamboo spears. The military families came out hesitantly seeing the harsh, grim faces of the soldiers and feeling afraid. The families were examined by the head of the village, the police and NWCYMA members, and then they were separated and ordered to sit. My grandmother and uncle were involved in that group. Next, they called police and government service families. People were more and more disturbed, running to the front to try find out what was going on. In the confusion, we heard a loud screech, "Fire, burn the village!" The moment people started running back to save their homes, they heard gun shots.

The soldiers took aim and shot at the running crowd.

My cousin and I grasped each others' hand and ran to our grandmother. A soldier wielded a spear to us, but luckily we reached her in time and she embraced us to protect us. For some unknown reason, only my cousin and I, our grandmother and uncle's family are still alive today.

Although Sang-su lived through the traumatic experience, he never spoke about it. For a long time, it remained a secret in his life. Whenever someone refers to Jeju Island, he experiences shame and fear, and feels lonely and deflated. He cannot think of Jeju Island as his own home or a place he loves.

4.3.3 The psychological impact of *Sasam Sageon* on Jeju Island people

Jeju islanders were affected both directly and peripherally by the traumatic socio-political genocide of *Sasam Sageon* and it required a long time to recover. After *Sasam Sageon*, they were not cared for emotionally or psychologically. The entire episode was kept a secret for forty years. If anyone mentioned it in public, they were labelled as a Red or Communist. If labelled as "a Red", they were subject to the government's policy. Therefore, Jeju Island people had lived with the reminder of victims not only of the genocide, but also of their own thoughts of their identity.

Based on their work with a Sri Lankan community and psycho-social workers,

Arulampalam, Perera, Sathis, White and Denborough (2006:90-91) describe the normal reaction of people to traumatic experiences:

Some might manifest responses that include confusion, fear, hopelessness, sleeplessness, crying, and difficulty in eating, headaches, body aches, anxiety, and anger. They may be feeling nothing at all or helpless; some may be in a state of shock; others may be aggressive, mistrustful, feeling betrayed, despairing, feeling relieved or guilty that they are alive, sad that many others have died, and shamed of how they might have reacted or behaved during the critical incidents. There may be some experiencing a sense of outrage, shaken religious faith, loss of confidence in themselves or others, or sense of having betrayed or been betrayed by others they trusted. These are all normal reactions to extremely dangerous or stressful situations, or where people have felt helpless or overwhelmed.

They document different emotional and physical responses as psychological symptoms that may occur due to traumatic experiences, such as genocide.

According to the witness of people from Jeju (Jemin-ilbo Reporters, 1998), years of genocide created unfathomable psychological anger and depression in them. Through interviews with Jeju people, I find their mental stress and depression to be extraordinary. They are overwhelmed by a sense of emptiness, desolation, anger, helpless and hopelessness. The Jeju people retain a deep rooted distrust and rejection of outsiders or those coming from mainland Korea.

Women who have survived *Sasam Sageon* suffer from great amounts of repressed anger. One woman says:

“I don’t know my husband when and where he died. Without any words they took off and he was victimised. I don’t know why he was victimised. I had four children but I could not care for them well therefore right now I have just one child. After my husband died, I have had a pain in the chest and my heart is beating violently for fifty years. I don’t know the name of the disease. The doctor failed to diagnose the disease.” (Jemin-ilbo Reporters, 1998:352-353)

After experiencing *Sasam Sageon*, the people of Jeju did not have an opportunity to address their emotional problems. After the genocide they might have experienced strong feelings of despair and hopelessness, or profound sorrow, fear and anger. Many survivors felt very isolated and struggled to have intimate relationships with others. Some people felt guilty for being alive. These are all effects that still plague survivors. Even though it is emotionally healthy for victims to share their stories, most Jeju islanders repressed their spiritual and emotional suffering due to the society and circumstances around them.

In the interviews with the women in Jeju, who experienced sexual abuse or torture during *Sasam Sageon*, Lee (2004: 57) asks them why they did not speak out. They responded that such acts were not condoned by society and at times they did not admit the reality to themselves, but instead suppressed their experiences. Sometimes it is difficult to see any display of emotion from these women because they have spent years enduring the effects of the genocide and overcoming psychological, social, cultural and economical stress factors.

According to witnesses (Jemin-ilbo, 1997), during the *Sasam Sageon*, the women of

Jeju were expected to keep the villages when men left, and to take care of the children and the elderly. Also they assumed responsibility of looking for their relatives' dead bodies and burying the corpses. Furthermore, they were often sexually abused and they sometimes married the enemy as a strategic move. Also many family relationships were broken because of forced informants. In one of the villages' almost seventy percent of the women were widowed by *Sasam Sageon* (Lee, 1999:87).

However, the women of Jeju gained a new identity by overcoming their circumstances. Women who rebuilt burned and dilapidated villages could take pride in themselves and gain independence within their families. According to Lee (1999:53), one woman said:

“At that time our village had a lot of damage. Almost all my neighbours' husbands were dead and in the village only the widows were left. After the riot, without anyone remarrying, we rebuilt our village by ourselves.”

This widow did not remarry and was proud of her strength as a woman for her role in helping to rebuild. She gave meaning to her story by prioritising her success over her emotional problems and suffering. She had stood tall with her successful results before her family, especially her children. Until now, it had been her responsibility alone to make a living for her family.

The surviving women did their best to provide for and to take care of their children and their elders without any help. They had a responsibility towards the living. These circumstances added to the image and identity narrative of Jeju women as women

who have strength and endurance for living.

After *Sasam Sageon*, the co-researchers' parents were effectively deprived of both the truth of what happened and the emotional support of their peers and family groups. Therefore they and their children are unaccustomed to expressing their emotions. In addition, their stressful position of responsibility afforded them little time or opportunity to address their emotional problems and they remained shocked and hurt for a long time.

Many of the Jeju islanders I have met experience feelings of depression, meaninglessness and loneliness to this day. In their narratives or stories, they struggle to form emotional relationships with their parents and children. Young adults describe their mothers as pitiful, great and strong. According to one research (Chol *at all*, 1998:131) the young women of Jeju feel conflicted between identity images of strength and their mothers' actual life-styles. Jeju women portray the image of burdened, sacrificial mothers more than the image of strength, the younger generation have mostly decided not to repeat their mothers' life-styles.

4.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, I have attempted to investigate the co-researchers' narrative context of Jeju Island. It has presented the representative Jeju myth of *Segyeong-bonpuri* and explained *Sasam Sageon*, the genocide of the Jeju people. These descriptions

provide historical and cultural specificity of the Jeju Island women. This knowledge is derived from the perspective of looking at their life world.

This chapter follows the Practical Theology of the post-foundationalist approach to contexts. It is developed out of the very specific and concrete moment of praxis in the practice of concern.

This helps both to understand the co-researchers' narratives and to create new narratives. It is a way analysing the co-researchers' life narratives, and their interpretation and the effects of their interpretation on co-researchers' narratives. The understanding of co-researchers' stories is grounded in order to understand the cultural tradition and their knowledge. This chapter explains why it is necessary to examine narratives of contexts and its implications for co-researchers' narratives.

I am interested in two lines of enquiry; first, to understand the priority of thought of the social customs engaged in, and how it manifests itself in their lives. Second is to understand the contexts of their knowledge, including socio-economic conditions and the power relations of local culture. These contexts can be subsequently addressed in a variety of ways in relation to the co-researchers' narratives.

CHAPTER 5

THE STORIES OF JEJU ISLAND WOMEN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Designed as qualitative research, the theoretical and methodological framework of this study is based on a narrative approach. In this framework, the researcher has gathered and taken into account the stories of Jeju Island women; in doing so, the study aims to gain a better contextual understanding of their experiences. The stories that have been employed in this research aims to take a closer look into the ways in which Jeju women's individual narratives, especially with regard to their experiences of God, have been socially constructed. In particular, the narratives ascribe to privileged narratives, identifying the privileged normative subjectivity and the construction of the narrative itself. The study also discusses how the traumatic event of *Sasam sageon* affects relationships among the co-researchers' family members. On the basis of a qualitative research method to explore the above issues, diverse research approaches suggest: post-foundational Practical Theology, social-constructionism, and narrative therapy were employed in this study.

This chapter focuses on the co-researchers' accounts of their life experiences, the researcher is a direct witness to their narratives. These co-researchers' stories are introduced in relationship with their own close circle of social institutions such as families and local communities. The stories also include some background information of their lives, especially with regard to recent struggles that they have

experienced and helped to understand their relationship with God.

The conversation and discourse of this research are inherited from White's theoretical premise (2000:9): "people's expression of life, which are actually shaping or constitutive of their lives, are units of meaning and experience, and these elements are inseparable." From the perspective of a narrative approach, an attempt is made to focus on the personal meaning that the co-researchers assign to specific events in their socially constituted lives. On that account, this study emphasises the description of their own expression of life—how the co-researchers tell the story of these meanings and interpret their experiences. In addition to this empirical portrayal, this study carefully reviews the conversation and discourse of the co-researchers' personal narratives. This attempt suggests how the researcher and co-researchers together deconstruct personal narratives and further develop alternative narratives.

In research practices that were conducted in January 2011 – for the cases of Jin and Young – and in June 2012 – for the case of Min and Sook –, the initial and communal findings of the background of co-researchers and their parents is that they were born and have lived in Jeju for many generations. Four participants were chosen and invited to take part in this study as co-researchers. The four co-researchers were female adults. They were very familiar with the cultural and traditional life of Jeju Island. Their grandparents experienced the traumatic events of *Sasam sageon* directly, and their parents experienced it as children, remembering the atmosphere and the loss of their relatives. The co-researchers are a second generation away from the event.

In this chapter, each of the four stories with each individual participant that was interviewed told of different issues that are significantly indicative, telling, and resonant to each of the co-researchers. This researcher listened to the stories of the co-researchers, a first-hand experience, and attempted to discern not only their narratives of the struggles in life, but more importantly about their religious and spiritual understanding of the experience of God. When the co-researchers described their life experiences, the researcher attempted to pay notably more attention to the meanings drawn from each of their words, while allowing them to build their own stories freely within a context of mutual respect and trust.

Through the interactive conversation and discourse between the researcher and co-researchers, there is a mutual search for the sake of a better understanding. This researcher acknowledges that listening is not a passive activity that is conferred to a research orientation, but I will involuntarily be interpreting the co-researchers' narratives. In this study, thereby, the narratives are interpreted first by the primary co-researcher, and then by the researcher – “making up” meanings from interactions (Freedman & Combos, 1996:45). Thus, the researcher's conversational approach is respectful of each of the co-researchers' knowledge and abilities, and recognises and further appreciates the complexity and uniqueness of each and every individual human condition and situation.

Focus is also placed on a wider range of the relationship within the community, as it is in the context of the co-researchers' personal accounts which tells the interrelatedness of things in a society, as opposed to focusing on only an isolated

individual herself. As such, emphasis is placed in this research on the contribution of tradition, culture and cultural discourses to interpretation that confers to another place-based hermeneutic perspective for the case of Jeju Island. While listening to the co-researchers' narratives, I will identify the ideas and values drawn from socio-cultural traditions and the local background of Jeju society, because "for practical theology to reflect in a meaningful way on the experience of the presence of God, it needs to be locally contextual, socially constructed, directed by tradition, exploring interdisciplinary meaning and it needs to point beyond the local" (Müller, 2005: 78). In addition to the component of Practical Theology, this research also includes an interdisciplinary analysis of relevant literature, as discussed in the previous chapters, and a hermeneutic view represented by the conversational creation of new narratives. In this sense, this study affirms that the co-researchers' narratives and realities are understood as a product of a broader sense of community, and further as a larger society. As dialogue evolves, new narratives, i.e., the 'not-yet-said' stories are mutually created (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:29). This research invites and engages the co-researchers to create new meanings from their narratives.

In this chapter, each story is told in a different manner, according to a perspective that is expressively important and indispensable to each of the co-researchers' lives within the society of Jeju. This chapter includes four different descriptions of each of the co-researchers' stories, and how I listened to the individual accounts. The co-researchers themselves are also described by the researcher, employing a narrative analysis of her experience of each of the four cases. It is necessary to focus on the co-researchers' interpretation of their experiences in order to understand what had

happened. Then all the researchers together can recognise and appreciate how present interpretations of the stories are connected to each of their own past knowledge and its relevant socio-traditional life components. This research does not adopt data collection in a chronological order because the primary goal of this study is to understand the co-researchers' narratives, and deconstruct their personal narratives and develop alternative narratives, rather than precise data analysis. Therefore, this research does not focus as much on analysis; instead it focuses on the description and understanding or meaning-making of the narratives.

This research interviews and discourse will follow the methodology of the seven movements of post-foundational Practical Theology. First, the researcher will describe the co-researchers' experiences in their specific contexts. These contextual stories do not only contain central information about the co-researchers' past experiences but they also include their present telling of their stories *per se*. Second, all the conversations with the co-researchers' storytelling and the following discourses are recorded, with an emphasis on the narrative observation, indicating the meaning and interpretation of personal accounts directed by each of co-researchers. Other social and cultural factors which have influenced the development of the co-researchers' stories due to each of their traditions will also be identified. Social constructivism and narrative therapy will be used in externalising and re-authoring conversations and discourses in order to deconstruct co-researchers' narratives which will be discussed through an alternative set of interpretation approaches and on that account this researcher will attempt to provide various interdisciplinary insights with the co-researchers.

The interpreted experiences of the co-researchers in their specific contexts are presented below in conversation transcripts. In presenting the co-researchers' stories, the pseudonyms are used for the sake of their privacy. Initials are also used for convenience, i.e., R for the researcher, M for Min, S for Sook, J for Jin and Y for Young. The interviews are translated literally from *Hangeul* (the language spoken in Korea) to English. Most of the content includes the same words used by the co-researchers but a few words and the conversation sequence has been changed and tailored, adapted for the sake of better clarity. Nevertheless, it is noted that the main content of the co-researchers' stories has not changed from the original conversations.

5.2 MIN'S STORY

Min is a senior student at college. She is a 22 year old Jeju Island resident. She had been taken to hospital on several occasions as a freshman and treated for a panic disorder. A psychotherapist told her that her problems arose from the lack of a strong and healthy relationship with her family. Min has spent most of her life living with her grandmother, who, along with her mother's sister, has supported her financially. She has received no financial or emotional support from either of the parents. Her grandmother is currently seventy years old, and was aged from 6 to 12 during the period of *Sasam sageon* in Jeju Island.

Min has two sisters. One sister lives in Jeju with her father while another sister works in Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Min's father has one older brother, one younger

brother and one older sister. Min does not have much information about her father's family. Min's mother has two younger brothers and a younger sister. Min's mother's sister married but got divorced after three years in the marriage. An uncle of hers was also divorced and has two children. Min initiated contact with her two sisters when she was in the 8th grade at school. She had a relationship with one sister at one point of her life stages, although it was not much of an intimate relationship between the two sisters. They fought a year ago and she has since severed the relation. Now she contacts only the second sister. She has not contacted her father since she was 18 years old. Min was seemingly unconcerned about her father and the relationship with him when she said she was not missing her father and did not hold any affection and respect for him. Min believes in God. She started to attend church services as a freshman at college. Only she and her sisters out of all of her family members participated in church services.

Upon our first meeting, I, or the researcher, introduced myself and my work. We then discussed what expectations she had about the following conversation and discourse. The researcher has met her five times; each session took over one and half hours. It was difficult for her to talk about her life at the interviews. She said, "I do not have special things or experiences to talk about..."

5.2.1 Min's story of her family

M: I have lived with my grandmother (my mother's mother) since the days when my parents got divorced. At that time, I was only a two year old toddler. They got divorced legally¹¹ but it was not by mutual agreement. According to the ruling of the court, I lived with my mother and my two sisters lived with my father.

R: I am just wondering why you could not live with your sisters.

M: this is because I was too young to be separated from my birth mother although it was true that my father originally wanted to raise all three daughters together. I spent most of my time at home with my grandmother because my mother frequently visited to Japan for her business. After some years passed by my mother eventually and permanently left home for Japan¹² and she got re-married there. Now she has a son and daughter in Japan.

My aunt always had told me that my mother and father are just folks who gave me a physical birth. Therefore I did not need to have any meaning and value on the relationship with them. My aunt also told me that she was able to support her mother, my grandmother, financially, but she did not want to live together with my grandmother at all.

R: I am wondering how your aunt's words influenced and contributed to your life.

M: Well, I was not fooled by the words, especially with her saying that my father had missed me. Although my sister also always told me that, saying it did not have much effect in my mind either. Whenever I met my sisters, they tried to push me

¹¹In South Korea, there are two ways in which one can get divorced, namely a legal divorce and a divorce by mutual agreement.

¹²Japan is located close to Jeju Island and so many people from Jeju go to Japan for jobs.

to have an open heart towards that.

R: What do you mean by that they had pushed you?

M: In fact, I did my best to open my mind at my own pace. You know, it is impossible to make my mind open at once. They also emphasised about my father expecting my reaction to his reconciling gestures. However, in my eyes, they were totally impatient, which is why I struggled with my eldest sister last year. After then, this year, my heart opened a little to my father. My heart was utterly closed until then.

R: You said your aunt's words about your mother and father being just people to give birth to you had influenced your thoughts towards the relationship with your father. Could you please talk more about how you have considered your father and mother since then?

M: (Pause) Now, I understand my father and mother little by little.

When I was a high school student, I was extremely full of hatred, so it was hard for me to forgive my parents, either of them. I considered as a person to be more than pitiful enough and thought my life was exceedingly miserable.

R: Thanks for sharing your life with me. Was it not too difficult to talk about?

M: Um. No. When people or colleagues heard my family story, they said how pathetic my life is or what a rough life that I have had. But now I am satisfied with my life.

R: You are satisfied with your life, how great you are!

M: (Laughing) Your words put me to shame.

R: I am wondering why you feel ashamed.

M: (Laughing) I had felt that I was a pitiful person in the world until my high school days. I was angry at my mother who had been living as a woman. What I meant

by that was that she has never lived as my mother, but as the one married to a man; I do not know who he is. And one sister and one brother were born unbeknown to me. I was really irascible to all these situations. I thought that my father was also a bad person because my grandmother told me so.

However, during my college life, I shared my life with others and also I had a chance to hear their life stories as well. I was surprised and a bit unfairly appreciated the fact that I had some friends living in even more challenging and harsh circumstances than I had. At that time, I gave my word to myself that I would not live with any feelings related to self-pity, as if I were the most pitiful and miserable in the world.

R: I am wondering how you changed the thought. Would you like to talk to me about that more?

M: In early days at college I talked to a senior student. She said that these experiences of mine that I considered to be part of my suffering might be my testimony and eventually it will become a positive tool for helping another person in a similar circumstance. It was very helpful for me, to hear that.

R: You mean that you thought that you could start to do something new and a bad experience is not the end of life? You were encouraged by the motivational thought that you could do something using such of your experiences.

M: Yes, yes. It was a chance to change. I was encouraged by colleagues as well. (Pause) I have not talked to anyone about these stories for two years. I am talking now after a long silence. Others would never know my circumstances unless I talked to them first. Since I am cheerful by nature, they would not believe I have these life stories.

I think I am living well. I am proud of myself. I seem to be living just fine.

R: Yes, you are living well. I am proud of you too.

At the first meeting, Min referred to her attitude when depressed. She talked about when she fell into such a depression, she rarely contacted other people and kept herself in her house all day long for months. I was wondering about this and at our second meeting we discussed it. She revealed that her problems were her relationships with her family members and talked about her subsequent feelings of depression.

M: I think and feel like I have been influenced more by my mother's family members who I lived with, but not that much from my own straight blood family line – my sisters, father and mother. I think the family members who have lived with me and have been directly involved in my life (such as my grandmother, aunt, uncles, nieces and nephew) have strongly influenced my own thoughts and feelings, and certainly had some effects on my life.

R: What effects do they have in your life?

M: when they had some problems, I was concerned about such matters naturally.

That is, I am bothered by them in many aspects of my life.

R: It bothers you?

M: Mostly what makes me weak is my family. My family never gives me strength.

Whenever there is a problem in my family, it affects my entire life situation that is to say, I am depressed. I never come out of the house and would not go to school.

R: You mean that makes you stop all your life.

M: Even though I have lived with my grandmother for a while, I often wish to live alone. If I lived alone, I might feel that I would have my own full '100 percent' in life.

R: Why do you think so?

M: Due to living with grandmother, I have to be associated with my uncles and their kids.

R: Is it a burden for you?

M: Yes, very much. I should care. My grandmother does not exactly know what is good for children and what is not. Therefore I have heard a lot about my parents, aunt and uncles' lives from grandmother which I did not need to know. The stories include her experiences and negative emotions. So I had a lot of trouble with adults until the end of my high school life. Also, my uncles do not have good characters. Whenever I was dissatisfied with my second uncle, I expressed it directly. Then he would offend me violently and I would often feel mortified.

Whenever my grandmother grumbled about troubles relating to my uncles, I worried and thought what I could do. I became occupied by trying to solve the problem instead of her solving it.

Before my younger uncle got married, we lived with him. He drank alcohol quite heavily. One day he drank too much. So I told him, "You must drink alcohol moderately; if you drink a lot, it is better to sleep at your friends'." I would advise him not to drink so much. He also felt bad when I gave him such advice. Because his life is in many ways heavily involved with my life, I cannot help but to be concerned about him. But like a stranger, they were not directly troubled with concern for me. I wish. I cannot stop thinking about them. (Pause) I rate them as

my family members but they do not think of me in the same way.

R: How can you know that your family members do not think you as a family member?

M: We generally met together on national holidays¹³. They just briefly greeted me and asked to me, “What will you do today?”

R: How do you wish them to be like?

M: I want to receive the feeling of warmth and sincere interest from them, and I would like to be asked more deeply and truly about my life. But we just talked formally as usual.

R: You mean that you would like to talk with your family members more intimately.

M: Yes, but it is an impossible thing.

R: Why do you think it is an impossible thing?

M: We do not have good relationships with each other. Until I began studying at elementary school, my grandmother went to Japan to earn more money to support the family. Therefore I was left alone with my elder uncle. I was afraid of my uncle’s face and did not eat well. One day my grandmother’s friend came to see how I live. She said I was washing dishes by standing on a chair. I was just a seven-year-old girl. I do not remember such a drastic and family-demanding experience but I was told about the story. I thought I had many pains in my childhood. One day I really wanted to eat eggs, so I put them in the microwave. Then the eggs broke (laughing).

When I saw my elder uncle, I was in a bad mood. I knew I should have greeted him but I did not want to greet him. Since the wife of my uncle also worked, my

¹³Koreans celebrate two main national holidays. One is *Chuseok* (Korean Thanksgiving) and the other is *Seolnal*, which is New Year’s Day.

cousins were left with my grandmother often. I was an only child in that house but I grew up with them like family. But...

R: You think of them as your family members, but not *vice versa*?

M: We love and hate. I am getting emotionally rusty about them. I hope that I do not have any effect from them. Whenever they had some celebration, such as getting awards or receiving a bonus, they celebrated only with each other, but I was being left alone. Additionally, if they were interested in my life, they could ask about me going to church. They did not ask anything about that.

R: Which person of your family members influenced your life the most?

M: My aunt (my mother's sister) has the biggest political voice within our family group. She has the power of influence on everything in-and-out of our family life and even what I could do within the context because she also has supported me financially. When I needed to decide something, my grandmother always said that I should ask my aunt about the decision. I had to pass everything with my aunt. When I became a Christian, first of all I had to tell and ask my aunt because if my aunt allowed that, my grandmother would also say it would be okay. Yes. I have thought my aunt is the primary figure in my family life, but if I calculate true proportions in my mind, my grandmother she is, that I believe. She has contributed to all of my entire life. The person I love is my grandmother.

R: Ah....

M: One morning when eating with my grandmother, I said to her, "Grandma, in the past, I called you my mom as a joke. I really think of you as my mom." And in my mind, the hatred from my uncles might have come from the fact that I thought of my grandmother as my mother.

I had so much fear about leaving my grandmother alone. But a few days ago, I went to spend one night and two days in Seoul. It was really fun, although I lost my way on the subway. (Laughing) It was a good experience. Thoughts of my grandmother did not bother me as much as I thought they would have.

R: Wow...good...

M: When talking with my grandmother, I always feel peaceful and happy. This might be because I have received and recognised a sort of definitional feeling and meaning towards her.

I even used to call my grandmother “mommy mommy.” But she has also been a burden to me in some ways, although some of my relatives said that my grandmother and I should stay together for life, I did not consider it seriously back then.

R: Have you had any experiences where you thought you should be the one to take care of your grandmother?

M: She had even broken down due to low blood pressure. One day, once I came back from volunteer activities, she was very ill. I immediately took the action of emergency measures, after asking one of my friends for help. I made a call to a medical hospital, and then I also called my uncle and aunt to tell them what I would do after then. Then I went to the hospital with my grandmother. I also undertook the hospital procedures by myself.

I had thought that she was strong enough but she was not. My grandmother later said, “If it was not for you, I would have died early.” I was not entirely clear what she meant by then, but I was feeling that her seemingly kind and rewarding comments on my virtuous acts sounded rather repressive to me.

R: Why did you feel like it was repressive?

M: I thought that she was holding me back from an opportunity to choose. I wanted to be free in my life. Up until high school, I never had good talks with my grandmother. Whenever I had a fight with my grandmother, she would say I should go to my father, which made me cry. At that time I felt like I was deserted by my grandmother rather than feeling free. But now I feel that responsibility is rather oppressive. I now understand what she meant when she said she lives because of me. It meant that my grandmother felt comforted by me.

R: Yes. Your grandmother is happy because of you. And also she is still alive because of you.

M: (Pause) While attending college, I could not make any appointments in the evening because I had to eat dinner with her. She always called me to ask where I was. Then I got stressed and although I had already eaten dinner outside, I ate again at home. Many times, I ate twice and experienced stomach-aches. But now I have decided to eat meals with my grandmother on weekends because during the weekdays, I need to meet with friends, engage in social works and other activities. I don't believe that the only way to maintain a good relationship with my grandmother is completely devoting myself and my time to her. I feel free. I love my grandmother but I know that self-sacrifice is not the only way of love.

R: Wow, Great. I am wondering.

M: My fear disappeared when I called her my mother. We will live together as long as possible. We will live with love as grandmother and granddaughter and also like mother and daughter.

R: Good...great...The title does not matter.

5.2.2 Min's experience of God

M: I have some struggles now. Um...I am now a senior. I think it is time to prepare for my future. But I have not decided on the attitude of my life. I was and still am struggling a little. Therefore in March, I decided to focus more on my studies. Naturally the things that I participated in, like club activities, were reduced. So many people talked about this. If I stop the activities, there is much talk. I did not like to do as many activities as before. I was conflicted. I hoped to do what I want...but...I want to make sure between my options.

R: What is preventing you from making a decision?

M: The words and deeds of people would not let me decide for sure.

R: What kind of words and deeds of people would not let you decide?

M: When I met them on the campus, they asked, "Why you did not come to the meeting? What's going on?" Without first asking me about my situation, they seem to interfere in my life with their words and attitudes.

R: What do they say?

M: They think I have to attend every congregation meeting. It is not that they worry about me. It seems like they want to say that my attitude is not good or it is not right as a Christian.

R: What do you think about that?

M: Um...I do not know. In fact, I have a friend who is a member of my extracurricular circle and with whom I attended a small Bible study group for three years. She is a good student. She is good at studying and is now preparing to graduate. However she is also eager to participate in church activities. Even though she

has not participated much in the club activities, last year she became a leader of the club. I want to live like her. Since she was really busy studying, she rarely came to the club room. People do not seem to interrupt her life but they demand that mine be interrupted.

R: You mean you want to focus more on your life rather than thinking about participating in congregation activities? But when you actually do so, you are bothered by other people's words.

M: I feel uncertain. Although I am truly busy, I feel like I should have a sense of responsibility. I compare myself with her.

R: Do you think that comparing yourself with her is a good thing or a bad thing?

M: It is a bad thing.

R: Why do you think it is a bad thing?

M: You know it is natural. Comparing attitudes is not necessarily a good thing.

R: It seems that through comparing, you get to make a difference in your life and have the opportunity to think about your life again.

M: Oh. Good. (Laughing)

R: I am curious as to how, as you previously said, she became the club leader even though she did not participate much in club activities.

M: Um. I have worked hard in club activities. Yet I am not a leader. All my friends around me who participate in various club activities are leaders. My club members did not vote for me.

R: How does this make you feel?

M: I feel a sense of alienation. Maybe I started to have conflict because of these facts.

R: You mean you did not feel recognised and valued by your own group?

M: Um. Yes, maybe...

R: I think it is natural to feel that way in your situation. You know, the longing for acknowledgement is a manifestation of human nature. Every person would like to be recognised and valued by others.

M: (Pause)

R: When did you first come to believe in God?

M: When I was in my first year at college, I received God into my life at a summer vision conference. When I was a high school student, I used to swear a lot and say many negative comments. I never talked to elders in a polite, respectful manner. I think I was a bad girl. But since I 'met' God I have been 'clean.' I try not to speak negatively about any person. I think if I truly receive God, then I have to be changed totally..

R: You mean you have changed your habit of swearing. I am curious as to what you mean by 'changed totally'?

M: Maybe. I unconsciously try to deny my past because I used to be a bad girl. But after the day I met God, I changed my mind and way of thinking.

R: Was it changed, or did you try to change?

M: I changed through prayer. Before I went to college, I hated living with my grandmother. I wished that my grandmother would die when I leave for school. But one day, I wrote a prayer request that I hope to live with my grandmother for a long time. It was my first time to fill out a list of prayer requests. After I accepted Jesus, I had a chance to look at the list of prayer requests again. Then it came to my mind that the promise or request I made to God should not be a lie. I began to

try talking with my grandmother prayerfully. I spent time with my grandmother. Also, I gave her calls and asked, “Did you eat lunch? I never used to do that before. The first time, it was a little awkward. As time went on, we became more like a family. Though technically we are family...Our relationship became intimate. God made me to do so. God has given me the will. God made it possible what I thought was impossible. God gave me the will, and God said to me that I can do it. Now, therefore, I give thanks to God for my family and the community I belong to.

R: God made you happy and responded to your prayer. And God also made you be thankful for your family.

R: I am wondering what God means to you in your life.

M: God is my family. In my congregation, the mentors are called mother. My mentor is my mother and God is my Father. I am so happy because we have become a happy family.

R: How do you feel to be in this family?

M: My heart feels warm and happy. In the past I lived a repetitive and boring life – go to school, go to an institute and go back home and sleep. But after I came to believe in God, I became truly happy to stay on the campus. I was interested in meeting congregation members. I talked a lot with them and had fun. The small story of my life was a testimony too. Therefore I wanted to stay together and share my stories with them.

R: You mean since you believed in God, your life has become more vigorous and exciting?

M: Yes.

R: I am wondering how you are experiencing God now in your life.

M: I do not know exactly. I want to behave like a spoiled child in front of God. But God wants me to become a more mature person. I just want to do anything I like and tell God what I am unwilling to do. But God wants me to keep going.

R: Where did you get these ideas?

M: God gives me words which prick my conscience. These days, God speaks to me about faith and deeds in the book of James. God says, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead¹⁴.” So I think I should do something. You know, maybe God gave me that word because of my recent struggle with whether I should be deeply involved in congregation activities or not. I have to do something.

R: You mean you must do something for God to get God’s love?

M: God always loves me. God’s love is true. This love is forever. But I do not know. If I were to do nothing, it may not be obedience to God. It makes me feel uncomfortable. When I do nothing, it is humiliating.

R: What do you mean by uncomfortable?

M: I am just uncomfortable. I do not know. If I were to do nothing, I would feel awkward. Since I am a short-tempered person, while listening to a story or sermon, I also think of what I want to do, at the same time.

R: What do you mean, ‘a short-tempered person’? Is it good or bad?

M: I do not know.

R: I want to interpret the short-tempered person as ‘progressive.’ If you hear motivating words you become increasingly willing to do things. And you think of

¹⁴James 2:26, a New Testament book in the Bible.

how you can do things, don't you? I think it is good thing. It shows energy and power.

M: It might be good. I occasionally think for a long time to decide on something.

However things that I decide at the moment I am keen to do quickly and with great energy. I am able to do them right away.

R: Great. You did it. You have energy and power.

M: Really? (Laughing) People often say that I am progressive and have a power that is surprising to be found in women. Sometimes, I become a leader in order to get things done.

R: Good.

R: You talked me of your experience of conflicting moments between God's words and your situation, and how much you felt uncomfortable. I think what is uncomfortable is this new start in your life. If you can describe with a colour, what colour is your past?

M: It is brown.

R: What about after you believed in God, and now?

M: Um. Yellow, and now it is blue.

R: What does the colour of yellow mean to you?

M: The colour yellow means brightness, like a forsythia bloom in the spring, it symbolises newness, vigour and energy.

R: Oh, great. How about brown and blue?

M: Brown seems dark and sombre. I cannot remember the past well. I should have had happy moments as well but everything is blurred.

Blue is the sea. It is refreshing, reviving and cool. The sea has a lot of resources

and is abundant. I faced the turning point of my life when I received God. Whatever the past is, it does not matter. I will focus more on now and the future.

5.3 SOOK'S STORY

Sook has lived in Jeju Island with her parents and two sisters. She is the first daughter and a senior student at university. She is 23 years old. After I introduced myself and my work to her, we began to talk about what expectations she has of these interviews. I met with her five times, and spent over one and a half hours with her during each session.

5.3.1 Sook's story of identity

S: I usually have a hard time speaking in front of people. Although I am a little changed now by life's training, I am still a little bit afraid. However, I think now is a good time to engage in a challenging discourse with you.

R: Do you mean that you want to take this time as another challenge in your life?

S: Yes.

R: Why do you find it so difficult to speak?

S: I do not know. When I was a child, just standing in front of people alone was difficult. When given the chance to speak in front of people, I would step down from the front, not saying anything, just crying and trembling. I might have been afraid of the circumstances and people's attention being focused on me. However,

I have been changed a little bit through my social activities.

R: Is it difficult standing in front of people itself or sharing about your life? Have you ever experienced it as difficult for you?

S: Since I became a Christian, I have had the opportunity to share my life; I have hardly felt it. Otherwise, just standing on stage is a burden.

R: What do you mean by hardly?

S: I had feelings of regret.

R: Why regret?

S: I knew what to say, but I could not. I was disappointed and ashamed (pause).

By the way, I have been in inevitable situations where I had to present on a stage. Therefore regardless of my willingness, I had to stand up on the stage. I had to do it either trembling or standing without talking on the stage. Although I should be able to present well, whenever I did I stammered and felt really depressed. However, through repeating this experience, now I have become a bit better.

R: What do you mean by 'regardless of my willingness'?

S: It was the duty and role given to me. Even though I was embarrassed and trembling, my duty and role made me stand and persist to the bitter end.

R: Wow. You are great. Although you were embarrassed and trembling you did your duty and fulfilled the responsibility given to you. The duty and responsibility makes you stronger, right?

S: Yes, that is right (smiles). I have never thought like that. Anyway as a leader in the social activity group, I have even had opportunities to present or start a discourse. Although I prepared notes, I talked with a trembling voice because of my fear and I was under strain because of people's attention. That moment was a little hard

for me. I know that it is hard, but I want to do it. If there were any opportunities given to me, I would be willing as well. I like it. I like social activities.

R: I am wondering how you can do it. In spite of trembling and fear, you try it again and again. How is it contributing to and supporting you?

S: What makes me stand against the fear and shame is the fact that not only do I have a given role, but also I can act in my group. The social activity makes me lively and gives me energy. My responsibility and role in the group makes my life exciting as well.

R: Wow. Your responsibility and role in your community makes you excited and gives you power or energy and courage. I am wondering how to encourage you!

S: I am not sure. I am good and have fun doing activities with group members.

R: Do you have fun doing activities with group members?

S: I am excited and have fun when I belong to the group and talk with them. I am happy, joyful and peaceful with them. It is good with them regardless of whether I am doing something or not. I often look forward to a meeting.

R: You mean it makes you happy and joyful that you belong to the group.

S: I am encouraged by them.

R: How do they encourage you?

S: They recognise me and give me the role of leader. Now I am involved in three social activities. According to the roles, I spent more time on one than another. First of all I am involved in the A organisation. I was doing well. And then I started to go to church. There I was also given the role as a leader of the group and I have joined C circles. Each one helps me, according to each role.

R: Wow. Do you really do everything? Hearing your story I am thinking these role

play an important part in your life. I am curious, if these roles were not given to you, then how would you see yourself?

S: (Long pause)

R: I am curious now as to whether the roles of each group encourage you or are a burden to you.

S: Recently I am in the middle. They are a source of both encouragement and exhaustion. Since I have undertaken these roles in communal societies for a long period, I have become a little bit exhausted.

R: How do you know you are exhausted?

S: The schedule of my working time has been messed up and I missed doing some work. I feel depressed and lonely.

R: Have you experienced many feelings of depression and loneliness before?

S: Yes. When I don't do anything I feel depressed and lonely. I think, I should meet someone – but meet who? I should do something – but do what? I have a lot of work that I should do but I cannot do anything. When I cannot manage my work well, I regret it.

R: What do you mean by 'you regret it'?

S: I had a lot of work to do but I did not do it. I should be more focused on work – why not? I thought, "What a stupid person I am!"

R: Oh no. I do not think that way. It's just that you are exhausted because of your many roles and much work. We are going back to the topic of burdens. You said recently you feel your roles are burdensome. Would you like to talk about that more?

S: I talked with a friend who is also a leader in the church community. She said that

she was mentally and physically exhausted with a lot of work. It might have come about by accumulated fatigue because she did a lot without any break time. I agree with her. I am a little fatigued and exhausted recently as well. However, I cannot quit. I have to keep going.

R: Who makes you keep going?

S: Um, nobody. It's just that I feel I have to keep going. It is my responsibility and my work. It is natural that we are held accountable, isn't it?

R: Why do you think that? Where does the idea come from?

S: You know everybody thinks that. Whoever takes responsibility well with his or her work is a good person. Teachers, elders and spiritual leaders taught me that it is important.

R: I am wondering now, do you think many works and responsibility on you are good or bad in your life now?

S: I know it is bad in my life, but it is unavoidable. I am obliged to.

R: You have been obliged to? That means it is not driven by your own willingness.

S: Sometimes...

R: Do you feel it becoming burdensome (*Himdeum*¹⁵) to you?

S: When I felt it becoming burdensome to me, I just used to bear or repress the feelings. However, these days I try to express the burdens a little, but not much.

R: You mean when you recognise the burden, you do not express it to others. I am wondering, which one is better – acknowledging and expressing the burden or not?

S: I do not know about before. From the time I express myself regarding work that is

¹⁵" *Himdeum*(힘듬)"in *Hanguel* (Korean language) can be translated as 'burden.'

burdensome; I then appreciate my roles and responsibilities. I think it is better than just putting everything into my heart and bearing and repressing it all, because I feel burdened with what I want to express but do not.

R: You mean it was a good experience, when recognising and expressing your burdens overwhelming you. However if you were not allowed to express your burdens, you felt even more burdened? Would you like to talk about your experience of that?

S: Even though I knew it would be hard, I would do things. If someone asked me to do him or her a favour, even though it was not my job, I would do it because I could not refuse. I did it although it was difficult for me. However, some burdens I recently said “no” to, so I have a little rest time.

R: Would you like to talk about your experience of that?

S: Last year, my church’s pastor announced that whoever wants to can come learn how to play the organ. As soon as I heard that, I went to the pastor and told him I wanted to learn. Therefore I started to learn how to play the organ. After a short while, the church organist went abroad hastily. There was no one to replace her as an organist, so the role was given to me. Although I could not play well, I then had to play the organ for the church service. I practiced during the week and then played for the Sunday service. It was too difficult for me to do well. Throughout the service, I was tense all the time. I could not concentrate on worshipping God. I felt burdened and thought that I could not do it anymore, so I told my church pastor about my circumstance. Therefore I stopped playing the organ. Before I spoke to him about it, I could never concentrate on the service because I was filled with thoughts and nervous throughout the time. However, last Sunday

worship was great. With less responsibility, I feel more comfortable. I felt less tension in my body and since I am less susceptible to the attention of the people, I felt more comfortable.

R: Why did you decide to express your burden?

S: When I acknowledged it was a burden, I was in agony of mind – which one is better or right, taking up the role continually or quitting. An elder in my church congregation suggested, “It is better take some time to rest. You are exhausted now.” I heard that, and decided immediately.

R: You mean she contributed to your decision? She supported you. Was that a good experience for you?

S: Yes. It was good for me. However, I also heard a lot of advice and encouragement relating to stop playing the organ after the service. Someone asked me why I stopped, and said it would be better if I continued, as I should not miss a good opportunity to improve myself. As I heard those words, I thought that maybe I should not stop. But never mind, it is more important to recover my ability to worship and I wanted to get away from the tension of my body and mind.

R: You mean, you thought it was a good choice in the end because it is more important to understand and accept yourself. You have been hard on yourself and have lived with a lot of burdens and tension.

S: It was burdensome for me. (Weeping)

R: It was too burdensome for you. (Pause) You are great. You had never played the organ before but you practiced for a whole week and supported the service as an accompanist. It took great courage.

S: (Weeping)

R: Why are you crying?

S: It has been too hard. I can improve too. It is the perfect time to decide something like that.

R: When I heard your story, I thought you live with a lot of effort.

S: I might try to live better. I have had role models around me. I try to resemble them.

R: You mean that you have high expectations of your life, to improve yourself and manage your time better?

S: Yes. But I have changed a lot, compared to the past.

R: Why do you say that?

R: I used to spend a lot of time in agony trying to make a decision. It was very stressful. Nevertheless, this was different. I decided immediately and told the pastor, and that was it. It seemed to be conducted in an instant and yet I was comfortable. Now I can do anything I want to do because the trouble has gone away from my life. I am now able to concentrate more on my life.

R: Great. I think you have a great spirit towards taking up challenges. You have the power to improve your life as well.

S: (Smiles) Good. I have never expressed myself like that. It has given me insight on my life. I find that I can interpret my life story more positively. It is good. I am surprised at the change in myself. (Smiles) When you say, "great" and "good," I feel good and happy. I am not used to thinking that I am great or good on my own. I am used to just not doing well. Your words have inspired me. Now I realise that instead of having sorrow for what I could not or chose not to do, it is better that I did not try to do something beyond my capacity just because I felt I could not refuse. When I cannot do what I feel I have to, I am filled with anxiety. It makes

me worried troubled and stressed. I would like to find and do what I can.

5.3.2 Sook's family story

R: Would you like to tell me stories of your family?

S: Yes. A little...

R: What images or feelings come to mind when you think of your family?

S: Whenever I think of my family, I am sad and anxious rather than pleased and happy. I worry about the relationships my family members have with each other. (Weeping) We live without any in-depth conversations with each other. It seems like we each live alone. My mother just does her work. We do not have enough time to talk with each other. We don't often eat together either. Even though we live in the same house, it seems we live separately. Each person lives in their own way.

R: Why do you feel this way and have worries?

S: My father physically abused me. I did not know that my family had serious problems until I started studying social welfare. I took my father's behaviour as normal; I had accepted it as natural. While sharing about my life and studying child welfare, I realised that my father abused my mother and me. It makes me unhappy. My father laid violent hands on my family, specifically on my mother and me. My mother often said that she found it hard to live. When I heard that, I became angry and hated my father more. I felt I was living a miserable life as well. I felt discomforted by my emotions.

I do not have many conversations with my father, only on occasion, to say, for example, “I need money to buy books.” Then he says, “How much do you need? When do you need it?” That’s it. We just talk about general things. Just having him asking me questions annoys me.

R: Why do his questions annoy you?

S: My father was never interested in my life before but he started to interfere in my life because of my sister. Sometimes he asks what I want, but what he does is what he wants.

R: Why do you say your father interfered in your life because of your sister?

S: When I was a student of middle school, he never asked about my school life, for example, about my school record, my friendships or my needs, but since my sister started going to the school, he became interested in her school life and only then, in me. My sister studies well. She is the pride of my father. He only focuses on her. When my sister was in Grade 12, while she studied, we were not allowed to watch TV and had to keep silent. In my case, he did not do that. Last week, he asked about our exams. He first asked my sister and then he asked me. As soon as I tried to describe my circumstances in writing the exam, he became angry at me. He wanted to hear rather short, simple words rather than a long description. He said he does not like explanations and repeated questions, he just wants to hear ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ but he is always generous towards her.

My father is not interested in my life. I have to do everything according to what he wants. He ignores my thoughts and opinions. My father has an aggressive way of talking and gets agitated over trifles. Everything he does is okay but if we did the same things it would not be okay. He dominates everything, depending on his

mood. I am affected by his moods, even though my sisters are not. I take on more strain than they do. I am not only uncomfortable but also under great strain at home.

R: When you think of your father, what image do you picture?

S: My father is alone. He is a pitiful person.

R: Why do you think like that?

S: My father is cut off from his family members – his wife and brothers, sisters, mother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and his wife’s siblings. My father is the firstborn son and he has two brothers and two sisters. One sister died when she was a child. I have never seen my aunts. The only thing I remember about them is that when I was a child one of my aunts sent clothes as a gift. My mother is the second daughter. She has one older brother, four younger brothers and two sisters. Her parents are alive.

When I was a child, we lived together with my grandmother, uncles and other family members. However, ten years ago, there was a very big quarrel in my house. They shouted at each other and things like the TV, microwave, and telephone and so on were thrown out in the yard. And then we were cut off. My grandmother lives with an uncle as well. Until now, they and my parents have not contacted each other. I do not know what is wrong with them. My parents never mention anything to do with it again. It has been hard not to hear family stories since I was child. I have never even heard how my father and mother met and got married. (Weeping)

R: Your father was cut off from his family and you could not have a relationship with your relatives as well. These facts make you unhappy and sad.

S: (Pauses, weeping)

R: I think your father's violent behaviour comes from these circumstances. He is lonely and needs an emotional connection with someone.

S: Although I feel we need to change a little bit, I am afraid to talk to my dad.

R: Were you always afraid of your father or not?

S: He tries to play tricks with my sisters occasionally. It is a little bit funny. My younger sister is bigger and taller than my dad. They push each other and measure their heights.

R: You mean you are not always afraid of your father.

S: (Smiles)

R: You are smiling, why?

S: I do not know but...it is possible to change?

R: I think so. Good.

5.4 JIN'S STORY

Jin, aged thirty-six years, is a married woman. She has three children, one boy and two girls. She runs her own the vegetable store with her husband. She is the fifth child of her own siblings and her mother is her father's second wife. She has one brother and five sisters. Her father died and she has lived on Jeju Island since she was born. All her family members believe in God. Her siblings have good relationships with each other.

5.4.1 The story of Jin: Responsibilities and burdens

R: Would you like to talk about your life story?

J: My story? What part of it?

R: Are you experiencing any conflicts in your life these days? Or could you explain your struggles or emotions or anything? Just talk about yourself. I want to listen to the story of life.

J: In a recent situation, despite the fact that I helped and supported my relations well, I never felt that I was doing well in my heart. I have supported family for a long time but I feel incomplete and dissatisfied with my life. For example, I and my husband have been supporting my husband's older sister, who is married. She has suffered economic hardships because of bad business. Therefore even though my husband is the youngest child, we have had to support relatives a lot so far, and supported beyond a degree that I am comfortable with. I feel displeased about it now.

When we got married, we didn't have much money. Therefore we lived on a one bedroom house which we rented and we opened a small grocery store nearby our house. Even though we did not have enough money, we still supported my husband's family. That was a difficult task for us. However she [my husband's sister] did not appreciate our help. Even though we are subordinate,¹⁶ when we are expected to help beyond our capacity, it makes me uncomfortable.

On the other hand, I think, I am a very selfish person. Jesus says, "If you love

¹⁶ This refers to the birth sequence of the siblings. In Korean culture, there is more responsibility for an older brother to support the family. Hence, the firstborn son inherits more of the fortune of the parents.

those that love you and do good to those who do good to you, it is natural. It is what anyone can do. But if you have love for your enemies, and do good, and lend, it is a sincere love.”¹⁷ In light of these words, I have no confidence in front of God. I have many conflicts coming from situations that conflict between the word of God and my own behaviour.

And with my kids as well, I try to love them whole-heartedly but sometimes I feel like I do not. It is strange for me. I want to love fervently but it seems impossible.

R: What do you mean?

J: You know, giving priority to children. Work regarding the children should be the priority above all. However, I am not like that. I am not wholly eager to help and support my children. I do not know why not.

When I was a child, I did not grow up without love. I lived under the love of my parents. My parents loved me most among all my siblings. I did everything exceptionally well. I did well in school. Therefore, I was a pleasure to my parents. Even now my mother says to my daughter, “Follow your mom as much as you can.”(Laughing) I participated in many things. In studies, sports, art and drama, I did well in all things until high school. Therefore, my parents loved me.

However, I am not very dependent on or devoted to my children. On the other hand, whenever I imagine that God could take my children up to heaven at any

¹⁷ Paraphrased from the New Testament book of Luke 6:32-36, which says, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

time, I choke with grief. However, I am not self-sacrificing as if burning my whole body for my children. I feel like keeping my own law. In my heart, I have other standards.

R: You mean, you think you do not sacrifice enough as a mother and feel like doing your own things.

J: I scold the children when I am angry with them. When bringing up children, I know it is natural to scold and whip. But...

R: After scolding the children, what kind of emotion does it leave you with?

J: It is a feeling of frustration, which comes from the thought and question of whether it was necessary to do all this.

R: I am curious as to why you feel frustration instead of remorse or something similar.

J: I am sorry, but the feeling of frustration is with myself. It is only due to myself it maybe also comes from my own criteria. Therefore, I might be a cold-hearted person. The anger and venting my anger might be also a part of me, but I dislike recognising this truth about myself. There is a voice that blames me, asking why I get angry, and telling me it might be better to repress... (Pause)

R: You said you have your own criteria; I think it is different for each person. Tell me more about that. I'm interested in what the criteria is that you speak of.

J: For example, before warning a child, I think that a mother should pray for thirty seconds. It is what I should do, but I do not. So I feel very frustrated because I am not in control of my emotions.

R: Do you think your frustration is a result of your failing to control of your emotions?

J: Yes, I do. If I controlled myself, it might be okay.

R: You think if you were in control of yourself, everything would be alright?

J: Yes. Whenever I experience any troubles or problems, first I question myself. I am used to trying to find the cause of the problem in myself. I ask myself a lot –not only when problems happen –but also when I am doing something. In a sense, I may want to make conclusions by myself. For example, if I experience problems with my husband, I do not fight at our own store because it would be in the staff's sight. In order to save my husband's face as a boss, I repress my anger. And then I think that it would be good to talk later. In many cases, after sometime passes I think it is not a big deal, so I let it go.

R: it seems that you are questioning yourself when there have been any problems or troubles with your children, husband and other relations. You seem to put all things on yourself, such as asking yourself why it happens... "What is the problem in me? How can I solve this? What can I do for them?" According to your own words... I think you rather draw conclusions alone rather than discoursing and asking others for help.

J: I draw some conclusions alone rather than talking about problems. I do not depend on others. In fact, I attempt to do something to solve the problem on my own. In the past, I was a class president and a school president from elementary school to college. Even though I am daughter of five, my mother and father praised me for doing well.

Until now, whenever they (my mother and siblings) tell me of difficulties, I have helped my mother and sisters without complaining about anything. Since I have done this for a long while, I am familiar with deciding things by myself. Even though I have an issue with my children, I do not ask them anything. By myself...(Weeping)

R: I am wondering what is the meaning of your tears?

J: I do not know. I have never wept. I should be strong.

R: You think weeping means you are weak?

J: You know I have been given much responsibility. It has made me strong. I had to do well in everything as a good leader and daughter.

R: You have done your duties with responsibility. Do you feel now the responsibility given to you is a good thing or a bad thing for you?

J: I do not know. However, I had a lot of stuff, and I was lonely.

R: When do you feel lonely?

J: In most situations, I have to take difficult decisions alone. For example, when my mom talks to me of her difficulties, in fact, I also have hardships but I scarcely say anything because it might be a burden to my mother. I don't want to plague my mom. I do not want to worry her. You know, when I had a relationship problem with my husband, I wanted to talk to my mother-in-law. But I did not. I cannot.

R: Hearing your story, I think you have been given too much responsibility. On the one hand, it has made you mature and strong. Also, it has kept you from falling down in difficult circumstances. It is reality. On the other hand, it makes you lonely and it is burdensome.

J: The circumstances of my life make me like that. I must do many things for the sake of my family. It is my duty to take care of my children, take charge of the store and do many general household tasks. I feel these might have made my life a little burdensome. Nevertheless, my mom has lived like that. She raised my family alone. She assumed the responsibility of the family livelihood, working in a restaurant for the whole day. I did not have negative thoughts about that. I

accepted it naturally. Come to think of it, my life style might come from that.

R: Why do you think like that?

J: I think that if women are other citizens –women whose husbands earn money and they do not have to work for a livelihood, they may just have to take care of children at home – I think it is different between Jeju women and other citizens.

R: I am curious as to what your image of your mother is.

J: My mom is like a captain. We were not very intimate. We did not feel kindly towards each other. I do not know...When I read my old diary, words of anger and blame towards my mom were written until recently before marriage. She had spoken curse words to me and my sisters. After my mom believed in God, I talked to her saying that she had to repent of that fact. My mom said she already repented and wept a lot. I replied, “Good job!” (Laughs) Because she has run a business since I was kid, her manner of speech is tough and straightforward.

R: How do you feel about your mother?

J: Well...There isn't a special feeling, I just feel a little bit sorry for her.

R: What do you feel now? What thought occurs to you now?

J: Um...While replying to your question I thought really I did like that if problems arose, I made decisions by myself without consulting with others, specifically my family. This is not an issue for me when I am physically and mentally healthy, but if I was weak, I might not be sure whether I can do it or not. I have accepted and taken my life predicaments and circumstances for granted. However, I have a question in my life; is the life attitude of self-sacrifice really good for me?

R: I am wondering what you are feeling.

J: I do not know for sure. I feel that the predicaments of my life are burdensome. I

wish I could take some time to rest. I would like to have the time to do my favourite things as well. I want to spend time on myself. I ask myself if it is possible to take time to rest and do what I want to, because my children are growing up and the store is not yet established – it still needs my management and overseeing. I can't stop doing anything. I wonder how many people actually live doing their favourite things, just as they wish. You know most people live by just adapting to their own predicaments.

R: While I was listening to your story, I came up with the thought that you might be conflicted by dual thoughts; one is what you want – to take rest and time for yourself, and the other is asking if anyone lives doing their favourite things. They also just live and conform to their circumstances.

J: Yes, you're right. I have never decided and chosen according to what I wanted in life. When I choose something, I have catered to others' stories of predicament and circumstances and made decisions accordingly, rather than doing what I really wanted to do. My opinion of what I want would be discarded and given up. When determining a path for the future, I did not decide according to what I wanted. I was just following the opinion of teachers and parents.

R: What does it mean that you do what you want?

J: It seems to be being a selfish person.

R: Is being selfish good or bad?

J: What do you mean? You think it might good?

R: (Smiles) Well...I think sometimes it is good and sometimes it is bad, but I think that people are motivated by selfish personal interests. In life, we need to follow our own interests and do things according to our own benefit as well.

J: (Pauses)

R: If you can do what you want, what do you want to do?

J: I want to rest.

5.4.2 Jin's experience of the presence of God

R: You said you want to do your favourite things; what are your favourite things?

J: I want to read the Bible without anyone interrupting me. I am happy when I experience God with intimacy.

R: If you read the Bible without anyone disturbing you, how do you feel?

J: When I read the Bible there is joy; God lets me see that I have never seen before and He sees my heart and mind. I hope to dig deeper into that.

R: I am wondering what kind of reality makes you joyful.

J: It is the fact that God understands my feelings. That is a comfort to me. My God understands and knows me beyond what I can express. I never experience that kind of intimacy when meeting and talking with people. I feel at ease in God's presence.

It is the Word of God that helps me to endure, moment by moment. The promise of God has led me thus far. He has driven my life. When I was pregnant with my first child, my husband and I dreamed simultaneously that the ark was coming down from the sky. It was a promise of God to my family. Whenever I had religious conflicts with my husband, I was not swayed by the temptation to get divorced because of the promise of God. He intervenes in my life through His words. God

has given me strength. God gives me special assistance in reading the Bible and in prayer.

R: If God is present here, what does He say to you?

J: He might say, "I love you so much." I had thought the reason for my present prosperity is the prayer of my mother and mother-in-law. However, recently I realised that my God's love for me is the only reason for that. God works just because He loves me.

R: God is your sincere supporter and friend.

5.5 YOUNG'S STORY

Young is a forty-five year old woman. She is not yet married. She has one sister and a brother, who are younger than she is. She has lived in Jeju Island for long. She is the only person who believes in God amongst her family members. She has lived separate from her parents since going to college, but she has lived in her parents' house since she started working on Jeju Island. She had even lived in Seoul for a while for work. She teaches in an Institute which is administrated by her friend and herself.

5.5.1 The story of her life with family

R: Would you like to talk about your life experiences? I want to listen to your life story.

Y: Um...My life story...I have a few childhood memories. My mom occasionally told

me that I grew up by myself. Although my parents did their best, they could not take care of me and my younger sister and brother well because they had to work in a field from morning till night. My family was poor when I was young.

Nevertheless it was not outwardly expressed, but when coming to the age of puberty, the poverty was a cause of conflict in my life. If they could support me a little more, I might have been better. I knew that my parents loved me, but they did not express their love for me. Nevertheless, I knew that they worked for us. Since they never expressed their love through anything such as words, acts and so on, I craved their love.

I had to be a good kid. My mom always told me that I had to be a good daughter and yield everything to my siblings. I took it as natural. I was used to conceding with my brother and sister and it was natural that I had to do the housework. I had to be responsible. Even though I did not want to do it, there was a lot of work I had to do. For example, if my mother said, "Let's go to the field and work together," I did not have the will to go but I had to, because I am the first daughter. I thought I was responsible for helping my parents.

R: You mean since you are the first daughter, you should be a good daughter and take responsibility for your family. How did you feel about that?

Y: I accepted it as granted. We lived in poverty and my sister and brother were younger. My mom was busy and tired because she had the responsibility of keeping our livelihood. It was a situation I had to accept. However, I held a grudge against my parents. It might have been possible to have been supported a little more. If they supported me a little more, I might have done well. I was envious of one of my friends. She wore pretty clothes and she also played the

piano well. She was not as good as I was. I thought that if my parents supported me a little more, I would be better. I just thought that in the innermost recesses of my heart, without expressing it, I had to be a good daughter.

R: You told me that you had to be a good daughter and be responsible for your family, specifically for your siblings. I am curious to where this idea came from?

Y: You know, it should not be surprising. All Koreans know that the first child has more responsibility to support the family than the others do. Also, my mother always told me that I had to take responsibility of caring for my younger brother and sister. My mother lived like that. She devoted her life to supporting her family. She continuously sacrificed her life for the sake of our family.

R: You mean that your responsibility as the first daughter made you sacrifice for the sake of siblings? When I heard your story, I thought you were still concerned about family responsibilities now, I wonder whether it is good or bad for you.

Y: Yes. You are right. However, the situation is a little different. In the past, the responsibility was not a good thing because it was a burden for me. Since I was young it was hard and heavy. I could not accept it with willingness. It was an inevitable duty, due to my circumstances. There was not enough love, compassion and respect in my family. It was not motivated by love. However, the meaning of responsibility is truly different now. I can do everything I want to do. Now I mostly respect my mom. I am willing to do as much as possible for my mom. It is my pleasure. Also, we have responsibility for each other. We are ready to share responsibility. My brother is concerned about me. I am a single; therefore my mother tells my brother that he should be responsible for me.
(Laughing)

R: You mean, now that you are securing a livelihood, you can love your family more sincerely. These facts have changed the meaning of responsibility for you. I am wondering, what do you mean by self-sacrifice?

Y: In the past, I thought that self-sacrifice was an unconditional devotion I had to give because mom had also done so. It was what I had to do regardless of my willingness. When I was going to junior-high school, I should have gone to school by bus because it was too far (about four kilometres away from my house). But I walked back home three times a week. Then I saved money and bought some gifts for my family members' birthday and so on because I wanted to show that I care on their special days. If I had something to share, I gave priority to my brother and sister. One day I went on a school picnic and my mother bought me some snacks. I was glad and wanted to taste them, but I withstood the temptation not to taste them and came back with all the snacks to share them with my younger sister and brother.

Now with self-sacrifice, it follows naturally if we love something. I cannot be devoted like my mom. My mom lived without a life of her own. However, I firmly believe my life is more important, before everything else. I had an experience where I wanted to claim my rights in my family. My grandmother left some property to my brother. I was angry with him, because it seemed he took it for granted that he would receive all the inheritance, as a son. My mother was surprised to see my attitude.

R: Why was your mother surprised?

Y: She was a little bit surprised because my attitude was different before. She thought I was a good daughter and that I love my siblings a lot and would yield to

everything.

R: What did this experience mean for you?

Y: Through this experience, I realised that I do not just want to be self-sacrificial. I want to claim my rights (Laughing).

R: Wow. I think you did a good job.

Y: It was a misunderstanding. My brother did not take it for granted. After the event, my mother told my sister that she hated fighting amongst siblings and that siblings have to live with love. She usually tells us there should be brotherly love between siblings. She emphasised that. My mother's reflection is natural because she has lived under a ruthless, Confucian, patriarchal Korean culture. I also do not want to cut off my family members. I told my brother and sister that family is a present from God. God gives us family. Although we cannot choose our parents, we have to love our mother and father. It applies to me as well. I told them that frequently and my siblings were mindful of that. Therefore we overcame some big problems in our family.

My family is the priority of my life. Now my family is most precious to me. However, since my family members do not believe in God, they do not have an effect on my lifestyle. When I chose a job, even though they opposed it, I chose what I wanted. I decided by myself through considering, being in agony and thinking deeply. I just informed them of my choice. Although my parents oppose something, if I think it is important that I might still decide on it.

R: I think that poverty was a big issue in your life and in creating your self-identify.

Y: Yes. When I told my colleague (friend) that I had worked in a field and wore rubber shoes, she said it might be a made-up story. I was shocked. There are people

who lived differently from what I did. Nevertheless, now I can speak about it laughing.

5.5.2 The story of the experience of God

Y: Even though I have gone to church since I was a child, I only accepted Christ as my Saviour in middle school. I spoke and expressed to God the grudge that I held against my parents; I had never clearly acknowledged or expressed that outwardly until then. Yet I knew that I had borne a grudge against my parents.

R: You mean you acknowledged your feelings of anger or dislike towards your parents as the experience of receiving God at puberty.

Y: Yes. I expressed my conflict and dissatisfaction outwardly. When I was sixteen years old, in the youth group worship service the pastor said that receiving God involves a turning from self to God and that we should be given a purpose, and make the effort to become the kind of person God wants us to be. He said we need to yield our lives completely to Christ, so He can take control of the throne of our lives. I had never heard such words before. When I heard that, I thought that I should not have a grudge against my parents.

R: Why did these words make you decide not to hold a grudge against your parents?

Y: Those words were really impressive. . I made up my mind not to live as I want to live but to live according to God's purpose for my life. The fact that God would lead my life and change it gave me a reason to have hope.

R: You mean, God gave you hope in life. Was it really meaningful for you?

Y: My values have been changed since I believed in God. The promises of God that have most made an impression on me are, “You are special,” “God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life,” and “God has summoned you by name; you are His.” These words formatted my values and have enhanced the value of my life. I had never felt that I was special. Since our family was poor, I was not treated as special; rather the son, my brother, was treated special. When I teach at the Sunday school proclaiming the good news, I always tell, “You are special and God loves you, God has a great plan for you.” These are meaningful words for me.

Once joining a Christian circle, I felt loved. I received love from a lot of people. I was happy and I felt encouraged about my life. It gave me confidence in my life.

R: What does having God in your life mean to you?

Y: In my life, God is my hope and freedom. God gives me the power to transcend reality. In reality, it is difficult and hard, but through God I had the courage to transcend difficult circumstances. It is power and freedom. It was the power that I could overcome the blame in my heart for my parents – God helped me beyond what I was able to do alone. Although there was difficulty, God made and opened a way in reality.

In the Bible, Paul was used by God. All things, his qualifications and ancestry, for God’s sake he considered them as rubbish. If I did not experience poverty and hardship, I may not have had a heart of sharing and understanding the weaknesses of people. I am certain that God will use all things from my past experiences in the future.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

According to a post-foundational approach to Practical Theology, in this qualitative research I first of all listened to the real-life stories of the co-researchers. I was interested in each of their concerns. Then, the co-researchers' experiences were described and interpreted by the discourse. Finally we, the researcher and the co-researchers, created alternative interpretations beyond general and customary interpretations using a social-constructivism perspective and a narrative therapy approach.

The research conversation entails a cooperative process. We, the researcher and the co-researchers, co-develop new meanings, new realities and new narratives together. The researcher's role, expertise, and emphasis is to develop a free conversational space and to facilitate an emerging dialogical process in which this 'newness' can occur (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992:29). I try to move into discourses of knowledge in the traditional domain that influence the co-researchers' stories and how they value their stories as important. The interviews with the co-researchers are directed by the Seven Movement methodology, which reflects the assumptions of post-foundationalist Practical Theology.

CHAPTER 6

A REFLECTION ON AND INTERPRETATION OF THE JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES: THE DISCOVERING OF MEANINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

With a post-foundational Practical Theology study that uses a narrative approach, this research process can be characterised and further assessed in the discourse of a narrative therapy approach. At this stage in the progress of research development, the researcher will expound the findings of information and knowledge, directed from the stories of co-researchers. With regard to the aim of this post-foundational narrative research, i.e., searching for the meaning of the co-researchers' narratives as well as creating new meanings through discourses, I will present the meaning and understanding of the co-researchers' own stories that are developed by the discourses within the context. Anderson & Goolishian (1988:390) state:

Meaning and understanding are developed by individuals in conversation with each other in their common attempts to understand other persons and things, other's words and action. Meaning and understanding are thus inter subjective. This shift to the world of conversation and dialogue is a point of view that rests squarely on the proposition that the quintessence of what we are, and what we will be, is dialogical.

This chapter attempts to seek investigating what the meanings, beliefs, values, and desires of the co-researchers' narratives are empirically denoted and how they would

be socially implicated during the interview. It is a major part of the research process to see what is understood and how the co-researchers' stories are interpreted. A social-constructionist approach is used as an invitation to the co-researchers to engage in the creation and re-creation of new meanings. Also, this chapter demonstrates the co-researchers' involvement in the process of research; this position touches on the sixth and seventh steps in the 'Seven Movement Model,' which refers to the development of a set of alternative interpretations that pointedly and emphatically implicates beyond the local.

Moreover, the method of the interpretation of this research is important for creating new meanings of experiences. White (1995:15) states, "Stories provide the frames that make it possible for us to interpret our experience, and these acts of interpretation are achievements that we take an active part in." The co-researchers' narratives include their interpretation of their own frameworks. Also, with the narrative discourses, we—the researcher and co-researchers together—can take part in the interpretation framework as a whole. Thus, from a narrative hermeneutical perspective, the researcher uses a process of interpretative fusion of horizons of meaning embodied in the co-researchers narratives (Gerkin, 1986:61). Also, in order to better understand the co-researchers' stories, I keep in mind that we need the fusion between the horizon of the world of the researcher and the world of the co-researchers. From this perspective, the task of the researcher is not to bracket the co-researchers' prejudices, but to fuse these horizons. In this way, the research borrows Swinton and Mowat's theoretical argument where we find that we take into account individuals' and society's underlying assumptions about the way people

should function within the world (Swinton & Mowat, 2006:114).

According to the post-foundationalist approach, the researcher carefully assesses whether or not there is a privilege or a forced effort by the researchers to bring God into the present. Further, this researcher attempts to understand the co-researchers' religious and spiritual understanding and experiences of God's presence, since the researcher's own understanding of God's presence constitutes a valuable contribution in a given situation (Müller, 2004:303). Van Huyssteen (1997a:20) makes a concluding remark that "we relate to our world epistemically only through the mediation of interpreted experience." Religious reflection can also offer a context in which we can become aware of the deeper meaning behind the co-researchers' current behaviour.

Within the framework of a post-foundational narrative research, it is notable that the co-researchers' voices are privileged and they need to work with their truths and their versions of reality, instead of having the imposition of an outside truth, even if that truth does come from "empirical studies" (Epston, Stillman & Erbes, 2012:77). The purpose of this research is not an attempt at generalisation or a search for broad truths. "It is rather a case of doing contextual research with such integrity" (Müller, 2005:86). The knowledge in this research is found by the co-researchers' narratives and it offers a possibility for a broader application. At this stage, the co-researchers' stories will be analysed and interpreted by means of unfolding, rather than simply stressing the basis of structured and rigid methods. According to this narrative approach, the researcher is interested in uncovering what the stories tell us.

This chapter does not only explain how we, the researcher and co-researchers, understand and interpret the co-researchers' stories but it also attempts to find reflected themes and norms of all the co-researchers' stories. The previous chapter contains the interpreted experiences of the co-researchers as well as new alternative outcomes that emerged with the development of collaboration among the researcher and the co-researchers. In this chapter, according to each narrative of co-researchers, the researcher first presents not only what we have learned through the process of looking into the co-researchers' stories but also what progress has taken place. Second, this chapter demonstrates whether and how we look for new knowledge and norms in response to what the co-researchers said. And then the chapter ends with the researcher's suggestion as to what we do for empowerment and for a better future, reflecting on each of the case studies, i.e., women's narratives from Jeju Island and to support their healthy living.

6.2 THE REFLECTING AND INTERPRETING OF THE CO-RESEARCHERS' NARRATIVES

6.2.1 Min's narratives

During the interview, Min shared two main narratives for discourse. The first one was about her relationship with her family members and what her identity was about, and the second was how she had experienced God and how this eventually but gradually had influenced the construction of her identity. Even though these stories were

described differently on the surface, there lay within them an emphasis on similar meanings, values and norms.

6.2.1.1 Self-sacrifice and a longing for acknowledgement

Reflected in Min's narratives, it is noteworthy that the notion of family as a social component in one's identity process, as well as its values and meanings as part of social praxis in Jeju have significantly concerned Min. Min felt that she has never experienced any parental love whether from either the paternal or maternal side. She lived with her grandmother (her mother's mother) while she was supported financially by her aunt (her mother's younger sister). Min's life decisions had been influenced by them. She always lived with some anxieties and fearful sentiments that she might be deserted by those around her. This anxiety and fear have considerably influenced her life. Min had been lonely when she was growing up. For example, when she was a high school student, she was wondering whether she would be able to deal with her anger which was constantly towards her parents but also her local circumstances.

In the conversation, she explored various ways of expressing her worries and fears and explained why she felt burdened especially with regard to her family members around her. First, she attempted to be a good girl with her elders such as her grandmother, aunts and any other older relatives. Second, she acknowledged that fear made her sacrifice for her family members. She thought that self-sacrifice would be one of the best ways of living. However, she also admitted that it was very stressful to live by that alone. The feelings of fear and anxiety were one reason why

she sacrificed her life for the sake of her family members. Consequently, she felt this way as if she was carrying a heavy burden on her shoulders for a long while. For her, many sacrifices that she had made for the family were due to her strong feeling of longing for attachment and love from others, and the sense of being loved and acknowledged by others, especially her near family members. She deeply wanted to become an important and indispensable family member that everyone might need.

Min and I spent time exploring, in greater detail, how the sense of a longing for acknowledgement had influenced her identity formation and the following social relationships in her mutual interactions with others. We were not surprised to learn that she had an insistent sense of comparing herself to others around her, and how this sense had instilled in her identity and self-perception that she was being perpetually assessed by others. Apart from this aspect, this observation enforced a shroud of secrecy around her life and, unfortunately led her into isolation from others. Expressing this self-predicament as her social condition, Min said that she felt burdened and deprived of love due to the injustice of her life circumstances in the past. She identified herself as a pitiful person, due to her predicament in her family life.

We explored where the idea of the self-sacrifice for others came from. She thought that her mother did not make any sacrifices for her. This way of capturing the reality made her unhappy all the time and thus she had such a deep grievance against her mother. Min could not understand her mother's decision to get remarried, and as she felt, abandoning her. She took it for granted that her mother should sacrifice her life

for her children. Min's attitude toward the issue of self-sacrifice revealed itself in her the relationship with others. One of Min's stories, which demonstrates her attitude regarding self-sacrifice is as follows:

Last year, I went to a summer conference that took place over five days and four nights. I had to share a room with a staff member as there was not enough space. You know we like to share with friends rather than with the staff. There was no one to share with willingness. During that period of time, although there was enough space, I kept my clothes in my travelling bag because I feared my roommate might feel uncomfortable otherwise. If I sacrificed, everything would have been fine. If any elder talked about something to me, I immediately would have thought what I had to do. It seems that I just unconditionally followed the words of adults.

Self-sacrifice was an easy way of resolving relational difficulties because it is taken for granted in the culture that this act of self-sacrifice is a necessary virtue that a nice person holds and practices. Min explored some of the details of how she has subscribed to this kind of view.

Although Min sacrificed for her family members, whenever they did acknowledge her contribution to their lives, she felt hopeless, hateful, burdened, and consequently alienated herself from her family members. She identified their acknowledgement of her contribution as valuable in her life.

Through re-authoring the conversation, we created new meaning out of her sacrifices for her family members. We interpreted it as a contribution to the family, rather than interpreting it as the sense of longing for others' acknowledgement of her

as an important member of the community and the sense of belonging and being an indispensable and central part of the family. She was brought up with the experience that her grandmother's life was saved by her in an emergency situation. For her, this event was considered to have a unique after effect. Min perceived and re-interpreted the meaning of her existence in the family from being a bothersome person to being a valuable person, that is, the one who eventually makes her grandmother happy and this was positively acknowledged by other family members.

During the early contact and interview with Min, it was clear that she had a negative perception of who she was. When the researcher reacted positively to her actions and words (for example, I encouraged her with words like 'good' or 'great'), Min was a little bit surprised and challenged. From that moment, it gave her another opportunity to stand alone on a different territory of her life. I also took part in assisting her to transform herself from the personal negative narrative-side to a more positive narrative-sided ethos, by empowering herself to offer different interpretations from her own. For example, Min wanted to treat her grandmother as a mother but she could not because her grandmother was just her grandmother, not a mother. We acknowledged that it would be possible to give another meaningful value to her grandmother as her mother. What we discussed how and what we felt and admitted on our own was more valuable than what was generally said by society. This helped her see and develop a more positive account of her identity and who she could be. Furthermore, this approach made it possible for her to actively engage in the reinterpretation and reconstruction of the social circumstances that she was subjected to. These attempts at reinterpretation changed the expression of her own

experience of her life in the past.

6.2.1.2 What it means to believe God is getting a new family

Min's narrative was also reflected in how she understood and experienced the presence of God, and how she integrated this in a social-constructionist process. Her accounts of her experiences of God were meaningful in her construction of a self-identity process as well as interpreting her experience of the presence of God.

Starting from when she first believed in God, Min started to have a more positive reflection of her life. She was involved in the Christian community at her college where she felt that she received love and was recognised and valued for who she was. She felt warm and happy, and also said that believing in God was like having another family. She said it was exactly what she needed in her life. Belonging to the congregation, she felt loved, cared, and emotionally supported. Min also recognised that her life stories could be interpreted differently. The predicament of her family and her life had previously been interpreted negatively, but it had become more positive, because of God's presence and the love which flourished from the source of the presence itself.

Min had emphasised being "clean" and "changed" since she believed in God. She hoped and desired for change in her life. She wanted to forget the negative side of her narrow perspective. When I asked her about past experiences of her childhood and when she was a teenager, she answered, "I do not know. I did not memorise

them.” She hoped to erase childhood memories which made her unhappy and a pitiful person. The experience of God was a sparkling moment in her story (Freedman & Combs, 2002:121). Her experience of God helped her to overcome her problematic identity and the tendency of it creating a negative identity formation.

Min expressed her experience of God as being interwoven with her recent suffering, and on the basis of her new relationship—the relationship with God and His presence of love and caring, she explained her values and norms. She expressed a recent experience of God as a Father who had power and privilege. Min preferred an emotional relationship with God, and she thought that God wanted her to become a mature person. This meant that she felt guilty about nothing before God. Min thought maybe she had to do something for God to receive love. It was a similar theme to her stories of her relationships with people. If she did nothing, she felt uncomfortable. She thought working for God was sacrificing wholly to church activities and Christian club activities. We looked for meaning in her experiences and beliefs. This was a source of constant conflict in her life choices – which should have priority – church and Christian club activities or her job? She expressed the sense of achievement in linking the word ‘short-tempered’ to being a progressive person in any relevant church activity. She felt it was a successful experience as the word was interpreted as having energy and power in her life. It was a point of entry to an alternative storyline of Min’s life.

6.2.2 Sook's narratives

When we talked for the first time, the researcher wanted to understand the meaning of Sook's stories from her perspective. Only then could the researcher attempt "deconstructive listening" (Freedman & Combs, 2002:26) to seek other possible meanings. First, I was aware of my understanding of her words, and asked her for details to fill in the gaps between my understanding and what she meant. Sook expanded on her narratives in response to my questions.

During the conversation and discourse between us, Sook frequently, did not only point out the effect from a lack of support from her parents, but she also addressed the responsibilities and roles which had led to her life as it currently is. Sook's stories could be classified into two main story lines, for the sake of a clearer understanding.

6.2.2.1 I should do everything given to me well

In Sook's narratives, the words "challenge" and "adventure" were very meaningful words for her. We shared the meaning of the word 'challenge,' and how it would be perceived as a value. Sook interpreted her experiences of suffering as a harsh challenge that has to be overcome. This understanding of such hardship is a strong power, motivating her life in society.

At our first conversation, Sook felt embarrassed and to break the ice she immediately shared some stories of herself, especially with regard to her difficulty of

public speaking. Sook was so shy that she was not able to speak in the presence of a large group or audience. Because of this she felt that she would not be a good person and felt disappointed and ashamed of herself because of her inability for public speaking. However, she linked these feelings to her story of “challenge and adventure.” Whenever given the opportunity to present something, she confronted the challenge without hesitation. I wondered what led to these actions, and she told me it was her sense of responsibility. She placed a high value on responsibility especially with regard to her experiences. This sense of responsibility empowered her to overcome the sentiments of disappointment and shame. She linked these with the narrative of achievement. We took some time together for discourse on the change from being a shy person to being a more daring person as a positive sided experience of self-accomplishment.

We also continuously shared about how she endured fearful situations and even how to value them as positive progress on route to accomplishment. In our conversations and discourses, we agreed to make up new meanings for her roles and responsibilities. We interpreted responsibility as a motivational factor that enables her to endure the difficulties of fearful conditions. It has even made her strong enough to overcome her limitations and hardships and thus it has allowed her a sense of achievement. In addition, it would be a way of feeling that she belonged to the community alone. The community allowed her to see her life in more meaningful ways, not just for living itself. This is because the community had given her a level trust and encouragement with an appreciation of her life. . It is notable that this aspect would be in many ways related to her longing for acknowledgment. The

community's encouragement, as well as the pursuit of her social desires and the fulfilment of social recognition as well as the sense of longing for acknowledgment, eventually encouraged her to take on a new role within the community. In this sense, she had sacrificed much of her energy and time to responsible community work.

Being supported by the community gave value and power to Sook's life. In fact, Sook was encouraged by the fact that her decisions were supported by others. For example, when she packed her travel bag, she was always anxious and even unable to decide what was necessary to pack. She was not aware of what would happen in the future, so she packed a lot of unnecessary things just in case. Yet, in contrast, if her mother or friends made any recommendation, she would be able to pack more easily. If a problem occurred, she would have thought about it, but she would not have been able to decide clearly what to do with it. However, if someone agreed and supported her opinion, she was able to make a decision, taking the suggestion as a valuable and meaningful truth. When she wanted to quit playing the organ at church services, she thought a lot about it but she was not able to make a decision, however, once one of her friends supported her opinion, she was able to make a decision immediately. She knew what she should do but still could not decide easily. In our discourse and conversation, we re-built the story as a success story. She recounted the experience of making a decision by herself, and how it had a good result and benefitted her life.

Sook was not able to easily express her own feelings of being burdened because the

values and norms of self-sacrifice and being responsible for the roles that she took continuously compelled her actions. She took on various roles and responsibilities despite having to deal with many struggles in her personal family life and social pressures around her. She admitted that the socially pressured roles and work were burdens for her. She had a difficult time due to her repressive condition, but regardless of her particular circumstances, she attempted to do her best to deal with her burden. She eventually admitted emotionally that she was feeling this to be the burden it really was. We recognised the burdensome nature of her care for the people around her. This moment of catching the feeling was evident as the sparking moment of the deconstruction of conversation. That is to say, for example, by expressing her feelings of being burdened this was a true feeling of her own, Sook shed tears. When I asked why she cried, she acknowledged her emotions and her needs, realising that an attitude of self-sacrifice was unfair to her. These discernments could explore that which was absent but implicit. She sometimes felt depressed because of the great amount of work she had to do. In her current circumstances, she struggled with her work, and more precisely, managing her work. She dealt with her crisis alone as always. The crisis was that she felt she should not feel what she was doing was burdensome because her social norm and perception that the roles she played and tasks she performed made her who she was. Therefore, it was difficult for her to say “no” if somebody asked for a favour or that she worked for the community. In our discourse, we put more focus on the narratives of her willingness and desires

6.2.2.2 Sook's family story: what should I do for family?

Sook mentioned her family tradition of privileged power--the opinions of her father and how the family members' relationships with each other were developed and maintained. When she was questioned about the story of her family, Sook felt distressed, but she did not refuse to discuss her story of family and origin. In earlier expressions of her relationship with her family, she shared many negative stories about her father and other family members.

Sook feared her father's disapproval for a long time. His negative judgment always had influenced her identity formation. For example, the fear or any related fearful sentiments towards her father had contributed to her sense of fragility and thus there was constant tension in her relationship with him for a long time. She was a subordinate in the hierarchy, and this drove her personality formation. The relationship with her father was deeply shaped and influenced by the dominant culture's privileged knowledge and practices of hierarchy drawn from patriarchy and its family system structure over time.

Sook saw her father as lonely and alienated from alienating his family. Her father had a lack of connectedness and was extremely separated from other family members. Through the discourse on her father's loneliness, she also actively engaged in the interpretation work of her father's acts of violence that she had observed and felt fearful of them. This work is on the basis of reinterpretation after the deconstruction addressed above, and this reframing work allowed her to have the potential for further changing the expression of her life experience which is the fundamental part

of one's transformation process, which this research project emphasises.

6.2.3 Jin's narratives

Jin started to talk about the conflict in her situation, her way of life and God's words. She was struggling with the meaning of sincere love. She did her best to deal with the challenge to overcome, but she felt that it was not sufficient enough. She did not feel satisfied, but rather, she felt a sense of guilt. She started her life story with her current struggles. The researcher attempted to see what was happening in her life and followed her words to find the meaning conveyed in her stories. Together we attempted to discover what values allowed her to live her life well.

Jin's stories could be classified into two main story lines for a clearer understanding. The former kind was the story of self-sacrifice for the sake of her family and relatives. This story demonstrated her feelings of being burdened especially with regard to her responsibilities. The second story was about her experience of the presence of God. In response, there are specific themes that are reflected in the preferred values and norms of her life.

6.2.3.1. It was my job to serve and help my family and relatives

Jin had been taking on the role of a care-giver of her family and extended family. She explained the predicament that she found herself in. She attempted to link some of

the events of her life to the particular theme of self-sacrifice, which is her preferred value on the basis of her identity formation. Her recurring experiences taught her to believe that the way of surviving and the purpose of her life is characterised as not only adopting forms of self-sacrifice, but also as an attempt to satisfy the expectations from her family and relatives. We were interested in what meaning she had taken from these experiences. This researcher also expected that her stories could lead to a deeper knowledge and understanding.

Jin and I explored various ways in which to examine her view of failure which had influenced and shaped her life. This attempt also explored how her view of life perspectives – that she was a failure as a good mother, person and daughter of God – had been constructed. In the beginning, Jin experienced her life as a single story of failure. The idea of failure and its associated guilt tyrannised her life and made her feel depressed and frustrated with what she had done. The researcher encouraged Jin to explore the mechanism by which her guilt had been provoked. During the discourse we found that she had put the blame for everything that happened around her on herself. This was related to her feelings of responsibility. Within the discourse of the deconstruction process, Jin began to understand her own life as distinct in comparison to the dominant view of society and culture.

Jin's stories of self-sacrifice relate to responsibility and expectation. Jin's mother continuously sacrificed her life for the sake of her family. This character originated from Confucian ideas and culture in Jeju Island. Jeju women in this society were expected to put the needs of others before their own. This is because in many

cases they were primarily and traditionally responsible for earning a living. She described her love towards her children. There is a dominant story about what it means to be a person of moral acts and thoughts in Korean culture. In this socio-cultural context, she was certainly aware that there should be an ideal and desirable role of being and acting as a mother—such an expectation is that a mother should make any sacrifice for her children. Her words “lack of love” and “enthusiastic love” referred to the meaning she had held of such self-sacrifice for her children. Also, the cultural expectation that a mother should sacrifice herself evidently influenced her narrative which was witnessed during the interview. An example, due to the conflict that had been always placed between this social norm and cultural bias within the personal historical context of her own predicament, she continuously defined herself as a problem person or as a bad mother. It was clear from Jin’s narrative that she was very independent and she had a strong sense of responsibility since many of the people around her had a tendency to turn to her, she observed. As a result, Jin always held the primary responsibility for her home, caring for family members and children. She began to select experiences of events which supported her story of ‘burden,’ and these stories were told and re-told. As more events were added to this plot, the story of her ‘burden’ became stronger.

Jin’s narrative was also augmented by others’ expectations of her and her own expectations of herself, which left her feeling frustrated and pressured. From her story we found that these expectations were one of the reasons she put pressure on herself and thus she experienced the feeling of guilt. There were expectations from her relations—parents, family, and even God of her. She described growing up with

her parents' love. She gave details of why she received love – because she had done exceptionally well at school. Therefore, she had always been a pleasure to her parents—i.e., she had thought continuous attempts to please her parents, was also her pleasure. In the light of this, we observed from her narrative that she valued herself because she had been doing well. These expectations pressured her into being someone else. This included an expectation to be a good Christian, which was one of the values controlling her life. This particular meaning came to mind from the gathering of her past experiences, as she narrated the effect of the expectations in her life. In the past, she felt pressured not only by her parents' expectations, but also that of her teachers and peers throughout her childhood.

Jin and I shared how she felt about taking on the role as the main caretaker. Even though Jin found it somehow difficult to express her thoughts, emotions, needs and desires central to her life, she expressed and perceived the feelings of despair, depression and anger towards herself. This became an opportunity to focus on herself and the meaning of her feelings. Jin felt that not showing feelings was a sign of being strong and was a means of being independent. She placed a lot of value on being strong and independent. This researcher occasionally asked Jin whether she thought this resistance was a positive or negative development in her life. In order to determine whether these instances reflected that she had not totally submitted to dominating thoughts, that self-sacrifice was only a way to resolve her predicament, and further to challenge her feelings and thoughts. This provided Jin with evidence that she had hope to live for herself and her desires. Jin was lonely, because she decided on everything alone. She did not allow herself to share her troubles with

anyone because of her values, that is, she wanted herself to be a pleasure to others, and not a burden to them. Her story of responsibility has two aspects especially with regard to her self-identity – independence and loneliness. She started to become an emotional person and to recognise and accept interest in herself. As the research conversation ended, she reflected on her growing determination to live and to feel.

6.1.3.2. Believing in and experiencing God is the only way to feel true love and satisfaction.

Jin's narrative of her experience of God was an alternative story. According to White (2006: 55), I, as a researcher, tried to make it possible for the co-researcher, Jin, to gain access to other stories of her life, and to other territories of identity, which were associated with her experience of God. Her immersion in the alternative stories supported new relationships and possibilities.

Jin's stories of her experience of God allowed her a more facile access to a point of entry to the alternative storyline of her life. She was invited to continue to develop and share these stories. By asking what were the favourite things she wanted to do eventually invited Jin herself to tell her own stories about her experience of God. This also encouraged her to recall her lived experience, to stretch her mind, and to find resources to create new meanings in her life. The experience of God in her life brought joy, intimacy, love, and a sense of becoming a special person. While talking about her experience of God, she explored other ways of being and thinking. She then found the value of meaning in her life is deeply rooted in the faith tradition and

honouring commitments. On this basis of faith and commitment, her new framework, working toward social values has been associated with alternative accounts of her life since then. For her, the experience of the presence of God was the source of her strength and survival.

6.2.4 Young's narratives

In Young's stories, cultural knowledge regarding gender stories reflects on Jeju women's life stories which have been dominated by such social virtues as strength and independence. Through the conversation and discourse with Young, we attempted to explore the themes and values that had facilitated her interpretation, but we also created together a new lens to see other dimensions of her values and meanings in her own narrative process, eventually assisting in building her new identity.

Jin's stories could be classified into two sections, for greater clarity. The one relates to stories of responsibility which helps her to be strong and maintain good terms with other family members. Another section is her story of experiencing the presence of God. There are specific themes that are reflected in a preferred value and norms of her life.

6.2.4.1 I have a lot of responsibility as a first daughter

There are various gender issues in Young's stories. Even though she has lived in a society where the social privilege and political power were mostly given to male residents, Young's stories demonstrated that she held a strong, industrious, and independent character. We paid particular attention to the experiences and beliefs that made her feel strong and independent. We exchanged our thoughts and feelings about how the responsibility of being the first daughter had influenced Young's attitude towards, and interaction, with herself and others around her, and further what expectations that she then set for herself. These made her more conscious and discerning of her attitude towards herself.

According to her stories, an important value of her life was to stay in good relationships with her family members. To uncover this issue in depth, the researcher encouraged her to identify which views of her lived experience were expressed in our conversation. We spent some time exploring in detail to see how becoming a good daughter and sister had influenced and shaped her interaction with others. She thought that becoming a good person in her family was doing well with the family responsibilities and other social roles given to her.

Young spoke of the experience of claiming her justified rights in her family as an alternative story. She expressed other ways of not conforming to traditional ways of interacting with family members. I asked her to carefully appreciate and lucidly assess her non-conformist attitude and thus to consistently develop her own unique way of interpreting and reconstructing her value framework to see who she

coherently would be in response to the new value findings. . As our work progressed, Young shared her experience of insisting for her rights in a family issue. She persisted, despite her stories of Confucian and patriarchal gender based social norms and cultural values. For example, her mother's reaction to Young's attitude was natural because she had lived under the cultural knowledge of Confucian and patriarchal norms; however, Young understood the situation but did not accept it as natural. She insisted with this opinion. She had a different view, that in this contemporary society, such socio-economic rights as inheritance rights should be given to the both daughter and son equally. She believed this was guaranteed by the law, and this demonstrated that her social beliefs were supported by the power of the law.

6.2.4.2. God means hope and freedom

The experience of God gave Young a different territory of identity. For her, believing in God would be to become a special person. In her circumstance and predicament, Young never felt that she was a special person; being a special person for her meant that she, as a woman also deserves the same social reputation as men. She was not a son, but a daughter; and due to gender bias and the following inferior social recognition and reputation, she believed that she had no choice but to live in poverty. She had always yielded to and sacrificed for others, which was valued as being 'good.' However, God gave her a feeling of being special in life and further a power to transcend the reality of her actual circumstance. Therefore, believing in God gave her hope and freedom. Through the conversation regarding her experience of God,

Young redeveloped rich stories of her life and identity.

6.3 FINDING VALUES AND THEMES IN THE JEJU WOMEN'S NARRATIVES

We have so far discussed each of the case studies which demonstrates how traditional values and social norms in Jeju have influenced the interpretation of each of the co-researchers' narratives. In particular, their narratives and identities were established and continuously have been shaped in response to a socially demanding cultural identity and narrative. Even though the findings from this study cannot be applied to all women living on Jeju Island, the commonalities and differences in the co-researchers' narratives would enable other similar women's cases to learn some more insights from narratives of Jeju women.

The personal identity narrative is established on the wider cultural identity narrative. We are not isolated and independent from social and cultural values in creating a self-identity. This stage critically examines the co-researchers' narratives in their traditional and cultural context through the integration of various disciplines. The analysis and interpretation of the narratives revealed three considerable and overarching themes and values. The first is the meaning and value of the community on their narratives. There is a deep relationship between the individual and the community. The second involves an awareness of the social meta-narrative of self-sacrifice, which gives shape to the process of story-telling. The third is what

responsibility entails, which is examined through a cultural and interdisciplinary investigation.

6.3.1 The value of the community for the co-researchers

According to the narratives of the co-researchers, it is evident that the co-researchers focused more on relationships with family and the community than on individual achievements. They find it natural to find their identity and give meaning to their lives through their relationship with the community. In a cultural understanding, the “self-in-community” (Jeong, 2006), is embodied in the co-researchers’ narratives. In Korean society, the community has meaningful roles for the creation of self-identity. The co-researchers took much of their personal identities from the reputation they have with their families, communities, or the groups they belong to. Their individual actions were affected by their families and communities. Jeong (2006:4) believes: “Traditionally, Koreans have understood human beings in terms of their relationship with communities. In this regard, a person was identified not by who he or she was as an individual but by his or her relationships with others.” In Korean culture and context, the co-researchers were much affected in determining their personal identity by what the community, such as their families, groups and societies said. Therefore they placed value on whether their acts suited the community or not. In addition, they struggled because what was most suited for their families and communities did not result in consistency between their inner selves and their external behaviour. It is shown that in Korean culture, they valued harmony and keeping relationships with

people and community members, rather than a rational and reasonable way of thinking and acting according to each individual's point of view.

The co-researchers were struggling in choosing between following their individual wants and needs or following their families' and communities' wants and needs. They felt guilt and fear for following their own desires and thoughts. This originated from socially-constructed meanings that they accepted as natural in their lives. Within the therapeutic narrative discourse, we built their stories with experience of self-achievements through their choices of their own desires and thoughts. These alternative stories of life helped them experience other ways of being and thinking.

The co-researchers' narratives can be linked with the identity narrative of the community. In this regard, they experienced a shifting of their identity narratives in a supportive Christian community, where they experienced not only feelings of warmth, happiness and encouragement, but were also able to change their identities. The experiences in a Christian community and experiences of God represented another dimension in the co-researchers' lives. These provided a new level of meaning and gave hope in despair, motivation in discouragement and companionship in loneliness. For them, the Christian congregation served as a meaningful and important community in which to identify themselves. Even though the family is the basic social unit and the home a place for living together and somewhere people ought to feel a sense of belonging, the co-researchers felt that they did not get adequate emotional support from their families, nor experience a sense of safety or belonging. With regard to a home, Monica (2011:13) says, "The concept of home is a place of self-

definition and belonging, a place where people find resilience to deal with the injustice of society or even of their families, a place where they can develop and express their values.” The home is very important in the construction of self-identity. Since many people on Jeju Island experienced loss, hopelessness and financial burden in their grandparents’ and parents’ generations because of the historical event of *Sasam sageon*, the co-researchers did not experience an adequate sense of belonging from their homes, which is essential for their well-being. Instead of their own families, their Christian communities supported them in overcoming stressful situations and their own struggles. Therefore they needed a healthy community, and their identity narratives embodied a particular social identity as well as an individual identity.

6.3.2 The meaning of self-sacrifice for the family or community

There are social-constructionist themes and values in relation to the cultural understanding of the self in the community. The co-researchers’ dominant story is that of self-sacrifice. They estimated the measure of love for their family and relatives by the measure of their self-sacrifice. The value of their love is placed on self-sacrifice. The meaning of self-sacrifice for the family and community is seen as giving privileged value to others rather than to the self. Additionally, the co-researchers hoped to change their own self identities through contributing to the family’s welfare. It is evident how the cultural understanding of the self and the self-in-community can be applied to their life situations. The traditional value of self-

sacrifice, for the sake of family and the community, supports present interpretations of the co-researchers' narratives regarding their life stories.

There is a reason why the co-researchers' feel like they need to sacrifice to change their own self-identity. The co-researchers who live in Korean communities think of their identity as merged into the communal identity. Since they felt that the circumstance and situation of their families and communities defined who they were, they felt the need to sacrifice. According to "we-ness discourse" (*Woori-seong*, Sang-chin & Soo-hyang, 1994), Koreans easily adapt to the whole as one. The pain of one person who is involved in the community is accepted as pain for the whole of the community, and the happiness of the whole is seen as personal happiness. Hence, they felt it was expected and natural that they sacrifice a lot for their families' well-being. The co-researchers constructed their positive development of identity from building up stories of contributing towards their families. This gives positive meaning to their lives. Because of their responsibilities, they are able to overcome and withstand difficulties. They think it is because of sacrifices towards family members that they are able to maintain good relationships with them until the present day.

The co-researchers often felt guilty due to thinking that they are not supporting their families enough. Under the Korean tradition of Confucius and the dominant patriarchal system, women have been forced to be submissive and to sacrifice themselves. Even though these Jeju women have contributed to the well-being of family more than the men have, they were rarely well-treated. They have just taken on the duties and responsibilities for the family without the right of compensation.

The family, their communities and social circumstances have continually expected of them the sacrifice of their own welfare, which the co-researchers took as natural. Therefore, in discourse, we firstly focused on what the co-researchers had contributed to the larger outcome of their families' welfare. We, researcher and the co-researchers, tried to give respect and find strength by ourselves. Then we discussed whether a life attitude of self-sacrifice was good or not, based on their experiences of life. They said that this was a negative development in their lives. During subsequent discussions, we spoke of why they believed this to be so. The influence of traditional interpretation on the co-researchers was discussed, and brought alternative interpretations that emerged through an interdisciplinary framework.

6.3.3 The responsibility for family and community versus the selfish person

The co-researchers keenly felt the burden responsibility resting upon them. They had many roles such as mother, daughter, sister and congregation member, which led to taking a lot of responsibility for their families and communities. These roles were not negotiated of their own accord but were expected of them due to cultural tradition. They were expected to play multiple roles at the same time. Many of these roles were not taken on by them willingly, sometimes because they found it difficult to say 'No.' The co-researchers really struggled with the amount of work expected of them. They believed that if they refused to do somebody a favour, they would be alienated

and separated from their friends and community relationships. This would also give them the feeling that in such a situation, saying 'no' would make them a selfish person. This view can be seen as an interpretation in alignment with social values and norms.

During early contact and interviews, our discussions centred on the co-researchers' stories about responsibility, their roles and how they took on these responsibilities. The narratives related to caring and supporting their families and communities and the shifting of their own identity stories. The responsibilities given to them were a source of strength for enduring and overcoming pain and hard circumstances in their lives. For many generations, a sense of responsibility was a tool and held meaningful value in Jeju women's lives, as they were charged with the responsibility of making decisions about how best to support their families.

The co-researchers were expected to fulfil their given roles well. The expectations of their families and communities made them feel bad about themselves and pressured them in unhelpful ways. They felt pressured to be someone who the people around them wanted them to be. They were expected to obey and surrender and to be humble and giving, as well as serving and accepting of everything without any opposition. If the co-researchers did not fulfil their given roles as people expected them to, they felt guilty. Through discourse it was found that this sense of guilt was borne of cultural norms and the view they held of themselves. The pivotal role they played in their families and their difficulties in maintaining concurrent functions outside the family served as burdens. Various expectations influenced their life

decisions about how best to live.

We spoke about the meaning of “the selfish person.” In Korean culture, the meaning of selfish differs from the Western idea. In Western society, it is generally understood that if someone is too concerned with his/her own interests at the expense of another's interests, he/she is a selfish person or acts selfishly. On the contrary, the co-researchers are Korean women used to self-sacrifice and who consider the community to be valuable. They take the meaning of selfish as doing something for themselves rather than for their families or communities. There is a difference in the meaning of the concept of selfish between Western and traditional Korean understanding. Jeong (2006:78) mentions a difference in the concept of self-identity and individuals between Western and traditional Korean understanding as follows:

Self-realization for Koreans seems to be possible only after the achievement of social-ethical responsibility. From the perspective of the Western concept of self, which values the integrity and identity of the individual, this vision of the self can be understood as a lack of self-identity and individuals can be seen as overly compliant to social values. On the contrary, the lack of self-identity from the perspective of the Western concept of the self may not be seen as a problem by Koreans. Rather, the Western vision of self-realization could be perceived as selfish.

The co-researchers, living with Korean tradition and culture, perceived seeking or concentrating on things to their own advantage or pleasure as being selfish. Therefore they struggled with decisions about putting their own needs or desires above the expectation of others. In the process of discourse, we talked about different meanings of the word ‘selfish’ and why we thought being selfish was bad.

This opened possibilities to make room for themselves to seek and focus on things to their own advantage, pleasure or well-being, without regard for others. If I asked the co-researchers to tell me about what their favourite things to do were, what drove their actions and motivated them, how they thought about life, they focused on themselves only a little and linked their experiences to who they were.

6.4 INTERDISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The post-foundational concept of *transversal rationality* provides a way for a responsible and workable interface between theology and any other discipline (Müller, 2009:203). At this phase, I attempt the interdisciplinary process. The purpose of this approach is to get thicker understandings and conclusions. It helps to confirm this with Van Huyssteen's words (2006:12):

Transversal rationality is now fused with consciousness and self-awareness, and this consciousness is then unified by an experience of self-presence, emerging over time from a remembering self-awareness/consciousness in which diverse past experiences are transversally integrated as we reach out to others.....Talk about the human subject is now revisioned by resituating the human subject in the space of communicative praxis. Thus the notion of transversal rationality opens up the possibility to focus on patterns of discourse and action as they happen in our communicative practices, rather than focusing only on the structure of the self, ego, or subject.

The post-foundational approach to the research can open up an epistemic

obligation that will point beyond the boundaries of our own discipline, our local communities, groups, or cultures, toward plausible forms of interdisciplinary dialogue (Müller, 2009:206). The participants not only helped the researcher to become confident in understanding the co-researchers' narratives, but also further fuelled more curiosity on the part of the researcher toward the broader context of the co-researchers' stories.

In applying the co-researchers' stories for this interdisciplinary process, the researcher asks two questions of the participants and has chosen two people from different professional fields, i.e., family therapist and social worker. The researcher has approached them as personal acquaintances, who are actively involved in their respectively different professional disciplines. They are as follows.

P1: Seon Ah Ahn, Clinical Social Worker in USA.

P2: Jin Ah Kang, Doctoral student in Seoul Women's University and Family therapist in Korea.

They are asked the following questions which are quoted from Müller's work (2009:203); 1. When you were reading the Jeju women's stories, what are your reflections and what would your concerns be? 2. How would you formulate your unique perspective on these stories? The P2's responses are translated from Korean to English, but the P1's responses are quoted verbatim. At the end of this work I formulated some feedback by interpreting what they say. My reflections were sent

back to them to know whether they could agree. My feedback of their response is included below.

6.4.1 Concerns and reflections

P1: As I read these stories, I was deeply touched by how these women have so bravely and earnestly worked to fulfil their responsibilities to put their family (and faith community) as a priority and to take care of its members. 'Work' and 'responsibility' are two words that are used in all four stories with significant meaning. It seems that these women think they can be valued and loved through 'work', which could mean many things from supporting family members financially to volunteering at church. They feel ambivalent (resentful but excited and valued) when 'responsibilities' are placed upon them, sometimes feeling burdened to a breaking point, yet they accept them graciously. Still, it was when they encounter God in their lives that they finally experience the love and acceptance they have so longingly yearned for. This experience, in turn, helped them to start a new journey to accept and love themselves and their family more freely.

Another commonality I found was the emotional and/or physical absence of fathers. Most stories are told around women's lineage struggling to take care of their families. It almost seems as if less expectations and responsibilities are placed upon fathers, thus not much of the stories evolve around them. Sook's story is one exception, in which she talks about her family a great deal in relation with her father's abuse toward herself and her mother. It is not surprising that she

talks about her feelings of sadness, anxiety and shame, while she struggles to 'improve.' Even when she finds comfort in her faith, she is the only one among four women who does not directly talk about her relationship with God (who for other women seems to have become an alternative parent figure); she rather talks about her relationship with her faith community. In her way to find happiness, she glimpses at hope when she was able to say her father was a lonely and pitiful person. She feels much encouraged with the interviewer's positive comments; she asks "is it possible to change?"

The theme of Min's journey, to me, seems to have been of looking for pseudo-parents who would love and take care of her 'intimately'. She had been practically abandoned by her father, mother, and later by her sister in her mind. She had called her grandmother 'mom' and wanted her uncle's family to be hers, only to feel disappointed. She feels anger and love (or perhaps longing for love) towards her family at the same time. This feeling of ambivalence repeats in her relationship with a faith community-her new adopted 'family'.

For Jin, 'love' means 'work'. From a young age, she learned that she can be praised by and give pleasure to her parents when she excels in what does. She had to earn 'love' or the thing she thought love by working hard or sacrificing herself for family. Yet she felt lonely and angry. She still works hard for her family, yet blames herself for not loving her children enough, meaning not sacrificing herself more for them. In her life, God is the only one who doesn't seem to demand her help or sacrifice. She finally has an intimate relationship with someone who she feels understands her feelings, loves her, and takes care of her.

This experience has yet to be transferred into her relationships with her fellow humans, especially with her family, so that she can truly 'rest'.

Growing up as the eldest daughter in poor family, Young believed she had to be a good daughter, who accepted her duty without complains and yielded a lot to her younger siblings. Her wants and desires had to be buried unexpressed. She craved love, compassion and respect, but never felt her family had these for her. When she experienced God, she became someone special; God loves her and has a great plan for her. Her faith gave her hope and freedom to start her journey to be independent. Ironically, the fact that her family members do not share the same faith helped her feel less affected by the family, made it easy for her to differentiate from her family. With this newly acquired confidence, she was able to shed new light on her perspective on her family, and to understand them.

P2: Min's life is filled with a story of abandonment from her parents. She could not follow her father and was eliminated from her mother when she was a child. But she transforms herself through her relationship with God and a mentor. Even though the family was not a warm and loving place for her, she has grown up herself without becoming a pitiful and miserable person through the power of faith. Likewise, Min's strength of internal self shows me the evidence of a human being's greatness. Although Min is anxious about her abandonment because she was not provided a "holding environment", she created her own stories in order to survive in the midst of the given circumstance. Min had not only attempted to not reproduce within the abandoned environments, according to her words "I do not want to live like mom", but also grown up herself through giving and receiving

caring relationships with others. In addition, I am really impressed with the discussion I had with the researcher about the metaphor of colours, and I am sure it is a precious chance for Min to confirm and open up a future story for her.

Most of Sook's stories were influenced by her relationship with her father and mother. She did not experience the holding environment sufficiently to receive herself from her parents. Sook's lack of self-esteem was defined through the type of relationship with the community. Doing her best in her role and duty, she attempted to receive acknowledgement and to draw out reflections from others. It caused her to burn out.

Jin's story shows her loneliness arose from her burdensome life. Even though she had lived with responsibility which might be considered as her own life choice, she felt lonely. Jin felt frustrated when she could not sacrifice herself as a mother, and she considered that her feelings and emotions had to be suppressed. Although Jin wanted to take a rest, she could not do so because the experiences from when Jin did something well she recognised and this caused her to keep sacrificing herself. However, she fortunately has the image of God as loving her and helping her like a friend.

For Young, her story is about how she has lived as the first daughter in Korean society. She had lived as a good daughter by caring and conceding to other siblings. She gave priority to her family rather than her own thoughts. In addition, poverty is one of the important issues. However, she transformed her circumstances of poverty into an important resource to build her identity rather than expressing it as feeling of anger and hatred toward others. Although her

mother did not express enough love for her children, Young learned love through her dedication and caring for her siblings. Compared to her mom, who lived a self-sacrificial life, Young grows up as a woman who knows her life is the most important thing. I am really impressed to see Young create a new story with God, who considers Young a special person and loves her through having a great plan for her.

6.4.2 Unique perspectives on Jeju women's stories

P1: Sook, Jin, Min and Young all have struggled to carve out their own place in life, while trying to conform to all the expectations and responsibilities placed upon them. They long for meaningful, loving and caring relationship, which they find in their experiences with God. This unconditional love they perceive through their faith has yet to be translated into their relationships with other people, and into their self-image, as they tend to still operate on their old belief that they have to earn love and affirmation through hard work. It is wonderful to see that they are able to respond to the interviewer's positive comments about their life stories and shift their perspective, as it indicates, to me, that the journey of healing is already quite in progress.

P2: We are not merely living our lives, but developing and growing our personality and relationships in the context of our family. We thereby pay attention to the

family life cycle and the emotional system of broad generations. We should take this multigenerational context of family connections into consideration because of the need to look for the patterns of our lives. For Min, moreover, passing through the period of adolescence, her developmental task is not only to unpack her own confused emotional relationship with her grandmother, who played the role of her mother, but also to become financially independent as she was leaving her own family well. It would naturally take place if Min were able to express herself enough to her mother in a secure environment. In the case of Sook, for resolving the problem of her relationship with her father, an investigation seems necessary as to who her father was, as she was searching for the lost relationship with her own family. With Jin, I hope to investigate where the conviction “I have to be strong” comes in. Finally, I support Young to extend her hopeful stories toward her own family and to share her positive stories with her own family members, specifically with a father who does not exist in a large part of her life. It will be a good experience for Young to experience belonging to her family.

6.4.3 Feedback to the responses

Their reflections and the unique perspectives of the co-researchers’ stories significantly contribute to the thicker understanding and rich description of the co-researchers personal identities and relational identities. My reflections on their interpretations were sent back to them, and they agree with me. Its content is like

this;

Your reflections and interpretations truly contribute to developing my ideas and having more questions around the co-researchers' stories.

First, I am aware and convinced how important the image of God is for the co-researchers and the narrative experience of God's presence in order for them to open up themselves and come up with the alternative narratives and future narratives.

Second, I became aware of the absence of the father in their narratives. It is important to recognise the pattern of their life. After the *Sasam sagoen*, maybe more than before, most of Jeju Island's people have experienced the absence of their fathers emotionally and physically. Within their historical circumstances, the women's functions and duties have had to be emphasised and had to push the women into the place of responsibility for their families' well-being. The fathers or men's functions thereby have been decreased. I think, If we might attempt to draw out the implications for the stories about the relationship with the fathers and the existence of the fathers in their lives over the long haul, they might be further free from their obliged sense of the responsibility and obligations.

I deeply appreciate all your responses. I would like to let you know sincerely that your responses have helped me to expand the horizons of my thought in such a way that makes it possible for this interdisciplinary work to thicken the alternative narratives.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research starts with co-researchers' storied experiences as a basic source of context. Their stories contain experiences of God, experiences of oneself, experiences of community and the world. The research process is done by interpreting the co-researchers' experiences and context into conversation with resources from social science and from theology. In this chapter, it is considered how it is interpreted by codified traditions and illuminates into the co-researchers' narratives.

I have attempted to investigate the interpreted meanings, norms and values within the co-researchers' narratives. We, the researcher and co-researchers, discussed the kind of information we were looking for in the stories of the co-researchers: what their domain knowledge and values were; how they interpreted their experience in their stories and how traditional interpreted meanings and values influenced the co-researchers' narratives. Considering all these aspects, this research was conducted using an interdisciplinary framework.

In the beginning, we derived the co-researchers' interpretations of their experiences as the main subject. We looked for new meanings by interpreting the co-researchers' narratives. I described how to bring about alternative interpretations, which allowed the co-researchers to explore preferred views of their futures through the discourse and conversation. Then we focused on finding what kinds of dominant cultural knowledge framed their stories. For this work, an interdisciplinary framework was

used to investigate what the dominant traditional knowledge and meaning were in the narratives of the co-researchers. There are four main aspects dealt with; the value of the community; the meaning of self-sacrifice for the family and community; the responsibilities for the family and community; and the meaning of being 'selfish,' which I attempted to present the findings in this chapter. Through this process, I hope to open up further possibilities for understanding Jeju women's narratives and lead them closer to their preferred futures.

According to the research purpose of empowering the powerless and stimulating alternative stories, we spent a long time on emphasising the stories of the marginalised and unheard stories. By telling these stories, people were empowered to understand and give meaning to their situation (Müller & Schoeman, 2004:8). In this study, it has been argued that the stories are interpreted stories of experience by various tradition and personal domain values. Through the integration with various view points, the co-researchers could deconstruct and reinterpret their stories. It allows the ability to open an alternative narrative and have a better future. Müller *et al* (2001:90) says that "narrative research does not end with a conclusion, but with an open ending which hopefully would stimulate a new story and new research", we continue as a never ending story of life.

This research gives co-researchers the ability to see a shifted future. It will be represented as the kind of interaction that can be used for empowering and for a better future. Their narratives are served to create new options for the present and a new direction for the future. I analysis three parts of the approach to open the

possibility to thicken the alternative stories; building a verity image of God and thicken experience narratives of the presence of God, supporting their personal value and desire, and also encouraging and acknowledging the individual uniqueness of life and values, rather than concentrating on community needs and responsibilities.

First, a useful way is to thicken the stories about the presence of God. In the research journey with the co-researchers, they indicated that the retelling of their experience about the present God is a positive direction for them, consistent with their choice, hopes and values for living. When we draw out plentiful stories of the experience of the presence of God, it provides some chance to shift their interpreting meanings and values positively and to be empowered. In addition, when we open the possibility to extend the image of God from an exclusive image of a male or father, having the power and ability to control the entire world, to another warm and loving image of God, the co-researchers determined a positive reflection of their identity narrative. To thicken the stories about the presence of God is important for identifying health, relationships, and culture.

Second, supporting their personal values and desires are one way to tell alternative narratives and create a new future. Even though the Jeju women are described very differently from the other mainland people concerning qualities such as independence, adventurousness, aggressiveness, and so on, the experience of feeling over-responsible in relationships and the experience of being subservient economically, emotionally, politically, or spiritually has become a dominant narrative.

It makes them feel powerless and victimised. Through the process of telling and retelling, we focus on reinterpreting the meaning, attaching their experience and concentrating more on personal values and desires. It helps to discover the narratives about ability, power and strength for living their own lives.

Finally it must be emphasised how important the encouraging and acknowledging of individual value and uniqueness of life are. The co-researchers easily bring up social and cultural privilege. In the patriarchy and Confucian circumstance and the culture of putting privilege value on keeping the community satisfied and self-sacrifice were the main experiences. The effect is powerless, meaningless and loneliness. For the sake of empowering and opening a new future, we focused on their new awareness of hope and personal desire. When they are offered the space to acknowledge their own valuable experience as a human being and when they were encouraged to recognise their own preferred value and personal uniqueness, the co-researchers reconsidered the direction of their lives and found enjoyment in their life as women, mothers or daughters.

The result of this research is not intended to generalise on the all the women of Jeju Island, but rather to support an exploratory view to promote understanding and the ability to draw alternative narratives.

CHAPTER 7

THE CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the final chapter, this researcher takes the opportunity to critically reflect on the research process as a whole as well as its positive and negative aspects. This research began with the researcher's motivation to learn and understand social privileges and domain meanings, as well as values and themes in the co-researchers' narratives. In the process of post-foundational narrative research, the researcher began to wonder where the co-researchers' domain and privilege values and themes arose from. In line with a perspective of understanding narrative as a "cultural vehicle" (White, 2011:8), the researcher was interested in the co-researchers' context of Jeju Island. On that account, this researcher studied the history and culture of Jeju Island to understand the background and life-skills associated with the co-researchers' stories. In the discourse with the co-researchers, the researcher encouraged them to understand the meanings and values associated with their own dominant stories of life experiences in response to the larger cultural narrative contexts of Jeju Island. This attempt allowed the co-researchers to develop their own alternative narratives in consideration of different interpretations that explore the nuts and bolts of their narratives alone as a whole. In a nutshell, through this research, the researcher became aware of how cultural roles had impacted each of their lives and how they had struggled to fit in with the social norms and cultural values.

Furthermore, the researcher discusses the critical self-observation and reflection on the entire research process, taking a standpoint view of the post-foundational narrative research of “Seven Movements”, and thus the researcher has also a chance to see her own theoretical and practical limitations of this research project and eventually make some suggestions for the future research.

7.2 THE SELF REFLECTION OF THE WHOLE PROCESS OF THE RESEARCH ACCORDING TO THE POSTFOUNDATIONAL NARRATIVE RESEARCH OF “SEVEN MOVEMENTS”

The concept of post-foundationalist Practical Theology is in itself a re-discovery of the basic forms of Practical Theology. It is an effort to move beyond the modern boundaries of Practical Theology as a very formal, rationalistic venture. It is also an effort to avoid the relativism of non-foundationalism. The strength of this perspective is that the researcher can take each co-researcher’s narrative on the basis of understanding the individual uniqueness, and together with each of their dynamic interactions with other social components such as local people, communities, traditions and culture.

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the experience of the co-researchers in response to the social contexts given to them; to carefully examine and understand the sources of their own life issues; and to further explore their diverse stories and the relevant social components that could allow them more

meaningful and healthier lives. In order to attain research objectives, this research uses the “Seven Movements” approach, which reflects the theoretical propositions of post-foundational Practical Theology. As this work is evidently shown as a post-foundational narrative research, the strength of the narrative research perspective is that all these found narratives during the interviews provide both the researcher and co-researchers with a metaphor and its social implications for a better understanding of their lives and their following transformation with the discourses and conversations.

This particular post-foundational narrative research emerges from the specific context of Jeju Island. Jeju inhabitants have developed their own specific culture, tradition and history, which influences the co-researchers’ narratives. The researcher listened to and described the co-researchers’ stories, and then, through the conversations, the researcher then offered interpretations constructed on their own, and further described and developed new interpretations in collaboration with each of the co-researchers. The co-researchers’ stories are informed by theology and other traditional disciplines of interpretation. The researcher was interested in the co-researchers’ narratives of experiencing the presence of God as each of them understood it in a specifically particular situation. Their stories of experiencing God were reflected in religious and spiritual aspects. Then the researcher approached the co-researcher’s stories from socially-constructed and post-foundational perspectives together. Through the interdisciplinary investigation, their descriptions of the stories were elaborated on. We investigated the specific meaning of themes of self-sacrifice, responsibility and a desire to contribute to the community. Through our discourse, we developed alternative interpretations and stories that pointed beyond the local

context and community.

In order to maintain a narrative research process of integrity, this research was informed by the three components of hermeneutics, social-constructionism, and post-foundationalism. The theory of hermeneutics and post-foundationalism provided us with the epistemological basis and the methodological direction, while social constructionism was employed to draw alternative stories.

7.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

I would like to point out two potential limitations of this research. First, as the researcher, I had lived in the same culture and tradition of the co-researchers and have had similar experiences to them, which led to this study. I was therefore not overly curious and had difficulty in identifying the meanings and knowledge which was taken for granted. As post-foundational narrative research, it was also difficult to provide different perspectives beyond the boundaries of my own discipline, local communities, groups and culture.

A second limitation was the difficulties in language. Language itself is important in narrative research. The chosen words used by the co-researchers have a rich meaning and value in their own narratives. The interviews done for this research were conducted in Korean. It is also noted that translation from Korean to English was required for this research project. However, translation itself is limited in wholly

delivering the specific sense of emotional and detailed meanings of the co-researchers' narratives, considering the nature of narratives *per se*; it accompanies both of the language use contexts—denotation and connotation—socially applicable together to a specific cultural identity of the local language user. In addition, this research does not present and quote the co-researchers' complete responses in the pure form of verbatim; the transcripts were intentionally edited for the sake of their own privacy and safety. The researcher met and interviewed the co-researchers personally and recorded their responses on a recorder, though. After recording each of the interviews, the researcher transcribed and translated the interviews. Also, the total conversation and discourse of the manuscripts amounted to over 100 pages and it was not feasible, for the primary purposes of this research, to include all the manuscripts in the thesis. Therefore, the content was shortened in many ways and summarised as briefly but emphatically as possible

7.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher offers some suggestions for further research. The purpose of this research project is to contribute to an understanding of women's narratives from Jeju Island and to support their healthy living. This study may be limited in its effectiveness for the entire body of humanity, and even some similar cases of women in Jeju. This is because each individual has his/her own unique, diverse experience and different background, which makes each of them interpret his/her experience differently. Therefore, for further research projects, social dimensions at the macro

level, including educational factors and other socio-political and economic components, as well as any social aspects at the micro level including the impact of an individual's stress and anxiety disorder and other socio-psychological factors due to the social changes that have impacted on women's relationships with other family members and the larger community will be continually examined..

Until now, there has been little literature related to the present context of Jeju Island in the research field of pastoral care and narrative therapy that deals with each individual's experience and his/her own values and interpretation thereof. Jeju Island is well-known as a tourist destination. In addition, it was officially inaugurated as one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature in 2011. Recently, there have been a lot of social changes in terms of population growth. A large number of people have moved to Jeju Island and many people have visited as tourists. According to a data analysis from one of the well-known local journals, the average annual population growth rate of Jeju Island rose 1.6 percent in 2011—most people came from mainland Korea and about 1,500 people came from abroad (*Halailbo*, 2013.01.11). According to a survey by the Jeju Provincial Tourism Association, about 970,000 tourists visited Jeju Island in 2012. This growth of population is one of the aspects that demonstrates recent social changes, especially with regard to the demographic circumstances of Jeju. Along with this social change, the researcher expects that many inhabitants of the island could have a chaotic experience in their inner worlds, and further they would experience much stress and anxiety emerging from such drastically changing circumstances. Thus, these social changes will allow the researcher or any others in the field with an opportunity of study to see more carefully how the Jeju residents'

narratives have been developed. What narratives of meanings have been dominant? With post-foundational narrative research, this kind of study will cover not just the description and interpretation of experiences, but also deconstruction and emancipation. To be sure, the future research would serve as an opportunity to learn what kind of knowledge strengthens or weakens the co-researchers.

In this research, I was not overly concerned enough about traumatic experiences. The co-researchers' parents experienced *Sasam Sageon* as genocide, but the co-researchers do not share the same feeling with their parents—their pains and other emotions were not as much as those of their parents' experiences; i.e., they only had general facts of what their parents faced in the past. This is surely a valid reason in effect, and more encouraging for continuous research. Working with the generation that had experienced traumatic experiences, consequently directing to assist each of them to honestly to confront and accept traumatic realities, thereby overcoming them, would be beneficial for them. Edelman *et al* (2003:148) explains the necessity of the therapeutic approach as follows: “This is necessary to overcome the internal (psychological) and external (socio-political) systems of denial by the creation of a receptive “wall of silence” brought about by the external and internal mandates. This opportunity is important to the healing process, even though the initial encounter with this condition may cause discomfort and require a period of conscious suffering.” However, it is also notable to understand some time has passed since the traumatic period. A lot of people who experienced the *Sasam Sageon* have already passed away. Nonetheless, the effect that their descendants inherited still remains in the social culture of Jeju. Therefore, it is important to equip us together with an approach

that keeps promoting the discourse of the stories of the Jeju people, especially considering the benefits from the perspective of narrative. The researcher hopes that this research project will continuously help the local people of Jeju in order to gain a better understanding of their own narratives whether they are positive or negative and furthermore, as a whole, it will hopefully empower them to help themselves live with healthier and happier psychological lives.

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