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Storytelling / Minjung Theology / Identity Formation

1 Introduction

Storytelling, or narrativity, made its appearance on the theological scene in the 1970s. While in Western Academic Theology it remained negligible and only gained some momentum in Religious Education, it flourished in the emerging contextual Theologies in the Global South. I will therefore start from the margins and put storytelling into an intercultural perspective. Since the medium is the message (Marshall McLuhan) I will begin with some of the stories that have been told mainly by Asian theologians. They come from the underside of his/her story and re/construct it from below. A practice that has become known as “oral history” in other academic disciplines. After a short mapping of the discourse in Intercultural Theology (2.), and the focus on Asian story Theologies in particular (3.) I will turn to Western reflections on the significance of Story for Theology (4.).

2 Storytelling in Contextual and Intercultural Theology

Storytelling seems to be a particularity of Asian Theologies, with Suh Nam-Dong, one of the founding fathers of South Korean Minjung Theology, and Taiwanese theologian Choan-Seng Song, as pioneers. Latin American Theology of Liberation on the other hand has its roots in the lectura popular, Bible-reading in the basic Christian communities. Ernesto Cardenal’s The Gospel in Solentiname (Cardenal 1976–1984) documenting the communal interpretation of the Gospel stories by his congregation of peasants on the shore of Lake Nicaragua is a well-known example. In South Africa, Itumeleng J. Mosala with his Biblical hermeneutics from the perspective of Black Theology (Mosala 1989) and Gerald O. West with his ordinary reader approach (West 1995; esp. 175–238) and the Ujamaa Center for Biblical and Theological Community Development and Research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) went in a similar direction. Yet when Allan Boesak for instance reads Revelations in the light of his prison experience under the Apartheid regime (Boesak 1987), or Elsa Tamez interprets Paul’s prison experience in the context of poverty and oppression in Latin America (Tamez 1993), the relation between Biblical stories and real life stories – be it individual or collective – is at stake in the background.

This short overview already demonstrates that across Latin America and Africa biblical stories are the entry point for contextual Theologies which relate them in a hermeneutic circle to the lifeworld of the people. As we will see in the next part, in Asia theologians often enter the hermeneutic circle between text and context through the life stories, both lived and fictional, of their people. Therefore, not all Asian Theology is necessarily story Theology but most of story Theology is Asian, with its epicenter in North-East Asia. An exception to be mentioned here are women in North American Diaspora Theologies who obviously independently from Asian Theologies have used the storytelling method. Ada María Isasi-Díaz (1943–2012), the neoterist of Mujerista Theology, uses Hispanic women’s life stories in her work *En la Lucha* (Isasi-Díaz 2004) gathered through ethnologic interviews to analyze the plight of her protagonists. Delores S. Williams (*1937), one of the mothers of Womanist Theology introduces novels in her *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Williams 1993) to describe the predicaments of black women. This has become a common strategy in Womanist Theology up until today.

## 3 Storytelling in Asian Theologies

Minjung Theology, the South Korean Brand of Liberation Theology,² is methodologically based on storytelling as is the work of Choan-Seng Song and other major Asian theologians. In what follows I offer a close reading of their appropriation of stories and ask for commonalities and differences as well as tracing possible interactions among them.

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¹ An exception is John Mbiti (1971), who has been professionally trained in New Testament exegesis.
² The Sino-Korean word consists of two syllables Min (people) and -jung (mass), so Minjung Theology is a ‘Theology of the people’. Minjung Theologians however claim that it is untranslatable because of the particular Korean experience.
3.1 Theology as Story-Telling – Suh Nam-Dong (1918–1984)³

Suh Nam-Dong’s article under the same title has become his theological will, published posthumously in English translation in a special issue of the CTC-Bulletin (Suh 1984/85a) on story, that was edited in his honor. The vision of history as a confluence of two traditions (“the Minjung tradition in Christianity and the Korean Minjung tradition” [Suh 1983a, 177]) proclaimed by him and his use of story are the two foci of Suh’s methodological framework. Story-telling is his method of choice for doing Theology, in the particular context of Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, a country divided between a ruthless communist regime in the North and a military development dictatorship closely aligned with the US in the South. Many Korean Christians living in the South, including most Minjung Theologians themselves, had fled the communists in the North after World War Two. Park Chung Hee then based his military dictatorship ideologically on strict anti-communism. Different from Latin American Liberation Theology, Marxist analysis therefore did not seem to be an option for first-generation Minjung theologians. Yet Suh is using materialist language and insists on sociological analysis. I will offer an inventory of the different genres of stories Suh is using and analyze how he is appropriating them.

Suh Nam-Dong introduces three different genres of stories in his articles under consideration: classics from late eighteenth century Yi-Dynasty (1392–1910), contemporary literature from the 1970s and real-life stories from the same period. All three genres are appropriated to articulate and analyze the suffering (han) of the minjung.

– The real-life stories are supposed to illustrate the han of the minjung and the priesthood of han of those Christian pastors and social activists who work among them. Minjung events like the self-immolation of the textile worker Chun Tae-II (1948–1970) who was protesting against the inhuman working conditions of female textile workers in Seoul’s Pyonghwa market, were a wakeup call for intellectuals like Suh Nam-Dong, who even happened to be an eye-witness. As a consequence of this story, Suh advocated for a Hyonjang church that is present among the minjung (Suh 1983a, 68).⁴ As a matter of fact this was already practiced by the Urban Industrial and Rural Mission (UIM/URM). Suh is referring to the story of Ms. Kim Kyong-Suk from the Y.H. Trade Union who was killed by the police during a demonstration. In the case of brother Oh Won-Chun from the Catholic Farmers’ Association, the story goes that he was captured, beaten and kept in solitary confinement.

– The han of the minjung is also expressed in Contemporary literature. Yun Hyong-Kil describes, in Rainy Season (Changma), the rifts going through nearly every

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³ These thoughts have been first presented at a symposium to commemorate Suh Nam-Dong’s centennial in Seoul on September 10th, 2018, at Yonsei University.

⁴ In Annotation 2 Suh compares the Hyonjang church to the Basic Christian Communities in Latin America: “Hyonjang Church is a Christian koinonia engaged in a social movement. The term may be translated as ‘field church’ or ‘church on the spot.’”
Korean family that were caused by the Korean War and the division of the country. In a mytho-poetical way the author describes the resolving of han, and the reconciliation between two old women living together as in-laws in a traditional Korean house complex. Kim Chi-Ha’s Story of the Sound is about an underdog who is eventually thrown into prison and is crippled by his torturers. The chunk of his body that is left rolls against the walls of the prison cell creating a sound of han that is widely heard. Kim’s Chang Il-Dam is a Korean one-man opera (pansori) about a Jesus figure who teaches how to overcome han. In God’s Bow (Shingung) written by Chon Seung-Se a shaman takes revenge by killing a rich man who ruined her life by taking everything away from her during a ritual he had requested her to perform.

This leads us to the Classics from earlier epochs that are supposed to refer to the han of the minjung in Korean history in particular the social grievances of the Confucian Yi-dynasty. Suh is referring to the story of the Buddhist Monk Jee-Sung, the protagonist of an eighteenth century short-story from Ahn Sok-Kyong’s Sapyobyolijb who ransoms two children from an impoverished Confucian scholar who wants to take them as a substitute for the debts of his servants who died without paying him back. Suh, in comparing the Buddhist monk’s redemptive act with Jesus and how he made the blind man see in John 9, clearly champions Jesus as more subversive and persistent in criticizing the system and the powers that be.

Central to Suh’s approach is his interpretation of the classical story of The Bridegroom of Ahndong from Dongsangki’chan, a collection of satirical writings. It is about Ahn-Gook, the son of a high-ranking Confucian scholar from Seoul who fails to learn how to read and write from early childhood days. Completely frustrated, the father sends his son to an uncle who serves in the province in Ahndong to get him out of his sight for good. The uncle also fails in engaging his nephew in reading and writing, and after some time decides to marry him off to the daughter of a minor provincial official. The latter however is suspicious why the son of a high-ranking official should wish to marry his daughter. When he finally hears about the reasons for the desperation he agrees to the marriage because he still regards it as prestigious for his family.

The daughter on her part then also tries to motivate her husband to join her father and the other learned men around him in the pleasures of intellectual life but fails initially as well. Against the Confucian convention she eventually decides to try to teach her husband by telling him stories that are related to the history of the country and the classics. She manages to catch his attention by her innocent question of whether he would ‘like to hear a story or two’. For the first time in his life Ahn-Gook gets excited about learning and eventually asks her, where all these wonderful stories come from. When she tells him that he can find them in books, the ban is broken, and he eagerly learns how to read and write.
The problems at stake here are the Confucian educational system and the social stratification that comes with it as well as the subjugation of women. Suh acknowledges that as well but nevertheless puts the emphasis on the opposition between written letters and oral stories and misses the tertium comparationis: that being the patriarchy. My close reading of the story and Suh’s reception reveals one of the pitfalls of Minjung Theology, namely, to have seen the agency of women but never making it theologically explicit. This led to a certain skepticism among Korean women theologians regarding Minjung Theology. Next to cultural hermeneutics and class analysis, feminism is the third theoretical tool that must be applied in interpreting this story.

Contemplating the different genres of stories that Suh is using, it turns out that there are different issues under consideration regarding real-life stories and contemporary literature on the one hand and the classics on the other. In the first case the question is whether there is a difference between so-called real and fictional stories. As far as Suh is concerned obviously there is none, they are both chosen as evidence for the han of the minjung. Methodologically he speaks of social analysis and sociology of literature respectively. The cultural-religious context of the classics is shaped by Confucianism and Buddhism and the historical distance to the feudal and patriarchal society must be taken into account. With these stories in mind two questions are called for regarding Suh’s appropriation: (1.) how can cultural hermeneutics (Kanyoro 2002), class analysis and other theoretical tools help to bridge the historical gap? (2.) What exactly is the tertium comparationis between the classical stories and the contemporary lifeworld of the Minjung?

3.2 Minjung Theology on Story

Storytelling proves to be a core concept throughout Minjung Theology (Küster 2010a; Suh 1984/85). Hyun Young-Hack describes Theology as rumor mongering. In situations of oppression, like for example under the military dictatorship in Korea, rumors, stories told in secret, became the preferred medium of communication, a strategy that can easily lean on the Bible.

Jesus was the worst and the most notorious rumormonger, telling the people that the Sabbath was made for human beings, not the other way around; that the Kingdom belongs to the poor rather than to the wealthy, and that he would rise up from the dead. He drank, ate, and chatted with the sinners and prostitutes, and became the source of insidious rumors. He himself was the rumor. He had to pay for it with his life (Hyun 1984/85, 47).

New Testament scholar Ahn Byung-Mu accordingly identifies different social groups of transmitters of the Jesus event. The stories of Jesus’ life and death have been communicated as rumors by the Galilean minjung (ὀχλος) that followed Jesus, while the ancient church interpreted his death and resurrection as κηρυγμα.
Therefore, the story about Jesus must have been transmitted secretly by those who knew him intimately. This type of tradition sociologically speaking, is rumor. Rumor expresses the effort on the part of the minjung of Jesus to transmit the real facts of the Jesus-event; and it is also the medium through which the minjung try to understand their own position in society. The political authorities, however, regard such rumors as an expression of rebellion, and consider rumor-mongering as dangerous minjung behavior (Ahn 1984/85, 30–31).

Kim Yong Bock points to the collective aspect of the shared stories as the social biography of the minjung:

At present, the only way to understand the social biography of the Minjung is to approach it through dialogue and involvement with the Minjung and through the minjung’s telling of their own story [...] Social biography encompasses the minjung’s subjective experiences as well as objective conditions and structures and societal power relations (Kim 1984/85, 70–71).

In the footsteps of Suh Nam-Dong David Kwang-Sun Suh describes theologians and Christian social activists as the Priesthood of han who resolve the suffering of the minjung by creating space for their stories to be told.

We are called into the priesthood of han to articulate the cries and groanings of the people in the language of theology, sociology, statistics, socio-economic analysis, and in poetry, drama, songs, paintings and sculpture (Suh 1984/85, 62).

The writings collected in the CTC Bulletin in honor of Suh Nam-Dong are good examples for the confluence of two traditions he envisioned. The various authors read the Jesus stories in the light of their Korean experience and the stories of minjung and vice versa. Initially the minjung stories and the Biblical stories are read contrapuntally, sometimes they are intertwined or a minjung story becomes transparent for the Jesus event and vice versa.

### 3.3 Choan-Seng Song

Choan-Seng Song (*1929) is certainly the Asian theologian whose name became almost synonymous with storytelling and who has also been engaged in a dialogue with Minjung Theology and Suh Nam-Dong in particular. over the course of his long career, Song published numerous books, all functioning according to the same pattern. He usually starts with telling a story, not necessarily Asian, it can also be Biblical or even *Alice in Wonderland* or *Cinderella*. Song explicitly refers to the hunger of his two daughters for stories (Song 1984, ix). His young daughters illustrated one of his books with children’s sketches related to the stories he is telling (Song 1984, ix). The Taiwanese theologian then associates freely with his experiences

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5 A term I adopt from postcolonial critic Edward Said (Küster 2018).
in the ecumenical movement and his theological knowledge, and references Biblical stories, with a strong predilection for Jesus. In the later part of his career the Biblical stories become more and more dominant over Asian stories.

There are few theoretical and methodological reflections detectable in Song’s writings. When it comes to terminology, he remains rather vague. Even though his compatriot Shoki Coe (1914–1988), who in a sense holds the copyright on the term contextualization, is a sort of theological godfather to Song, he only mentions these discourses in passing. He develops his own private jargon when he speaks of “transposition” from Israel to Asia etc. (Song 1982, 16–17). Song himself states:

[T]heological method is something of an after-thought [...] For me theology is like storytelling. The story unfolds itself as you tell it. It moves in all directions. It may even stray into byways. But this is the excitement of telling stories. A story grows and expands. It leads to new terrains and depicts new scenes. If this is what our storytelling is like, how much more so is God’s storytelling! [...] The method of storytelling is in the telling of stories. (Song 1999a, 2)

At the same time, Song, similarly to Suh is interested in a Theology of history since his dissertation on comparing Barth and Tillich’s view on revelation and man’s religion (Song 1965, 1984). In an extensive review of Choan-Seng Song’s early writings, Suh Nam-Dong criticizes a divergent understanding of “revelation”. Suh distinguishes between the infra-structure and super-structure of revelation, a terminology that has Marxist overtones. Theologically, the relationship between revelation and history is at stake among the two.

Song’s account of his participation in a 1984 conference on Minjung Theology in Seoul allows a fictitious dialogue between the two. Regarding the questions raised on the understanding of revelation Song laconically qualifies this as a matter of emphasis not substance and problematizes the term “infra-structure” (Song 1984, 17–18). Song interprets Minjung Theology as a Theology of the cross in a very socio-historical way. His own Tears of Lady Meng is probably as close as one can get to Minjung Theology from another contextual background (Küster 2010b). Song is a strong advocate of a Taiwanese political Theology and Liberation Theologies in general. Concurrently Song deals not only with Confucianism and Buddhism, which Suh regards as “supra-structure” (Suh 1984/85b, 14), but also with folk culture and folk religion like Shamanism. As a matter of fact, he refers several times to Korean minjung culture and religion in his writings. In their methodological use of story as well as in their theological take on history Suh Nam-Dong and Choan-Seng Song seem to be soulmates rather than antagonists.

6 Cf. for similar spatial metaphors Koyama (1985) or Panikkar (1987).
3.4 Kosuke Koyama and Kwok Pui-Lan

Even though Kosuke Koyama (1929–2009), another icon of Asian Theology, does not use the term *story* programmatically, but only rather in passing (Koyama 1974a, 206), he and Choan-Seng Song are like twin brothers in the way that their careers have developed internationally and in their doing of Theology (Küster 2011; Koyama 1985). Their writing style is narrative and their way of thinking associative. Koyama discloses more of his autobiography, he reflects on his mission work in Thailand, his experiences of war and nationalism in his home country Japan as well as his work in the ecumenical movement in Asia and worldwide and his own cosmopolitan life between countries and continents. While Choan-Seng Song’s Theology is Jesus-centered and operates within a Trinitarian framework, Koyama’s Theology, due to his Lutheran background, is cross-centered. Both combine an interest in a Theology of history (Koyama 1974a, 22–23, 52) with an interest in narrative Theology. The title of Koyama’s classic *Waterbuffalo Theology* is a metaphor for his kenotic approach to “re-root” (Koyama 1974a, 118) Biblical texts and theological ideas in the Asian context “from below” (Koyama 1974a, viii). Similar to Song, Koyama prefers a private terminology but is well aware of the contextualization debate. His theological program of “neighbourology” (Koyama 1974a, 89–94) in a nutshell reads as follows:

> On my way to the country church, I never fail to see a herd of waterbuffaloes grazing in the muddy paddy field. This sight is an inspiring moment for me. Why? Because it reminds me that the people to whom I am to bring the gospel of Christ spend most of their time with these waterbuffaloes in the rice field. [...] They remind me to discard all abstract ideas, and to use exclusively objects that are immediately tangible ‘Sticky-rice’, ‘banana’, ‘pepper’, ‘dog’ [...] (Koyama 1974a, 39).

Second-generation Asian Woman Theologian Kwok Pui-Lan (*1952) propagates a historical, dialogical and postcolonial imagination. She occasionally refers to the story-approach of first-generation Asian male theologians. Applying the method of feminist New Testament scholar Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, Kwok reconstructs the stories of Chinese Bible women and demonstrates that there has been local, female agency in spreading the Christian faith in China beyond the Western missionary project. In her work, Kwok skillfully combines storytelling with rewriting herstory. At the same time, she wants to read the Biblical stories in the context of other sacred texts of Asian religions and de/construct the impact of Western colonial Christianity:

The term *dialogical imagination* describes the process of creative hermeneutics in Asia. [...] It is highly imaginative, for it looks at both the Bible and our Asian reality anew, challenging the historical-critical method, presumed by many to be objective and neutral (Kwok 1995, 13).

‘Postcolonial imagination’ refers to a desire, a determination, and a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome, which takes many forms and guises (Kwok 2005, 2–3).
An intervention that must be taken into consideration in all this is Gayatri Spivak’s famous article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Spivak 1988) that raises the question of representation. The contextual theologians introduced here for their part try to create a space for the stories of the poor and oppressed to be heard. They rewrite his/her story by pointing out their subjectivity and local agency.

## 4 Story and the West

While Minjung Theology with its slogan “people as the subjects of history” (Commission on Theological Concerns 1983) content-wise still belongs to the project of modernity, its methodology already shifts into the direction of *The Postmodern Condition*. The famous title of Jean Francois Lyotard’s (1924–1998) report to the Canadian government (Lyotard 1984) is of interest here mainly because of the language game he created. Lyotard postulates the end of the Meta narratives of Modernity like Enlightenment, Marxism etc. and propagates the power of local narratives instead, which are championed by contextual Theologies. At present we are experiencing the return of the Meta narratives in its worst form. Trump’s “Make America great Again” is symptomatic for the new nationalistic chauvinism that is swamping the world. While on the other hand, unfortunately, narratives like enlightenment, democracy, human rights etc. seem to have lost their radiant power.

### 4.1 Western Theologians on Story

While contextual theologians from Asia do storytelling, western academic theologians tend to reflect theoretically on the possibilities of storytelling. In Germany in the 1970s the linguist and literary critic Harald Weinrich (*1927), and the Catholic founding father of a new political Theology Johann Baptist Metz (1928-2019), were advocating what they called “narrative theology” in two short but influential articles in *Concilium* (Metz 1973, Weinrich 1973). In his methodological and theological reflections, Metz opts for a narrative Theology that keeps alive the “dangerous memory” of the suffering of victims, the poor and oppressed. He formulated this new political Theology after Auschwitz and has been in solidarity with Latin American Liberation Theology from its very beginnings.

Dietrich Ritschl (1929–2018) and Hugh O. Jones, consider “story as raw material of Theology” (Ritschl and Jones 1976, translation by V.K.). Consequently, Ritschl regards contextual Theologies not “Theology” in the real sense of the word. Already in 1974 Gerhard Ebeling had pointed out the lack of “experience” as a theological

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7 An exception is Hollenweger (1979–1988), one of the founding fathers of Intercultural Theology that is a collection of stories with little theoretical reflection.
category (Ebeling 1975). As a Lutheran Theologian he criss-crossed the Barthian neglect of all things contextual and oriented himself toward human life experience. He introduced the theological notion of experience with the experience (Ebeling 1975, 25) of God’s presence in human lifeworlds.

In the footsteps of Karl Barth’s Neo-Orthodoxy, the post-liberal Yale school represented by theologians like Hans Frei (1922–1988), George Lindbeck (1923–2018) and Stanley Hauerwas (*1940), developed a different take on “narrative theology” from Metz and Ebeling that “rejects both the traditional Enlightenment appeal to a ‘universal rationality’ and the liberal assumption of an immediate religious experience common to all humanity” (McGrath 2017, 78). Over against Metz who wants to relocate the church in the enlightenment project and his pathos that the dangerous memory of the suffering of Christ has a political impact on society and includes the memory of the suffering of the victims of oppression and terror, they argue for an internal communication process within the church, in narrative form following the model of much of the Biblical texts.

I am persuaded that historical inquiry is a useful and necessary procedure but that theological reading is the reading of a text, and not the reading of a source, which is how historians read it. Historical inquiry, while telling us many useful things, does not tell us how we are to understand the text as texts (Frei 1992, 11).

Narrative Exegesis on its part diverges from historical critical exegesis with its interest in the Biblical texts in their current form. Its proponents apply methods like New Criticism, close reading or reader response criticism (Erbele-Küster 2014). They refer to the classical hermeneutical positions behind the text (narrator), in the text (narrative structures and functions) and in front of the text (reader response).

In the late 1980s, early 1990s in Practical Theology Wilhelm Gräb (*1948), Henning Luther (1947–1991), and others propagated a life story approach that focused on the Re/construction of one’s identity through telling one’s life story. Gräb (1998) applied the story approach to rites of passage like baptism, confirmation, wedding and funeral. Theologically he saw these as events of justification of individual human life stories. Henning Luther (1992) also deals with the individual subject and how human life stories are under permanent deconstruction and reconstruction. Over against the more communal approach of Contextual Theology, “people as the subject of history”, they emphasize the subjectivity of his/her story. Still it is the subject in front of God and fellow human beings. The single most important philosophical contribution to the subject under discussion is the oeuvre of Wilhelm Schapp (1884–1965) that has never been translated into English. According to Schapp (1953; 1959) human beings are enmeshed in stories. Storytelling is an anthropological constant that needs an audience. In a similar way Paul Ricoeur’s (1913–2005) philosophical anthropology is centered on the concept of narrative identity.

Ultimately, Practical Theology today seems to have a more pragmatic take on story, in the sense of Dietrich Ritschl’s understanding as raw material. The empirical
turn in Practical Theology has led to research based on quantitative and qualitative interviews regarding people’s life stories. A link between Practical Theology and Contextual as well as Intercultural Theology could be the use of story in healing from trauma. At the same time, this could also be a way for intercultural exchange between Asian Theologies and Liberation Theologies in Africa and Latin America. Post-conflict societies are still overshadowed by past suffering. Contextual Theologies can create safe spaces for storytelling and allow the subaltern to find their own voice as well as overcoming trauma.

4.2 Aesthetic Resistance – Pussy Riot Against the New Meta Narratives

Coming back to Lyotard’s distinction between stories and meta narratives once more, I want to have a side glance on contemporary popular culture. The Russian feminist artist collective Pussy Riot became known in the West through their Punk Prayer, an event in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, the central church of the Russian-Orthodox Church, in Moscow in 2012. Some of their members stormed into the Trump Tower in New York City in 2017. With subversive statements they protested the man-to-man friendship of Putin and Trump. A theater play and the video Make America Great Again targeted the nationalism and chauvinism of the two. In the clip Nadezhda Tolokonnikowa poses as Anchor-woman of a fake CNN newscast covering Trump’s success in the elections. She also appears as Trump in the Oval Office, with legs spread on the presidential desk and cowboy boots. Later, in a Sado-Maso scene, her barely dressed body is measured by two clones of Trump in police uniforms checking if she fulfills Trump’s ideals of what a woman’s body should look like. She is branded according to the way in which she embodies different stigmatized minorities discriminated against by Trump.

Pussy Riot direct a new dimension of political Theology in public space. Their theological interventions are opposing the alliance of the Russian-Orthodox Church and State, Kyrill I and Putin are both targets of their critique. Not only has the text of the Punk prayer, but also statements during the lawsuit shown that they draw from Christian faith (Pussy Riot! 2012, 23.29–32). Furthermore they apologized after the event in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior explicitly in case they should have hurt religious feelings, but not for their attempt to remind the church of its genuine mission.

Social media and YouTube are platforms of storytelling in the twenty-first century. They often function in the same way as the rumor mongering practiced by the
Minjung movement. Trump himself ran his presidency via Twitter and tries to denounce and silence his critics by labeling their subversive voices as fake news. Yet stories like the ones created by and around Pussy Riot remain to be subversive to dominant discourses and meta-narratives.

5 Conclusions

- Story(telling) is an anthropological constant. Human beings live in and by their stories. Storytelling constitutes their identity.
- Story always is a re/construction be it real-life or fictional. Stories vary with the context they are told in. Human beings develop different visions of their life in the course of time.
- Storytelling often reveals the underside of his/her story. Contextual Theologies share this approach, also known as oral history with other disciplines of humanities.
- In Theology the issue at stake is the link between the Biblical stories and stories of human life experience. They can be correlated in different modes: read contrapuntally, intertwined, or as ‘experience with the experience’.
- A good story is the theology in itself rather than its raw material. Marshall McLuhan’s (1911–1980) famous catchphrase “The medium is the message” points to form, not to content. Yet stories can be interpreted theologically by identifying the plot and points of comparison as well as the generative themes they contain.
- In contextual Theologies, story goes with social analysis and cultural hermeneutics. The stories told already constitute a form of social biography. They often imply a critical view on the life circumstances in a given society.
- Story is subversive to dominant discourses and meta-narratives.

Bibliography


