2 NARRATIVE IDENTITY

There are [is AJ] a destiny that makes us brothers: none goes his way alone: All that we send into others comes back into our own. Edwin Markham

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, in section 1.2, two questions were referred to as the central focus of this thesis. I remind the reader that these questions are: *What are the implications of acquired mobility impairment for personal identity and collective identity? How can we in Christian faith communities, through pastoral work, facilitate a sense of belonging to strengthen personal identity and collective identity for people who are mobility disadvantaged?* To answer the first question I suggested that, besides a pastoral work praxis of embrace, narrative theory can contribute to gaining insight in the "problem of identity".

This chapter addresses the central question: What is identity? However, because I consider narrative theory specifically from the notion of the narrative identity theory of Ricoeur (1992), the question will be addressed 2from a narrative identity point of view. I therefore discuss what narrative identity is about and how the notion of narrative identity can contribute to addressing the problem of identity.

Paul Ricoeur's publication, *Onself as Another* (1992), presents a renewed look at practical philosophy that may be helpful in considering the relevance of the theory of narrative identity for this study. In this chapter the notion of narrative identity is discussed in relation to personal identity. Then, I will link the considerations in terms of personal identity to the notion of collective identity, which is followed by a discussion of the notion of religious identity.

2.2 THEORY OF NARRATIVE AND SELF

The theory of "selfhood" leads to a practical philosophy that is concerned with what "selfhood" is. To address the problems of establishing "self" (personhood), it is important to explore Ricoeur's (1992) notion of personal identity. In *Oneself as Another* (1992) Ricoeur focusses on narrative identity against the background of human action theory that includes themes of language, metaphor and meaning for action. Ricoeur examines the themes of the human "self" and human action.

Relevant to this study, therefore, is understanding that caring for another is about human actions toward one another. Accordingly, the notions of personal identity, collective identity and narrative identity that human action theory incorporates are important. Ricoeur (1995:305) points out that two factors facilitate the surpassing of what he calls the linguistic turn in terms of human action. The above author writes, "...on the one hand, the recognition that discourse is an action; on the other, and in a contrary sense, the recognition that human action is a speaking action".

However, earlier publications of Ricoeur introduced a progressive notion of narrative as mediation between psychological and cosmological time. I will, therefore, first give a brief summary of Ricoeur's earlier publication as a background to the notion of narrative identity presented in *Onself as Another* (1992).

One of Ricoeur's former publications, consisting of three volumes, deals with the connection between narrative and time. I will summarise the interaction between narrative and time from what Venema (2000) writes about the three volumes of *Time and Narrative* by Ricoeur. According to Venema (2000:91) narrative discourse identifies the human agent as a responsible being through the work of imagination. The metaphor of

narrative is capable of enabling self-discovery through language and human action.

Accordingly, the function of narrative "brings difference and identity together into a unifying structure" (Venema 2000:92). In fact, the narrative plot is the means by which one can structure different temporal experiences of the human story into a complete story. It is the way that human temporal experience can be re-configured into a meaningful whole. Above all, narrative makes it possible for individuals to be identifiable in a world through imagination and responding to the question: Who? (Venema 2000:92).

Therefore, narrative has the ability to bring to life the temporal perspective of human existence through which identity is shaped. The reciprocal entanglement of personal and collective narrative accounts establishes the personal, "who I am" in relation to the collective, "who you are". Past accounts of history are pieced together and through an imaginative process of emplotment an order is obtained for the individual who is searching for "sameness" and identity. Thus, emplotment is the action which produces meaning from a number of events in experiences of human existence to create a whole meaningful story.

Consequently, the fragmented stories of past experiences are configured so as to empower re-figuration of experience to shape personal and collective identities (Venema 2000:93). It means that the hermeneutical process begins with pre-figured experience and ends with the re-figuration of experience. Venema (2000:130) points out that in *Time and Narrative*, for Ricoeur, the mediation function is ascribed to the narrative "arc", that of configuration, of which the three steps are prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. This means the configuration of past fragmented stories of experiences enables empowerment through refiguration of the individual's construction of personal identity.

Dreyer (2000:29) comments on Ricoeur's introduction of a triad of *mimesis* (narrative as an imitation of action) in terms of the narrative "arc". The various models of mimesis refer to prefiguration, configuration and refiguration: to human action in its unreflective manner, to the organisation of action in a meaningful form by means of a plot, to the means that narrative may be received by the reader, which can change thinking and actions.

Thus, a "mimetic arc" of narratives moves from praxis of experience through a semantic analysis of linguistic meaning and returns to practical human action. It is a narrative arc that moves from pre-figuration through configuration to refiguration of experience that enables practical prescription for daily living. Hence, the narrative offers coherence, continuity and choices of actions for life. Narrative offers imaginary models through language that reconnects the events of the text with the world of the reader (Muldoon 2002:66-68; Venema 2000:94).

Narrative text and reader are therefore in a relationship where the text creates a world into which the reader can enter and present new levels of meaning. Narrative, however, for Ricoeur, is not reserved only for poetry, drama and novels, but the human agent is constantly engrossed in experiences of daily life that fit into life's narrative (Muldoon 2002:75-76).

In fact the significance of the connection between narrative (text) and life is that it is similar and can be transferred and be applicable to individuals and communities. Venema (2000:92) points out that Ricoeur proposed that time becomes human in that it is organised according to narrative, while narrative is meaningful in the way it depicts temporal experience.

Narrative identity, however, is a notion that appears only toward the end of the third volume of *Time and Narrative*. It is the construction of narrative identity that provides a solution to the problems between

"sameness" and difference, forms a bridge between history and fiction and mediates between psychological and cosmological time (Dreyer 2000:25). Accordingly, through the organisation of historical events of temporal narrative episodes, testimony can be offered by individuals of who they are.

Consequently the search for narrative identity entails taking responsibility for past events in relation to present actions, with anticipated action for the future. In this way a narrative whole is created from diversity of events that portray the individual's ability to carry out actions in relation to the suffering of another. It is, therefore, through linkage of narrative with the "mimetic arc" of interpretation that narrative and time are linked. The term "emplotment" provides a relationship between temporal existence and narrative (Venema 2000:94).

The above is a quick recap of the background leading to the notion of narrative identity. The next section, therefore, takes time to examine Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity against the background of his theory of personhood. The discussion will be limited to that of the temporal and relational dimensions of Ricoeur's analysis of two models of permanence in time. I will also remark on the connectedness between the dimensions and from my interpretation of Ricoeur's (1992) perspective on personal identity will attempt to move personal identity to the level of collective identity through the notion of collective identity as belonging.

2.3 NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Narrative identity resulting from Ricoeur's exploration of narrative theory, is based on a dialectic of *ipse/idem* or "selfhood" and "sameness" and "self/other" or "self" and "other-than-self" (Ricoeur 1992:116-120). According to Ricoeur (1995:306) the problem with identity is the reflection

of the "who" when expressed in terms of the "self". This section will deal with the notion of "self". Next, the dimension of selfhood and "sameness" is discussed; thirdly, the dialectic of "self" and "other-than-self" is considered. Because Ricoeur's narrative identity theory is in relation to personal identity the background of personal identity from *Oneself as Another* is considered first.

2.3.1. The dimension of self and personal identity

In *Oneself as Another* (1992) Ricoeur's approach to "self" is through four questions and philosophical themes. The question: "Who is speaking?", is answered through the path of the philosophy of language. It leads to the question: "Who is acting?" This is dealt with through the philosophy of action. Next, the question: "Who is telling a story?" relates to narrative theory. Lastly, the question: "Who is responsible?", is dealt with through moral philosophy.

For Ricoeur (1992) the "self" is narratively constituted proportionate of a person capable to speak, act, be narrator and act responsibly, but not within an ultimate foundation, nor is it a fragmented illusion (Kaplan 2003:82:83, Reagan 2002:5, Venema 2000:130).

Oneself as Another (1992) reflects three main themes comprising the hermeneutics of "self":

1) the way the natural languages are used to reflect on the "self";

2) the distinction between *ipse* identity as personal identity and *idem* identity as "sameness", and

3) the dialectic between "self" and the "other-than-self".

2.3.1.1 Identity and language

Ricoeur (1992) begins with language and the "self". Text is central to the hermeneutical analysis and has a dual reference, that of "self" and the world of human existence. Interpretation of text, therefore, is also the basis for interpretation of the "self". Self-identification, for Ricoeur (1992), therefore, begins with language. Thus, to understand "self" means understanding the language used to talk about "self".

The first proposal of describing identification, for Ricoeur (1992:27) is to begin with how the primitive "being" is spoken of. Ricoeur, therefore, proposes that at the primitive level the person is the object of identifying reference in natural languages. Ricoeur (1992:27) writes that he begins with enquiry into "the procedures by which we individualize 'something' in general, and consider it an inadvisable example within the species."

Accordingly, the first understanding of individualisation, Ricoeur (1992:27-28) proposes, is that to express definite description, such as the first man to walk on the moon, creates a class with a single member. Proper names, however, refer to one individual without knowing anything about the individual.

It therefore merely designates one individual to the exclusion of others in the particular group. In another category of individuality operators refer to personal pronouns, such as "I", "you' and deictic terms, such as "this", "that", and adverbs of place and time (spatiotemporal), such as "here", "there", "now', 'yesterday", designating different things in each one (Ricoeur 1992:28-29).

What then determines the connection to the object in relation to the utterance? It means that utterance is still considered as a sort of object occurring in the external world. It is clear at this point what Ricoeur

(1992:27) writes:

> It is along this path of identifying reference that we encounter the person for the first time, considering this term in an equally modest sense as globally distinguishing entity from physical bodies. At this elementary stage, identifying is not yet identifying oneself, but identifying something.

Consequently, Ricoeur (1992:31) turns to Strawson's conception of "basic particulars" in moving from identification of a sort of object to that of the identification of person.

2.3.1.2 The person as a basic particular

Strawson's strategy is to isolate basic particulars belonging to a certain type. Basic particulars referring to physical bodies and the persons we are, however, mean that nothing can be identified without relation to another. This means that perceiving primitive "being" is the same as conceiving person as only physical body. Here the person is "one of a thing" and not a subject as such. Hence, the basic particulars referred to by Strawson allow for identification and reidentification of person in an objective manner (Ricoeur 1992:31-32; Venema 2000:132).

Consequently, Ricoeur claims that Strawson fails to make a distinction between self-description and reference in general. However, the benefit of semantic self-reference is that it is applicable to anyone and everyone and thus designates universal "self" as the same as another person. Ricoeur (1992:32), therefore, turns to pragmatics in that the speaking person designates himself/herself in the action of speaking. It concerns reflexive analysis of utterance in relation to "I-you". Hence, the problem of identifying reference is that "sameness" of body obscures selfhood (Ricoeur 1992;33).

To address the problem, Ricoeur (1992:34-35) refers back to Strawson's basic particulars of body. The puzzle is how we understand the "self" as one and the same person who is spoken of (object) and the subject who can designate self in the first person and at the same time address a second person. The problem, therefore, is how we can understand designation of the third person in a conversation as someone who designates himself/herself as a first person. Once again we return to the notion of the primitive concept of person where the understanding of person is considered within a general framework of the theory of predication applied to logical subjects.

Thus, the person positioned as logical subject is seen in relation to ascribed predicates and thus, the identifying reference of person. However, the problem remains that ascription still does not distinguish specific character from common attributions. The major advantage, therefore, of ascription is that it eliminates dual reference to consciousness and body through the notion of two series of predicates for one and the same thing.

It means, for example, that the same person who weighs 70 kilograms also has different kinds of thought or mental capacity. It brings the paradox of double attribution without double reference to the surface. Two series of predicates, therefore, are responsible for the same entity, or "selfhood" and "sameness" (Ricoeur 1992:36). This indicates mutual overlap of "sameness" of logical subject and object reference.

At the same time, however, the notion of "sameness" as *idem* identity surfaces, which confronts us with the difficulty of "sameness" of the subject ascription that exposes the difficulty of one's own body (Ricoeur 1992:37). Thus, Ricoeur's position that the concept of person and that of physical body are bound within a primitive concept points to the weakness of Strawson's position of basic particulars of body. This means that on a semantic analysis level Strawson fails to make a distinction of self-

designation from reference in general (Venema 2000:132).

The important point, though, is that the double inscription to “someone” and to “anyone else” allows for ascribing mental predicates to describe different logical subjects. To ascribe a state of consciousness means that oneself is felt (reflexive) and someone else is observed. The dissymmetry in ascription criteria shifts the “self” to the expression “oneself” . If a state of consciousness is felt, then it is self-ascribable. It is the self-designation of the subjective person.

However, the “otherness” of someone else’s consciousness must also be considered as a self-ascription. It means that mental states can be credited to anyone. Anyone can be me, him, you; it can be credited to anyone. This means that what I can ascribe to myself can also be ascribed to another person (Ricoeur 1992:35-36). Simultaneous the notion of reflexivity and the notion of “otherness” forms a strong correlation between a sense of “mineness” in belonging to “self” and belonging to another in the sense of yours (Ricoeur 1992:38-39). Thus, the ideas of reflexivity and “otherness” are simultaneous.

Returning to pragmatical investigation of language use in the situation of interlocution to move beyond the objective person, Ricoeur (1992:39-40) claims that the difficulty of semantic self-reference is that it treats the person as “what” instead of “who”. Ricoeur (1992:133) assumes, therefore, that the question “who?” in conversational interaction between “I” and “you”, engages the theory of speech acts. This means a move from semantic reference to a theory of language used in the specific context of interlocution. Through a pragmatic analysis of the speech act, therefore, the subject of the act of speaking is disclosed.

Thus, “what” is turned into the “who” during dialogical interaction between “I” and “you”. It means allowance is made for the connection of the

referential construct of identification to connect to the question “who?”. Identity is therefore linked in this way to the first person “I” that is unique and not connected to anyone else. Consequently, the difference made between “what” and “who” is that semantic reference and pragmatic (“I”) are distinct in their universality (semantic) and singularity (pragmatic) (Ricoeur 1992:43-45; Venema 2000:133-134).

Consequently, the hermeneutics of “self” follow the question, who? Who is speaking? Who is acting? Who is the narrator of the story? Who is accountable for the actions? Thus, hermeneutics make a detour through the analysis of language regarding the “self”. Semantics and pragmatics are brought together. Who is speaking and who is acting are, therefore, closely connected through the theory of action. Hence, the dialectic between identity as “selfhood” and identity as “sameness” links identity with human action theory through the “mimetic arc” in connection with the “narrative arc”. The relational value between who I am and who you are (“selfhood” and “sameness”) establishes the concept of an acting and a suffering individual (Reagan 2002:5-6).

It means that Ricoeur (1992:52-53) looks to bring together the “self” and action by explaining the “What?” of action through the answer to the “Why?” of action. This means that to say “what” an action is, is to say “why” it is done. Thus, describing an action begins to explain the action (Ricoeur 1992:63). However, “what” and “why” of an action reflect “who” is doing the action. An action is within the realm of the agent or the “who?” of the action. The concepts from the perspective of identifying reference to describe action refer to the person being spoken about so that action and agent form a coherent network that will determine what counts as action (Regan 2002:10).

Ricoeur (1992:63) writes: “Every motive is a reason-for, in the sense that the connection between motive-for and action is a relation of mutual

implication." Thus, what is being spoken reflects why an action is performed. This means that during reciprocal dialogue persons can understand what the "other" means and it also provides understanding of the intentions of the "other". So the intention of action expresses the desire to act. The expression of intentionality of action takes priority over the "what?" of the action. The "who" of action reflects the agent or human "self". It is the agent who speaks, promises and acts (Ricoeur 1992:53).

Therefore, the intentionality of action expresses three grammatical forms and time frames. Intentionality is expressed in the present tense, refers to past tense of intentional action that has taken place, whereas the expression of intention still to do something, refers to actions intended in the future (Ricoeur 1992:68,70-71,73).

Accordingly, Kaplan (2003:86) points out that for Ricoeur, to understand meaning and intentions through dialogue, includes the contribution of speech act theory about "selfhood" in relation to "another". Where overlapping of identifying reference and reflexivity of utterance take place, "I" is both the subject of utterance and the object of identifying reference. I and one's name mean the same thing.

Rasmusssen (1996:162-163) refers to Ricoeur's suggestion of solving the paradox; on the one hand, "I" refers to the person speaking as designating "him/herself"; on the other hand "I" fixes the self-referential character of discourse, by uniting ways of identifying reference and the reflexivity of the utterance. Thus, the living body that experiences belonging to a particular "selfhood" is concealed behind the reference to "sameness". "Selfhood" can, therefore, be characterised by reference to the "sameness" in the likeness of one particular body with all other human bodies. The theory of pragmatics steps ahead of the problem of identifying reference through concentrating on the utterance of the speakers in reciprocal conversation. It means that the one who utters expresses "self"

as a unique person who makes a statement as a testament to his/her own identity.

However, reflexivity, which is the character of the speech action theory, does not sustain this idea of particularity of selfhood; rather it is bound up in the form of "sameness". Rasmussen (1996:162,163) writes that "Ricoeur thinks that speech-act theory can drive beyond itself in the sense that by 'anchoring' interlucution in the 'speaking subjects', the particular experience of the speakers would have to be taken into account." Therefore, Rasmussen (1996:163-164) cautions that if the choice is taken to step beyond Ricoeur's reasoning then a more general argument surfaces. He suggests that to take the speech-act theory beyond the philosophy of the subject comes at a price. Only if "selfhood" is reduced to "sameness", thus sacrificing the temporality of the personal "self", could a rational explanation be found in interlocutionary acts.

Rasmussen (1996:164) maintains that if Ricoeur's proposal were to be accepted, then it would seem that speech-act theory drives beyond itself, if the interlocutionary act is taken as an event. Even then, it is difficult to account for the "self" as embodied and temporal in purely illocutionary terms. The speech-act theory retains the Cartesian bias of "disembodied self". However, it is such problems that brings Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity to the fore, which will be discussed in the next section.

Before considering narrative identity and the dialectic of "selfhood" and "sameness" let us first briefly retrace the steps of Ricoeur's analysis of personal identity that is crowned by the notion of narrative identity. On the one side of a dialectic is the author and the text. It is through emplotment that we can piece together events and actions and arrange them into a meaningful whole story.

Hence, intelligence and coherence can be brought to events and actions of

discordance and concordance through drawing numerous events of human action into a temporal wholeness. It helps us to find out who acts and who suffers and what the story tells us about these actions and suffering. It tells us about the characters involved in the story. In other words, it tells us about "the self" and the history surrounding "self", that are prior stories of culture, politics, economy and tradition, and the effect these have on "the self" of the story (Kaplan 2003:89; Muldoon 2002:74-75).

Another side is that of reader in relation to the text. The texts create distance in everyday life, but provide ways of finding new meaning. It is at this point that the role of emplotment provides for a "fusion of horizons" between text and reader that bridges the gap between us and the practical world we live in. It is a means to provide a way for emplotment of human action in the search for identity. Thus, the narrative function provides a way to establish "who I am". It, therefore, provides a way to cross spatiotemporal dimensions through the emplotment of action of narrative "arc" in relation to "mimetic arc" (Muldoon 2002:76-77; Venema 2000:119-121).

Accordingly, narrative identity is basically knowledge about "self" through means of interpretation; interpretation of narrative mediates between "self" and practical life, and narrative blends together fictitious history and life history through imagination and provides for configuration of narrative events that allows for refiguration of empowering the "self" in practical life.

Lastly, the combination of the philosophy of language and speech-act theory considered the puzzle of accounting for the "self" as embodiment and temporal in terms of the interlocutionary act. However, to move beyond the reduction of identity to "sameness" requires a deeper look into Ricoeur's consideration of the notion of narrative identity.

2.3.2 The dialectic of "selfhood" and "sameness"

Narrative can give a sense of continuity by linking the past with the future, so giving an ever changing story of the "self". Thus, narrative link events together that make sense of self-identity that is spatiotemporal in nature.

In this way the person is more than an embodied person. The individual also has a capacity to initiate action and suffer actions in relation to "self" and "others". Each human agent has a history and social life with a personal identity that changes over time. Identity, however, according to Ricoeur (1992:115-116), has two meanings. The notion of personal identity constitutes confrontation between two major concepts of identity: on the one hand, identity as "sameness" or *idem*-identity, on the other hand, identity as "selfhood" or*ipse*-identity.

Permanence in time is connected only to *idem*-identity or "sameness". But how can someone be identical at two different times? It means that identity may on one level be understood as numerical identity because it can be found in identity as oneness. It is the same thing. This notion of identity can be understood in the sense of re-identification of the same. Also, identity on another level is qualitative identity, which denotes extreme resemblance in similarity. That is, there is such similarity that they are interchangeable (Ricoeur 1992:117).

In a sense identity is continuity between stages of time; stages of time that apply to the same person. It is a sense of uninterrupted continuity or permanence in time, in habits and traits by which the person is recognised, which include genetic code. These habits and traits also include acquired identification through systems of organisation. These acquired systems may be values, beliefs and traditions that the individual identifies with, and through which he/she is identified by others.

Ricoeur (1992:118) proposes that there are two models of permanence of time: identity in the sense of "character" and identity in the sense of "keeping one's promise". "Character" denotes distinctive marks that enable recognition of the person as the same. For example, a named person may be the same person who committed a crime. He/she has a birth name and has committed a crime. Therefore he/she can be identified by birth name and probably identified as a criminal. Hence, the expression "character" allows for identification and reidentification of a person as the same over time. Identity in terms of "sameness" and identity in terms of "selfhood" overlap in the expression of "character". Character, therefore, constitutes stability.

"Keeping one's word" in faithfulness to the promise that was made, being faithful to keeping one's word, expresses "self"-constancy, not in regard to something in general, but to the particular of the individual. However, what about the reflection of "selfhood" independent of "sameness"? When "sameness" and "selfhood" are seen from the dimension of "a promise kept", the two meanings of identity form a gap. The person exercises initiative when making and "keeping a promise" (Ricoeur 1992:119-120). Faithfulness to "self" through the "kept word", therefore, features temporality in time, in that it may initiate change through the "keeping of one's word" in faithfulness to "self" (Ricoeur 1992:121).

It means that the problem of personal identity that exists between the concept of permanence and temporality in time ushers in confrontation between the concept of identity as "selfhood" and at the same time identity as "sameness". This confrontation leads to the notion that stability and change are actualised through the expression of "character" and "keeping one's promise". It means that the two models of permanence in time are available in expressions that are both descriptive and emblematic at the same time (Ricoeur 1992:122).

This raises the question: What benefit is narrative in the tension between stability and change or the dialectic between “self” and “sameness”? Ricoeur (1992) gives considerable focus to the mediating role of narrative configuration that organises action into meaningful order by means of emplotment.

But how can narrative do this? In Ricoeur’s publication, *Oneself as Another,* the notion of narrative brings together difference and identity through the notion of pre-figuration, configuration and re-figuration into a meaningful whole and the possibility of the individual being identified with the world through imagination.

It means that narrative enables the temporal dimension of existence and how it shapes identity to be understood. Narrative events (plots) and the process of imagination applied to the past and present move through the notion of the “narrative arc”, that is the movement from pre-figuration, configuration and re-figuration of experience that allows for the movement from description to prescription. Thus, the “narrative arc” and the “mimetic arc” create a connection in which constancy of cohesion and order can be maintained through what is offered by narrative through the process of imagination through emplotment. Also, the connection between the “mimetic arc” and “narrative arc” offers the ability for change through the process of initiative and choice (Ricoeur 1992:121-122).

Ricoeur (1992:140-141) maintains that the plot has the power to make a single story out of multiple incidents. Thus, as a story of life unfolds so the identity of a character can unfold in a “story”. In other words, emplotment is the transformation of manifold happenings into a story and in this way it brings order by connecting events into a single story that makes sense even when events may conflict. Discordances can threaten identity at the level of emplotment because they interrupt concordances, which order the arrangement of facts or narrative events.

However, discordance and concordance may be seen to unite when a plot connects multiple events together to form a single story (Ricoeur 1992:142). Dauenhauer (1997:131) and Dreyer (2000:29-30) point out that it is the power of narrative that unites events into a wholeness that makes the integration of diversity and instability with stability possible.

At this stage I will recapitulate what has been discussed and what relevance it has for this study. Identity has two meanings, that of *ipse*-identity and *idem*-identity. "Sameness" (*idem*-identity) is a form of permanence in time that allows for identification and re-identification of the "sameness" of a person over time through numeric and qualitative identity. It is what establishes uninterrupted continuity of person. Simultaneously "selfhood" constitutes a polemic of two characteristics, namely, "character" and "keeping one's word". "Character" comprises the descriptive criteria that establish identification and re-identification of the person as the same, although, similar to *idem*-identity, it refers to the dimension of "sameness" within "selfhood".

"Keeping one's word", as the other characteristic of "selfhood", testifies to the person's capacity to remain faithful to promises and capable of being accountable for one's actions. Thus, the person can be identified in "sameness" of person through constancy of integrity of his/her character over time. The person remains trustworthy despite the passing of time and any disturbance in life that may occur.

In this regard "self" assumes responsibility and accountability to "another" through the action of re-figuring "self" through stories taken as own in relation to the stories of "others". It means that faithfulness to the "self" and responsibility to "another" are relational. Thus far, I have referred to the importance of the transition of semantics and speech-act theory. What of the implications of the ethical/moral theory in relation to "selfhood" and "sameness"? This brings me to the dialectic of "self" and "another".

2.3.3 Dialectic of "self" and "another"

Another dialectic concerns identity of "self" as between the "self" and the "other", or alterity of "other". It means that "selfhood" has meaning other than the contrast with "sameness". The key to the "other-than-self", therefore, for Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another*, is mainly in *ipse*-identity, through "keeping a promise", and is always in relation to "another".

Thus, over time narrative connects two processes through emplotment of action and of character. This joining between action and character therefore results in a dialectic of concordances and discordances drawn from emplotment of action (Ricoeur 1992:144-146). It means that narrative constructs the character of the story, but not distinct from individual experiences. In this sense the person's narrative identity is obtained through construction of the story told.

Accordingly, in contribution to his notion of mediation of the dialect of "self" and the "other-than-self", Ricoeur (1992:142-143) employs the idea of "emplotment of character". At this level of emplotment the person as agent and sufferer allows for the capacity of the person to initiate action.

Narrative actions consist of interactions that are common in passions of suffering. The person's actions are exposed during a narrative and he/she also becomes known as a feeling person who suffers with and takes the initiative in being responsible for "another" (Ricoeur 1992:145).

It implies responsibility to "others". Only an ethical human agent can through the constancy of integrity remain accountable to "another" throughout time. Ricoeur (1992:146-148) maintains the tension between "self" and "other" is also *idem*-identity in the theme of "character". The mediating function of narrative identity between the poles of "sameness" and "selfhood" overlap in that counting on someone results in the notion of

relying on the stability of character of a person and expecting the person to keep his/her word. Accordingly, an ethical level is required where narrative is confronted by "sameness", "selfhood" and ethical identity to require of the person to be accountable for his/her acts.

Ricoeur (1992:151-152) asks: How does one through narrative mediation move from description (theory of action) to prescription (ethical theory)? It is through the moral rule termed "faithfulness in keeping one's word", which gives an obligatory reference, in that faithfulness can be tested according to a "kept word". However, whereas during the action of interlocution promises are based on the verbal dimension, in the practical world they are based on the actions human agents take. On this level therefore interaction is within a framework where socio-cultural traditions and initiative occur and are internalised.

Identity of "self" depends, therefore, on actively recognising and accepting the differences of the "other" instead of on passive tolerance. The active acceptance of the "other" brings awareness of the "self's" own "otherness". At the level of praxis-based action it is either active action or passive action (Ricoeur 1992:155-156).

Consequently, narrative operation is not only evident in interaction that is obvious action, but also in the fact that neglecting to do something is still acting. It means that omission or negligence to act may target someone who will suffer the consequences of non-action. This leaves the potential for the power of others' actions to control how justice is served to some people. However, the ethical implication is that the person's action holds her/him accountable.

In this idea of action and power Ricoeur (1992:157-158) points out that actions have moral and ethical implications. Thus, the mediation of narrative between the descriptive (action theory) and the prescriptive

(ethical theory) provides a hypothetical realm to open up stories for moral judgement. This means that taking responsibility for "another than self" is a matter of integrity. It is during presenting or telling a story that it reveals "who" did "what" and "how" it was done. In narratives the actions as well as the "character" of the human agent are disclosed, together with the different roles that people play as "characters" of the story. Thus, narrative forms moral ideas and action, but at the same time the stories, which one tells in dialogue with others, assist one to assess if one has achieved one's moral ideals (Kaplan 2003:92).

Thus, through the revealed "who", "what" of entangled stories the subjects' actions influence and shape one another. It reveals their characteristics or traits and "promises kept or not kept" (Ricoeur 1992:159). Thus the unity of "sameness" and "selfhood" through the notion of a moral "being", in the expression "character" (*idem*-identity), has the capacity to "keep promises" (*ipse*-identity). It means that my "promised word" is an attestation of belonging to the realm of "selfhood". In other words, I testify that through my promised word I commit "myself" in faithfulness to "myself" and "another" to do what I promised (Kaplan 2003:93-94).

In conclusion, the important points from Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity in relation to the above problematic issues relevant to the thesis statement are given below.

1) Narrative exposes the character of the storyteller and the roles that characters play are also disclosed. Thus, narrative constructs the characters of the story in accordance with the individual's experience. It therefore discloses the person as a feeling person who suffers, but who also takes responsibility for "others".

2) The function of narrative is to mediate between action theory

(descriptive criteria) and ethical theory (prescriptive). Accordingly, telling of a story opens opportunities for moral judgement. It therefore also opens the opportunity to assess whether moral goals have been achieved or not.

A function of narrative is to mediate between action theory and ethical theory and this is of prime consideration for this study. It allows for the opportunities of moral assessment and moral judgement and the possibility of initiating change or maintaining a complementary stability. Its main value is that it gives opportunities to test ideologies that are oppressive and utopian situations that are distorted. I will discuss the above dimension of narrative identity in the section where I deal with the transition of personal identity to collective identity. Because the notion of collective identity increases the ethical and moral implications I will deal with narrative as mediation between description and prescription.

2.3.4 The connection of temporal and relational dimensions

Previously in this chapter it was stated that for this study the notion of narrative identity from the perspective of the temporal and relational dimensions of Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity would be reflected on. What then is the connection between the temporal and relational dimension of personhood and the implications of narrative identity?

It means that, because of the connection between the temporal and relational dimensions, action can be taken toward implementing change. It opens the way for critical reflection on social manipulation of marginalisation. It also opens ways through imagination for the possibility of stabilising and for changing tradition where required (Dreyer 2000:36). This means that narratives of people and society, when recounted and reflected on critically, can expose situations of exclusion, discrimination and oppression. These narratives and the discrepancies between them can

uncover what is involved and how oppressive attitudes and behaviours, which uphold rigid tradition, can be accosted and confronted to bring change. It can also reveal traditions that are stable and complementary to the inclusion of all people. It can be the means to enable people who are excluded from their societies to identify with their communities. It also opens ways to enable those who are marginal to empowerment to achieve personal identity satisfactory to them. Also, it can result in those who are marginal experiencing identity with the collective members of their societies and knowing a sense of belonging (Brown 1997:110).

Thus, allowance is made to reflect with criticism on the narratives of people's lives and to become involved in the stories people recount about their contextual daily living. It means taking responsibility for "another-than-self". This reflection on the emplotment of actions in the lives of people can enable ways of uniting discordant and concordant actions (Ricoeur 1992:142-142,146-148). It is important when considering the assets of the notions of stability and change in the context of a collective sense. Because this study deals with people who are physically restricted and marginalised within their societies I will therefore reflect on narrative identity in a collective sense. How may Ricoeur's notion of "self-identity" in *Onself as Another* apply to people in a collective sense?

2.3.5 Collective identity

I propose that there is the possibility of a linkage between personal identity and collective identity through the notion of narrative and the metaphor "belonging". Through everyday reciprocal interaction and sharing narrative accounts people find parallels with their own stories and take these as their own. A community's "character" is disclosed by the telling of stories in a reciprocal manner, that is the telling and listening to each other's story within the collective context of entanglement of narratives. Thus, narratives shape personal identity and sharing reciprocal narratives

about a community in tension with stories of a particular group can shape collective identity. Collective identity therefore constitutes the "entangled stories" of the group and of other groups (Dreyer 2000:30-31). When people interpret self-narratives in relation to the interpretation of others' narratives through interaction, it creates an experience of belonging. Narrative discourse therefore forms personal identity and facilitates a sense of belonging that shapes collective identity.

2.3.5.1 Narrative identity and meaning

The notion of narrative identity maintains that people identify with the acquired habits of a group through taking its values, beliefs, meaning systems and norms (traditions) as their own. This bonding with fixed sets of rules, values and meanings can provide a sense of belonging and identity with community. This means that in a sense the individual belongs to the narrative of his/her own past and present, but he/she also belongs to the narrative of the past and the present of the members of a society (Brown 1997:110).

The result is that both interpretations of narratives shape identifying with "self" and with "others". It means that the temporality of human existence is connected with the relational dimension of human existence. The temporal plots of daily living of an individual are connected to daily living in relation to the "other" and thus, each has its own sense of history. In this sense "I" belong to "self" (selfhood) and "I" belong to "other-than-self" (community). Thus, narrative discourse and interpretation can bridge the gap between personal identity and collective identity. It provides a way of identifying "self" as another and being acknowledged as a capable and multifaceted human being.

In this way provision is made for the transition of subjectivity to inter-subjectivity by way of narrative discourse. Commonality is found in the

patterns of action and suffering contained in our history. A sense of belonging through commonality is obtained during social interaction through the exchange of different experiences that are comparable through narratives (Brown 1997:116-117).

People seek to discover the meaning and value of life through the events that occur in their lives. Recounting narratives is the way they try to make sense out of the narratives of their lives to give them purposeful meaning. It is the way they attempt to discover being "rooted". Thus, it is the way a sense of belonging is developed. It means that we can speak of collective identity.

2.3.5.2 Narrative identity and the ethical dimension of collective life

What then is the potential of narrative as mediation between description and prescription of action in a sense of personal and collective identity? Narrative has the potential to move from an agentless identity to that of agency, hence, it links an identity to a person. People are connected to the stories which they articulate about themselves (Brown 1997:113). The interpretation of narrative discourse affirms the human actor of action. It also affirms or denies the course of action in that it reveals whether an action has been carried out or not and it identifies the receptor of the action carried out or not carried out.

Brown (1997:113) points out that according to Ricoeur's notion of identity, self-description is organised around the notion of sharing. People give an account about themselves in the sense of "becoming", such as becoming of age, becoming a mother, etc. Accordingly, narrative discourse reveals human action in relation to ordinary life and problem situations. Therefore, sequences of events, drawn together into a whole story, allow for recognition of the direction a story (a life) takes, the implications of this and how the story can be concluded through the intentional human response

to the situation. Thus, self-description is, to an extent, organised through the notion of sharing. Also, "self" can discover own suffering and the suffering of another in that agency may be suppressed or recognised through achievement or denial of action.

This means that the identities of the actors are connected through the temporality of human existence with the relational dimension through taking responsibility in "keeping promises" made to another. Thus, at the same time it reveals promises made in relation to me and you. We can discover actions taken to fulfil these promises or the failure to fulfil promises. This discovery can therefore provide a way to contemplate change for the future through imagination. Thus, narrative identity also has the potential to co-author action and promote change to a situation or maintain stability (traditions) that are complementary to the situation.

However, Dreyer (2000:31) cautions by pointing out that Ricoeur maintains that the acquired identity of a group, by its values, beliefs, meaning systems and norms, must constantly be revised and renewed to avoid tradition becoming rigid and stagnant. It is the tension between stability and change found in the narrative expressions of the group connected to the past and present, which forms the group's identity and connects past and present to the future. Recounting of the "stories" of a group's past and present collective memories paves the way for critical reflection, re-interpretation and revision for renewal. It also allows imaginative changes for the future and movement of values, norms and meanings, which are rigid, or "power tools" for the privileged group (Dreyer 2000:32).

Thus, the point that is made through Ricoeur's notion of narrative identity, that the power to initiate change can be constructive or destructive, is important. Non-action or ignoring ideologies that are oppressive or distorted utopian systems are destructive as it keeps the person under the power of the "other's" action. An example of this may be found in

societies where exclusionary actions, discrimination and oppression are ignored by non-action. Policies may be made, but non-action enforces the lack of implementation of the policies.

Moreover, silence or ignoring power-controlling strategies creates suffering for the "other". Hence, non-action or ignoring oppressive socio-cultural structures, ideologies or distorted utopian systems is equal to aiding and abetting the oppression of certain people.

At present it is sufficient to understand the above to mean that innovation (possibility for change) requires critical examination and analysis of traditional stances in view of past promises being kept or not kept to avoid sedimentation (tradition) that remains static to the advantage of the privileged majority. In society or the church, unrevised traditions create structures of unequal power and exclude, marginalise and disempower people, such as people who are disadvantaged in mobility. This thought will be taken up in detail in the last chapter in relation to pastoral work with people who are mobility disadvantaged. However, I will consider the relevance of the notion of narrative identity in regard to multiple identities and religious identity.

2.4 IDENTITIES IN A PLURALISED SOCIETY

The notion of collective identity and the action of sharing through reciprocal narratives are avenues to the shaping of different identities. The social, political, economic and religious environments of our world we live in, shape different identities. Dauenhauer (1997:131), for example, points out that our world contains multiple political identities. Brown (1997:115) points out that narrative provides for identity as an actor and as a sufferer of the story. In this way narrative also provides the communicative basis for connecting human agency with identity. Thus,

narrative exchange in social interaction provides for identifying with multiple situations in a society.

2.4.1 Multiple identities

In relation to identifying with multiple social situations Van der Ven (1998:104-105) proposes a "third way", which he refers to as the open "self" theory of a dialogical "self". The open "self" theory allows for the acceptance of multiple roles in multiple situations in society through critically reflecting and distancing "self" from the roles. Thus, it is the distancing of "self" that allows for continuity, or personal identity over time. The dialogical theory of "self", therefore, is the process of the multi-voices of "self", that is the voices attached to each role, that enter into dialogue with "another"; through reciprocal dialogue and reflective criticism consensus is obtained through agreement or compromise (Van der Ven:1998:106). The end result is that many stories develop about everyday living and actions that are produced from different situations as to roles individuals play in relation to "self" and "others".

John Shotter (1993:8-9), who considers human existence from a constructionist point of view, focusses on how people use certain ways in reciprocal dialogue to construct different kinds of social relationships (identities). The emphasis is on language and ethical reciprocal dialogue, therefore the continuous flow of communication and social, political, religious or economic interaction between people is what develops and shapes the acceptance of beliefs, values and meanings of social constructions as one's own. Accordingly, people construct their identities based on reciprocal negotiations during argumentative conversation developed by social constructions over time (Shotter 1993:35). It is therefore through dialogue in a back-and-forth movement that social meaning is developed.

Incidentally, the point of view of constructionists must be critically considered because of the priority given to language. Constructionists usually give priority to language. All objects of consciousness are constructed through language and essentially nothing is outside language. The problem is that human agency is "left out of the equation", because language is the only means of social construction. Burr (1995:61), however, points out that the problem of language at the cost of omission of human agency in the construction of reality occurs in extreme postmodern perspective. Shotter's emphasis, however, is on "joint action", which describes a dynamic personal reciprocal dialogical interaction of construction of reality. Shotter's (1993:11-12) defence against relativism is that he rejects the idea of dialogue in a monological manner.

Some social constructionists are concerned about change in life situations and maintain that although constituted by reciprocal dialogue, the individual is still capable of critical historical reflection and able to make a choice about life. It means that this view considers that, because the human agent can critically analyse the social interactive framework of their lives, change is also possible. Thus, this view is removed from the extremist postmodern proponents who focus only on the performance-action functions of language (Burr 1995:57).

The point for this study is that each of the authors expressing the various points of view about identification of "self" maintain some dialectical perspective. Van der Ven (1998) maintains a dialectic of the individual and community through critical reciprocal dialogue in relation to "self" and "another" in forming identities in diverse situations. Brown (1997) points to a dialectic of the individual and cultural traditions through the reciprocal sharing of narratives in social interaction, which shape identities as the individual's stories are recognised in the stories of "others". Then, Shotter (1993) maintains a dialectic of the individual and socio-cultural context through reciprocal argumentative dialogue, which is taken as one's own,

and identities are constructed from the interrelational action.

Similarly, the above dialectical processes can make space for individuals to have separate experiences, but can construct a sense of belonging to one another through a sense of commonality. It means that narratives emerge and allow for transition from personal identity to collective identity. Brown (1997:115,116) writes: “This sense of belonging is accomplished through a very common activity in the everyday social world - the exchange of diverse experience through comparable narratives.” Consequently, belonging is more than multiple personal identities because it gives us authority to speak of a collective, such as referring to we, us, ourselves (Brown 1997:116).

It is in this way that society demands identification of its members with constitutive practices and diverse social institutions. Dauenhauer (1997:32) also points out that political society operates on normative issues that decide how members of a particular political society should behave. The aim is to get its members to accept identification with its set of beliefs, values and the meanings of its set practices and political institutions. It therefore means that political identity is shaped in the same way as personal identity.

The point that each of the above authors makes is relevant to the notion of social, political, economic and religious identities as individuals accept different beliefs, value, systems of meaning and expectations as their own. For this study it means that social, political and religious identities are formed through the notion of a sense of belonging. So far I have considered the idea of multiple identities in society in general. When dealing with constituting meaning with regard to religion where meaning is formed from a reality transcending human existence and the empirical world, a section on religious identity is discussed below.

2.4.2 Religious identity

Religion usually refers to the transcendent or as Sterkens (2001:12) uses the term “immanent world-view”. Sterkens (2001:75) refers to religious identity in a pluriform society. Not only are the problems of a pluralised society to be dealt with, but the problem presented by plurality of religious traditions, as well as internal or denominational plurality, also needs to be taken into consideration. This means there are diverse beliefs, values, meanings about God (transcendence) and set expectations of behaviour for different situations in relation to transcendence.

Sterkens (2001:76) approaches religious identification from a specific perspective of what he calls the religious polyphonic “self”. It consists of religious identity at a microlevel considered in relation to dialogue with other religions in plurality of world-views at the macrolevel. Sterkens (2001) is specifically referring to dialogue between different religions because of multiple religions existing at the macrolevel. I, however, have only referred to some of his points of view about religious identity in general because dialogue with other multiple religions with the concern of co-existing with one another goes beyond the scope of this study.

Social functions which in the past were consistent with family life and religion expanded to include multiple institutional structures. The convention of children forming their identity from the influence of beliefs and values of parents and significant others has faded somewhat, because of pluralisation at the macrolevel of life. Multi-identities, because of pluralisation, result in diverse and numerous influences and options relating to set social, political, cultural and religious orders. It also has an influence on the individual in shaping personal identity (Sterkens 2001:76; Van der Ven 1998:92-93).

Sterkens (2001:76-77) points out that an identity concept that deals with

plurality of social, political, cultural and religious institutions needs to avoid two extremes. I will address the religious identity concept in relation to “self”, although much of what is referred to as religious identity is similar for social, political and cultural dimensions of life. From a perspective of religious identity I remind the reader that the concept of identity must be considered from plurality of social and religious structures. The two extremes to avoid are, 1) the monolithic “self” where the individual remains permanently the same and is incapable of functioning in a heterogeneous society because she/he cannot comply with the conventions, rules and expectations of that society, and 2) a multiple personality that is fragmented into numerous roles and losing all permanence, which becomes a conglomerate of different personalities.

Sterkens (2001:77-78) suggests that identity be conceptualised as a polyphonic ”self” that is about combining different voices from different environments that exert influence on the individual. It allows for different identities to be shared through dialogical engagement of the individual with the different voices. Similarly, Van der Ven (1998:107-108) refers to dialogue with different inner voices that represent multiple roles the individual plays in different societies. It is this inner dialogue with a main religious tradition and other religious traditions that enables the individual to form religious identity.

It means that throughout the course of an individual’s life-time religious traditions may go through phases of change, while the individual may change views about acquired religious views as well. Either change, traditions or personal views, influence the individual, but the individual remains the same person. However, her/his views may have changed because of the influence of his/her own religious traditions or of multiple religious traditions, which may be denominational or of a religion different to the acquired religious traditions (Sterkens 2001:82). An example of a change in different denominational views is when an individual who is a

Lutheran moves to a charismatic denomination. Change of religious beliefs, for example, occurs when the individual changes from the views of a Christian tradition to a Moslem tradition. Thus, religious identity is not fixed.

Individuals can change views about religious beliefs, but the person remains the same person. In this sense of constancy, religious identity spans past, present and future of religious tradition and personal history (Sterkens 2001:83-84). One's religious and personal narratives become entangled with narratives of other religious traditions, which may influence both religious and personal identity.

However, this study is about the problem of identity and how it can be dealt with. It is therefore important that the notion of narrative identity and the influence that religious traditions have on religious identity are considered in relation to the problem of identity.

Narrative identity theory can be the means of testing religious ideologies supporting any structures of oppression, as well as utopian systems (religious traditions) that may be distorted. Narrative mediation between action theory and ethical theory can, therefore, allow for moral judgement and assessment in any actions of oppression. It is the means through which rigid tradition can be critically questioned, responsible and accountable actions can be implemented to effect changes in traditions, or maintain a suitable complementary tradition that includes all people .

The function of narrative is emplotment of actions and events into a meaningful whole story which discloses the character of the story and the other actors' part in the story. Critical reflection on the past in relation to the present religious traditions can allow for configuration of prefigured experience to allow for refiguration through imagination for future actions. In other words, refiguration of experience for practical daily living can

occur. It means that through narrative mediation and the linkage with the "mimetic" and "narrative arc" change may be considered, with consequent initiation of actions to implement changes to religious traditions that are needed in relation to the practical daily living of people (Dreyer 2000:32; Muldoon 2002:68; Venema 2000:94).

At the same time narrative mediation can strengthen our Christian religious identity, through critical reflection in relation to other religious traditions, in that it provides knowledge about "self" and Christian religious traditions. Thus, it allows us to know what we stand for in relation to our own Christian beliefs in relation to other religious traditions. Berger (1992:68-71) warns that one must know what one believes, when entering into inter-religious dialogue within a pluralised society, otherwise there is a danger of being sucked into accepting "anything that goes".

Ricoeur's (1992) notion of narrative identity is, however, important for understanding the "self-history" in relation to the history of "others", that is the social political, economic, cultural and religious "histories" surrounding "self". Narrative mediation therefore discloses the suffering of human agents and the actions or non-actions of our own religious traditions. It means that it is important to understand the moral/ethical accountability of our religious traditions in relation to "others" in society, Christians and people of other religions. Thus, narrative can function to mediate between the "religious self" and practical life by providing moral judgement and assessment of goals. It can also initiate action for revising new goals to be achieved by the Christian tradition to facilitate a sense of belonging for all people, that strengthens personal identity.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The notion of narrative identity was considered in terms of how it can

strengthen personal identity through the metaphor of “belonging”. The conclusion was that narrative identity opens the possibility of 1) allowing the initiation of change; 2) maintaining a complementary stability of tradition; 3) allowing moral judgement of traditions, actions and intentions; 4) allowing assessment of whether promises that were made had been kept or not. These four points are achieved firstly through reflexion and criticism in connection with the contextual ordinary daily lives of people and the traditions of societies and secondly, through taking responsibility for “self” and “another” in moral action that facilitates collective identity and strengthens personal identity.

Religious identity was considered in relation to Ricoeur’s (1992, 1995) notion of “self” and “sameness”. In relation to the thesis statement of the problem of identity and how it can be dealt with, it was argued that through the notion of narrative identity religious tradition can contribute to shaping personal identity. Religious identity can, through the metaphor of “belonging”, provide collective identity that makes people experience inclusion.

The next chapter will consider mobility impairment and how narrative identity may be considered in relation to mobility impairment.