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# Trauma and Holy Saturday:

## *Remembering and Mourning with WWII Comfort Women*

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**ABSTRACT.** The phenomenon of trauma is not new. However, the study of trauma is relatively new, spanning a little over a century, and has recently begun receiving attention from contemporary theologians. This paper will be concerned with trauma and its ongoing effects on WWII comfort women to take issue with a linear (or triumphalistic) narrative of redemption in which life is victorious over-and-against death. In addition, this paper will explore a theology of Holy Saturday as a way to forge an appropriate theological response to trauma, and, further, demonstrate its potential to engage in the work of trauma healing.

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Seeing helplessly the loved one who dies, watching powerlessly one's country destroyed or one's people slaughtered in the gas chambers, or witnessing fearfully one's close friends or neighbors who get abused or re-experience the abusive events through anxiety attacks, flashbacks, repeated nightmares, or intrusive memories — such events can result in a variety of traumatic reactions. Trauma is inescapable. Inevitable. It is not rare, but common. And, most of all, it is a complicated issue. It really requires our careful treatments.

Given the reality of trauma, it is fair to say that the theologian who asserts theological claims to a meta-narrative of the linear progression from death to life, may seem to those who survive war, torture, rape, or domestic violence as inappropriate at best, or naïve and unsympathetic, at worst. Thus, I argue that theology must 1) slow down its movement from Good Friday's crucifixion to Easter Sunday's resurrection, often read in a linear narrative in which life is victorious over-and-against death, 2) take time to dwell in Holy Saturday — the puzzling *hours* of transition between Good Friday and Easter Sunday — and 3) learn to bear witness to “what remains” within the context where the reality of death persists and the promise of life remains unseen.

In order to take trauma and its aftermath seriously, my paper will first seek to describe the depth of comfort women's traumatic experience. By exploring this depth and re-exploring it through the lens of trauma study, I hope to demonstrate that a better theology for trauma, in general, and comfort women, in particular, is to bear witness to what does not go away, to what remains, to what exceeds death yet cannot be interpreted as new life. At the heart of this better theology is Holy Saturday and its twofold picture: suffering remains, but love remains more — even at the place at which the channels of graceful future and hopeful healing are most threatened.

### **The Depths of Comfort Women's Traumatic Experience**

The Japanese military's sex slaves, called *jeongsindae* or comfort women, refer to the victims of the planned and organized crime committed by the Japanese government, army, and private enterprises during World War II. In *The Comfort Women*, George Hicks describes the comfort women's sufferings of Japanese regimental and military field brothels. During the 1930s and 1940s, women from Japanese-occupied territories were involuntarily shipped all over the Japanese Empire, which stretched from the

Siberian border in the north to Burma in Southeast Asia. While it is difficult to estimate the objective number of comfort women, especially given the lack of statistical data, Hicks says that there would have been about 139,000 comfort women at most.<sup>57</sup> These women were forced to have sex with 10 to 40 men a day and suffered from unbearable insults and humiliation. If they tried to fight their attackers, they were beaten so savagely that their somatic functions were permanently impaired.<sup>58</sup> They were also stabbed with bayonets that left inexpugnable wounds on their innocent bodies and internal organs as well as the inviolability of their human rights.

As a result, many of those comfort women committed suicide or were left with wounded souls—lives marked by acute anxieties, dissociative states, obsessive thoughts, and mental/physical illnesses, such as nervous breakdowns and sterility. This cluster of emotional, psychological, and somatic collapse led to shame and even helplessness. This all developed in response to multifaceted loss. This loss manifested in the erasure of geographical connection to their country, the mystery and sacredness of their life, the dignity and wonder of their liberty, and the meaning and purpose of their existence.

At the end of the war, these women were either shot to death, committed suicide after being bullied, humiliated, and disenfranchised, or simply were abandoned. Those who survived and returned home have henceforth lived with much suffering from their failing health, poverty, shame, and social alienation. In “The End of a Nightmare, The Beginning of Another,” Hicks describes that the comfort station survivors’ long, traumatic journey to home and rehabilitation in community have left physical, psychological, and spiritual wounds on their innocent bodies and minds. These wounds

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<sup>57</sup> George Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan’s Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 19.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

become the source of triggers that result in traumatization and re-traumatization.<sup>59</sup>

It is also important to note that many survivors in Asia are confronted with another form of suffering. In countries such as Korea and China, the communities have been shaped by a Confucian taboo that attaches the high moral value to the ideal of chastity.<sup>60</sup> According to a professor of anthropology at San Francisco State University and the author of *The Comfort Women* C. Sarah Soh, the scope of Asian women's education in the twentieth century was largely limited to the cultivation of "wifely virtues," including chastity and obedience.<sup>61</sup>

Kim Ok-Sil, who labored as a comfort woman in China for three years from 1942 and returned home, said in her oral interview with Soh that her father often shouted at her with rage, "This girl [Ok-Sil] is brining *shame* to the ancestors and the neighborhood [emphasis added]."<sup>62</sup> Another Korean survivor whose name is Yi Tuk-Nam said to Soh in a similar vein: "I hated being at home more than dying."<sup>63</sup> Confronted with such Confucian taboo, many survivors in Asia are unable to disclose the infringement on their human rights, nor can they accuse their abusers. Instead, they cover their traumatic experiences so as not to face ostracism from their families and communities. The need to be silent about evil and injustice is obviously the ongoing reality of a suffering that does not go away, but for them it is essential for the process of survival and rehabilitation. In turn, a majority of comfort women in Asia fall silent out of terror.

Silence makes one a stranger to something, not to others but to one's own self. Georges Perec, a Jewish Holocaust survivor who

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 152–67.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>61</sup> C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 88.

inevitably migrated to France during World War II writes of what it means to be a stranger to oneself in his memoir:

I am a stranger in relation to something of me... I am different, but not different from others, different rather from what is mine, from my people. I do not speak the language my parents spoke, I do not share the memories they might have had, something which was theirs, which made them who they were, their history, their culture, their hope was not transmitted to me.<sup>64</sup>

His memoirs describe that, woven into the traumatic event that dispossess him of his identity, language, community, and memory, his relationship to his own life and story borders on the outsider's perspective, as if it were someone else's story being narrated.

In my view, Perec's memoir encapsulates the reality that many of these survivors in Asia faced. A Confucian taboo empowered their silence. Many of these survivors in Asia are still unable to speak up and claim what is missing and forgotten in their lives and stories. They are strangers or bystanders to their own lives and stories. In a broad sense, silence makes these survivors fall into an abyss of being forgotten, leaving them to suffer alone in fearing ostracism from their families and communities. It is nothing more than an unfinished war waged against one's identity, language, community, and memory.

The survivors' real stories stand against a social code of chastity that renders their modes of living, remembering, truth-telling, and witnessing to their past as social taboo. Consequently, many of those survivors in Asia: 1) committed suicide, 2) suffered and died within unresolved grief or unbearable complications such as depression, intense anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems; or 3) remain

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<sup>64</sup> W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 81–2.

unknown or unwilling to stand up and claim the justice that is their due. Yes, their suffering *is not over* yet.

### **Herstory of Trauma in the Lives of Comfort Women**

The suffering that remains is at the heart of trauma. In *Walking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*, a trauma therapist Peter Levine, whose somatic experiencing approach provides effective treatments to traumatized people, describes trauma as the ongoingness of certain forms of suffering. According to Levine, when people face “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and the threat of annihilation,” and when these sufferings *remain* and *last* longer than four weeks, or worse, *become chronic*, trauma is nothing but the chosen diagnosis.<sup>65</sup>

The phenomenon of trauma is not new. People have been vulnerable to trauma since violence is everywhere at every time — world wars, local wars, civil wars, ideological wars, ethnic wars, genocides, famines, epidemics, and lesser tumults of all kinds — and human civilization from the beginning has therefore always been vulnerable to its delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance in the form of anxiety attacks, flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive memories: Trauma. This trauma, in a nutshell, is not new.<sup>66</sup> Yet, the

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<sup>65</sup> Peter Levine, *Walking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1997), 28.

<sup>66</sup> Considering the physical impacts of the Black Death/Plague, the French Revolution, Evolutionary theory, and the Holocaust, and their psychological and emotional manifestations on the victims in the form of something spectral, which signifies, but not represents directly, that something, having occurred, has left its mark, a peculiar and uncanny inscription of sorts, it becomes apparent to us that the origin of trauma is not limited to our modern century but dates back to the Middle Ages and to the Ancient Ages given the Herodotus’ historical witness of the Greco-Persian Wars of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE (and perhaps to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE according to the analysis of the biblical scholar David Carr who saw the biblical texts as historical manuscripts of war, suffering, and trauma — in his *Holy Resilience: The Bible’s Traumatic Origins*, Carr seeks to find the origin of trauma in the biblical texts, which record the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE). See David M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible’s Traumatic Origins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

study of trauma is relatively new, spanning a little over a century. Associate Director for the Master of Theological Studies at St. Norbert College Lynn Bridgers traces this history in “The Resurrected Life: Roman Catholic Resources in Posttraumatic Pastoral Care.” According to Bridgers, the twentieth century provided numerous opportunities for studying trauma, but it was only after the 1970s that a constellation of three political movements, comprised of Vietnam veterans, rape victims, and the Holocaust and torture survivors, offered the political impetus for the larger study of psychological trauma.<sup>67</sup>

The first of these political movements was comprised of disaffected veterans returning from Vietnam. These Vietnam veterans organized hundreds of small groups, gathered where they could speak honestly about the horror of war, and revealed in public their dissatisfaction with the level of treatment available to them in the aftermath of their service.<sup>68</sup> The second was the women’s movement, which gave voice to those working in shelters for victims of domestic violence or in rape and sexual abuse crisis centers.<sup>69</sup> No longer willing to allow “denial, secrecy, and shame” to render those victims of sexual violence silent, the women’s movement put a lot of effort into transforming what had previously been private suffering into public action for social and political change.<sup>70</sup> What was at stake in their effort was to address the similar patterns found in those female victims and Vietnam veterans. The third movement

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<sup>67</sup> Lynn Bridgers, “The Resurrected Life: Roman Catholic Resources in Posttraumatic Pastoral Care,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 15, no. 1 (2011): 39–40. There is no firm definition for trauma, which has been given various descriptions at various times and under different contexts. For a good discussion of trauma and recent attempts to define it, see Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel, and Pastoral Care* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 57–62; Judith L. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 7–32; Bessel van der Kolk M.D., *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 7–50.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>70</sup> Hunsinger, *Bearing the Unbearable*, 57.



comprised the human rights movement centering on Holocaust survivors; researchers saw parallels between the psychological responses of both female and veteran groups as well as Holocaust survivors and the tortured survivors they supported.<sup>71</sup>

Studies of the parallels between the psychological responses of rape victims and Vietnam veterans and the Holocaust and torture survivors made significant contributions to the psychological assessments of loss, violence, suffering, and ways of coping. These psychological assessments spurred the American Psychological Association (APA) to research psychological trauma. Consequently, in 1980, the APA included a new, legitimate diagnosis in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for 1980 called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The field of traumatic studies finally commenced in earnest. In their first attempt to capture its essence, physicians and psychiatrists described trauma as “wound” or as “an injury inflicted upon the body by an act of violence,” “a loss of a sense of self,” “a breakdown in normal knowing and feeling,” “a paralyzing lack of agency in the threat of the harm suffered,” and an inability to structure thoughts, organize stories, or re-engage in life.<sup>72</sup> To be traumatized meant to be haunted by an inimical external force that threatens to destroy one’s body, mind, and emotion. In this stage of initial research, trauma studies primarily focused on somatic or emotional damage.

However, trauma studies have gradually extended its scope to the peculiar and uncanny temporality of trauma.<sup>73</sup> The leading

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<sup>71</sup> Bridgers, “The Resurrected Life,” 40.

<sup>72</sup> Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 12-5.

<sup>73</sup> Contemporary trauma studies have also sought to develop critical theories that extend its application beyond the clinical context (i.e. trauma as pure pathology) to a wide range of socio-cultural and historical dimensions, allowing trauma research to facilitate new interdisciplinary encounters with cultural studies (Jeffrey Alexander and Manfred Weinberg), historical studies (Dominick LaCapra), and literary studies (Shoshana Felman and Cathy Caruth). It is not so surprising to see why contemporary trauma theorists have turned to concepts of trauma as tools of literary or cultural analysis inasmuch as we can look at a popular culture, music and mass

exponent of contemporary trauma studies Cathy Caruth describes that trauma is experienced only belatedly in its repeated possession of the one who experience it: “The story of trauma... as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality — the escape from a death, or from its referential force — rather attests to its endless impact on a life.”<sup>74</sup> “The tales of trauma,” Caruth further notes, oscillate “between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival.”<sup>75</sup> Trauma has no clear end but returns as if it were “what is not integrated in time.”<sup>76</sup> This return in Caruth’s estimation is what distinguishes trauma from suffering.

In Shelly Rambo’s seminal work on trauma studies, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, she also writes in a similar sense: While “suffering is integrated in time,” trauma is “not solely located in the actual event but, instead, encompasses the return of that event, and the ways in which the event is not concluded.”<sup>77</sup> Trauma in this view (and Caruth’s) is not simply a wound that bears witness to the past suffering. It is, rather, a nagging cry that speaks beyond that past suffering.

In my stay in the House of Sharing,<sup>78</sup> I witnessed this “nagging” cry concretely manifested in comfort women’s bodies, minds, and

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media obsessed by repetitions of violent wars and disasters: “at the successions of *Die Hards*, *Terminators*, and *Robocops*, as well as *Nightmares on Elm Street*, disease and epidemic films, and now the return of the “classic” disaster films of twisters and turbulence and the repeated sequences of mini apocalypses within each film; at “real life” cop shows; and at the news itself, that never exhausted source of pure horror.” See James Berger, “Trauma and Literary Theory,” *Contemporary Literature* 38, no. 3 (1997): 571–74.

<sup>74</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4, 7.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 7.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> The House of Sharing in Korea is a place located in Gyeonggi Province. Built in 1995, the house is home to the *halmonis* (i.e., the comfort women). In addition to living quarters for the *halmonis*, the house includes a lecture hall, an outdoor

emotions. Kun-Ja Kim, for example, cries: “I try not to think of it. I really do. But it is useless because it comes alive. Time does not heal. And there is no way I can escape from this hell. It is terrible... terribly hurt... Until the day I die, I cannot forget what I have been through. Even after I die, I won’t be able to forget. [After giving a fragmentary account of what had happened to her at the Japanese military brothel, she continues:] Living a life with this haunting memory has nothing to do with a life living in a fairy tale. It is not simply life; nor is it literally death. But it is something that has to do with a form of life surviving death.”<sup>79</sup> Based on her four years as a comfort woman, Johana also cries: “Even though these horrible things happened to me many years ago, I still have deep sorrow and grief inside me. Time does not heal. No money, no matter how much, can ever compensate us for what we went through.”<sup>80</sup>

Both Kun-Ja and Johana attend to suffering that remains long after the event is over. Kun-Ja does not *really* escape from her hellish past. In a similar vein, Johana is *still* tied up with her horrible past. Their cries in this sense speak to what is beyond the past in such a way that the past does not stay in the past; nor does it come to an end but, instead, invades the present and offers an antithesis to a familiar saying: time heals all wounds.<sup>81</sup>

Trauma exists. It is *real*.<sup>82</sup> It *really* constitutes and subsumes life around it. Its *realness* manifests in both Kun-Ja and Johana. Many

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entertainment stage, and the Museum of Sexual Slavery by the Japanese Military. The museum, which was built in 1998, includes wartime photographs, art by the halmonis, and a life-size, so-called “comfort station” cubicle.

<sup>79</sup> Kun-Ja Kim’s story and oral witness have been written in this paper based on the interview I had at the House of Sharing on Wednesday, August 20, 2014. Kun-Ja is a former comfort woman who lives in the House of Sharing.

<sup>80</sup> Hicks, *The Comfort Women*, 166.

<sup>81</sup> Trauma is “a break in the order of experience that blasts apart... the binding of past, present, and future.” Through this break, the interpenetration of past and present occurs. See Gregg Horowitz, *Sustaining Loss: Art and Mournful Life* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 124.

<sup>82</sup> Some psychiatrists point out that the nature of the traumatic event in and of itself does not guarantee a traumatic reaction. Thus, Hunsinger acknowledges that “[o]ne person may experience the event as traumatic while her neighbor, friend, or

other women in the House of Sharing whose lives and dignity were forcefully violated by the Japanese soldiers' genital organs are also not free from this *real* trauma.

Whenever I visit the House of Sharing, I witness these women crying which indicates they are not going to forget the Japanese government; that they are suffering from their traumatic experiences; and that insofar as they live in/with their (mnemonic) bodies that hold the wounds of sex slavery, they will never escape from the haunting memories to experience healing, transformation, and reconciliation. Obviously, trauma is pervasive in the life of these women; it shatters their faith in justice, their hope in peace, and their vision of redemption. If this is the case, should not trauma be acknowledged by theologians as a worthy topic of theological discourse?

However, most theological discourse to date has not been about trauma. That is to say, theological discourse has gone without addressing the question of trauma that has no clear end. As Rambo rightly points out, "Easter comes too early, before its time."<sup>83</sup> Thus, theology fails to take account of testifying to what remains after the traumatic event. Trauma is completely eclipsed in theological discourse and becomes merely a forerunner to the final epiphany of God's glorious salvation for us.

Given the impact of trauma, especially its peculiar and uncanny temporality, no victorious theological discourse can easily emerge. Theologians should admit that their theological witnesses to trauma and its aftermath should not be a straightforward march into Easter Sunday. It should rather be, as Serene Jones implies in her text *Trauma and Grace*,<sup>84</sup> a vision of hope or peace without a prior

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daughter, having the exact same experience, may find it stressful but not traumatic." This fact remains inexplicable and provides room for doubt to the existence of psychological trauma. See Hunsinger, *Bearing the Unbearable*, 59.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>84</sup> Jones describes her struggle with the question: "How do people, whose hearts and minds have been wounded by violence, come to feel and know the

assumption that the Easter vision will be necessarily realized in the near future. Finding a theological discourse of redemption amid trauma in this sense is not providing a satisfactory denouement of Easter Sunday. Rather, it should testify to a strait gate of hope through Holy Saturday — the day in which Jesus' death is completed, the dead Christ descends into hell, and the hopeful promise of "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well"<sup>85</sup> is muddled, interrupted, and shattered. Holy Saturday is the day in which death feels so final.

### **Holy Saturday**

The rise of trauma studies calls attention to new aspects of the conversation about suffering and redemption. First, trauma survivors would likely resist a "redemptive" or "triumphalistic" description of their traumatic sufferings. Second, their sufferings are seen as irredeemable. Third, theology would likely trivialize the nature and magnitude of the traumatic event as well as its aftermath insofar as it reads traumas in a linear fashion in which life is always victorious over-and-against death, insofar as it fails to bear witness to what does not go away, to what remains, to what exceeds death yet cannot be interpreted as new. So while the efforts to theodiceize or maintain the theology of resurrection are noteworthy, even required for theologians, one must concede this theoretical perspective is inappropriate at best, and simply untrue at worst, for trauma survivors.

Why are theologians at times quick to turn to resurrection<sup>86</sup> to overlay triumphalistic narratives on persons who experience trauma,

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redeeming power of God's grace?" And she cites a Vietnam veteran's account as a way of responding to this question, reflecting: "The way forward is never straight, and there is no going back. Having lived in the land of the bizarre, all one can do is step forward into a future where that bizarre world continues to haunt you, but perhaps in a new way. A space is opened up for other kinds of knowing as well. But two worlds continue to haunt one another." See Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, viii, 156.

<sup>85</sup> Flora A. Keshgegian, *Time for Hope: Practices for Living in Today's World* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 43.

instead of witnessing, mourning or patiently waiting until the traumatized are ready to experience victory over their trauma? What is a “more appropriate theological response” to those who lack the benefit of hindsight, to those who are reliving traumatic experiences, whether in the form of intrusive memories, dreams, or actions?

Maybe we need Holy Saturday.<sup>87</sup> Maybe there is a reason that the dead Son came back from the dead on Easter Sunday rather than Holy Saturday. Maybe there needs to be a *prolonged* time of hopelessness built into our theologies to provide some sort of solidarity with all those who struggle to see a time of hopeful tomorrow. To forge a more appropriate theological response to the fundamental questions of trauma and its aftermath, I suggest that theology must begin to learn how to see the world through the lens of Holy Saturday and its twofold picture, manifested in Hans Urs von Balthasar’s classic texts *Mysterium Paschale, Explorations in Theology* volume 4, and *Theo-Drama* volume 4 and 5, instead of holding a source of hope born from foreknowing how the story ends.

At the heart of Rambo’s text *Spirit and Trauma* is von Balthasar’s theology of Holy Saturday and its potential to engage in the work of trauma healing. Following von Balthasar’s and Adrienne von Speyr’s joint reflections on Holy Saturday, Rambo describes Holy Saturday as an “archive of gap” that bears witness to a radical closing (the tragedy of Good Friday) with no certainty of mysterious reopening (the alleluias of Easter Sunday).<sup>88</sup> This “archive of gap” is

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<sup>86</sup> We must also ask ourselves that to whom does the resurrection happen? It happens to Jesus of Nazareth. No one other than this Son of Man can traverse the abyss of death that sin has opened up. Obviously, we do not yet have any experience of it that we have heard of except this one. Moreover, Mary the woman who bore God incarnate to the world did not think “everything is all right in the end” as she held her dead son; nor could the disciples ever have imagined the morning of Easter resurrection. The rush to Easter Sunday can belie that reality.

<sup>87</sup> Holy Saturday is one in which trauma survivors may discover a traumatic Christian narrative that appeals to them: The chaos and horror of Good Friday are over; Jesus is buried in a borrowed tomb and the grief and mourning now begin; those who had gathered around the cross return to their homes without knowing how the story ends; for them death feels so final, and hope feels far away.

<sup>88</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 54–68.

one of the most traumatic times in the Christian liturgical cycle, for on that day there really is “no hint of light, no hint of life, no hint of words.”<sup>89</sup> Rambo sets forth that Holy Saturday is the interval between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This interval is “a period of chaos, misrecognition, and strange reversals.”<sup>90</sup> In this interval there is no life and no words but only the “second death,” the experience of the Son as a dead man.<sup>91</sup> Christ, as von Balthasar states, “does not descend into hell as one victorious over death.”<sup>92</sup> Christ does not go down to the interval and collect all the sinners and unbelievers; nor does he break the chains of the captives. There is, in Rambo’s words, “no victory there and no activity. Instead, the Son is a dead man in hell.”<sup>93</sup> The interval shows no stunning picture of victory. The Son is dead. In exploring Holy Saturday through Rambo’s Balthasarian paths, one may find no “triumphalistic” narrative, but less of a pause and more of an end that triggers a time of grief and sorrow for the dead Son who enters the very state of deadness—sinking, not striding, to the place of the dead. This view is contrary to a common traditional stance on hell in which there is either the glorious march of a victorious king or the triumphant proclamation of Christ’s final power over-and-against sin and death.<sup>94</sup>

It is important to note, however, that while von Balthasar views a “non-triumphalistic” Holy Saturday as a central theme figuring prominently in most of his subsequent theological endeavors, he does not fail to interpret this non-triumphalistic Holy Saturday within the broader contexts of the triune life of God and the divine drama

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 56–57.

<sup>91</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 172–73.

<sup>92</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 63.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> The common traditional view of hell, as Alyssa Lyra Pitstick argues, affirms that Christ’s descent is “more the beginning of the glory of Easter Day than the continuation of the suffering of Good Friday.” See Alyssa Lyra Pitstick, *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ’s Descent into Hell* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 84.

that narrates the redemption of all of humanity in God's absolute, everlasting love.<sup>95</sup> In *Explorations in Theology*, volume IV, *Spirit and Institution*, von Balthasar maintains that a proper understanding of the descent into hell is based on the triune life of God. Von Balthasar writes:

The depths of God's abandonment of the Son on the Cross can be understood only through the unique and lasting relationship of the Son of God, even and precisely in his abandonment ['The hour is coming and is already here when you will leave me all alone. But I am not alone, for the Father is with me' (John 16:32)]. In the whole 'economy' of the Incarnation, the divine intimacy of the Father and Son in the Holy Spirit assumes only another modality, occasioned by the absorption of human, sinful alienation in this intimacy, as a new expression of their selfless, surrendering love. The return of the Son to the Father who has raised him from the dead is nothing other than the transparency of this modality of alienation in what it already is in truth: the eternal intimacy of divine love.<sup>96</sup>

Von Balthasar speaks of the abandonment of the cross, which reaches its pinnacle in the isolation and desolation of the descent into hell, as another 'modality' of the divine unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Von Balthasar also claims that Jesus Christ's experiences of the cross and the descent into hell reveal the absolute character of God's love, and, further, demonstrate that this love is rightly understood only if it is interpreted as God's absolute, everlasting love.<sup>97</sup> In von

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<sup>95</sup> Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 64.

<sup>96</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology, Vol. 4: Spirit and Institution* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 436, quoted in David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement, and the Christian Life* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 122.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.



Balthasar's view, the full extent of God's absolute, everlasting love is revealed in the complete solidarity of the Son of God with what is not God (a man, a dead man, a lost soul). And this complete solidarity, which enacts the redemption of all of humanity and the reconciliation of the world with God, carries the Son of God to death, and, further, into the isolation and desolation of hell. It is precisely in his complete solidarity with all of humanity that the Son of God reveals that God is absolute, everlasting love. To borrow von Balthasar's words, the Son of God, by accompanying all of humanity even to their traumatic realities of abandonment, isolation, and desolation, manifests "that God, as all-powerful, is [absolute, everlasting] love, and as [this absolute, everlasting] love is all-powerful."<sup>98</sup>

Von Balthasar draws the further presupposition that God's absolute, everlasting love is whole within the very life of God. Von Balthasar understands this limitless divine love within the very life of God as the *kenosis* of the divine persons in relation to one another.<sup>99</sup> The Son by virtue of his divine kenosis exists wholly in the Father, the Father wholly in the Son, the Spirit wholly in the Son and the Father. In von Balthasar's view, the inner life of the Trinity is deeply self-emptying in nature, and is therefore the form of all God's economic works "outward" (the creation, reconciliation, and redemption of all things).<sup>100</sup> It is in this point of view that the interval — liturgically named as Holy Saturday in this case — is not merely a forerunner to Easter, nor is it separated from the broader contexts of the triune life of God and the divine drama that narrates the redemption of all of humanity. It is, in von Balthasar's estimation, the focal event of the Triduum, that is to say an outstandingly distinguished event in which one may see not merely Christ's deepest entry into darkness, but the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, 133–326. See also John Polkinghorne, ed., *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 137–51.

<sup>100</sup> Polkinghorne, *The Work of Love*, 140.

mystery of God's Trinitarian life, which allows for great distance within the very life of God so as to fully embrace authentic elements of human physical and spiritual death, and the radical character of God's love and kenosis, which is fully revealed in God's complete *togetherness* with what is not God (man, creation, suffering, hell).<sup>101</sup> Von Balthasar describes, God is this as all-powerful is love, and as love is all powerful intrinsically in the mystery of His Trinity, which can be explicated only by the total opposition — between being with God and being abandoned by God — within God himself. This divine mystery can disclose itself only in its full reality “as accompanying the sinner only *sub contrario*, in secret, because otherwise it would not have revealed itself as reality. But because in this God (and God is God only as eternal and living) reveals himself as love, he cannot have become love merely by virtue of the emancipation of the creature; he has no need of the world and its ways in order to become himself; but manifests himself, precisely in the cross of Christ, in his abandonment by God and descent into hell, as the one he always was: everlasting love.”<sup>102</sup> “As the three in one, God is,” in von Balthasar's account, “so intensely everlasting love, that within his life temporal death and the hellish desolation of the creature, accepted out of love, can become transmuted into an expression of kenotic love.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Emphasizing the distinctiveness and profound meaning of the Descent into Hell on Holy Saturday, von Balthasar also writes that the mystery of Holy Saturday must be known to us as “one single total truth, one single dogma, which at its centre is christological, but in its immediate implications is trinitarian as well as soteriological, and, indeed, soteriological (*descensus* and Resurrection) as trinitarian.” Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Convergences: To the Source of Christian Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 93–94.

<sup>102</sup> Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell*, 123. Anne Hunt also expresses the importance of Holy Saturday in Christian narratives of salvation by using the three “participatory” verbs—sharing, bearing, and experiencing: “The paschal mystery [revealed in Holy Saturday] means that God, in love, has entered into the hiatus of death—physical and spiritual—and has taken the full measure of our situation not from the outside, as it were, but from the inside, *sharing* our desolation, *bearing* our sin, as Son *experiencing* God-forsakenness [emphasis added].” See Anne Hunt, *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery: A Development in Recent Catholic Theology* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1997), 80.

Von Balthasar in his theology of Holy Saturday has accomplished something very meaningful to contemporary theologians. His theology of Holy Saturday opens up a way through which we can interpret that God's love survives the "non-triumphalistic" Holy Saturday and mysteriously persists on the razed terrain between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, between death and life-after/through/with-death. Moreover, it shows that if God is God in hell; if God identifies Godself as what is other than God; if God allows that otherness in the "kenotic" modality of the divine unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to accompany us even to the isolation of hell, there is no place God's love will not interrupt and persist. So while the Balthasarian "non-triumphalistic" narrative of Holy Saturday may look bleak and uncomfortable, and even idiosyncratic to many of those traditionally conservative Catholic or Protestant theologians, one may find in his work within the interval a useful picture for understanding what persists between Good Friday and Easter Sunday: A picture of God's love traveling to the place where there is no hint of life while enabling the dead to have communion with the one who is *intrinsically* love.<sup>104</sup>

When viewed from von Balthasar's point of view, a twofold picture of Holy Saturday becomes clear enough to read. On the one

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<sup>103</sup> Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell*, 123.

<sup>104</sup> In the first volume of *Explorations in Theology, The Word Made Flesh*, one may further find a helpful description for understanding the significance of a non-triumphalistic Holy Saturday in Christian narratives of salvation. Von Balthasar writes, "The descent into hell between Christ's death and resurrection is a necessary expression of the event of redemption... The mystery of [a non-triumphalistic] Holy Saturday is two things simultaneously: the utmost extremity of the *exinanitio* [self-emptying] and the beginning of the *gloria* even before the resurrection." Here von Balthasar views: (1) the death and resurrection of Jesus are not understood as mere bipolarity, for Holy Saturday as the "necessary expression of the event of redemption" stands between the first and the third day of the Paschal Triduum, Good Friday and Easter Sunday; and that (2) insofar as the *gloria* begins even before the resurrection, the mystery of a non-triumphalistic Holy Saturday gives us a cue for understanding and coping with the presence of the radical nature of divine love in the pure silence and isolation of Holy Saturday: Jesus Christ's journey to the extreme limit of human suffering and death. See Edward T. Oakes and David Moss, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 116–17.

hand, Holy Saturday is a component of the incomprehensible nature of a somber, non-triumphalistic event that triggers a time of grief and sorrow. New Testament scholar Gail O'Day also notes the interval is nothing but a time of pain and hardship for those who remain as witnesses to the extreme loss that has occurred on the Cross.<sup>105</sup> In fact, there's no one in the group of first disciples who could really be told of having the benefit of hindsight for understanding Holy Saturday. Thus, they wept and mourned as Jesus said in the book of John 16:20: "You will weep and mourn... You will grieve." But Holy Saturday is, on the other hand, a razed yet paradoxically sparkling terrain where one may find the following realities: (1) the Son experiences the same timelessness and utter incomprehensibility of isolation and desolation as does the dead in hell; (2) the Son creates out of his self-emptying life a complete solidarity with them, which, in trauma therapists' perspectives, can become transmuted into a provisional, yet timely means for making and re-making a "fragile" bridge that leads the traumatized of all sorts to life, recovery, and justice.

### **A Better Theology for Trauma**

The importance of examining the twofold picture of Holy Saturday is not merely in the von Balthasar's remarkable theological defense against the challenges of traditional theologies, but more in its potential that helps contemporary theologians in understanding and coping with the issue of ongoing and very real trauma that marks so many survivors. In my view, the twofold picture of Holy Saturday contains two valuable resources that might contribute to the healing process of trauma. In connection with Judith L. Herman's classic models for trauma treatment, these resources can show up in two practical activities: (1) remembering and mourning the non-

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<sup>105</sup> Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Luke - John* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 841.

triumphalistic narrative of the survivor's Holy Saturday experience; (2) eventualizing the complete solidarity of God with the dead, the forsaken, and the hopeless through God's love.

First, as a factor contributing to the healing of a trauma survivor, trauma theorists assert that giving voice through remembering and mourning to all that the traumatized have experienced — the terror and hopelessness, the isolation and desolation, the sorrow and grief — is the first step for reclaiming their lives after trauma. In "Recovery from Psychological Trauma," Herman describes the value of remembering and mourning based on her clinical experience of trauma care and support. She writes:

[The healing process of trauma] requires immersion in a past experience of frozen time; the descent into [remembering and] mourning feels like a surrender to endless tears. Patients often ask how long this painful process will last. There is no fixed answer to the question, only the assurance that the process cannot be bypassed or hurried. It will almost surely take longer than the patient wishes, but that it will not go on forever. After many repetitions, the moment comes when the telling of the trauma story no longer arouses quite such intense feeling. It has become a part of the survivor's experience, but only one part of it. It is a memory like other memories, and it begins to fade as other memories do. Her grief, too, begins to lose its vividness.<sup>106</sup>

Herman shows that, while "new conflicts and challenges at each new stage of the life cycle will inevitably reawaken the trauma and bring some new aspect of the [traumatic] experience to light," the activity of remembering and mourning is necessary to create a

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<sup>106</sup> Judith L. Herman, "Recovery from Psychological Trauma," *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 52, no. S1 (September 1, 1998): 148.

space where the traumatized can begin to see the trauma as “only one part, and perhaps not even the most important part,” of their life stories and regain the power of interpretation over it.<sup>107</sup>

When viewed from the perspectives of Herman and many other psychologists who follow her approach, one thing becomes clear. Without the activity of remembering and mourning, traumatized people are unable to overcome the anxiety of their traumatic experiences. They remain overwhelmed by the traumatic event, defeated and terrified continuously. In turn, they are imprisoned by the suffering that remains and fail to re-engage in life and recovery. To put it in another way, the traumatized cannot escape from the “archive of gap” that bears witness to a radical closing with no certainty of mysterious reopening without remembering and mourning their “non-triumphalistic” Holy Saturday experiences. The activity of remembering and mourning is vital to the trauma therapy.<sup>108</sup>

A proper example that reveals the connection between the first activity of remembering and mourning and the trauma healing of comfort women is a documentary called *One Last Cry*. This film highlights the issue of comfort women, forced into sex slavery by the Japanese Army during the years 1939-1945, as a “grave violation of human rights that affected and continues to affect women all across Asia and Europe.”<sup>109</sup> Thus it records the unintentional, intrusive repetition of the traumatic event in the bodies, minds, and emotions of those comfort station survivors in South Korea, Wuhan, China,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> It is also important to note that an act of remembering is an important theoretical construct that has the potential to become the mechanism through which theology can accomplish three ethical goals: 1) recalling the pain and loss a social group experienced that is threatened by forgetting, 2) identifying resilience and resistance in the midst of a social group’s suffering, and 3) recognizing life experiences that are beyond and between suffering, resistance and resilience. Flora A. Keshgegian, *Redeeming Memories: A Theology of Healing and Transformation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 86.

<sup>109</sup> The entire documentary *One Last Cry* is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yHHfYOGumI>

Shanghai, the Philippines and Australia. But it also shows how these survivors come to the positive dimension of trauma healing by remembering or mourning their past in dance, song, or verbal format.

Of course, remembering itself is not a universal principle of healing. Mourning does not bring the same level of healing to all survivors. *One Last Cry* does not filter away the agonized faces, painful gestures, and violent tremors that the comfort station survivors express in the process of remembering and mourning their traumatic past. But one thing that is clear to me in the documentary is that this process of remembering and mourning helps these survivors emerge from the shadow of silence and solitude. This escaping may seem less important at first, but it is actually significant in trauma healing. A representative example is Jan Ruff, a former comfort woman and Australian human rights activist known for her vocal campaigns and speeches against war rape. She testifies in the documentary that a Japanese soldier *deflowered* her and gave her a new name, Flower. Her new name resulted in removing all types of flowers away from her life. But as she came closer to peace through the process of remembering and mourning, she regained the power of interpretation over the layers of negative meaning imposed on flowers to the extent that she can enjoy making flower arrangements. Again, not all survivors experience the same level of healing. And many of those survivors in the documentary do not experience the same level of progress as for Jan Ruff. However, we clearly see through this film that there is a link between trauma healing and the activity of remembering and mourning.

Yet, none of this activity can occur apart from the presence of a trusting relationship. Talking about the unbearable or the unspeakable can, in actual fact, make matters worse. Any kind of direct processing of the traumatic experience needs to be well balanced at all times with a sense of safety and stabilization that

trauma survivors can only receive within the context of trusting relationships. Here we need to consider the second activity for the healing process of trauma<sup>110</sup>: eventualizing the complete solidarity of God with the dead, the forsakenness, the hopelessness.

According to psychologist Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's theory of basic assumptions, we all live with our basic assumptions about the world.<sup>111</sup> These basic assumptions serve as a basis of our well-being, give meaning to our existence, and, most importantly, provide a sense of safety and stabilization. The first is that the world is benevolent. This first basic assumption involves the belief that the world around us is good and does no harm to us. The second is that the world is a meaningful and coherent whole and not a basket of uncertainties. The third is that the self is worthy. This third assumption evaluates one's self as an autonomous and moral individual. These basic assumptions are the foundations for our social connections to others: safety and stabilization.

In the case of traumatization, however, all these basic assumptions are completely shattered. We lose the foundations for our social connections to others.<sup>112</sup> Thus, we can commonly find a sense of isolation and desolation in traumatized people. Trauma damages their sense of safety and stabilization. Intensive anxieties such as feelings of shame, fear of judgment, and extreme vulnerability continue to haunt their lives and spirits. Trusting relationships cannot easily be established. That is understandable because they often fail to engage in the first practical activity for the process of trauma recovery: remembering and mourning.

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<sup>110</sup> About which Herman would refer to as her first model for trauma treatment: Safety and Stabilization.

<sup>111</sup> Ronnie writes, "[T]raumatic events do not produce the psychological equivalent of superficial scratches that heal readily, but deep bodily wounds that require far more in the way of restorative efforts. The injury is to the victim's inner world. *Core assumptions are shattered by the traumatic experience* [emphasis added]." Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 3–26.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.



Time and patience are necessary. Given the profound losses and the ongoing effects of trauma that the traumatized have suffered, it is obvious that one must be patient and wait until the traumatized are ready to be healed. The rush to move forward does nothing to bring safety or stabilization. Rebuilding the basic assumptions that serve as the basis of the trusting relationship is a slow and repetitive task. In this sense, trauma specialists are always told of deliberately slowing down the process, patiently enduring its slowness, and always waiting the survivor's autonomous or voluntary participation, while remembering the maxim that "the slower you go, the faster you get there."<sup>113</sup>

Where can we find such an "enduring" or "waiting" community, instead of one that is "demanding" or "pushing" for immediate healing? In the twofold picture of Holy Saturday that I have described in the previous section, one may see the "enduring" or "waiting" community is eventualized through the Son who patiently endures what persists between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Instead of ignoring the profound mystery of Holy Saturday and rushing to the hopeful promise of all shall be well,<sup>114</sup> the Son of God empties himself to fully embrace authentic elements of human physical and spiritual death and enables the dead, the forsaken, the hopeless to have communion with the one who is *intrinsically* love. While this "enduring" or "waiting" relationship needs further development, the scholarship and cooperation of contemporary

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<sup>113</sup> Hunsinger, *Bearing the Unbearable*, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Recognizing this impetuous approach to Easter and to its claim of new life and resurrection, von Balthasar writes, "We must, in the first place, guard against that theological busyness and religious impatience which insist on anticipating the moment of fruiting of the eternal redemption through the temporal passion — on dragging forward that moment from Easter to Holy Saturday." Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, 179. Such a busy and impatient understanding of *Karsamstagzauber* (the magic of Holy Saturday) in von Balthasar's view only makes it impossible for Christian theology to attend reverently the central narrative of cross and resurrection that God, in love, has entered into the realm of death—physical and spiritual—and has taken the full extent of our sin not from the outside, as it were, but from the inside, "*sharing* our desolation, *bearing* out sin, as Son *experiencing* God-forsakenness." Hunt, *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery*, 80.

theologians and trauma theorists demonstrates its theoretical feasibility and practical usefulness.

A helpful example supporting its value but needs further study and development is the Comfort Station Survivor's Wednesday Protests in South Korea. The Wednesday Protest is led by The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. This weekly protest has continued in front of the Japanese embassy in downtown Seoul for 25 years and 11 months since January 8, 1992. Being listed in March 2002 in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's oldest rally on a single theme, the Wednesday Protest is still ongoing, actively demanding apology and justice from the Japanese government regarding the large-scale sexual slavery system established by them in all parts of Asia during World War II. But the official stance of the Japanese government is that there is not enough evidence to prove the formal involvement of the Japanese government on this matter. In other words, without clear evidence to justify the involvement from the Japanese government's perspective, there will neither be an official apology, nor any acknowledgement of their war crimes against the human rights and dignity of comfort women. The problem is that these women cannot wait for their apologies. In fact, the vast majority of survivors have passed away without regaining their rights and dignity, and the remaining survivors, who are old and sick, can no longer take an active role in the weekly rally. Yet, hope does not fade away but lingers (though wearily) through citizens who are in solidarity with them.

On July 16, 23, and 30, 2014, I also attended the Wednesday Protest to share in love and solidarity the endless suffering of these powerless women and lament for justice that has not yet come to them. Covering myself with signs and banners, I stood in solidarity with the remaining comfort station survivors and many others from diverse social groups to occupy a specific area of the street to

commence the protests. In that area, the survivors shared old stories and testified to what remains in their lives today—poverty, loneliness, doubt, and brokenheartedness. They strongly protested against the Japanese government’s persistent inaction to commit to its responsibility in the atrocity that occurred against these women.

During the protests, the occupied area also turned into an academic sphere for educating protesters about war, justice, peace, history, and trauma. But more than that, protesters became the “enduring” and “waiting” community empowering the comfort station survivors to make a way to attain hope out of no way. According to the chief manager of the House of Sharing Shin-Kweon Ahn, Kun-Ja and others, comfort women in the House of Sharing wait for the Wednesday Protests.<sup>115</sup> For them, the 25-year-old protest is their reason to live. They receive love, consolation, and encouragement from the people attending the protests. Through the people who stand in solidarity with them they remember and mourn what does not go away, what remains, what exceeds death and cannot be interpreted as new life. By remembering and mourning, they build resistance, resiliency and hope in the midst of the ongoing and very real trauma that continues to haunt them.

## **Conclusion**

Holy Saturday is the reality of trauma survivors. Given the nature of this middle day, an awful transition wherein no one can easily find an exit to go out, theologians must resist rushing to the narrative of a triumphant resurrection. The field of theology must begin to learn how to see the world through the lens of trauma survivors whose lives are lived in the middle day between death and life. If not, moving from Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday will force trauma survivors to get over, to forget, to wipe away the past that has no

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<sup>115</sup> Ahn’s remark was based on the interview I had at the House of Sharing on Wednesday, August 20, 2014. On November 30, 2014.

clear end but overflows with negative cultural and social consequences. Such pressure is a type of epistemological violence that pushes trauma survivors like Kun-Ja, Johana, and many other comfort women to imagine a victory they truly cannot imagine.

In a broader sense, it is also a type of political violence that compromises social consensus and as such renders our discourses and practices apathetic towards demanding justice for survivors of traumatic events and demonstrating our unwillingness to challenge the ways in which the larger society shirks its responsibility for fair trial. Thus, the field of theology must take time to dwell in Holy Saturday and begin to learn how to shape its discourse and practices around a theology of Holy Saturday. That is to say, theologians must forge an appropriate response to trauma and its aftermath; theology must begin to assign value to remembering and mourning and *patiently* stand in solidarity with trauma victims, not attempting to mute their voices.

The theological lens of Holy Saturday as informed by Rambo and von Balthasar guards against the theological busyness (or religious impatience) of reconfiguring trauma into narratives of “get over it” or “put it behind us and move on” and adjusts the gaze of theologians into the central narrative of cross and resurrection that God, in love and solidarity, has entered into the realm of death — death not merely as the end of earthly life but also as reality plagued by terror and hopelessness — and has taken the full extent of our suffering not from outside, as it were, but from the inside. Insofar as Christian theology puts its gaze on God’s loving solidarity with the traumatized, it will not discount or minimize their 1) indelible imprint of the traumatic moment, 2) numbing or emotional detachment from details of the traumatic event, and 3) persistent re-experience of the traumatic event through recurring dreams, flashbacks, repeated nightmares, or intrusive memories. But instead it will offer them a Christ-form of solidarity that will let their resistance,

resiliency, and hope be animated, even in the midst of their ongoing suffering, and help them embark on the journey of trauma healing as revealed in the Wednesday Protest and the documentary *One Last Cry*.

Then the question is: Will theology bear witness to Holy Saturday for the sake of healing trauma survivors?

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