

Shelly Rambo. *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017. 188 pages. \$29.95.

Since her 2010 release of *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, Shelly Rambo's work has quickly become central to trauma theology. In this her second book, Rambo exceeds expectations with a masterful and surprisingly daring venture to reconsider theologies of resurrection in the "afterlife" or "ongoingness" of trauma.

Rambo's book is divided into four chapters that function almost as isolated essays in trauma, but are held together by the running thread of a retelling of the story of Thomas and the wounds of Jesus in John 20. She begins the book with a stirring introduction that features stories of zombies, and her foundational claims about trauma. Along the way, Rambo presents the bold impulse of the book, which is "to rethink the trajectory of the major plotline of the Christian story and to revisit its central assumptions: that life triumphs over death, and that resurrection hope points to the future" (8). In this mission, Rambo sets out to reexamine these central assumptions through the lenses of trauma and suffering.

In the first chapter, Rambo leaps right into the fray as she challenges John Calvin's interpretations of Thomas and the wounds of Jesus. In the midst of this argument, she draws out some key components that inform the remainder of the book. Most importantly, she notes that by erasing the wounds of Christ after the resurrection in prominent Christian interpretations, and by minimizing or reproving Thomas's physical encounter with these wounds, Christians promote the "other-worldliness" of resurrection. In this other-worldly vision of resurrection, Christians lose the possibility that "resurrection could speak in the meantime, in the in-between spaces of human life" (36).

In the following chapter, Rambo launches the reader into an unexpected narrative; in fact, readers may wonder how they jumped from John Calvin to the story of Macrina (and accompanying feminist challenges in resurrection theologies). Yet the story of Thomas is woven throughout, creating continuity between the chapters. With palpable rootedness in human experience and poetic command, Rambo retells the remarkable death narrative of the fourth-century abbess and canonized saint, Macrina. Her miraculous story is at once enchanting, tragic, and illuminating, and serves to supply a counter-resurrection narrative—one that resists the patrilineal snares of traditional resurrection theologies—and demonstrate the healing power of resurrected wounds.

From here, Rambo departs from Macrina and emerges in chapter 3 in the "age of Ferguson," where she explores traumas of racism in the United States. The chapter opens with meditations from Wendell Berry's *The Hidden Wound*, and explores today's racism as a historical wound that has been intentionally kept out of sight. Rambo echoes Berry when she describes the religion of white Christianity as a soothing bandage intended to hide deep and unseemly historical wounds. Under the bandage of white Christianity is the festering, untended wound of racism. In order for Christians to truthfully speak of healing or resurrection in the age of Ferguson, white Christians must look at the wounds. In the surfacing of wounds, they become the locus of honesty and of bold truth-telling, which resists white narrational manipulations.

In the final chapter, Rambo enters yet another context of trauma: the ongoing wounds of war veterans. Here Rambo continues to elaborate the hiddenness of wounds. She explores the incongruence of soldiers' lived traumatic experiences with the narrative that is spun in American society. The soldiers' wounds are hidden in America's choice to reach for the war hero trope instead of the real bodies that are returning home, to work, to their communities, and to their

families. Throughout much of the chapter, Rambo tells stories of a veterans' group in Ohio called Warriors Journey Home, and she describes how they gather "at the site of wounds to tell difficult truths" (114).

Rambo's book concludes with the overarching claim that resurrection cannot be limited to the delineation of the natural and supernatural, the heavenly and earthly; resurrection is not located at the end of a timeline, arriving sequentially after life and death. Resurrection happens on the ground and it happens in the midst of wounds. While her thesis is striking and even a bit subversive, readers may have a difficult time returning to orthodox views of resurrection after spending time among the narratives of the wounded in this book.

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