

Jesus as a Wounded Woman: A Postcolonial Feminist Trauma Reading of Emanuel Garibay's *Emmaus*

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Abstract: This article uses Emanuel Garibay's painting "Emmaus" as the primary unit of analysis to construct a theological understanding of Jesus as a wounded woman within the framework of postcolonial feminist trauma theology. This research aims to examine how visual art can function as an alternative theological space to reimagine Christology in responding to the experiences of trauma and sexual violence experienced by women. Methodologically, this study uses Erwin Panofsky's three-stage art analysis—pre-iconography, iconography, and iconology—integrated with postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics. The study's findings reveal that the Emmaus painting depicts Jesus as a wounded female figure, where the wounded body serves as a symbol of trauma, resistance, and solidarity with marginalized women. This reading offers a novelty in the form of a Christological metaphor that extends theological reflection beyond the biblical text into the realm of theological aesthetics. This article contributes to the global discourse of trauma theology and feminist Christology by affirming visual art as a constructive medium for the articulation of recovery, the existence of the body, and the formation of a community of survivors of sexual violence.

Keywords: Feminist Christology; Trauma Theology; Postcolonial Feminist Hermeneutics; Theological Aesthetics; Painting by *Emmaus* Emanuel Garibay

1. Introduction

Sexual violence against women is a systemic social problem and continues to take place across private and public spaces. Data from the National Commission on Anti-Violence against Women shows that the majority of cases of gender-based violence occur in the personal realm, which should be the safest space for women (Komnas Perempuan, 2024). This violence not only leaves physical wounds, but also prolonged psychological trauma, such as anxiety, depression, identity disorders, and suicidal tendencies (van der Kolk, 2014). In this context, women's bodies become a power field full of patriarchal relations, stigma, and silencing of victims' voices (Herman, 1992). Furthermore, sexual violence is often legitimized by cultural, economic, and even religious structures, so that victims experience layers of oppression—ranging from economic dependence, social stigma, to theological interpretations that blame the victim (Arivia, 2003; Hooks, 2015). As a result, many female survivors do not have a safe space to share their traumatic experiences. In such situations, theology is challenged not only to speak normatively about morality but also to present itself as a

discourse capable of responding concretely to the wounds, traumas, and experiences of the wounded body (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010).

A number of theological studies have attempted to respond to the issue of violence and trauma through various approaches. In the realm of trauma theology, Cathy Caruth (1996), Shelly Rambo (2010, 2017), and Serene Jones (2009) emphasize that trauma is a wound that is latent, unspeakable, and challenges the theological framework that is too quick to offer healing. On the other hand, postcolonial feminist approaches to biblical studies have been developed to uncover patriarchal and imperial power relations that silence women's voices, as seen in the studies of Dube (2000), Laholo (2021), and Lena et al. (2024). In the context of fine arts and theology, the painting *Emmaus* by Emanuel Garibay has been interpreted by several writers. Singgih (2005) views the female figure in the painting as an expression of Jesus' presence alongside the minority, while Tamba (2021) interprets Jesus as a female figure who frees herself from structural oppression. Pattenden (2010) emphasizes the dimensions of political and anti-authoritarian criticism in Garibay's work. However, these studies have not explicitly read *Emmaus's painting* from the perspective of trauma hermeneutics, particularly the trauma of sexual violence against women, nor have they linked it to the construction of Christology as a theological response to the wounded body.

Departing from these gaps, this article aims to fill the blank space in theological studies by presenting a reading of *Emmaus's paintings* through the perspective of postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics. Unlike previous studies that emphasized the dimensions of social resistance or structural liberation, this study specifically focuses on wounds, trauma, and the female body as a theological locus. The painting of *Emmaus* is treated not merely as an illustration of a biblical narrative, but as a visual text that preserves the memory of trauma and opens up the possibility of new Christological meanings. By integrating Erwin Panofsky's art analysis (1972) and the hermeneutics of trauma (Caruth, 1996; Lakawa, 2021), this article aims to demonstrate that the visual arts can serve as a legitimate theological medium for interpreting traumatic experiences that are often inexpressible in discursive language. The main objective of this research is to build a contextually relevant theological construction, especially for women survivors of sexual violence, while expanding the scope of feminist Christology from the text of Scripture to the realm of theological aesthetics.

This article argues that *Emanuel Garibay's* painting of *Emmaus* allows for the construction of Jesus as a *wounded* woman, a Christological metaphor rooted in traumatizing experiences and solidarity with the body of a woman who has experienced violence. Jesus, who is shown through a woman's body with a wound on her hand, not only represents post-traumatic suffering but also becomes a symbol of the afterlife of *trauma* as understood in trauma theology (Rambo, 2017). The main hypothesis of this article is that Jesus' construction as a wounded woman could serve as an alternative theological framework for trauma recovery, as she rejects the logic of instant healing and opens up a safe space for survivors to recount their wounds. Through postcolonial feminist readings, the figure of Jesus also challenges the theological patriarchy that has been removing the female body from the center of faith reflection. Thus, this article confirms that Christology departing from art and trauma is not only symbolic, but also has ethical, pastoral, and political implications in an effort to build a compassionate community that sides with victims of sexual violence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Trauma, Theology, and Healing

Sigmund Freud, as quoted by Cathy Caruth, defines trauma as a wound inflicted on memory (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). This wound can be caused by several things, such as medical procedures, violence, or stigma attached by an individual or group to another individual or group. Trauma has a profoundly negative impact on the mind, psyche, social life, and physical well-being of an individual or group. These negative effects cannot be allowed to persist for a long period of time because they will damage the psyche, mind, and body of the traumatized person. Therefore, an appropriate response is needed to help victims recover quickly from the trauma they experience.

Cathy Carruth precisely formulated the concept of trauma. Caruth emphasized that trauma is not merely a pathology or a simple illness of a wounded soul. Trauma is always a screaming story of a wound that speaks to us, attempting to inform us of a reality that is otherwise unavailable (Caruth, 1996). Caruth's argument demonstrates the complexity of trauma, which goes beyond simple illness. Trauma undermines the concept of truth that can be readily formulated in words. When confronted with theology, trauma inevitably disrupts theology, which often attempts to provide quick answers to every problem or complexity of human life. In the face of trauma, theology falls apart. Furthermore, theology becomes not only a discourse dependent on logic but also on the feelings and experiences of the wounded body (Lakawa, 2025, p. 18). As a discourse that currently also relies on the feelings and experiences of wounds, the experiences of wounds and feelings become the source and site of trauma theology, which becomes a site of healing. Therefore, efforts that marginalize the experience of wounds or trauma are not a relevant approach. The study of trauma must begin with the experience of the wound that remains, demanding a theology willing to respond to experiences and narratives that are often incomprehensible and arrive too late (Rambo, 2010, p. 15). Therefore, a relevant method is needed to disrupt and challenge theology that sometimes ignores the experience of wounds and trauma. One way to do this is by using trauma as a lens to read biblical texts or other texts (such as works of art) that can contribute to trauma recovery efforts. Reading sacred texts or works of art from a trauma perspective can help us to see the extent of the responsibility of believers (the church) to be involved in trauma healing.

2.2. Hermeneutics of Trauma

Trauma hermeneutics is a lens used to interpret texts within their historical context, while simultaneously exploring and applying them within the contexts of both the past and the present (Boase & Frechette, 2016, p. 2). The arguments put forward by Christopher Frechette and Elizabeth Boase demonstrate that trauma hermeneutics is multidirectional. Trauma hermeneutics cannot be a single discipline or research focus without utilizing other approaches. At the same time, trauma hermeneutics is an interdisciplinary field that utilizes psychological, social, theological, literary, cultural, and aesthetic or artistic approaches (Lakawa, 2021). As is well known, hermeneutics is part of the meaning-making process. Texts such as the Bible can be viewed and interpreted in a new way from a trauma perspective (Carr, 2014). From a trauma perspective, someone who experiences trauma due to violence will experience a phase where they lose the meaning of an event (loss of meaning). This is because a victim of violence is no longer able to organize the memories that occurred within them after an extraordinary or traumatic event. This occurs due to the brain's

inability to function properly after a violent event. Traumatized individuals are unable to remember or even give meaning to the violent event that befell them. Therefore, the task of theology is to provide new meaning to violent events from the perspective of trauma. In other words, can theology speak from and with something that has lost its meaning? (Butler 2003) From this, the function of theology in the context of trauma is to provide a theological framework, namely, how meaning emerges from the traumatic event that befell an individual.

Septemmy Lakawa, in his article entitled "Teaching Trauma and Theology Inspires Lives of Witnessing Discipline: Theological Education as Missional Formation," introduces a model of trauma hermeneutics: the hermeneutic of rupture. He likens rupture to a crack that can reveal a ray of light emerging from the crack. This light is a new hope after violence. Lakawa emphasizes that the hermeneutics of rupture fractures and disrupts all claims of faith and narratives that negate the experience of trauma. Trauma hermeneutics reimagines and reconfigures sacred texts, symbols, and narratives, drawing on the effacement of wounded voices, the process of healing, and the reconstruction of theology and lived experiences that stem from the foundation of the wound (Lakawa, 2018, p. 331). On the other hand, trauma hermeneutics also rereads the Bible and other texts to dismantle the stigmatization of women's bodies that has actually caused trauma for women who experience violence or sexual harassment. Stigma usually arises from groups that look down on or marginalize women's bodies. Rereading biblical texts or other texts, such as paintings, from a trauma perspective provides a liberating perspective for women who have experienced trauma.

Several studies have used trauma theology as a perspective for reading biblical texts. First, a study by Margaretha Florida Kayaman entitled "The Body of a Victim of the Shackles of Patriarchal Culture Calls for a Theology of the Body: Trauma Hermeneutics of the Narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-22." In the article, Kayaman uses a trauma theology perspective to reread the story of sexual abuse experienced by Tamar. Kayaman argues that Amnon, Jonadab, Absalom, David, and Tamar are victims of the patriarchal system, but on the other hand, Tamar, as a victim of sexual abuse, still calls for respect for the human body even though it is damaged (Kayaman, 2024). The second study, conducted by Richard Kearney, is entitled "Healing Touch: Hermeneutics of Trauma and Recovery." Kearney argues that healing the traumatized body can begin at the site of the injured body. Furthermore, she states that emotional space is another form of carnal hermeneutics. Therefore, the existence of emotions needs to be taken into consideration in the trauma recovery process (Kearney, 2020).

2.3. Hermeneutics of Feminist-Postcolonial

Postcolonial criticism also targets biblical texts. Biblical stories, particularly those related to women's experiences, can be interpreted through a postcolonial feminist lens. A postcolonial feminist lens is used to amplify the voices of women oppressed by a patriarchal system that shackles, colonizes, and controls women.

Several studies have employed a postcolonial feminist approach. First, the study by Iston Umbu Kura Lena, Yusak Budi Setyawan, and Toni Tampake, entitled "Can Tamar Speak?" (A Feminist Postcolonial Hermeneutic Study of the Text of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 from the Perspective of the Experience of "Capture Marriage" in Sumba). Kura Lena and colleagues argue that Tamar's silence is not simply a result of patriarchal culture, but also due to the powerful power relations between

Absalom and Amnon over Tamar (Lena et al., 2024). The next study, entitled "Who Touched Me?" Interpreting the Narrative of Luke 8:43-48 with a feminist postcolonial approach was conducted by Dedi Bili Laholo. She argued that the woman with the issue of blood in Luke 8 had been confined by the power of patriarchy and colonialism. Feminist postcolonial hermeneutics highlights the significance of women's struggles and courage, as well as Jesus' presence as a holistic healer who liberates and transforms (Laholo, 2021). Several studies mentioned show that the feminist postcolonial approach is relevant in an effort to free women from the shackles of patriarchy and the political power that ensnare them. However, on the other hand, the above research does not touch on other interpretations outside of biblical texts, such as paintings or other works of art.

3. Methods

3.1 Material Objects

The material object of this research is the painting *Emmaus* by Emanuel Garibay, a Filipino artist known for his figurative expressionist works that contain social, political, and religious criticism (Garibay, 2011). This painting was chosen because it presents a representation of Jesus that differs from conventional Christian iconography, specifically as a female figure with wounds on her body. Visually, this painting displays elements of the body, space, and relationships between figures, as well as relevant wound symbols that can be read as a theological visual text. Therefore, *Emmaus* is treated as both an aesthetic object and a symbolic text that contains memories of trauma, resistance, and power relations within the context of postcolonial feminism.

3.2 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative-interpretive design, combining an aesthetic theology approach with postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics. This design allows the artwork to be read as a theological medium that not only represents biblical narratives but also bodily experiences, wounds, and trauma (Farley, 2001; Rambo, 2010). The main interpretive framework refers to Erwin Panofsky's model of art analysis, which includes three stages—pre-iconography, iconography, and iconology—as the basic structure in reading visual meaning historically, symbolically, and theologically (Panofsky, 1972). This design was chosen because it is multidisciplinary and compatible with a trauma approach that emphasizes the complexity of the trauma experience.

3.3 Data Sources

The primary source of data for this study is the painting "Emmaus" by Emanuel Garibay, serving as visual data. Secondary data were obtained from theological and interdisciplinary literature, including trauma theology, postcolonial feminist hermeneutics, theological aesthetics, and fine arts studies. Key literature includes the works of Cathy Caruth (1996), Shelly Rambo (2010, 2017), Serene Jones (2009), and Septemmy Lakawa (2021), as well as studies of Garibay's work by Singgih (2005), Pattenden (2010), and Tamba (2021). These sources are used to construct theoretical frameworks and reinforce visual interpretations in a contextual and theological sense.

3.4 Data collection techniques

Data collection was conducted through visual studies and literature reviews. Visual studies involve an in-depth examination of the elements of a painting, including composition, color, body gestures, facial expressions, character positions, and the symbols displayed, such as wounds. Meanwhile, literature studies are conducted by examining relevant academic literature to understand the historical, theological, and cultural context of painting as well as postcolonial trauma and feminist approaches. This technique enables the integration of visual data and theoretical reflection, ensuring that interpretation is grounded in a dialogue between the artwork and scientific discourse (Boase & Frechette, 2016).

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in stages, following the framework outlined by Panofsky (1972). The pre-iconographic stage is used to describe visual elements descriptively without symbolic interpretation. The iconographic stage links the visual elements to the narrative of Emmaus in the Gospels as well as the socio-cultural context of Garibay's work. The iconology stage integrates visual reading with trauma hermeneutics, specifically the concepts of fractures, delays, and inarticulate trauma (Caruth, 1996; Lakawa, 2021). At this stage, the postcolonial feminist perspective is employed to construct the theological meaning of Jesus as a wounded woman, yielding an interpretive synthesis that is both constructive and reflective.

4. Result

4.1. Sexual Violence: Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives

The conversation about sexual violence will certainly never end. Sexual violence can be defined as any act that degrades/insults, harasses, and/or regenerates a person due to inequality in power and/or gender relations, resulting in psychological and/or physical suffering that interferes with a person's reproductive health and the loss of opportunities for education and employment safely and optimally (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi Nomor 30, 2021). The National Commission on Women divides sexual violence into at least fifteen types, namely rape, sexual intimidation including the threat of attempted rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, trafficking of women and men for sexual purposes, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced contraception and sterilization, sexual torture, inhuman and sexually nuanced punishment, and nuanced traditional practices sexual harassment that endangers or discriminates against women or men, and sexual control is included through discriminatory rules on moral and religious grounds (Komisi Nasional Perempuan Indonesia, 2014, 4). From this classification, it can be seen that sexual violence can occur in all social strata, both in the family, religious communities, and education.

Unfortunately, sexual violence is considered a crime against moral norms and ultimately creates the view that sexual violence is only considered an ethical conflict that is ultimately not dealt with legally and ends up in peace efforts (Purwanti & Zalianti, 2018). This view results in sanctions for victims not being too severe because they are not considered a criminal act. Then, people often think that sexual violence occurs because the victim (female/male) cannot take care of themselves or their

clothes. Statistical results released by the National Commission on Women and Children through the 2023 annual record show that of the 289,111 total complaints, it is gender-based violence and is still dominated by violence against women in the personal realm as many as 284,741 cases (98.5%), the public realm as many as 4,182 cases (1.4%), and the state realm as many as 188 cases (0.1%). The annual record also recorded instances of sexual violence that occurred as much as 34.80% of the total complaints (Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan (Komnas Perempuan), 2024). The record also shows that violence often occurs in the personal or domestic sphere. This statistic also shows that the personal realm, or the domestic realm, which should be a safe place, is the most dangerous place for women. These statistics can be addressed in a relevant way, and theology can contribute to solving these problems.

Sexual violence that occurs in the personal or domestic sphere shows that human sexual behavior has been in a terrible escalation. Freud, in his psychoanalytic theory, posits that human consciousness influences human behavior based on desires (eros) that individuals initially develop during childhood (Freud, Sigmund, Terjemahan Saputro, 2017). The inability to control these desires moves humans to take various actions that justify all means so that lust is fulfilled in deviant forms. The victim is the most vulnerable party because they are unable to take any action to protect themselves. The victim was also unable to resist because the violent incident made him numb (*numb*), and he did not give resistance.

The sexual violence ultimately traumatized the victim. The victim was unable to tell the violence she experienced logically and logically, but her body reacted horribly after the traumatic incident. The body keeps a record of the violence experienced, and the sound of the wound forces the body to tell about the violence through languages that are often not understood. Victims of sexual violence also consider themselves dirty and worthless. This fact ultimately makes it difficult for victims to recover and experience *resilience*.

There are at least several reasons for sexual violence, namely, the patriarchal system in a strong society. This system considers men to be the primary holders of the social system, dominating roles, moral rights, authority, and property ownership. The majority of Indonesian society widely accepts this system, ultimately placing men in a *position of dominance within* the culture. *Second*, in power relations, the victim himself has a hierarchical closeness to the perpetrator in terms of economic structure and power. This resulted in the victim feeling threatened with his financial and social life if he did not comply with the perpetrator's instructions (Johanis, 2022, pp. 2-3). *Third*, the female body is property. Often, women are considered as property that is controlled and owned by men, so men have the right to do anything to women/victims (Arivia, 2003, pp. 105-106). Such an understanding is often found in some cultures in Indonesia, especially in marriage relationships where women are "bought" by men through dowry. *Fourth*, sexual fantasies; the term sexual fantasy refers to the habits of some people who have abnormalities in sexual relationships, for example, being aroused if their partner feels sick, and so on. *Fifth*, the traumatic experience experienced by the victim. Perpetrators of sexual violence are often victims who have not recovered from the violence they have experienced. Violence is usually seen as an attempt at revenge and, at the same time, is a language of hurt expressed in the form of persecution and other physical acts.

Sexual violence certainly has an impact experienced by victims and perpetrators. Sexual violence has a significant psychological effect on women and the lives of victims, in essence. Women

who are victims of sexual violence tend to experience stress, depression, and prolonged anxiety disorders. They may also experience behavioral changes, such as social isolation, increased anxiety, and changes in sexual behavior. In addition, sexual violence can disrupt women's confidence and identity, as well as affect their relationships with their families and others (Putri et al., 2024).

Sexual violence against women often shows that the position of men is more dominant than women. Women themselves are considered incapable of standing alone and even fighting against the injustices they face. In addition, sexual violence against women shows a mistake in the interpretation of biblical texts about women's position and their relationship with men. Marie Claire Barth Frommel argues that men in patriarchal cultures shaped the Bible, so many experiences and statements are interpreted from an androcentric perspective. This negates the experiences of women in the Bible (Frommel, 2010, p. 28). The androcentric interpretation of biblical texts is still maintained today, for example, that women should be in absolute subjection to men (Ephesians 5:22-33). Women were told to be silent and not allowed to serve (1 Timothy 2:8-15). These texts can certainly be reread in a feminist framework.

Sexual violence is also considered part of a fact about power relations. The existence of unequal positions in the socio-cultural, economic, and political world results in women experiencing discrimination and injustice. These negative things are the result of patriarchal culture, and at the same time, patriarchy is also part of imperialism. One of the arguments that needs to be underlined is from Bell Hooks, who states that patriarchy is institutionalized sexism, called cultural imperialism, that seeks to make the oppression of women an artistic necessity (Hooks, 2015, p. 161). Often, cultural imperialism is intertwined with theological imperialism, in which, in the end, people are forced to believe that the culture formed by man is God's creation. In such a situation, people without strong faith will find it difficult to distinguish between the work of God and the work of man.

Humans can mistakenly respond to the nature of God, which is often shaped by culture (Murniati, 2004, xx). The above argument at least states that gender-based violence stems from imperialism's understanding of gender. Women are often relegated to a subordinate position and seem justified by theological beliefs stemming from the interpretation of biblical texts. Therefore, an effort is needed to unmask imperialism in the status and position of women. This term is called postcolonial. The term does not refer to the period after or the end of the colonial period, as it is characterized by the end of political and geographical domination. Still, it relates to a thorough analysis of the methods and impacts of imperialism as an ongoing reality in global relations (Dube, 2000, p. 48). The feminist-based postcolonial movement at least provides new hope for violence prevention efforts through an analysis of the methods of imperialism that are the basis for gender-based sexual violence.

4.2. Emanuel Geribay's Feminist-Postcolonial Trauma-Based¹ Interpretation of "Emmaus"



This painting, titled Emmaus, was created by Emanuel Geribay (hereinafter referred to as Geribay). Geribay himself is a Filipino artist. He is known as an expressionist-figurative artist who often expresses social consciousness and sharp criticism of political and religious rulers who use power for their own interests. Geribay also usually painted people in scenes of political, spiritual, and social complexity, where controversial issues of justice and truth were presented with passion and color (Garibay, 2011).

In the Emmaus painting, Geribay re-questions the figure of Jesus, who is often depicted as a Caucasian man. For Geribay, the portrayal of Jesus as a woman with a bad reputation will challenge art connoisseurs to see Jesus in others, especially those who are looked down upon by society. That is why, in the image, two male disciples laugh at realizing their misunderstanding of Jesus (Garibay, 2011).

We use this painting as the basis for constructing Jesus because it depicts the "other" figure of Jesus and is distinct from the usual representation in Christian art. This painting is open to imaginative interpretation with different perspectives, depending on what Geribay displays.

In this painting, Geribay depicts a young woman wearing a red, open-shirted dress, surrounded by three men who are seen talking to each other and displaying happy expressions. The woman was wearing an open red shirt that featured the upper chest, and on her hands, there was a scar (stigmata). The wound marks remind us of the wound on Jesus' hand during the crucifixion. Meanwhile, the man to her left, who had no hair and wore dull clothes without sleeves, had a slight smile on his face as if he was responding to the woman's conversation.

The man to the right of the woman has hair and is dressed in a dull shirt, with a laughing expression, while his right hand hits his head in laughter at the woman's actions. Meanwhile, the man in the middle was also dressed in dull clothes and saw the man on his right talking to him. The woman had a central position, but none of the three men's eyes looked at the woman, who seemed to be

¹We got this painting when we participated in a discussion session at the Persetia Institute Study event on June 28, 2023, under the guidance of Septemmy E. Lakawa.

telling a story while showing her wounds or stigmata. The woman and three men sat at a table containing one plate and three bottles of red drinks. The scene takes place in a small room, with the light positioned very close to the woman and the man on her left side. Additionally, Geribay displays a silhouette of a man. The man was also dressed in dull clothes and turned his back on the four people as if he didn't care or was leaving the room.

The painting of Emmaus, created by Geribay, presents Jesus as a wounded woman. The wound displayed by Geribay in the form of a stigma/wound mark on Jesus' hands declares that Jesus was wounded and crucified because of the violence and injustice experienced. The woman's placement in the center of the painting positions her as the main subject. The woman also showed the wounds on her hands to the three men, and the men laughed out loud because of the story of the injuries.

The picture described by Geribay is interpreted as a woman who experiences violence. The injured body indicates the violence that has been experienced. The wound can be translated as a form of trauma. The body of a woman who has been injured and subjected to violence is a *battlefield* or battlefield (Herman, 1992, p. 33). For feminist theology, the female body that experiences violence has a political dimension and a divine dimension. The wounded woman's body is considered a heavenly body that seeks to overthrow patriarchy as a symbol of imperialism as a marker of radical equality (Isherwood, 1998, p. 22). Therefore, the body of injured women who have been considered weak and marginalized is used as a symbol of resistance to these acts of violence.

The resistance lies in the wounded body, which not only tells the truth of the past about the violence that has occurred but also tells the experience of the future after the violent event (*aftermath*), and at the same time, tells the story of *the afterlife* when the violent event has not gone in the memories by the victims. Furthermore, these wounds and traumas demand to be told without rushing and without having to be resolved with healing narratives.

The imagination of the wound is conveyed through the figure of the woman, who recounts the experience of her wound as an unfinished event. Shelly Rambo has often noted that Christian theology frequently promises the resurrection as a potent remedy, but at the same time, it covers the surface without addressing the wounds (Rambo, 2017, p. 74). Through Rambo's argument, at least, he gets a message that the wounds in the form of sexual violence, injustice, and marginalization are required to be heard as a form of resistance to the violence experienced by victims of sexual violence.

In the painting, the woman is imagined telling the wound to the three men. The three men burst out laughing in response. We imagine that the three men laughed at the woman's story because of the unusual way of telling the wounds after the violent incident. The next possibility is that the woman is talking about the violence she experienced caused by men. The man's response seemed to be to laugh at the woman due to the violence she experienced. The response shows that often, the story of the injury conveyed by the victim is foolishness that does not need to be done because it will invite adverse reactions from other parties. However, on the contrary, the story of the wound can be told to reveal the truth elsewhere, including its delayed appearance and delayed delivery (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). The process of delivering the injury story can be delayed and translated into other languages. In addition, in the process of recovering from injuries or trauma, the narrative of the wound can only be told when the victim has found a safe space (*safety*) and is ready to relive their traumatic memories.

Serene Jones stated that there are at least three reasons why a wound needs to be told; namely, *first*, the traumatized party needs to be able to hear the story. Therefore, in a community, stories or experiences about violence are essential and are witnessed as a form of articulation of the victims of violence. *Second*, there needs to be someone to witness the violence to create a sense of security and allow survivors to share their experiences. *Third*, witnesses and witnesses must begin the process of telling a different new story to pave the way for recovery (Jones, 2019, p. 32). Jones's argument implies the importance of re-witnessing violent events that victims or survivors have experienced. This effort is quite risky because, of course, it will cause the victim to experience a *trigger* or trigger various painful memories to reappear and hurt the victim.

Furthermore, this Emmaus painting can also be interpreted in terms of the concept of a safe space. The woman and the three men sat at the same table, enjoying their food and drinks together—a small banquet made by the woman. The small banquet can be seen from the presence of one plate with three forks and/or spoons and three glasses in front of each man. Some of the cutlery in the painting at least suggests that the master or mistress of the house is the woman or the injured party. The depiction of the banquet echoes the scene of Jesus feeding two disciples when they arrived at Emmaus (which corresponds to the theme of the painting Geribay). The act of giving food and drink carried out by the woman is, at the very least, an effort to embrace her as a victim, inviting other parties or victims to join this healing community (Jones, 2019, p. 40). The dinner table or banquet event is an effort to heal and a form of brotherhood on the part of the victim to invite other parties who experience violence to enter the injured community as part of the recovery effort for the violence and injustice experienced by the victim. This banquet event can also be viewed as a third room or liminal space, interpreted as a space where a connection exists between the private and the public, the individual and the communal, and the religious and the political (Lakawa, 2023, p. 242). If we borrow an idea from Shelly Rambo, then liminal space is considered a "middle" place, or a figurative site, between death and life, and life that is no longer limited (Rambo, 2010, p. 7).

This is the *afterlife* site used in the creation of this painting. The banquet event is an *afterlife* site where the banquet is symbolized as a middle space between the violent and post-violence events, where the banquet is considered as part of the site or safe space where the victims can tell about the violence they experienced and experience a safe community as a place of embrace and compassion for victims of violence. Furthermore, the woman is depicted alongside three men eating together. This event is symbolized as a fellowship with other parties who have experienced violence to enter the injured community as part of the recovery effort from violence. This banquet room is also considered a liminal or central space, serving as a haven where victims can find healing and a sense of community.

The woman who told the story of violence is a metaphor for Jesus as a person whose body was injured by sexual violence. Furthermore, the woman was doing an act of telling her story of violence to others. The violent experience was witnessed in front of a man who was listening to the story of the traumatic experience. These narratives or traumatic experiences can be viewed as part of the recovery process.

The process of telling the trauma experience is carried out in a safe space (*safety*), which is symbolized by eating and drinking activities. The safe space or middle room is a space where the

victim can tell about the violence he has experienced and fellowship with other parties who may also experience violence as a form of fellowship in a healing community.

It can be concluded from the explanation above that the Emmaus painting depicts Jesus as a wounded woman, along with a man, who recounts the trauma of violence. The process of retelling the violence experienced by victims of violence can only occur after the victim has a safe space. The concept of safe space. The safe room or middle room is a space where the victim can tell about the violence he experienced without feeling accused and discouraged. Safe spaces also speak of a space where fellowship with other parties or fellow victims of violence is a form of fellowship in a healing community.

4.3. Jesus as the Wounded Woman Who Heals: A Theological Construction

The designation of Jesus as a wounded woman is part of a constructive effort to present Jesus as a wounded figure as well as a healer through trauma stories or narratives in Emmaus's paintings. This designation is relevant in a feminist context but also challenging because, in church tradition or teaching, Jesus is referred to as the son of God.

Understanding Christ (Christology) is not just an interpretation of Jesus but rather an active involvement in the quest to achieve the whole humanity that Jesus brought with him in his coming (Fabella, 1985, pp. 4-9). The argument put forward by Fabella shows that the interpretation of Jesus involves not only an abstract understanding of Jesus but also an active engagement in issues concerning humanity. The issue of violence and trauma is an *inherent part of* the current humanitarian problem. The image of Jesus as a wounded woman is a fitting metaphor when faced with the reality of the trauma of sexual violence experienced by many women. This metaphor shows a belief that Jesus, as a wounded woman, represents many women who are struggling in a state of trauma due to sexual violence.

The painting of Emmaus, painted by Geribay, depicts Jesus suffering from injuries caused by injustice, violence, and marginality. At the same time, these wounds are also wounds for many women whose bodies are torn apart by violence and loss of life and who are unable to tell stories about the scars and trauma that are happening to them. Jesus is also depicted as a woman who provides a communion meal, inviting the victims to fellowship within the wounded community. The community of wounds offered by Jesus at the supper is the space between, which serves as a recovery space for the victim. Thus, just as the wounded woman is central to the painting of Emmaus, Jesus can be said to be the injured woman who not only experienced the sexual violence as evidenced by her wounded body but also as the one who healed the victims of sexual violence.

5. Discussion

The results of this study show that Emanuel Garibay's *Emmaus* painting can be read as a visual representation of Jesus as a wounded woman in the context of trauma, violence, and marginalization. Through a pre-iconography, iconography, and iconology analysis, it was found that the female body with a wound in the hand, the central position of the female figure, the laughter response of the men, and the simple banquet scene form a visual narrative of trauma, silencing, and the attempt to build a safe space. Wounds on a woman's body are understood not only as a symbol of post-traumatic suffering, but as a marker of ongoing trauma (*afterlife of trauma*). The banquet scene

is interpreted as a liminal space—an intermediate space—that allows for wounded narration and the formation of wounded communities. Thus, Jesus is not only represented as a figure who rises and triumphs over suffering, but as a figure who still bears wounds and relates to the experience of the body of a woman who experiences sexual violence. The summary of these findings confirms that visual art can be a legitimate theological medium to present Christological reflections that favor victims of trauma, especially women who have been silenced by patriarchal structures and religious imperialism.

These findings reflect that women's traumatic experiences cannot be understood simply as past events that have been completed, but rather as wounds that continue to live on in the body and memory. Emmaus' paintings reflect this reality through the body of a woman who is injured but still present, talking, and inviting relationships. The laughter of the men in the painting represents the social response that survivors of sexual violence often experience, namely, denial, harassment, or neglect of the victim's narrative. In this context, the results of the study confirm that trauma is not only an individual problem, but also a relational and structural problem. This reflection is in line with the views of Herman (1992) and van der Kolk (2014), who emphasize that the body stores violent memories and needs a safe space for recovery. By placing the female figure at the center of the painting's composition, Garibay—and the theological reading of her work—invites the reader to reflect on who has been placed at the center of the faith's reflection. This reflection challenges theology to no longer speak from a safe and abstract position, but rather from a wounded body and a real traumatic experience.

The theological interpretation of the results of this study presents Jesus as a wounded woman, a Christological metaphor rooted in trauma theology. In this framework, Jesus' wound is not understood as a sign that must be immediately redeemed by the resurrection, but as a wound that remains present and speaks (Rambo, 2017). This interpretation rejects the theological logic that is too quick to offer healing and closure of wounds, as criticized by Caruth (1996) and Jones (2009). The banquet scene in *Emmaus's* painting is interpreted as a safe or liminal space where the narration of trauma can occur without coercion to "heal." In this space, Jesus, as a wounded woman, acts not as a superior savior but as a fellow survivor who invites solidarity. This interpretation extends Christology from a mere reflection on Jesus' divine identity to a relational praxis that favors the victim. Thus, the results of this study confirm that trauma-based christology is performative and ethical, as it calls the faith community to be present, hear, and accompany the wound, not to judge or silence it.

When compared to previous research on Garibay's *Emmaus* paintings, the findings of this article show a significant shift in focus. Singgih (2005) emphasizes the aspect of Jesus' presence among the little people and humor as a form of resistance, while Pattenden (2010) sees this painting as a critique of political and religious authoritarianism. Tamba (2021) reads the female figure as Jesus in the framework of postcolonial feminist liberation and hospitality. Different from these three approaches, this study places trauma—specifically the trauma of sexual violence—as the primary lens of reading. Thus, the female figure in painting is not only read as a symbol of liberation or resistance, but as a body that stores wounds and memories of violence. This comparison suggests that postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics approaches offer a depth of analysis that has not been touched by previous studies, especially in understanding the relationship between wounds, bodies, and communities. This approach also expands the discourse of aesthetic theology by situating art as a space of trauma witness, rather than merely representing theological ideas.

Based on the discussion above, this study has several important implications. First, theoretically, this article affirms the relevance of postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics as a productive approach in the study of Christology and aesthetic theology. Second, methodologically, this research opens up the possibility of using visual arts as a theological text equivalent to biblical texts, especially in the context of trauma and violence. Third, pastorally and ethically, Jesus' construction as a wounded woman encourages the church and faith community to build safe spaces for survivors of sexual violence, where the wounds can be told without stigma. In the future, further research may expand this approach by analyzing other works of art—both paintings, films, and performative art—as part of the trauma recovery discourse. In addition, a dialogue between trauma theology and concrete pastoral practice needs to be developed so that theological reflection does not stop at the symbolic level, but contributes directly to assistance and justice efforts for women survivors of violence.

6. Conclusion

This study found that Emanuel Garibay's *Emmaus* painting can be read as a theological construction of Jesus as a wounded woman within the framework of postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics. Through visual and theological analysis, the female body with wounds on the hands is interpreted as a representation of the ongoing trauma caused by violence, marginalization, and silencing of the victim's voice. The banquet scene in the painting is understood as a liminal space or safe space where wounds can be told without the demand for instant healing. Thus, Jesus is not represented as a figure who eliminates wounds through resurrection alone, but as a figure who continues to carry wounds and is present in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. These findings confirm that the experience of the injured body can be a valid and relevant locus of Christological reflection, especially in a social context characterized by high levels of violence against women.

Scientifically, this article makes a significant contribution to the development of trauma theology, feminist Christology, and aesthetic theology. First, this study expands the Christological discourse by presenting the metaphor of Jesus as a wounded woman, which departs from dogmatic abstractions and instead draws on traumatic experiences. Second, this article demonstrates that visual art can be viewed as a productive theological text, parallel to Scripture, in fostering contextual reflection on faith. Third, the integration of Panofsky's artistic analysis with postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutics offers an interdisciplinary methodological model that can be used in the study of contemporary theology. By placing women's bodies, wounds, and experiences at the center of reflection, this research challenges mainstream theology that often ignores the dimensions of trauma and opens up space for a more empathetic, critical, and victim-centered theological approach.

This research opens up wide opportunities for further research in the field of theology and cross-disciplinary studies. Further studies can expand the object of study by analyzing other works of art—such as film, performative art, or installation art—as a theological medium in responding to gender-based trauma and violence. In addition, postcolonial feminist trauma hermeneutic approaches can be applied to visual and cultural traditions in other contexts to enrich global perspectives on Christology and trauma recovery. Further research can also empirically link theological reflection with pastoral practices and survivor assistance, ensuring that theology extends beyond the symbolic level to make a tangible contribution to building a safe and just community.

Thus, trauma-based aesthetic theology has great potential to continue developing as both an academic discourse and a liberation praxis.

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