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A DISABILITY THEOLOGY OF LIMITS FOR RESPONDING TO MORAL INJURY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Lisa Nichols Hickman

August 2018

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Lisa Nichols Hickman

2018

A DISABILITY THEOLOGY OF LIMITS FOR RESPONDING TO MORAL INJURY

By

Lisa Nichols Hickman

Approved May 4, 2018

Dr. Elizabeth Agnew Cochran
Associate Professor of Theology
(Committee Chair)

Dr. Darlene Weaver
Professor of Theology
(Committee Member)

Dr. Anna Floerke Scheid
Associate Professor of Theology
(Committee Member)

Dr. James C. Swindal
Dean, McAnulty College and
Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Professor of Philosophy

Dr. Marinus C. Iwuchukwu
Chair, Department of Theology
Associate Professor of Theology

ABSTRACT

A DISABILITY THEOLOGY OF LIMITS FOR RESPONDING TO MORAL INJURY

By

Lisa Nichols Hickman

August 2018

Dissertation supervised by Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, Ph.D.

This dissertation names the phenomenon of Moral Injury (MI) as a pressing moral, theological and ecclesiological issue. With an eye toward support to veterans and their families, this dissertation situates MI within the field of disability studies, in particular, the work of Deborah Creamer’s “limit model” of disability and then, with a theological turn, offers a helpful corrective to Creamer’s model by probing Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s view of “limit” (German: *grenze*) and offering a “crucial limit model of disability” as a response. To accomplish this task, first, I review the development of MI as a category and differentiate MI from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I identify psychiatric and psychological themes developed by scholars such as Jonathan Shay, Brett Litz, William Nash, Everett Worthington and Diane Langberg. In addition, I outline key theological themes developed in the scholarship of Rita Nakashima Brock,

Gabriela Lettini, Robert Meagher, Warren Kinghorn and Brian S. Powers. Second, I situate MI in the world of disability studies through the notion of finitude while at the same time acknowledging the confines for MI in current models of disability: the medical model and the social model. Creamer offers a helpful alternative in her “limit model” however, weaknesses in her constructive model necessitate revision. Third, I propose Bonhoeffer as a helpful conversation partner to bolster Creamer’s account of “limit” by using themes he develops in *Creation and Fall* regarding the limits of humanity, theology and Christology that speak to human finitude. In response to those limits, Bonhoeffer proposes a mode for the flourishing of human life by means of “the orders of preservation” and later, his “mandates of creation” providing both parameters and restrictions for moral agency. These will be assessed with an eye to how life might be structured for veterans returning from war with their moral code eroded. Fourth, this study will conclude with implications of a revised limit model for veterans with MI – for the individual, for society, and for the work of the church in a world broken by war.

DEDICATION

For my grandfather Robert Lee Nichols

Pro scientia et sapientia.

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My friend, Kay Wiley, says: *You finish because people are generous to you.*

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THE VETERANS' CREED

I am [*former rank*] [*first and last name*],

A veteran of the United States [*branch of service*],

As one of my nation's fittest and finest, I answered my nation's call to duty.

I mastered the weapons of war and became expert in defense and security – and I make no apology for my skills.

I am a warrior and have seen and done things that many may not understand.

I have proudly served my country with honor and dignity.

I am one in fifteen – a seven-percenter – a member of a team spanning the nation – veteran brothers and sisters, bonded by our common values and experiences.

I now stand ready to serve my veteran teammates.

I will help them face and conquer their enemies, including the demons from within.

I will never abandon an injured veteran teammate.

If they need support – I will carry them. If I cannot carry them – I will call for help.

When I struggle with my own pain, my veteran teammates will support me; and I will reach out of the darkness and grasp their helping hands.

I will never quit.

I will never give up.

I will never accept defeat.

I am... a United States veteran.

- Judge John C. Reed, III

A true war story is never moral.

- Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Chapter 1

Moral Injury: The Signature Wound of a Generation

*I am [former rank] [first and last name],
A veteran of the United States [branch of service],
As one of my nation's fittest and finest, I answered my nation's call to duty.*

- The Veterans' Creed¹

1.1 Introduction: Statement of the Problem and Preliminary Hypothesis

The lament of Jeremiah, “they have treated the wound of my people carelessly” (Jeremiah 6:14, NRSV)² reverberates today as United States veterans return home from a decade of war, ridden by PTSD and moral injury, only to discover lethargy and complacency in societal response. The seriousness of soldiers’ wounds, to body and spirit alike, demand ethical, social and theological responsibility. Failure to address the seriousness of these wounds results in distress, depression and even suicide for the soldier. Statistics may describe a portion of the reality; however, statistics cannot measure suffering. The suffering of soldiers and the repercussive suffering in the wider circles of their lives (family, work, faith, civic responsibility) is difficult, if not impossible, to assess. The emerging interdisciplinary field of moral injury describes a wound created by social suffering and moral distrust where a soldier’s sense of what is morally right is compromised. Current research reveals a differing presentation of symptoms for moral

¹ Written by Judge John C. Reed, III, The Veterans’ Creed is key to his work with veterans in the Mercer County Veterans Court. See: Sandy Scarmack, “Their own court helping veterans going through criminal justice system,” *The Sharon Herald*, February 17, 2015, www.sharonherald.com/news/local_news/their-own-cour-helping-veterans-going-through-criminal-justice-system/article (Accessed October 14, 2016).

² Jeremiah 6:14 (NRSV). Jeremiah 6 is a difficult text of judgment foretelling a time when God will purge Jerusalem and then begin anew with a few who remain and are righteous. In verse 14, God speaks in judgment of people whose falsity keeps them from God. Their inability to attend to the wounds of the surrounding community is a part of that judgment, as well as their proclamation of ‘peace’ when no peace yet exists.

injury other than Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).³ Scholars formally recognized PTSD as a critical diagnosis in 1980 after years of response to varying types of war neuroses.⁴ In 2009, a group of scholars led by Psychiatrist Brett Litz introduced the terminology ‘Moral Injury’ to describe a different category of symptoms related to moral formation, moral emotions, moral response to crisis, and the disabling effect of shame when there is an inability to contextualize events that occurred.⁵ Litz and his team make clear through their literature review, clinical research and analytical assessment:

We are doing a disservice to our service members and veterans if we fail to conceptualize and address the lasting psychological, biological, spiritual, behavioral, and social impact of perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations, that is, moral injury.⁶

The loss of a meaningful and moral worldview creates a shattering of moral identity both *within* the soldier and *beyond* the soldier to the outside world. Moral injury may be situated, therefore, within the larger field of trauma studies and can be considered a paradigmatic example of the manifestation of moral trauma within an individual. While the precise contours of the newer field of moral injury are under discussion, what *is* clear is that moral injury has a disabling effect on the soldier and their surrounding circles. And yet, moral injury as a particular form of disability has not been studied nor

³ Thomas Gibbons-Neff, “Why distinguishing a moral injury from PTSD is important,” *Stars and Stripes*, March 9, 2015, <https://www.stripes.com/opinion/why-distinguishing-a-moral-injury-from-ptsd-is-important-1.333520#.WNwlzxSjxEc> (Accessed March 30, 2017). Please note, a more comprehensive comparison of PTSD and Moral Injury and their unique characteristics will be discussed in Chapter Two.

⁴ Matthew J. Friedman, Paula P. Schnurr and Annmarie McDonagh-Coyle, “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Military Veteran,” *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 17:2 (June, 1994): 265.

⁵ Brett Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, and Shira Maguen “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy,” *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29 (2009): 696. The importance of this paper in the academic discourse on moral injury will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 697.

addressed. The field of disability studies⁷ has asked, wrestled and responded to many of the questions raised by moral injury.

Responding well to the particular problem of moral injury requires a robust description of the contours of the presenting injury both *within* the veteran's inner being and *beyond* the veteran as that injury affects his or her relationship with the world. The complications arising from the experience of moral transgression and the inability to "contextualize"⁸ the experience creates a disruption between self and world. This conflict between one's moral center and "morally challenging experiences"⁹ creates a clash of value systems that carry the potential for "long-lasting psycho-bio-social impairment."¹⁰ The terminology Litz and his team use to describe the potential impairment reveal the possible impact between the self within and the world beyond.

How then do we address the seriousness of this moral injury avoiding the carelessness the prophet Jeremiah laments? Given the clinical scholarship based on the presenting symptoms, a first response might be to medicalize the moral injury and treat it as pathology to be healed. However, describing that injury only as a wound to be medically treated carries several dilemmas: moral injury becomes a *problem to be solved*, patients with visible injuries receive *prioritized care*, medical treatment is unable to

⁷ Scholars in the field of disability studies utilize a variety of titles for "disability" to capture nuances of personal narrative, embodied conditions, social construction, historical and political implications, and cultural difference. Some of these titles include "dis/ability studies," "ability studies," "(dis)-ability studies," "crip studies," and "disability studies." See for example: Linda J. Rogers and Beth Blue Swadener, eds., *Semiotics and Dis/ability: Interrogating Categories of Difference* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001); René R. Gadacz, *Re-thinking Dis-ability: New Structures, New Relationships* (Edmonton, Alb.: University of Alberta Press, 1994); and Dan Goodley, *Dis/ability Studies: Theorising disablism and ableism* (London: Routledge Press, 2014); and also, Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: NYU Press, 2006). For the purposes of this dissertation, I am using the largest spectrum of the term "disability studies" as a starting point for cross-disciplinary conversation with moral injury.

⁸ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 696.

⁹ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 696.

¹⁰ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 696.

plumb the depths of moral emotions, and the issue of moral injury is *depoliticized*. First, medicalization turns moral injury into a problem to be solved rather than a person in need of wholistic healing of body, mind and spirit. Veteran Tyler Boudreau explains, soldiers turn “automatically into mental patients instead of wounded souls.”¹¹ Second, some might argue that medicalizing moral injury will place the wounded soldier with the invisible wounds of war at a disadvantage to others whose wounds are more noticeable. Theologian Robert Meagher explains, “Those who come back without a scar – silent, hollowed out, shadowed, and overlooked until they take their agony out on themselves or others – rarely find recognition, much less healing.”¹² Third, when that invisible wound is observed, many consider treatment of the injury as simple as a medical solution to be assessed, diagnosed and treated therein neglecting the depth of the injury within the veteran’s moral emotions. The inner experience of shame and guilt and their outward manifestations of “anger and decreased empathy”¹³ are difficult to assess and treat solely within a medicalized environment. Finally, a medical diagnosis has the potential to confine the moral injury to the soldier alone rather than considering the greater societal context. Veteran Tyler Boudreau explains, “A diagnosis has a tendency to depoliticize a veteran’s disquietude and turn it into a mental disorder.”¹⁴

If medical assessment alone is not enough to treat moral injury, is it possible that a social analysis could help restore the wound? Certainly this is a step veteran Tyler

¹¹ Tyler Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” *The Massachusetts Review*, 52:3/4 (2011): 749.

¹² Robert Emmet Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 1.

¹³ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁴ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 750.

Boudreau argues for when he implies re-politicization over and against the tendency to depoliticize. He makes clear:

What's most useful about the term "moral injury" is that it takes the problem out of the hands of the mental health profession and the military and attempts to place it where it belongs – in society, in the community, and in the family – precisely where moral questions should be posed and wrangled with. It transforms "patients" back into citizens, and "diagnoses" into dialogue.¹⁵

Describing moral injury only as a wound to be medically treated, neglects the societal entanglement that creates moral injury. Moral injury is not simply a "psycho-bio" condition, but also a "social" one.¹⁶ Litz and his team of scholars recognized the medical (psychological/biological) component as well as the socio-political dimension (social) that has qualities of both physical impairment as well as societal disabling.¹⁷ The move toward a more 'social' analysis of moral injury initiates substantive conversation. When soldiers become "citizens" and not just patients, when moral injury becomes re-politicized, and when we move beyond therapeutic-medical-reductionism toward a more complex social analysis, it is then possible to: invite *criticism* of the Just War tradition,¹⁸

¹⁵ Boudreau, "The Morally Injured," 750.

¹⁶ See: Jeffrey P. Bishop, "Biopsychosociospiritual Medicine and Other Political Schemes" *Christian Bioethics*, 15:3 (2009): 254–276. Bishop argues that societal structures create unjust effects on human being through biopsychosociospiritual structures that cause harm and malfeasance (273).

¹⁷ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 696.

¹⁸ See for example: Tobias Winright, *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015) and also Robert Emmet Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014). And also, Anthony F. Lang, Jr., Cian O'Driscoll, and John Williams, eds., *Just War: Authority, Tradition, and Practice* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013). To be clear, the long tradition of "just war theory" originating with Augustine is outside the scope of this dissertation. However it should be noted the multiple and complex ways in which wars can be unjust whether the originating propulsion to war is unjust (*jus ad bellum*) and the mechanisms through which the war is carried out (*jus in bello*). Just war tradition considers the following regarding the *jus ad bellum* criteria: just cause, right authority, right intent and last resort. The just war tradition considers the following regarding the *jus in bello* criteria: proportionality, double-effect and discrimination. In addition, recent scholarship considers a third realm regarding *jus post bellum* exploring the ethics of justice and restoration after the conclusion of a conflict. See for example: Eric Patterson, ed., *Ethics beyond War's End* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012).

probe the *complexity* of the soldiers' "contextual realities",¹⁹ *de-clinicize* the injury as solely cognitive,²⁰ and *re-conceptualize* healing as social rehabilitation rather than a solely individualized event.²¹ The cumulative effect of these positive elements of a social analysis is that "It pulls moral transgressions that are not necessarily traumatic out of the mental health profession and into society, into the living room, and makes these notorious 'invisible wounds' all our problems, not just the problems of the VA."²² In other words, moving the responsibility of moral injury from the shoulders of veterans to the shoulders of society redistributes personal guilt to be shared across society.²³

Despite these benefits and the soul-searching societal conversation they invite, describing moral injury solely through a social analysis carries its own restrictions. A social analysis, while it complicates the dynamics of politics, power and possible oppression at play in an assessment of moral injury, neglects several key factors such as: the *profundity* of moral emotions such as anxiety, shame, fear and guilt,²⁴ the alterations in *identity* due to those "global evaluations of the self,"²⁵ the inability to assess the *fluidity* of moral injury across varying contexts (ie. a veteran may experience the complications of moral injury within a church or household, but not suffer the same distress within a cadre of military veterans), the questions of *agency* (ie. is the moral agent free to act or caught within a complex and/or unjust system) and finally, the

¹⁹ Tobias Winright and E. Ann Jeschke, "Combat and Confession: Just War and Moral Injury" in *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century*, ed. Tobias Winright (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 175.

²⁰ Winright and Jeschke, "Combat and Confession," 174.

²¹ Winright and Jeschke, "Combat and Confession," 184.

²² Boudreau, "The Morally Injured," 754.

²³ Boudreau, "The Morally Injured," 753.

²⁴ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 699.

²⁵ Litz, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans," 699. Here, Litz draws on the work of Helen B. Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (New York, NY: International Universities Press, 1971), 30. Lewis speaks of a global evaluation of self: "I did this thing" which is a different moral emotion and process than guilt which focus on the action done: "I did this *thing*."

ambiguity of moral injury. Moral injury isn't always a moment of combat but what Tyler Boudreau describes as "...dull. It's going to be a man with a shovel or a farmhouse search. It's going to be a hug."²⁶ Boudreau uses this description to show the complexity of agency within distorted power systems leading to ambiguity in what might appear 'right' or 'wrong' in any given situation. In addition, a social analysis neglects certain nuances of *responsibility*. In some instances, a veteran needs the burden of responsibility broadened from her shoulders to bear the enormous complexity and ambiguity of a moral crisis in which she finds herself. In other instances, a veteran needs to claim as their own certain moral actions and seek atonement rather than accepting the *passivity* of a broader societal spectacle.²⁷ A social analysis acknowledges the complicity and complexity of institutional sin and its potential to wreak havoc on individual bodies creating what Sharon V. Betcher deems "social flesh"²⁸ that goes beyond medical diagnosis or treatment. However, the profundity, identity, fluidity, ambiguity, complexity, responsibility and passivity are not fully accounted for within a social assessment. Even taking the step toward a social diagnosis of the wound, as helpful as naming that reality is, can still prevent this particular wound of moral injury from being fully understood.

1.2 Moral Injury and Disability

²⁶ Boudreau, "The Morally Injured," 754.

²⁷ Boudreau, "The Morally Injured," 753.

²⁸ For more on the concept of the "assemblage" of "social flesh" see Sharon V. Betcher, "Of Disability and the Garden State," *Religious Studies News*, (March, 2013).

Drawing moral injury alongside the field of disability studies²⁹ is provocative for two reasons. First, ‘disability’ is often a liability in military culture – not simply the diagnosis, but the very word and its implications. Second, the field of disability has wrestled with questions akin to those being asked by scholars of moral injury regarding the medical and social components of disability. While “medical” and “social” models of disability are helpful for naming particular realities those with disabilities face, the medical model does not incorporate the power at play within the social construction of disability. And, the social model of disability cannot fully describe the “fluidity”³⁰ through which certain disabilities present or recede in varying social contexts. The social model understands disability as contextual within a particular world, but consider, for example, whether a person would be considered deaf within a deaf community. In response to this critical issue of “fluidity” across social contexts in disability studies, Deborah Creamer suggests the need for an alternative model to compensate for the inadequacy of these two standard models and allow: greater fluidity across social contexts, deeper questions regarding the human condition, as well as broader exploration of theodicy.

Creamer’s work critiques the medical and social models of disability and develops a proposal for a “limit model of disability.”³¹ Just as the social model builds upon and expands the medical model of disability, the limit model advances the social model to demonstrate how the disabling that occurs within certain worlds generates

²⁹ For further introduction to the discipline, see key texts: Lennard J. Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1997). And also: Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, eds., *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002).

³⁰ Deborah Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 93.

³¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

certain questions relating to God, self and humanity.³² To be clear, Creamer does not abandon the two alternate models in full; instead, she acknowledges their strengths and weaknesses and takes additional steps forward. Creamer's work invigorates study of disability by acknowledging the unavoidable limits of human embodiment, demonstrating how confrontation with limits invites questions, and naming the equalizing power of this assertion for all humanity. Creamer's work is important because it addresses the real "limits" that studies in disability probe and pursuits in theological method quickly meet. Creamer critiques "static" conceptions of disability where people are seen "either" disabled "or" not.³³ Instead, disability for Creamer is "fluid" depending in part on functionality across various contexts. Because of this fluidity there is "ambiguity in perception" therefore people cannot be easily categorized.³⁴ Identity, Creamer argues, has a complexity greater than the current medical and minority (social) models engage.³⁵ A "limit" in Creamer's assessment is any place where a person moves from ability to a disability. She explains:

From the limits perspective, sin might now be redefined as an inappropriate attitude toward limits as we both exaggerate and also reject our own limits and the limits of others. Disability might be understood as limits that are not accommodated by the environment. Rather than minimizing the experiences of disability, this perspective allows us to identify areas where our limits become disabling due to physical or social barriers, relocating sinfulness. It also identifies prejudices we hold about limits – that is, how we see some limits as "natural" (we cannot fly) and others as "defective" (I cannot run) – and offers an opportunity for a critical reexamination of such views. Moving away from such prejudices, we might instead explore the relationship between limits and creativity, or wonder what the existence of limits tells us about the nature of

³² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31-33.

³³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

³⁴ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 6.

³⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 7. To be clear, Creamer uses the term "minority model" as an alternative to the "social model" of disability. Her reason for this choice is to demonstrate the oppression that occurs when a larger social group deems who is in the majority and the minority (25-26).

humanity. Through this new lens, questions may also be raised about images and understandings of God.³⁶

Limits, then, create a space for the varied spectrum of “embodied experience”³⁷ rather than simplistic measures of “either/or”³⁸ that can minimize disability benefits, prevent treatment and affect social perceptions. Acknowledging limits creates an equalizing measure of human experience, where all people at various moments in time and in diverse contexts encounter limits.³⁹ When that limit is encountered and a moment of recognition regarding changing ability or agency occurs therein is the experience of disability.⁴⁰

For Creamer, this sense of “limit” is an integral part of being human, not simply for those who currently experience a disabling condition. Her understanding of “limit” is overwhelmingly positive: limits are unsurprising,⁴¹ limits are intrinsic to existence,⁴² and limits are good – not evil.⁴³ In developing this position, Creamer erases some of the negativity associated with limits and disablement and expands “limit” to suggest a

³⁶ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

³⁷ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31. An important reference regarding limits, embodiment and human vulnerability is: Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago, IL: Open Court Press, 2001). For MacIntyre, the notion of limit is an inherently human thing and an inevitable part of human existence. This book is a response by MacIntyre, to criticisms from *After Virtue*, claims that our “embodied dependencies” are a singular, definitive characteristic of what it means to be human. Due to these embodied dependencies, there is the need for virtuous dispositions. Two questions guide his work: Why must humans look to other intelligent animal species to see what is important in the life we share? And, why is vulnerability and dependency important for moral philosophy? In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre tried to distance his argument from biology. Here, he links the two. Virtue must begin with an understanding of our “initial animal condition” (p. x). A re-reading of Aquinas, even one of Aquinas’ prayers, led MacIntyre to a deeper understanding of our animal condition, vulnerability and dependence that stands, in MacIntyre’s opinion to the *megalopsychos* of Aristotle.

³⁸ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

³⁹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

⁴⁰ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

⁴¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 94.

⁴² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 95.

⁴³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 96.

particular theological anthropology that touches all humanity.⁴⁴ She uses the “limit-ness” of human experience to offer a third way beyond the operative “medical” and what she calls social “minority” models of disability. For Creamer, the “medical” model of disability misses the larger social implications of societal constructions that have implications for power, prejudice, oppression and socio-political stigmatization.⁴⁵ The social “minority” model of disability functions to address these implications and offers a clear socio-political depiction of the way society fails to meet the physical and vocational needs of disabled persons. Creamer’s articulation of “limit-ness” as a model for both disability and theology clarifies the bias in both the medical and social models that presume “normal” bodies as the standard. A “limit” model creates a space for what Creamer calls a “threshold”⁴⁶ where one might experience distinct levels of ability and/or disability in varying contexts. In addition, a limit model reveals a fundamental aspect of human experience whereby encountering varying thresholds raises deep questions regarding human beings before God.⁴⁷ To summarize Creamer, an important clarifying note is necessary. Creamer’s “limit model of disability” might better be understood first and foremost as a “*contextual* model of disability” (differing from the all-pervading “social model”, in order to provide for changes in agency and ability across varying social contexts for which the standard “social model” does not account). Then, emerging from that “*contextual* model of disability” is the ongoing encounter with limits: my agency is limited in *this* context and my abilities are limited in *this* context. Those

⁴⁴ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 32.

⁴⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 27.

⁴⁶ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

⁴⁷ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

encounters, then, raise questions – as those limits are reached – regarding the limits of God, my self, and those around me.

Creamer’s model serves as an important first step in describing the particular kind of disabling experience moral injury constitutes that have heretofore gone unrecognized. Before proceeding, it is vitally important to acknowledge the risk of drawing moral injury into conversation with the area of disability studies. Veteran and author Tyler Boudreau makes very clear his perspective: “Moral injuries are not about benefits or blame. They’re not about treatment or medications. They’re not about disability.”⁴⁸ In fact, veterans react quite strongly to the stigmatizing label of “disability” and its implications for being a part of a special needs population even though, ironically, a disability label might provide future benefits to the morally wounded soldier.⁴⁹ Psychologist Jonathan Shay was one of the first to advocate for articulating the ‘disabling’ effects of moral injuries’ wounds, “When the injury invades character, and the capacity for social trust is destroyed, all possibility of a flourishing human life is lost.”⁵⁰ The language of disability, for a veteran, can sound overly medicalized thereby creating an asymmetrical power dynamic where a dependent ‘victim’ is in need of a more powerful person who may offer strategies for healing the impairment. Or, the language of disability, for a veteran, can sound overly socialized because a diagnosis carries socio-political stigmatization. As much as the language is loaded for veterans that is precisely the point and the burden shared by scholars of disability. Creamer’s determination to claim the language of

⁴⁸ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 754.

⁴⁹ Linda Bilmes, 'Soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan: The long term costs of providing veterans medical care and disability benefits', Faculty Research Working Paper Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, 2007), <https://www.clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ReturningSoldiers.pdf> (Accessed September 15, 2017).

⁵⁰ Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York, NY: Scribner Publishing, 2003), 150-151.

“limit” is to address these very issues. Tyler Boudreau, though arguing against disability, yields toward the argument Creamer is making when he writes, “When we talk about moral injuries, we seek a deeper understanding of our humanity.”⁵¹ Creamer addresses “limits” because our encounter with limits and our threshold of ability or disability in their presence raises the deepest of questions regarding our shared humanity.

However, there are inadequacies in Creamer’s assessment. Limits, for Creamer, are positive: she describes limits as unsurprising, intrinsic and good. This is not unlike the veteran or scholar who advocates the strength of moral injury as the retention and awareness of morality. Even a moral injury maintains a remnant of decency and hope in the moral goodness and moral codes operative within a broken world. However, comprehending the depth of a veteran’s moral injury requires journeying to a level beyond Creamer’s “unsurprising, intrinsic and good” to the complexity of the moral emotions of anger, wrath, shame and lament. In order to create a greater space for those moral emotions within Creamer’s model, this dissertation recovers Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s view of limits (German: *grenze*) in *Creation and Fall* as a necessary refinement to Creamer’s “limit model.” While Creamer moves from the “contextual” to the theological by examining first the changes in agency across varying contexts, and then, asking theological questions regarding the limits encountered; Bonhoeffer does the reverse. Bonhoeffer pursues the exegesis of a Biblical text, Genesis, to ponder the theological and anthropological reasons for the existence of limits. Then, he takes that exegetical analysis toward a practical application across contexts as he suggests “the orders of preservation” as a way of maintaining agency and ability across social contexts even

⁵¹ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 754.

when limits are encountered. The retrieval of Bonhoeffer's pastoral and practical response to limits will better facilitate an adequate description of moral injury and thereby create a space for a deepened response to the moral emotions and the moral demands evidenced in this injury.

Particularly important for refinement within Creamer's model is the complexity of "limit" when affected by both individual and institutional sin. Creamer's account recognizes the limit of human finitude; Bonhoeffer's theology in conversation with Creamer will develop the implications of finitude and shame in the face of limits. Responding well to the moral injury of veterans, as ethicists, theologians and civilians, requires better understanding the transgression of moral limits a veteran experiences and the subsequent shame and soul-shattering repercussions of this injury. Responding well means medical treatment, when necessary, and social accountability beyond latent acceptance, but also an identification of human limits and divine limitations within a crisis of moral authority across fluid moral worlds. Responding well requires the church to consider the theological resources available to address this moral wound, to make those resources available to those in need, and to deepen the space for suffering within those resources when necessary.

1.3 Toward Cross-Disciplinary Scholarship for Moral Injury

Defending this thesis, requires three key steps: first, a thick description of moral injury and its history will be presented drawing on the work of psychiatrist Jonathan Shay, psychologists Brett Litz, William Nash and Everett Worthington, as well as theologians Rita Nakashima Brock, Gabriella Lettini, William Kinghorn, Robert Meagher

and Brian S. Powers. Critical to the history and definition of moral injury is distinguishing the presenting characteristics of moral injury as significantly different from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). After reviewing the historical development, noting several key themes in the scholarship is necessary to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the field. Within this developing field key themes echo questions scholars address and wrestle with in the world of disability: the predicament of physical experience and the heightened tendency toward medicalization of the predicament rather than grappling with a greater sense of embodiment, the problem of societal complacency in understanding the experience and moral grief of veterans, and the limits of theological reflection across fluid social contexts regarding questions of war and its aftermath. These lingering themes and concerns are important to address because they reverberate with medical, social and theological themes regarding the limits of questions raised in the field of disability.

Second, situating moral injury within the field of disability studies is critical for naming the particular disabling implications of moral injury on the veteran and within the veteran's context. The study of disability necessitates reflection on various forms of embodiment and how bodies are accepted or rejected within varying social contexts. Creamer's rejection of "either/or" claims of disability toward a more equalizing and fluid model of disability are key to her presentation of a "limit model" of disability. Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of her model will then demonstrate both the promise of her model as well as the need for further refinement.

Third, drawing on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's depiction of limits within his accounts of creation, sin and redemption will deepen and further define Creamer's limit model

creating a space to assess moral injury that goes beyond physicality and sociality. The assertions Bonhoeffer makes regarding limits create the space for a particular theological response when a moral world is transgressed. Bonhoeffer proposes “the orders of preservation” as the particular location in which Christology intersects his theological anthropology. An analysis Bonhoeffer’s “orders of preservation” will then allow the reader to understand how a moral world can then be rebuilt, through Bonhoeffer’s mandates of creation, to attend to the spheres of life of church, family, culture and government building on what Christ has preserved in the face of fluid and changing limits. This dissertation will conclude by determining the implications of a limit model of disability for veterans experiencing moral injury. Strengths and weaknesses of a “revised” limit model will be explored along with its implications for soldier, society and spiritual life within the church.

Characterizing moral injury as a transgression⁵² of limits provides a helpful resource for moving beyond restrictive views of moral injury as a wound that can be treated medically through particular treatment, or as a socially inflicted lesion from the collapse of a particular moral world. Instead, a robust description of limits initiated by a conversation with the disability theology of Deborah Creamer and strengthened by the theological anthropology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer can help moral injury in our veterans be tended to in a socially serious and theologically astute manner. As the contours of moral injury and its ramifications for veterans continue to be nuanced, a keen definition of what moral injury precisely *is* will deeply affect our understanding. Even more so, drawing on

⁵² It should be noted that Litz, et. al, first used the language of “transgression” in their 2009 study. See, for example: “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696.

the work of disability studies and its transformative work in the body politic⁵³ will assist those in the field of moral injury provide liberating advocacy and integrity for those in crisis.

Veteran war reporter and author, David Wood calls moral injury “the signature wound of this generation.”⁵⁴ And yet, because of the shame and guilt intrinsic to moral injury, calculating its reach across veterans⁵⁵ is difficult even when the human cost of its effects are “incalculable.”⁵⁶ “Incalculable” is a helpful descriptor for considering the impact on soldiers and society of moral injury for several reasons. First, recent statistics depict a pressing need: of the 30,000 suicides that occur in the United States each year, 1 in 5 of these suicides is a veteran.⁵⁷ While there is much debate over certain statistics and how they are calculated, what is most clear is the cry of individuals for help.⁵⁸ Second, moral injury is not necessarily immediately present upon return from war. Veteran Karl Marlantes describes in his reflection, “What It Is Like to Go To War,” a period of being ‘fine’ for ten years after Vietnam before he questioned his moral code and its reverberating effect on his life.⁵⁹ Because of the delayed reaction, reliable statistics

⁵³ See for example: Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and also Paul K. Longmore, Paul K. and Lauri Umansky, eds. *The New Disability History: American Perspectives* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ David Wood, “The Grunts: Damned if they Kill, Damned if they Don’t,” *Huffington Post* (March 18, 2014), <http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/moral-injury/the-grunts> (Accessed February 4, 2016).

⁵⁵ For current discussion regarding number of suicides a day, see: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/02/04/the-missing-context-behind-a-widely-cited-statistic-that-there-are-22-veteran-suicides-a-day/> (Accessed February 4, 2016).

⁵⁶ Editorial, “Healing Moral Wounds,” *America: The National Catholic Review* (April 14, 2014), www.americamagazine.org/issue/healing-moral-wounds (Accessed February 24, 2016).

⁵⁷ Kimberly Hefling, “Suicide is Rising among Young Male War Veterans,” *Stars and Stripes* (Jan. 12, 2010), <https://extranet.dhss.alaska.gov/sites/stopsuicide/News/Suicide%20is%20rising%20among%20young%20male%20war%20veterans.pdf> (Accessed March 16, 2015).

⁵⁸ Hefling, “Suicide is Rising among Young Male War Veterans”.

⁵⁹ Karl Marlantes, *What It Is Like to Go to War* (New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2011), 49-50.

regarding particular generations of veterans and the wars they fought in are difficult to obtain. Third, it is impossible to calculate the human cost of moral injury on marriages, parenting, extended familial relationships, friendships, the work force and ongoing societal impact across generational lines over time. Psychiatrists David Berle and Zachary Steele studied the psychological effects of returning from war on family systems by measuring changes in relationships, roles, responsibilities within the family, the rearing of children and issues of anger and violence. In all areas, they found substantive distress and difficulty in finding both proactive and reactive help to assist the family dynamics.⁶⁰ Fourth, the possibility of moral injury affecting journalists, contractors and other civilians privy to war zone contexts will even further exacerbate the impossibility of assessing human cost and obtaining adequate statistics. Former Journalist Chris Hedges, for example, speaks to the trauma he experienced over twenty years while covering wars in Latin America, the Middle East and the Balkans, when he explains:

It so upends the moral and physical universe that when you step outside the war zone you just cannot relate, you cannot function... I did it for 20 years and what happens when you cannot extract yourself from it is early death, whether that is through drinking, substance abuse, or a heart attack.⁶¹

In addition, statistics regarding Moral Injury do not include repercussions on individuals outside the armed forces affected by warzone suffering, perhaps including Moral Injury. Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Berkeley, Edward Wasserman reminds:

⁶⁰ David Berle and Zachary Steel, "Families of returned defense force personnel: a changing landscape of challenges," *Australasian Psychiatry* 23:4 (June 23, 2015), 399.

⁶¹ David Gutnick, "Ex-correspondent Chris Hedges on covering war, dealing with PTSD," CBC News (Feb. 9, 2015), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ex-correspondent-chris-hedges-on-covering-war-dealing-with-ptsd-1.2947101> (Accessed March 30, 2017).

While the coverage of veterans is a major improvement in the media's approach from what it was in the late '60s and '70s, it has come alongside the virtual disappearance from coverage of civilian suffering.⁶²

Perhaps this incalculability, in all its fuzziness, void and shame is what makes it so difficult for churches to provide pastoral, theological and liturgical support to veterans and their families. The National Congregation Survey, completed in 2012, is a comprehensive study of 1300 American religious institutions including mosques, synagogues and churches assessing their individual and collective impact. Question #465 of the National Congregation's Survey reveals the neglect of religious institutions in responding to veterans and their families. The question asks, "Within the past twelve months have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities? Support for veterans and their families?" Of 1330 congregations analyzed, 967 churches said 'no' with a percentage ranking 72.7% of the nation's churches failing to respond to this pressing need. Of those interviewed, 27.3% or 363 institutions (of the 1300) offered support.⁶³ For churches to meet their neighbor in need, adequate theological and pastoral support is critical to implementation of initiatives and facilitation of group support, for the ultimate resurrection of despairing spirits. Given that 2.7 million Americans have been deployed since 2001,⁶⁴ theologians and ethicists must address the spiritual and moral needs even when the task seems incalculable.

⁶² Edward Wasserman, "Coverage of 'moral injury' among U.S. vets masks disregard of civilian war suffering," *Unsocial Media*, (Jan. 6, 2014), <https://ewasserman.com/2014/01/06/coverage-of-moral-injury-among-u-s-vets-masks-disregard-of-civilian-war-suffering/> (Accessed March 30, 2017).

⁶³ National Congregations Study Cumulative Data Set (1998, 2006-2007, 2012). The discouraging response to this question labeled "VETSUPPT" is even more chilling when viewed as a pie chart wherein three-quarters of the circle depicts the absence of response from religious institutions.

⁶⁴ "Costs of War," Watson Institute International and Public Affairs of Brown University, <http://costsofwar.org/article/us-veterans-and-military-families> (Accessed February 23, 2016).

As noted above, it is my intention in this dissertation to construct a revised and deepened “limit model” of disability that can provide helpful pastoral resources and theological nuance to the individual veteran in distress due to moral injury. Drawing moral injury into the field of disability studies is not intended to “disable” the veteran, but to better enable those persons who have experienced moral injury to articulate the limit reached in the soldier’s psyche that surpasses bodily injury and societal neglect to better determine the help they need and deserve. Even more so, drawing moral injury into the field of disability helps to create a deeper conversation regarding the precise nature of what moral injury is and its consequences for how we understand human agency and subjectivity and to provide an appropriate response to assist the person in need. In addition, considering moral injury in relation to broader reflection on human limitations and finitude provides a foundation for recognizing how anthropological, theological, and Christological convictions can inform our understanding of this complex moral experience.

1.4 Methodology of the Study

Given the pressing needs surrounding veterans struggling with moral injury, psychologists Brett Litz and Shira Maguen encourage a cross-disciplinary conversation regarding moral injury in a journal article entitled “Moral Injury and Veterans of War” in the *PTSD Research Quarterly* driven by their highly esteemed clinical and scholarly work with veterans in Boston and San Francisco. Litz argues that more work is needed to

address the “many unanswered questions that need further development”⁶⁵ and to work across disciplines to mobilize and capitalize on various disciplines to respond to the many layers of human and societal need. Collaboration is needed “across disciplines that integrate leaders from faith-based and spiritual communities, as well as other communities from which individuals seek support.”⁶⁶ In light of that challenge, this dissertation intentionally engages literature in the fields of moral injury, theology and disability studies. The methodology needed to accomplish this task is fourfold.

The first step is to create a working definition of moral injury by examining scholarship from a range of disciplines (Psychology, Psychiatry, Disability Studies, Theology) surrounding moral injury to determine a working definition of moral injury and its presenting characteristics. While Litz and his team of scholars do not specify the range of disciplines to be included, the paper clearly specifies the field of Theology as a helpful resource.⁶⁷ In addition, it should be noted Litz and his team consider cross-disciplinary work essential both for research as well as for long-term recovery.⁶⁸ Cross-disciplinary work such as this both allows an illumination of new areas of understanding across disciplines and also challenges each discipline to consider where its breadth of scholarship has not yet touched on particular issues. This interdisciplinary conversation can then acknowledge the shadows of neglect, name the strengths of particular accounts, and discover structures that aid restoration. A keen eye will be focused to assess the strengths and weaknesses of theological scholarship in moral injury.

⁶⁵ Maguen, Shira and Brett Litz. “Moral Injury and Veterans of War” *PTSD Research Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2012): 3.

⁶⁶ Maguen and Litz, “Moral Injury and Veterans of War,” 2.

⁶⁷ Maguen and Litz, “Moral Injury and Veterans of War,” 2-3.

⁶⁸ Maguen and Litz, “Moral Injury and Veterans of War,” 2-3.

The second step in the working methodology of this paper is to draw alongside the discourse on moral injury contemporary understandings of disability, particularly from a theological perspective. Doing so will require a critical assessment of historical reflection on disability in the field of theology, including the work of Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Kierkegaard and Luther. Then, engagement with current models of disability informed by scholars such as Eiesland, Yong, Reynolds, Haslam, Betcher and Garland-Thomson will allow an assessment of critical themes and neglected areas. Much work in the theology of disability has been particularly informed by liberation theologies of disability.⁶⁹ While a liberatory method is not the central thesis of this project, my working methodology will rely on scholars like Jennie Weiss Block,⁷⁰ Nancy Eiesland and Sharon V. Betcher who have used this method to successfully nuance new conceptions of disability when past perceptions have proved to be anything but liberating. Of particular interest to this study is the current project of Deborah Creamer who proposes a “limit model of disability” as an alternative to prevailing medical and social (which she calls “minority”) models of disability.⁷¹ The key step in this methodological move is to have a robust conversation between the fields of disability studies and moral injury with the aim of more successfully naming and defining exactly what moral injury is and, in particular, to understand its disabling effects on the injured veteran. Looking keenly at Deborah Creamer’s model will help us to better analyze the way in which moral

⁶⁹ Nancy L. Eiesland’s *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* marks three key factors for a liberatory model: engagement with the lived experience of those who are disabled, analysis of social theory regarding disability as a lens through which to assess the institution of the church, and what Eiesland deems “the proclamation of emancipatory transformation.” See Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 22.

⁷⁰ Block’s “theology of access” is a liberatory model intended to help secure the rights of the disabled community within the church. The liberatory model reveals for Block an “accessible God.” See: Jennie Weiss Block, *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities*, (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing, 2002), 122-123.

⁷¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 25-26.

injury is partly constituted by a transgression of limits that occurs within a moral code. Developing her analysis will prove to be a helpful step forward for drawing moral injury into the realm of disability, but there will prove to be inherent inadequacies in her model that will need to be addressed. While Creamer suggests limits are natural, intrinsic and good,⁷² nuancing the depth of response and reaction to those limits will be an important step for creating emotional and moral space for the wounded soldier to then engage a conversation regarding limits.⁷³ Essential to understanding Creamer is to comprehend her “limit model of disability” as more akin to a “contextual model of disability” where, within those varying contexts different levels of agency and ability are experienced. As the “limits” of those contexts are encountered, questions are raised regarding God, self and other by the agent experiencing the disabling limits.

The third methodological step important to this project will be to resource, assess and draw into conversation the biblical theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who engages an extensive conversation on limits in his work *Creation and Fall*. The historical and critical retrieval of his work requires an eye to the nuances of the German language, the context of the theological discussion at the time that necessitated his reflections, and the dogmatic theological method central to his work that conceives Scripture as a key place of divine revelation. In addition, Bonhoeffer’s conceptualization of limit gives rise to a Christological account as well as a theological anthropology and divine theology. Particular care will be taken to compare and contrast Creamer and Bonhoeffer in these areas with attention paid to the Christological emphasis Bonhoeffer suggests creating a

⁷² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 94-95.

⁷³ Current scholarship in disability studies and theology is quite interested in Creamer’s model. As the dissertation develops, care will be taken to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Creamer’s model given current scholarly conversation and to add further dimensions and nuances that current scholarship attests.

threefold schema for anthropology, theology and Christology in the face of limits. This historical review is essential to understanding Bonhoeffer's development of the human person in the face of limits. These implications will then be drawn into conversation with Creamer's disability theology of limit and its implications for moral injury.

The final methodological step in this project will be to allow the conversation across these three areas to construct a new model of disability, "the crucial limit model," that takes into account Bonhoeffer's resources for deepening Creamer's model. The new model will inform possibilities for our understanding of moral injury, its psychological and theological treatment, a theological assessment of the issues, and possibilities for societal engagement of moral limits and their implications. At stake in this conversation are the demands for practical and pastoral theology that the theological nuances will construe. This four-fold methodology provides an overarching schema thereby allowing critical reflection on moral injury and the very real limits veterans face in the midst of particular moral contexts and their presenting crises. This cross-disciplinary conversation will contribute to a deeper understanding of what moral injury is and how it must be both respected and addressed within our society and among our churches. Jonathan Shay reminds us moral injury affects character that in turn affects social trust. Societal care for moral injury will attend to the injury, the injured character, and the injured social trust.

1.5 Overview of the Chapters

To accomplish the task outlined above, Chapter two will provide an overview of the emergence of the field of moral injury engaging contemporary scholarship from the fields of Psychology and Theology. Key to defining moral injury well is distinguishing moral injury from PTSD, so lingering on the distinctions between the two will be a

necessary step at this stage. Specific themes and concerns within the field of moral injury will be analyzed with links hinted at here for their helpful dialogue with disability particularly themes related to medicalization and socialization. Moral injury will be presented here as a problem of “limits” within a moral world that have an anthropological and theological dimension.

Chapter three will draw moral injury into conversation with the field of disability studies by first overviewing historical Christian models of disability. Current models of disability will then be assessed including the work of Nancy Eiesland, Amos Yong, Molly Haslam and Sharon Betcher. Three possibilities exist for drawing moral injury and disability into conversation together: defining moral injury as a disability, using the framework of disability for moral injury, or drawing the two together through the theological engagement of finitude. This chapter will conclude with an examination of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s account of finitude for disability.

In chapter four, dominant models in the field of disability including the medical and social models will be presented and analyzed alongside their implications for moral injury. A third model of disability, the “limit model” proposed by Deborah Creamer, will be addressed in more depth more thoroughly addressing the strengths and weaknesses of her model.

The analysis and assessment of those models provides a starting point for chapter five that explores Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Creation and Fall* as a resource for building on, adapting and expanding Creamer’s model to address particular limitations within her construct. While Creamer begins with varying contexts and the disabling limits

potentially experienced across those contexts and *then* raises questions about the experience of those limits; Bonhoeffer does the reverse. Bonhoeffer begins with a theological analysis of “limit” based on his exegesis of the Biblical text of Genesis and the questions those limits raise regarding a theological anthropology and agency, and *then* he moves later in his theological work to describe the effect of those limits across varying contexts and the potential for functioning in the midst of those limits. While this reversal is important, to compare and contrast their work, an additional benefit Bonhoeffer brings to the conversation is the notion of shame. He, thereby, creates a more robust exploration of human emotion in the face of limit over and above the sense of “goodness” Creamer’s model names. Bonhoeffer’s view of limit will be presented by situating his view of limit within Protestant thought on limits as both a result of human sin and human finitude. The unique contributions Bonhoeffer makes to these ongoing conversations will be highlighted. While Creamer proposes implications of “limits” for anthropology and theology, Bonhoeffer does as well but adds a Christological component to limits. Here it will be made clear the precise claims Bonhoeffer makes regarding limits as well as depicting become the foundation for his Christological formation regarding his concept of the orders of preservation. Care will be taken to contextualize how these orders of preservation build on his view of limits and how they were a response to a robust theological and societal conversation in his time. Finally, attention will be given to how Bonhoeffer’s later work on the mandates of creation builds on his limit model and the orders of preservation to create structures across the varying contexts of church, marriage, family, culture and government for an individual to thrive.

Chapter six will offer a construction of this crucial limit model of disability. Strengths and weaknesses of this revised model will be analyzed. Care will be taken in this chapter to show the benefits of the limit model that transcend the medical and social models, while at the same time, understanding keenly the ongoing issues that will need to be refined within the limit model to better name, evaluate and support moral injury.

Chapter seven will engage an application of the crucial limit model of disability through Jon Paul Lederach's conception of the moral imagination. Using the contexts of a county Veterans' court and Brian Doerries' "theatre of war" project, we will explore the possibility of engaging the crucial limit with moral imagination for individual soldiers and societal institutions. We will conclude with an assessment of future work to be done in the areas of theology, moral injury and disability, as well as in further cross-discipline conversations as encouraged by Brett Litz, to build on the crucial limit model of disability.

The Veterans' Creed begins: *I am [former rank] [first and last name], A veteran of the United States [branch of service], As one of my nation's fittest and finest, I answered my nation's call to duty.*⁷⁴ The aim of this dissertation, in drawing moral injury into conversation with the field of disability and theology, is not intended to 'dis-able' or stigmatize any soldier or veteran. Instead, the hope is to enable soldiers and societies alike to have a deeper conversation about human limits before God in a broken and complex world with the hope of preserving our "fittest and finest" and allowing the potential for human flourishing to unfold even after great trauma and suffering have been

⁷⁴ Judge John C. Reed, III.

endured. This work is essential, as one young veteran of two wars, now a senior at Georgetown University, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, explains: “It is our job, as a country, to understand what broken means.”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Gibbons-Neff, “Why Distinguishing a Moral Injury from PTSD is Important.”

Chapter 2

Moral Injury: Psychological and Theological Perspectives

*I mastered the weapons of war and became expert in defense and security
– and I make no apology for my skills.
I am a warrior and have seen and done things that many may not understand.
I have proudly served my country with honor and dignity.
I am one in fifteen – a seven-percenter – a member of a team spanning the nation –
veteran brothers and sisters, bonded by our common values and experiences.*

-The Veterans' Creed⁷⁶

2.1 Emergence of the Field of Moral Injury

Shell shock. War neurosis.⁷⁷ Soldier's Heart. Insanity. Nostalgia. Irritable Syndrome. Battle Fatigue. Combat Stress Reaction. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. *Combat Veteranitis*.⁷⁸ Psychiatrists, journalists, pastors and family members have strained to name symptoms presented upon return home from war. All attempts to diagnose and treat the range of behaviors resulting from the pressures and crises encountered in the arena of war fail to encapsulate the damage inflicted on body, mind and spirit. Historian Ben Shephard documents the struggle to name and define varying neuroses in his 2003 account *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century*.⁷⁹ Drawing upon accounts recorded in diaries, official records, doctor's reports, journals, medical papers, conversations with soldiers, and newspaper articles, Shephard explores the relationship between professional psychiatrists and

⁷⁶The Veterans' Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

⁷⁷ Uwe Siemon-Netto, *The Acquittal of God* (New York, NY: Pilgrim Press, 1990), 31.

⁷⁸ Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co., 1996), 4.

⁷⁹ Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), xxi.

soldiers since World War I through the Gulf War culminating in his assessment that treatment beyond current ‘medical’ options are needed that would more systemically address the trauma endured by the individual soldier.⁸⁰ His account acknowledges the difficult relationship between the landscapes of deployment and home; mortal combat and morale,⁸¹ coping mechanisms and presenting symptoms;⁸² readiness for war and recovery in its aftermath; repression of grief and its expression,⁸³ perception of well being and the daily struggle to cope.⁸⁴ Shephard states his goal clearly: “There is a compelling reason to take a much wider look at what has happened in the past: we are making a mess of this problem today and need to learn the lesson that, in treating the aftermath of war, good intentions are not enough.”⁸⁵ Even in Shephard’s robust account of the history of “shell-shock”⁸⁶ and critical account of societal response⁸⁷, Shephard’s twenty-first century publication fails to name “moral injury” as a presenting category of symptoms.

While these studies recognize a depth and complexity of veterans following a war, “moral injury” is a complex and relatively new term that describes a particular set of symptoms. We will see how scholars and psychologists strive to define the contours of the presenting indicators as well as to define the boundaries within which Moral Injury can best be described. Psychiatrist Jonathan Shay, Psychologists Brett Litz, William Nash, Everett L. Worthington and Diane Langberg and theologians Rita Nakashima Brock, Gabriella Lettini, Warren Kinghorn, Robert Meagher and Brian S. Powers agree

⁸⁰ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 396.

⁸¹ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 38.

⁸² Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 355.

⁸³ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 19.

⁸⁴ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 19.

⁸⁵ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, xxi.

⁸⁶ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 1-3.

⁸⁷ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, 385-396.

regarding many of the major dimensions of moral injury but will offer subtleties concerning the nuances of moral agency, critical repercussions and healing response. Their differences are not cause for concern, but an invitation to think specifically regarding the interplay of agent, event, moral code and aftermath of the presenting injury.

For the purpose of understanding notable developments in the history of identifying moral injury, it will be helpful here to note briefly key figures and dates before they are discussed more fully later in the chapter. Psychiatrist Jonathan Shay developed essential themes for the conceptualization of ‘moral injury’ during his twenty-year tenure in Boston working for the Veterans Improvement Program (VIP) as a psychiatrist for the US Department of Veterans Affairs.⁸⁸ To be clear, however, Shay did not ‘name’ moral injury; he provided the themes but not the terminology. In 1991, Shay discussed “the betrayal of what is right” as a component of PTSD in an article entitled “Learning about Combat Stress from Homer’s *Illiad*” in *The Journal of Traumatic Stress*. This article described a decade’s worth of work at the Boston Clinic with veterans from Vietnam. Three years later, Shay developed this article to a full book: *Achilles in Vietnam*. When these were written, Shay understood a moral component (“the betrayal of what was right”) to what was then diagnosed as PTSD:

Vietnam Veterans with severe PTSD often report the following combat experiences: a leader's betrayal of "what's right," blunted responsiveness to any emotional, social, or ethical claims outside a tiny circle of combat-proven comrades, grief and guilt for death(s) in this circle, lust for revenge, renunciation of ever returning home, seeing one's self as already dead, berserking, dishonoring the enemy, and loss of humanity.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Jonathan Shay, “Moral Injury,” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 31:2 (2014): 182.

⁸⁹ Jonathan Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 4:4, (1991): 562.

While Shay did not coin the term immediately in his either the 1991 article in *The Journal for Traumatic Stress* nor the 1994 book *Achilles in Vietnam*, scholars credit his clinical and academic work as introducing the moral component to symptoms initially described as PTSD and then later named by other scholars as Moral Injury. For Shay, moral injury is something that happens ‘passively’ to a soldier while a person in authority over them commits an act that is a ‘betrayal of what is right.’⁹⁰ Shay sees this kind of injury, resultant of a failed moral relationship between a leader and his troops. Shay sees these themes developed in both of the ancient texts the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* and uses them to discuss contemporary wartime issues.⁹¹

After Shay, it is psychologist Brett Litz and his team of scholars including Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva and Shira Maguen, who are credited with the terminology of ‘moral injury.’⁹² Their 2009 paper

⁹⁰ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 183.

⁹¹ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 183

⁹² In the paper: Kent D. Drescher, David W. Foy, Caroline Kelly, Anna Leshner, Kerrie Schutz and Brett Litz. “An Exploration of the Viability and Usefulness of the Construct of Moral Injury in War Veterans.” *Traumatology* 17:1 (March 2011); the team of scholars discuss the viability of the terminology “moral injury” for understanding the condition by interviewing religious and health professionals proficient in supporting veterans. Questions posed to the interviewees included: Is the category of Moral Injury necessary? Is the working definition of Moral Injury sufficient to describe the phenomenon? Can PTSD be used to include those who are morally injured? And, is the very terminology of the name “moral injury” adequate? In response, the interviewees were unanimous in their responses to the first three questions. Yes, Moral Injury is a needed category. No, the working definition is inadequate. And no, Moral Injury cannot be included within PTSD. In response to the fourth question, regarding the name, there was substantial differentiation in participants’ answers. Sixty-five percent agreed that “moral injury” worked as a name to describe the presenting symptoms. However, thirty-five percent disagreed saying, “No” and determining the two words to be inadequate.⁹² Within that thirty-five percent, there was a split between those who wanted to eliminate the word “moral” while keeping “injury”, and those who wanted to eliminate “injury” while keeping the word “moral.” For those in the first group, alternative names included “Spiritual Injury, Emotional Injury, Personal Values Injury and Life Values Injury.” Those in the second group preferred to describe the presenting symptoms as “Moral Trauma, Moral Wounds and Moral Disruption.” Clearly, we can see here the straining of language to adequately describe the depth of despair and destruction encountered by the soldier and witnessed by their therapeutic and pastoral help. See for example the work of Camillo Mac Bica who suggests “PEM Injuries” to describe the “Psychological, Emotional and Moral Injuries of War” in his book *Beyond PTSD: The Moral Casualties of War* (New York, NY: Gnosis Press, 2016). If the phenomenon of Moral ‘Injury’ is greater than a physical injury to the body, does the language of “injury” do justice to the depth of despair inherent within the spirit of the

entitled, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy” in the *Clinical Psychology Review*⁹³ is viewed as an influential early study on moral injury that served to broadly introduce the terminology and invite further research across disciplines. In their view, moral injury results from the perpetration of a morally injurious event by the individual himself, rather than victimization as a bystander to a person in higher authority.⁹⁴

Their article, seen as a seminal moment in the field, accomplishes two things. First, the scholars name “morality” as a component to mental health and the risks of war that had heretofore overall gone unnoticed in the studies of mental health, veterans and presenting psychosocial symptoms; a noticeable *absence* of attention.⁹⁵ Second, their clinical assessment both assimilates and academically presents the beginning threads of scholarship and clinical work noticing the *presence* of morality as a potential place of injury. For example, they drew on a paper entitled “When They Come Home: Posttraumatic Stress, Moral Injury, and Spiritual Consequences” by Health Science Specialist Kent D. Drescher and professor of Psychology David Foy published in 2008 in *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* identifies ‘moral injury’ as an

one who is morally injured and the need for society to grieve those wounds? If the phenomenon of ‘Moral’ Injury is greater than a soldier’s morality, does the language of “morality” do justice to the depth of complexity involving social complacency, stressed morality and theological struggle? The language of injury carries with it the potential for a balm, a medication, a technological aid, or a bandage that can contain the trauma and aim toward healing; what happens when that is not possible? The language of morality carries with it the potential for a return to the center, a moral code; what happens when that is not possible? The inadequacy of the language, attested to in Ken Drescher’s study, is a modest indication of the inadequacy of our ability to understand the depth, despair, shame and inability to function that a morally injured veteran experiences and that can only be spoken of with language that is theological.

⁹³ Litz, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans,” 695-706.

⁹⁴ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 184.

⁹⁵ For example, see: C. W. Hoge and others, “Combat Duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mental Health Problems and Barriers to Care,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 351:1 (2004): 13-22. As well as: Matthew J. Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 352:1 (2004): 75-77. Both of these articles acknowledge the tremendous psychiatric costs of war, but do not venture into the realm of morality to describe the presenting injuries.

entity of its own other than PTSD that can have profound physical and social consequences. Just after the release of Litz's introduction of moral injury as a preliminary model, Theologian Rita Nakashima Brock convened a "Truth Commission on Conscience in War"⁹⁶ at the Riverside Church in New York City in the Spring of 2010 to address her assessment of the pressing societal need for truth in wartime across varying parties and to preserve moral conscience within the military.

Each of their attempts could well fit within the American Academy of Religion's 2016 Call for Papers to address and explore what has become a new and pressing need: "Moral Injury is an emerging concept which attempts to engage the impact of making difficult moral choices under extreme conditions, experiencing morally anguishing events or duties, witnessing immoral acts, or behaving in ways that profoundly challenge moral conscience and identity and the values that support them."⁹⁷ Given this sweeping definition, several questions readily emerge. How does societal complacency affect soldiers and their moral worlds? What is the role of religious institutions in critiquing the systems of war while supporting soldiers in their humanity? Do we as a society err too easily in responding with militarization rather than seeking alternative routes for addressing conflicts? What support systems are in place for combatants who have returned to society? What structures of support are effective for upholding soldiers and their families in the long journey home to normalcy? While the intricacies of these questions and their answers are beyond the full sweep of this dissertation, we can see in

⁹⁶ See: www.conscienceinwar.org

⁹⁷ American Academy of Religion 2016 "Call for Papers" on "Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Group" convened by Co-chairs Rita Nakashima Brock and Elizabeth Margaret Bounds, www.papers.aarweb.org/content/moral-injury-and-recover-religion-society-and-culture-group (Accessed October 14, 2016).

the claiming of these questions the intricacies of both morality and injury. How is morality shaped prior to war, during war, and upon return home from war when a complacent society questions the morality of a soldier faced with situations beyond their comprehension? What dynamics are at play in creating particular injuries: societal complacency, church teaching, the crisis of war, the judgment of outsiders? With the hope of highlighting the exponential intricacies, scholars at the American Academy of Religion explain further, “Moral Injury is a wound of moral subjectivity within a social context.”⁹⁸ As difficult as it is to describe the “what” and the “how” of Moral Injury, the pressing concern is the “who,” the moral subject. Psychiatrist Brett Litz explains, “An individual with Moral Injury may begin to view him or herself as immoral, irredeemable, and un-reparable.”⁹⁹ Litz recognized the shame *within* deeply affected the world *beyond*.

The emergence of moral injury as a field of study with clinical significance and cross-disciplinary implications invites further exploration. To accomplish this it is necessary to examine the scholarship of moral injury in both the fields of Psychology and Theology to comprehend how clinicians and theologians understand and respond to moral injury. Once that framework is presented, themes from both fields will be extracted in order to explore physiological, sociological and theological concerns and their implications for scholarship and response. A closer consideration of these themes, in turn, allows us to see what is missing in the scholarship, what is needed in the field, and what actions might forward societal response to our wounded veterans. This chapter thus

⁹⁸ American Academy of Religion 2016 “Call for Papers” on “Moral Injury and Recovery in Religion, Society, and Culture Group” convened by Co-chairs Rita Nakashima Brock and Elizabeth Margaret Bounds, www.papers.aarweb.org/content/moral-injury-and-recover-religion-society-and-culture-group (Accessed October 14, 2016).

⁹⁹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 698.

underscores the need for the present study that aims to bring moral injury into conversation with disability, through the scholarship of Deborah Creamer and the scholarship of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in order to develop a ‘revised limit model of disability’ for moral injury.

2.2 Scholarship: Psychiatry and Psychology on Moral Injury

Prior to his introduction of the thematic issues of moral injury (Shay) and the formal introduction of the terminology by Litz and his team of scholars in 2009, scholars such as Psychiatrist Matthew J. Friedman recognized and sought to respond to “Post-Vietnam Syndrome”¹⁰⁰ as a distinctive form of PTSD. His work may be viewed as an early form and foundation of contemporary conceptions of moral injury. In his work on PTSD (prior to the formation of moral injury), Friedman advocated an assessment of the psychiatric expense of war, praising efforts such as the National Vietnam Veteran’s Readjustment Study completed and published in 1988 for its “rigorous evaluation.”¹⁰¹ Friedman is well aware of the difficulty that statistics, stigmatization and zooming in on specific moments of time pose for studies such as these. First, statistics struggle to measure the difference and the effects of current presentations, historic episodes, and/or lifetime manifestations¹⁰² of a psychiatric illness like PTSD. Second, veterans struggle beneath the stigmatizing consequences of self-profession of a psychiatric illness

¹⁰⁰ Matthew J. Friedman, “Post-Vietnam Syndrome: Recognition and Management,” *Psychosomatics* 22:11 (November 1981): 931-943.

¹⁰¹ Matthew J. Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 351:1 (July 1, 2004): 75.

¹⁰² Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 75.

considering the “Scarlet P” effect of a diagnosis.¹⁰³ Friedman determines the more likely a person is to have a mental health diagnosis, the more likely that person is to have a distorted view of the possibility of stigmatization.¹⁰⁴ Soldiers perceive they will be viewed as “a failure, a weakness, and as evidence of an innate deficiency of the right stuff.”¹⁰⁵ Third, statistics fail to take into account in a significant way the variables of “emotional sustenance,”¹⁰⁶ variances in structures of social support for each soldier, and stressors that can be either circumstantial or complex and long-standing.¹⁰⁷ In keeping with Friedman’s advocacy for reduced stigmatization, this dissertation will argue that reduced stigmatization is a central goal for scholars in the field of disability studies and a constructive resource for returning veterans.

Friedman’s work precedes overt discussion of moral injury; however, his pursuit is prelude to the discussion that follows. The notion of moral injury emerges from Jonathan Shay’s work at that Boston Clinic over two decades with veterans and his scholarly engagement with the ancient texts of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to explore the questions and themes that arose during critical work with his clients. In this section, we will overview the work of Shay, as well as, Kent Drescher, Brett Litz, William Nash, Everett Worthington and Diane Langberg to understand their definitions of moral injury, the context of their study, nuances and themes in their scholarship, and their suggestions for healing and repair once moral injury is recognized.

¹⁰³ Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 77.

¹⁰⁴ Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 76.

¹⁰⁵ Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 77.

¹⁰⁶ Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 76.

¹⁰⁷ Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 76.

The definition of Moral Injury offered by the scholars carried the intent to “stimulate a dialogue”¹⁰⁸ and so it did. They defined moral injury as “Perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”¹⁰⁹ The dialogue that definition initiated was a conversation with Jonathan Shay who necessitated a “person in authority”¹¹⁰ as the one who violated the moral code while an innocent soldier stood by his side. Litz and his team preferred a broader, and some would argue a less “political” definition of moral injury. Litz credits the early work of Psychiatrist M.J. Friedman for describing a “post-Vietnam syndrome”¹¹¹ characterized by moral conflict and guilt to begin the categorization of moral injury. The clinical prevalence of moral injury today can be attributed to the complex interplay between: lengthy wars requiring long and multiple deployments, the unconventional tactics utilized on both sides, the ambiguity of the enemy, the incapacitation of prudent actions and moral judgment amid unusual wartime strategies, all perhaps exacerbated by ongoing familial and situational stress on the life of the soldier.¹¹² Litz and his team of researchers continue to advocate for DSM, APA and even the Pentagon’s recognition of moral injury because of the “longstanding psycho-bio-social impairment”¹¹³ on the soldier and reverberating effects on their family systems and workplaces. The subsequent moral injury when either an act of commission or an act

¹⁰⁸ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 700.

¹⁰⁹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 700.

¹¹⁰ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 183.

¹¹¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696. See also: Friedman, M.J. “Post-Vietnam syndrome: Recognition and Management,” *Psychosomatics* 22 (1981): 931-943.

¹¹² Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696. Certainly Shay reveals in his study of Ancient Greek tragedies of war markers of moral injury; however, scholars and clinicians are working today to understand both the ancient echoes of war’s effects as well as what appears to be a new phenomenon and its increasing prevalence in veterans and the societal undercurrents that factor in to the complex scenario where moral injury becomes a widespread new reality.

¹¹³ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696.

of omission transpires in a highly charged scene results then in an “inability to contextualize”¹¹⁴ the occurrence within existing moral frameworks. In this particular study, Litz et al. have focused on “acts of commission”¹¹⁵ highlighting the performance of atrocities and killing, rather than attending to instances of omission wherein the soldier bears witness to either the morally inept actions of others or perpetrations of cruelty and human suffering that they are unable to respond to in the instance. This is important to note, in light of Shay’s definition of moral injury, as necessitating a moral authority outside one’s self who fails. Rather than emphasizing Shay’s definition, Litz and his team are less interested with the impact of authority and focus more on the actions of a soldier and the possibility a soldier might become morally injured by the actions of his or her peers. For Shay, authority matters. For Litz, personal agency is key.

2.2.1 Review of Key Authors

2.2.1.1 Jonathan Shay

Since his 1994 publication of *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, psychologist Jonathan Shay continues to be a key voice in the field of Moral Injury. Shay utilizes the Homeric epic *The Illiad* to illumine issues related to combat trauma, rage and the berserk state by reexamining the ancient narrative in light of Vietnam.¹¹⁶ While ‘moral injury’ as such is yet unnamed in Shay’s work at this stage

¹¹⁴ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 705.

¹¹⁵ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 705.

¹¹⁶ Michel Foucault examines “madness” as a presentation of societal structures that is expressed in different eras in varying forms. Madness is located within a certain cultural nexus resulting not just in individuals who are driven to a berserk state, but societies that can succumb to states of madness which then have great impact in nuanced and powerful ways on individual lives. For Foucault, madness becomes treated within those societies through medicalization. He notes a state of “unreason” as different than madness and more likely to be pushed to the margins of society. Foucault claims that unreason is a helpful state when reason itself is “dazzled” and that confusion offers insight into societal truths. See: Michel

in 1994, his insights begin to reveal a distinction between moral injury and PTSD. Twenty years later in an article entitled simply “Moral Injury,” Shay made clear the distinction that he knew by instinct in *Achilles* but had not fully articulated.

Jonathan Shay defines moral injury as: “a betrayal of what is right by a person in authority in a high stakes situation.”¹¹⁷ Shay’s definition of moral injury requires a person in authority to fail morally, deeply affecting the moral worldview of the soldier underneath the moral agent’s leadership; this then is not simply a failure in one’s own moral code. For Shay, moral injury is constituted by three key elements: the betrayal of “what is right”, the failure in morality of a respected authority, and the existence of a high stakes situation.¹¹⁸ This triptych depicts three scenes: first, the landscape of a moral code; second, a person in authority who fails morally; third, the greater context of a high stakes environment. The presence of each of these components in that triptych is vital and necessary to Shay’s definition and each, together, contributes to the overriding despair, potential for suicide and possibility of interpersonal violence that occurs within moral injury and can be even more damaging than repercussions of PTSD.¹¹⁹ The difference between PTSD and moral injury in Shay’s definition can be distinguished by the presence of those three components in that painting (moral code, moral authority, morally complex high stakes situation). It is interesting to note one nuance Shay hints at regarding the failure of moral authority. In his work with the Homeric texts, Shay sees elements of

Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York, NY: Random House, 1965).

¹¹⁷ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 182.

¹¹⁸ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 182.

¹¹⁹ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 182.

leadership in the Homeric military that United States military culture would ascribe to the greater fiduciary of the state rather than an individual leader.¹²⁰

Shay's wisdom and experience in this area is extensive. He worked as the sole psychiatrist at a Boston VA Clinic for over twenty years. After his work with *Achilles in Vietnam*, the MacArthur Genius Foundation awarded him a grant for his ongoing initiatives and success. Even more so, Shay continues to advocate for policy changes, better practices and shifts in institutional culture to better address the weaknesses he sees in the field of moral injury regarding the need of military leadership to be "expert, ethical and properly supported."¹²¹ Ultimately, Shay's voice and perspective remain optimistic regarding the potential for recovery in those who have been morally injured. A triad of steps are suggested by Shay for ongoing clinical work to make progress with both soldiers and the greater society: recognize the need, empower the victim and create supportive clinical teams adept at handling the potential transference and countertransference that can occur within a therapy setting.¹²² As a physician, Shay's concern is for the clinical diagnosis, care, treatment and recovery of the wounded soldier; however, it should be noted that religious care both through theological reflection and/or liturgical practices are not suggested by Shay as elements essential to recovery.

2.2.1.2 *Kent D. Drescher and David W. Foy*

Psychologists Drescher and Foy published one of the first non-clinical studies on the topic of moral injury in 2008. They define moral injury as:

¹²⁰ Shay, "Moral Injury," 186.

¹²¹ Shay, "Moral Injury," 183.

¹²² Shay, "Moral Injury," 191.

Disruption in an individual's confidence and expectations about their own or others' motivation or capacity to behave in a just and ethical manner brought about by bearing witness to perceived immoral acts, failure to stop such actions, or perpetration of immoral acts, in particular actions that are inhumane, cruel, depraved, or violent, bringing about pain and suffering of others or their death.¹²³

The loss that occurs for a veteran with moral injury, according to Drescher and Foy, is a “disruption in moral directedness and moral expectancies.”¹²⁴ These *inward* repercussions move from “a stressor” to “a disorder” when there becomes a noticeable change in life's functioning and flourishing for the individual soldier, manifesting in significant outward consequences.¹²⁵ Drescher and Foy understand both the physical and emotional stressors of war. In addition, they elaborate on the traumatic stressors that may occur through natural, unintentional or intentional means. In their clinical practice they have seen the noticeable effects of PTSD: re-experiencing past traumatic events, the presence of avoidance techniques to prevent that re-experience and the tendency toward hyper-arousal.¹²⁶ However, they note seven characteristics in veterans beyond those three characteristics of PTSD that indicate a need to describe Veterans' clinical experience in terms of Moral Injury rather than PTSD. These include: differences in ethical standards that previously existed, effects on spirituality and views of God, shame and its aftermath of alienating behaviors, pervasive unhappiness and unease, reduced levels of trust in individuals and institutions, behaviors that escalate, and poor care for one's self with the potential to harm.¹²⁷ In the face of trauma, soldiers with PTSD and moral injury often

¹²³ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home: Posttraumatic Stress, Moral Injury, and Spiritual Consequences for Veterans,” *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 28 (2008): 91-92.

¹²⁴ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 92.

¹²⁵ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 87.

¹²⁶ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 88.

¹²⁷ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 92.

manifest “negative religious coping”¹²⁸ even though there are a few veterans who occasionally seek spiritual means for growth, recovery and meaning making after war.¹²⁹

In order to equip clergy, military chaplains and clinicians with resources for this newly attributed category of moral injury, Drescher and Foy draw on standards of response¹³⁰ utilized by relief workers in the aftermath of disasters to help those tasked with responding to veterans who might have moral injury. These skills include: providing resources to reduce ‘arousal’ from possible stressors, increasing circles of support and decreasing isolating tendencies, encouraging enjoyment in pleasurable activities that are healthy, addressing and re-directing beliefs that have become warped by trauma and its aftermath, working to rebuild the “moral compass”¹³¹ of the veteran, and finally, reducing the severity of re-experiencing symptoms by teaching cognitive and behavioral coping strategies.¹³² Shay, in contrast, offers less of a systematic response and more of an existential one questioning if recovery is even possible.¹³³ The best treatment, according to Shay, is one that begins with the soldiers’ own self care with the first step of establishing “safety, sobriety and self-care.”¹³⁴ The steps that follow are not a cathartic release of all held within, but instead, the slow construction of a personal narrative.¹³⁵

¹²⁸ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 94.

¹²⁹ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 93.

¹³⁰ See, for example, the psychological first aid techniques employed by: M. Brymer and others, *Psychological First Aid: Field Operations Guide*, 2nd ed. (Rockville, MD: National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD, 2006).

¹³¹ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 99.

¹³² Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 97-99.

¹³³ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 184.

¹³⁴ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 187.

¹³⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 187. Shay is quite clear regarding the problematic nature of catharsis. He cites Judith Herman who writes, “The patient may imagine a kind of sadomasochistic orgy, in which [he or] she will scream, cry, vomit, bleed, die, and be reborn cleansed of the trauma.” See: Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York, Basic Books, 1992), 172. Shay continues to make clear the long slow process of constructing a personal narrative as more akin to running a marathon.

The personal narrative aims to rebuild the ruins of character and the shattered¹³⁶ fragmentation of consciousness.¹³⁷ The personal narrative must, in order to heal, find a trusting community of listeners¹³⁸ who listen, refrain from judgment, and respond with emotion.¹³⁹ And who then bear witness on behalf of the soldiers as they continue to “hear, believe and retell”¹⁴⁰ so that the soldier’s personal narrative shapes the beginning of a sociopolitical movement.¹⁴¹ That sociopolitical movement challenges an adult’s everyday sense of safety. “What is right”¹⁴² is questioned by the listening audience. The language Shay relies on here draws from Homer’s use of *themis* as the normal expectation of what is societally right and Nussbaum’s use of “the fragility of goodness” to describe the “cloak of safety”¹⁴³ adults take for granted in daily functioning.¹⁴⁴ The sociopolitical effect of the soldier’s narrative is to remove that cloak of safety inviting discomfort and a greater “communalization of the trauma.”¹⁴⁵ The difference between Shay and the work of Drescher and Foy is the divide between the veterans’ personal work and the practice of the psychotherapist. Shay places a mantle upon the shoulders of

¹³⁶ For further insights on the shattering implications of trauma see: Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2002).

¹³⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 188.

¹³⁸ Shay points out the possibility of instrumentalizing trauma narratives as “reader assurance” by highlighting the work of Lawrence L. Langer who critique the genre of trauma narratives. See: Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹³⁹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 189.

¹⁴⁰ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 193. Shay continues to draw here on Judith Herman’s *Trauma and Recovery*, 7-32.

¹⁴¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 193.

¹⁴² Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 193.

¹⁴³ The language of “the cloak of safety” will take on new meaning as we explore language used by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his exposition of *Creation and Fall* in chapter five.

¹⁴⁴ See: Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), 417.

¹⁴⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 194. This will become of interest and importance in chapter six as we explore Brian Doerries’ *Theatre of War* and his use of ancient Greek tragedies in contemporary settings to accomplish this task.

veterans to secure their own safety and self-care, while Drescher and Foy see that as the primary work of the therapist.

Drescher and Foy pave the way for what will become the substantive clinical study published in 2009 by Brett Litz and his team of scholars. Drescher and Foy are helpful in deepening the connection, that Shay begins, between the fields of moral injury and trauma studies, providing early distinctions between PTSD and moral injury, noticing dynamics at play in the provision of spiritual care for soldiers disenfranchised with classical conceptualizations of God, and considering the potential of “memory” as a possibly redemptive source for healing.¹⁴⁶ Drescher and Foy conclude their paper with the provocative naming of memory as a potential source for healing by drawing on the work of theologian Miroslav Volf. By way of his work,¹⁴⁷ they consider the potential of memory to be either destructive causing further damage or constructive and aiding redemption.¹⁴⁸ Their connection to memory poses an interesting question regarding what bodily functions moral injury most disables. Is moral injury a psychiatric injury? An injury to the core of morality, and if so, where does morality reside – in body, mind or spirit? Or is moral injury a wound to the memory? Determining the location and manifestation of this wound will be key to diagnosing and treating moral injury, as well as to understanding its ‘disabling’ effects.

¹⁴⁶ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 100.

¹⁴⁷ See for example: Miroslav Volf, “Love’s Memory: Redemptive Remembering,” in *2002 Princeton Lecture on Youth, Church and Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2002). Volf argues for a construct of “redemptive” rather than destructive remembering. For Volf, memory is linked to conflict and reconciliation and can lead either to obstacles and bitterness or to justice and hope. A redemptive memory is linked the biblical narratives of Exodus and the cross, both of which are shaped by restorative memories.

¹⁴⁸ Drescher and Foy, “When They Come Home,” 100.

2.2.1.3 *Brett T. Litz*

Professor of Clinical Psychology at Boston University and clinician for the Veteran's Affairs Healthcare System in Boston, Brett Litz continues to be both prolific and on the prophetic edge of research and response to Moral Injury. With over 300 publications in academic journals and three books in the field, Litz was on the cutting edge of recognizing and defining moral injury and remains influential in shaping response to the crisis within military culture today. He has worked with many key scholars and clinicians in the field including Kent D. Drescher, David Foy, and William P. Nash. In 2009, he chaired the team of scholars that published an early article on Moral Injury entitled, "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy" in *The Clinical Psychology Review*. Most recently, in 2015, Litz published a book length strategic practicum for clinical response to soldiers returning from war entitled *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss and Moral Injury* along with scholars Leslie Lebowitz, Matt J. Gray and William P. Nash where moral injury is one of a triad of crises that must be addressed upon a soldier's return home including: the *governing fear* of life-threatening events, the *grief and loss* of other's lives lost, and the *guilt and shame* of moral injury.¹⁴⁹

The operational definition, for Litz and his colleagues is that "morals" are "the personal and shared familial, cultural, societal, and legal rules for social behavior, either tacit or explicit...fundamental assumptions about how things should work and how one

¹⁴⁹Matt J. Gray, Yonit Schorr, William Nash, Leslie Lebowitz, Amy Amidon, Amy Lansing, Melissa Maglione, Ariel J. Lange, Brett T. Litz, "Adaptive Disclosure: An Open Trial of a Novel Exposure-Based Intervention for Service Members With Combat-Related Psychological Stress Injuries" *Behavior Therapy* 43:2 (June 2012): 414.

should behave in the world.”¹⁵⁰ Difficult emotions such as guilt or regret, shame or embarrassment, even cynicism and despair, are markers. While moral injury creates an “inability to contextualize;” the injury does not shield the veteran from conflicting moral emotions. These moral emotions invite the individual to probe their moral code.¹⁵¹ Guilt and shame are the operative emotions within moral injury; however, Litz argues here that shame is the more devastating consequence of moral injury. Guilt often prompts “the making of amends”¹⁵² and carries less risk for behaviors that are anti-social. Shame, on the other hand, has the tendency to draw the individual into an inward spiral fueled by “global evaluations of the self”¹⁵³ as well as causing increased isolation due to “toxic interpersonal difficulties.”¹⁵⁴

The moral emotions of guilt¹⁵⁵ and shame are an area, according to Litz, that could use further research. He notes the attention of psychologists to the most life-threatening of injuries,¹⁵⁶ rather than to lingering emotions such as guilt and shame. Litz’s account of guilt and shame is better understood through considering the way in which it coincides and differs from Paul Ricœur’s work on these emotions. For example, in *The Symbolism of Evil* Ricœur aims to understand “moral evil” by suggesting a

¹⁵⁰ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁵¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁵² Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁵³ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁵⁴ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁵⁵ For a scholarly overview of guilt from a variety of perspectives see: Herant Katchadourian, *Guilt: The Bite of Conscience* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). Katchadourian claims “Guilt is neutral in itself...It becomes pathological when it is excessive or deficient” (xiii). He argues guilt should be explored both on “micro” levels of human emotion, action and experience as well as on a “macro” level of greater societal systems such as the natural sciences of evolution, the legal framework of justice, and moral systems of philosophy and religion.

¹⁵⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696.

threefold pattern of experience: defilement, sin and guilt.¹⁵⁷ Defilement, for Ricœur, is a pre-ethical stance where one feels defiled, dirty and discouraged by the crossing of a certain taboo. That taboo is beyond rationality and requires a ritualized act to purify the symbolic stain gained in its transgression.¹⁵⁸ The experience of defilement creates a palpable terror within the recipient that does not differentiate between the ethical (moral code transgressed) and the physical (changed bodies due to natural causes.)¹⁵⁹ Standing between defilement (an external category for Ricœur) and guilt (an internal one), is the category of sin that places a human being before God¹⁶⁰ with both an external and an internal trajectory. Sin bears a twofold repercussion: first, sin severs and disconnects an agent from something of importance. Ricœur calls this the “negativity” of sin.¹⁶¹ Second, sin carries a “positive” repercussion when it serves to remind the agent of something of consequence that is still there.¹⁶² Finally, there is guilt. Ricœur tends to place the actual moral transgression within the category of sin; while guilt is the inward subjective experience of that transgression.¹⁶³ Guilt can lead to a sense of scrupulousness that is institutionally paralyzing, personally isolating, and ultimately a stumbling block.¹⁶⁴ For Ricœur, guilt leads toward a binding paradox when one recognizes, like the Apostle Paul, the inability to stop sinning while also becoming aware of one’s culpability. This leaves the agent at an impasse.¹⁶⁵ For Litz, guilt is less of an “impasse”

¹⁵⁷ Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1967), see chapter 1.

¹⁵⁸ Ricœur *The Symbolism of Evil*, 178-179.

¹⁵⁹ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 29.

¹⁶⁰ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 50-51.

¹⁶¹ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 70.

¹⁶² Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 81.

¹⁶³ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 103.

¹⁶⁴ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 137-138.

¹⁶⁵ Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 139.

and much more of a “motivating”¹⁶⁶ emotion that doesn’t paralyze but instead offers a passageway to something new. The experience of guilt, for Litz, motivates a person to make amends, engage in less risky behavior, and to review and assess specific past acts. For Litz, guilt is a “motivating” emotion and shame, in contrast, causes paralysis, withdrawal, self-harm and avoidance.¹⁶⁷ The notion that guilt can function positively is thus intriguing, and an advantage of Litz’s conceptualization rather than Ricœur’s.

The intervention strategy offered in response to this preliminary model of moral injury, with its focus on shame, is an eight-step process. Given Litz’s recognition that guilt motivates, while shame stagnates, one can appreciate his attempt to motivate the veteran experiencing shame to do the following steps including: connection (strong therapeutic relationship),¹⁶⁸ preparation of the patient for difficult therapeutic content,¹⁶⁹ consideration of exposure time recognizing the pain of addressing harmful experiences,¹⁷⁰ “examination and integration”¹⁷¹ of key events in a veteran’s narrative, conversation with a “benevolent moral authority,”¹⁷² “reparation and forgiveness,”¹⁷³ reconnection with individuals and institutions,¹⁷⁴ and finally, vision for the road ahead.¹⁷⁵ In this eightfold schema, Litz explores the possibility of a spiritual path once therapy has ended that might open up a transcendent dimension to a veteran’s life experience. For Litz, spirituality is “an individual’s understanding of, experience with, and connection to

¹⁶⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁶⁷ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁶⁸ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 702.

¹⁶⁹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703.

¹⁷⁰ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703.

¹⁷¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703.

¹⁷² Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703.

¹⁷³ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 704.

¹⁷⁴ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 704.

¹⁷⁵ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 704.

that which transcends the self.”¹⁷⁶ Transcendence, then, is “not being defined by the [morally injurious] experience, and correcting the wounds by not succumbing or being that construction of the self through subsequent mindful and purposeful existence moving forward.”¹⁷⁷ The success of intervention depends on the possibility of a veteran’s ability to navigate the difficult moral emotions of a morally injurious experience and integrate them into a new construct of self who is able to “contextualize, justify and accommodate acts”¹⁷⁸ within a redefined moral framework.

Litz clearly outlines basic concepts, assumptions, treatment and pressing needs in the field. Concepts at play in this discussion are themes of morality, moral behavior in times of distress, the emotions of guilt and shame, and the complicated relationship between self-condemnation and self-forgiveness.¹⁷⁹ Shame and its aftermath appear in this study to have a more damaging and longer-lasting effect than guilt alone and its precisely this difficult to diagnose and treat emotion that invites the *salutogenic* treatment Litz aspires to in his work. Medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky advocated *salutogenesis* as a course of treatment committed to understanding the dynamics that contribute to the rebuilding of health rather than focusing research solely on the root causes of a disease. Treatment, for Litz, will then build on that health to foster “equally intense real-time encounters with a countervailing experience.”¹⁸⁰ Reaching that experiential encounter will only be possible through an eight-fold treatment plan: foster connection, prepare and educate, determine a modified exposure component to the

¹⁷⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 704.

¹⁷⁷ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 704.

¹⁷⁸ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 705.

¹⁷⁹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹⁸⁰ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 701.

treatment, examine and integrate, encourage dialogue with a benevolent moral authority, seek restoration and forgiveness, foster reconnection, and plan adequately for the long term commitment to health and restoration.¹⁸¹ Assumed within this treatment plan is that moral injury acknowledges an “intact moral code”¹⁸² that has been transgressed through an experience of profound dissonance. To proceed, Litz et al. advocate for the development of a psychometric scale to better assess and diagnose moral injury, an epidemiological and *salutogenic* response, and most importantly, additional controlled trials to intervene on behalf of soldiers struggling with moral injury to be studied and assessed so further research can be shared.¹⁸³

Having presented the need for a psychometric scale that can be used clinically for the diagnosis and response to Moral Injury, Litz joins a team of scholars led by William P. Nash who create a Moral Injury Events Scale (MIES) that allows psychometric evaluation. The scale developed by the scholars is intricately linked to the definition of Moral Injury initially presented by Litz: “Perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”¹⁸⁴ Eleven questions are ranked on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree) with nine of the questions probing violations of belief systems and two of the questions exploring perceptions of trust.¹⁸⁵ Questions include such moral inquiry by asking “I saw

¹⁸¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 702-704.

¹⁸² Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 701.

¹⁸³ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 705.

¹⁸⁴ Nash, William P.; Teresa L Marino Carper; Mary Alice Mills; Teresa Au; Abigail Goldsmith; Brett T Litz, “Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Events Scale,” *Military Medicine* 178:6 (June 2013): 647.

¹⁸⁵ Nash, “Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Events Scale,” 647. The authors acknowledge the difficulty of discussing moral injury for fear of attributing blame or judgment and cautions therapists and pastors accordingly. In addition, they make clear further work is needed.

things that were morally wrong” and “I violated my own morals by failing to do something I should have done.”¹⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that while Litz’s definition of Moral Injury does not necessitate the injury being caused by a person in authority, as Shay does, this study still includes these kinds of questions in the psychometric scale by prompting response to these kinds of questions: “I feel betrayed by leaders who I once trusted”, “I feel betrayed by fellow service members who I once trusted”, “I feel betrayed by others outside the U.S. military who I once trusted” and “I trust my leaders and fellow service members to always live up to their core values.”¹⁸⁷ Even though scholars presented the MIES index as a preliminary possibility, early results proved valuable and worthy of note. For example, soldiers with a higher MIES score also had concomitant higher scores on anxiety and depression scaled while also scoring lower on scales that measure social support and positive affect.¹⁸⁸

Litz’s work culminates in a recent book length publication entitled *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss and Moral Injury* published in 2015 that addresses a triad of concerns for returning soldiers: trauma, grief and morality. Litz suggests the military culture does a solid job in responding to “life threatening experiences” that can evoke trauma and fear, but needs to do a significantly better job in addressing grief and moral injury.¹⁸⁹ Key elements of a bettered response would include attention to *brevity* (acknowledging the real time constraints of soldiers and their

¹⁸⁶ Nash, “Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Events Scale,” 651.

¹⁸⁷ Nash, “Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Events Scale,” 651.

¹⁸⁸ Nash, “Psychometric Evaluation of the Moral Injury Events Scale,” 650.

¹⁸⁹ Brett Litz, Leslie Lebowitz, Matt J. Gray, William P. Nash, *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss, and Moral Injury*, (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2015), 19.

families)¹⁹⁰, *complexity* (acknowledging the depth and number of elements involved)¹⁹¹, the *phenomenology* of trauma in wartime¹⁹², the problematic language of *injury* (veterans shy away from medicalizing language like “treatment”¹⁹³ and finally, the *capacity* to contextualize, integrate and “adapt” traumatic wartime experience into one’s life narrative.¹⁹⁴ One can see in Litz’s approach in 2015 retains components of the intervention strategy proposed in 2009, but offers them in a streamlined fashion with the eight-steps condensed into a more workable timeline based on a soldier’s commitments and realistic possibilities for clinical treatment. Litz’s expertise in military trauma, early intervention and mental health across the lifespan of a veteran clearly add to the depth and extent of scholarship in Moral Injury.

2.2.1.4 *Worthington and Langberg*

Professor of Psychology Everett L. Worthington and Diane Langberg, a private clinician, provide an assessment of self-condemnation as a presenting factor in moral injury and its concomitant cry for self-forgiveness in their 2012 article “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness in Treating Complex Trauma and Moral Injury in Present and Former Soldiers” published in *The Journal of Psychology and Theology*. We see here in their work a desire to attend seriously to a framework of spirituality from a Psychological perspective with a focus on self-forgiveness. Their definition of forgiving the self as “a coping strategy for stresses arising from self-condemnation”¹⁹⁵ implicitly

¹⁹⁰ Litz, “Adaptive Disclosure,” 408.

¹⁹¹ Litz, “Adaptive Disclosure,” 408.

¹⁹² Litz, “Adaptive Disclosure,” 409.

¹⁹³ Litz, “Adaptive Disclosure,” 409.

¹⁹⁴ Litz, “Adaptive Disclosure,” 409-410.

¹⁹⁵ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 275.

begs the theologian to join the conversation with psychologists to create a more robust space in which theologies of forgiveness, reconciliation and atonement might engage the conversation within Moral Injury.¹⁹⁶ Self-condemnation arises in a failure to meet one's own expectations for morality in a given situation and as a stress emerging from a perceived wrongdoing.¹⁹⁷ The authors outline a helpful description of what does *not* constitute self-forgiveness in the face of moral injury:

It is easier to tell what self-forgiveness is not than what it is. It is not letting oneself off the hook irresponsibly, accepting oneself and moving on with life, finding someone to blame such as one's parents, spouse, commanding officer, the President, Osama bin Laden, God, or life.¹⁹⁸

To counterbalance the definition constituted in *absentia*, the authors then suggest two kinds of self-forgiveness: decisional self-forgiveness and emotional self-forgiveness. The definitions of these are worth lingering on in full:

“Decisional self-forgiveness is making a decision to act toward yourself without malice, self-blame, and self-condemnation and to treat oneself as having at least equal worth as do others. Emotional self-forgiveness is the emotional replacement of unforgiving emotions toward the self with positive emotions toward the self like self-empathy, self-sympathy, self-compassion, and self-love.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ See also: Edward Tick, “Healing the Wounds of War: Atonement Practices for Veterans,” *Beyond Forgiveness: Reflections on Atonement*, Ed. by Phil Cousineau (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011). Like Jonathan Shay, Edward Tick counseled Vietnam veterans suffering from the aftermath of war. Tick offered support to veterans drawing on the depth and breadth of resources from the world's spiritual, mythological, psychological and ethical wisdom. For Tick, war “breaks, fragments, incinerates, ravages, shoots, shreds, smashes, stabs, and destroys. It is a violent act of division and deconstruction” (115). Central to that deconstruction is the external division of neighbor to neighbor, and perhaps even more so, the division of one's internal spirit. While Tick's legacy precedes the emerging work today on moral injury, his work is helpful as he grapples with the telling of stories, the necessity of self-forgiveness and ways of making amends. For Tick, atonement is an act of truth telling which is necessary for healing. Because, “The first casualty of war,” as Aeschylus states, “is truth” (128).

¹⁹⁷ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 275-276.

¹⁹⁸ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 282.

¹⁹⁹ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 282.

Forthcoming are two works from Worthington that will develop a theology for self-forgiveness that will address the simultaneous injuries of God, others and self by describing the merciful moral repair that occurs by God's grace and initiative working in conjunction with the sacrificial love of Christ, whereby creating social repair between societal neighbors and psychological repair for one's self.²⁰⁰

Together the scholars suggest a six-step plan to facilitate self-forgiveness²⁰¹ by doing the following steps: "receive God's forgiveness, repair relationships,²⁰² rethink ruminations, REACH emotional self-forgiveness, rebuild self-acceptance and resolve to live virtuously."²⁰³ Within this schema, "REACH" stands for: "Recall the hurt without blame, Emotional replacement, Commit publicly to the forgiveness experience, Hold on to forgiveness when doubts arise."²⁰⁴ Both of these schematics occur with keen attention to the present reality – that is "deal with oneself" – by "dealing with one's past" and "dealing with one's future."²⁰⁵ As simple as this may sound to 'orient' one's self within the past, present and future, those who have worked with moral injury make clear that a feature of its impairment is the rupturing of time and history.²⁰⁶ A true sense of disorientation happens by the severing of the individual from a future that might induce

²⁰⁰ Worthington and Langberg, "Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness," 282.

²⁰¹ The authors make clear a limitation of this study is that while they are suggesting this schema for use with military veterans at this point they have only used it with college women who have experienced trauma and participants in an alcohol treatment program. They aim to adapt this for military culture in future studies although using it for the current study in its exploration of moral injury across cultures.

²⁰² While Worthington and Langberg vow in the REACH schema to restore relationships, one wonders if their work ventures far enough into the critical act of apology. See, for example: Darlene Fozard Weaver, "Apologies and their Import for the Moral Identity of Offenders" *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 36:1 (2016): 87-105. Here, Weaver stresses that a grounded apology offers both the opportunity for moral repair as well as a critical instance where grace might be received.

²⁰³ Worthington and Langberg, "Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness," 284-285.

²⁰⁴ Worthington and Langberg, "Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness," 284.

²⁰⁵ Worthington and Langberg, "Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness," 283-284.

²⁰⁶ To be clear, Shay is aware of these features and elaborates on them in his description of narrative and healing. See: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 188-193.

hope because of a past that keeps presenting and re-presenting itself creating a recapitulation of the past traumatic moral event.

Repairing a “right relationship to God”²⁰⁷ is essential to the moral repair they envision in attending to a condemned self. One must wonder though, if a conversation with Protestant theology might aid their work. In suggesting “the person must make a commitment to live as virtuously as possible so that a repetition of the failure does not occur;”²⁰⁸ their suggestion could be perceived at first glance as an invitation to works righteousness, rather than a theology of grace. We will see in our exploration of Bonhoeffer in chapter five an invitation to the responsible action of a moral agent. That responsibility is held within the framework of two key elements: first, reality is complex and living responsibility is always bound with complications, and second, the cost of discipleship in response to God’s grace is living virtuously and faithfully in return. Worthington and Langberg could deepen their theological reflection with conversations in Catholic and Protestant theology to provide complexity to the positive psychology they espouse. For example, they write, “In positive psychology, the commitment to virtue for self and others is called *eudaimonia*.... Expression of those virtues is encouraged to build positive families, workplaces and communities.”²⁰⁹ Bonhoeffer will offer a model for living, different than the virtues, which will build on Catholic models of natural law and

²⁰⁷ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 284

²⁰⁸ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 284.

²⁰⁹ Worthington and Langberg, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness,” 284. In suggesting *eudaimonia*, Worthington and Langberg are following in the tradition of Aristotelian eudaimonism.

Protestant models of grace and the divine command as he focuses on the orders of preservation and the mandates of creation.²¹⁰

Worthington and Langberg are to be heralded for their work that begins to bridge the fields of Psychology and Theology and deepens the conversation regarding self-condemnation, trauma, and self-forgiveness. Though a singular publication, this article is worthy of note here, for the conversation it invites. Worthington is considered a leading researcher, not in the area of Veteran's affairs, but in the psychology of forgiveness.²¹¹ The REACH model he and Langberg propose has proved helpful for other victims of trauma including addiction and abuse; its proposal here is for helpful impact on soldiers who have experienced warzone trauma. Because Moral Injury is nascent with less than a decade of serious scholarship, this article serves to extend the conversation even though its scope is limited.

2.2.2 Critical Analysis of Psychological Discourse

As we see the progression of Moral Injury from a presenting category of symptoms differentiated from PTSD to a substantive diagnosis, three strands of inquiry demand further analysis. These include questions related to morality, injury and

²¹⁰ In her work, *The Virtue of Bonhoeffer's Ethics: A Study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ethics in Relation to Virtue Ethics*, Jennifer Moberly argues for a "virtue-ethical" reading of Bonhoeffer. She believes Bonhoeffer would not have described himself as a virtue ethicist, nor have a particularly positive reading of accounts of virtue. She sees Bonhoeffer as a theologian who attends to "virtue-ethical concerns" while maintaining the primacy of grace and attending to a socio-political framework of the real that is significantly different than traditional eudaemonistic frameworks she sees as affirming "self-love" rather than love of the other in concrete situations. Jennifer Moberly, *The Virtue of Bonhoeffer's Ethics*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 232.

²¹¹ Worthington and Langberg recognize "self-forgiveness" as a missing element in the literature of forgiveness. They note a study by: Fehr, R., Gelfand, M. J., & Nag, M., "The road to forgiveness: A meta-analytic synthesis of its situational and dispositional correlates," *Psychological Bulletin*, 136:5, (2010): 894-914 that reveals the lack of self-forgiveness in the literature. Worthington and Langberg contend that self-forgiveness is a skill that can be taught in both secular and religious settings.

disability. The review of the Psychological literature reveals a need to attend more deeply to the concept of morality, to avoid taking the word “injury” for granted but offer instead a foundation for the concept that builds on a clear account of morality, and to better situate moral injury as a certain form of disability within the field of disability studies in order to distinguish the disabling effects of a morally injured agent. The following section will attend to these questions.

2.2.2.1 The Problem of Morality

First, a critical review of sources raises questions about whether suitable depth has been given to the conceptualization of *morality*.²¹² Moral Injury became its own diagnosis apart from PTSD as psychologists became aware of an injured morality, a deeper more abstract dimension, than the presenting physicality of PTSD and its recurring symptoms, notably fear. While this distinction is clear, there has not been sufficient analysis regarding how morality is constructed, sustained, disabled, and then reordered within the psychological literature on moral injury.²¹³ Shay relies on

²¹² It is worthy of note here, perhaps with some irony, that Jonathan Shay quotes Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried* in Shay’s chapter on “Healing and Tragedy” by saying, “A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things men have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue.” See: Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990), 76-77.

²¹³ Consider, for example, the work of Charles R. Pinches, *Theology and Action: After Theory in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Press, 2002). Author Pinches describes a problem in ethics wherein theory can too often neglect both the agent and the context. He reviews three theories: action theory, principle monism and proportionalism and illumines how each of these value theory over agent and context: action theory focuses on the actions themselves detached from the wider context (11-33); principle monism shifts from the particularized action toward the larger universal principle, and yet, forgets the agent and the context (34-58); and proportionalism relies on a consideration of weighing the good against the bad achieved by an action (59-86). At stake here is a twofold loss: neglect of the agent

Nussbaum's account of moral luck, and in turn Aristotle's response to the Stoics, to make sense of the effects of "betrayal" on an otherwise "good person." Litz explores moral emotions, but neglects deeper work on moral choices, and particularly moral choices amid complex contexts. Litz's focus is on the aftermath of morality, shame and guilt, rather than the preceding factors. In this section we will analyze Shay and Litz's explanations and assess their weaknesses. This will lead us to the problem of "injury" and how a robust concept of morality can better describe what precisely is injured, and how.

In his prophetic article "Learning about Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*" published in 1991, Shay has not yet distinguished Moral Injury from PTSD and thereby including within the diagnosis of PTSD injuries that can be both moral and philosophical.²¹⁴ The *Iliad* describes what Shay deems "a moral disintegration"²¹⁵ of Achilles who, as the story began, had a "broad moral horizon"²¹⁶ but after a series of events including the swiping of a medal of honor from Achilles by Agamemnon finds that morality shattered and fixated toward "a single point of revenge."²¹⁷ The combat stress that crumbles Achilles moral code is what Shay calls "the betrayal of 'what's right'."²¹⁸ While Shay does not outline a definitive definition of morality, he does strain to find a word outside of The *Iliad's* original language to describe what has been lost. "What's right", for Shay, encompasses "normative expectations, convention, moral order, that

and extraction from the context (182). A thorough review of moral injury requires ethical theories that attend justly to both.

²¹⁴ Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," 563.

²¹⁵ Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," 575.

²¹⁶ Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," 576.

²¹⁷ Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," 576.

²¹⁸ Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," 562.

which is fitting, ethics, commonly understood social values.”²¹⁹ Even Homer, it appears, speaks about morality and a moral code through relationships rather than rigorous definitions or abstract concepts. So, Shay reaches beyond the Homeric language, to ethicist Martha Nussbaum’s use of the word *nomos*²²⁰ which points to laws and customs that exist between authorities and citizens constituting obligations and rights that should normally be followed.²²¹ Shay postulates three consequences that occur when *nomos* is threatened. First, a shattered *nomos* leads to the inability to act with virtue since morality has been subjected to vulnerability, and perhaps even been crushed.²²² For Shay, this is an important point for combat veterans, which is all too often neglected in their after care.²²³ Further study should explore what Shay implies in this statement regarding the link between morality and virtue.²²⁴ Second, Shay laments the lack of options for reconstruction when *nomos* has been lost. It is to this end that Shay has devoted his career and service.²²⁵ And third, Shay describes the spirits of soldiers who are “numb, incapable of pleasure, tortured by a pervasive sense of taint.”²²⁶

²¹⁹ Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 563.

²²⁰ Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 403.

²²¹ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 403. Nussbaum relies on Euripides’ *Hecuba* to unpack the fragility of *nomos*. After presenting Hecuba’s view of *nomos* as stable within a society and the very structure of our internal being because of their “incorruptibility” Nussbaum proceeds to recognize Hecuba’s fragility and vulnerability. Upheaval, within a society, can upset *nomos* and cause instability institutionally and individually.

²²² Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 577.

²²³ Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 578.

²²⁴ “Virtue” is an undefined concept by Shay in this article on Homer’s *Iliad*. In *Achilles in Vietnam* Shay offers further development regarding his notion of virtue when he explains the loss of human virtue in veterans who have reached the “berserk” state leading them to be “like gods.” Virtue and values are lost in this state. Shay makes an interesting analysis when he explains that virtues such as generosity and courage are “meaningless to a god.” Virtues, for Shay, are related to mortality not from “being God.” See: 85-86.

²²⁵ Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 574. To be clear, Shay implies this lament in this section when he outlines the consequences for a soldier of dehumanizing the enemy.

²²⁶ Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 574. Interesting to note how Shay’s three descriptions parallel Ricœur’s in reverse: defilement (tortured by a pervasive sense of taint), sin (incapable of pleasure – remember, Ricœur’s description of sin as being a negative state where one is cut off, as well

Again, in his 1994 *Achilles in Vietnam*, Shay dives into a brief foray with morality appearing to be satisfied with Nussbaum's account of moral luck. Moral luck is a concept, dating back to Aristotle, that Nussbaum finds helpful to describe the effect of situations beyond our control on the character of a "good person." For Shay, moral luck is connected with the situation of betrayal outside of our control by a moral authority. For Aristotle, moral luck is helpful for distinguishing between notions of justice and morality when a moral agent finds herself in a context outside of her control, where "involuntary" factors affect one's moral agency.²²⁷ He explains,

It is then generally held that actions are involuntary when done (a.) under compulsion or (b.) through ignorance; and that (a.) an act is compulsory when its origin is from without, being of such a nature that the agent, who is really passive, contributes nothing to it: for example, when a ship's captain is carried somewhere by stress of weather, or by people who have him in their power.²²⁸

Aristotle engaged in a hearty debate with Stoic Philosophers, for example Epictetus regarding whether or not virtue was sufficient for happiness. Aristotle argued no, since virtue can be subjected to moral luck and involuntary situations. Epictetus argued yes, since he believed the wise person could be immune to misfortune by staying calm in the

as a positive state where one remembers the good, i.e. pleasure), and guilt (numb – again, Ricœur describes guilt as an impasse).

²²⁷ While Aristotle distinguishes between voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary contexts where luck and morality might intersect, other ethicists make different distinctions. For example, some might consider the distinction between "constitutive luck" (that which constitutes a person's natural character by genes, dispositions, gifts and birth), "developmental luck" (that which develops a person's character through mentors, teachers, opportunities, habits, and/or lack thereof), and "resultant luck" (that luck we have as a result of our actions over time.). See, for example: Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979) particularly, chapter three on moral luck.

²²⁸ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. By Harris Rackham (London, UK: Wordsworth, 1996): 1110a,2-4. Aristotle distinguishes between "voluntary," "involuntary," and "non-voluntary" moral circumstances. In response, there are three types of choices: deliberate choice, deliberation and wishful thinking. The person who is virtuous makes deliberate choices to choose between the extremes and find the mean. While the courageous person may fear, they exhibit a confidence in directing their fear toward the sake of the *kalos* (beautiful). Herein, that person finds the mean between cowardice and rashness. See also: Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995).

midst of the turmoil.²²⁹ We will return to this conversation in the debate to follow as we explore Martha Nussbaum's conceptualization of moral luck in her work *The Fragility of Goodness*.

Shay is drawn to Aristotle and Nussbaum's conception of "moral luck" rather than the Stoics.²³⁰ He makes clear, "Greek tragic poets confront us with a harrowing dimension of social existence."²³¹ That haunting dimension is the possibility of "social betrayal"²³² that can destabilize human character, societal conventions²³³, and have catastrophic consequences for "human relatedness."²³⁴ Subjected to such betrayal, the veteran according to Shay does not exhibit calm in the misfortune, but may go berserk in the face of "catastrophic moral luck"²³⁵ that can occur within war zones. Nussbaum's exploration of moral luck seems concerned ultimately with this question: Can an interaction with a situation of bad moral luck devastate and cause the demise of an

²²⁹ It is worthy of note here that Vietnam veteran James Stockdale, imprisoned for four years in North Vietnam as a prisoner of war, held close to Stoic philosophy to persevere. He details this in his autobiography: James Stockdale, *Courage under Fire: Testing Epictetus's Doctrines in a Laboratory of Human Behavior* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1993). This book is a collection of essays given as The Hoover Lectures on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. In this he relied first and foremost on a basic teaching of Epictetus to his students that you can never be "victim" to another, a person can only be a "victim" to himself. Marcus Aurelius taught this as well: "Take away the complaint, 'I have been harmed.' And the harm is taken away." Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book 4.7. From *The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antonius*, trans. George Long in 1862 (Oxford, UK: Benediction Classics, 2012).

²³⁰ Elizabeth Agnew Cochran offers a helpful analysis of early Stoics versus Roman Stoics in her work, "Faith, Love and Stoic Assent: Reconsidering Virtue in the Protestant Tradition" *Journal of Moral Theology* 3:1 (2014): 199-227. Here, she distinguishes between Aristotles' view of the virtues as "a multiplicity of interconnected moral qualities" versus the Socratic and Stoic view of virtue as unified, and able to be pursued through *phroenesis*. However, she distinguishes a separate strand of Stoicism, affiliated with the Romans, wherein virtue is an "assent", much like the Protestant view. Nussbaum's ethic stands more in keeping with the Roman view of Stoic assent.

²³¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 30.

²³² Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 31.

²³³ "Convention", in Homeric language, is *themis*.

²³⁴ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1994): 31.

²³⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 31.

otherwise good person?²³⁶ Morality then creates a link between a person of character and their actions and repercussions. Shay explains,

Prior to Agamemnon's betrayal of "what's right" and the death of Patroklos, Achilles possessed a highly developed social morality. This was reflected in his care for the welfare of other Greek soldiers, respect for enemies living and dead, and a reluctance to killy prisoners. Achilles' moral unluckiness, his tragedy, was that events – simply what happened – created the desire to do things that he himself regarded as bad.²³⁷

Eliciting from Shay's discussion here on "Moral Luck",²³⁸ one can deduce these affirmations regarding morality: morality is formed by societal conventionality and stability, ie. *themis*; positive interactions with *themis* create a steadiness of character that produces positive and wise actions; negative interactions with *themis*, particularly in the form of bad moral luck, destabilize the individual, their choices, their relationships and their sense of stability within a given society. MacIntyre criticizes Aristotle for such an account that does not take interest in the historicity and contextuality of a given situation and instead focuses on abstract conceptions.²³⁹

²³⁶ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 31.

²³⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 31.

²³⁸ For contemporary scholarship on moral luck, see: Neil Levy, *Hard Luck: How Luck Undermines Free Will and Responsibility* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011); Robert J. Hartman *In Defense of Moral Luck: Why luck Often Affects Praiseworthiness and Blameworthiness* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2017); and also Lisa Tessman, *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005). In chapter one, she struggles with the "agent regret" that can occur damaging self and virtue in the fight against oppression. She calls this "regretting the self one is." Here, the virtuous agent must struggle in response to bad "moral luck" and this may take the form of either anger or "agent-regret." In chapter two, she wrestles with the question of moral damage and its affect on human flourishing. How does a virtuous agent "carry on" when there are clear boundaries of possible morals and the inability to flourish within a particular system? For Tessman, systems of oppression and injustice are of particular importance as one considers the possibility of virtue amid the need for liberation.

²³⁹ See: Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. MacIntyre criticizes Aristotle here for his "ahistorical character of his understanding of human nature." And adds three additional criticisms: First, Aristotle's teleology presupposes a refutation of metaphysical biology. Second, his framework assumes the *polis* without a critical and distanced eye. Third, Aristotle is not particularly interested in looking at conflicts, which might be the very crucible in which the virtues are learned (162-164). It should be noted that in later editions of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre backtracks on these critiques. See for example the introduction to the 3rd edition of *After Virtue*.

In her work *The Fragility of Goodness*, Martha Nussbaum provides a comprehensive study on Greek interpretations of “moral luck” questioning whether a person’s character is dependent upon circumstances that surround them, or solely independent. This exploration of vulnerability, to a world of factors beyond one’s own control, is essential for considering morality, injury and potential disability. Greek tragedies allow deep exploration into that vulnerability and the complexity of human suffering in a tragic world and their counterpoint story to human self-sufficiency. Through these tragedies the Greek tradition asked compelling questions of human agency and contingency amid “moral luck.”²⁴⁰ Unlike Plato, who maintained indifference between moral luck and character, Aristotle and other Greek poets engaged a hearty dialogue on the porous relationship between the two.²⁴¹ Nussbaum’s probing scope of moral luck, ethics and the potential for *eudaimonia* are critical for understanding human agency and contingency, but even more so, the Greeks’ pursuit of reason led them to the “limits of reason.”²⁴² She explains,

We must ask...how it works to order a life... The Greeks characteristically, and appropriately, link these ethical questions very closely to questions about the procedures, capabilities, and limits of reason. For it is their instinct that some projects for self-sufficient living are questionable because they ask us to go beyond the cognitive limits of the human being, and, on the other hand, that many attempts to venture, in metaphysical or scientific reasoning, beyond our human limits are inspired by questionable ethical motives having to do with closedness, safety and power.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 4.

²⁴¹ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 20. Plato and the Stoics believe the good life could be achieved even in the face of bad moral luck. Aristotle disagreed and understood the vulnerability between the two based on moral luck and circumstance. Some criticize Nussbaum for this view, believing she was too heavily influenced by Bernard Williams’ view of Aristotle from his work *Moral Luck* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²⁴² Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 8.

²⁴³ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 8.

These limits are confronted in a myriad of ways, described here as the limit of knowledge and reason. These limits of reason are reached amid all the contingencies of life for example, when love, courage, and virtue set forth in the world with “a stance of openness towards the world and its possibilities”²⁴⁴ but then meet vulnerability and betrayal. Limits, in some sense, are part of the very character of love, courage, virtue and morality. For Nussbaum, the fragility of goodness is a robust acknowledgement of the power of moral luck to override character and its aim for *eudaimonia*, the good, flourishing life.

Within the body of scholarship on Psychology and Moral Injury presented by Shay, Litz, Drescher, Worthington and Langberg, it is Litz’s ground-breaking 2009 article, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy” that best presents a framework for defining morality. Litz offers several paragraphs on morality as he and his team lay out basic concepts building his argument regarding moral injury, moral repair and the need for strategies of intervention beginning with the definition:

Morals are defined as the personal and shared familial, cultural, societal, and legal rules for social behavior, either tacit or explicit. Morals are fundamental assumptions about how things should work and how one should behave in the world.²⁴⁵

Drawing on Kohlberg, Freud, Eisenberg and Miller, Litz and his team argue that morality is a key aspect of human development where primitive drives are transformed toward pro-social behavior. Persons in the trajectory of a human’s development have the possibility of shaping moral development through positive teaching and modeling as well

²⁴⁴ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 339.

²⁴⁵ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

as through punishment when norms are transgressed.²⁴⁶ Litz explores the nuances of “moral emotions” such as the negative emotions of embarrassment, shame and guilt as well as the positive emotions of pride and gratitude.²⁴⁷ When those negative moral emotions are at play, they reveal a moral code that still remains intact despite the trauma it has experienced. In response to those emotions, the task of the therapist is not to excuse, deny or accommodate what has transpired within the morally injurious event.²⁴⁸ Instead, Litz and his team argue for a “new synthesis” that expands the view of morality for one’s self²⁴⁹ and one’s world within the complex context of that event.²⁵⁰

While Litz aims to offer a constructive framework in which to contemplate morality as a polyvalent term with many nuances and implications, other scholars too easily assume a predetermined definition of morality.²⁵¹ This assumption creates a myriad of problems. First, without a working definition of morality, as well as

²⁴⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

²⁴⁷ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

²⁴⁸ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703. Ethicist John M. Doris offers an interesting counterpoint to the language of character in his work *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*. Doris claims virtue theory makes unsustainable claims about human behavior in light of real life situations. He argues for a situationist view of human behavior that takes into account varying contexts. For example, he approves of the language of “local traits” in particular contexts rather than “robust traits” shaping a life of virtue (115). He gives an example of “Henry” who is truthful in certain contexts, but not always in others. Virtue requires “dispositional consistency” that is not always possible in real life situations (24-25). See: John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁴⁹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 703. Consider, for example, the work of Christian B. Miller who offers an account of “mixed trait” moral character wherein a person might have positive moral actions in some situations (so, those are not perfect, but they are not vices) and negative moral actions in other situations (given the situation, the negative action might not be completely immoral, but it still is not a virtue.) Christian B. Miller, *Character and Moral Psychology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 37-61.

²⁵⁰ Again, see John M. Doris and his situationist rather than globalist view taking into account varying contexts.

²⁵¹ Consider for example the excellent scholarship of Nash and Litz in their 2013 article, “Moral Injury: A Mechanism for War-Related Psychological Trauma in Military Family Members” wherein morality is only defined in absentia as something that can be lost (369), rather than a proactive definition of how it is constructed.

elaborating distinct nuances, morality becomes an abstract and assumed term leaving its implication to the hearer's discretion. Standards for determining moral choices may need to be revisited in light of changing war codes in the twenty-first century. Second, implicit in the readings is the knowledge that military codes allow moral choices otherwise unacceptable in other social settings. Thereby, morality is constituted by certain choices and behaviors varying across social spheres.²⁵² How then does one determine what crosses the immoral line within a military code of ethics? While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to assess military codes of ethics, what is worthy of note is the shifting boundaries of morality across social contexts and then back again.²⁵³

In the literature review of psychology and psychiatry, we see two areas of focus: first, Jonathan Shay's account of betrayal and how moral luck can factor into the moral injury of a person with good character; and second, Brett Litz's summary of moral emotions, particularly guilt and shame, following the consequential act that can create either a pathway (through guilt) or an impasse (through shame). Further work on moral injury must question whether both accounts are sufficient to describe the injury at hand. Morality, then, is clearly both a critical theme as well as a lingering key question. How are we to understand 'injury' – that is, what is injured and how it might be repaired – if morality is still yet undefined and unsupported in a substantive way by scholarship other

²⁵² Drescher and a team of scholars make explicit what is otherwise implied by many in their article, "An Exploration of the Viability and Usefulness of the Construct of Moral Injury in War Veterans" in saying: "During war, service members are at times required (e.g., for survival, to accomplish a mission objective) to perform acts that would be illegal in most other contexts (i.e., killing)." (p. 8) And then implying, soldiers must then shift from one context, with its own moral codes, to another context with its own moral conventions.

²⁵³ Martin Luther explored questions such as these in his understanding of vocation, allowing some choices to be made in certain roles that were unacceptable in other spheres of life. He described these as "the orders of creation" and believed their shape to be formed by natural law. See, for example: Paul Athaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1972) and Werner Elert, *The Christian Ethos* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1957).

than Shay's reference of Nussbaum (*nomos* and moral luck) and Litz's brief mention of Kohlberg and Freud?

2.2.2.2 *The problem of Injury*

The second obvious but essential critical theme is that of 'injury'.²⁵⁴ The Latin etymology of the word "injury" denotes a negation "in-" of that which is right "*jur/jus*." Thereby Shay in his 1991 prophetic article elaborating on a moral dimension to PTSD by describing the injuries to a veteran inflicted by "the betrayal of 'what's right'" pointed quietly to the etymology of "injury" even before it was deemed distinct from PTSD. His account then, in a sense, conflates morality and injury into that phrase so crucial to his scholarship: "the betrayal of 'what's right'". What is injured, for Shay, is that constellation of *nomos* (societal convention) that is brought to the test when confronted with an authority and a moral agent within a crisis situation.

The element of betrayal by a person in authority, as has been made clear, is critical for Shay but not for Litz. The problem with simplifying the disagreement between these two strands of scholarship into a betrayal by an authority (Shay) versus a betrayal by an individually acting moral agent (Litz) is that it neglects the greater scope of the crisis situation. Neither Shay nor Litz delineate societal complacency and social complexity into their sphere of definition for the extreme conditions at play in the crisis situation. Both the person in authority and the individual moral agent are not acting alone, but within a greater script and scope that they cannot control nor change. Too

²⁵⁴ Stoic philosophers, such as Marcus Aurelius, had a very matter of fact attitude toward an injury. Aurelius said: "Reject your sense of injury and the injury itself disappears." Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. by Meric Causubon, Book IV, paragraph 7 (1906). An alternative translation reads: "If not man shall think himself wronged, then is there no more any such thing as wrong."

much of an emphasis on the debate between who caused the injury – the authority or the agent – neglects the critical question of society’s role in causing morally injurious wounds. Catholic Social Thought acknowledges the reality of social sin and its systemic and exponential effect on individual realities. In *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, written in 2004, it states:

The consequences of sin perpetuate the structures of sin. These are rooted in personal sin and therefore, are always connected to concrete acts of the individuals who commit them, consolidate them and make it difficult to remove them. It is thus that they grow stronger, spread and become sources of other sins, conditioning human conduct. There are obstacles and conditioning that go well beyond the actions and brief life span of the individual and interfere also in the process of development of peoples.²⁵⁵

Jonathan Shay, in agreement with such sentiment, would argue that social sin prevents the hearing of trauma narratives.²⁵⁶ It is ironic that society *injures* but then cannot bear witness to the trauma that injury produces and instead works as a whole to “deflect, deny and forget.”²⁵⁷

Injuries, that negation of what is right, have a locus of *causation* (authority, agent, larger societal activity) as well as a locus of *infliction*. Some agent causes a negation of what is right that has an effect of marking, changing, afflicting, disturbing, negating what had otherwise been deemed whole. When Litz, et al., discuss the effect of that causation

²⁵⁵ Catholic Church. 2005. *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 119. This is the kind of systemic oppression to which Lisa Tessman addresses the question of virtue in her work *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles*. See also: Derek R. Nelson, *What’s Wrong with Sin: Sin in Individual and Social Perspective from Schleiermacher to Theologies of Liberation* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2009); and also Stephen G. Ray, Jr., *Do No Harm: Social Sin and Christian Responsibility* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003). Later we will see an account of Bonhoeffer who wrestles with personal responsibility in light of social sin. For example, he understands the vocation of a physician who is called not only to heal the sick, but also to work toward healing of the greater societal wound that caused the illness.

²⁵⁶ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 194.

²⁵⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 194.

upon an infliction, they pose the question for the soldier asking, “Are they at risk for developing long-lasting psycho-bio-social impairment?”²⁵⁸ Implied within this question is an assumption regarding the locus of the infliction. The injury, for Litz, has psychological dimensions, biological dimensions and social dimensions. It should be noted that this turn of phrase does not include, but certainly assumes, *moral* impairment. And, it could be argued that a fifth dimension *existential* be included within the locus of impairment given Litz’s belief that part of the effect of a moral injury is the damaging effect upon the individual’s life narrative. This discussion, regarding the locus of the infliction, is critical for moving forward toward healing and begins to draw us into the conversation that disability scholars have engaged. Is the infliction located within the body, a medical injury? Is the infliction located within the social body, A social injury? Is the infliction located within the body of something more transcendent drawing us into the limits of human perception and understanding, perhaps even, the body of God?²⁵⁹

Jonathan Shay makes clear the difficulty in locating the injury as well as the critical necessity for treatment in understanding the injuries’ location when he writes:

For mental health professionals the Achilles story —betrayal of "what's right," shrinkage of the moral and social horizon, grief and guilt for the death of a special comrade, renunciation of ever returning home, seeing one's self as already dead, berserking, dishonoring the enemy— is not a bad injury check-list when developing a Veteran's combat history over time.²⁶⁰

In other words, the healer must look beyond the obvious injuries toward something deeper and perhaps more ambiguous. For Shay, what is the ultimate injury greater than

²⁵⁸ Litz, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans,” 696.

²⁵⁹ Deborah Creamer uses the language of “the body of God” in her work on a limit model of disability by drawing on the scholarship of Sallie McFague’s *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Her work will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

²⁶⁰ Shay, “Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's Iliad,” 577-578.

the obvious checklist of injuries, is the paralysis that can occur when a veteran is unable to tell, own and integrate their story of that “betrayal of ‘what’s right’” into their sense of self.²⁶¹

The lack of a story and its coherence within an expanded sense of self and world is the ultimate injury, one that is ultimately existential demanding an expansion of Litz’s “psycho-bio-social” locus of the injury into a larger “psycho-bio-social-moral-existential” location for what is injured. Such an expansion enlarges the injury from the soldier’s body alone to the societal body, and, from the societal body to the body of God and the limits of human understanding. In later chapters, attention to Warren Kinghorn’s work on moral injury and Stanley Hauerwas’ scholarship in disability will reiterate the need for narrative that is larger than a singular person and held together within the context of a larger story-formed community.

2.2.2.3 The Problem of Disability

The third critical theme to be explored after an analysis of morality and injury is the relationship between moral injury and disability. Friedman describes a “Scarlet P”²⁶² effect of a mental health diagnosis²⁶³ and so we can begin to imagine the stigmatizing

²⁶¹ In addition, Shay is critical about the language and paradigm of modern medicine. He writes, “Certain dramatic successes of modern medicine have come to seem like paradigms for real healing...(they) share a certain story line: The problem is identified (diagnosis); a treatment is administered (therapy); the patient returns to his prior (life)...without impairment.” Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 185-186.

²⁶² Friedman, “Acknowledging the Psychiatric Cost of War,” 77.

²⁶³ See, for example, the study by Jack Tsai, Natalie P. Mota, and Robert H. Pietrzak, “U.S. Female Veterans Who Do and Do Not Rely on VA Health Care: Needs and Barriers to Mental Health Treatment,” in *Psychiatric Services Journal* 66:11 (November 01, 2015): 1200-1206. The authors begin with a hypothesis that women veterans would have less stigmatization of mental health services since men often carry gendered traits of self-reliance and views of masculinity that affect the ability to request help. They found women to experience similar levels of stigmatization regarding health care for various disabling psychiatric conditions. See also: Lorber W, Garcia HA, “Not supposed to feel this: traditional masculinity

fear of a “Scarlet D” effect of a disability given the potential “psycho-bio-social-moral-existential” injuries at play in a morally injured veteran.²⁶⁴ Some might argue, in hopeful protection of veterans from that stigmatization, that moral injury is not a disability but a normal response to extremity and the presentation of an intact, though damaged, moral code. But when, one must ask, does the crisis of moral authority have ramifications to the point of disabling for the veteran’s interiority, intimate relations, and institutional life? While the issue of a veterans’ disabling, or not, by moral injury may be both political and controversial, as this study proceeds, it is my argument that the scholarship on disability is absolutely essential to the questions being asked in the field of moral injury. These are questions related to impairment, medicalization, unjust social structures, liberation from those systems, and the acknowledgment of limits and the existential questions they raise about human life and finitude. In chapter three, we will bring moral injury into conversation with the field of disability offering possible insights to both fields while also clearing outlining possible risks in so doing.

2.3 Scholarship: Theology and Moral Injury

If we are to have more than the “good intentions”²⁶⁵ to which Shephard alludes then we must reflect on the interplay between the human condition, social conventions, moral formation and their vulnerability and fallibility in the face of power and crisis

in psychotherapy with male veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq,” *Psychotherapy* 47:3 (Sept. 2010): 296–305, and Garcia HA, Finley EP, Lorber W, et al, “A preliminary study of the association between traditional masculine behavioral norms and PTSD symptoms in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans,” *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 12:1 (2011): 55–63.

²⁶⁴ See, for example, the scale designed by: Britt TW, Greene-Shortridge TM, Brink S, et al: “Perceived stigma and barriers to care for psychological treatment: implications for reactions to stressors in different contexts,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 27 (2008):317–335.

²⁶⁵ Shephard, *A War of Nerves*, xxi.

situations. Understanding that interplay necessitates a broader framework for comprehending and assessing *morality*, a deeper probe for analyzing *injury* by assessing its causation and infliction, and a higher call to decrease stigmatization by searching the scholarship of *disability*. Given these three critical themes in the scholarship on Psychology and Moral Injury, it is now worthy of note to assess the scholarship from the perspective of Theology and Moral Injury by looking to the work of Brock, Lettini, Kinghorn, Meagher and Powers. Rita Nakashima Brock makes clear the need to draw Moral Injury into the realm of Theology in her book *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* when she states, moral injury is concerned with “souls in anguish, not a psychological disorder.”²⁶⁶

2.3.1 Review of Key Scholars

2.3.1.1 Rita Nakashima Brock

In the field of moral injury, Rita Nakashima Brock may be credited with being deliberate about the relationship between moral injury and Christian faith, theology and ethics. Brock, former Professor of Theology and Culture at Brite Divinity School, has awakened theologians, pastors, lay leaders and religious scholars to the pressing issue. Brock makes clear, “To be morally injured requires a healthy brain that can experience empathy, create a coherent memory narrative, understand moral reasoning and evaluate behavior.”²⁶⁷ Brock’s work champions the testimony of countless veterans from

²⁶⁶ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 51.

²⁶⁷ Rita Nakashima Brock “Moral Injury: The Crucial Missing Piece in Understanding Soldier Suicides,” *Huffington Post*, 07/23/2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rita-nakashima-brock-ph-d/moral-injury-the-crucial-missing-piece-in-understanding-soldier-suicides_b_1686674.html (Accessed February 3, 2016).

Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, war reporters, psychiatrists, parents and family members to rally support for those struggling. To best understand their work it is important to contextualize the development of the “Soul Repair Center” at the Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas and the accompanying book *Soul Repair* which documents the testimony and theological struggle of the soldiers with whom they have worked. Then, further influential works of Brock will be explored as well as the trajectory of future endeavors. To be clear, Rita Nakashima Brock is the scholar at the center of this discussion; however, she pairs with key partners including Gabrielle Lettini, Professor of Theological Ethics and Studies in Public Ministry at the Graduate Theological Union, as well as Colonel Herman Keizer, the founding co-director of the Soul Repair Center.

The collective work of Brock, Lettini and Keizer calls the attention of theologians, churches and culture to the burgeoning need of returning soldiers who in the desolation of war have questioned God, self and neighbor in struggling with religious structures, second-guessing their own humanity, and questioning the undergirding moral codes of a civilized world. Their work with The Soul Repair Center of Brite Divinity School to offer education, research and support in the field of Moral Injury began in the winter of 2008 after viewing the Emmy nominated film “Soldiers of Conscience.” Brock and others address how religious communities might offer strength, guidance, discernment and repair to soldiers wrestling with religious issues before, during and after war.²⁶⁸ Brock began to explore in coursework and with graduate students the presence

²⁶⁸ https://www.brite.edu/programs/soul-repair/about_soul_repair/our-history/ (Accessed November 15, 2017).

and relevance of Truth Commissions at various points in history.²⁶⁹ Within two years of the initial viewing of that movie, Brock and a team committed to the cause offered the first “Truth Commission on Conscience in War” (TCCW) on March 21, 2010 at the Riverside Church in New York City. Here, veterans shared testimony regarding their actions in the warzone and the emotional aftermath that followed.²⁷⁰ This event coincided with the publication of Litz, et. al, provocative essay in 2009 “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans: A preliminary model and intervention strategy” which added to the interest and relevance of the event. Along with Litz, Brock became a central figure in the emerging movement that championed the needs of soldiers and urged an appropriate societal response.

The irony surrounding their clarion call is, as Brock notes, that our culture *should* know the human impact of war and its potential for moral injury because war stories and its aftermath are as old as the *Illiad* and *Bhagavad-Gita*, as close as our Bibles in the Hebrew Psalms, and played on our movie screens and captured in novels like *Full Metal Jacket*, *American Sniper*, *The Hurt Locker* and *Catch-22*.²⁷¹ In fact, it was seeing the 2007 documentary *Soldiers of Conscience* that crystallized in the two scholars the need to

²⁶⁹ See for example: Anna Florke Scheid, “Under the Palaver Tree: Community Ethics for Truth-Telling and Reconciliation” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 31:1 (2011): 17-36. Scheid calls for a return to “the palaver practice” (31) when traditional structures of justice are no longer operative or trustworthy. And also, Patricia B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge Press, 2012). In this work Hayner studies 40 global truth commissions to evaluate the legacy and effectiveness of truth telling and reconciliation for moving forward during times of transitions. To be clear, Hayner does not study “The Truth Commission on Conscience in War”, possibly because it does not fit her model of national healing after a time of civil war. However, Brock’s Truth Commission offers a fascinating counterpoint for study in sharing truth, seeking reconciliation, assessing impact, and acknowledging the responsibility of the state to seek the truth after a time of war, even if the war was not within its own bounds.

²⁷⁰ Darlene Fozard Weaver, in her book, *The Acting Person and Christian Moral Life* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2011) highlights in chapter five the importance of “naming moral actions” as a moment of “truthfulness before God” (144-145). Truthfulness, in a Christian context, must name the individual action, but also must name that action within the greater schema of creation, fall and redemption.

²⁷¹ Rita Nakashima Brock, *Soul Repair*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), xiv.

respond from their disciplines and create a Truth Commission on Conscience in War where fourteen testifiers, seventy-five truth commissioners and over five hundred laypeople gathered at Riverside Church in New York City gathered on March 21, 2010 to hear four hours of testimony regarding conscience and its complexities in wartime. The following day, the commissioners and testifiers gathered to create an agenda of next steps that resulted in the formation of the “Soul Repair Center” at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas. In addition, several statements were released including this one addressed to the clergy:

To Religious and Community Leaders: In working with members of the Armed Forces and veterans, religious and community leaders must educate themselves and their members about the consequences of the physical and psychological wounds of war and the needs of those who struggle with lingering wounds. They must learn to listen to veterans about how to reintegrate them into their communities while not falsely valorizing or demonizing them or leaving them to suffer invisibly and in silence. They must, especially, educate themselves and their communities in how they can support those who suffer moral injury.²⁷²

This clarion call to clergy and community members is still waiting to be fully heeded.

The question remains: what theological framework can encapsulate reflection and practice? The Garden of Eden is a metaphor central to Brock and Lettini’s work in *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury After War*. Veteran Kevin Benderman first provides the image central to the book in an introductory reflection:

[I found out] we were in the area of Iraq that was supposed to be the Garden of Eden, the cradle of civilization where mankind began. I had to ask myself, “Why am I carrying around an M16 in the Garden of Eden?”²⁷³

²⁷² <http://brite.edu/academics/programs/soul-repair/whoweare/#staff> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

²⁷³ Kevin Benderman quoted in documentary *Soldiers of Conscience*. By Gary Weimberg and Catherine Ryan. United States, 2007. See: Brock, *Soul Repair*, vii.

Lettni and Brock return to the image of the garden at the end of their book,²⁷⁴ after presenting and reflecting on the witness and testimony of four soldiers' recruitment, deployment, moral injury and initiatives for soul repair. Given Lettni and Brock's theological background, one might expect a stronger theological foundation to their scholarship here. However, their clear concern is rallying public understanding and advocacy in support of soldiers in crisis. To that end, the structure and testimony of this book serve to open the dialogue they envision rather than provide lengthy theological reflection. Their concluding reflection on the garden highlights the presence in Genesis 3:24 of the "He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life."²⁷⁵ The presence of this fiery angel²⁷⁶ is the opportunity that awaits veterans willing to engage the moral struggle upon return from battle. The key themes from the Garden of Eden story linger in light of this angel: dangers of good and evil exist in the garden, clear boundaries were stated to protect that knowledge, and in light of the serpent the morality test failed. The angel appears to prohibit a return, so it seems, to that original state. Beyond the gate, the authors note, "are fratricide, war, empire, slavery, misogyny, and myriad forms of oppression."²⁷⁷ Moral injury then stands before, "our moral conscience [which] takes up that fierce flaming sword and guards what is left of our moral identity. To reenter the Garden, humanity must face that fierce angel. Unless the struggle is attempted, there is

²⁷⁴ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 127.

²⁷⁵ Genesis 3:24, New Revised Standard Version. All subsequent quotations will be NRSV unless further noted.

²⁷⁶ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 126. Dietrich Bonhoeffer will draw on this image in *Creation and Fall* in the chapter "Tree of Life." Bonhoeffer uses the image to describe the problematic limitlessness of sin which Adam now encounters within the world.

²⁷⁷ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 127.

no way back and no way to know what remains in the garden behind the gate.”²⁷⁸ The authors’ make clear at this juncture that the healing journey of the wounded soldier is not the soldier’s alone. Their clarification is worth taking full note:

The attempt to regain entry requires accepting responsibility for what we have done, but doing so may cost people their lives if they have to go back alone. Societies that launch wars, believing that weapons of death and destruction are noble, good, and lifesaving, or that wars are holy, do so dishonestly, without wisdom or the capacity to take moral responsibility for the harm they do, not just to their enemies, but to all they send into the maws of killing. We should not expect those who return to have to face that angel alone.²⁷⁹

Brock and Lettini’s honorable work in placing the moral load of this injury on the shoulders of the social body and not just the soldier’s should be noted and applauded. At the same time, the concerns they introduce invite further theological engagement, and this dissertation will take an important step forward in that conversation by addressing human limit.

Brock devotes her scholarship and the stewardship of her time to practical efforts such as The Truth Commission on Conscience in War, the efforts of the Soul Repair Center, and new initiatives such as advanced training seminars on Moral Injury, Community and collective healing.²⁸⁰ Prior to her 2013 book *Soul Repair*, Brock was a prolific author of theological works including *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States* (1996), *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (2002), *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (2008), *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of*

²⁷⁸ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 127.

²⁷⁹ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 126-127.

²⁸⁰ <https://www.vo.org/seminar>. (Accessed November 15, 2017).

This World for Crucifixion and Empire (2009), and *Saving Paradise: Recovering Christianity's Forgotten Love for this Earth* (2012). Brock's scholarship continues to hone in even more fully on the topic of moral injury. We see the beginning of this chapter in her scholarly life with the 2012 publication of an essay, "Moral Injury: The Crucial Missing Piece in Understanding Soldier Suicides." In 2013, she presented her findings to a gathering of religious chaplains at Montreat Conference Center in a highly acclaimed slide show and presentation.²⁸¹ In 2015, after Op-Ed contributor David Brooks of *The New York Times* wrote "The Moral Injury" wherein he conflated PTSD with Moral Injury²⁸², Brock quickly responded with a clarifying statement.²⁸³ A pinnacle moment occurred for gaining recognition in the field of moral injury when Rita Nakashima Brock and a team of scholars, psychiatrists, theologians and even thespians, were invited to host a week-long lecture series at the Chautauqua Institution in the summer of 2016.²⁸⁴ In 2017, Brock resigned from her positions at Brite Divinity School in Theology and as co-director of the Soul Repair Center to begin work as the Moral Injury and Recovery Program Developer for the Volunteers of America a position in which she works more exclusively with matters of moral injury. Also in 2017, Brock introduced a fuller description of her vision for the community's role in healing from moral injury with a second essay, "Sophie's Choice: Why Healing from Moral Injury Is a Community Process." In September of 2017, in conjunction with The Braxton Institute this work will continue in Princeton, New Jersey as a team of scholars, therapists and

²⁸¹ <http://pccmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Moral-Injury-and-Soul-Repair-Chaplains-Montreat.pdf> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

²⁸² <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/opinion/david-brooks-the-moral-injury.html> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

²⁸³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/20/opinion/helping-to-heal-the-trauma-of-war.html> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

²⁸⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4O0WPGYykc> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

community practitioners are trained in a communal restorative process. Just released is a compendium of moral injury in sacred texts which Brock contributed to alongside Joseph McDonald entitled *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts (Studies in Religion and Theology)* published in May, 2017. In this work, Brock writes the foreword for McDonald and a team of scholars who wrestle with moral injury in the sacred texts of Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and even mainstream American Civil Religion and then ask whether these texts continue to perpetuate trauma or offer visions of restoration. The conviction of the contributing authors is that moral injury is an emerging area of trauma studies, seen particularly in returning veterans, but not confined solely to the context of warfare.²⁸⁵

Brock furthers the conversation regarding Moral Injury, in part, by doing justice to the self-evident themes of morality and injury. Her voice demands attention to the thread of morality that cannot be neglected when tending to soldiers' returning to war. As noted above, consider the recent op-ed piece by David Brooks in The New York Times who in an attempt to call attention to Moral Injury apart from PTSD instead conflated the two by saying, "Most discussion about PTSD thus far has been about fear and the conquering of fear. But, over the past few years, more people have come to understand PTSD is also about exile — moral exile."²⁸⁶ In response to this Op Ed essay, Rita Nakashima Brock wrote a letter to the editor that deserves full quotation here:

David Brooks captures the anguish of post-traumatic stress disorder well. But he does a disservice to those with PTSD when he tries to collapse it into moral

²⁸⁵ Joseph McDonald, ed. *Moral Injury in Sacred Texts* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2017).

²⁸⁶ David Brooks, "The Moral Injury," *New York Times* (February 17, 2015), http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/opinion/david-brooks-the-moral-injury.html?_r=0 (Accessed February 3, 2016).

injury. Natural disasters are a major cause of PTSD, though rape is the cause most likely to provoke it. Moral injury is a response of the ‘formerly’ moral agent to violating one’s own moral code. It can be experienced without PTSD, and results in a loss of faith or meaning, shame, grief and isolation. Committing an atrocity has the worst effect because it violates even the military moral code for soldiers, but just surviving when others do not can lead to profound guilt. Only one-fourth of Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans receive treatment for PTSD, but many more endure moral injury alone in a society oblivious to their suffering. Mr. Brooks is right: Veterans require more from us than a thank-you, and we would be better people if we were willing to hear harrowing things and to offer a caring presence on their journey of rebuilding a moral identity.²⁸⁷

According to Brock, good soldiers typically have a strong moral identity upon entering the military. She claims, “most people capable of such a commitment also have empathy for others and deep moral values.”²⁸⁸ Her argument goes on to suggest that as those morally strong soldiers are then trained in the military there is an “absence of discussion about the moral impact of military training and its implementation in combat.”²⁸⁹ So good soldiers experience disconnects between competing moral worlds – their moral worlds before, during and after combat. The impact of this disconnect, Brock argues, should be a consideration when exploring the rise of soldier suicides. Her concern is that too much emphasis has been given to the “squishy statistics”²⁹⁰ of soldier suicides, at the real cost of understanding the contributing factors. For Brock, a contributing factor is the neglect of moral discussion, even in the “spiritual fitness”²⁹¹ components of military training.

²⁸⁷ Letter to the editor printed February 20, 2015. www.nytimes.com/2015/02/20/opinion/helping-to-heal-the-trauma-of-war.html (Accessed September 30, 2016).

²⁸⁸ Rita Nakashima Brock, “Moral Injury: The Crucial Missing Piece in Understanding Soldier Suicides,” *Huffington Post*, September 22, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rita-nakashima-brock-ph-d/moral-injury-the-crucial-missing-piece-in-understanding-soldier-suicides_b_1686674.html (Accessed September 16, 2017).

²⁸⁹ Brock, “Moral Injury.”

²⁹⁰ Brock, “Moral Injury.”

²⁹¹ Brock, “Moral Injury.”

Brock is helpful in briefly laying out a process of moral formation where virtue, character, and the capacity for moral action become engrained in neural pathways²⁹² through community formation, mimicry and unfolding ethical identity across time. This formation is shaped by everything from linguistic patterns of a given culture, to the narratives of religious traditions, to moral reasoning taught in various institutions (education, religious institutions, military formation). Difficulties arise for the moral agent when there is a conflict between systems in the shifts from one moral world to another and back again. Military training relies on tightening the neural pathway toward patterns of immediacy and programmed response to threat; however, those tightened neural patterns become unraveled upon return home and so repair is needed for the damaged neural patterns of moral formation. Brock believes the repair process is not for the soldier alone, but should be a community process for forming new moral pathways since morality is never individual, but always a social process.²⁹³

The resultant injury, from that disabled morality, is multi-faceted. Brock adds several dimensions to the analysis of that injury as she suggests the injury doesn't just affect an individual, but is societal.²⁹⁴ Because of that a moral injury can have

²⁹² Brock. See: <http://pccmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Moral-Injury-and-Soul-Repair-Chaplains-Montreat.pdf> (Accessed November 15, 2017).

²⁹³ While Brock begins the work of connecting moral formation and repair to neural patterns in her presentation to the Chaplains at Montreat, further scholarship is needed. For recent scholarship on brain development and character see, for example: James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993) and Robert Wright, *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994). And also, Ronal Lee Zigler, "The Formation and Transformation of Moral Impulse," *Journal of Moral Education* 28:4 (1999): 445-457.

²⁹⁴ For Brock, the societal dimension is both prior to the injury as social sin creates a space for moral injury to happen, as well as after the injury as reverberations continue from the soldier to society. Conversation in social sin is a key contributor to a robust understanding of moral injury. Consider, for example, African-American theologian Stephen G. Ray who grounds an account of social sin in his book *Do No Harm*, we are "created by God, constituted by sin" in his reading of Reinhold Niebuhr. Additional models for understanding and addressing social sin may be seen in Latin-American, Feminist and Asian theologies. See here, Derek R. Nelson *What' Wrong with Social Sin*. When the Vatican recently released a new list of

repercussions across generations of an injured community.²⁹⁵ Healing from that injury requires, of course, the reconstruction of a moral identity, but that is not the work of the soldier alone. Instead, it is the collective responsibility of the community to work together toward healing and the recovery of empathy,²⁹⁶ Brock makes clear: “Moral injury recovery is a collective responsibility. When we individualize moral injury as a personal failure, we lose the nature of moral conscience as social,²⁹⁷ as what enables ethical relationships.”²⁹⁸

Brock, acknowledging military culture and the shame associated with such labels, is reluctant to associate moral injury with “disability.” However, Brock describes a “slow burn”²⁹⁹ component to moral injury as the injury kindles and then explodes.³⁰⁰ While PTSD is damage to the amygdala and hippocampus in the limbic sphere of the brain resulting from a fear response to an outside threat, moral injury is not a brain injury. In fact, Brock argues that moral injury requires a healthy brain particularly in the prefrontal cortex where empathy and moral assessment occur.³⁰¹ Brock cares about moral formation and understanding the thick narrative and societal systems that create

the “seven deadly sins” in 2008 the focus was on the social dimension of sin with this list: polluting, genetic engineering, gathering riches, drug dealing, seeking and providing abortion, practicing pedophilia, and causing social injustice. These differ substantially from the original list: gluttony, fornication, greed, pride, despair, wrath, vainglory and sloth.

²⁹⁵ Rita Nakashima Brock, “Sophie’s Choice: Why Healing from Moral Injury Is a Community Process,” *Huffington Post*, May 19, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sophies-choice-why-healing-from-moral-injury-is-a_us_591f5660e4b0b28a33f62c03 (Accessed September 16, 2017).

²⁹⁶ Brock, “Sophie’s Choice.” One example Brock provides, based on personal experience, is the internment of Japanese during World War II.

²⁹⁷ Lisa Tessman’s *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* is worthy of note here. See also: Willie James Jennings *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

²⁹⁸ Brock, “Sophie’s Choice.”

²⁹⁹ Brock, “Moral Injury.”

³⁰⁰ A contributing factor to this “slow burn” onset of moral injury can simply be the process of aging. Brock explains in “Sophie’s Choice” that moral injury “can also surface late in a long life when mental capacities to control emotions and traumatic memories weaken.”

³⁰¹ Rita Nakashima Brock, “Moral Injury, Soul Repair After War, and the Civic Role of Religion,” Presentation at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting 2013.

and guide ethical behavior. Given Brock's argument here, it will be important to address how moral injury is a particular kind of disability even though it differs from the disabling done by PTSD to the brain.³⁰² As this dissertation proceeds to draw moral injury into the field of disability it is important to note how Brock's account of morality as a social construct coincides with arguments in Disability scholarship concerning the need for a social model of Disability.

Despite the excellent efforts of Rita Nakashima Brock, theologians were at first slow to respond to the cry for thinking theologically about moral injury even though this field invites reflection on many areas of theological concern: creation and fall, sin and salvation, moral agency in a fallen world, atonement and redemption, prayer and lament, confession and reconciliation, liturgical practices and the Sacraments. The reasons for this neglect are uncertain, but at least four seem plausible. First, partly because of the conflation between PTSD and MI, as well as perhaps due to the terminology of "injury", one possible reason for theological neglect is the medicalization of the problem. Such thinking categorizes moral injury as a medical, rather than a theological, problem. Second, theological denominations struggle against each other and within their own ranks in conversation regarding the morality of war and peace. Ecumenical work exploring twenty-first century concerns with Just War theory will be important for contextualizing moral injury within warfare and twenty-first century challenges.³⁰³ Third, given the

³⁰² Cheryl Lawhorne-Scott and Don Philpott, *Combat-Related Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD: A Resource and Recovery Guide* (Plymouth, UK: Government Institute Guides, 2010).

³⁰³ For example, Anna Florke Scheid draws on an invitation from Catholic Archbishop of Chicago, Priest Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, who made the challenge for a "consistent ethic of life" in a lecture at Fordham University. Scheid responds to his request by suggesting Just War Theory must add to its usual demands "a consistent ethic of reconciliation." Scheid argues this ethic of reconciliation can be conceptualized and realized at every stage: *jus ante bellum*, *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum*. See: Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, "A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American-Catholic Dialogue" *Counseling and Values*

complexity of war and its aftermath, ecumenical work assessing societal rituals for return after war will be crucial.³⁰⁴ And finally, recent theological work addressing moral injury has been timely, but perhaps jumps from need to practice, without lingering in the theological space necessary to shape and define those particular practices.³⁰⁵ This criticism is made cautiously and with great respect for the theologians at hand that in seeing the magnitude of the issue, and the paucity of church response,³⁰⁶ have offered steps forward through particular actions. The desire for a robust and astute theology is to increase the capacity of the institutional church to better attend to the personal needs of each veteran and their family. “I have a feeling of intense betrayal,” war veteran and divinity student Michael Yandell reveals, “and the betrayer and the betrayed are the same person: my very self.”³⁰⁷ Yandell describes his experience of returning from war and dealing with the moral ramifications in terms of a landscape where “everything was laid flat.”³⁰⁸ The task of theology is to reanimate that “flat” moral landscape by providing dimension, perspective, points of orientation and capabilities for faithfully navigating an asperous new moral world. This is a significantly different problem than addressing the

29:1 (October, 1984): 6-14. And also: Anna Florke Scheid, “Just War Theory and Restorative Justice: Weaving a Consistent Ethic of Reconciliation” *Journal of Moral Theology* 5:2 (2016): 99-115. And also, see: Tobias Winright, *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015) and also, Lisa S. Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Pacifism, Discipleship and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1994).

³⁰⁴ See, for example: Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, ed. *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Co., 2012).

³⁰⁵ See, for example: Everett L. Worthington, “Religious Considerations and Self-Forgiveness in Treating Complex Trauma and Moral Injury in Present and Former Soldiers.” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 40 (Winter 2012): 274 – 288. And also, Zachary Moon, *Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families*, (Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2015).

³⁰⁶ National Congregations Study Cumulative Data Set (1998, 2006-2007, 2012).

³⁰⁷ Michael Yandell, “The War Within: A Veteran’s Moral Injury,” *The Christian Century* 132:1 (January 7, 2015), 12-13. For further reading on Yandell’s understanding of a divided self upon return from war, see his exegesis of the Gerasene Demoniac of Mark 5 in Joseph McDonald, ed. *Moral Injury in Sacred Texts*. Michael Yandell, “Do Not Torment Me: The Morally Injured Gerasene Demoniac,” *Moral Injury in Sacred Texts* (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2017), 135-150.

³⁰⁸ Yandell, “The War Within,” 13.

issues presented by PTSD: moral injury, instead, is a problem of disabled morality, human limits pressed to the extreme in crisis situations, and the spiritual dimensions provoked.

2.3.1.2 Warren Kinghorn

Warren Kinghorn, professor of psychiatry and pastoral theology at Duke University Divinity School, provides a theological account of moral injury with a desire to push beyond “unhelpfully limiting”³⁰⁹ psychological constructs of moral injury. Kinghorn is grateful for the work of Shay, Litz and others for providing “critical analysis of the relationship between combat trauma and the moral agency of the acting soldier”³¹⁰ that he believes the empirical literature neglected prior to the work of Shay and Litz partially due to the rise of PTSD as a diagnosis in 1980.³¹¹ Kinghorn argues Moral Injury needs a robust conversation with a Christian account of Moral Theology in order to “rescue moral injury from the medical model and the means-end logic of *techne*.”³¹² Moral injury, for Kinghorn, can not be subjected to, nor solved by, the technical arts of medicine. To

³⁰⁹ Kinghorn, Warren, “Combat Trauma and Moral Fragmentation: A Theological Account of Moral Injury,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 32, 2 (2012): 62.

³¹⁰ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 62.

³¹¹ Kinghorn does acknowledge the work of two scholars Robert Jay Lifton (1973) and Sarah Haley (1974) with raising essential questions about moral agency and war. See for example: Robert Jay Lifton *Home from the War; Vietnam Veterans: Neither Victims nor Executioners* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973) and Sarah A. Haley, “When the Veteran Reports Atrocities: Specific Treatment Considerations of the Vietnam Veteran,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 30 (1974): 191-196.

³¹² Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 57. Kinghorn’s respect for Litz’s use of the medical model is readily apparent, and yet, Kinghorn acknowledges the need to probe deeper from psychiatry toward moral theology because, “Psychological theories of moral injury such as that of Litz and colleagues can be insightful and clinically useful, but on their own terms they cannot treat moral injury as anything other than an immanent, psychological phenomenon involving not a fragmentation of a teleological whole but transgression of a soldier’s own internalized rules and assumptions. Because their empirical suppositions do not allow them to pass moral judgment on these rules and assumptions or to speak directly about teleology, they are unable to distinguish between meaningful and non-meaningful moral suffering, so reduction of self-described suffering, measured empirically, becomes the primary goal of the clinical encounter,” 67.

accomplish this task, Kinghorn begins by outlining the ways in which the concept of human agency is helpful.³¹³ Then, Kinghorn sets forth his argument for why a “medical model” is problematic for the discussion.³¹⁴ Finally, he presents his case for why moral injury must be embedded within the embodied narrative of the Christian story and healed through community practices.

With an eye toward locating a person within a larger story, Kinghorn begins with an account of human agency. Later this grounding will prove helpful for two reasons: seeing the person and not the medical need, and, grounding that person in a larger narrative. So, Kinghorn provides three arguments explaining why *human agency* proves helpful for diagnosing and tending to the trauma that has at its center an active self, rather than a passive situation solely inflicting the trauma. First, an emphasis on the *individual*:³¹⁵ the trauma has at its center an acting person who exhibits agency within the complexity of a larger social matrix.³¹⁶ Second, the *social*: the complexity of that social matrix is all too often overlooked within the “sound-bite”³¹⁷ conversations of American political consensus and conversation. Within the greater reality at play, an individual is an “embodied, relational, responsible self”³¹⁸ functioning within an eco-system greater than one’s self. And third, the *martial*: a discussion of human agency beckons Christian ethicists beyond abstract discussion of Just War toward the impact of war on individual’s lives and agency; here it must always be remembered the concrete impact of the war

³¹³ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 62.

³¹⁴ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 64.

³¹⁵ To be clear, the italics here are mine to emphasize the points Kinghorn makes in these three areas.

³¹⁶ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 62.

³¹⁷ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 63.

³¹⁸ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 63.

becomes embodied within the person.³¹⁹ Kinghorn describes a morally injured soldier as a “truthful sign of moral incoherence.”³²⁰ Clinical Psychology and their focus on agency, for Kinghorn, is a helpful prompt for Christian ethics.³²¹ However, Kinghorn offers an “appreciative theological critique”³²² by suggesting locating agency solely within a medical model is unhelpful and suggests the Christian narrative provides “a thicker contextual account of proper human ends.”³²³

Kinghorn suggests the medical model is unhelpful for several reasons. First, a medical model tends to distance and disassociate the relationship between the diagnosed injury and “the experiencing self.”³²⁴ Second, a medical model can fall prey to the possibility of politicizing wounds.³²⁵ And third, the medical model is subject always to the problem of *techne*, that is, the logical fallacy that suffering can be tended to and amended by “the means-ends logic of technical rationality.”³²⁶ Kinghorn suggests a two-fold problem: the inability to ‘judge’ moral norms and an absent teleology. Both of these conditions keep moral injury within the realm of technology.³²⁷

Kinghorn’s assessment of the strengths of agency, his critique of the medical model and his longing for a teleology beyond technology are all aimed toward a new and

³¹⁹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 63.

³²⁰ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 63.

³²¹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 64.

³²² Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 59.

³²³ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 59.

³²⁴ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 64.

³²⁵ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 65.

³²⁶ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 65.

³²⁷ Kinghorn relies on the work of Joseph Dunne to define and explore technology. Dunne’s account conceives *techne* as an application that might be utilized in a situation to realize a particular end that is conceptualized in advance of the application. See: Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of ‘Technique’* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997). Kinghorn contrasts this account to the work of Gerald McKenny who questions whether there can be any *techne* for suffering. For McKenny, there is a “teleological silence” to modern medicine at the hands of technology. See: Gerald McKenny, *To Relieve the Human Condition: Bioethics, Technology, and the Body* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997).

robust narrative that allows suffering to have a *telos* other than despair.³²⁸ For Kinghorn, technology has at its root the Aristotelean concept of *techne* where a particular application is utilized within a certain situation toward a particular end. Assumed in this concept is that better *techne* must be gained when a situation can no longer be met by the existing technology. Kinghorn criticizes medicalization in acknowledging that while responding to the pressing need with an eye toward the reduction of suffering, these technologies of psychotherapy and pharmaceuticals are utilized without considering alternatives beyond these means.³²⁹ Implied in Kinghorn's response is a longing for theology, which is never used as an instrument of technology, but instead is entrusted to the spirit with the hope of reducing the suffering, but even more so, transforming the suffering toward a redemptive end.

Kinghorn comes to the conclusion that the clinical disciplines are ultimately only partially equipped to address the pain of our injured veterans. However, "Faith communities, unlike the clinical disciplines, are able to embrace thick and particular conceptions of human flourishing and human failing and are, thereby, equipped much more robustly than the clinical disciplines to facilitate the healing of morally injured veterans."³³⁰ To accomplish this task, knowing the teleological end of importance for the individual veteran, will take an institutional commitment to soul search, purge and re-

³²⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre argues to reclaim teleology in his critically acclaimed work *After Virtue*. See: Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd edition (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2007). The pre-modern era had a *telos* and all actions were judged against that teleological framework. The modern world reacted to the "superstitions of teleology" (35) and separated the individual out from that framework allowing individuals then to make arbitrary and free decisions without a superseding paradigm. Herein is "contingent arbitrariness" (33) in which the modern world is now trapped. The initiation of the modern self separated the individual from that teleological framework and thereby all of the above moral philosophers reject an ultimate *telos* and their projects then fail (61).

³²⁹ Kinghorn, "Combat Trauma," 67.

³³⁰ Kinghorn, "Combat Trauma," 71.

order. Kinghorn makes clear churches must do three things to make this accommodation: first, “renounce the privilege of ignorance”³³¹ about current wars and the military-industrial complex that encourages them; second, “renounce generalizations” that protect institutions and individuals from complex discussions regarding topics not easily divided into “pro” and “anti”³³²; and third, once those have been renounced, turn to the full embrace of “the war-torn bodies among them” by hearing the lament of the soldier in their midst rather than the generalization in the media.³³³ Christian communities bear the possibility for Aristotle’s vision of the “right ordering” of humanity different than an ordering toward the alleviation of distress alone. While that may sound dismissive of our soldiers’ plight, Kinghorn aims for “desire of God and to God’s good creation”³³⁴ that alone can happen within a Christian narrative. This ordering allows for the depth of patience amid suffering, confession alongside the reality of sin, and forgiveness in the face of guilt our veterans demand.

Situating the veteran within a story where suffering is not the end but is instead a lament calls deeply our willingness to give up control in exchange for the desire for God and for the good creation God intended.³³⁵ Doing so creates the space for a particular *habitus* within the faith community. Essential to that *habitus* is the patience of a Holy Saturday where lingering in the uncertain middle³³⁶ of suffering calls attention to the persistent intrusion of “death into life”³³⁷ and does not move too quickly to resurrection

³³¹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 71

³³² Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 71

³³³ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 71.

³³⁴ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 68.

³³⁵ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 68.

³³⁶ Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 8.

³³⁷ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 3.

hope. Resources are available within the Christian community not just for the worship of Easter, but for the lingering in lament through liturgy, prayer, scripture and worship.³³⁸

Alongside patience, *penitence* is an essential component to what theology and worshiping communities can offer beyond psychotherapy. Even within a just war framework, all actions that occur within war are “things to lament, not to celebrate.”³³⁹ Kinghorn acknowledges historical frameworks wherein penitence was “to some degree communal, where war comrades would experience penitential requirements upon their return home and would be able to transition together, within the context of the larger community, into full liturgical and social participation in church and community.”³⁴⁰ Even more so, there were particular points when a given community participated in active social reflection and “collective ownership of the wartime violence conducted in its name.”³⁴¹

Finally, the third element of liturgical space alongside patience and penitence are the embodied *practices*³⁴² of a given community.³⁴³ Kinghorn advocates for a “non-

³³⁸ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 68.

³³⁹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 68-69.

³⁴⁰ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 69.

³⁴¹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 69.

³⁴² With his use of the word “practices” Kinghorn is drawing on Bernard Verkamp’s vision for soldiers returning home from war and the practices that will help them reintegrate into society. An account of practices must reckon with Alasdair MacIntyre’s account in *After Virtue* wherein he presents external good that come with a practice and internal goods achieved from participating in a practice. In chapter 14, MacIntyre discusses the internal goods of the virtues, which come in direct conflict with the achievement of “external goods” (190). A society that focuses on external goods will lose an appreciation of the virtues, which will at first, decrease and then suffer “total effacement, although simulacra might abound” (196).

³⁴³ Kinghorn makes two particular points regarding practices at this intersection. First, he critiques both the Protestant and Catholic traditions for not fully embodying the possibility of penitence as a practice after war. While penitence is rarely practiced within the Protestant tradition, Kinghorn suggests Catholic neglect of this important spiritual practice. Inherent in this conversation is Kinghorn’s conviction that practices embody a different kind of *telos* for suffering than *techne*. Second, Kinghorn grounds his discussion in the importance of penitence with the work of Bernard J. Verkamp who studied soldiers’ return to war within particular cultural contexts and the moral implications of that welcome home. See: Bernard J. Verkamp, *The Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in Early Medieval and Modern Times* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993).

instrumental” invitation to the veteran, so the veteran does not become the focus but instead becomes assimilated into the “embedded context of Christian community”³⁴⁴ participating then in its rich life of faith-shaped practices. The inherent possibility within patience, penitence and practices points the soldier beyond the alleviation of suffering toward a teleological greater good that Kinghorn argues may only come from within a faith community.

Consideration of Kinghorn’s account raises several questions. First, Kinghorn raises the critical question regarding the teleology of suffering. Clearly, he is concerned with an over-reliance on technology aimed toward a particular end.³⁴⁵ The underlying question he invites the reader to struggle with is whether suffering is always a negative experience. Suffering, perhaps, could offer a meaningful contribution to a flourishing life if allowed a *telos* of redemption.³⁴⁶ Second, in discussing the *jus in bello* paradox of moral injury, whether or not we can address moral injury without discussing war’s moral justifiability, Kinghorn writes that soldiers become visible “signs of the moral incoherence.”³⁴⁷ One wonders here about the almost sacramental tone of such language.

³⁴⁴ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 70.

³⁴⁵ Kinghorn is not alone in offering this critique. See, for example, others who share this concern: bioethicist Tristram Englehardt, *Bio-Ethics and Secular Humanism: The Search for a Common Morality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991) and also, *The Foundations of Christian Bioethics* (The Netherlands, Swets & Zeitlinger Publisher, 200); Leon R. Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1985); and Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York, NY: Picador, 2003). Consider, for example, Kass’s statement that embodiment “is a curse only for those who believe they deserve to be gods” 293; and also Fukuyama’s that medical technology should not be cut off “from our otherwise spontaneous joy at being natural creatures,” 173.

³⁴⁶ Again, MacIntyre is helpful here with his account of *Dependent Rational Animals*. Because human beings experience vulnerability and suffering within existence it should be noted the threefold intent of the title: human beings are dependent, human beings are rational and human beings are animals. Because we are not self-sufficient, there is the potential for suffering in the face of human vulnerability. See: Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Peru, IL: Carus Publishing Company, 1999), 1-10.

³⁴⁷ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 63.

If sacraments are visible signs of God's invisible love and grace,³⁴⁸ what would we deem the reverse when a beloved constituent of God's creation becomes a visible sign of moral incoherence and societal injustice? Kinghorn would do well to offer further exploration of the Protestant sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, rather than penitence alone in this discussion. In Baptism, our "flourishing" and our "failing" die and are raised again to new life through Jesus Christ. In Holy Communion, the moral incoherence and societal injustice of our societal matrix is broken open and forgiveness is poured out again and again.³⁴⁹ If soldiers' bodies have become an almost 'anti-sacramental' sign, is it possible to imagine the fullness of our sacramental practices offering education, transformation and reversal? Third, the scholarship of Bernard Verkamp³⁵⁰ indirectly notes the possibilities and implications of a modern day penitential practice, encouraged by Protestants and Catholics, and perhaps even, embraced by the larger society, for returning warriors. Kinghorn makes reference to Verkamp's account of manuals and rituals outlining penitential demands that existed from 600 CE to 1200 CE. For example, Verkamp outlines instructions from Theodore of Tarsus for the soldier to refrain for forty days from partaking of communion and even from attending church, and

³⁴⁸ Certainly there are distinctions between Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox views on communion. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will simply take note here of two views that shape the connection between the inward grace and the visible sign. The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes, "the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions," *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2000), n. 1131. The Presbyterian Church states, Sacraments are "signs and seals of the covenant of grace" *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Ch. XXVII Sec. 1.

³⁴⁹ The social significance of Holy Communion and its symbolism of what is broken in contemporary society may be seen in the following sources: William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1998); Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God*; and also Stephen Plant, "The Sacrament of Ethical Reality: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Ethics for Christian Citizens" *Studies in Christian Ethics* 18:3 (December 2005).

³⁵⁰ See: Bernard J. Verkamp, *The Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in Early Medieval and Modern Times* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993).

then, easing back into these societal practices.³⁵¹ St. Basil believed in an even lengthier time of absolution suggesting three years until the reception of Holy Communion.³⁵² What specific practices³⁵³ would be mandated today?³⁵⁴ Kinghorn notes by way of a footnote practices outlined in the Old Testament for practicing penitence³⁵⁵ such as the rites of purification, appropriation of booty, construction of monuments, ritual processions, and corporate laments.³⁵⁶

And finally, the language of “medical model” and “social contexts” in Kinghorn’s account points toward the fruitfulness of a conversation between Kinghorn’s work and theological reflection on disability. Kinghorn appreciates the language Shay uses to carve out the space needed to describe moral injury as a disability, “when the injury invades character, and the capacity for social trust is destroyed, all possibility of a flourishing human life is lost.”³⁵⁷ Disability studies has wrestled with the same questions regarding the inadequacy of medicalization and the inability of a broader social matrix to fully encompass issues raised in disability.

³⁵¹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 68. See also: Verkamp, *The Moral Treatment*, 17.

³⁵² Verkamp, *The Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors*, 17.

³⁵³ A famous editorial in *Christian Century* following World War II pondered why “Penitence Absent from Wartime Prayers” and pleaded with the nation and her religious leaders to have humility in understanding the gravity of what all had been through. “Penitence Absent From Wartime Prayers,” *Christian Century* 62:16 (April 18, 1945): 485.

³⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that a search through a database of journals across disciplines reveals only six relevant sources. Even more so, none of these sources date past the Vietnam era and most are within the World War II era.

³⁵⁵ See, David A. Bosworth, “‘You Have Shed Much Blood and Waged Great Wars:’ Killing, Bloodguilt, and Combat Stress,” *Journal of Religion, Disability, and Health* 12 (2008): 236-250.

³⁵⁶ A classic text in this field is Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* trans. Marva J. Dawn (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1951). In this text, von Rad takes into account the fact that soldier are sent out from, and return to, a social-cultic community with proscribed rituals. For further reference to Biblical texts see: Brad E. Kelle, “Postwar Rituals of Return and Reintegration” *Warfare, Ritual and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts* ed. by Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ames and Jacob L. Wright, (Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 205-242.

³⁵⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 151. To be clear, at this point Shay is writing in *Achilles in Vietnam* prior to his full description of moral injury that will be developed in his later work.

“Souls in anguish”³⁵⁸ is the starting point, according to Rita Nakashima Brock, for drawing moral injury into the field of Theology. Kinghorn, instead, looks to the end, the *telos* of human flourishing making meaning out of suffering within the context of a healing, penitential community. As we turn to the work of Robert Emmet Meagher, we will engage his efforts to address the complexity of the landscape in between as he explores the question: how can moral injury exist if wars have passed the Just War criteria? While it is beyond the bounds of this study to fully assess and critique Just War theory, his account is essential for probing theological assumptions for moral injury.

2.3.1.3 *Robert Emmet Meagher*

In his book, *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War*, Theologian Robert Emmet Meagher questions the legacy, the legitimacy and the limits of Just War theory, particularly as it relates to questions of moral injury. Meagher is both an academic and activist. *Killing from the Inside Out* is a follow up to his 2006 work *Herakles Gone Mad: Rethinking Heroism in an Age of Endless War*. Meagher works directly with wounded veterans and participated in the highly acclaimed National Truth Commission on Conscience in War. *Killing from the Inside Out* is an exposition of Christianity’s complacency in suggesting the possibility of war “without” – “war without sin, war without criminality, war without guilt or shame.”³⁵⁹ The lie Christianity promised was war without losing one’s soul.³⁶⁰ Perhaps Meagher is too overstated in

³⁵⁸ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 51.

³⁵⁹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 129.

³⁶⁰ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 129.

suggesting Just War theory concludes there can be war without consequence,³⁶¹ but he makes a compelling argument that moral injury is inevitable unless we reject Just War theory. In so doing, Meagher makes a compelling argument that the philosophical and theological framework of Just War contributes in a significant way to the moral injuries of soldiers today in providing “moral” justifications for potentially immoral wars. To understand his work it is necessary to comprehend his conceptualization of moral injury and then consider a brief history of Just War Theory he reviews and then critiques.

Meagher defines moral injury as “the violation, by oneself or another, of a personally embedded moral code or value resulting in deep injury to the psyche or soul.”³⁶² This seemingly simple definition contains five elements that interact over time and space, particularly in moments of crisis and stress. These components are:

- an act (violation)
- a person (either self or other)
- a pre-existing state (moral code or value)
- a change (result), and
- an impairment (damage to the psyche or soul).

As we continue to dig deeper into the phenomenon of moral injury, two things will become clear. First, there is an interaction of these five elements over the course of a lifetime that is not by definition linear. And second, scholars and soldiers alike will disagree on what constitutes the exact nature of each of these elements.

³⁶¹ In their article “Growing Edges of Just War Theory: *Jus ante bellum*, *jus post bellum*, and Imperfect Justice,” Mark J. Allman and Tobias L. Winright acknowledge the complexity and imperfections of Just War Theory in contemporary society. They advocate notions of John Langan’s “Imperfect justice” and Paul Ramsey’s “Justified war” to adjust moral thinking and expectations in the face of war. They present a four-fold schema outlining: a perfectly just war, an imperfectly just war, an unjust war, and a perfectly unjust war. See: Mark J. Allman and Tobias L. Winright, “Growing Edges of Just War Theory: *Jus ante bellum*, *jus post bellum*, and Imperfect Justice,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 32:2 (Fall/Winter 2012): 173-191. Also see: John Howard Yoder, *When War Is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*, 2nd. Ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996); and: John Langan, SJ, “An Imperfectly Just War,” *Commonweal* 118:1 (June 1, 1991); and also: Paul Ramsey, *War and The Christian Conscience How Shall Wars Be Conducted Justly?* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961.)

³⁶² Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, xvi-xvii.

The complex interaction between these elements does not occur within a particular boundary, but can unfold over a lifetime as distance, space and conscience allow moments of reflection. Meagher notes the reflection of Timothy Kudo who was unable to process actions that occurred during war because “We were simply too busy to worry about the morality of what we were doing.”³⁶³ In the essay, Kudo questions which is more difficult to endure upon return from war: “the ethical damage” or “the physical injuries we sustain.”³⁶⁴ For Meagher, the internalized ethical damage that has different contours than a physical injury is the impetus behind the name of his study “Killing from the inside out.”³⁶⁵ His fivefold schema assists in delineating the arenas of morality and the affective injuries all of which interplay within real limits.

While Meagher maintains the language of injury for the purposes of his argument, his fivefold schema furthers the conversation in suggesting the limits of human agency (actions), humanity itself (person), and morality (moral code) when limits are met in these three areas in a moment of critical change, a permanent consequence results. The paradox at the heart of moral injury is that “injury” is realized because of a hyper “clarity” – an acute awareness within a critical moment of a limit. Meagher explains, “Captain Kudo, far from succumbing to moral confusion, has come to a moral clarity.”³⁶⁶ If that is the case, clarity has not been injured. Instead, clarity reveals a limit reached and then transgressed.

³⁶³ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, xvii. Meagher cites here Timothy Kudo “I Killed People in Afghanistan. Was I Right or Wrong?” *Washington Post*, January 25, 2013.

³⁶⁴ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, xvi.

³⁶⁵ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, xiii.

³⁶⁶ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, xviii.

The second trajectory of Meagher's book, *Just War Theory*, explores the history behind the tradition's attempt to provide moral clarity prior to and during war. Before exploring the impact of Augustine and Ambrose on crafting a theory of Just War, Meagher begins in Ancient Greece to explore the beginnings of the "Western way of war"³⁶⁷ through the ancient Greek epics of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.³⁶⁸ Meagher's purpose for exploring these epics is not simply to recount the stories, nor to draw on Homer's account as someone who "understands,"³⁶⁹ but instead to explore the relationship between the rituals of sexuality and warfare.³⁷⁰ War, according to Meagher, is not unlike necrophilia³⁷¹ and the dynamics of foreplay, erotic hunger, rape, raging desire, fury, climax, and longing again.³⁷² Meagher explains the use of the Greek word *meignumi* which means "to join" or "to mingle." He writes *meignumi* was "used to denote both intercourse in battle and intercourse in bed." The Greek twins *Hypnos* (sleep) and *Thanatos* (death) followed both.³⁷³ Meagher's chapter on Ancient Greece is a strange prelude for the Just War Theory to follow, but does raise interesting questions related to the moral injury he presents in the first chapter. The ancient Greeks understood

³⁶⁷ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 16.

³⁶⁸ Meagher's use of Homer's *The Iliad* is certainly an acknowledgment of the most quintessential war story ever told and its impact on warriors through the centuries to validate, lament and bear witness. However, Meagher's particular take on Ancient Greece is to show the interconnectedness of love and war, violence and sexuality. Meagher is bold in describing the pornographic elements of combat alongside a conception of war as necrophilia. See: Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 16-33. On the other hand, Shay draws on Homer's character of Achilles in *The Iliad* to both structure the entirety of his argument as well as to depict what elements of warfare Homer omitted in his epic. Shay draws on themes from Homer to structure his chapters on betrayal, the moral horizon, the grief of a lost comrade, guilt, wrongful substitution, the berserk state, and dishonoring the enemy. All of these themes culminate as Shay explores the breaking point of moral existence and whether or not healing and recovery is possible. See: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*.

³⁶⁹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 17.

³⁷⁰ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 31.

³⁷¹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 33.

³⁷² Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 31.

³⁷³ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 31.

sleep and/or death followed the fury of war, but what happens when the morally injured live in the disorienting twilight between the two?

Meagher also probes the Greek tragedies for insights into the relationship between human agency and responsibility³⁷⁴ drawing on excerpts from *Oedipus the King* and Christian Scriptures. Meagher uses the example of Oedipus to question whether accountability is necessary if someone “sinned” without intentionality or knowledge.³⁷⁵ Sophocles makes the claim that Oedipus is accountable for his actions, because the actions are what remain at the end for all to see. Even if an action is unintentional or done without full knowledge, Oedipus and others are to be held to judgment. The Greeks understood actions with grievous consequences as “pollution” (*miasma*) in need of “purification” (*catharsis*).³⁷⁶ Polluting crimes may be acts of commission, acts of omission (or done without full knowledge or intention) and also, what Meagher deems “metaphysical crimes” that can just “happen to you.”³⁷⁷ Meagher turns here from Ancient Greece and Rome³⁷⁸ to the early Christian scriptures to unpack the relationship

³⁷⁴ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 47.

³⁷⁵ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 35. Jonathan Shay addresses the story of Oedipus in a footnote to illuminate “the fatal conflict of two valid claims.” While spectators may be able to see other possibilities within a situation, the tragedy made real in the Greek poets is the moral impossibility of two tragic choices within a given conflict. See: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 214n.9.

³⁷⁶ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 42.

³⁷⁷ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 41. Here, Meagher appears to draw the plight of Vietnam Vets into the category of “metaphysical crimes” that just happen to you given the context into which you were drawn. Much like Nussbaum’s category of “moral luck”, metaphysical crimes are unintentional and heavily dependent on context and situational circumstances.

³⁷⁸ For a discussion of human agency, virtue and morality in Ancient Rome, see: Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2008). Augustine’s thought that Pagan virtues were nothing but “splendid vices” led Herdt to the pursuit of the questions raised in this book regarding “putting on virtue” as being a vice in and of itself. She notes well the irony in the tradition – that virtue seems to imply authenticity first and foremost. But, if virtue is habitualized and learned over time, then certainly there are times when virtue is “put on” and practiced (25). Herdt maintains an Augustinian conception of virtue while reworking his legacy around the splendid vices. Herdt advocates here a view of humanity that is both truly fallen, as well as in the process of being redeemed in an ongoing fashion. With this view, she believes habituation matters (25). The church has not, and will never, do that process perfectly. However, we yield to that process and even more so, the redeeming grace

between agency and accountability described by Jesus in the Gospels. Meagher argues these scriptural injunctions are difficult to “challenge”³⁷⁹ because of their foundational nature. And yet, Meagher goes on to wonder about the impact of texts like Matthew 15:17-20 where “pollution” that occurs through sinful acts are only able to be determined by God who alone sees the work of the hands as well as the intentions of the heart.³⁸⁰ Meagher believes distinctions such as the questions of internal intent, even the act of forgiveness given by Jesus to his killers who said “they know not what they do”, become entry points for the development of Just War Theory since “all sin, even the murder of God, can be forgiven.”³⁸¹ In this exploration of human agency and accountability, Meagher poses the question by asking if “purity of heart” is perhaps even more dangerous for the development of Just War Theory.³⁸²

Prior to the conversion of Constantine, Meagher makes the case that Christian pacifism³⁸³ was widely accepted given the nonviolent orientation of Jesus and the

of God. In so doing, we relinquish any control of our own and yield to the stark dependency we have on God alone. At stake here for Herdt is the possibility of division, alongside hypocrisy, how do we go through the habitual process of “putting on virtue” while at the same time being ever newly transformed by the grace and mercy of God? She advocates no division, but a singular mystery amid the ordinary processes of life. In her chapter on Augustine, she is concerned with two aspects of his legacy. First, the inner wrestling between Christian *mimesis* (that tries on virtue) alongside the problematic that creates for virtue and formation. In addition, she wants to transform how the tradition has understood his disposition toward the splendid vices and retrieve them as possibilities for formation today (45-46). For Herdt, Aristotle tries to make the distinction between virtue and hypocrisy by his acknowledgement of the inner motive of the person in trying to be good, rather than just appearing to be good. Aquinas is helpful to her project in his acceptance, rather than rejection, of pagan virtues as possibilities for the good. Also see: James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Here, Wetzel seeks a deeper understanding of Augustine’s concept of the will, and God’s grace in response to that will, as a limit of virtue. Also see: Darlene Fozard Weaver, “Double Agents: Persons and Moral Change in Jennifer Herdt’s ‘Putting on Virtue’” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41:4 (2013): 710-726.

³⁷⁹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 47.

³⁸⁰ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 49.

³⁸¹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 49.

³⁸² Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 49.

³⁸³ For example, see Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VIII 73. Here, Origen argues that Christians do not go to battle, nor do they serve the emperor. Instead, they fight using different weapons “by raising a special army of piety through our petition to God.”

beatitude “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9).³⁸⁴ Meagher suggests that pacifism was more supported through Christian scripture than the argument for clergy celibacy. However both killing and sexuality were seen as “polluting” actions undesirable for the holiest Christian life.³⁸⁵ While there were movements prior to Constantine to legitimize Christian violence through proof-texting, the general consensus supported the pacifist nature of Jesus who discredited use of force. Those who took the oath of military service to the Roman army repeated the words to the *sacramentum* swearing allegiance to the emperor.³⁸⁶ Christianity transforms the *sacramentum* from an oath made to the great “high priest of the Roman state religion”³⁸⁷ to the language of the holiest element of Christianity: the sacraments of Baptism and Communion where wholly other oaths and promises are made.

The conversion of Constantine and his subsequent profession of faith radically challenged all prior assertions, particularly those related to war and killing. Meagher explains, “Until the fourth century a Christian empire was an oxymoron. Now it was a challenge. However unthinkable it was to imagine a Christian army, it was even more of a stretch to entertain the idea of a nonviolent empire.”³⁸⁸ How would theologians provide justification for killing in the name of the empire? Meagher credits Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo with doing just that. Ambrose extrapolated on the courage of

³⁸⁴ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 66.

³⁸⁵ See for example: Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988). Brown explores concerns in the early church related to sexuality, celibacy, virginity and how Christian views of the body shaped early society. Of interest to Meagher is Brown’s claim that human frailty shifts from death to sex and this has deep effects on how we understand Jesus, the early apostles, leaders in the church and the hierarchy between those who were celibate and those who were not.

³⁸⁶ Meagher *Killing from the Inside Out*, 59. Tertullian describes this in *On Idolatry*, 19.315.

³⁸⁷ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 59.

³⁸⁸ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 71.

Moses, Joshua and David who discovered strength in battle for justice. For Ambrose, the dimension of “justice” proved decisive as to whether or not a battle proved disgraceful: “fortitude without justice is the source of wickedness. For the stronger it is, the more ready it is to crush the weaker, whilst in matters of war one ought to see whether the war is just or unjust.”³⁸⁹ Wars fought for the justice of God and/or for the just defense of one’s civil life were proper and acceptable. Both Ambrose and Augustine found liberal freedom in scriptural interpretation, far from literal readings, even when those interpretations appeared ridiculous. Consider for example, Meagher urges, how Augustine’s exegesis of the famous Gospel text “turn the other cheek,”³⁹⁰ transformed these words, so now, “these precepts pertain rather to the inward disposition of the heart.”³⁹¹ So, Augustine subjugates the physical demonstration of turning the other cheek to the internal disposition of peace and charity, even if the outward action is anything but charitable. For Augustine, this exegetical move was made possible by both an exegetical approach to scripture that the spirit gives life, and the letter of the law kills, but also by his understanding of the brokenness of the world given its fallen state.³⁹² Meagher argues a growing gulf between agency and accountability occurred as theologians sequestered “inward disposition” as a validation for committing heinous acts of war for the empire

Even stranger than these exegetical moves, Meagher argues, is the belief of Augustine that “killing in war could be dispassionate, free of anger, hatred, rage,

³⁸⁹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 72. See: Ambrose, *Duties of the Clergy* I.35.176 and I.41.211.

³⁹⁰ Matthew 5:39, Luke 6:29.

³⁹¹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 74. Augustine, *Letters (NPNF)*, 138.2.13.

³⁹² Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 75.

revenge, and thrill.”³⁹³ Here are the roots of a war “without” consequence, a war without even the consequence of a wounded soul or a moral injury. Both Ambrose and Augustine legitimized war, but only with the mandate of a sovereign authority.³⁹⁴ Meagher describes the church at this time as having “a pacifist lump in their throat”³⁹⁵ that allowed the institutional church to send their young men to war without subjecting their own selves to its horrors. Christianity aided and abetted sending young men off with “a clear conscience” given the legitimizing moral authority of the governing power.³⁹⁶ Upon return, the pollution of war required penance, perhaps even the possibility of abstinence from the *sacramentum* of the church,³⁹⁷ even though the *sacramentum* of the military oath prevailed.

Medieval theologian Peter Abelard echoed Augustine and Ambrose in accepting inner disposition as primary over evil deeds. Abelard argues, “God alone pays attention not so much to the deeds that are done as to the mind with which they are done [and] is truly thinking about the guilt in our intention.”³⁹⁸ The pinnacle of Medieval Christianity’s attitude toward war concludes with Thomas Aquinas who famously listed three conditions for war’s acceptance and overall justice:

1. Declaration of war by a legitimate sovereign authority;
2. For the sake of a just cause;

³⁹³ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 80.

³⁹⁴ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 79.

³⁹⁵ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 85.

³⁹⁶ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 85.

³⁹⁷ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 85.

³⁹⁸ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 92. Abelard, *Ethical Writings*, I.84. The passage continues: “Thus he is called the tester of the heart and the reins, and is said to see in darkness. For where no one sees, there he sees most of all, because in punishing sin he doesn’t pay attention to the deed but to the mind, just as conversely we don’t pay attention to the mind that we don’t see but to the deed we know.”

3. Always done with right intention – toward peace, punishing evil, and/or uplifting the good.³⁹⁹

It is useful here to compare these three petitions for “authority”, “rightness” and the “high stakes” pursuit of peace and punishment of evil with Shay’s three petitions for the qualification of a moral injury: “Betrayal of what is right by a person in authority in a high stakes situation.” In his acclaimed book *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, Shay does not engage a conversation with either Just War Theory nor with Ambrose, Augustine, Abelard or Aquinas. However, the language is strikingly similar. Is Shay’s definition of moral injury a blatant or latent reminder of the power and perseverance of this long-standing legitimizing theory of war? Meagher notes the discrepancy between the presumption of just war theory and a concern for those who experience moral injury: “with the Thomistic doctrine of just war in place, the church had little to say that was helpful to those who returned from a sanctioned war in moral pain.”⁴⁰⁰ And, with practices of penance in slowly growing disregard during the medieval period, public penance and the possibility of healing turns inward to “phantom pain”⁴⁰¹ now invisible to others causing grief to remain that no longer has an outlet nor an end.

Meagher is clear in his assessment: Just war must die.⁴⁰² And, the church must do an “autopsy” to understand how the good news of the gospel became perverted through a legitimizing empire. While Meagher notes solitary voices of dissent with a

³⁹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Question 40.

⁴⁰⁰ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 106.

⁴⁰¹ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 106.

⁴⁰² Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 129.

hope for a retrieval of pacifism, the systemic norm still avows Just War.⁴⁰³ Though the theory of Just War in its totality is one that Meagher would like to disarm, even more so, contemporary warfare in the age of machine guns and civilian arenas, no longer matches the rules of proportionality and fair play that Just War espouses.⁴⁰⁴ Because the church continues the lie of Just Warfare theory, soldiers, citizens and societies are prevented from entering the potential spiritual journey of the dark night of the soul to wrestle with warfare's demons and corrupting pollution.⁴⁰⁵ Souls and societies instead languish without the spiritual resources necessary to engage the deepest questions of humanity, sin and Christian faith. Meagher makes the bold claim that Just War must die and the pursuit of pacifism must be reignited, however, he does little to offer constructive discourse on healing from moral injury. This neglect comes with a cost. Meagher lays out well the interconnectedness between hyper-masculine sexuality, Just War and moral injury. And he sets forth the complacency and interconnectedness of church and state in espousing criteria for war that are just, and even in the overlapping arenas of the *sacramentum* – those pledges to emperor in the court, and through Christ at the communion table. Because of these intersecting spheres of life – government, family, sexuality, work, military, personal faith, institutional church, and civic life – healing from moral injury requires more than the death of a theory, and even more so new life within every sphere of life that has been harmed by its legacy.

2.3.1.4 *Brian S. Powers*

⁴⁰³ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 130.

⁴⁰⁴ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 131.

⁴⁰⁵ Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 141.

While Robert Meagher argues that the conceptualization of an “inward disposition” allowed soldiers in a Christian empire to go to war, Theologian and Veteran Brian S. Powers looks not within, but outward toward “disordered goods” as a cause of moral injury.⁴⁰⁶ Powers’ explanation of “disordered goods” is based on an Augustinian framework wherein the agency of humanity can be radically redirected by the powerful tug of external forces that can further distort our own values. Moral injury then is relocated from a problem lodged within the soul of a soldier to a systemic societal problem. Powers critiques Shay and Litz for failing to name the “twisted and distorted...axiological universe of the military endeavor.”⁴⁰⁷ These larger forces distort the potency of human agency. Powers understands examines agency in light of the Augustinian conception of “human willing;” human willing becomes morally injured when it becomes distorted by the outward tug of forces beyond its own will. In so doing, Powers radically redefines moral injury beyond the conceptualizations of Shay, Litz and Meagher. Powers contends that moral injury is “the realization that one’s moral orientation, to which one commits his or her willing, is aligned toward a ‘good’ that is ultimately false.”⁴⁰⁸ Such a definition introduces wholly new language and concepts involving orientation, the will, alignment and falsehood. Instead of an inward hurt of a moral code, Powers’ definition redirects thinking toward “pursuit of distorted and poisoned moral goods.”⁴⁰⁹ Powers pushes us to consider social forces at play in moral

⁴⁰⁶ Brian S. Powers, ““Moral injury and original sin: The applicability of Augustinian moral psychology in light of combat trauma,” *Theology Today* 73(4): 325.

⁴⁰⁷ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 326.

⁴⁰⁸ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 327.

⁴⁰⁹ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 327.

injury to comprehend the way in which moral injury is “socially constituted” not solely by a soldier’s actions, but by the larger “axiological universe”⁴¹⁰ of social dynamics.

To make the Augustinian viewpoint perfectly clear, Powers extrapolates the “moral autonomy”⁴¹¹ suggested by Pelagius that is wholly other than the enslavement to original sin presented by Augustine. Original sin, foreign to Pelagius, exists congenitally for Augustine.⁴¹² Human will, the center point of agency, is not capable of a truly morally good choice because it is bound to sin. Augustine believed Pelagius too highly prioritized agency. Pelagius differs from Augustine in presuming that human agency is able to will the good, despite human tendencies toward sin.⁴¹³ The will then, for Augustine, is not a place of fully free choice, but instead “a modality in which human agency takes place.”⁴¹⁴ While Pelagius believed the will could overcome and act independently both on its own accord as well as outside of socially conditioning factors,⁴¹⁵ Augustine argued otherwise. Humans no longer have the ability to “will rightly”⁴¹⁶ or to pursue “that which is truly good.”⁴¹⁷ Instead, we tend to pursue “tribal

⁴¹⁰ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 326.

⁴¹¹ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 328.

⁴¹² So true is this fact, that one reason Augustine believes in original sin is because of congenital deformities in children. For example see: Augustine, *Contra Julianum*, I.6.24, *Contra Julianum opus Imperfectum*, 1.39 and also, *De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Originali*, 2.20.22. Regarding passing on sin congenitally through Adam, see: Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. R. W. Dyson (New York, NY: Cambridge Press, 1998), 13:3

⁴¹³ Pelagius writes, our capacity to make good and moral choices “makes the good part better by making it voluntary and independent, not bound by necessity but free to decide for itself.” See: Pelagius, “To Demetrias” in *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers*, ed and trans by B. R. Rees (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1991), 3.2.

⁴¹⁴ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 330.

⁴¹⁵ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 329. For a description of Pelagian views on sin see: Alistair McFadyen, *Bound to Sin: Abuse, Holocaust and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (New York: Cambridge, 2000), 170.

⁴¹⁶ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 328.

⁴¹⁷ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 328.

goods”⁴¹⁸ based on a distortion of the social good that happens through original and institutional sin.⁴¹⁹

Augustine paints a fascinating picture as he foretells Adam’s fall in the Garden of Eden with a description of celestial angels who run astray. With their wills oriented toward “disordered goods” they dismiss the goodness of God and pursue their own “tribal goods.”⁴²⁰ Sin then, for Augustine, is both the responsibility of an individual whose will has gone astray, and also the collective responsibility of a larger matrix with the potentiality to distort perceptions of value and goodness.⁴²¹ Powers draws on his military experience to describe the particular way in which individual willing is subjected to the larger system of military authority, wherein individual agency yields to a larger hierarchy. Powers makes clear a subtle distinction between the “unraveling of agency” that occurs through trauma⁴²² and the “co-opted willing” of military life.⁴²³

These shifts in orientation regarding the nature of moral injury as “co-opted willing” toward a systemic “disordered good” creates, according to Powers, three strategic benefits. First, Powers argues this shift allows a more unified treatment of

⁴¹⁸ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 328.

⁴¹⁹ Darlene Fozard Weaver offers a review of key recent works in religious ethics on individual and institutional sin in “How Sin Works: A Review Essay,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29:3 (2001): 473-501. Here, she notes the work of Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993). Park contends that even a doctrine of sin, in and of itself, can be sinful because it ignores the concept of *han* which Park understands as suffering. For Park, the doctrine of sin can all too easily collapse acts of sin into the suffering of sin.

⁴²⁰ For a fuller description of this in Augustine see: Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson (New York, NY: Cambridge Press, 1998), 12.1. Augustine’s original text states: “While some steadfastly continued in that which was the common good of all, namely, in God Himself, and in His eternity, truth and love; others, being enamored rather of their own power, as if they could be their own good, lapsed to this private good of their own.”

⁴²¹ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 330.

⁴²² Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 335. See also: Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 17-18.

⁴²³ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 335. See also: Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America*, 47.

“acute and diffuse” moral injury.⁴²⁴ Second, Powers suggests this shift better understands codes of ethics within military life where there are “limited moral choices”⁴²⁵ rather than a broad array of possibilities. A soldier’s moral choice is not unraveled, flattened or fragmented by their own choice, but by being co-opted within a larger system.⁴²⁶ Powers understands this betrayal of authority in a much broader, more institutional, sense than Shay’s personalization of betrayal. Finally, Powers argues the binary nature of “good” and “bad” is removed by the shift, providing some necessary “breathing room” for the veteran to contemplate the matrix within which one had to make the moral choice.⁴²⁷ Powers’ argument succeeds in balancing human responsibility as a willing personal agent alongside the matrix of limited choices and distorted goods within the military complex.

Applying Augustinian theology to moral injury provides several helpful conduits to explore. Augustinian notions of original sin complicate clear and easy conceptualizations of ‘morality’ that can too easily pervade in public discourse. Acknowledging the larger matrices of systems and their tendency toward or against morality is helpful recourse in understanding the locus of an injury as larger than a veteran’s soul. A consideration of “goodness” and the “goods” we pursue adds, perhaps, a sixth dimension to Meagher’s five-fold paradigm of moral injury that neglects a trajectory to outward goods. Powers’ inclusion of the pursuit of “distorted goods” adds a helpful nuance to previous definitions.

2.3.2 Critical Analysis of the Theological Discourse

⁴²⁴ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 334.

⁴²⁵ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 334.

⁴²⁶ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 334.

⁴²⁷ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 336.

Scholars, Pastors, Psychiatrists and Sociologists have certainly navigated the terrain of Moral injury laying out its dimensions, scope, repercussions and demands for treatment and support. Within the depth and breadth of their thoughtful attention, key lines of argument emerge from the theological reflection that build and expand on themes presented in the concerns presented by the psychological scholarship. Those themes of morality, injury and disability are revisited here with further critique. Before turning in the following chapter to models of disability and the work of Deborah Creamer, in this section I will highlight three concerns evidenced in the theological scholarship on Moral injury: the predicament of medicalization and physical embodiment; the problem of societal complacency; and the theological questions raised when limits are encountered across fluid contexts. These lingering areas of focus are important to address because they reverberate with medical, social and theological repercussions regarding the limits of war and its aftermath on human individuals.

2.3.2.1 *The Problem of Embodiment and Medical Connotations*

A critical concern in the scholarship on Moral injury, as well as its all too simplified conflation with PTSD, is a critique of the hyper-medicalized approach to treatment when presenting symptoms are described. The medical world can all too easily disintegrate into mechanized views of the body that separate muscle, breath and flesh from morality, soul and life.⁴²⁸ Lost in this hyper-mechanized account are many deep issues: for example, a robust conceptualization of what it means to be human, an

⁴²⁸ Shay makes note of this as well as he describes the impact of “dramatic successes” in medicine on our expectations and paradigms regarding what kind of healing may or may not be possible. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 185.

understanding of trauma and its encodement into the body,⁴²⁹ a probing conversation regarding the limits of technology, and a deep reflection on the proper aim of the medical craft. Kinghorn is clearest in his critique of “the medical model and the means-end logic of *techne*”⁴³⁰ whereby psychiatrists and psychologists are the soul care-providers to the morally injured. The assumption of their work is an absolute end to suffering without questioning if there is any meaningful suffering possible.

Conversation partners Kinghorn engages in this discussion range from Aristotle to Joseph Dunne and Gerald McKenny to wrestle with the question: can suffering be healed by medical technique?⁴³¹ Kinghorn argues that a psychological approach such as Litz’s assumes suffering must end. But with a turn to theology and the Christian narrative, there can be a redemptive turn within suffering that provides meaning and sense-making amid trauma. To make this point clear, Kinghorn turns to the work of philosopher Joseph Dunne who questions scientific assumptions in the practices of psychotherapy and medicine by reappropriating Aristotle’s thoughts on *techne* and *phroenesis*. In simple terms, Aristotle describes *techne* as the ability “to make” and *phroenesis* as the ability “to act.”⁴³² Making, for Aristotle, is directed toward “an end other than itself”⁴³³ while acting does not, *phroenesis* then is its own end. With *techne*, there is always a final product in mind as the technician “fixes his gaze and increases or releases the tension accordingly.”⁴³⁴ This begs the question then, to what exactly is the gaze fixed? Dunne

⁴²⁹ Bessel van der Kolk, *When The Body Keeps the Score*, (London, UK: Penguin Publishing, 2015).

⁴³⁰ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 57.

⁴³¹ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 66.

⁴³² See, for example: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140a2-5 and 1140b1-4.

⁴³³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b6-7.

⁴³⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1138b18.

argues against easy technical solutions to what appear to be technical problems and invites alternative teleological ends to be considered.⁴³⁵

Theologian and Bioethicist Gerald P. McKenny builds on the work of Aristotle and Dunne as he questions assumptions of modern bioethical claims to minimize suffering and maximize choice.⁴³⁶ The problem with bioethics today is an avoidance of analyzing these deeply held beliefs that prevents an articulation for alternative potential values for suffering. If the relief of suffering is removed as the teleological end of medical treatment, what could be imagined as another potential *telos*? While Kinghorn briefly explores Aristotle, Donne and McKenny, perhaps an additional helpful conversation partner would be Michel Foucault and his analysis of “bio-power.”⁴³⁷ Foucault argues that “bio-power” is operative through an overriding narrative presenting a normative view of human life and ability. Under this narrative, human being itself becomes a means to an end, with the end being a social conceptualization of normalcy. Bio-power operates within a perception that it expands choices and therefore limits suffering, but because bio-power is a tool used toward societal ends, instead it increases

⁴³⁵ Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 65. For Joseph Dunne, there is a distinction between *techne* and *phroesis*. *Techne* assumes a universal applicability to attend to all in a similar fashion. *Phroesis*, on the other hand, is a form of practical reasoning that is contextual, flexible and attentive to the particulars. The *telos* of *techne* is an instrumental aid toward a specific aim while the *telos* of *phroesis* is not pre-ordained and is connected to the good at which it aims through specific and attuned actions conditioned by the presenting symptoms and the ethically committed agent who attends. See: Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1993): 261-268.

⁴³⁶ McKenny, *To Relieve the Human Condition*, 9.

⁴³⁷ Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, “‘The Full Imago Dei’ The Implications of John Wesley’s scriptural holiness for conceptions of suffering and disability,” *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*, 9:3 (2006): 21-46. See also: Brandy Daniels, “Ethics Beyond Biopower: Bonhoeffer, Foucault, and the Problem of Race” *Ontology and Ethics: Bonhoeffer and Contemporary Scholarship* ed. by Adam C. Clark and Michael Mawson (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 150-162.

suffering and limits choices.⁴³⁸ Bio-power aids political structures and societal norms, at the expense of human lives for example, in suggesting disability must be eliminated because it causes suffering instead of imagining alternative narratives and medical possibilities.⁴³⁹

In addition to Foucault, Kinghorn would benefit from conversation with Phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's and her work "Giving the Body Its Due," where she argues for a new metaphysics of the body to replace the "imbalance created by Cartesian dualism."⁴⁴⁰ This new metaphysics would replace the objectified, disassociated, compartmentalized and thoroughly dissected view of the body that dominates Western medical treatment suggesting all "injuries" may be treated by medical applications, pharmaceutical products and the latest technological advancements and suggests instead a new metaphysics is needed in the twenty-first century.⁴⁴¹ Trauma in the old metaphysics is subjected to the rationality of cognition as if "the body [was] drone to an all-powerful, rational mind"⁴⁴² rather than a metaphysics with a deeper sensibility of embodiment and full-bodied humanity. Stress in the body is treated by anti-anxiety medications, rather than attention to grief that becomes "fossilized" within the layers of the body.⁴⁴³ Sheets-Johnstone articulates poetically, "The way to health in present-day Western medicine is not by invocation but by ingestion."⁴⁴⁴ Over time, disease became disassociated from the larger body and reduced to isolated locations within a materialist

⁴³⁸ Cochran, "The Full Imago Dei," 23-24. See: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I* (New York, NY: Random House, 1990): 144, and McKenny, *To Relieve the Human Condition*, 206-207.

⁴³⁹ Cochran, "The Full Imago Dei," 42.

⁴⁴⁰ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, "Charting the Interdisciplinary Course," *Giving the Body Its Due* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 1.

⁴⁴¹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 15.

⁴⁴² Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 2.

⁴⁴³ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 8.

⁴⁴⁴ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 135.

conceptualization of the body rather than understanding the nexus of disease within the wider systems of the body. In the face of this compartmentalization, Sheets-Johnstone argues for a “corporeal turn”⁴⁴⁵ in medicine that rights the imbalance, gives the body its due, and honors the truth of experience that becomes embedded within a body.

Sheets-Johnstone invites deeper reflection on embodiment with an eye toward “giving the body its due” and self-reflection on medical models that err on mechanized views of the body. Is it possible that theology and Christianity, perhaps at times, have maintained mechanistic views of death? This is the question asked by Kent Drescher:

The development of moral injury in the psychological literature can be interpreted as suggesting that the medicalization of psychological trauma—embodied in both the diagnosis of PTSD as a mental illness, as well as in the treatment of PTSD as a fear-based disorder—is a simplification of what it means to survive a traumatic event. The construct of moral injury points to the need for much more complex conceptualizations of suffering in the wake of trauma, including traumatic acts that one may have perpetrated. Morally injurious trauma of this type presents survivors with the inescapable task of accommodating death into their life narrative. In the dominant cultures of medicine and Christianity, death is something to be conquered, not something that is permitted to remain. But it does remain for many who have survived trauma, and psychotherapies and theologies that fail to make room for this remainder will prove too shallow to accommodate the depths of human suffering.⁴⁴⁶

What becomes embodied in Drescher’s account is not only the morally injurious event, but the encounter with death itself. For Sheets-Johnstone, this encounter with death, as well as encounters with situations of ongoing anxiety producing stress, result in the fossilization of trauma within the body creating a “tonic immobility”⁴⁴⁷ where a chasm is created between the body and its ability to heal itself. In the face of these death

⁴⁴⁵ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 15.

⁴⁴⁶ Kent D. Drescher, Jason A. Nieuwsma and Pamela J. Swales, “Morality and Moral Injury: Insights from Theology and Health Science” *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, 33 (2013): 56.

⁴⁴⁷ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 7.

encounters, there is a “continually aborted grief”⁴⁴⁸ that creates a space for the recapitulation of past traumatic events in daily life. Medical treatment is not the answer for this embodied grief, instead, the corporeal turn may only occur through ritual.⁴⁴⁹ Ritual allows what German poet Rainer Maria Rilke calls “the life...unlived”⁴⁵⁰ of our bodies to gain life, voice, expression, credence and honor. Reclaiming the “living sense of the body” which has been suppressed through western medicine will allow healing and greater sense making.⁴⁵¹ Instead of progressive fragmentation and isolation of pain within the body, corporeal reflection realized in ritual, will bring completion to the “continually aborted grief.” In addition, the cultural history enfolded and embedded within our bodies will bear witness to a story greater than our own choices.⁴⁵² Our bodies, by means of this corporeal turn, will be recognized for the greater societal trauma embedded in sinew, heart, mind and spirit.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone looks beyond western culture for insights on disease, healing and trauma; her book includes essays from a multiplicity of global perspectives. Japanese philosopher Yasuo Yuasa proposes a wholly other body scheme than the typical Western Cartesian dualism.⁴⁵³ Yuasa envisions four circuits that are not self-sufficient

⁴⁴⁸ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 8.

⁴⁴⁹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 8.

⁴⁵⁰ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 5. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone draws here on the poetic line of Rainer Maria Rilke from his lettered entry of August 12, 1904: “Consider whether these great sadnesses have not rather gone right through the center of yourself...Only those sadnesses are dangerous and bad which one carries about among people in order to drown them out; like sicknesses that are superficially and foolishly treated they simply withdraw and after a little pause break out again the more dreadfully; and accumulate within one are life, are unlived, spurned, lost life, of which one may die.” Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co., 1993), 63-64.

⁴⁵¹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 2.

⁴⁵² Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 12.

⁴⁵³ Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body, Self-Cultivation, and Ki-Energy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993): 37-67. Shigenori Nagatomo has written extensively on Yuasa Yasuo’s particularly regarding Yuasa’s “body-scheme” which involves four information circuits and is an attempt to move away from a disjunctive dualism of the body toward a theory of correlation. See for example: Shigenori Nagatomo,

systems, but instead are integrated in ways we can only begin to understand. They include: the neurophysiological, the kinesthetic, the psychological and the emotional-instinctual.⁴⁵⁴ In this schema, knowledge is gained through the body not by way of the intellect. Even more so, the four-fold schema works together to produce a certain “ki-energy” that can be disrupted when there is trauma to one portion of the quartet. Is it possible then, for us to imagine, a disruption to the moral code embedded in one of these four circuits within the body? And if so, what exponential effect might that disruption have on the larger systems and the ki-energy, as Yasua, suggests?

Recognizing the challenge to traditional medical, and even psychological, treatments, a 2016 team of scholars, of which Drescher is a part, suggests several alternative therapies. With an eye to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), these scholars remain committed to “holism, empowerment, access, legitimacy, and health, as opposed to sickness.”⁴⁵⁵ Their study assumes a disconnect within traditional treatments and argues for alternative therapies including: Adaptive Disclosure (AD), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). In light of these advances, the team of scholars advocates a support mechanism other than these “alternative” treatments. Despite their turn away from medicalization and the metaphysics of Descartes, these avenues for treatment are still not enough. They

“Yuasa Yasuo’s Philosophy of Self-Cultivation: A Theory of Embodiment,” *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy*, ed. Bret W. Davis (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴⁵⁴ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 5.

⁴⁵⁵ Marek S. Kopacz, April L. Connery, Todd M. Bishop, Craig J. Bryan, Kent D. Drescher, Joseph M. Currier, Wilfred R. Pigeon, “Moral Injury: A New Challenge for Complementary and Alternative Medicine,” *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 24 (2016), 29.

suggest spiritual care through ongoing pastoral counseling as a necessary component to the success beyond any of these treatments alone.⁴⁵⁶

Sheets-Johnstone, Kent Drescher, Yasuo Yuasa, and the team of scholars in the 2016 study led by Marek Kopacz identify the inability of a purely “medical model” to address the wound behind moral injury. According to Sheets-Johnstone, medical treatment needs a “corporeal turn” to reclaim a metaphysics of the body. Kent Drescher argues space must be made in treatment for the narratives of death experienced in real-time and then embedded for all time within the body. And, the scholars led by Marek Kopacz identify the inability of medical and psychological treatment alone to tend to the many dimensions of moral injury, spiritual care (Reiki, prayer, rituals, etc.) is a necessary complement to any medical treatment. In conclusion, let this be perfectly clear: a medical approach is insufficient for diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support of the morally injured veteran; their injury is deeper than any medical art can heal.

2.3.2.2 *The Problem of Social Dimensions*

Just as Phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone prompts a shift in thinking beyond standard medical practices for moral injury to include larger considerations of embodiment, theological reflection prompts a shift from seeing the soldier and his or wounds as a singular, individual concern, but a more complex societal and institutional one. This shift raises serious matters: the often unjust social forces at play in creating the military⁴⁵⁷, the social distortion of “goods” pursued,⁴⁵⁸ the greater moral injury latent

⁴⁵⁶ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 29.

⁴⁵⁷ See for example: “Small Towns Absorb the Toll of War,” National Public Radio, February 20, 2007, <http://www.npr.org>; and “Military Recruitment 2008: A Look at Age, Race, Income and Education of New

within the larger society, the glaring lack of society's inability to mourn and grieve war and loss, and the institutional sin of social power.⁴⁵⁹ These sizeable, consequential and hyper-complex topics should shoulder some of the 'injury' our veterans feel; but all too often, soldiers are left paralyzed by these greater structures at play in society.⁴⁶⁰ While the literature in review has addressed several critical themes, three additional notes will be addressed here regarding socially constituted bodies, social trauma⁴⁶¹ and social grief.

Social Injustice and Socially Constituted Bodies

A discussion of moral injury must attest to social forces that shape the military; forces often based on class, race and social location. For some, voluntary enlistment

Soldiers," *National Priorities Project*, February 18, 2009, <http://nationalpriorities.org>; and, for a historical perspective see: Sara Turner and John Bound, "Closing the Gap or Widening the Divide: The Effects of the G.I. Bill and World War II on the Educational Outcomes of Black Americans," *Journal of Economic History* 63, no. 1 (March 2003): 145-77.

⁴⁵⁸ Powers, "Moral injury and original sin," 325.

⁴⁵⁹ See for example Jonathan Shay's explanation of the gods in *The Iliad* as illustrative of social power. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 149-164.

⁴⁶⁰ Ben Fountain captures an excellent contemporary example of this societal distortion in his novel *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*. Ang Lee, who directs the movie version of the novel, received critical acclaim for his use of 4K resolution, 3-D technology and a rapid set of 120 frames per second. Lee employed this high resolution, high frame technique to capture 'reality' as honestly, comprehensively and realistically as possible. However, the *New York Times* movie reviewer Mekado Murphy notes, "Moviegoers and critics alike balked at the uncomfortably realistic images." Mekado Murphy, "Ang Lee's Plea: Give 'Billy Lynn' a Chance" *New York Times* October 15, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/movies/billy-lynns-long-halftime-walk-screening-reaction.html?mcubz=0> (Accessed September 16, 2017).

⁴⁶¹ Current work on social trauma includes: Sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012). Alexander argues that trauma is never a singular, but always a collective societal experience and can be a key in navigating social conflicts. For Alexander, trauma is a grave injury that transcends boundaries and binds silenced and oppressed people together in the face of their perpetrators. Also, Vamik D. Volkan, *Immigrants and Refugees: Trauma, Perennial Mourning, Prejudice, and Border Psychology* (London, UK: Karnac Books, 2017). Volkan examines the psychology of borders and the trauma they can invoke in refugees and immigrants. In his work, Volkan explores "chosen trauma" as a collective identity chosen and shared by a social group that finds identity, meaning and suffering in this sense of sameness that binds them together. While the group may advance forward from the chosen trauma, there are moments when regression occurs and the chosen trauma represents itself. And finally, see the work of Old Testament Theologian David C. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012). Carr argues for studies of the Bible that recognize its development in the face of trauma, exile and suffering producing an extended work of trauma literature. Such a reading invites deeper accounts of suffering, silence, trauma and shame particularly an extended reflection on the despair of having a crucified savior for the people of Israel.

provides a paycheck, identity and career where otherwise impossible. Recently, J.D. Vance wrote in his biography *Hilbilly Elegy* of the Marine Corps as his only escape from the poverty that entrenched his family system and limited his future possibilities.⁴⁶² Rita Nakashima Brock's opening chapter of *Soul Repair* "I Became a Soldier" frames the social injustice of military service. For example, she notes:

"The numbers are significant: almost three-fourths of U.S. troops in Iraq were from towns where per capita income fell below the national average. Military recruiters, drive by quotas, work in offices found in poorer areas of cities, and new Army recruits come primarily from lower to middle class communities, southern states, and black, Hispanic and Asian communities, according to official U.S. Army data.... In neighborhoods with high crime levels or in unstable or abusive families, military service may offer greater safety and what one man termed, 'three hots and a cot.'"⁴⁶³

Theologian, veteran and Dean at Boston University Pamela Lightsey spoke eloquently of the classism, racism, and sexism rampant within military recruitment in a 2016 lecture at The Chautauqua Institution in a week whose overarching theme was moral injury.⁴⁶⁴ Lightsey draws on Judith Butler's concept of "socially constituted bodies"⁴⁶⁵ to describe the poor, young,⁴⁶⁶ uneducated,⁴⁶⁷ racially divided body of military enlistees. War is not

⁴⁶² J.D. Vance, *Hilbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and a Culture in Crisis* (New York, NY: Harper, 2016): 156-177.

⁴⁶³ Brock, *Soul Repair*, 2-3.

⁴⁶⁴ Dr. Pamela Lightsey at Chautauqua Institution. "Honorably Discharged to Dishonorable Conditions: Moral Injury and Black Veterans," (August 17, 2016), <https://www.thegreatlecturelibrary.com/index.php?select=speaker&data=1850> (Accessed September 16, 2017).

⁴⁶⁵ Lightsey. "Honorably Discharged." See Judith Butler, *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning, Violence and Politics* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 2004), 20. Here Butler sets forth an argument that bodies are constituted politically and have a social vulnerability. Because of that charged political nature and the vulnerability that follows, bodies are always at risk for violence. The social constitution of bodies asks "Who counts?" and "What makes for a grievable life?" 20.

⁴⁶⁶ Lightsey. "Honorably Discharged." Lightsey makes the point 60% of active duty military are under thirty years old. A higher percentage of 72% under age thirty is noted in "2014 Demographics: Military One Source" Published by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Accessed Dec. 5, 2017. [Download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf](http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf).

⁴⁶⁷ Lightsey. "Honorably Discharged." Lightsey notes only 7% of soldiers have college degrees while in the service. A 2014 study reveals 77% of active duty members have a high school diploma or GED. Those holding a Bachelor's degree comprise 12.6%. See "2014 Demographics: Military One Source" Published

the only violence these enlistees face, Lightsey claims, they face “national violence”⁴⁶⁸ against them when the institutional sins of racism and classism injure them. She argues, “We enter the military as “socially constituted bodies” and the moral injury faced in the military can have rippling effects across social contexts for generations. Lightsey notes the ongoing and continually unfolding social constitution of bodies: bodies are shaped socially prior to military engagement and they are shaped further by the social structures of the military and the call of service there.”⁴⁶⁹

Lightsey provides, to what she deems the nascent field of moral injury, the “complicating inquiry” of “social contexts” to complicate the landscape and language of the unfolding discussion. She explains that, “Our social interactions help shape who we are, help shape our thoughts about our world, and how we comport ourselves daily. This also means our perspectives about war are also impacted by our social contexts and also differ based on those contexts and our experiences in this world.... We can not talk about moral injury unless we acknowledge social context has some impact as well.” Lightsey is not only a veteran, her son Dweylon serves as well. Their stories are featured in Brock’s *Soul Repair*⁴⁷⁰ and Lightsey serves on the Board of the Soul Repair Foundation. Her lecture’s title may be named the “honorable discharge to dishonorable conditions”; however, her focus reveals the dishonorable structures of society revealed before, during and after military life that comport and distort human bodies, minds and souls.

by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Accessed December 5, 2017. Download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf It should be noted that active duty officers have a substantially higher rate of education than the general population.

⁴⁶⁸ Lightsey. “Honorably Discharged.”

⁴⁶⁹ Lightsey. “Honorably Discharged.”

⁴⁷⁰ See for example: Brock, *Soul Repair*, 8-12, 28-31, 57-60, 81-86.

Social trauma

Rita Nakashima Brock acknowledging the forces both Powers and Lightsey recognize are at play in our social fabric, adds an interesting twist to the social implications for moral injury in her current work, by suggesting larger trauma systemic in societal structures that have gone undiagnosed, untreated and whose latent grief and power have a gravitational pull we can only begin to imagine. Brock's background in trauma studies and her own familial history informed and directed her desire to draw theology into conversation with moral injury, in so doing, she greatly furthered the conversation and created both "The Soul Repair Center" as well as "The Truth Commission on Conscience in War." To further the conversation now, Brock believes a reckoning with larger systems of moral injury is key to addressing individual injury. She writes:

When an entire community has experienced moral injury, it must process its suffering or it can over-determine its identity and erupt as mistrust, toxic relationships, and suspicion of outsiders. Communities that fail to address moral injury can also inflict it by losing themselves in a victim identity and being unable to see their own power and responsibility or the harm they cause. Akin to a low grade fever, moral injury saps the energy for human flourishing, and it can erupt as a full-fledged life-threat when ordinary activities and life tasks fail to repress its invisible suffering....When and how it emerges in a life or a community is dependent upon how social and cultural meaning systems and taboos are enacted and how moral failures and traumas are processed.⁴⁷¹

While it may seem counter-productive to divert attention from individual trauma toward larger communities of the morally injured, Brock's argument is clear. To address moral injury at the micro level, it must be addressed socially on a macro level. Doing so will require discernment and recognition, but even more so exploration of both the meaning

⁴⁷¹ Brock, "Sophie's Choice."

systems and how traumas are grieved and processed within communities as a whole.⁴⁷² Jonathan Shay argues for a “communalization of the trauma”⁴⁷³ that disrupts social conventions that work all too often to “deflect, deny, and forget trauma narratives.”⁴⁷⁴

As we continue to work through the Veterans’ Creed written by Judge John Reed for recitation at the Mercer County Veterans’ Court, it should be noted that implied within the creed, though not explicitly stated, is an acknowledgement of shared trauma by the veterans. When the creed is recited at each session of the Veterans’ Court, certainly the creed itself has meaning, but perhaps there is also an implied stress and grief that goes unnamed, but is understood amid the camaraderie.

Social grief

Political Theologian John Kiess invites a shift in thinking from complacency about war’s mentality to grief about war’s moral complexity and tragedy. In his purview, a soldier’s private pain cannot be separated from a greater societal context. Just as standard medical models cannot diagnose and treat moral injury, current models do not exist within society for “giving grief its due.” Instead, a soldier is left to deal privately with personal pain rather than engaging in a larger societal ritualization of weeping, grieving, mourning, and perhaps, healing. To make this argument, Kiess draws on Augustine and the “politics of mourning” he expresses in his theological thinking.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² See also: Elizabeth Rosner, *Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2017).

⁴⁷³ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 194.

⁴⁷⁴ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 194.

⁴⁷⁵ John Kiess, “Common Ruins of Love: Augustine and the Politics of Mourning” in *Augustine and Social Justice*, eds. Teresa Delgado, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 207.

Kiess finds it surprising that Augustine critiques the Roman culture of his day for failing to grieve⁴⁷⁶ because Augustine is well known for his “misgivings about mourning in the face of loss.”⁴⁷⁷ For example, Kiess points to the shame Augustine articulates in his own *Confessions* about the tears he shed over the death of his mother, “I closed her eyes; and there flowed a great sadness on my heart and it was passing into tears, when at the strong behest of my mind my eyes sucked back the fountain dry, and sorrow was in me like a convulsion.”⁴⁷⁸ Certainly, shame in crying as a response to the death of his mother is not in the same realm as tears shed and shame embodied over a morally injurious situation, however, the shame Augustine experienced in his deeply personal grief regarding his mother is helpful for our reflection. The act of grieving, first of all, demonstrates a particular way that loves may be ordered⁴⁷⁹ wherein love for human life does not exceed love for God.⁴⁸⁰

Second, Augustine considers grief as formative in the development of moral judgment.⁴⁸¹ When these are considered together, we must then ask what a “rightly

⁴⁷⁶ Kiess, “Common Ruins of Love,” 208.

⁴⁷⁷ Kiess, “Common Ruins of Love,” 208.

⁴⁷⁸ Augustine, *The Confessions*, Book 9, Chapter XII.

⁴⁷⁹ For example, Augustine adds to virtue ethics a conception of ordered loves as laid out in his *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, here we will explore how fortitude, justice, prudence and temperance are shaped by love and ordered to God through that love and the virtuous life they demand. Four virtues are shaped by forms of love each pointed to God. So, fortitude is “love readily bearing all things.” Justice is “love serving” the beloved alone. Prudence is “love distinguishing with sagacity.” Temperance is “love giving itself entirely” to the beloved. Any exhaustion of these virtues is depleted love (Chapter 15, Section 25).

⁴⁸⁰ Paul Helm, “Augustine’s Grievings,” in *Augustine’s Confessions: Critical Essays*, ed. William E. Mann (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 148. Eric Gregory is helpful in showing Augustine’s evolution in understanding love of God and love of neighbor. Early texts reveal an understanding of neighbor as *uti et fruit*, that is we both use and enjoy our neighbor. See Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*. Ardent critics demean Augustine’s “instrumentalist” view of love toward neighbor. Eric Gregory suggests this is too harsh a view and one should consider this early work as Augustine working out his theological views (338). After this instance, Augustine never speaks again of “use” of one’s neighbor. Instead, one loves a neighbor because they too reside within God, not within the lure of our projected needs.

⁴⁸¹ Paul Griffiths, “Tears and Weeping: An Augustinian View,” *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions*, ed. Sarah Coakley, (Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 19.

ordered grief’ looks like in a society, as well as, considering what wrongly ordered grief might activate. While Augustine criticized the Roman society for a failure to grieve, Kiess is certainly at work offering that critique of our society today. If, as Jonathan Shay suggests, “Moral injury is the “betrayal of what is right by a person in authority in a high stakes situations” could this definition be extended beyond the war arena, to the high stakes situation of a society welcoming a soldier home? If so, could we then extend Shay’s definition to suggest the person in authority is the greater society, who in neglecting to grieve and mourn what has been lost at war, inflicts a moral injury upon the confused soldier who questions the moral judgment of the greater societal landscape?

Several Augustinian scholars have argued that “rightly ordered grief” becomes a place of moral formation and effects the development of virtue over time in individuals and in the institutions of society.⁴⁸² Public grief then becomes a critical element of citizenship, when neglected, causes the loss of virtue and the diminishment of moral formation. Kiess describes Augustine’s Rome as “a society whose craving for spectacle and love of glory leaves it fundamentally alienated from reality and incapable of acknowledging loss.” This wrongly ordered grief represents an incapacity to grieve disallowing Roman citizens from coming to the truth about a need for social and political reform and the fragility of their eroding community.⁴⁸³

What we need to remember from Kiess’ work regarding the failure of a society to grieve is this: Our work “Entails coming to see how the effects of individual injuries are not self-contained, but rupture the deeper relationships and bonds of trust that are a

⁴⁸² James Wetzel, for example, makes the distinction that Augustine preserves a connection between grief and virtue, rather than dismissing them as contradictory as he perceived the Stoics to do. In *Augustine: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2010): 17-29 he works to connect the two.

⁴⁸³ Kiess, “Common Ruins of Love,” 209.

precondition for everyone's flourishing."⁴⁸⁴ While the problem of moral injury could be placed on the shoulders of the individual soldier, a key theme that needs further exploration is the societal responsibility for war: *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum*.⁴⁸⁵ Key to this societal responsibility is the active work of grief, which Kiess describes as "the slow work of reconstituting the moral boundaries that violence has disrupted."⁴⁸⁶ When society loses the inability to grieve, as well as the inability to reconstitute those violated moral boundaries, chaos and blame ensues. Consider, for example, Vietnam Veterans who were treated like moral outcasts upon return home. Mahedy notes "Like Pontius Pilate, like Lady Macbeth, the American people washed their hands of the war assuaging their own consciences by treating the veterans as moral outcasts."⁴⁸⁷

From these discussions further by Brock, Lightsey, Powers, Kinghorn, Kiess and others, it is clear that social structures, conditions and injustices must be explored for their effect in causing, contributing to and sustaining moral injury. For the soldier who feels the weight of the trauma alone on her shoulders, this social analysis is absolutely necessary. However, like the medical social, the social model is not enough to describe, analyze and begin to mend moral injury. Ultimately, social creation of moral injury is certainly an element of the problem, but not the whole. The medical model addresses wounded bodies, the social model probes the social constitution of our bodies and our failure to grieve the effects of that social constriction, but further questions remain.

⁴⁸⁴ Kiess, "Common Ruins of Love," 222.

⁴⁸⁵ Brian Orend introduced the language of "justice after war" to complete the threefold language of Just War Theory in his piece: "Justice After War" in *Ethics & International Affairs* 16:1 (Spring 2002): 43-56.

⁴⁸⁶ Kiess, "Common Ruins of Love," 223.

⁴⁸⁷ William Mahedy, *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets*. (New York, NY: Greyhound Books, 2005), 47. Uwe Siemon-Netto draws on this quote in *The Acquittal of God*, 32.

These further questions drive this study to probe “the limit model of disability” for furthering the understanding of moral injury and appropriate responses.

2.3.2.3 *The Problem of Shifting Limits across Contexts*

Author and veteran Tyler Boudreau describes a fascinating quandary in his article, “The Morally Injured” as he outlines what he calls an “unremarkable” trip to a farmhouse in Iraq. His story is worthy of note because it points to a problem difficult to pinpoint, but one important to our unfolding conversation – the problem of shifting limits across varied contexts – and the consequences of those shifts in our consideration of moral injury. His story unfolds like this:

The search itself was conducted flawlessly: I watched from my vehicle as the marines knocked on the front door. A man answered and, through an interpreter, they politely explained that we needed to search the premises for weapons and bomb-making materials. They asked him if he’d mind stepping outside with his wife and children while we looked around. The man was cooperative and amiable. There was no shouting or pushing. The marines wore friendly smiles. They stepped gently through the house and were careful to replace anything they moved. Outside, other marines chatted playfully with the kids and gave them pieces of candy. When the search was complete and nothing was found, we thanked the man and apologized for the inconvenience. It was over. Not a shot was fired, not a drop of blood or a tear was shed, and yet, as we withdrew from that farmhouse and roared off into the night, I felt something inside me begin to hurt. What can I call that hurt?⁴⁸⁸

Boudreau’s vignette is helpful in suggesting a form of moral violation that does not begin with overt violence. Certainly the scene reveals an imbalance of power across cultures, but that imbalance is only notable when we recognize the shift in limits across social contexts. In another scenario, this vignette might be acceptable. But in this context, the acceptable limits have shifted, provoking discomfort for Boudreau. For Boudreau,

⁴⁸⁸ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 746.

stepping over the limits of the household violated his sensibility of power and its unjust force and affect on a local family. In this moment, Boudreau's agency was disabled.

The previous sections of critical analysis explored a medical problem – the problem of embodiment – within the literature of moral injury, as well as a social problem – the problem of disabling social systems in creating moral injury. Here, we tend to a slightly different nuance that occurs socially, but across varied contexts, for moral injury. Brian S. Powers aids in this discussion when he speaks of “disordered goods.” In so doing, he acknowledges a morality that is perfectly ‘able’ when ordered toward the good, and the right and the just within a society. But, when by means of Augustinian original sin, those goods become “disordered” and “false”⁴⁸⁹ the shift in context creates a disablement that had not previously been there. In this broken and disfigured world, the agency of a soldier becomes subject to what Powers deems “a limited horizon of choice.”⁴⁹⁰ When choices become limited in varied horizons and contexts, agency that might be perfectly able and capable in certain contexts is suddenly disabled and violated. Interaction with such a limit evokes feelings of guilt and shame similar to the grief a victim of trauma might experience.

⁴⁸⁹ Powers, “Moral Injury and Disordered Goods,” 327.

⁴⁹⁰ Powers alludes to this concept in his essay “Moral Injury and Original Sin”, see pages 332 and 334. The particular language of “limited horizon of choice” is from a personal conversation with him regarding this essay. Jonathan Shay uses similar language when he refers to “shrinkage of the moral and social horizon” in his essay “Learning about Combat Stress from Homer’s *Illiad*,” 577. Shrinkage of the horizon is a key concept for Shay in this article as he explores its impact on social circles and moral choices. Shay explains, “Initially Achilles’ horizon shrinks from the whole Greek army to his own troop, the Myrmidons. As wrath festers, his field of moral vision and emotional responsiveness shrinks further to just one man, his foster brother, Patroklos” 565. U.S. Military Officer Crispin Burke argues in his article “How Veterans Can Help Bridge the Civil-Military Divide” that there is a widening “civil-military gap.” While some suggest the onus is on civilians to reach across the divide, Burke says the responsibility is upon veterans to reduce the division and better understand the society to which they are called to serve. See: Crispin Burke, “How Veterans Can Help Bridge the Civil-Military Divide” *The Atlantic* (November 13, 2017) www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/how-veterans-can-help-bridge-the-civilian-military-divide/545669/ (Accessed December 5, 2017).

Here, then, is a key insight. The scholarship of moral injury fails to recognize and address the role of shifting morality and agency across varied social contexts. Robert Meagher makes strides forward in his book *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War* as he describes shifting rules of morality and coordinating limits in the varied contexts of sexual mores, the war arena and even theological reflection and the church as issues of ‘just war’ are discussed and negotiated. While his work is a difficult read, particularly in his descriptions of necrophilia⁴⁹¹ and its relationship to war, he draws closer in the field to naming certain ‘abling’ and ‘disabling’ aspects of agency across varied social contexts.

As we consider the need for the present study, this issue of varied limits experienced and/or transgressed across varied social contexts will be important. This will be evidenced as we soon examine a hypothetical soldier, Arthur Rowanberry, upon return home from battle. In the context of the war arena, he is a hero. As he returns home, to his own local farm, all that he has experienced more and more disables him. What made sense in one arena, no longer makes sense at home. The question remains, what will Arthur Rowanberry *do* with this new knowledge? And, how will he now live?

2.4 Veteran Rowanberry and the Need for the Present Study

Theologian and Social Ethicist Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon argues in his essay “Moral Injury as Inherent Political Critique: The Prophetic Possibilities of a New Term” that the embodied knowledge gained through moral injury must bear witness and mobilize the veteran toward a cultural self-critique. He makes clear: “Moral injury is not

⁴⁹¹ Robert Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out*, 33.

to be thought of only as harm incurred but as burdensome knowledge embodied that concerns one's self and one's culture and society. In some cases, such experiential knowledge can and should form a politically engaged social ethic."⁴⁹² Wiinikka-Lydon's approach provides the veteran experiencing moral injury an "active" and mobilizing response to their existential crisis rather than a "passive" victimized one. In so doing, he nudges the soldier to find meaning in their injury that will lay claim upon an unjust society, such a claim, according to Wiinikka-Lydon is a "prophetic insight."⁴⁹³

Wiinikka-Lydon's argument is fruitful as it recognizes the "epistemological crisis"⁴⁹⁴ at the heart of moral injury. While Wiinikka-Lydon's acknowledgement of a missing piece in both the psychological and theological scholarship of moral injury is an important starting point, I would argue that a few steps are necessary between the awareness of that "epistemological crisis" and the ensuing pursuit of social justice. First, while Wiinikka-Lydon's does well to shift the language to "epistemological crisis," that language does not honor the deep questions of embodiment internalized by moral injury. The shift moves us from our bodies, to our minds, recapitulating the Cartesian dualism that divides rather than integrates. His reason for suggesting the shift is "to see moral injury not as a disability but as indicative of destabilizing knowledge, or at least, its potential."⁴⁹⁵ The problem with dismissing "disability" as onerous or oppressive is precisely the reason disability scholarship emerged in the first place. Owning and embracing one's disability as a first step toward epistemological knowledge can deepen

⁴⁹² Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, "Moral Injury as Inherent Political Critique: The Prophetic Possibilities of a New Term," *Political Theology* 18:3 (2017): 220.

⁴⁹³ Wiinikka-Lydon, "Political Critique," 330.

⁴⁹⁴ Wiinikka-Lydon, "Political Critique," 330.

⁴⁹⁵ Wiinikka-Lydon, "Political Critique," 330.

embodiment within one's own body and strengthen a liberation ethic toward our societal body. Even more so, claiming disability not as a curse, but as a generative source of knowledge regarding our body, the social body and the very body of God can be liberative and a compelling beginning for a social ethic. Disability, as reclaimed through the voices of excellent scholars and academics, is a unique and generative source of "destabilizing knowledge."

The additional step to add between Wiinikka-Lydon's "epistemological crisis" and an ethic of social justice is a theological lingering on the prophetic insights gained from the crisis. For example, Wiinikka-Lydon draws on the work of anthropologist Veena Das and her terminology of "poisonous knowledge"⁴⁹⁶ to describe the experience unwanted instruction gained through violence – both intimate and societal violence.⁴⁹⁷ The rich terminology of poisonous knowledge urges deeper theological reflection perhaps through Rita Nakashima Brock's exploration of the Garden of Eden or Brian S. Power's exposition of original sin and disordered goods. While this theological reflection is beyond the scope of Wiinikka-Lydon's excellent essay that succeeds in moving the scholarship on moral injury forward toward political critique, the loss and its potential for theological reflection should be noted and amended.

The theological neglect, though I believe Wiinikka-Lydon truly values theology as insight for epistemological knowledge, may be seen in the following statement: "Moral injury can be thought of as a form of epistemological crisis born of the experience of political violence where the knowledge from wartime experience undermines one's

⁴⁹⁶ Veena Das, "The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity," *Violence and Subjectivity* ed. by V. Das et al., (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000): 221. 205-225.

⁴⁹⁷ Wiinikka-Lydon, "Political Critique," 225.

moral, political, and social worldview....sustained through political relationships and power struggles both at home and in the war theater.”⁴⁹⁸ Here, Wiinikka-Lydon confronts the moral, political and social limits provoked by moral injury. But two limits are missing from this list – first, the limits of embodiment and second the limits of theology.

Perhaps the need for further study can best be articulated through considering a veteran himself. Take for example, the fictional character of Arthur Rowanberry who returns to his hometown farm after years of war described by author Wendell Berry in his short story “The Long Walk Home.” At his best, one can imagine Veteran Rowanberry reciting the Veterans’ Creed embodying both the best and most difficult facets of service to which it attests:

I mastered the weapons of war and became expert in defense and security – and I make no apology for my skills. I am a warrior and have seen and done things that many may not understand. I have proudly served my country with honor and dignity. I am one in fifteen – a seven-percenter – a member of a team spanning the nation – veteran brothers and sisters, bonded by our common values and experiences.

At worst, one can imagine as Berry does Rowanberry’s disquieted change: “From a man in the light on the outside of the world, he was transformed in the twinkling of an eye into a man in the dark on the inside of himself, in pain, and he thought that he was dead.”⁴⁹⁹

Our society is in crisis as we welcome home the living dead, the many Arthur Rowanberry’s of our day. Tending to their despairing spirits must go beyond medicalization and societal judgment and complacency. In the face of this pressing need, theologians, psychiatrists, activists and veterans are working to respond in order to prevent the twenty-two suicides a day by veterans who succumb to the despair of moral

⁴⁹⁸ Wiinikka-Lydon, “Political Critique,” 228.

⁴⁹⁹ Wendell Berry, “Making It Home” *Fidelity* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1992) 88-89.

injury. Certainly, Jonathan Shay's lifetime of psychiatric treatment is a legacy of listening and healing, but he would argue, this is still not enough. Certainly, Rita Nakashima's *Soul Repair Center* at the Brite Divinity School offers resources not available at local VA hospitals, not providing therapy, but offering networks of resources, reflection, and most importantly, relationships.⁵⁰⁰ And consider the program encouraged by Camillo Bica, a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, in his documentary *Thank You for Your Service* where he argues for a "Behavioral Health Corps" that could attend to the wounds of spirit not able to be treated by current VA hospitals.⁵⁰¹ The efforts of Shay, Brock and Bica are highly admirable in both their care for individuals in despair and in their labors to shout to a society all too unwilling to hear the depth of that despair and their complacency. What is needed are ongoing studies building on their efforts to further define the landscape of the problem, to listen deeply to untold trauma and to create institutional structures that respond to the pain. Doing so will require an acknowledgement of disability, neither as a political term, nor as one that is pejorative; but instead, a recognition of disability's claim and liberating potential. Perhaps most needed, is sustained theological reflection that can equip the church and academy to embrace a community of people who are still standing at the cross on Good Friday where all morality has imploded and a new frontier must be navigated. This new frontier must explore new landscapes of human embodiment, new rituals for grief and mourning across society, and ultimately, must raise new theological reflection on the questions about God,

⁵⁰⁰ Jake Whitney, "Combating Moral Injury" *Texas Observer* (October 14, 2016), <https://www.texasobserver.org/combating-moral-injury/> (Accessed October 17, 2016).

⁵⁰¹ Ashley Lee, "'Thank You for Your Service' Explores Moral Injury Behind Veteran Suicides," *The Hollywood Reporter* (October 5, 2016), <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/thank-you-your-service-explores-moral-injury-behind-veteran-suicides-video-935459> (Accessed October 17, 2016).

self and humanity in the face of moral injury.⁵⁰² Imagining Arthur Rowanberry living into the prophetic critique Wiinikka-Lydon proposes requires several steps beyond epistemological knowledge: first, a claiming of disability and its liberatory potential; second, a wrestling with theological ramifications; and third, a living into a social ethic that is prophetic and transformative of political structures and sin.

⁵⁰² See: Tick, "Healing the Wounds of War," 115. Here, Theologian Edward Tick states that war "obliterates oneness" with God, self and neighbor. In response, he advocates for the spiritual discipline of atonement as a necessary step toward healing and focuses on the word "one" at the center of the word as an integral element to the healing *telos* of the practice.

Chapter 3

Disability Theology: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

*I will help them face and conquer their enemies, including the demons from within.
I will never abandon an injured veteran teammate.
If they need support – I will carry them.*

- The Veterans' Creed⁵⁰³

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two we reviewed the psychological and theological scholarship on moral injury: highlighting underdeveloped accounts of “morality” and “injury,” questioning the potential of “disability” as a possible framework in which to gain insight into moral injury, and examining questions of embodiment in an overly medicalized world, social entanglements amid personal suffering, and notions of shifting limits and the questions raised of self, God and other in the face of those limits. In this chapter, we will continue to develop the conversation between moral injury and disability recognizing the risks and potential of engaging that exploration. In so asking, we will investigate what moral injury might gain from disability scholarship as well as what moral injury might lose. Moving forward will require the recognition that the definition of disability changes at different points in the scholarship depending on the locus of emphasis in the schema. To accomplish this task it will be necessary to do the following: outline the notion of disability as problematic to the field of moral injury, consider why moral injury needs to wrestle with the scholarship on disability, explore why disability needs to reflect on moral injury, and then, consider three possible options for moving forward in the

⁵⁰³ The Veterans' Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

conversation. After presenting these arguments, we turn to a review of historical accounts of disability in the work of key theologians, describing themes and tensions present in their accounts, continue with a review of contemporary Christian accounts of disability that adopt three different frameworks: a liberation framework, a framework of social analysis, and frameworks of theological doctrines and their implications. Finally, we will focus more closely on selected themes and questions probed by these scholars and consider their implications for moral injury. The study in this chapter will lay the groundwork for chapter four, where we will probe three working models of disability (the medical model, the social model and the constructive “limit model” presented by theologian Deborah Creamer as an alternative) and assess their strengths and weaknesses for providing exploratory frameworks for moral injury. We will see in this thorough overview how contemporary scholarship on disability, as a whole, rejects notions of disability as shameful, terminal, judgmental and dismissive; and instead, views disability as provocative and full of potential – not in an instrumentalizing way, but in a humanizing recognition of flesh, world, and the transformation that can occur between the two.

3.2 Disability as Problematic Terminology for Moral Injury

Disability is a taboo word in the field of moral injury. For veterans like Tyler Boudreau, the language stigmatizes and fails to honor the complexity of the injury experienced; here, disability is shameful. For Psychiatrists like Brett Litz and Jonathan

Shay, who might honor the disabling conditions of moral injury,⁵⁰⁴ the language of disability yields to clinical methods, needs addressed and problems solved. Without the clinical diagnosis and treatment, “disability” deems a veteran incapable in various spheres of life.⁵⁰⁵ In this case, disability is terminal. For politicians, who perceive the disabling language of moral injury as a critique of authority,⁵⁰⁶ disability is judgmental. For some theologians, the language of disability is a dismissal of other forces at work. Veteran Tyler Boudreau and Theologian Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon provide two compelling examples of rejecting “disability” because the language is shameful, terminal, judgmental and dismissive; consider, for example, Boudreau’s critique:

Moral injuries are not about benefits or blame. They're not about treatment or medications. They're not about disability. They are about our society and our moral values. A moral injury is not inherently the same thing as a war crime, though clearly the two ideas overlap. But when we talk about war crimes, we seek justice; when we talk about moral injuries; we seek a deeper understanding of our humanity. We seek healing, in some spiritual sense.⁵⁰⁷

Boudreau’s experience in Iraq and subsequent moral and theological reflection is honorable and worthy of sustained examination for its soul-bearing witness, and perhaps even more so, its subtle reframing of how we configure moral injury. As we proceed forward with the argument in this chapter, it will be important to keep Boudreau’s reactive critique to the language of disability in mind. He argues moral injury is not a disability; instead, moral injury is about society. However, the notion of societal infliction of disability is precisely one of the helpful frameworks the field of disability

⁵⁰⁴ Jonathan Shay, “Betrayal of ‘What’s Right’” in *Imagine What It’s Like: A Literature and Medicine Anthology*, ed. Ruth Nadelhaft and Victoria Bonebakker (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 308.

⁵⁰⁵ See for example: Charles Hoge, Holly E. Toboni, Stephen C. Messer, Nicole Bell, Paul Amoroso, David T. Orman, “The Occupational Burden of Mental Disorders in the U.S. Military: Psychiatric Hospitalizations, Involuntary Separations and Disability” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 162:3 (2005): 585-591.

⁵⁰⁶ Shay, “Moral Injury,” 183.

⁵⁰⁷ Boudreau, “Morally Injured,” 754.

can offer moral injury. In addition, he argues moral injury is not a disability; but does take us to a deeper exploration of our humanity. Disability theory certainly intends that same exploration. The place where his assumption *is* correct is in his recognition that disability, in its current scholarly presentation, does not tend toward critical reflection on moral values.

As we proceed forward in our arguments here, we will move forward toward a new form of a moral framework of disability that encompasses the disabling which occurs across moral worlds when different limits are transgressed and shame ensues. Before outlining exactly how that task will be accomplished, it is worth noting one more rejection of “disability” by Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon. While Boudreau reacts to the language of disability, he recognizes the social entanglements of moral injury and the deep questions raised regarding human nature and the need for spiritual healing. Wiinikka-Lydon has a similar reaction to the language of disability, but adds another dimension to moral injury not as social entanglement, nor a spiritual barrier, but as an epistemological framework. He writes,

A key way to do this, I argue, is to see moral injury not as a disability but as indicative of destabilizing knowledge, or at least, its potential. What is referred to as a moral injury may often be the felt result of experience and so is something that requires engagement that might not be best understood as healing, but instead, as a form of epistemological conversion or reconfiguration. Such experience will give rise to moral dissonance that disturbs one’s worldview and ethos, disturbs their entire moral subjectivity.⁵⁰⁸

Wiinikka-Lydon’s critique assumes that disability prevents “destabilizing knowledge” and resists its potential to bear witness to political systems and prophetic insights.⁵⁰⁹ The

⁵⁰⁸ Wiinikka-Lydon, “Inherent Political Critique,” 230.

⁵⁰⁹ See: Simon Hayhoe, “The Epistemological Model of Disability, and its role in understanding passive exclusion in eighteenth and nineteenth century Protestant educational asylums in the USA and Britain,”

combined reactions of Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon dismiss the field of disability as not offering insight into social implications, not asking deep reflections into the nature of humanity, and not providing an epistemological framework through which to engage experience. As we move forward in this chapter, we will examine the disability scholarship of historical and contemporary theologians who wrestled with exactly these kinds of questions. For example, we will see in the contemporary work of Nancy Eiesland an analysis of the social structures that create disability, a clear rejection of the assumption that disability cannot prompt a liberatory ethic. In the historical review, we will see the existential questions raised by Soren Kierkegaard regarding self and God in the face of disability. And, as we examine the scholarship of Deborah Creamer, we will see her rejection of the assumption that disability cannot cause an “epistemological conversion,” instead, we will learn from her how disability presents new knowledge as various limits are confronted. Perhaps, Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon provide first-person accounts and scholarly reflection that caution us to proceed carefully.

3.2.1 Why Moral Injury Needs Disability

Before turning to a historical review of various Christian scholarship on disability, at this juncture it is important to consider what the scholarship on disability might offer moral injury, as well as the reverse. In a recent essay, “Why Theology Needs Disability,”⁵¹⁰ Tim Basselin suggests a rapprochement between two distinct disciplines. Basselin understands here the problem with the notion that theology might need

International Journal of Christianity and Education 20:1 (March 2016): 49-66. He argues that epistemological constructs of disability must be very careful to not stigmatize and therefore create hierarchies of superiority. Dong so minimizes real improvement to the lives of those who are disabled.

⁵¹⁰ Tim Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” *Theology Today*, 68:1 (April 2011): 47-57.

disability. Claiming disability as a need for theology all too easily falls into the trap of minimizing and instrumentalizing disability. His essay so starts with a quote from disability scholar and Theologian Thomas Reynolds, “Employing disability for mere theological gain is to be vigilantly guarded against.”⁵¹¹ The same critique is important in both directions as we consider the relationship between disability and moral injury. Yes, moral injury needs disability, but not at the expense of utilizing disability solely as a means to an end. Basselin draws on a multitude of disability scholars whose work will be reviewed in full later in this chapter under current scholarship on disability. We introduce these scholars briefly here in considering Basselin’s argument but will consider them in depth later in the chapter.

Reynolds critiques “the cult of normalcy” which is evident in our fixation and reliance upon autonomy.⁵¹² It is this challenge to autonomy where, Baseelin argues, theology might gain strength and direction. However, before pushing forward Basselin pauses, wisely, to confess our own complacency within disabling structures of thought and societal interaction. He draws on two scholars in the field of disability and theology, Nancy Eiesland and Helen Betenbaugh, to make two claims. First, alongside Eiesland, he claims the true meeting of theology and disability, with an eye to justice, will shake theological foundations of the church by setting aside claims to wholeness and perfection that are deeply engrained into church life and theology without question.⁵¹³ Second, along with Betenbaugh, he contemplates the possibility of living an “Easter life” in a

⁵¹¹ Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 47. See: Thomas Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 40.

⁵¹² Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 49. See: Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 26.

⁵¹³ Basselin. “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 51. See: Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 111.

“Good Friday body.”⁵¹⁴ Such a claim begins to push back on assumptions of wholeness and perfection by embodying bodily brokenness as an everyday reality. This claim rejects assumptions of ableism inherent in church structures and doctrines. Theology can gain from reenergizing our understanding of the kind of dependency and vulnerability Eiesland, Betenbaugh and the L’arche communities witness to and live within. Herein, there are new paths of openness to the power of God configured and “perfection” (Matthew 5:48) is radically redefined as perfection in vulnerability and dependency, not in perfected bodies. Working within such a framework allows the possibility of the “transvaluation” theologian Frances Young sees occurring within the L’arche communities.⁵¹⁵

Basselin concludes by demonstrating that a renewed relationality reframes and reconstructs theology. He looks to the work of Amos Yong who reimagines the doctrines of creation, the Holy Spirit and soteriology within his book *Theology and Down Syndrome*.⁵¹⁶ The doctrine of Creation takes new life when we move from linking fallen humanity to particular disabled bodies, to widening that stance to see the fall within social structures.⁵¹⁷ Soteriology is reframed by understanding a more communal sense of salvation.⁵¹⁸ The Holy Spirit is revisioned by seeing “multiple forms of corporeal flourishing,” instead of a societally dictated singular form of flourishing as a societal

⁵¹⁴ Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 51. See: Helen Betenbaugh, “Disability: A Lived Theology,” *Theology Today* 57.2 (2000): 208.

⁵¹⁵ Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 56. See: Frances Young’s unpublished paper presented at a conference at “La Ferme” in the community of L’Arche in Trosly-Breuil France in December, 2002.

⁵¹⁶ Basselin, “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 56. See: Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 165.

⁵¹⁷ Basselin. “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 56.

⁵¹⁸ Basselin. “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 56.

norm.⁵¹⁹ Basselin succeeds in showing the breadth and depth disability scholarship can bring to the norms and assumptions of theology. Can we imagine the same to be true, that moral injury needs disability as well? If so, categories within moral injury addressing questions of embodiment, social structures, systemic injustice, moral codes, diagnosis, treatment, and shame might be deepened by further engagement with the scholarship of disability.

In addition to Basselin, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson offers further reinforcement regarding the importance of disability as a particular source of knowledge. Garland-Thomson presents here a series of “counter-eugenic arguments”⁵²⁰ to conserve the category of disability. She sees disability as a “generative resource”⁵²¹ rather than a problem or liability. She believes disability has the potential to “gather us into the everyday community of embodied humankind.”⁵²² In so arguing, Garland-Thomson deepens the commitment of Tyler Boudreau to more fully comprehend the humanitarian effects of moral injury and their potentially disabling repercussions. For example, Boudreau offers this lament as his first person account of moral injury progresses:

And the only way Americans can fathom the meaning of this term, "moral injury," is to acknowledge the humanity of the Iraqis. The two ideas are inseparable. What I've found most difficult for people to grasp (and for a while this was hard for me, too) is the full range of "moral injuries" sustained in Iraq.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ Basselin. “Why Theology Needs Disability,” 56. See: Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 181-182.

⁵²⁰ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability.” *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 9:3 (September 2012): 341.

⁵²¹ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 341.

⁵²² Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 339.

⁵²³ Boudreau, *The Morally Injured*, 751.

While we've acknowledged Boudreau's initial resistance to the framework of disability, we can see in this account the potential (to be clear at this point the language is used with necessary caution) mutual disabling of soldiers and societies.

According to Garland-Thomson, disability, in our culture, has the potential to create what Malu Fontes calls "strangers in their own land"⁵²⁴ and certainly we see that possibility in Boudreau's reflection on the Iraqis in the aftermath of war. Julia Kristeva portrays the cultural dissonance that continues to reverberate by saying, "the disabled person opens a narcissistic identity wound in the person who is not disabled."⁵²⁵ Garland-Thomson recognizes the exilic and narcissistic identities found in the personal and cultural experience of disabling conditions. She aims to create positive comprehensions of disability by counter-posing her conception of the "inherent dynamism of flesh" against other stereotypes. She proceeds to define disability as "the transformation of flesh as it encounters the world."⁵²⁶ In this pilgrimage of life, our bodies are dynamic, fluid and constantly in transformation.⁵²⁷ We are pliable beings, so much so, Garland-Thomson argues that "disability is perhaps the essential characteristic of being human."⁵²⁸ Perhaps, scholarship in moral injury can only move forward with further reflection on that essential category of being human, and if so, incorporating

⁵²⁴ Malu Fontes, "Disabled people are strangers in their own land," *The World Association for Christian Communication's Media Development* 2 (1998). Quoted in Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 340.

⁵²⁵ Julia Kristeva and J. Herman, "Liberty, equality, fraternity, and ... vulnerability," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 38:1/2 (2010): 251–268. Quoted in Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 340.

⁵²⁶ Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 342.

⁵²⁷ See: Tick, "Healing the Wounds of War." Theologian Edward Tick argues that occurs throughout battle are infinite "transformations of oneness and intimacy" (117) affecting the cosmos from every angle. He suggests this is precisely why the *Bhagavad Gita* begins with the provocative statement, "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds" (120). *Bhagavad Gita* 11:32. J. Robert Oppenheimer, the developer of the atomic bomb, is famously quoted referencing this text.

⁵²⁸ Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 339.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's insight that disability is an essential aspect of our humanity as it transforms over time and space. Certainly we understand Boudreau's caution regarding the language of disability, his goal first and foremost is "to get the idea of 'moral injury' out there."⁵²⁹ We proceed with caution here, guided by Boudreau, to not overly sentimentalize Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's account of disability. And yet, just as Boudreau invites us to probe our collective humanity and the impacts of our actions across space and time; so too does Garland-Thomson prompt an account of transformations that occur through our daily interactions in this world.

To protect and conserve disability, according to Garland-Thomson, several things must happen: disability must be seen as a resource, perhaps even, as a place for making meaning in the world.⁵³⁰ With this argument Garland-Thomson indirectly addresses the concern of Wiinikka-Lydon who subtly dismisses disability as a category for epistemological knowledge. According to Garland-Thomson, disability provides a setting for human beings to develop character and voice that the dominant culture needs to preserve and to hear, an "epistemic resource" that generates knowledge and "minority ways of knowing" and perceiving the world.⁵³¹ Likewise, disability must be seen as an ethical resource.⁵³² She looks here to Michael J. Sandel who says disability moves us from aesthetic resource to ethical resource.⁵³³ Such a shift to the ethical from the aesthetic initiates a conversation about the problem of suffering. She understands our culture wanting to all too quickly eradicate suffering and to solve the problem. However,

⁵²⁹ Boudreau, *The Morally Injured*, 754.

⁵³⁰ Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 344.

⁵³¹ Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 345.

⁵³² Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 347.

⁵³³ Michael J. Sandell, *The case against perfection: Ethics in the age of genetic engineering* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007): 45. Garland-Thomson, "Conserving Disability," 347.

if we listen carefully and cautiously we might hear how “suffering expands our imagination about what we can endure.”⁵³⁴ Garland-Thomson sees the work of eugenics as an act of control – one that want to manipulate the future. Disability counters that by calling the individual radically into the present moment and also, to what she deems “an open future”⁵³⁵ untethered by other narratives and expectations. Narratives of normalcy are then halted, and the invitation to living with the unfolding (rather than the fixing) of disability is initiated. The conservation of disability for moral injury would then reject notions of shame, terminal illness, and judgment inherent in the literature of moral injury and its perspective toward disability seen so far.

3.2.2 *Why Disability Needs Moral Injury*

Having examined moral injury’s need for attention on the scholarship of disability, the reverse is important to explore for a moment as well. Is it possible that academic consideration of disability may benefit from the scholarship on moral injury? Inviting that conversation encourages a deeper probe of disability’s avoidance of moral reflection and a long history of subtly linking disability to morality with divisive and judgmental repercussions. In the Hebrew Bible, two schools of thought inform reflection on disability. First, there are laws informing the Priestly writer’s account of disability as unacceptable because it was deemed unclean. Often these accounts have an underlying

⁵³⁴ Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 350. See: Emily Rapp, *Poster Child: A Memoir* (New York: Holtzbrinck Publishers, 2007).

⁵³⁵ Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 352. The language of “open future” is Garland-Thomson’s. However, she appears to be heavily informed here by Michael Sandel’s terminology of “openness to the unbidden” who argues against genetic enhancement because such decisions create a closedness to the otherwise possible. For Sandel, the unbidden can foster humility, vulnerability and deep human empathy if we do not try and control the outcome. See: Michael Sandel, ‘The Case Against Perfection,’ *The Atlantic Monthly* 293 (2004): 57.

assumption linking morality to the imperfect body. Second, there is a counterpoint called the Holiness Code that allowed space for varying abilities though not always to the degree one might hope. One reason disability needs moral injury is to understand texts such as these that quietly link morality to disability thus causing injuries to body, mind, spirit and society. First, Sarah Melcher implicates why disability studies needs deeper reflection in the area of morality because of the possibility of sustaining injuries from moral judgments and the shame thus inflicted by those stigmatizing opinions. Second, Judith Abrams expands that discussion as she compares and contrasts Priestly views of holiness versus the Holiness school in Old Testament literature. Disability needs the scholarship of moral injury to help unravel hidden linkages of morality with ideas of bodily perfection and wholeness.

Sarah J. Melcher's essay "Visualizing the Perfect Cult: The Priestly Rationale for Exclusion" examines the world of Leviticus and its desire for "holiness."⁵³⁶ She notes two distinct writers of Leviticus, the first who wrote chapters 1-16 known as the Priestly Torah, and the second who wrote chapters 17-26 known as the Holiness Code. The first writer restricts holiness to the Priesthood. The second writer suggests holiness is desirable but unattainable.⁵³⁷ Both seem to suggest that perfection is the norm for embodiment with flawlessness as the ultimate ideal (Hebrew תָּמִים *tamim*).⁵³⁸ Because God's displeasure is connected to physical imperfection, those with imperfect bodies are

⁵³⁶ Sarah Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult: The Priestly Rationale for Exclusion," *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*, ed. Nancy Eiesland and Don Saliers (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998): 55-71.

⁵³⁷ Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 56-57.

⁵³⁸ Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 57-59. Melcher draws on Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963). For Goffman, stigma is that moment when normal identity formation is disrupted by through interactions with others and the processing of their reactions to the perceived abnormality (6).

typically excluded from the community. One public sign of that was the mark of *sara'at*, a stigmatizing tattoo of moral failure.⁵³⁹ Leviticus is a complex text that includes the exclusive text of Leviticus 21 as well as the inclusive text in 19:14 that states: “You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.”⁵⁴⁰ Melcher implores us to consider what Leviticus 19 lived out in community in contemporary society might look like as new ideas of holiness and bodily imperfection become embodied in our worshiping and liturgical life.⁵⁴¹

Sharon Betcher deepens this insight in her article “Rehabilitating Religious Discourse: Bringing Disability Studies to the Theological Venue,”⁵⁴² with an analysis of Judith Z. Abrams work *Judaism and Disabilities: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli*. Abrams sheds light on what has been a troubling conundrum for Biblical scholars: how can Leviticus 21:16-24 exist within the same book that creates the so-called “11th commandment”⁵⁴³ of Leviticus 19:14? The answer to this is in the difference between the Priestly school’s view on disability and the Holiness school. The Priestly school had a strong tie to the temple and was concerned with the priesthood’s ability to be holy within the confines of the temple. The Holiness school had a larger frame of reference in making a “sanctuary” out of the greater land extending the temple’s

⁵³⁹ Melcher, “Visualizing the Perfect Cult,” 58.

⁵⁴⁰ Leviticus 19:14, NRSV.

⁵⁴¹ Melcher, “Visualizing the Perfect Cult,” 58. Melcher relies on the scholarship of Erving Goffmann who encourages “the language of relationships” to both address stigma and to move beyond stigma within communities. See: Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963): 3.

⁵⁴² Sharon V. Betcher, “Rehabilitating Religious Discourse: Bringing Disability Studies to the Theological Venue,” *Religious Studies Review* (Fall 2001): 341-348.

⁵⁴³ Betcher, “Rehabilitating Religious Discourse,” 344. See also: Mary Jo Iozzio, “Thinking About Disabilities with Justice, Liberation and Mercy,” *Horizons* 36:1 (Spring 2009): 32-49.

space to the Promised Land.⁵⁴⁴ Here, those with disabilities are to be respected before God and treated righteously even if those injuries have moral connotations. Can we imagine the same to be true, that disability needs moral injury as well? Models of disability currently addressing questions of embodiment, social structures, systemic injustice and contextualized limits might be deepened in future scholarship by further engagement with the scholarship of moral injury to reveal hidden assumptions that link bodily imperfection to morality. As this study progresses, we will see how early models of disability (i.e., the medical model) were an attempt to offer a corrective to overly moralistic views of disability whether overt or assumed in the scholarship.

3.2.3 The Disabling Effects of Moral Injury

Psychologist Jonathan Shay articulates the particular disabling effects of moral injury on the life of a veteran and the society that surrounds them. In a lecture series at Chautauqua, in the summer of 2016, Shay made the following five claims: first, moral injury disables a person's ability to "show up to an appointed time and place in a crowd of people one doesn't know well."⁵⁴⁵ Second, moral injury disables a veteran's ability to "experience words as trustworthy"⁵⁴⁶ and in so doing, to not automatically discount words and statements as deceitful jargon. Third, with this failure of words, moral injury

⁵⁴⁴ Betcher. "Rehabilitating Religious Discourse," 344. See: Judith Z. Abrams, *Judaism and Disabilities: Portrayal in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli*, (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1998), 39.

⁵⁴⁵ Jonathan Shay, "Moral Injury in War." Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016. Shay's analysis at Chautauqua may be compared to chapter ten in his book *Achilles in Vietnam* where he explores "The Breaking Points of Moral Existence." Here he outlines the disabling persistence of the following ten things: the traumatic moment, untrustworthy perception, problematic memory, the tendency to be mobilized toward danger, the persistence of survival mode, betrayal, isolation, suicidal impulses, meaninglessness, and the inability to participate in any capacity for democracy. See: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 170-182.

⁵⁴⁶ Shay, "Moral Injury in War," Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

disables a veteran's ability to "see the possibilities in persuasion, negotiation, compromise and concession essential to democratic functioning."⁵⁴⁷ This element cements the inability of the veteran to function as an individual within a society making clear then the larger ramifications of the scope of moral injury. The soldier experiences only deceptions and lies making it impossible to live within this social context. Fourth, moral injury disables "the possibility of winning a struggle without killing and of losing a struggle without dying."⁵⁴⁸ And fifth, perhaps most destructively, moral injury disables a soldier's ability to "see the future as real."⁵⁴⁹ Here, we encounter the "despair" unaccounted for in veteran's who do not fit the model of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.⁵⁵⁰ Shay has long argued the inability of PTSD to include the depths of despair experienced by some veterans and the disablement of trust as a presenting clinical

⁵⁴⁷ Shay, "Moral Injury in War," Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

⁵⁴⁸ Shay, "Moral Injury in War," Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

⁵⁴⁹ Shay, "Moral Injury in War," Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

⁵⁵⁰ A full definition and description of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is beyond the bounds of this dissertation. Shay offers a helpful schema to compare and contrast PTSD and moral injury in: Shay, "Moral Injury," *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 185. For this schema, he utilizes the work of Brett Litz in "Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans." PTSD is triggered by an event that threatens death or causes a serious injury. The role of the individual at the time is one of victim or witness, but not a perpetrator. The predominant emotions for PTSD are fear, horror and helplessness. There is a pattern of re-experiencing the event, avoidance or numbing in response to that remembering, and the possibility of physiological arousal in the act of remembering. The basic human necessity lost in PTSD is safety. In contrast to these, the trigger event for moral injury is an act that violates deeply held moral values. The role of the individual might be a perpetrator, victim or witness and the emotions in response to that moment are guilt, shame and anger. The morally injured vet will re-experience the event and engage in numbing and avoidance activities. However, there is no physiological arousal in response to the act of remembering. The basic human necessity lost to moral injury is trust in the moral world. This schema offers a helpful comparison between the two. However, of note, are two differences between Shay and Litz. Litz disagrees with Shay and believes the moral agent is responsible for the moral injury, not the person in authority as Shay believes. And second, Shay disagrees with Litz, believing that moral injury, not just PTSD, can encode trauma within the body. Shay explains in the above article, "From my observation, where leadership malpractice inflicts moral injury, the body codes it as physical attack, mobilizes for danger and counterattack, and lastingly imprints the physiology every bit as much as if it had been a physical attack."

condition. Even more so, Shay recognized prior to many headlines the inability of a diagnosis of PTSD to account for the rise in suicides among veterans.⁵⁵¹

Shay outlines convincingly the disabling effects of moral injury; however, these disablements do not easily fit into either the medical or the social models of disability which will be outlined in full in chapter four. In addition, it might be argued that these disabling factors do not easily fit into the definition of moral injury Shay posits as: “the betrayal of what is right by a person in authority in a high stakes situation.” Before exploring the problem of assessing moral injury within a medical or social model of disability, it is important to explore the relationship between Shay’s definition of moral injury and its relationship to the five disabling conditions Shay witnesses in his clients. His argument is that when betrayal, crisis and person in authority converge creating the impact of moral injury then the fivefold disablement affects: personal presence, the experience of words, civic discourse, the sense of what is possible and future hope. The agency of a person so entrapped in the web of betrayal, crisis and authority becomes disabled beyond a physical condition, or even societal function. The depth of disablement while affecting functionality within a society points toward something deeper that involves the hope of words, the hope of discourse, the hope of a future, the hope that struggle might lead to something other than death.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵¹ Shay, “Moral Injury in War,” Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

⁵⁵² It is important to note Shay’s clinical work in treating moral injury. In addition, Shay looks to the role of Greek tragedies within Athens to understand how the moral injuries of warriors were explored within the *polis*. Shay argues the Greeks knew the “existential threat” of moral injury and sought to “metabolize trauma” within the community releasing some of the “toxins” of war through the public showing and discussion of Greek tragedies. Later we will explore how playwright and thespian Brian Doerries resurrected these tragedies in the twenty-first century in his “Theatre of War” project to offer discussions pointed toward communal healing, deep listening and civic discourse regarding war and its aftermath.

Shay's outline of the contours of disabling conditions speak to something deeper than a medical account: there is more here than an impaired body. And, Shay's outline points toward something deeper than social implications: there is something more here than a body unable to function within a given social context. In fact, one is reminded here of Thomas Reynolds' definition of disability: disability is "a range of physiologically rooted social performances, a series of moments defined by relationships between human beings. In a basic sense, the distinction between ability and disability is built into the fabric of communal life."⁵⁵³ As we look to construct a revised limit model of disability, I would suggest that such a model should illumine the despair, lack of trust, and inability to imagine a future that Shay recognizes across the depth and breadth of his patients.

3.2.4 Forwarding the Conversation between Disability and Moral Injury

Certainly we witnessed in Tyler Boudreau a reflexive retort to identifying moral injury with disability unequivocally. Both Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon invoke caution in moving forward with the argument; and to be clear, this caution is taken seriously with respect to veterans, their experience, and their return to society. As survivors of trauma and with all too many stigmas placed upon them, denying their voice and narrative would be antithetical to healing. And so it is with great carefulness, alongside the scholarship outlined in the previous section by Jonathan Shay, I suggest the notion of disability as helpful terminology through which to address questions of embodiment, medicalization,

⁵⁵³ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 53.

social grief, shifting limits and theological issues within moral injury.⁵⁵⁴ Three possibilities are evident to continue this discussion. First, it would be possible to wholly equate moral injury as a disability. Doing so, I believe, would negate the experience of individuals on both sides of that conversation. As we proceed forward to overview key moments in the historical scholarship on disability, I believe we will see the risks inherent in this equating as we explore the themes and tensions evidenced in that scholarship.⁵⁵⁵ For example, we will see how early notions of disability too easily created a simplistic morality creating a dichotomy between sinner and saint that would have disastrous consequences for those who are morally injured.

Second, one could use the scholarship of disability as a framework through which to perceive insights into struggles and questions raised within the scholarship of moral injury. As we explore the contemporary scholarship on disability through the lenses of liberation accounts, social analysis and doctrinal insight and implications; we will address possibilities that disability offers moral injury that have not yet been advanced in the scholarship. Still, there is a risk in applying the framework of one field to that of another

⁵⁵⁴ Peter Capretto offers a critical and helpful argument against “operationalizing” disability in the pursuit of theology by claiming that theology finds itself in a “double-bind” relationship to disability. To instrumentalize the experience of disability toward a theological pursuit is to further marginalize those who are oppressed; and yet, to ignore their experience is to assume that disability is not in need of sustained theological attention. His final claim is a methodological one in that not all things need to be useful for methodology, instead, through a phenomenological perspective it is possible that uselessness is “okay” (915) and that wonder before God and others invites us to sustained attention without utilizing that which is the object of the attention. See: Peter Capretto, “On Not Operationalizing Disability in Theology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85:4 (December 2017): 889-919. William C. Gaventa offers a counterpoint to Capretto’s argument by pairing disability not with theology, but with spirituality and suggests a model of two-way process where each informs the other. See: William C. Gaventa, *Disability and Spirituality: Recovering Wholeness* (Baylor, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018).

⁵⁵⁵ To be clear, I am proceeding forward with caution here. Throughout the scholarship of both historical and contemporary work on disability there are countless nuances and vigorous conversation within the field. It would be impossible to easily equate any of the movements with simple definitions or models. However, for the purposes of moving forward with this argument, I believe we can look at broad strokes within the scholarship that both address and challenge the concerns of Boudreau and Wiinkka-Lydon.

without due caution. The analysis that follows the contemporary review will demonstrate risks and promises inherent in applying frameworks across disciplines.

Finally, there is a third option as moral injury and disability are drawn together in conversation. Perhaps, both moral injury and disability draw us into deeper reflections of what it means to be human, and to have real limits, before God. The theological anthropology that conversation initiates is one that begins with finitude and ends with wonder. In between there is a myriad of emotions that include despair, shame, anger and suffering. Such an anthropology acknowledges human existence functioning within a spectrum where changes occur to body, morality and ability over time through a multitude of encounters. Some of those encounters are the shattering encounters of trauma that implode and explode all previous accounts of what it means to be human. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson leans into this kind of theological anthropology with her conceptualization of “disability is the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world.”⁵⁵⁶ So too does Deborah Creamer with her account of disability as an encounter with limits. Both Creamer and Garland-Thomson provide accounts of finitude in the face of limits that offer helpful insight both to moral injury and disability. However, their accounts do not go deep enough into issues of shame, despair, trauma and suffering, nor do they attend to moral problems and possibilities in the face of limits. To that end, this study aims to provide a “revised limit model of disability” that can draw disability and

⁵⁵⁶Garland-Thomson’s language resonates with themes in Aquinas who also understood a “theology of bodily weakness” where all humans are subject to decay over time. In light of that decay, Aquinas argued that at baptism we are drawn into life with God, and through the transformation that occurs over a human being’s lifetime in that *corpus infirmitas*, our baptism grounds and sustains human life. See: Miguel J. Romero, “Aquinas on the *Corpus Infirmitas*: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace,” in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 111.

moral injury together into a deeper conversation about human finitude in the face of limits.

3.3 Historical Christian Scholarship on Disability

A review of the historical Christian scholarship on disability will help us to understand early ideas about the category and the definition of disability as a lens through which to gain insight into the theological anthropology of what it means to be human in particular times and places from Ancient Greece to the modern era. The scholars we will engage, chosen as a sampling from different eras, are wrestling with ideas of deviance and perfection for individual bodies within the body of greater societies that have perceptions of worth, functionality and normalcy based on how deficient or sufficient the capacities of a certain body are at that time. To be clear, the scholarship is often disjointed, sporadic and episodic for two reasons. First, the topic of disability is not the first and foremost idea addressed within their work. And second, there is not a larger collective of disability scholarship as a sustained conversation to which they are contributing.⁵⁵⁷ At best, we will encounter conceptions of disability as divine

⁵⁵⁷ Brian Brock cautions the modern era for too easily dismissing the schema that disability is only a modern idea. In the work he edited with John Swinton, *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, he makes clear that disability scholarship should be engaged within the time period in which it was constructed to do three things: what were the disabling conditions of the time, what might be the challenges of that particular account of disability, and what do we have to learn in this era about that description and the challenges it posits. See: Brian Brock, "Introduction: Disability and the Quest for the Human," *Disability and the Christian Tradition*, 10-11.

revelation.⁵⁵⁸ At worst, we will explore the implications of the gods' "displeasure"⁵⁵⁹ where disability is seen as a disorder of the gods.⁵⁶⁰

As these theologians struggle to make sense of differing bodies we often see a tendency to lean toward language informed by simplistic views of normalcy and functionality as convenient and perhaps, repercussions of the episodic nature of the scholarship. Perhaps it is precisely this tendency toward too easily making catastrophic judgments to which Boudreau rightly reacts. In investigating the literature we will begin to see additional strains of thought develop around the areas of interest to this study, and we will note tensions that arise as we note particular understandings of morality, disability and injury. We will also see periodic consideration of matters such as embodiment, social constructs and limits within certain contexts. To be clear, it would be anachronistic, as Brian Brock argues, to suggest that any of these scholars have a developed theology of disability.⁵⁶¹ And so their work must be engaged with caution and care, while probing it for insight into social concepts of the day and scholarship that either mitigated the status quo or highlighted it.

3.3.1 Scholarship through 500 CE: Societal Disorder or Soteriological Reordering

Throughout this chapter we will explore themes and tensions in the historical scholarship from Plato through Karl Barth. In the historical scholarship prior to 500 CE,

⁵⁵⁸ Elaine Ledgerwood, "Saints Not Sinners: An Investigation into the 'Positive' Constructions of Disability by the Early Church," *Colloquium* 42:1 (2010): 95.

⁵⁵⁹ Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult," 69.

⁵⁶⁰ Almut Caspary, "The Patristic Era: Early Christian Attitudes to the Disfigured Outcast," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. by Brian Brock and John Swinton, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 24.

⁵⁶¹ Brian Brock, "Augustine: Hierarchies of Human Wholeness and Healing," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 65.

we see discussion that claims disability is a disordering that occurs by the God and has social repercussions for the *civitas*. In turn, theologians pushed back on the language of disorder with soteriological claims of divine restructuring of human life. The tensions here are clear: is disability ultimately discordant to the point that true harmony will only be experienced in the resurrection? Or, does disability actually reverse societal contagion of corruption and stereotypes by calling humanity to deeper levels of relating beyond the surface? Here, we will explore briefly the work of Plato, Aristotle, Tertullian, the Cappadocian Fathers and Augustine.

3.3.1.1 Plato and Aristotle

Disability, in ancient times, was viewed as “disorder” by the gods.⁵⁶² Because of this, care for the vulnerable and infirm was quite limited. At best, wounded soldiers received care in the *valetudinaria*.⁵⁶³ During this time, a person’s value was always connected to his or her social value and ability to contribute virtuously to the public good. Aristotle’s famously succinct account states: “Let there be a law that no deformed child shall live”⁵⁶⁴ reflected an extant view of the fourth century B.C.E. world in which he lived.

For Plato who lived and wrote in the fifth century B.C.E., human physicality consisted of the intellect, the soul and one’s physical body. Together these three are

⁵⁶²Caspary, “The Patristic Era,” 24.

⁵⁶³ Eugene Hugh Byrne, “Medicine in the Roman Army,” *The Classical Journal* 5:6 (April 1910): 267-272.

⁵⁶⁴ Aristotle. *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, Vol. 21 *The Politics*, translated by H. Rackham. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1944), Book VII, 1335b, 20. To be clear, this succinct phrase summarizes his view. Some scholars have worked to resource larger schemas within Aristotle’s philosophy to gain wisdom for embodiment and disability. For example, see: Susan S. Stocker, “Facing disability with resources from Aristotle and Nietzsche,” *Medicine, Health Care, and Philosophy* 5:2 (2002): 137-46 wherein she argues when “we take up someone else’s good as our own is empowering” for those with disabilities.

ordered toward a teleological end of health and harmony. Socrates' argument in Book IV of *The Republic* reveals a theological anthropology based on domination as preferential to disorder: "to produce health is to establish the elements in a body in the natural relation of dominating and being dominated by one another, while to cause disease is to bring it about that one rules or is ruled by the other contrary to nature."⁵⁶⁵ Within the right workings of a city, that normative health (*Hygeia*) does not stand in isolation; but instead, is a part of a larger hold aimed toward overall order. The right order of a body is a constitutive piece of the larger right ordering of a city. Right ordering leads to harmony; disorder yields disharmony.⁵⁶⁶ When there are perceived societal failures of physical and/or rational ability there is a failure of order that has societal repercussions. Philosopher Thomas Joseph Kiefer argues this disorder has a twofold consequence: first, justice is not possible for that individual and second, entrance into the ideal city of *The Republic* is improbable.⁵⁶⁷

Such arguments allowed Plato to make difficult decisions regarding abortion, eugenics and infanticide. The best progeny was desirable for the right ordering of the city, on a philosophical level, as well as for the right protection of the city on a practical level.⁵⁶⁸ Disabled infants and fetuses were disposable goods for Plato. Kiefer suggests three reasons why: disablement prevents human dignity,⁵⁶⁹ physical disablement

⁵⁶⁵ Plato, *The Republic*, 444d3-6.

⁵⁶⁶ Thomas Joseph Kiefer, "Reason and Normative Embodiment in Plato's Republic: On the Philosophical Creation of Disability" *Disability Studies Quarterly* 34:1 (2014), <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3319/3523> (Accessed October 17, 2017).

⁵⁶⁷ Thomas Joseph Kiefer, "Reason and Normative Embodiment in Plato's Republic."

⁵⁶⁸ David J. Galton, "Greek Theories on Eugenics," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 24 (1998): 263.

⁵⁶⁹ Plato, *The Republic*, 406b3-c.

prevents societal functioning⁵⁷⁰ and, intellectual disability does not allow the necessary education, particularly in morality, vital to the ideal⁵⁷¹ city.⁵⁷²

Platonic teaching carries weight regarding those with intellectual disabilities because reason is linked to value and growth in virtue. Without paradigmatic “reason” a person with intellectual disability in Platonic society is ranked lower on the scale of human being.⁵⁷³ Physical disability prevents the specialization aimed toward in *The Republic* where order is preserved through specified tasks driven by fully functioning, non-disabled workers. Any disruption in this aim disorders justice, harmony and the desired order.⁵⁷⁴ Corruption in either physical or intellectual abilities hinders moral formation toward civic virtue. Thus, Plato’s political philosophy subjugates varying abilities as it fosters civic order and justice. As archaic as this view may sound, sociologists Freund and Maquire argue that its stigmatizing presence lingers in societies today as disabilities pose threats to “social order.”⁵⁷⁵

While Plato’s arguments regarding physical and intellectual disability appear to be in a more formative stage, Plato offers more extended thought on what might be deemed the forefather of moral injury as he explores the concept of a “just soul”⁵⁷⁶ going to battle. If the right ordering of humans within a city are aimed toward the protection of *The*

⁵⁷⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, 406d-e.

⁵⁷¹ Plato, *The Republic*, 410a1-3.

⁵⁷² Thomas Joseph Kiefer, “Reason and Normative Embodiment in Plato's Republic.”

⁵⁷³ Tim Stainton, “Reason and Value: The Thought of Plato and Aristotle and the Construction of Intellectual Disability,” *Mental Retardation* 39:6 (2001): 452.

⁵⁷⁴ Anna Greco, “Natural Inclinations, Specialization, and the Philosopher-Rulers in Plato's Republic” *Ancient Philosophy* 29:1 (2009): 18.

⁵⁷⁵ Peter E. S. Freund and Meredith B. McGuire, *Health, Illness, and the Social Body: A Critical Sociology*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999): 118.

⁵⁷⁶ Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV, 443e. Plato writes, a person should choose “the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps to produce this condition of the soul.” Plato had a threefold view of the soul that included the appetitive, the logical and the spirited. For a person’s soul to be just, the logical aligns with the spirited offering courage and strength to do good and justly in complicated circumstances. See: Plato, *The Republic*, Book IV, 436 b6 – C1.

Republic, what happens when those who have put their minds, bodies, morals and lives in service to the city become injured in body, mind, morality or spirit and can no longer assist in the right ordering of the city? Plato's account of Socrates' service to the Peloponessian war demonstrates an attunement to the reality and sacrifice of service through deployment, the war arena and homecoming. While Plato celebrates the resilience of Socrates,⁵⁷⁷ he also laments the difficulty soldiers had in returning to the ordinary spheres of life.⁵⁷⁸

Plato is at his best when he explores the psychological depth a soldier must embody and navigate, for example, in the alignment of a just soul and its proper application in combat. Plato highlights the fact that Socrates does not come undone in the midst of wartime service, his resilience and sense of justice carry him through, though the struggle is real. Plato establishes the resilience of Socrates (who serves despite his disagreement with the premise for war in the first place)⁵⁷⁹, even amid the losses he faced, against the context of the needs of the larger city.⁵⁸⁰ And yet, is the fact that Socrates does not "come undone" a helpful model or ideal for soldiers today? Plato highlights the sound mind and body of Socrates, one might argue, to such an uncommon measure that it becomes an archetype of wholeness rather than a helpful portrait of a soldier changed by war. In so doing, he maintains wholeness as ideal rather than corruption inciting civic disorder.

3.3.1.2 Tertullian

⁵⁷⁷ S. Sara Monoson, "Socrates in Combat: Trauma and Resilience in Plato's Political Theory," *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, ed. by Peter Meineck and David Konstan (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 139-147.

⁵⁷⁸ Monoson, "Socrates in Combat," 143.

⁵⁷⁹ Plato, *Gorgias*, 515e-517a, 519a-b.

⁵⁸⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, Book X, 603e – 604c.

With Greco-Roman views in the background, the early church fathers wrestled with new views of embodiment in light of the incarnation. Tertullian, writing in the late second, early third century of the Common Era, viewed the body as the stage where the natural and the supernatural worlds interacted. In light of the incarnation, *all* bodies, not just disabled bodies, were in need of redemption. Theologian Charlotte Radler explains, Tertullian “creates a reordered soteriological structure that classifies flesh, filth, and dishonor as curative.”⁵⁸¹ Tertullian challenged the view of Plato and Aristotle who did not condemn the termination of newborns with disabilities nor fetuses when he wrote:

But to us, to whom murder has once for all been forbidden, it is unlawful even to destroy the fetus in the womb whilst the blood is still forming into a human being. Prevention of birth is premature murder; nor does it alter the question whether one takes away a life already born, or destroys one which is in process of formation. That also is a human being, which is about to become one, just as every fruit exists already in the seed.”⁵⁸²

And Tertullian took issue with contemporaries such as Marcion who deemed all flesh as deviant, and instead, posited a view of fleshly existence that carried “salvific power.”⁵⁸³ For Tertullian, order and disorder in the body became a place of divine interaction. In a treatise on the patience of Job, he illumined how that interaction takes shape within the trajectory of a real person’s life and struggle:

Thus did that hero who brought about a victory for his God beat back all the darts of temptation and with the breastplate and shield of patience soon after

⁵⁸¹ Charlotte Radler, “The Dirty Physician: Necessary Dishonor and Fleshly Solidarity in Tertulliano Writings” *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (2009): 345.

⁵⁸² Tertullian, *The Apology of Tertullian for the Christians*, ed. by T. H. Bindley (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1890). Apology 9:4.

⁵⁸³ Charlotte Radler, “The Dirty Physician: Necessary Dishonor and Fleshly Solidarity in Tertullian’s Writings,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 63 (2009): 354. See: Tertullian, *Five Books Against Marcion*, in *Anti-Nicene Fathers: Volume 3*, ed. by Alexander Roberts (New York: NY: Cosimo Classics, 2007). See, for example, chapter XXIV: ‘The Goodness of Marcion’s God only imperfectly manifested; it saves but few, and the souls merely of these. Marcion’s Contempt of the Body Absurd.’

recover from God complete health of body and the possession of twice as much as he had lost.⁵⁸⁴

Tertullian advances the conversation by taking emphasis away from divine favor or disfavor and offering instead a more reciprocal interaction between the human and the divine. At stake though, for Tertullian, is his overly positive emphasis on the total return to health that appears to conflate disorder with revelation. Views such as his will become problematic as Christianity will grow to interpret and preach scriptures pertaining to disability in ways that problematize the disabled person and hope for miraculous cures such as Job's.⁵⁸⁵ Despite this weakness, Tertullian's view on disability is shaped by his understanding on redemption and salvation before God, not before the needs of a city such as Plato.

3.3.1.3 The Cappadocian Fathers

The Cappadocian fathers, writing in the fourth century C.E., argued for philanthropy toward disfigured adults. Basil the Great envisioned a new city for social outcasts and laid out instructions for life together in his work "The Long Rules" where he saw *theoria* always going hand in hand with *philanthropoiea*. Gregory of Nazianzus argued in his *Oration 14* for philanthropy in cities and appealed to all humans as being created in the image of God. Finally, Gregory of Nyssa saw decomposition as a fundamental transformation of the human being over time as a common nature to us all. He wrote two particular homilies that addressed the disfigured and the poor. Gregory of

⁵⁸⁴ Tertullian, *Disciplinary, Moral, and Ascetical Works: Fathers of the Church, Volume 40*, trans. by R. Arbesmann, Sr. E. J. Daily, and E.A. Quain (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1959): 14.

⁵⁸⁵ Sharon V. Betcher, "Saving the Wretched of the Earth," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 26:3 (Summer, 2006). <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/721/898> (Accessed: February 7, 2018).

Nyssa advocated for the utility and functionality of all people, even when disabling conditions were present, "The hand is mutilated but it is not insensitive. The foot is gangrenous but always able to run to God. The eye is missing, but it discerns invisible goodness, nonetheless, to the enlightenment of the soul if we want to be received by them [the lepers] in the eternal dwellings, let us receive them now."⁵⁸⁶ For Gregory of Nyssa, these words implied the possibility of the person with disability to pass on the beauty of their inward spirit, even past the outward disfigurement that kept them at bay in society. Some scholars describe this affect as "reverse contagion."⁵⁸⁷ The reversal is twofold: first, perceived contagion is reversed in the eye of the beholder; second, the unusual choice for the word "contagion" (the Greek μεταδίδωμι) had the first connotation of compassionate sharing.⁵⁸⁸ So, the reversal became not just a changed perception; but instead, an actual gift to the caregiver who crosses normal societal boundaries. Their work stands in contrast to the traditional views of their day; but we will see as scholarship continues to develop (even in the sporadic and episodic, rather than sustained investigation) that for every step forward toward normalizing disabled bodies within the social spectrum, there will soon be a step back.

3.3.1.4 Augustine

While the Cappadocian fathers offered steps forward for compassion in reversing societal perception, Augustine's work does not advance their consideration. At best, his work is often paradoxical when disability themes are explored; and at worst, his work

⁵⁸⁶Gregory of Nyssa *De pauperibus amandis* in *Gregoru Nysseni Opera* ed. by Arie van Heck (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 1967), 9.1: 122-123.

⁵⁸⁷ Susan R. Holman, "Healing the Social Leper Gregory of Nyssa's and Gregory of Nazianzus's "περὶ φιλοπτώχια," *American Journal of Archeology* 92:3 (1999): 302.

⁵⁸⁸ Holman, "Healing the Social Leper," 302.

heralds images of perfection and beauty that are damaging to disabled bodies. Much of his work focuses on a view of perfection, for example, the idea that in the resurrection a person will be restored to his youthful vitality. In answering that question, he may have been responding to the text from 1 Corinthians 15:35: *How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?*⁵⁸⁹ For Augustine, the dead will be raised into perfect bodies with perfect symmetry and proportionality⁵⁹⁰ expressive of his summation: “for all bodily beauty is the harmony of parts” (*omnis enim corporos pulchritude est partium congruentia*).⁵⁹¹ Here, a conflation of ancient aesthetics alongside Christian teaching appears to infuse his views on the resurrection.

One wonders if Augustine’s hope for the resurrection had to do with his own physical condition of weakened lungs,⁵⁹² which he describes in *Confessions*:

The pains in my chest made breathing difficult and my lungs would not no longer support clear and prolonged speaking.⁵⁹³

And, along with the weakened lungs, Augustine knew the disabling effects of aging as bodies change and transform over time and space. He described his condition later in life as, “full of complaints, coughing, phlegm, bleary eyes, besieged with various aches and

⁵⁸⁹ Translation from the New Revised Standard Version, 1 Corinthians 15:35.

⁵⁹⁰ See: Candida R. Moss, “Heavenly Healing: Eschatological Cleansing and the Resurrection of the Dead in the Early Church” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Dec. 2011): 1008-1009.

⁵⁹¹ Augustine, *City of God*, 22.19.

⁵⁹² Carl G. Vaught, *Encounters with God in Augustine's Confessions: Books VII-IX*, (Buffalo, NY: SUNY Press, 2004):108. See Confessions 9.2.2: “In your sight, I resolved not to make a boisterous break, but to withdraw the service of my tongue (*ministerium linguae*) from the language marts (*nundinis loquacitatis*)... [I]t seemed like outward show if we would not wait for the vacation time that was now so near, but would leave early a public profession (*de publica professione*), practiced before the eyes of all men.”

⁵⁹³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 9.2.4 Scholars take note that it seems likely his lungs improved allowing him to continue preaching for over forty years after this lament was initially written. However, later in his life bodily weakness caused Augustine to retire and recuperate for a season. See: Donald Burt, “Health, Sickness” *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* ed. by Allan Fitzgerald and John C. Cavidini (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999): 416.

pains.”⁵⁹⁴ Augustine’s vision of old age for himself is interesting in that this excerpt appears to show his self-focus amid his changing condition, but the broader context of the quote reflects his equating of his old age with a changing world. “The world’s like a man;” Augustine argues, “he’s born, he grows up, he grows old...The world has grown old; it’s full of troubles and pressures.”⁵⁹⁵ This insight is interesting to read in light of his views on the resurrection where he sees the fall of Rome as an aging world that is perishing like our bodies. Christ offers a vision “to put you together again when everything else was going to pieces”⁵⁹⁶ where youth will be renewed, like the wings of eagles as depicted in Psalm 103:5 and Isaiah 40:31. The implication is that resurrection in Christ will free the body from the disintegration and fragmentation of aging bodies in an aging world.

Brian Brock speaks well to Augustine’s view of the resurrection, “the perfect individual pattern hidden in humanness from conception will be expressed in its fullness in the resurrection.”⁵⁹⁷ At best, this view expresses the potential for full imaging of the *imago dei*; at worst, it would be possible to read into this view a highlighting of perfection that becomes problematic for those disabled in this life. Despite the risk this perspective might overly exalt perfect bodies, Augustine maintains a “principle of diversity” where he sees that each person will maintain his or her uniqueness in their

⁵⁹⁴ Augustine *Sermons: III* (51-94) 81.8 ed. by John Rotelle, trans. by Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1991): 364.

⁵⁹⁵ Augustine, *Sermons: III* (51-94) 81.8: 364.

⁵⁹⁶ Augustine, *Sermons*, 81.8: 365. Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflections of a “world come of age,” resonate with similar themes of Augustine’s. See: Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 342

⁵⁹⁷ Brian Brock, “Augustine’s Hierarchies of Human Wholeness and Their Healing,” 69. Augustine elaborates, “So then: all are to rise with a body of the same size as they had, or would have had, in the prime of life.” See: Augustine, *City of God*, XXII.16: 1144.

individual identity,⁵⁹⁸ even if ironically, quirks in bodies will be changed and transformed⁵⁹⁹. One must wonder the implications of Augustine’s views for moral injury. Certainly perfection and return to an individual’s primary pattern offers hope for those damaged by an “aging world,” and yet, such a view dismisses disabled bodies in need of change. We will return to this discussion later when we discuss contemporary theologian Brian S. Powers who addresses Augustine’s notion of disordered goods in that aging world and the effect of that disordering on human agency and willing.⁶⁰⁰

These brief thoughts on Augustine give insight into his views on resurrection, bodily life and an “aging world.” Over and above this schema, it is important to note Augustine’s view of the Trinity and how it might impact our notions of disability and moral injury. An important addition Augustine makes to Trinitarian thought is revealed in the second half of *De Trinitate* wherein he compares the inner life of the Trinity to the inner life of a human being. Knowledge of God begins with *exercitatio mentis* (an exercise of the mind) that bridges the life of the soul to the life of the Trinitarian mystery. With his description of a “psychological trinity”, Augustine adds a new dimension to Trinitarian theology by combining the inner-workings of – memory, understanding and will.⁶⁰¹ Human beings, through their memory, understanding and will, may begin to perceive the Trinitarian nature of God.⁶⁰² Care should be taken to not reduce Augustine’s Trinitarian theology to the psychological trinity alone,⁶⁰³ and yet, we must question the

⁵⁹⁸ David Dawson, “Transcendence as Embodiment: Augustine’s Domestication of Gnosis.” *Modern Theology* 10 (1994): 5.

⁵⁹⁹ Candida Moss, “Heavenly Healing,” 1009.

⁶⁰⁰ Brian S. Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 325.

⁶⁰¹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book XV, chapter 7, article 12.

⁶⁰² Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book XV, chapter 20, article 39.

⁶⁰³ See: Khaled Anatolios, “Augustine’s Trinitarian Epistemology” in *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011): 242-249. Anatolios

extent to which his assumptions of sound memory, sound understanding and sound will affect perceptions of those human beings whose memories, rationality and will are disrupted and even disabled. Augustine knew the divine trinitarian love must be realized in history through the Easter mystery and the salvation narrative begun at the incarnation. For Augustine, Trinity points always toward an outward soteriology – not an inward psychology.⁶⁰⁴ Rationality, central to Augustine’s conception of the Trinity, as well as his construction of the human being⁶⁰⁵ created in the image of God will be a legacy that future scholars in the field will have to wrestle with as intellectual and moral impairments are considered.

3.3.2 Scholarship from 500 to 1500 CE: *Corpus Infirmis* and Wounds of Christ

In the medieval era, Thomas Aquinas and Julian of Norwich advance conversation of disability beyond questions of disordered society and ultimate harmony in the resurrection, bearing witness to vulnerable bodies. Aquinas advocates a theology of baptism in relationship to his understanding of the innate vulnerability in the *corpus infirmis* and the need for divine protection. Julian of Norwich critiques the culture of her day by inviting vicarious suffering with the wounds of Christ, and disabled humanity, to better understand the love of God and the pain Jesus suffered. This interlude in scholarship is a refreshing pause between the disordered *civitas* of the Greeks and the moral judgment during the Reformation.

offers a helpful corrective and reminder here on Augustine’s Trinitarian work. He argues that to only focus on the psychological image of the Trinity in Augustine is to miss his bigger project which is to draw believers into the “Christodramatic” narrative and the dynamism of life in the Trinity.

⁶⁰⁴ See: Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 1993): 167-188.

⁶⁰⁵ We must recognize at this point that Augustine’s conception dates back to the scholarship of Plato and Cicero who also highlighted rationality as a core foundation of human being.

3.3.2.1 Aquinas

By the time of Aquinas, this legacy of rationality is a given in the tradition dating back to Aristotelian views. Given the high priority placed on rational thought by Thomas Aquinas,⁶⁰⁶ one would imagine a system of thought within his work setting aside those with intellectual impairments from the possibility of a *telos* of a flourishing life. However, while Aquinas addressed physical “impairment” throughout his work – recognizing all human souls as impaired in various forms – most of his corpus is focused more to the concerns of spiritual and moral impairment.⁶⁰⁷ Miguel J. Romero helpfully explains that Aquinas posits what might be called a “theology of bodily weakness” where all humans are subject to decay over time.⁶⁰⁸ At baptism we are drawn into life with God, and through the transformation that occurs over a human being’s lifetime in that *corpus infirmitas*, our baptism grounds us in that love and life of God as seen in this text from Aquinas on Baptism:

The spiritual regeneration effected by Baptism is somewhat like carnal birth, in this respect, that as the child while in the mother’s womb receives nourishment not independently, but through the nourishment of its mother, so also children before the use of reason, being as it were in the womb of their mother the Church, receive salvation not by their own act, but by the act of the Church.⁶⁰⁹

Aquinas affirms that in the grace given at Baptism a child receives salvation through the Church prior to any intellectual or rational achievement. In the same way, those with

⁶⁰⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicam* I-II, Q 93, art. 1.

⁶⁰⁷ John Berkman, “Are Persons with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Sacramental Icons of Heavenly Life? Aquinas on Impairment,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26:1 (2013): 96.

⁶⁰⁸ Miguel J. Romero, “Aquinas on the *Corpus Infirmitas*: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace,” in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 111. Again, we saw this in the sermons of Augustine as he wrestled with his decaying body in an aging world.

⁶⁰⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologicam*, III, Q 68, art. 9 reply to ob. 1.

intellectual impairments receive the same act of grace. Because those who are impaired in wisdom and rational thought through intellectual disability are not, by themselves, able to separate themselves from the love and grace of God, John Berkman claims a Thomistic viewpoint where these individuals are actually “sacramental icons of heavenly life” since they are never separated from the love of God.⁶¹⁰

Throughout his work, Aquinas addresses *amentia* (profound cognitive impairment) and the *amens* (the imbecile). He maintains a lovely “grammar of grace” for those with *amentia*.⁶¹¹ Lack of reason does not affect a human being’s capacity for relationship to God, although it may prevent that human being from fully and properly bearing God’s image.⁶¹² Likewise, *amentia* does not impede the grace-filled infusion of supernatural virtue.⁶¹³ Someone with *amens* is related to God by way of ordination and origination. Aquinas’ view of resurrection life is that there is continuity between our bodies however that continuity is through the soul. In that resurrection moment,⁶¹⁴ the

⁶¹⁰ John Berkman, “Are Persons with Profound Intellectual Disabilities,” 95.

⁶¹¹ Miguel J. Romero, “Aquinas on the *Corpus Infirmis*,” 122.

⁶¹² Molly C. Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability: Human Beings As Mutuality and Response* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2011), 96.

⁶¹³ John Berkman, “Are Persons with Profound Intellectual Disabilities,” 94.

⁶¹⁴ A brief discursus on views of resurrected life and disabled bodies is helpful here. Augustine believed a little child who died would become at the resurrection the mature perfection of their possible youth. Origen wondered how our bodies – which are in constant change and flux over time – would appear then in the resurrection. He suggested an *eidōs* which is an image of the unchanging form. Gregory of Nyssa thought that our bodies will be freed from sin in the resurrection. Here, the Greek notions of unchanging and perfected forms still seems to be at play. Contrary to Origen, Methodius of Olympus believed not in a spiritualized *eidōs*, but in the physical bodily structure itself. Aquinas too disagreed with Origen and claimed bodies would be perfect and physical in their resurrected life – even if some defect or lack needed to be claimed from another source. For further reflections on this, see: Gilbert Meilaender, “*Terra es animata: On Having a Life*” in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives on Medical Ethics*, ed. by Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Press, 1987): 390-400. Contemporary theologian Amos Yong, where in a powerful point he says “the body itself finds its rest in the unending process of being transformed by the glory of God in ways that overturn the binary dichotomies not only of male/female but also of disabled/nondisabled.” Yong’s argument is that individual disabilities will be preserved in the eschaton and recognized as essential in the communion of saints and the “divine scheme of things.” In addition to individual affirmation, there will be communal reconciliation and restructuring of broken societal relationships. Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 281). Scripture offers

“glorified” soul overflows into our body and perfects and glorifies its bodily operations.⁶¹⁵ Until that moment of glorified resurrection, Aquinas maintains the virtuous courage and humility of those who bear earthly bodily impairments although he hopes for transformation in resurrected life.⁶¹⁶

Aquinas’ account of the resurrection and its implication for those with disabilities is much in tune with his intellectual forebears,⁶¹⁷ but stands in contrast to prominent views in the Greco-Roman world. For example, Candida Moss points to the story of Oedipus who believed he would maintain his disabling blindness in the afterlife, and to Virgil’s *The Aeneid* that assumes disabling wounds from the scars of battle would be preserved in the afterlife as well. Her examples point to the presence of bodily continuity from this life to the next.⁶¹⁸ The Jewish view of the afterlife began to reshape these beliefs by suggesting that bodies would be created anew in the resurrection. Worthy of note here is the implication for theologians in their accounts of disability: wrestling with impairment raises questions regarding the self, the other, and God as bodily limits are encountered. These three spheres of life necessitate discussions of disability that are not just medical, but social, and even eschatological.

conflicting accounts from the scars of Jesus preserved after the resurrection in his encounter with Thomas to a differing account in 1 Corinthians 15 when all will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye.”

⁶¹⁵ John Berkman, “Are Persons with Profound Intellectual Disabilities,” 93.

⁶¹⁶ Miguel J. Romero, “Aquinas on the *Corpus Infirmis*,” 122.

⁶¹⁷ See: Candida R. Moss, “Heavenly Healing: Eschatological Cleansing and the Resurrection of the Dead in the Early Church” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Dec. 2011): 991-1017. She explains how Pseudo-Justin Martyr argued the resurrection of the body would lead to bodily perfection suggesting if Jesus can do this much on earth, “How much more will he do” through healing in heaven. Pseudo-Justin Martyr saw the transformation of this world into the kingdom of God happening eschatologically in the here and now. That transformation would be completed, perfectly, in heaven. Irenaeus tended to agree seeing the dead rising and the walking of those who had been limp as practically synonymous. These views show the troubling conflation of sin and disability both in scripture and the early church, perhaps, one might call this an “exegetical model of disability.” Augustine culminated these views emphasizing the substantiality of resurrection where we become “more embodied” but we would find the strength of our youth and the loss of all that deforms. He envisioned a perfect aesthetic in heaven.

⁶¹⁸ Moss, “Heavenly Healing,” 997.

3.3.2.2 *Julian of Norwich*

By the fourteenth century, amid the political justice system of the medieval blood sanction⁶¹⁹ as convicts were beaten and bloodied to the point of disablement, the mystic Julian of Norwich sought spiritual understanding of suffering, wounds and even blood. She sought knowledge of “every kind of pain, bodily and spiritual . . . every fear and assault from devils.”⁶²⁰ In a society fearful of pain, Julian prayed for infliction. In a society fearful of disablement, Julian prayed to be wounded. In a society fearful of bloodshed, Julian prayed her bleeding would draw her closer to the redeeming love of Christ.

When she was thirty years old, and on her deathbed, Julian received a series of visions disclosing the suffering of Christ appeared to Julian. She wrote a manual known as *The Short Text* to record those sixteen visions. Later, as she continued to reflect on their meaning for redemption and renewal, she wrote a piece now known as *The Long Text*. While the existence of both texts is important historically; it is also worth of pause to note the distance in time passed between the two texts allowed for significant reflection, discernment and interpretation of her experience with suffering and its salvific meaning.

Julian believed she could have understanding of redemption by grace:

I desired three graces by the gift of God. The first was to have recollection of Christ’s passion. The second was a bodily sickness and the third was to have, of God’s gift, three wounds . . . the wound of contrition, the wound of compassion, and the wound of longing with my will for God.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Trisha Olson, “The Medieval Blood Sanction and the Beneficence of Pain: 1100-1450,” *Journal of Law and Religion* 22.1 (2006/2007): 63-129.

⁶²⁰ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. by E. Colledge and James Walsh (London and New York, 1978): 126.

⁶²¹ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, 125.

For Julian, redemption is not abstract but available in the here and now, even amid real suffering. Amy Laura Hall explains how Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* develop the "grammar of grace" that Aquinas explicated.⁶²² Julian's characterization of suffering describes how Christ's body flows - into our bodies, the church body, the dismembered social body of the world, and into all of creation itself. Hall sees in Julian's work a "bleeding together of boundaries"⁶²³ that are both physical and social. This imagery of bleeding emerged from a moment when Julian, gazing on the cross, could at first only cast her eye heavenward just above the cross. When she lowered her eye to the crucifix, the flow of blood as a vision emerged. Julian speaks out of bodily and cognitive solidarity with the body of Christ as she herself requested three wounds and a bodily illness so she could empathize.

Out of the intense unity Julian finds with Christ, she knows in that unity there is salvation for all people. Her vision spoke in a revolutionary way to Julian's troubled time. Blood was then seen as disordered creation. Women were prevented from receiving the 'blood' of the Eucharist. The plague and its aftermath had ostracized and outcast the sick. Julian's vision shows how body fragility can have generativity and not be something to be scared or ashamed of when experienced.⁶²⁴ Of importance to note here is how disability reshapes the body politic instead of social context and structures shaping or defining who and what is disabled.

⁶²² Amy Laura Hall, "A Ravishing and Restful Sight: Seeing with Julian of Norwich," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 152-183.

⁶²³ Amy Laura Hall, "A Ravishing and Restful Sight," 154.

⁶²⁴ Amy Laura Hall, "A Ravishing and Restful Sight," 158. For this insight, Amy Laura Hall draws on Frederic Christian Bauerschmidt, *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

Julian found safety in the flow of blood and tears unlike the rest of her society. Key to Hall's interpretation of Julian are the works of Mary Jo Iozzio and her nomenclature of "radical dependence"⁶²⁵ to describe the relationship between Julian's blood and the blood of Christ, as well as the relationship of all humanity with Christ's human incarnate bleeding. Julian reminds us that Jesus says to us: "He did not say, 'You shall not be tormented, you shall not be troubled, you shall not be grieved,' but he said, 'You shall not be overcome.'"⁶²⁶ Julian of Norwich predates the work of Burton Cooper, Jürgen Moltmann and Nancy Eiesland, but her imagery of suffering, disablement and their potential for broken bodies to inform and guide the body of Christ foreshadow their work. Julian of Norwich is to be remembered for her empathy and suffering particularly the depth to which she describes the sickness and wounds within her body. Her vulnerability to that reality, raw as it seems, was a counterpoint to other societal narratives of her time that needed challenged.

3.3.3 Scholarship from 1500 to 1950 CE: Providential for one or Universal for all?

The conclusion of this section will probe a variety of tensions and themes in the historical scholarship recognizing the diversity of thinkers across time. For now, in this section we pay attention to the questions of disability as circumstance, providence or existential state. Martin Luther leaned toward questions of morality in his assessment of the disabled either as sinner or saint, monster or minister to the people. Kierkegaard, in contrast, claimed disability as a universal existential state inclusive of all humanity. The

⁶²⁵ Mary Jo Iozzio, *Radical Dependence: A Theo-anthropological Ethic in the Key of Disability* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming).

⁶²⁶ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love (The Short Text)*. Abridged edition. Translated by Elizabeth Spearing. (London: Penguin Press, 1998): 22, 4:19.

questions of disordering continue, though more subtly, as do the concerns about the effects of disorder on civic life and even, resurrection life.

3.3.3.1 Martin Luther

Luther's view of disability can be understood through reflecting on his theology of the cross which affirms that the only source of knowledge of God may be found at the cross itself. Luther's direct discussion of disability is somewhat troubling in his paradoxical views of disability as either monstrous or saintly.⁶²⁷ He is known and rightly critiqued for a disturbing passage wherein he encouraged the suffocation of a twelve-year-old disabled boy with Prater-Wili syndrome who in Luther's view who "did nothing else but eat and excrete."⁶²⁸ The Nazis assimilated this view into their program of removal. However, a story also exists of Luther encouraging the mother of a young disabled girl to go home and feed her and love her and for the mother to "put her trust in God."⁶²⁹ At best, Luther may be seen as viewing individuals in their particularity becoming the medium for the message of God's salvation story, as well as possessing the ability to articulate that story as well.

Despite the deeply problematic ways that Luther speaks of disability at points in his work, his overall anthropology has constructive potential for contemporary reflection on disability. Luther's anthropology is weak in the sense that he sees humanity being transformed by God over time in the course of their lifespan. Luther sees true human

⁶²⁷ Stefan Heuser, "The Human Condition as Seen from the Cross: Luther and Disability," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. by Brian Brock and John Swinton, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 185.

⁶²⁸ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. by J. Pelikan & H.T. Lehmann, various translators. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1955-1986): 54:396-397.

⁶²⁹ Heuser, "The Human Condition," 185. Heuser draws on the 2003 movie *Luther* for this vignette.

being both at the cradle and at the cross; and so humanity's call is always to the weak, vulnerable and one might surmise, disabled.⁶³⁰ In so doing, Hans Reinders suggests Luther would dismiss any "ethics of choice" toward disability; and instead, understand the working of a providential God who chooses for us, not against us. Reinders also stresses that for Luther God's choice matters far more than anything we might choose ourselves.⁶³¹ Given the large corpus of Luther's writings, his view of disability – as disparate as his references to it may seem at times – must always be interested through his *theologia crucis* which stands in contrast to a *theologia gloriae*.⁶³² In both the light and the shadow of the cross, God stands with the humble and the weak revealing an alternate glory to the ways of the world. From this *theologia crucis*, all human beings are to embody *amor crucis*, that is, the deep love of Christ offering compassion and humble service to those in need.⁶³³

3.3.3.2 John Calvin

In our review of key scholars and their relationship to themes raised by disability (theological anthropology, morality, sin and salvation, doctrines of creation and resurrection)⁶³⁴ it is fascinating especially to understand disability through the

⁶³⁰ Heuser, "The Human Condition," 197.

⁶³¹ Hans Reinders, "Life's Goodness: On Disability, Genetics and 'Choice,'" in *Theology, Disability, and the New Genetics: Why Science Needs the Church* ed. by John Swinton and Brian Brock (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2007): 164.

⁶³² Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 203.

⁶³³ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 204.

⁶³⁴ Meilaender offers helpful insight regarding the particular interest in resurrection in the field of theology and disability. He writes, the interest in the resurrection is "to relate the body's history to their concept of the person's optimal development." See: Meilaender, "*Terra es animata: On Having a Life*," 390. He quotes a novelist Robertson Davies through the character Ozy Froats who says, "Health isn't making everybody into a Greek ideal; it's living out the destiny of the body." See: Robertson Davies, *The Rebel Angels* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 1983): 249.

embodiment of those who suffered in their bodily life. For example, John Calvin knew suffering. His wife died only nine years into their marriage.⁶³⁵ All of his children died in childbirth.⁶³⁶ In his own body he wrestled with “migraines, hemorrhoids, consumption, gout, kidney stones and tuberculosis.”⁶³⁷ One must wonder, before entering his ethical, theological, and exegetical reflections, what a person who believed strongly in doctrines of depravity and predestination would make of disability considering his own experience. One letter Calvin wrote to a friend, Madam de Coligny, reveals an initial insight: “Illnesses serve us as medicine, to purify us from the desires of this world and to cut away what is superfluous in us. They are messengers of death and they can teach us to free our feet so that we can depart from this life, whenever it pleases God.”⁶³⁸

Given the language of death and the doctrine of predestination, it is surprising to see glimpses of other themes in his work. Deborah Creamer argues there are themes of inclusion, equality, interdependence and the relevance of embodiment in this world throughout his thought. She organizes his disparate corpus into four themes: an analysis of ways he exegetes specific texts on disability,⁶³⁹ a look at church structure and organization with an eye to his radical inclusion of those on the margins (see for example

⁶³⁵ Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000).

⁶³⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993).

⁶³⁷ Deborah Creamer, “John Calvin and Disability,” in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 218. Despite her thorough account of Calvin in this edited compilation, Creamer does not draw on Calvin nor include him in the selected bibliography in her work *Disability and Christian Theology*

⁶³⁸ Machiel Van den Berg, *Friends of Calvin*, trans. by Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009): 142.

⁶³⁹ Deborah Creamer, “John Calvin,” 218. For example, consider Calvin’s interpretation of Genesis 32:25-32. The limp Jacob receives from God, this new impairing disability, is a reminder of God’s strength, human weakness, and our humility before God. See: Greg Baughman, “John Calvin and Disability: Unique Insights from Three Perspectives,”

http://www.academia.edu/11943952/John_Calvin_and_Disability_Unique_Insights_from_Three_Perspectives (Accessed online February 28, 2018): 8.

Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances),⁶⁴⁰ bodily themes (i.e. the body is a prison),⁶⁴¹ and his use of metaphors that use disabling language.⁶⁴² Some paths to follow in Calvin's thought would also include a study of inclusion in his discussion of the sacraments, his view that knowledge of self is knowledge of God, and his wrestling with areas of theodicy.⁶⁴³ Calvin can be called out for using language that is offensive and must be reckoned with: i.e. "brute beasts"⁶⁴⁴ as language for physical impairment and "mad-men" as problematic language for mental impairment. However, his overall thought should not be quickly dismissed and his theological complexity should be wrestled with to find deeper meaning and themes, particularly, I would argue for the purposes of this argument, regarding Calvin's doctrine of the incarnation.⁶⁴⁵ In Calvin's commentary on the Gospel of John, particularly verse 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh,"⁶⁴⁶ Calvin suggests that Calvin uses "made flesh" rather than "made man" to present the limits God would encounter entering into the new social context of human being. He writes,

In spite of the vast distance between the spiritual glory of the Word of God and the stink of our filthy flesh, the Son of God stooped so low as to take upon himself this same flesh which is subject to so many miseries. *Flesh* here means not, as so often with Paul, our nature corrupted by sin, but mortal men in general.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁰ Creamer, "John Calvin," 218.

⁶⁴¹ Creamer, "John Calvin," 219. See for example: Elsie Anne McKee's introduction to John Calvin, *Writings on Pastoral Piety* ed., trans. and intro. by Elsie Anne McKee (New York: Paulist Press, 2001).

⁶⁴² Creamer, "John Calvin," 219. See: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* ed. by John T. McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1954): I.14.1. Calvin speaks of the veil by which God hides and our inability to see God because of that blurriness, our impaired vision requires spectacles.

⁶⁴³ Deborah Creamer, "John Calvin," 220-222.

⁶⁴⁴ Used often in Calvin's commentaries – for example Hosea, Psalms, Isaiah, etc. FIX

⁶⁴⁵ Deborah Creamer, "John Calvin," 223.

⁶⁴⁶ John 1:14, NRSV.

⁶⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries* translated and edited by Joseph Haroutunian and Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958): 163.

By putting on “flesh” God subjects God’s very own being to a new social context, and in so doing, a new encounter with human limits. Calvin predates a social model of disability that will be extrapolated in the next chapter, and yet, we see his thought straining to push beyond ideas of impairment and medicine, toward the intersection of human creatures in social contexts. In so doing, whether intended or not, Calvin pushes back on Platonic and Aristotelian notions that disability is disorder divined by the gods which has repercussions for the *civitas*. Instead, it will be the city itself and the social conventions within it that disable flesh.

3.3.3.3 Soren Kierkegaard

Two key themes from Soren Kierkegaard, Danish theologian of the nineteenth century, play out in his work that can inform contemporary study of disability. First, all people live with a “sickness unto death” which is a desire not to be one’s self. All of us are disabled, in a way, by sin and by a general state of angst. Kierkegaard sees this as the biggest problem of human existence that is more troubling than any particular state of ability or disability. In response to that sickness, we take “a leap of faith.” All humanity, including those with various abilities, must make millions of little leaps of faith every day past their own insecurities, sins, abilities, disabilities. Kierkegaard helps us to critique the societal norms of normalcy and he in particular does not rely on a universal standard of normalcy. In contrast with the medical model of disability that will be developed after Kierkegaard’s lifetime, Kierkegaard’s view of the sickness unto death helps us to see that

all humanity is incomplete and suffering.⁶⁴⁸ In keeping with the social model of disability (again, Kierkegaard predates these models but foreshadows their insight), Kierkegaard saw how the social norms of his day created prejudices and stereotypes.⁶⁴⁹ One key aspect of his view of that sickness unto death is that the state that creates that sickness is not just the internal or the physical, but that sickness is caused by a relationship in the world by something other than one's self. Kierkegaard viewed sin as the ultimate disability; all else paled in comparison.⁶⁵⁰ Recognizing the existential angst and dread in which Kierkegaard is so often known, Bill Hughes argues from a Kierkegaardian perspective a reversal of thought from societal codes of normative bodies suggesting instead: "What is required is a critical social ontology that problematizes non-disablement and exposes the forms of invalidation that lie at the heart of disabling culture."⁶⁵¹ In making this suggestion, Hughes encourages a more generalized sociology of impairment as the norm, rather than the outlier. One wonders if Kierkegaard could have imagined such a world – where all, truly, are impaired – when he writes regarding despair:

Just as a physician might say that there very likely is not one single living human being who is completely healthy, so anyone who really knows mankind might say that there is not one single living human being who does not despair a little, who does not secretly harbor an unrest, an inner strife, a disharmony, an anxiety about an unknown something or a something he does not dare to try to know, an anxiety about some possibility in existence or an anxiety about himself, so that, just as the physician speaks of going around with an illness in the body, he walks around with a sickness, carries around a sickness of the spirit that signals its presence at rare intervals in and through an anxiety he cannot

⁶⁴⁸ Christopher Craig Brittain, "Kierkegaard and the Abilities and Disabilities of Subjectivity," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 291-292.

⁶⁴⁹ Brittain, "Kierkegaard," 292-293.

⁶⁵⁰ Brittain, "Kierkegaard," 289.

⁶⁵¹ Bill Hughes, "Being disabled: towards a critical social ontology for disability studies," *Disability and Society* 22:7 (2007): 673.

explain. In any case, no human being ever lived and no one lives outside of Christendom who has not despaired.⁶⁵²

While the disability scholar might cringe at the equation here between disability and despair, Kierkegaard's thought here is helpful in universalizing and normalizing disability as a real possibility for *all* people across a spectrum of human permeability and vulnerability over time. Much more examination of Kierkegaard's vast, diverse and witty corpus is needed within disability studies; his intellect is underused in this arena.

3.3.3.4 Karl Barth

Barth is a fascinating conversation partner in the field of disability and theology and will be important later in chapter five as we understand the context in which Dietrich Bonhoeffer developed his theological construct "the orders of creation." In addition, Barth will serve as a foil for understanding the importance of Bonhoeffer's views on finitude, natural law and revelation. For now, it is helpful to understand Barth's working conception of disability. Donald Wood, author of "This Ability: Barth on the Concrete Freedom of Human Life," recognizes that Barth is often seen as being removed from the experience of the human with his focus on Christology, scripture and revelation.⁶⁵³ In addition, Barth's focus on the universality of the gospel makes suspect any attempt to cordon off his thought for a particular sub-group. Wood recounts a story where Barth and a friend Heinrich Vogel discuss resurrection and the disabled.⁶⁵⁴ Vogel believes his

⁶⁵²Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, vol. XIX in Kierkegaard's Writings. Translated and edited by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980): 22.

⁶⁵³ Donald Wood, "This Ability: Barth on the Concrete Freedom of Human Life," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. by Brian Brock and John Swinton, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 391.

⁶⁵⁴ Wood, "This Ability," 392.

daughter will be freed from her impairment and will walk. Barth envisions her disability being the very thing of which heaven is made and holds in high honor. She will sit at the head of the banquet table and God will say to her, “I have loved: *you*.”⁶⁵⁵ Wood sees the term “disability” as functioning in Barth’s thought to invite a conversation between “the intersection of the individual and society.”⁶⁵⁶ And so we see in his thought a movement from disability being defined as a medical impairment toward a more complicated entanglement between the body and society. That insight informs Barth’s view of covenantal community. Because we are involved in a covenant community, we are called to a life of ethical responsibility toward *all* people. Barth explains,

Responsibility [*Verantwortung*: the actual responding] does not need to be advertised as an ethical programme, because 'responsibility' [*Verantwortlichkeit*] marks human life as an elemental, non-negotiable phenomenon. As creatures addressed by God, human beings cannot but exist 'in responsibility' [*Verantwortlichkeit*]. We live in responsibility, which means that our being and willing, what we do and what we do not do, is a continuous answer to the Word of God spoken to us as a command.⁶⁵⁷

Human beings live with God as the centerpoint and full partnership of God in that covenant with a responsibility to act and care for all others within that covenant community. Given the beauty and possibility of the covenant community now, Barth explores a very different approach to resurrection as he sees the resurrection not marking a new epoch fleeing human history. Instead, resurrection is the “reverse” side of this life.⁶⁵⁸ That reverse is now hidden from us but one day it will be revealed to us.

⁶⁵⁵ Eberhard Busch, *Glaubensheiterkeit. Karl Barth: Erfahrungen und Begegnungen*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986): 92-93.

⁶⁵⁶ Wood, “This Ability,” 393.

⁶⁵⁷ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2: I, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957): 641.

⁶⁵⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/4: 338.

Exploring this view of resurrection for disability theology would be helpful to further his views on eschatological transformation and what that entails for bodily life.

3.3. Themes and Tensions in the Historical Scholarship on Disability

As these varying models of disability are presented over time, some schematically and others by piecing together work of scholars, several themes and tensions are revealed. In Chapter Two, we explored the themes of morality, injury and disability within the psychological literature on moral injury. In addition, through the theological literature review we discovered themes of embodiment, social context and limits. All six of these themes are evidenced in the historical literature on disability; however, they are often revealed as tensions across varying viewpoints. In these historical accounts we see the struggle to define, to discern disability's relationship to the divine, to come to terms with one's own changing bodies, and differing accounts of disability depending on whether they are accounts of bodies or minds. While a social analysis is not fully developed in any of the scholarship, we begin to see the intersection between disabled bodies and the social systems around them. Even more so, when attention is less focused on the disabled body in this world, we see in the historical accounts a wrestling with disability in the resurrection questioning whether there will be a return to a youthful pattern or the preservation of 'scars' from this life. Here we will explore themes and tensions in the historical scholarship on disability before turning to contemporary scholarship and the way the legacy of these thinkers will be addressed in the future.

Consider for example the themes within the psychological literature of morality, injury and disability. A historical analysis explicates a tension between morality as

simplistic or *complex*. Martin Luther's account, not unlike the monstrosities in Augustinian thought, appears to present a *simplistic* conceptualization: those who are disabled are either monstrous or saintly.⁶⁵⁹ Perhaps Soren Kierkegaard offers a counterpoint to this simplicity as he wrestles with the existential nature of the sickness unto the death and the *complexity* that sickness plays out in our psyches, choices, moral agencies and societies. This tension is of particular import for moral injury wherein returning veterans are all too often categorized in dichotomous ways by a simplistic societal diagnosis of "saint" or "sinner" rather than sustained attention to the complexity of the moral situations from which they emerged.

With the theme of disability, as provoked by the psychological literature, insight is gained by looking at the scholarship on disability and resurrection life. We see in the historical conversation regarding disability there is the tension between disability as a category that should be *preserved* even in the realm of resurrected life versus a disorder that should be *rejected*. Even the scholars discussed here who preserve disability in this life still maintain a view that disability will be rejected in the afterlife differing from the Greco-Roman legacy, illumined by the story of Oedipus and Virgil's *The Aeneid*, that preserve disability the category of disability for eternity.

Regarding injury as a theme within the psychological literature, the historical documentation of disability among theologians wrestles with exactly what kind of "injury" disability is. There is a tension between the scholars of the injury as one that is *inflicted* unduly by the gods versus an injury that provides an opportunity for *vicarious*

⁶⁵⁹ Stefan Heuser, "The Human Condition as Seen from the Cross: Luther and Disability," 185.

suffering with God. Hildegard of Bingen reveals the perception of affliction when she writes:

If this torturing pain which I was suffering in my body had not come from God, I would not have been able to live any longer. Although through all this I was being punished, I still spoke, sang and wrote concerning the divine vision what the Holy Spirit wished to announce through me.⁶⁶⁰

And we see in Tertullian's account of Job the same kind of wrestling with affliction from God that demands perseverance and becomes a test of obedience and faith. Julian of Norwich offers a counter perspective with the view of an injury as a place for *vicarious* suffering. The invitation to participate in the suffering of others became the prompt for her prayer as she invited "every kind of pain."⁶⁶¹ Julian's vicarious suffering offers an important prompt for contemporary society that too easily compartmentalizes the experience of veterans. Her theological reflection on suffering and solidarity are important considerations for a society that does not suffer vicariously with the experience of veterans on their terms. These three themes: morality, disability and injury; and the tensions they reveal: simplistic morality/complex reality, preservation of disability in the resurrection/rejection of disability in the resurrection, and vicarious suffering with God/inflicted suffering by God will be helpful to remember as we continue to deepen the conversation between disability and moral injury.

The religious literature on moral injury explicated themes related to the need for deeper conversation on the intricacies of embodiment and medicalization, social contexts and the social construction of moral injury, and the implications of changing moral limits across varied contexts. The historical review of disability reflections by philosophers and

⁶⁶⁰ Monk Godefridus et al., *The Life of the Holy Hildegard* (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1995): 62-63.

⁶⁶¹ Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 126.

theologians ranging from Plato, to Julian of Norwich to Karl Barth, reveals tensions related to these themes as well. With the question of embodiment, there is the tension between *perfection* and *transformation*. Aristotle and Augustine, for example, highlight themes of perfection in their hopes for disabled bodies to not disorder society and for resurrected bodies to return to their youthful perfection. On the other hand, Aquinas and Gregory of Nyssa speak to the possibility of transformation that exists when human beings embrace the reality that their bodies will change and decay over time and invite into that eschatological journey the possibility of divine knowledge and participation.

The historical literature on disability speaks with greater insight than might be suspected to the complexities of disability and its relationship to society. The tension here exists between disability as a societal *impediment* and disability as a societal *intersection*. Plato, for example, viewed disability as an impediment to the good ordering of society and Aristotle agreed, suggesting, perhaps the disabled could factor into a society's downfall if the disabled were allowed to live. Karl Barth offers an alternative view, as perceived through the scholarship of Donald Wood, that disability is a revelation of the intersection between an individual and the society in which they live. That intersection invites reflection, responsibility and a renewed commitment to covenantal community.

Finally, the third emphasis in the religious literature on moral injury explores the lack of interest in the concept of "limits." Without the recognition of limits in relation to human experience, the category of moral injury fails to explain the complexity of morality and its potential disabling within and across various social contexts. The implications of this issue are subtle, but still relevant and present within the review of the

historical literature on disability. One tension here lies between limits as *obstacles* and limits as *opportunities*. Consider, for example, Martin Luther's view of the young man with Prater-Wili syndrome. Luther's simplistic conceptualization of him as someone who "did nothing else but eat and excrete" fails to recognize the possibilities inherent within this young man in certain contexts; and so, Luther perceives his disability solely as an obstacle. John Calvin, offers an alternate position with some theological complexity, as he sees the opportunity involved when certain limits are engaged with possibility. The incarnation takes on limits within a certain context as God takes on flesh and in so doing, takes upon God's own being the possibility of decay and disability. These three themes: embodiment, social constructs and limits within contexts reveal certain tensions in the historical review of disability: perfection/transformation; impediment/intersection; and obstacle/opportunity.

Across these themes and tensions, we begin to see the conceptualization of disability as revelatory.⁶⁶² The crux of the revelation may differ, but the deliver of the message is still a transcendent God. The missive varies: a Judeo-Christian⁶⁶³ divine judgment regarding sin,⁶⁶⁴ a Platonic response to a disordered world, a Pauline reminder of our weakness and God's strength, a Cappadocian reversal, or an opportunity to suffer along with Christ as Julian of Norwich reminds us. Even if these views appear dated; it is important to note two things: first, echoes of these views can resonate today and second, new messages voiced are important to note. Across the scholarship, one message

⁶⁶² Elaine Ledgerwood, "Saints Not Sinners: An Investigation into the "Positive" Constructions of Disability by the Historical Church," *Colloquium* 42:1 (2010): 95.

⁶⁶³ See for example: Mary Elise Lowe, "'Rabbi, Who Sinned?' Disability Theologies and Sin" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 51:3 (Fall 2012): 185-194.

⁶⁶⁴ Carol Thomas, *Female Forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999): 57.

remains clear: disability reveals "everyone's vulnerability to weakness, pain and death"⁶⁶⁵ and societal implications for that vulnerability. But perhaps, of most importance, is the earliest explanation for that revelation given to disability in ancient times by the Greeks. Disability was understood as disorder by the gods.⁶⁶⁶ Everyone in that ancient society was subject to the potential for that disordering and the havoc it would create for bodies and for society. Is it possible, that moral injury proves the reverse to be true? Whether ancient Achilles or modern day Billy Lynn,⁶⁶⁷ is the morally injured veteran deemed to be the former "god" who has now become fundamentally and irreversibly disordered?⁶⁶⁸ Perhaps this is the reason for Boudreau's knee-jerk reaction in too easily categorizing moral injury as a disability. As disability scholarship progresses across the centuries into more robust and sustained accounts, the disordering of disability begins to shift from the work of the gods to the structures of civilizations.

3.4 Contemporary Scholarship on Disability

Against the background of these historical theologians, several of whom let "disability be a sign of moral imperfection or divine retribution for sin,"⁶⁶⁹ contemporary scholars in disability strive toward liberative models, even though they too upon occasion

⁶⁶⁵ Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 1996): 60.

⁶⁶⁶ Caspary, "The Patristic Era," 24.

⁶⁶⁷ Achilles is the soldier at the center of Homer's *Iliad*. Billy Lynn is the title character of Ben Fountain's novel turned screenplay *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*.

⁶⁶⁸ Jonathan Shay would agree with the premise for this assessment. He outlines the 'god-like' character of the berserk state in *Achilles in Vietnam* (84 – 86). He writes: "Gods are immortal; man is mortal. Gods know no limit on their power (except other gods); man is often powerless and trapped. Gods are invulnerable; man is fragile, easily mutilated and killed. The berserker feels godlike in his power and acknowledges no limit to his power and invulnerability."

⁶⁶⁹ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 71.

instrumentalize, demonize and/or valorize disability and its potential for suffering.⁶⁷⁰ These scholars are important for “conserving”⁶⁷¹ the category of disability and negotiating questions of embodiment, systemic societal structures and limits. A careful overview of scholars Nancy Eiesland, Sharon V. Betcher, Jennie Wiess Block, Amos Yong, Thomas Reynolds, Molly Haslam, Hans Reinders, Amy Laura Hall, Stanley Hauerwas, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson will certainly orient us to the field, even if it is not entirely comprehensive. After reviewing this scholarship here in Chapter Three, we will examine in Chapter Four two key models of disability that emerge, and at times blend, within these contemporary sources: a medical model of disability and, a social (also known as the minority) model of disability. Review of the strengths and weaknesses of each model will then pave the way for an alternative model, the limit model, presented by Deborah Creamer. In this discussion of disability scholarship and key models for disability, it will be important to keep in mind the ongoing conversation with moral injury and the potential scholarship on disability has for resourcing and response.

To order this review, to continue to deepen the overall argument of this study, and, to respect the representative voices of Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon; the scholarship in this contemporary review will be organized into three categories: scholarship that focuses on disability and the need for deeper engagement with liberation theology, scholarship that wrestles with disability through an analysis of society, and

⁶⁷⁰ Again, it is important to remember the caution and challenge of Brian Brock who recommends gracious readings with an eye toward constructive criticism in order to move scholarship, and humanity, forward along a continuum of growth and learning. See: Brock, “Introduction: Disability and the Quest for the Human,” 11.

⁶⁷¹ Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 339.

scholarship that highlights particular theological doctrines and their importance for disability studies. Here we remember the second of our three options for drawing disability into discussion with moral injury: the conceptual frameworks (not the precise definition) of disability have something valuable to offer the field of moral injury.

To be clear, the ten scholars to be reviewed in the contemporary scholarship on disability offer a small sample of the vast, excellent work achieved in this area since Eiesland's publication of *The Disabled God* in 1994 and Burton Cooper's *Theology Today* article "The Disabled God" in 1992. The past twenty-five years of scholarship is rich with anthropological insight, theological complexity, and sociological challenge. The conceptions presented here serve as a gleaning and point toward larger conversations across the scholarship.

3.4.1 The Framework of Liberation and Disability: Eiesland, Block, Betcher

The first framework through which to examine disability scholarship in the contemporary era is through the nexus of liberation. Liberation theology seeks to free those entangled in just structures of economic, social, corporate life thereby releasing those entangled within them from those "architectural and attitudinal"⁶⁷² barriers that function in meta, systemic and hyper-complex ways affecting individual human life. Nancy Eiesland is to be credited with beginning this conversation in the scholarship of disability and her legacy of liberation continues to this day.

3.4.1.1 Eiesland

⁶⁷² Joeckel, "A Christian Approach to Disability Studies," 341.

While Nancy Eiesland is credited with the powerful phrase “The Disabled God,” she is indebted to two theologians that are worthy of note to set the stage for her liberation framework. First, Burton Cooper published an essay “The Disabled God” in *Theology Today* in 1992 prior to her publication of the eponymous book. The strength of Cooper’s essay is his willingness to use disability as a lens through which to ask some of the hardest theological questions: how do we understand God’s perfection? What sense do we make of suffering? And, what does hope mean for disabled and nondisabled in this life and the next?⁶⁷³ Cooper addresses the first question on perfection by suggesting there are only two possibilities; either God is complete in eternity and perfect therein or God’s perfection is made clear in Christ and his suffering.⁶⁷⁴ Cooper stands with Jürgen Moltmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer who see God’s identity to be clarified in the cross of Christ and the participation with the suffering of the world. With this, one might place the metaphor of “disabled” upon God, but he notes that caution and care should be used with this symbol.⁶⁷⁵

Regarding the question of suffering, one of the first theological issues that must be untangled is whether or not suffering is a result of sin. Too often theodicy gets entangled with these three basic elements: God is behind all events, God can overcome all powers within these events, meaning can be found within suffering from the power of God. In response to this, Cooper offers a fascinating counterpoint. What if God were not the power beneath and behind all things? Instead, what if God were a “lure for

⁶⁷³ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” *Theology Today* 49:2 (July 1992), 173-174.

⁶⁷⁴ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 175.

⁶⁷⁵ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 177.

things”?⁶⁷⁶ That is, what if God called free human beings into the divine relationship through ever-growing love and greater and greater creativity? Because of God’s ever-present care and concern in that luring one dimension we can understand of God’s ‘disability’ is through the concreteness⁶⁷⁷ of God’s love for the disabled person and the suffering and empathy God feels in that moment of care. Cooper points to the Biblical story of Matthew 25:31-46 and the great judgment to help us see God’s disabling in each of the moments of poverty, hunger, estrangement, and might we add disability.⁶⁷⁸ God’s ability comes not in a power that is able to do all, end all, be all. But instead, “ables”⁶⁷⁹ us to overcome suffering with meaning, power, purpose, creativity and compassion for ourselves and for each other. Cooper’s response to the question of resurrection hope and eternal life is that the full personality of the person enters into communion with God and that personality has been shaped by a lifetime of living with a disability.⁶⁸⁰

A second theologian important to Eiesland is Jürgen Moltmann who envisioned a “crucified God”⁶⁸¹ that became central to Cooper and Eiesland’s vision of God who understands pain, suffering, difference and disabling conditions. Moltmann contends that when all of life is viewed as a gift, and vulnerability is accepted as a basic state of our humanity made clear through the image of the crucified God, then clear lines of ability

⁶⁷⁶ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 178.

⁶⁷⁷ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 179.

⁶⁷⁸ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 179.

⁶⁷⁹ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 180.

⁶⁸⁰ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 182.

⁶⁸¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

and disability recede.⁶⁸² With an eye to liberation, Moltmann believes God is on the side of the poor, but also, God will side as well with those who oppress the marginalized. It is the work of the church to call that reconciliation into being as an act of hope for the kingdom of God in this world.⁶⁸³

Nancy Eiesland offered the 1994 publication *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* that became a groundbreaking piece in the field of disability and theology. In that work, she does not draw directly on the eponymous essay of Burton Cooper, though, it is listed in her bibliography. She does make explicit reference to Moltmann's eschatological image of a disabled Jesus that she contends calls the church to "a communion of justice."⁶⁸⁴ As the church struggles for justice, the body of Christ becomes the proleptic image of the eschatological Christ. She draws on Moltmann who argued:

The one who is to come is then already present in an anticipatory sense in history in the Spirit and the word, and in the miserable and the helpless. His future ends the world's history of suffering and completes the fragments and anticipations of his kingdom which are called the church.⁶⁸⁵

For Moltmann, Eiesland and Cooper the disablement of God in Christ becomes a prototype through which to reexamine all of the churches doctrines, practices, liturgies, missions, scriptures, symbols and metaphors.⁶⁸⁶ The broken body is not just sacramental; it is pastoral, it is a call to justice, it is eschatological. Here, the disability scholarship

⁶⁸² Jürgen Moltmann, "Liberate Yourselves by Accepting One Another," in *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*, ed. Nancy L. Eiesland and Don E. Saliers (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 110.

⁶⁸³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Gospel of Liberation* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1973), 88.

⁶⁸⁴ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 104.

⁶⁸⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 132. See: Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 104.

⁶⁸⁶ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 104.

challenges current work in moral injury to consider the same. How are the morally disrupted bodies, minds and spirits of returning veterans challenging the church to reinterpret issues of justice, liturgy, and even eschatology? Eiesland offers first steps forward, informed by her intellectual predecessors Moltmann and Cooper.

Prior to Eiesland's work, scholarship in the field was often sporadic (as in the case of the historical Christian scholarship on disability explored in the previous section), exegetical,⁶⁸⁷ or pastoral.⁶⁸⁸ During her career, scholars such as Dawn Devries, Andrew Purves and Stanley Hauerwas were just beginning to write more robust essays and books on theological doctrine and their implications for disability.⁶⁸⁹ Eiesland stands out in the field for her singular, extensive book on disability and theology informed by her personal experience. She recognized two trends persistent in the conversation between disability and theology in the historical tradition: first, the tendency to correlate the category of tragedy to disability and second, the tendency to romanticize, and even heroize, those with disabilities and their rise above suffering.⁶⁹⁰ Eiesland cautions against both approaches in her seminal work *The Disabled God*. Following in the line of Jürgen Moltmann's "crucified God" and Burton Cooper's *Theology Today* article "The Disabled

⁶⁸⁷ For example, see: A.C. Kruer, "Paul's Handicap," *Review & Expositor*, 37:2 (April 1940): 173-180. And also: Harry H. Pritchett, "The Story of Philip," *Saint Luke's Journal of Theology*, 19:3 (June 1976): 209-212.

⁶⁸⁸ For example, see: James Jackson Putnam, "The service to nervous invalids of the physician and of the minister," *Harvard Theological Review*, 2:2 (April 1909): 235-250. And: Harold Loukes, "Needs and potentialities of the less able pupil," *Modern Churchman* 9:1 (October 1965): 78-87. And also: Robert Perske, "Pastoral Care and Counseling of Families of the Mentally Retarded," *Pastoral Psychology* 19:188 (November, 1968): 21-28.

⁶⁸⁹ See: Dawn Devries, "Creation, handicappism, and the community of differing abilities," *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, ed. by Rebecca Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994): 124-140. And: Andrew Purves, "Toward a pastoral theology of generosity: God's grace and the inclusive church," *And show steadfast love: a theological look at grace, hospitality, disabilities, and the church*, ed. by Lewis H. Merrick (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (USA), 1993): 83-92. And: Stanley Hauerwas, "The gesture of a truthful story," *Theology Today* 42:2 (July 1985): 181-189.

⁶⁹⁰ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 12.

God,”⁶⁹¹ Eiesland speaks from her experience and draws on an emancipatory methodology of liberation to carry out her project. After laying out a theological method drawing on the work of Rebecca Chopp’s “critical praxis correlation,”⁶⁹² she explains the social construction of disability and suggests a liberatory theology of disability that will ultimately pry open the constraints of the social construction. Eiesland relies on the embodied stories of Diane DeVries⁶⁹³ and Nancy Mairs⁶⁹⁴ to compare and contrast various “bodies of knowledge.” These stories matter in Eiesland’s overall project because they help empower the embodied voices of those living within various circumstances. Both DeVries and Mairs disdain the tragic approach to disability, while still maintaining the ability to grieve. Both see in their experiences the possibility of creative knowledge and integral relationships as joys within their embodied experience. Chapters three and four look at the structure of society and the structure of scriptures and churches to unearth disabling tropes and boundaries and search for ways forward. Eiesland laments how little the church has followed and responded to the Americans with

⁶⁹¹ While Eiesland notes Burton Cooper’s 1992 essay in her selected bibliography, she does not engage his work in the text itself. Regarding Moltmann, Eiesland notes he calls the church to “a communion of justice” through the disabled God of Jesus Christ. For Eiesland, the very existence of the church itself is dependent not solely by the resurrection event, the body of Christ, nor the sacramental act of communion, but only by “the disabled God (who) must live out liberating action in the world” (104). She draws on this notion from Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977): 132.

⁶⁹² Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1986): 139-44. Chopp provides an alternative to David Tracy’s “critical correlation method” by arguing that draws on theory to transform social praxis by approaching Scripture in less idoloc ways and highlighting narrative, experience and embodied voices to drive the praxis. And: Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 21-22.

⁶⁹³ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 33. To be clear, this Diane DeVries is different than the earlier scholar noted named Dawn DeVries. For more on the story of Diane DeVries, written after *The Disabled God* by an author who followed her story for over twenty years, see: G. Frank, *Venus on Wheels: Two Decades of Dialogue on Disability, Biography and Being Female in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000).

⁶⁹⁴ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 40. To hear Nancy Mairs tell a portion of her own story, see: Nancy Mairs, “Hers,” *New York Times* (July 9, 1987). <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/09/garden/hers.html> (Accessed: February 7, 2018.)

Disabilities Act of 1990.⁶⁹⁵ Within the structure of the church, Eiesland laments the 1980 passing of the ALC's statement "The Church and Persons with Handicaps: Unmasking a Hidden Curriculum of the Christian Community"⁶⁹⁶ and then five years later barring as a body people with significant physical or mental handicaps from ordination.

When Eiesland pictures a disabled God, this God does not fall into those tropes of either tragic figure (consider from the historical review Augustine and Martin Luther) or saint (consider Tertullian and Julian of Norwich). Instead, this God is "not an omnipotent, self-sufficient God, but neither a pitiable, suffering servant....I beheld God as a survivor, unpitiful and forthright."⁶⁹⁷ Such an image of a disabled God has profound theological implications as it de-centers the conversation and begins a transformative process having initiated the working metaphor from "concrete existence."⁶⁹⁸ What would it look like, one must wonder, if the *imago dei* itself were not as imagining 'perfect' Godhead, but a broken body? Eiesland's vision of a disabled God normalizes nonconventional bodies and calls the church to imagine new forms of justice. Eiesland concludes with reflections on sacramental bodies and a concluding liturgy for sacramental practice.⁶⁹⁹ The Eucharist is the ultimate broken body and "affirms our existence as painstakingly, honestly and lovingly embodied beings." The Eucharist calls all within the church to be very attentive to our embodiment and the embodiment of God in Christ.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁵ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 67.

⁶⁹⁶ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 75.

⁶⁹⁷ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 89.

⁶⁹⁸ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 69.

⁶⁹⁹ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 118-119.

⁷⁰⁰ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 116.

3.4.1.2 Jennie Weiss Block

Catholic theologian Jennie Weiss Block envisions a “theology of access” that draws on a model of liberation and offers critique to the church to be hospitable in architecture and attitudes, liturgy and hymns, nearly a decade after Eiesland’s concerns were raised from a liberation standpoint as well. Block’s work on theologies of liberation and the view of “the accessible God”⁷⁰¹ she presents in her 2002 work *Copious Hosting: A Theology of Access for People with Disabilities* are noted by Deborah Creamer⁷⁰² as instructive along with Eiesland’s model of “the disabled God”⁷⁰³ and Kathy Black’s model of “the interdependent God.”⁷⁰⁴

Block’s methodology is twofold: first, she draws on the revisionist/correlational model of David Tracy.⁷⁰⁵ Second, she works with a theology of liberation.⁷⁰⁶ Both of these help her to accomplish three tasks: to explain the disability movement to Christian theologians, to examine Christian ‘texts’ (scripture, liturgy and Sacraments) from a disability perspective and to present a theology of access that ultimately leads to

⁷⁰¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 81-82. Creamer highlights Block’s notion that a God of access demands liberatory action as a Christian mandate for justice and hospitality.

⁷⁰² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 75-91. Creamer argues that disability is constructive to theology. First, it can challenge traditional doctrines and their implications in theology. Second, disability offers an experience of oppression that calls for liberation. These lead to the third step in her argument, that theology needs disability in order to have real interaction with human limits in the face of the divine (91).

⁷⁰³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 85-87. Creamer sees Eiesland’s identification of the disabled God as a moment of culmination as the God of access and the God of interdependence becomes deeply visceral and embodied, making real the experience of disability with divine embodiment.

⁷⁰⁴ Kathy Black, *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disability* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996): 37-38. See also: Creamer, *Disability and the Christian Tradition*, 83-84. Black’s work is vital and informative in the study of disability. For the purposes of this dissertation, Eiesland and Block provide a liberatory viewpoint in addition to the work of Sharon V. Betcher. Black is omitted only for the sake of conciseness.

⁷⁰⁵ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1975): 43-48.

⁷⁰⁶Block, *Copious Hosting*, 19-21.

vulnerability and friendship. The title of her book is a phrase from Edward Schillebeeckx who described Jesus as a “copious gift of God.”⁷⁰⁷ Block believes the church can model this kind of copious hosting where there is an abundant supply of all that is needed for everyone at the table of Christ. Her theology of access provides an enlarged Christian anthropology, a deepened theology of embodiment, and a new form of exegesis of the Scripture texts that speak to disability, a greater hospitality within liturgy and sacrament, a deepened spirituality and ultimately a liberatory response to the oppression of those who are disabled. She uses the language of Gustavo Gutierrez who describes the “irruption of the poor”⁷⁰⁸ as those erased from history, now becoming a part of the story. This too is the same for those with disabilities as this liberatory movement increases. She critiques an “ableist” bias in scriptures as well as the “healing cult” within the Christian tradition aiming to “fix” through faith healing.⁷⁰⁹ In fact, she makes clear to note the ‘disabling’ of Jesus that occurred before his death.⁷¹⁰ Access, for Block, is a mystical and moral necessity that can be heightened through deepened pneumatology and an ecclesiology that is self-critical and willing to change.⁷¹¹

A theology of access reminds all that God is not present to us on our own terms but instead in ways that invite our deepest hospitality and vulnerability.⁷¹² Jesus as copious host has abundant supply, plenty of resources of mercy, grace, inclusion, love and acceptance for *all* people. Block’s twofold method of correlation and liberation

⁷⁰⁷ Block, “Copious Hosting,” 131. See: Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1979), 213.

⁷⁰⁸ Block, “Copious Hosting” 95. See: Gustavo Gutierrez, “Liberation Theology,” in *The New Dictionary of Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 548-553.

⁷⁰⁹ Block, “Copious Hosting,” 101.

⁷¹⁰ Block, “Copious Hosting,” 109.

⁷¹¹ Block, “Copious Hosting,” 138-141.

⁷¹² Block, “Copious Hosting,” 158.

leverages new readings of traditional texts to find a deepened theology of access and a broadened sense of copious inclusion.

3.4.1.3 Sharon V. Betcher

Theologian and disabled scholar Sharon V. Betcher serves as a counterpoint to Eiesland and Block as she takes an alternative approach to a framework of disability and liberation. She disagrees with Eiesland that a methodology of liberation is helpful for disability arguing that the general public does not conceive disability in terms of oppression and exclusion, but instead comprehends disability as impairment first and foremost.⁷¹³ For Betcher, ideas of normalcy and degeneracy, told within the miracle stories of Scripture and preached through Christian missions, have become oppressors rather than liberators throughout the history of colonization as they have been operationalized.⁷¹⁴ “Crip bodies,” Betcher contends, become objects of capitalist economics, unjust systems and colonizing missions through the Christian tradition.⁷¹⁵ As her work in this area develops, bodies become for Betcher “the materializations of social structures”⁷¹⁶ while our flesh is “an ever-changing materialization of spirit in finitude.”⁷¹⁷ Here, Betcher takes a slightly more positive view of flesh than does John Calvin, however, her sentiments echo his. “Flesh” for John Calvin, implied that God would

⁷¹³ Sharon V. Betcher, “Feminist and Disability Theologies on the Edge of Post-Humanist Discourse” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 26:2 (Fall, 2010): 123. This essay is a response by Sharon V. Betcher in a roundtable honoring the work of Nancy Eiesland.

⁷¹⁴ Sharon V. Betcher, “Saving the Wretched of the Earth,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 26:3 (Summer, 2006). <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/721/898> (Accessed: February 7, 2018.) See also: Capretto, “On Not Operationalizing Disability,” 909.

⁷¹⁵ Betcher, “Saving the Wretched of the Earth.”

⁷¹⁶ Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh,” 123.

⁷¹⁷ Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh,” 123.

encounter limits within the social world of human beings.⁷¹⁸ While our bodies might become infused with unwelcome social judgments and barriers, our flesh invites transcendent transformation for life in this world. This transformation of the flesh is “ever-changing” and becomes a “materialization” of the effervescent spirit moving and changing and evolving within the limits of finitude.

Betcher develops this distinction between flesh and body in her book *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement* where she continues to untangle the nuances between flesh and body. Bodies, Betcher argues, are the “objectified form of our social engagements.”⁷¹⁹ In suggesting this conception of bodies, Betcher invites consideration of the fossilization of social entanglements within our bodies: social structures, environmental toxins,⁷²⁰ societal stereotypes, the gaze of the other, particular laws all become embedded within our bodies. Her argument complicates any easy filtering of the body into normalcy or not. Even more so, her conceptualization of the flesh beyond bodies invites further complications in thinking. Flesh is the entanglement of our bodies,

⁷¹⁸ John Calvin, *Calvin Commentaries* Translated and edited by Joseph Haroutunian and Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958): 163.

⁷¹⁹ Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh,” 123.

⁷²⁰ Betcher’s views are seen as she applies these concepts in her essay, “Disability and the Garden State.” Betcher adds ecology to the conversation between theology and disability. Herself an “eco-theologian” she names the anthropocene as a “disabling environment,” critiques certain concepts of disability, examines the concept of “social flesh” and claims herself as a self-called “crip” an “earth-assemblage” of sorts. She builds first on the misnomer that human disability is an “individualized” problem rather than a communal one. Her naming of the anthropocene as a disabling era relies on the work of Steingraber, Estabrook, Robbins and Dracos all of whom provide statistics and stories that link disability to ecology. All of these create new acts of injustice as this “slow violence” relocates dangerous industries across the globe causing ecological damage and communal injustice. Betcher invites us to consider this “slow violence” as it passes through the generations and “folds of flesh, releasing its unnecessary mutations.” This linking of ecology, disability and theology helps theologians first and foremost to reconsider “flesh” as social, rather than individual. Social disablement, by ecological terror, then falls into the structure of the dominant culture’s medical and social views of disability. See: Sharon V. Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State” *Religious Studies News*.

http://rsnonline.org/index47ae.html?option=com_content&view=article&id=1462:of-disability-and-the-garden-state&catid=25:spotlight-on-theo-educ&Itemid=1620. (Accessed October 10, 2014).

shaped by their encounters with the world, with something of the Spirit. Betcher's argument in her book points to the way that even the wonderful and holy notion of the Holy Spirit can become politicized as the Spirit drives for an idealized "wholeness" that is heralded within political structures and laws. Betcher accomplishes three tasks: flesh complicates the idea of normalcy, flesh becomes a conversation point across disciplines, and flesh invites a deeper conversation in the area of pain that is too often compartmentalized to bodies alone and does not recognize the role of the spirit.⁷²¹

Betcher works to normalize some disability by drawing on the words of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson who says disability is "the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world."⁷²² Betcher sees this social flesh materialize in her own body, as cripp, as an "earth assemblage." Through this lens, Betcher herself becomes "social flesh." While Betcher's essay may appear irrelevant at first glance to questions of disability and moral injury, her reflections are surprisingly prescient as she describes an interaction between body, flesh, society and spirit that can either enable, or disable. The colonizing, oppressing and unjust effects of social flesh are worthy of consideration as we draw moral injury into conversation with disability. Social flesh, for Betcher, is in need of the liberatory work of an unpoliticized Holy Spirit.⁷²³ And, disability study is in need of complex notions of the finitude and vulnerability of the flesh in the face of systems that

⁷²¹ Betcher, "Becoming Flesh of My Flesh," 123.

⁷²² Betcher, "Of Disability and the Garden State." See: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "The Case for Conserving Disability," *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 9:3 (September 2012), 342.

⁷²³ Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, 48.

work against bodies to oppress. She makes clear, “Disability is just something that happens to flesh, that occasions our persistent negotiation with limits and finitude.”⁷²⁴

Eiesland, Block and Betcher pave the way through their frameworks of liberation from unjust social structures toward considerations of disability that address directly questions of social analysis, including medical critique and ethical response.

3.4.2 The Framework of Social Analysis and Critique: Reinders, Hall and Hauerwas

As scholarship in the field of disability continues to progress, the issues facing the field are as futuristic as the potential for transhumanism and yet as ancient as those questions facing Plato, Aristotle and Tertullian about the ethics of abortion amid the possibility of disability. Scholars such as Hans Reinders, Amy Laura Hall and Stanley Hauerwas contemplate issues of ethical norms, societal programs, and prenatal testing. Their work conveys mastery of the discipline with the vulnerability of the human heart; all three scholars offering wisdom, discernment and guidance to individuals and institutions facing the complexity of human life in contemporary society.

3.4.2.1 Hans S. Reinders

Ethicist Hans S. Reinders invites in his analytical work *The Future of the Disabled in a Liberal Society: An Ethical Analysis* a lingering reflection on the subtle, and often blatant, discrimination at hand in prenatal testing, the diagnosis of disability and state support for those who are disabled.⁷²⁵ His work provides a different angle then

⁷²⁴ Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh,” 109.

⁷²⁵ Hans S. Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society: An Ethical Analysis* (Notre Dame, IL: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

many examined here so far, but is worthy of note for the questions he raises regarding care for the disabled, particularly care for the disabled when it is known prior to birth that a child will come into this world with a disability. Reinders will prove to be a fascinating conversation partner as we consider moral injury as a disability; and then, wrestle with the consequences of societal responsibility. And, to make the point perfectly clear, provide accountability for societal consequences when the military-industrial-complex knows in advance the disabling of body, mind and spirit that can occur through the weapons and mechanisms of war.

Reinders lives in the Netherlands where euthanasia is supported by the state as a viable option for those in crisis.⁷²⁶ With this ‘liberal’ background to his study, we become clear from his argument how detrimental this policy can be to those with disabilities of all kinds. His concern with prenatal testing is how that moment can have a trajectory over the lifespan of all people who might then receive a negative devaluation of their own lives with the choices made after the testing.⁷²⁷ Reinders critiques the utilitarian ends of such policies and their wider social implications. As selective abortion post pre-natal testing becomes more widespread, then the consequences of parental choice for those who choose otherwise become more complicated in a liberal society.⁷²⁸ If a parent ‘chooses’ to have a complicated child, where does the burden of support then fall – onto the taxpayers or onto the parents who made the choice? There are dangerous possibilities at play here that demand a finely tuned ethical eye to how policies play out across a complex spectrum. Reinders pushes society to consider life as a gift in the midst

⁷²⁶ Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled*, 5.

⁷²⁷ Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled*, 52.

⁷²⁸ Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled*, 52-53.

of finitude.⁷²⁹ Instead of seeing only the need for societal responsibility, he invites social relationality as full of possibility and wonder. He invites a more robust conversation between theological resources and contemporary moral life. In the end, he pushes for a more complex understanding of suffering that is not presumed by an outside society and is upheld by religious resources for naming lament.⁷³⁰ Real concern remains for the disabled, and those who “choose” disability in a liberal society. Because of this solidarity is less and less possible, even though liberal societies herald inclusion, equal opportunity and access. Jean Bethke Elshtain, in a review article, offers a helpful summary: “over time our capacity to recognize, to welcome, to support, and to care for human persons who lives seems to us entirely pointless and burdensome will collapse.”⁷³¹ She surmises and agrees with Reinders assessment that liberal society can at times corrode our “moral intuitions.”⁷³² As we continue to link disability to moral injury, the question of societal responsibility and guilt will grow in importance. For now, it is important to remember the phrase “limited horizon of choice”⁷³³ for veterans who make difficult moral choices with few options. For a liberal society, where choice is “paragon,”⁷³⁴ how will society reincorporate those who made difficult choices, choices so difficult that they had disabling effects?

3.4.2.2 Amy Laura Hall

⁷²⁹ Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled*, 146.

⁷³⁰ Reinders, *The Future of the Disabled*, 159.

⁷³¹ Jean Bethke Elshtain, “What Counts as a Person: Review of The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society: An Ethical Analysis,” *Commonweal* (September 28, 2001), 25.

⁷³² Elshtain, “What Counts as a Person,” 25.

⁷³³ See fn. 403 and the conversation with veteran and theologian Brian S. Powers who uses this terminology to describe the landscape within which moral injury occurs.

⁷³⁴ Elshtain, “What Counts as a Person,” 25.

Issues of genetic testing and pre-natal choice are areas of scholarship and interest for Amy Laura Hall. She provides a thought provoking book review (*Expecting Adam* by Martha Beck, *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus* by Rayna Rapp, *The Future of the Disabled in Liberal Society* by Hans S. Reinders and *Choosing Naia* by Mitchell Zuckoff) worthy of note here,⁷³⁵ illumined by the theological concept of hospitality. And one theological step further, the concept of interruption as a real dynamic within hospitality and also within raising children, particularly children with disabilities. She begins by looking at Rapp's work on "the social impact of amniocentesis in America" that is calling upon women to be "moral pioneers"⁷³⁶ in the decisions they make. Rapp probes deep in untangling the motives and methods available to these moral pioneers. However, Hall asks her to go deeper by calling upon the possible "prophetic witness" of women who make unconventional choices.⁷³⁷ Rapp's anthropological approach belies the testimonial nature of her work as well: Rapp has taken the tests and made tough choices. Rapp draws on the language of another scholar who describes a "kinship of affliction"⁷³⁸ for both children with disabilities such as Down Syndrome, and even for their parents and families.

Hall notes that Reinders' work examines the dilemma that arises in a society when prenatal testing emerges in better and better forms in a society, so that, when families choose whether or not to have a child with special needs there are then societal

⁷³⁵ Amy Laura Hall, "Put to the test: making prenatal choices" *The Christian Century* (June 28, 2003): 32-36. This essay is of personal importance to me as it facilitated by ability to accept a difficult pregnancy and diagnosis through the theological lens of hospitality.

⁷³⁶ Hall, "Put to the test," 34. See: Rayna Rapp, "Moral pioneers: women, men and fetuses on a frontier of reproductive technology" *Women Health* 13:1-2 (1987): 101-16.

⁷³⁷ Hall, "Put to the test," 33.

⁷³⁸ Hall, "Put to the test," 33. Rayna Rapp draws on the scholarship of Robert Edgerton's language of the "kinship of affliction" here. See: Robert B. Edgerton, *The Cloak of Competence* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

implications. He wonders whether societies will fund disability services, which is truly, a question of hospitality. He hopes for a world where relationships and the responsibilities they demand will be unconditional. This kind of hospitality and the prophetic witness it demands is an act of a robust Christian imagination. In turn, Beck's work *Expecting Adam* is a testament to the inhospitable arena of an Ivy League graduate school, one that is countered only by a myriad of "puppeteers" and "angels" who nudge her to truly accept her Down Syndrome son-to-be Adam. Hall highlights the inefficiency of hospitality and all its interruptions over and against a "society bent on efficiency."⁷³⁹ If we want to make the courageous choice to expect and accept Adam, such moral pioneers – moms, public witnesses, extended families, the society and the church – must work against a world that all too often is determined to reject Adam.

Hall's review offers surprising resources as we consider moral injury as a potential disability; as well as accessing disability resources to strengthen our conceptualization and care of the morally injured. Just as Rapp recognizes "moral pioneers", one of the reasons for the state of the morally injured today is their venture into territories of modern warfare heretofore been unexplored. Resources are not existent for mapping the moral landscape they enter – both for the mother anticipating genetic testing, and the soldier entering new arenas of conflict. Reinders reckons with the choices those moral pioneers make and wonders whether society has the resources to live with their choices. Again, an echo of the territory our morally injured veterans now find themselves upon return home. Beck's work should not be taken lightly in this conversation as well. Are we rejecting Lieutenant Adam upon return home because of

⁷³⁹ Hall, "Put to the Test," 36.

our “society bent on efficiency,” or expecting Adam and the interruptions and inefficiencies his new life will demand?

3.4.2.3 Stanley Hauerwas

Stanley Hauerwas has written extensively on the topic of disability, inclusion and hospitality in the life of the church with an eye toward the beloved community of God in Christ.⁷⁴⁰ Brief note will be made here of a short but significant essay, helpful for our ongoing conversation regarding disability, moral injury and morality. In his essay, “Must a Patient Be a Person to Be a Patient? Or, My Uncle Charlie Is Not Much of a Person But He is Still My Uncle Charlie,”⁷⁴¹ Hauerwas enters here a conversation that seems to him to have suddenly come to light – what does it mean to be a person? He argues that society is looking to a definition of personhood for health care, rather than see “what only a substantive community and story can do.”⁷⁴² He begins with looking to Paul Ramsey who emphasizes that no person should be used toward the good of another person. Hauerwas says this is Ramsey’s Kantian protection on what is all too utilitarian an approach in medicine today.⁷⁴³ Perhaps, according to Hauerwas, the striving to define personhood is mobilized by a permissive rather than a protective tendency; if someone is not a person, then perhaps we are permitted to let the other have more rights rather than protecting the one who is vulnerable and needs those rights saved. Hauerwas criticizes

⁷⁴⁰ Deborah Creamer states a limitation of Hauerwas is his extended scholarship on intellectual disability at the cost of neglecting other important issues. Deborah Creamer, “Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas’ Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology,” *Religious Studies Review*, 34:2 (June 2008): 88.

⁷⁴¹ Stanley Hauerwas, “Must a Patient Be a Person to Be a Patient? Or, My Uncle Charlie Is Not Much of a Person But He is Still My Uncle Charlie” in *On Moral Medicine*, 377-379.

⁷⁴² Hauerwas, “Must a Patient Be a Person,” 377.

⁷⁴³ Hauerwas, “Must a Patient Be a Person,” 377.

modern medicine for losing its “story” amid our society. There is a vacuum in consensus when it comes to the collective moral beliefs of our society. Leaning toward story, particularly the stories formed by faith communities, might mean a change in life span, cure, and technology. But so doing, might ensure greater emphasis on “how we choose to survive” rather than on our simple “survival.”⁷⁴⁴ So doing, may be a different plan for Uncle Charlie because of his story and his community. Hauwerwas’ account challenges our culture’s tendency toward medicalization while rejecting deeper views of embodiment. He values story as a vehicle to move us forward where our morality might be otherwise lacking. And, he provides a vision for alternative structures of society that disallow disabling, and encourage enabling through story-formed community.⁷⁴⁵

3.4.3 The Framework of Theological Doctrine: Haslam, Yong and Reynolds

As we consider different frameworks for perceiving insight into disability today, an important lens to explore disability is through deep engagement with theology and the various doctrines presented throughout Christian history. Scholars like Molly Haslam, Amos Yong and Thomas Reynolds compel accounts of disability that invite us to take very seriously the claims made by Christian theology. Haslam asks us to consider our theological anthropology with full knowledge of intellectual disability and its repercussions for relationality. A robust vision of pneumatology, is for Yong, a kaleidoscopic lens through which to interpret disability with regard to the church. Reynolds prompts consideration of human vulnerability with regard to the doctrines of

⁷⁴⁴ Hauerwas, “Must a Patient be a Person to be a Patient,” 379.

⁷⁴⁵ Here, Hauerwas echoes Warren Kinghorn’s lament of “moral fragmentation” and the possibility of narrative for restoration of body, mind, spirit and even morality amid that disintegration. See: Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma,” 59.

creation and redemption. Each of these scholars invites us to do two things: first, to draw disability into conversation with traditional theology to expose weaknesses within particular doctrines; and second, to allow theology to more fully guide and shape our wholehearted response to disability.

3.4.3.1 Molly C. Haslam

With so many scholars addressing primarily physical disabilities, theologian Molly C. Haslam critiques the western bias toward ‘reason’ that reveals a bias toward body and a neglect of those who are intellectually impaired in her book *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability: Human Being as Mutuality and Response*. When humans are categorized by their abilities for ‘reasoning’ or even by their ability to cognitively ‘be in relation’, there is a quiet exclusion of those with profound intellectual disabilities that might not be able to participate in either of those categories of relating. Haslam becomes a fascinating conversation partner, even hypothetically, with Nancy Eiesland and her conception of the disabled God. Eiesland offers a portrait of God in a sip-puff wheelchair; and yet, can we imagine the visceral metaphor continuing through the lens of Haslam’s work to include a God who is intellectually disabled?

Haslam argues for an understanding of humanness as ‘responsiveness’ that does not require a particular intellectual capacity.⁷⁴⁶ She suggests an avoidance of turning ‘inward’ toward a particular capacity such as reason and an avoidance of turning ‘outward’ toward a particular way of relating within a community. Instead, she moves beyond these dualistic conceptions toward a holistic understanding of God and the world

⁷⁴⁶ Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*,” 2.

in a responsive relationship that takes a step forward in illuminating the impact of bodily bias.⁷⁴⁷

Haslam hopes to renegotiate the legacy of Eiesland whose liberatory vision of God in a “sip-puff wheelchair” unintentionally excludes disabled and non-disabled, by proving God unrecognizable to the child with Down Syndrome, the autistic adult, the currently non-impaired theologian, the schizophrenic young adult, the non-responsive disabled child. Eiesland’s insight simultaneously embraces those who are ‘other’ while unintentionally excluding yet another who feels removed from self-dignity and divine creativity. Haslam recognizes the strength and the weakness of Eiesland’s legacy. Haslam appreciates Eiesland’s affirmation in naming “the paucity of theological exploration of social, emotional and intellectual disabilities as scandalous”⁷⁴⁸ but she also laments Eiesland’s reluctance to struggle with disabilities beyond those solely physical. Recognizing this rift, Haslam’s work addresses the bias against intellectual disability and attempts a theology rooted in mutuality⁷⁴⁹ and response, rather than a theology based in a particular image of God’s physicality. Haslam advances the conversation in recognizing the bias toward bodies and against intellectual and mental disabilities, her work is important in creating the space alongside intellectual and mental disabilities for the possibility of a disabling that occurs across social contexts when new limits of reason, or lack thereof, are experienced.

⁷⁴⁷ Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*, 9.

⁷⁴⁸ Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*, 2.

⁷⁴⁹ Haslam is in agreement here with Amos Yong who also highlights mutuality rather than charity as the building block of relationship. Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 294. However, reviewer Kirsteen Kim honestly questions mutuality as an ethical action. She asks: “one wonders whether this ideal view is one which others with different personal experience would share.” Kirsteen Kim, “Theology and Down Syndrome,” *International Journal of Public Theology* 5 (2011): 253.

The anthropology of Martin Buber's "I-Thou" relationship provides Haslam with the resources she needs to move beyond being linked to capacity, metaphysics, intellect, or language. Human being, for Buber and Haslam, is mutuality and response. This move allows her to move beyond Gordon Kaufman's conception of human being as "intentional agent"⁷⁵⁰ and Gordon Lindbeck's analysis of human being as a "language user."⁷⁵¹ Using a phenomenological approach, Haslam strives to describe human being in relational terms and concludes in the end *imago dei* is relational yearning, not rational acquisition.⁷⁵²

3.4.3.2 Amos Yong

Throughout his book *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity*,⁷⁵³ Amos Yong examines a range of theological doctrines (creation, salvation, eschatology, Christology) through a twofold lens of his Pentecostal background and the particular disability of Down Syndrome. Yong's theology is deeply personal, informed by his Pentecostal faith background as well as the relationship with his brother with Down Syndrome. As a Pentecostal theologian, Yong's interests are in the healing tradition of Pentecostalism and in the spirit-filled community Pentecostals are known for

⁷⁵⁰ Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*, 19.

⁷⁵¹ Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*, 36.

⁷⁵² Haslam, *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability*, 92.

⁷⁵³ Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Down Syndrome in Late Antiquity*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). Note should be made of Yong's prolific and extensive book with a primary focus on Down Syndrome, not the larger spectrum of disability. One reviewer notes the importance of this fact by saying, "350,000 Americans and perhaps 5 million people worldwide have Down Syndrome, a genetic condition that occurs when a third chromosome is linked to the twenty-first pair. Of parents who receive early diagnosis of Down Syndrome, between 70 and 90 percent choose to abort." See: "Poewr and Powerlessness in Pentecostal Theology A Review Essay on Amos Yong's *Theology and Down Syndrome*," *Pneuma* 30 (2008): 137. James L. Philpott presented one of the earliest theological accounts of Down Syndrome in his account, "By the Waters of Babylon: The Experience of Having a Down Syndrome Child" *Pastoral Psychology* 27(3) (Spring 1979): 155-163. Also worthy of note: John Swinton, "The Body of Christ Has Down Syndrome" in *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13:2 (2003); 66-78.

in their worship and fellowship. Yong imagines healing not of individual diseases, but of systemic inability to be hospitable and inclusive.⁷⁵⁴ When this hospitality is gained through healing then the possibility begins for that spirit-filled community to receive hospitality back to itself through the gifts and Holy Spirit surprises of those with disabilities.

Like several of the historical theologians, including Augustine and Barth, Theologian Amos Yong also struggles with the relationship between disability and resurrection. This is just one example of the many doctrines he wrestles with and reconceives for late modernity. While that may seem removed from engaging deeply in the reality before us, questions regarding the resurrection address very much our current identity and the injuries we face in this life. Questions about disability and resurrection press the deepest concerns and commitments of embodied life. Yong engages a historical overview of resurrection and its relationship to disability. Augustine believed all bodies, except those scars of the martyrs, would be perfect in heaven. All monstrosities would be eliminated.⁷⁵⁵ The Augustinian view of personal identity along a continuum of transformation through life is that the “flower” of one’s youthful body would be resurrected.⁷⁵⁶ Aquinas shared a similar view of restoration in our bodies at resurrection. In addition, Aquinas who believed in the pursuit of virtues, would have excluded those with intellectual disabilities from this realm because the possibility of “perfect

⁷⁵⁴ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 224.

⁷⁵⁵ See for example: Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 87. In *Writings of Saint Augustine*, various translators (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, various dates), 4:442-443. Augustine writes: “Concerning monsters which are born and live, however quickly they die, neither is resurrection to be denied them, no is it to be believed that they will rise again as they are, but rather with an amended and perfected body.”

⁷⁵⁶ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 262-263. See: Augustine, *City of God*, 22:20.

relationship with God” would be prevented by their lack of cognition.⁷⁵⁷ Even today, such views persist so that ultimate freedom resides in the dismissal of disability in eternity. More modern views fall across a spectrum of understanding – perhaps in heaven, what matters most is the larger collective body fully present to the love of God. Nancy Eiesland would not rid herself of her disability in heaven because “my disability has taught me who I am and who God is.” Hauerwas takes her viewpoint a step further, “to eliminate the disability means to eliminate the subject.”⁷⁵⁸

In light of these, Yong presents a “dynamic eschatology” to come alongside his “dynamic anthropology.” He shapes this in light of a disability reading of 1 Corinthians 15 as well as the *epectasis* (eternal journey of the soul) in Gregory of Nyssa.⁷⁵⁹ Is it possible, with these in mind, that a person might be both preserved and transformed over time in eternity?⁷⁶⁰ Yong believes our viewpoint on resurrection and eschatology informs and shapes current practices now. Sarah Coakley’s view of the eschaton shapes Yong, where in a powerful point he says “the body itself finds its rest in the unending process of being transformed by the glory of God in ways that overturn the binary dichotomies not only of male/female but also of disabled/nondisabled.”⁷⁶¹ Coakley’s argument that the eschaton disrupts societal norms and advances Christian concepts of identity that allow for fluidity, vulnerability and less dichotomy than certain cultural norms is helpful to

⁷⁵⁷ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 264-265.

⁷⁵⁸ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 270.

⁷⁵⁹ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 271.

⁷⁶⁰ Disability Scholar Brian Brock offers a helpful note here in his review essay “Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65:3 (Aug. 2012): 370-372. He explains that Yong’s eschatological theology is never “expungement of human bodies and identities,” but aims in the ongoing transformation of healing begun in earthly life and continued in the eschaton.

⁷⁶¹ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 281. See: Sarah Coakley, *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Press, 2002).

Yong who argues for a dynamism and ascent in the afterlife other than what is experienced in this life. Yong's argument is that individual disabilities will be preserved in the eschaton and recognized as essential in the communion of saints and the "divine scheme of things."⁷⁶² In addition to individual affirmation, there will be communal reconciliation and restructuring of broken societal relationships. Yong uses the example of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav's "Tale of the Seven Beggars" to illustrate a world inhospitable and broken structurally that will be redeemed and well understood in resurrection life.⁷⁶³ The seven beggars each are disabled and their disablements in the story are intended to reveal two things: first, the broken nature of this world and second, a signpost of the world to come that will mend what is broken. However, as much as this appears to be a story of condemnation of disability and anticipation of a new world to come, Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav made sure to convey in this story that what was most broken was society's inability to accept the beggars as they are. In fact, those unable to see the wholeness of the beggars are in fact "deformed" as well.⁷⁶⁴ What we learn through deep reading of Amos Yong is that his theology is poised to reverse the failure of this morality tale. As Yong says, it is "an attempt to make sense of my brother."⁷⁶⁵

3.4.3.3 Thomas E. Reynolds

Thomas E. Reynolds' work *Vulnerable Communion* (2008) develops from his commitment to relational ontology, but even more so, from Reynolds own experience as a family within a church where his son Chris, host to a variety of unseen disabilities, was

⁷⁶² Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 282.

⁷⁶³ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 288-289.

⁷⁶⁴ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 289. For the story of the rabbi see: Shaul Magid, "Nature, Exile, and Disability in R. Nahman of Bratslav's 'The Seven Beggars,'" in Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, ed., *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 2002): 355.

⁷⁶⁵ Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome*, 293.

at first marginalized. He draws on Eiesland's "two-way access"⁷⁶⁶ as a theological method that mobilizes those with disabilities greater access into institutions while at the same time provides the non-disabled with glimpses into the "social-symbolic world" of those who do have disabilities. Such a two-way privileging of disability is not unlike Gutierrez's "preferential option" and "irruption of the poor." Reynolds works within the ADA framework that defines disability in a threefold manner: as real impairment of body or mind, as a record of that impairment, and/or as being regarded as having that impairment.⁷⁶⁷ Reynolds sees the Apostle Paul as one of the first theologians of disability whose "thorn in the flesh" becomes a Christological witness to the power of Christ's saving message at work within him.⁷⁶⁸ This is one example of the "metaphorical reversal" that Reynolds will emphasize through this work as an overturn of the "cult of normalcy." Such a cult of normalcy has theological implication in the fact that it can even effect a normalizing projection upon God. A hermeneutic of disability must avoid trivialization or denigration of those who are disabled. While calling disability a tragedy, it is not the impairment that is tragic but the social consequences that are. Questions of theodicy can fall prey to the cult of normalcy. Reynolds encourages a conversation about human vulnerability beyond those traps toward a deeper ecclesiology and systematic theology.

Like Amos Yong, Reynolds offers thorough reviews of the doctrines of creation, redemption and the *imago dei* and ecclesiology. Two points are key to Reynolds theology of creation as a generous and ongoing gift of God. First, he believes in a knowledge of

⁷⁶⁶ Thomas E. Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 15. See: Eiesland, "The Disabled God," 20-23.

⁷⁶⁷ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 18.

⁷⁶⁸ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 19.

God that is *a priori* - inscribed as a strong sensibility on the human heart – rather than knowledge of God that is *a posteriori* – learned from reasoning within the world. While this may sound contradictory to a love of God that is “learned” in vulnerable communion, Reynolds argues what is gained in that vulnerability is a justification of the longing we have known all along. In addition, Reynolds stands behind the Reformed tradition’s tenet of creation *ex nihilo*.⁷⁶⁹ The *ex nihilo* must not be neglected, Reynolds asserts this fact alongside Tertullian, Irenaeus and Augustine who argued similarly to claim that creation remains without form, absolute nothing, without God’s guiding presence. Even though this is not specifically outlined in scripture, this tenet expresses our reliance upon God at every moment – we are created *ex nihilo* – in vulnerable communion for all time.⁷⁷⁰ God’s creativity as gift in creation reminds us that we live in an “economy of superabundant grace”⁷⁷¹ rather than subsisting in the cult of normalcy and all that such a cult entails. In this chapter Reynolds speaks to the “transformation” that can occur through disability as vulnerability becomes embodied within a community. One response to the fact that we are created in the *imago dei* is to then become imitators of that image – or as Reynolds says – to model *imitatio dei*.⁷⁷²

It should be noted here that Reynolds does not venture into any theological reflection here on the Trinity, which would be helpful. Instead, he focuses on the *imago dei* as creativity, relationality and availability.⁷⁷³ These capacities – particularly the

⁷⁶⁹ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 154.

⁷⁷⁰ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 154.

⁷⁷¹ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 137. Reynolds draws here on a conceptualization of “superabundance” posited by Paul Ricœur. See: Paul Ricœur, “Ethical and Theological Considerations on the Golden Rule,” 293-302 and “Love and Justice,” 315-329, in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*, trans. David Pellauer, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995).

⁷⁷² Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 178-179.

⁷⁷³ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 180.

capacity for love – call us into the *capax Dei* (the capacity for God). Reynolds’ last chapter begins with the lovely and often-quoted words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, but read here within the framework of disability, “For Christ plays in ten thousand places,/Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his/To the Father through the features of men’s faces.”⁷⁷⁴ The kingdom, evidenced in the church, will welcome in these “out of control” bodies that affront our sense of normalcy and yet through a metaphorical reversal come to model the very body of Christ in our midst. The “power of inability” is realized once and for all in the cross and it is the radical charge to the church that demands modeling true vulnerability in the midst of that inability for God to meet us here.⁷⁷⁵

Reynolds leans toward a model of disability that is less medical (he writes, “disability is not a thing”⁷⁷⁶) and is instead something sociologically complex. Disability, for Reynolds is “a range of physiologically rooted social performances, a series of moments defined by relationships between human beings. In a basic sense, the distinction between ability and disability is built into the fabric of communal life.”⁷⁷⁷ When we learn Reynolds own son has Aspergers, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Tourette’s Syndrome and Bipolar Disorder, this suggests that personal experience moved him toward a more nuanced definition. Such a definition moves us toward an understanding of our own identity that is shaped and reshaped amid many myriad moments across social contexts. For Reynolds, a suffering and liberating God actively

⁷⁷⁴ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 214.

⁷⁷⁵ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 204, 207-209.

⁷⁷⁶ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 53.

⁷⁷⁷ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 53.

draws near to those who become disabled in those “physiologically rooted social performances” and then works to liberate their oppression.⁷⁷⁸

3.4.4 Themes and Questions in the Contemporary Scholarship on Disability

The hope this chapter began with is that moral injury “needs” disability. Recognizing the cautions raised by Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon, we drew moral injury into conversation with these frameworks for interpreting disability: the framework of liberation, the framework of social analysis and medical critique and the framework of theological doctrine and its implications. Here, we will look at themes and tensions raised within these frameworks with regard to the medicalization of bodies, the sociological construct of disability, and limits encountered. While each of these themes explores issues of human finitude, it will be in the next section as we interpret the work of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson that their implications will be fully realized and then suggested as a helpful third option for relating moral injury and disability.

Phenomenologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone argues for a “corporeal turn”⁷⁷⁹ in medicine to better respect the complexity and humanity of embodiment. Perhaps, she recognizes like Garland-Thomson the situation of human finitude by understanding the vitality and vulnerability of the human being. Nancy Eiesland adds to this corporeal turn by dismissing notions of God as perfect in body; and recognizing not just the human but also the divine with regard to complex notions of frailty and vulnerability. Her

⁷⁷⁸ John Swinton in his review essay “*Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*,” *Practical Theology* 2:2 (August, 2009): 305, questions whether Reynolds advocates enough for reversal of oppressive power structures amid the powers at hand. He believes Reynolds advocates a suffering God, but does not pursue far enough a God who overturns power structures. 302-305.

⁷⁷⁹ Sheets-Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 15.

conceptualization of the disabled body of God complicates norms, expectations, ideals and projections within human bodies. Thomas Reynolds pursues an alternative route, but toward a similar end in complicating notions of disability. Disability, he argues, is “not a thing.”⁷⁸⁰ In the western world of Cartesian dualisms, Reynolds refuses to enter the door of easy dualisms and expects instead respect for the body not as a mechanism or easily fixed or medicalized subject, but instead, a socially complex phenomenon. Betcher demands the same respect for the complexity of human bodies amid the mechanics of the medical world as she invites reflection on social bodies, spirited flesh, and the subtle ways ecological changes can wreak havoc on human bodies. Medicine, in its treatment of human illness and treatment of certain disabilities, must also pay attention to the societal and ecological sources of those ailments and alterations of ability.

Contemporary scholarship on disability makes clear the social nature of disability and the effects of social constructs and expectations on those of varying abilities. Eiesland sought liberation for the disabled from unjust structures and her colleagues continue her cry. Thomas Reynolds’ work in *Vulnerable Communion* assumes the social construct of disability that Eiesland seeks liberation from by means of her disabled God. Reynolds offers a provocative phrase, worthy of note and continued reflection. Disability, he understands, is a “physiologically rooted social performance.” Such a definition could easily be misunderstood as overly dramatic or even judgmental. But his sentiment is wholly otherwise: what we perceive as disability is an enactment of greater social norms, failures and projections. For our morally injured veterans, Reynolds words both identify and challenge. It would be all too easy to focus on what is first presented

⁷⁸⁰ Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 53.

(shame, distrust, isolation) rather than explore the deeper sociological influences. A counterpoint is offered within Block's exploration of Gutierrez's notion of the "irruption of the poor." So much of the scholarship suggests that societies create disabilities through inhospitable acts, unjust laws, and expectations of perfection. Block's view reveals the opposite; that is the capacity of those in minority groups to upset the status quo and in so doing, to demand new social structures. Gutierrez envisioned an irruption of the poor that Block commends. Authors, theologians and veterans today are demanding a similar "irruption of the veteran" to invite a complacent society to engage the reality of war-torn and morally injured veterans. Block's reflection echoes Yong's insight that there is a systemic disability within society to include the disabled, and this too has consequences for those whose presenting disability is moral injury.

Certainly we see within the contemporary scholarship issues relevant to medical and social models of disability that will be explored more fully in Chapter Four. Of interest to this dissertation is the exploration of how different abilities within particular bodies are revealed or hidden within and across various social constructs. The notion of "limits" and its implication for bodies, morality, disability and society is a little explored topic within the fields of morality, disability and moral injury. The contemporary scholarship on disability raises some interesting insights regarding the notion of changing functionality and/or flourishing across varied contexts. Two contrasting views may be seen in the work of Hans Reinders and Amos Yong. Reinders offers a real world cost analysis of the societal implications of choosing disability. Reinders recognizes the ill effects of a liberal society that will place limits on disabled people and those who choose to bear the disabled into existence. This viewpoint presupposes judgments on those with

varying abilities and their preconceived inability to function across various contexts. Yong proposes an interesting counterpoint with his vision of a dynamic eschatology imagining human beings take on a sacred journey of ascent that will naturally assume decay and disability and transformation over time experiencing different limits across different contexts but all the while maintaining the possibility of a particular kind of flourishing. Perhaps it is Amy Laura Hall who explores a third way: new contexts and new choices create the space for new moral decisions. When time and space between collapse, those left in their wake must make difficult decisions as “moral pioneers.” A moral pioneer, forced into new, unexpected and uncharted territory, will find themselves at times ‘abled’ and ready to make difficult choices within a changing context. And yet the opposite is also very true: at times the moral pioneer will become disabled – that is limited – when context closes in and they are no longer able to function and make decisions as they have in the past. Hall’s language of “moral pioneer” drawn from the scholarship of Rayna Rapp certainly has implications for our morally injured veterans, pushed to the limit to make difficult and pioneering moral choices in landscapes and contexts no one could have ever imagined.

3.4.5 The Framework of Human Finitude: Garland-Thomson

These questions of medicalization, social construction and engagement with limits all probe the depth of human finitude: what does it mean to be finite in the age of *techné*? What does it mean to be finite as a socially constructed body? And what does it mean to be finite as we encounter real limits in a complex and broken world? Rosemarie Garland-Thomson invites direct engagement with those issues in her work. In so doing, she

provides a helpful alternative for pairing disability and moral injury that does not rely on definitions, or even frameworks, but instead a complex theological anthropology that accounts for human frailty, failing and finitude in the face of the fall.⁷⁸¹

3.4.5.1 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

The academic field of disability studies provides a promising conversation partner for engaging and reflecting on the complexities of moral injury. Individual and social identity is at the heart of questions regarding impairment and disability. The problem with understanding disability, according to disabled scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson is that in our society we do not have a clear “collective notion...of what it means to be disabled”⁷⁸²; in so asking, Garland-Thomson raises the question of human finitude. Garland-Thomson laments the singular defining factor of disability by many in our culture: “The one thing most people do know about being disabled is that they don’t want to be that.”⁷⁸³ To begin to expand notions of disability, one step important to Garland-Thomson is to invite others to consider the fluid and ever-changing nature of our own bodies. In so doing she invites reflection on disability as an experience all will experience at some point in their own lifetime, even when they can’t imagine being “that” – whatever “that” is for them. She explains, “The fact is, most of us will move in

⁷⁸¹ See: Capretto, “On Not Operationalizing Disability,” 895. Capretto argues that Garland-Thomson defies easy categorization. Though she provides a social analysis, she holds onto the medical model of disability as it allows attention to the depth of pain possible within disabling conditions that are not due to social construction (ie. schizophrenia, fibromyalgia) and so she tends to transcend both with a new account that honors both experiences and their collective effect on various systems.

⁷⁸² Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled” *The New York Times*, (August 19, 2016), www.nytimes.com/2016/8/21/opinion/sunday/becoming-disabled.html?_r=0 (Accessed October 14, 2016).

⁷⁸³ Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

and out of disability in our lifetimes, whether we do so through illness, an injury or merely the process of aging.”⁷⁸⁴

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson answers some of her own questions in a particularly compelling definition of disability stating, “What we consider disability is the transformation of flesh as it encounters world.”⁷⁸⁵ Impairment, as this definition suggests, occurs as flesh – all flesh – encounters the world. As we consider moral injury, and the particular wounds that occur during wartime, this definition becomes even more compelling as one wonders how flesh, in all its dimensionality, is transformed as the war-zone world is encountered. If “injury” is one of the disabling possibilities for all of us, is it possible for us to imagine an injury that is moral and thereby disabling? One can imagine the implications such a broadening to include morality might have then in defining disability. When the American with Disabilities Act describes disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,”⁷⁸⁶ one must wonder if moral impairment (that touches a deeper place than mental capacity) might be included.

Garland-Thomson notes our shared vulnerability given the “inherent dynamism of the flesh”⁷⁸⁷ and its “movement through time and space in the process we call life.”⁷⁸⁸ Garland-Thomson’s work here is to “conserve” disability as a potential for “meaning-

⁷⁸⁴ Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

⁷⁸⁵ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 342.

⁷⁸⁶ Cited in Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

⁷⁸⁷ Here, it is interesting to hold in comparison Amos Yong’s vision of eschatological ascent rooted in the soteriology of Gregory of Nyssa; and, to hold in sharp contrast Calvin’s conceptualization of disability as “a messenger of death.” Garland-Thomson holds true to a view of dynamic anthropology that offers potential, hope, and of course, transformation over a lifespan.

⁷⁸⁸ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 342.

making” by finding within both impairment and disability a narrative resource, an epistemic resource and an ethical resource.⁷⁸⁹ Garland-Thomson’s definition is particularly helpful in honoring the full complexity of life, acknowledging human suffering but also affirming the joy within which it is entangled.⁷⁹⁰ She understands the intimate connection between flesh and world that is recognized in the World Health Organization’s definition of disability that understands the complex interplay between “features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.”⁷⁹¹ To be clear, too often the features of society only acknowledge the contextual limitations placed on a body in any given social context rather than acknowledging societal factors that can contribute to mental, physical, and we will argue here moral, disabilities that might occur through environment, wartime engagement and other disabling elements.

The definition put forth by Garland-Thomson is deceptively simple and yet utterly compelling. As noted above, her words recognize the impact the collective social world has on individual bodies, even to the point of injury. This impact creates a shared vulnerability that calls us all into the spectrum of disability. But perhaps, her thirteen word definition of disability creates a framework noting within her definition each of the

⁷⁸⁹ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 344.

⁷⁹⁰ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 353.

⁷⁹¹ Cited in Garland-Thomson’s article, “Becoming Disabled.” Original source: Definition of “Disabilities” on the *World Health Organization* website. The definition in full describes disabilities as, “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experience by an individual in involvement in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and societal barriers.” Drawing this definition alongside Jonathan Shay’s list of five disabling aspects of Moral Injury helps us to categorize Moral Injury as a particular kind of disability wherein activity and participation are restricted due to a particular impairment. www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/ (Accessed October 14, 2016).

models of disability: *flesh* acknowledges the medical model, *world* incorporates the social model, and *transformation* points to the possibility a limit model and the questioning of limits might enact. Before turning to explore these three models in full later in this chapter, it is important to understand how Garland-Thomson engages conversation amid the field of disability scholars.

In her New York Times essay, “Becoming Disabled,” Garland-Thomson sets the foundation for a series of essays on disability by prominent scholars and activists in the field. In her viewpoint, “becoming disabled” is a strength to live into no matter where you are on the disabled spectrum. Becoming disabled, acknowledging the areas where one is a “misfit between body and world” becomes then “an occasion for resourcefulness.”⁷⁹² Becoming disabled allows greater humanity, especially when one considers the fluidity and fragility of life.⁷⁹³ Becoming disabled prevents a disabled person from the persistent thought that society demands them to be other than their own self with a particular mind and body. And, finally, “Becoming disabled means moving from isolation to community, from ignorance to knowledge about who we are, from exclusion to access, and from shame to pride.”⁷⁹⁴

This chapter on “Disability” began with arguments regarding disability’s need for moral injury, and the reverse, moral injury’s need for disability. Garland-Thomson offers a compelling argument for “conserving” disability not just as a category, but as a resource both for individuals and institutions that creates knowledge, access and pride. The language provided with deceptive insight and simplicity by Garland-Thomson that

⁷⁹² Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

⁷⁹³ Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

⁷⁹⁴ Garland-Thomson, “Becoming Disabled.”

disability is the transformation that occurs as flesh encounters the world will prove to be helpful lens through which to view Bonhoeffer's scholarship in Chapter Five as well as a critical tool for developing a revised limit model of disability that takes into account varying contexts and "worlds." Before turning to Bonhoeffer in Chapter Five, in Chapter Four we will analyze and assess the medical and social models of disability, introduce Deborah Creamer's "limit" model as a new constructive model, and investigate the need for a "revised limit model of disability" to address the weaknesses in her model for the particular needs of returning veterans. The literature addressed in this chapter ranges from scholarship that in the language of the Veterans' Creed "abandoned" the disabled to scholarship that offered resolute "support." With an eye to deepening and strengthening that support, the conversation between disability and moral injury will continue in the next chapter and moves us toward the development of a revised limit model of disability that recognizes human finitude in the face of limits.

Chapter 4

Models of Disability and the Need for a Revised Limit Model

If I cannot carry them – I will call for help.

- The Veterans' Creed⁷⁹⁵

4.1 Models of Disability and Socially Encoded Meanings

Our review of historical and contemporary scholarship on disability and the push for interchange between the fields of disability and moral injury in chapter three aided in recognizing the potential stigma inherent in the language of disability.⁷⁹⁶ Tyler Boudreau and Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon invite resistance to the transfer of the stigmatizing label of disability to moral injury. Disability and moral injury both provide an epistemology of “destabilizing knowledge”⁷⁹⁷ that may not be immediately evidenced, but that I would argue is rooted in a recognition of human vulnerability and finitude. However, the stigmas and stereotypes evidenced in the historical accounts, social analyses, and even theological doctrine reviewed in chapter three can at times prevent deeper engagement of the epistemology and theological anthropology at stake.

Perhaps this is because disabled bodies, and the language of disability itself, carry messages that have symbolic and cultural impact. Samuel Joeckel refers to disabled

⁷⁹⁵ Veterans' Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

⁷⁹⁶ Peter Capretto notes the “double-bind” problem that exists between theology and disability is a “frustration for those working to bridge and unite disciplines and collaborate on shared objects of study.” See: Capretto, “On Not Operationalizing Disability in Theology,” 915.

⁷⁹⁷ Wiinikka-Lydon, “Inherent Political Critique,” 230.

bodies as “having symbolic power embedded in cultural structures of meaning”⁷⁹⁸ that can sometimes bear erroneous messages. For some, according to Joeckel, the message is “divine disfavor”⁷⁹⁹ where a broken body is revelatory of a judgment by God.⁸⁰⁰ For others, the message is a heroic overcoming of an obstacle revealing a strength that is inspiring to others.⁸⁰¹ Because of the “error” in those messages, disability scholars continue to challenge problematic ideologies and offer constructive accounts of disability. The messages of divine disfavor and heroic triumph may appear simplistic, but their usage reflects and often reinscribes entrenched patterns of cultural interaction, power relations and epistemological meaning. Bodies, according to Michel Foucault, “emit signs”⁸⁰² that reveal their complex relationship to power as well as injustices embedded in particular ideologies and practices.

In this chapter, we will explore the traditional models of disability: the medical⁸⁰³ and the social models.⁸⁰⁴ In these models, as much as they aim for precision to describe

⁷⁹⁸ Samuel Joeckel, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies: A Prolegomenon” in *Christian Scholar’s Review*, 35:3 (Spring 2006), 323.

⁷⁹⁹ Joeckel, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies,” 326.

⁸⁰⁰ Lingering effects of these models are still present. For example, see: Pauline A. Otieno, “Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Disability: Implications on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Kenya” in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 29:4 (2009). Otieno works here to draw the work of Nancy Eiesland and her liberatory praxis to Kenya and particularly the Kenyan church. The Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) claims that 10% of Kenya’s population of 32.2 million are disabled. The Kenyan church is mired in dated ways of considering the intersection between disability and theology as outlined by Eiesland: disability is associated with sin, disability as associated with a suffering that is virtuous, and disability seen as a prompt for charity.

⁸⁰¹ Joeckel, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies,” 326. Joeckel explains how these two messages of divine disfavor and heroic triumph were present in the eighteenth century by drawing on the work of Helen Deutsch. See: Helen Deutsch, “Exemplary Aberration: Samuel Johnson and the English Canon,” in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, eds. Snyder, Brueggemann, and Garland-Thomson (New York: Modern Language Association, 2002), 199.

⁸⁰² Joeckel draws on Michel Foucault to illumine this point, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies,” 330. See: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977), 25.

⁸⁰³ Historian of disability studies, Lennard Davis claims that the medical field established the earliest model of disability to account for pain, difference and impairment. Lennard J. Davis, “The End of Identity Politics: On Disability as an Unstable Category.” In *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Davis,

a particular manifestation of disability, they still serve more as broad descriptors to describe a “cluster of somewhat related experiences or situations.”⁸⁰⁵ After we outline working dimensions of the medical model of disability and the social model of disability, we will pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of each. Finally, we will turn to the work of Deborah Creamer who notes dissatisfaction with both models and offers instead a “limit model of disability.” In our ongoing dialogue with moral injury, the medical and social models of disability offer insight that is helpful and appropriate, even when disability is most often deemed taboo in the military world. However, it is Deborah Creamer’s “limit model” that is most compelling for focusing on the various experiences of disabilities across contexts. This chapter will conclude with the suggestion we expand Deborah Creamer’s limit model to take into account which limits are natural, and are to be embraced, and which limits result from sin and should be challenged. We will note how Creamer’s model begins the conversation but does not give enough clarity; therefore it will be necessary in the next chapter to draw on Dietrich Bonhoeffer for an assessment of the moral demands of each type of limit.

4.1.1 A Moral Model of Disability?

At this point in the conversation, we have seen attempts both wittingly and unwittingly to connect disability to morality through both the historical and contemporary

Lennard J., (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2013): 263. Others note the development of the World Health Organization’s 1980 classification system for identifying impairments, disabilities and handicaps. See: WHO, *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*, 1980.

⁸⁰⁴ Michael Oliver and Bob Sapey are credited for first naming a “social model of disability.” See: Michael Oliver and Bob Sapey, *Social Work with Disabled People* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983): 29.

⁸⁰⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 22.

models. Some scholars argue that “a moral model of disability” is the oldest model predating medical and social models.⁸⁰⁶ To be clear, standard practice is to name *only* medical and social models of disability that will be outlined later in the chapter. However, scholars noting the existence of a kind of “moral model of disability” are trying to articulate and draw together nuances in thinking around disability that linked bodily impairment to morality. Consider for example, Robert Garland’s *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World* which is a historical overview of deformity beginning with ancient Rome. Garland explores both the curious as in the *teraton agora* ‘monster market’ in Rome to the concerning practice of infanticide. He outlines a “physiognomic consciousness” that idealized the perfect body and shamed those misshapen bodies as indicative of the soul’s “hidden energies”⁸⁰⁷ whose moral consequences are revealed in bodies. Nancy Eiesland fought fiercely to retrieve Christian exegesis and tradition from the link between morality and disability. She argued, Christian faith can no longer let “disability be a sign of moral imperfection or divine retribution for sin.”⁸⁰⁸

In this kind of model, disability is seen as a punishment and leads to social exclusion and a lowering of social status due to misdemeanors done by the individual or

⁸⁰⁶ Julie F. Smart. “The Power of Models of Disability,” *Journal of Rehabilitation* 75.2 (2009), 4. See also: Jonathan C. Drimmer *Cripples, Overcomers, and Civil Rights: Tracing the Evolution of Federal Legislation and Social Policy for People with Disabilities*, 40 *UCLA L. rev.* 1341, 1397 (1993): 1346. And also: E.E. Enwereji, “Understanding Models Necessary to Treat Disability Issues” *Global Journal for Research Analysis International* 4:5 (May, 2015): 410-413.

⁸⁰⁷ Robert Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder: Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World* (Bloomsbury, UK: Bristol Classical Press, 2010): 87-104.

⁸⁰⁸ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 71.

their family member.⁸⁰⁹ Here, bad action is presumed to result in a congenital disability. Not unlike the doctrine of Karma, this implication of a moral model struggles with the effects of sin and morality. Those who assumed a moral reason for the disability in the body, often hid their disabled family member preventing them from engaging in society and meaning making. Shame, self-hatred and social ostracism are key components of this model.⁸¹⁰ While this model contains many facets that are disturbing theologically (disability as punishment, disability as moral failing, disability as challenge from God to be overcome),⁸¹¹ for our purposes, the model fails to show what happens when morality itself, that is, an individual's participation in the moral community is disabled. Moving forward would require a model of disability that moves beyond moral judgment toward a more robust understanding of the disablement of moral agency through morally injurious situations brought on by one's self or by the failed person in authority. At the same time, moving forward will require honest wrestling with the effects of sin and shame, consequences and confession in the face of finitude that are at the heart of moral injury. We need a model deeper than the mark of *sara'at* from the book of Leviticus that was a stigmatizing tattoo of moral failure.⁸¹² What model might create a space beyond stigma for theological reflection? What model might navigate a new landscape for those "moral pioneers"⁸¹³ where focus is less on morality, and more on the changing landscapes and how that affects coping and embodiment and morality over time and space? Even prior

⁸⁰⁹ Kofi Amponsah-Bediako, "Relevance of Disability Models from the Perspective of a Developing Country: An Analysis" *Developing Country Studies*, 3:11 (2013): 127.

⁸¹⁰ Deborah Kaplan, "The Definition of Disability: Perspective of the Disability Community" *Journal of Health Care Law and Policy* 3:2:5. (2000): 353.

<http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/jhclp/vol2/iss2/5> (Accessed October 14, 2016).

⁸¹¹ See: Rebecca P. Cameron "Honoring the Experience of Disability" *Phi Beta Kappa* 94.2 (2014), 17.

⁸¹² Melcher, "Visualizing the Perfect Cult: The Priestly Rationale for Exclusion," 55.

⁸¹³ Hall, "Put to the test," 34. See: Rayna Rapp, "Moral pioneers: women, men and fetuses on a frontier of reproductive technology" *Women Health* 13:1-2 (1987): 101-16.

to Nancy Eiesland recognizing disability as no longer a sign of “moral imperfection,”⁸¹⁴ the medical model of disability was advanced to challenge the dominant underlying conception of morality that informed earlier perceptions of disability.

4.1.2 *The Medical Model of Disability*

As we turn to a fuller description of the medical and social models of disability, it is important to keep in mind that the medical model was an advance, in response to a weakness from these earliest models and the judgments they exacerbated. As the first recognized formal model, the medical model⁸¹⁵ began as the medical world conceived disability as bodily impairments that differ from the norm and studied “pathological physiological conditions.”⁸¹⁶ The medical model focuses on functioning versus non-functioning parts of the body and mind.⁸¹⁷ In response to these ailments, service industries employ their *techne* toward care for the disabled population and societies are judged by their compassion, or not, toward them. These industries, according to Mitchell and Snyder have “established their scientific and social credentials (as well as their professional legitimacy) through the ‘humane’ study and provision of services to disabled populations that are at the outermost margins of social interest and cultural value.”⁸¹⁸ In the medical model of disability, disability is a physical impairment shaped by the world

⁸¹⁴ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 71.

⁸¹⁵ Some literature refers to the Medical Model of disability as either the “Biological-Inferiority Model” or the “Functional-Limitation Model.” See for example: Scot Danforth, “A Pragmatic Evaluation of Three Models of Disability in Special Education” *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 13:4 (December 2001), 343-359. And, J. Fields, D. Sobo, J. Sanford, N. Toll and R. Wheatland, “The Disablement Model: the relationships between and among impairment, functional limitation, and disability in the elderly population” *Issues on Aging*, 22:3 (1999), 5-9.

⁸¹⁶ Joeckel, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies,” 327.

⁸¹⁷ We will see as this study progresses, how moral injury challenges each of the standard models of disability studies. In the medical model that emphasizes the functionality of body and mind, moral injury adds the dimension of spirit and its relationship to a moral code as a possible locus for disability to occur.

⁸¹⁸ David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, eds., *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 1.

of ‘perfection’ that invites societal norms for our bodies and then determines who is impaired and who is not.

At stake in this model is a concern that disability is defined in terms that stress its deviation from a norm or ideal version of human being. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, professors in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois, Chicago, describe this problem through the term “similitude”: “Dreams of similitude underwrite the social debasement of disabled people.”⁸¹⁹ Mitchell and Snyder argue that this debasement of disability is evident even in academic efforts to define disability: “Across the modern academy, entire research domains have been devoted to the pathologization and, subsequently, normalization of disability as deviance.”⁸²⁰ For the purposes of this dissertation it is particularly important to note the Christian tradition is complicit in reinforcing norms that encourage the definition of disability in terms that show its lack of similarity to the standard ideal body:

Variations on this thesis with respect to biblical narratives: gender ambiguity; the likeness of humanity made in God’s image; the economically abject’s location on the outskirts of biblical society; bodily incapacity as expression of divine disapproval; the use of disabled people as a defensive frontline to ward off intruders; disability as a marker of tainted priesthood or moral failing; mental illness as satanic possession; the perfect body of Christ as the approximation of godliness; physical disability as loss of claim to hereditary kingship; sexual infidelity as source of childhood deformity; excessive vulnerability as the definition of impairment; among others.... Their bodily, cognitive, and sensory differences continue to provide opportunities for exclusion rather than embrace.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁹ David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder “Jesus Thrown Everything Off Balance: Disability and Redemption in Biblical Literature” in *This Abled Body: Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies* Edited by Hector Avalos, Sarah J. Melcher and Jeremy Schipper (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2007), 174.

⁸²⁰ Mitchell and Snyder, “Jesus Thrown Everything Off Balance,” 174.

⁸²¹ Mitchell and Snyder, “Jesus Thrown Everything Off Balance,” 174.

The medical model of disability then designates bodies as disabled or abled through a process of assessing consistency with an idealized norm. Any presenting bodily issue that fails the similitude test is then subject to medical cure.

The effect of this assimilating norm can be seen in discussions on healing, genetics and medical treatment. Under the medical model, those with disabilities are considered broken people who require technology to assimilate toward a norm of preconceived health and vitality. In his book *A Theological Diagnosis: A New Direction on Genetic Therapy, "Disability" and the Ethics of Healing*, Matt Edmonds wrestles with these issues. His central concern is the over-medicalization in response to disabilities rather than reshaping civic structures toward greater inclusion, and even more, toward grace and friendship.⁸²² Radical medicalization leads to genetic options that are untoward for Edmond as the field of genetics then becomes a curative resource for disabilities.⁸²³ For Edmonds, problems occur when reducing the individual either in globalizing theories of disability or in preventive genetic treatments. The way forward beyond these easy reductions is to “enable each and every one of us to develop friendship, life and love. By rescuing the individual from unnecessary categorization – by giving the person a name.”⁸²⁴ While Edmonds’ ‘diagnosis’ and ‘treatment’ for the problems inherent to the medical model may appear idealistic (civic engagement, enablement and the exercise of ‘naming’ an individual), his suggestion is counter-intuitive to the medical world. His argument recognizes the tendency to technologize

⁸²² Matt Edmonds, *A Theological Diagnosis: A New Direction On Genetic Therapy, "Disability" and the Ethics of Healing* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2009), 12-13.

⁸²³ Edmonds, *A Theological Diagnosis*, 70-72.

⁸²⁴ Edmonds, *A Theological Diagnosis*, 139.

healing and to dismiss the individual. Genetics becomes for Edmonds an avenue toward preventive “healing” and “disability” is the object of that healing act. Such a move objectifies an individual: both the existent individual who becomes the image of possible disablement as well as the not-yet existent embryo who is being shaped technologically toward a particular future.⁸²⁵

Medical ethicist Jeffrey Bishop sees the tendency within modern medicine to “claim power”⁸²⁶ and objectification over bodies, so much so that it has become “The standard bearer of western metaphysics.” Bishop works with Emmanuel Levinas here to resituate the “other” from object of medicine to constituting subject.⁸²⁷ Bishop appreciates the ethical demand of Levinas who argues that it is violent to totalize another person by reducing them to our categories of comprehension.⁸²⁸ Instead, the medical world needs to have what Levinas deems a “non-allergic relation with alterity.”⁸²⁹ All too often, we have what Levinas defines as “a reduction of the other to the same.”⁸³⁰ Bishop’s argument suggests the need for the medical world to a new understanding of the patient and discover within that person “the astonishing feat of containing more than it is possible to contain.”⁸³¹

Bishop also draws on the work of Jean Luc Marion’s theologies of the idol and the icon. While an individual constitutes idols over and over again (creating a sense of

⁸²⁵ Edmonds, *A Theological Diagnosis*, 50-51.

⁸²⁶ Jeffrey P. Bishop, “The Broken Body and the Disabled Body: Reflections on Disability and the Objects of Medicine” in *Theology, Disability and the New Genetics*, ed. by John Swinton and Brian Brock (New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2007): 214.

⁸²⁷ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 222.

⁸²⁸ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 222.

⁸²⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969): 47.

⁸³⁰ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

⁸³¹ Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 27

utter exhaustion), an icon is what constitutes that person and gives life. For Marion, an “idol” is that place where “the gaze has just stopped: the idol concretizes the stop”⁸³² while the “icon” is that which envisages: the icon opens in a face that gazes at our gazes in order to summon them to its depth.⁸³³ In the relationship between a health care provider or physician and a person with disability, Bishop argues, the switch means a reversal from the “constituting gaze of the doctor”⁸³⁴ to the one who is the “constituted subject-physician.”⁸³⁵ This reversal places power back into the hands of the person who had been deemed disabled. For Bishop, the disabled body is the one that does not measure up to the idealized body of the false god of medicine.⁸³⁶ Bishop acknowledges that objectification is a natural accompaniment to many of medicine’s strengths, but then graciously pushes a reconsideration of reversals that might be helpful.⁸³⁷ Bishop understands the “broken body” as simply a human being, one who longs to worship and one who hopes to be reconstituted by the liturgical body through divine worship.⁸³⁸ Bishop concludes with a high calling to divine liturgy and worship to “re-constitute” the physician through prayer, but it should be noted that Bishop is arguing for an ethical high calling as well. He looks to Levinas and Marion as two ethicist-theologians who transcend Kant’s “categorical imperative”⁸³⁹ with a call to contextual responsibility that will always be “so demanding that sin is necessary, and failure inevitable.”⁸⁴⁰

⁸³² Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, Translated by Thomas A. Carlson, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 11.

⁸³³ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 226. Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, 19.

⁸³⁴ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 226.

⁸³⁵ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 226.

⁸³⁶ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 227.

⁸³⁷ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 226.

⁸³⁸ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 229-230.

⁸³⁹ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 223.

⁸⁴⁰ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 223.

The medical model has been subject to widespread and longstanding criticism among scholars of disability. At its basest, the medical model sees the individual as a person with errors that might be erased through the proper procedures. Humans then are categorized into “curable” or “uncurable” dependent on whether or not technology exists to fight the disabling condition. This model considers the disabled person alone as the sole indicator of whether or not disablement is present, neglecting societal forces. In so doing, the model minimizes the effect of culture and even though it has an eye toward the individual, still manages to ignore the identity of the whole person, seeing instead only ability or not. In its drive toward rehabilitation, the medical model neglects the subjectivity of persons with disabilities. The weakness of the medical model then is in its tendency to judge humans themselves as ‘weak’ or ‘strong’ based on their level of abilities.

The strength of the medical model, first and foremost, is its advancement beyond the moralistic judgments inherent to early observations of disability. The medical model, as noted in the creed above, heard a certain “cry for help” within disability studies to address the moralistic questions. As Joeckel notes divine disfavor and heroic triumph were components of the earliest understanding of disability. Using these moralistic formulations is evident in the texts of Ancient Rome⁸⁴¹ and early Christian writings⁸⁴²

⁸⁴¹ See for example: Carlin A. Barton, *The Sorrows of the Ancient Romans: The Gladiators and the Monsters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). Barton argued that the spectator culture of ancient Rome led to the creation of the Roman “monster.” Here even in ancient Rome we see social disability manifested in the “strictures of civilization” that create disablement.

⁸⁴² See for example: Julia Watts Belser and Melanie S. Morrison, “What No Longer Serves Us: Resisting Ableism and Anti-Judaism in New Testament Healing Narratives” in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 27: 2 (Fall 2011): 153-170. Belser and Morrison offer a fascinating insight and corrective. When the move is made in scriptural exegesis to deemphasize the medical model of disability by not focusing on healing as a literal act, then the next step is to critique the institutions as one would in a social model of

where judgments regarding ability and the possibility of human flourishing are often harsh, simplistic and reductionistic.⁸⁴³ Joeckel explains the importance that we might otherwise take for granted:

While the other paradigms invest disability with a cosmic significance or associate disability with the resiliency of the human spirit, the medical model approaches disability as impairment to be medically ameliorated.⁸⁴⁴

The academic shift in language eliminated “the stare of wonder”⁸⁴⁵ that carried a message of either judgment or providence and replaced the engagement with “a clinical gaze.”⁸⁴⁶

The socially encoded meaning of disability shifted at that point from messages of favor or

disability. The “double bind” they describe is that in “resisting ableism” one can easily fall into a pattern of anti-Judaism. The two scholars work together in a risky move for an essay. They re-visit a sermon written, preached and published by Morrison on the story of the bent over woman in Luke 13:10-17. The reader can practically hear Morrison cringe in her use of the Dutch word for resurrection *Opstanding* as a theme through the text. Belser, her partner in this essay is a disabled scholar whose mobility is provided by a wheelchair. Belser helps Morrison to listen deeply to what Devorah Greenstein calls a “rhetoric of affliction” that can plague sermons and preaching. While Morrison had hoped to witness to the dynamic process of resurrection at work in ongoing lives, rather than a single event, her portrayal of the bent over woman is problematic. Morrison imagines her in a miserable state rather than imagining the possibility this woman might have lived in “resourcefulness and creativity, supporting and sustaining herself – and perhaps others, as well.” Even in quoting Irenaeus in this sermon that “the glory of God is a human being fully alive,” she speculated that the bent over woman was anything but fully alive. What Morrison and Belser realize together is that changing this narrative can all too easily lead to the next step in the double bind which would be criticizing the broken society in which the “bent over” woman lives.

⁸⁴³ Adele McCollum offers an alternate viewpoint to these as she suggests further study on folktales as a helpful resource. See: Adele B. McCollum, “Tradition, Folklore and Disability: A Heritage of Inclusion” in *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice*, eds. Nancy Eiesland and Don Saliers (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998): 167-187. McCollum advocates for a resourcement of traditional folktales that speak to inclusion in the face of a liturgical time she deems as abstracted from ordinary life. This liturgical disconnect may be reframed through the lens of folktales. She looks to the Stith Thompson Motif Index for an exhaustive indexing system of folktales. Here, she is able to look up “lame”, “blind”, “crippled”, “idiot”, “monster” and find a wealth of resources. In the face of exclusion, she finds in folklore radical inclusion of people with varying abilities. She also briefly explores themes of occupational injury, disability by deception, the curse of a disability and healing in these tales. She believes that folktales are at the heart of any given community and help to embody and include people of all abilities. Some motifs she sees in this lore are things like “the disabled change agent” of Tiny Tim who softens hearts; the “clever people with physical disabilities who improvise” like the cat with the wooden paw, “the blind character with insight” like Tiresius and “the wise fool.” This compendium of tales shows the importance of what McCollum calls “concrete contact groups” and their role for inclusion.

⁸⁴⁴ Joeckel, “A Christian Approach to Disability Studies,” 327.

⁸⁴⁵ Lennard Davis, “Dr. Johnson, Amelia, and the Discourse of Disability in the Eighteenth Century,” in *“Defects”: Engendering the Modern Body*, eds. Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 62.

⁸⁴⁶ Davis, “Dr. Johnson, Amelia and the Discourse of Disability,” 62.

disfavor toward the distance of a clinical assessment. And so, an additional strength of the medical model one might argue is its potentiality to strengthen existing skills when medical treatment functions within a holistic view of humanity, one that acknowledges the whole person and aims to enhance existing skills where medically possible. Such advancements can be positive when oriented not to erase errors, but instead work to fostering humanity with the best of technology. Living into this strength is fraught with judgment and stereotype, one must consider the body, mind and spirit of the individual on their own terms and with their own hopes realized rather than projected upon by others. We will see as we move from the medical model to the social model, how that advancement in scholarship was fueled by a need to better understand the intersection between bodies and societies.

4.1.3 The Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability⁸⁴⁷ argues that disability is largely socially constructed, deeply informed by worldly structures of institutions and stereotypes that create a societal ‘disabling’ of an individual through restricting access or provoking judgment.⁸⁴⁸ In the medical model, attention is focused on the embodiment of individual

⁸⁴⁷ In some literature, the social model of disability is referred to as the Minority-Group Model of disability. See for example: Gerald V. O’Brien, “Eugenics, Genetics and the Minority Group Model of Disabilities: Implications for Social Work Advocacy” *Social Work* 56:4 (October, 2011), 347-354. And also: Dimitris Anastasiou, “Disability in Multicultural Theory: Conceptual and Social Justice Issues” *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 27:1 (June 2016), 3-12. And, Andrew Batavia and Kay Schriener, “The Americans with Disabilities Act as Engine of Social Change: Models of Disability and the Potential of a Civil Rights Approach” *Policy Studies Journal* 29:4 (2001), 690-703. To be clear, the social model is not exclusive to the frameworks of social analysis examined in chapter three.

⁸⁴⁸ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 22-31.

physicality. In the social model, attention is given to discrimination that occurs in the world through societal structures that create minority groups through exclusion by the physical and social nature of institutions.⁸⁴⁹ Sociologist Michael Oliver was instrumental in establishing the social model in 1983 with his work *Social Work with Disabled People*⁸⁵⁰ wherein he advocated for social justice and championed an approach through which to see societal barriers otherwise taken for granted. The social model centers critical attention on the way societal structures create disadvantages and cause restrictions for people with diverse impairments.⁸⁵¹

Three theologians offer insight into the social model of disability: Nancy Eiesland, Stanley Hauerwas and Sharon V. Betcher. Eiesland invites liberation from unjust societal structures. Hauerwas asks demanding questions of the intersection between intellectual capacity and social structures. Sharon V. Betcher prompts discussion between the environment and its potential to disable bodies through social injustice. Nancy Eiesland advocates for the social model in her understanding of the liberatory struggle those with disabilities face to overcome societal oppression, alienation from particular norms, and stigmas promulgated by stereotypes.⁸⁵² In the face of such limitation Eiesland, like Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, experiences disability as disabling interchanges between the world and one's body through "architectural and attitudinal"⁸⁵³ barriers. While Eiesland wrestles with the societal dimensions of disablement in

⁸⁴⁹ See for example Nancy Eiesland's description regarding the social construction of disability in *The Disabled God*, (23-25).

⁸⁵⁰ Michael Oliver, *Social Work with Disabled People*, (London, UK: Macmillan Press, 1983).

⁸⁵¹ Pam Thomas, Lorraine Gradwell and Natalie Markham, "Defining Impairment within the Social Model of Disability," *Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People's Magazine*, (July 1997).

⁸⁵² Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 102.

⁸⁵³ Joeckel, "A Christian Approach to Disability Studies," 341.

interactions with her own disabled body, Stanley Hauerwas adds to the conversation in the social model the question of intellectual disablement wherein there is a social construction of disability with regard to intellect and reason.⁸⁵⁴

Theologian Sharon V. Betcher adds dimension to the social model of disability by inviting reflection on ecological devastation as a contributing factor for creating disability rather than seeing disability as a natural phenomenon seen as an “*individual tragedy*.”⁸⁵⁵ The socialization of disability, for Betcher, is something that occurs prior to birth through social contexts and devastations rather than after birth as a body enters a social context inhospitable to their particular condition. For Betcher, the anthropocene⁸⁵⁶ itself is a disabling social environment. She explains, “Disability is not merely a ‘natural’ evolutionary mutation. In the Anthropocene era, as human activity drives and aggravates planetary evolution, environmental disability is increasingly a form of human-on-human injustice.”⁸⁵⁷ The effect of this societal injustice is what Betcher deems an “earth-assemblage.”⁸⁵⁸ For Betcher, society disables in two ways: first, through our shared “fleshy commons”⁸⁵⁹ which can create bodily disablement prior to birth; and, second, by

⁸⁵⁴ For example see: Stanley Hauerwas, “The Church and the Mentally Handicapped: A Continuing Challenge to the Imagination” *Critical Reflections on Stanley Hauerwas’ Theology of Disability: Disabling Society, Enabling Theology* (London: Routledge Press, 2005), 53-62.

⁸⁵⁵ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State.” *Religious Studies News*. http://rsnonline.org/index47ae.html?option=com_content&view=article&id=1462:of-disability-and-the-garden-state&catid=25:spotlight-on-theo-educ&Itemid=1620. (Accessed: October 10, 2014).

⁸⁵⁶ Atmospheric chemist, Paul Crutzen describes the anthropocene as, “A new geological epoch characterized by pervasive human influence throughout earth’s systems.” The cumulative condition exhibited by the anthropocene is the effect that ‘industrial humanity’ enforces as an evolutionary force affecting both ecology and biology thereby affecting certain disabilities. See for example: P.J. Curtzen and E. Stoermer, “The Anthropocene,” *Global Change Newsletter* 41, no. 1 (2000). Crutzen drew on the language of ecologist Eugene F. Stoermer who coined the term to popularize the concept giving it cultural weight to describe this new geological epoch at play.

⁸⁵⁷ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁵⁸ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁵⁹ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

the disabling that occurs after birth when the culture that created the particular disability then continues to “marginalize and minoritize.”⁸⁶⁰ Here, there can be a move back toward the medical model of disability when the society that both creates and perpetuates disability then “conspires to fix, cure, and rehabilitate disability.”⁸⁶¹ In the face of these forces, both medical and social, “certain assumptions of normalcy”⁸⁶² are heralded and in so doing the disabled person’s “agency, autonomy and reason”⁸⁶³ are suppressed within the system.

Betcher’s thesis is an important addition to understanding the many dimensions of the social model of disability as she makes clear the ramifications of “unthought after-effects of human historical processes”⁸⁶⁴ on an individual life existing within a greater over-powering context such as the Anthropocene. Betcher’s willingness to challenge current notions of the socializing effects of disability is helpful for this dissertation which aims to understand the disabling effects of moral injury brought on by, in Betcher’s words, the “unthought after-effects of human historical processes.” For our purposes, the critical move is not from the disabling effects of dismissive social contexts to the creating forces of the Anthropocene, as Betcher suggests, but from dismissive social contexts to the disabling forces at play in the ongoing theatres of war.

Eiesland, Hauerwas and Betcher offer glimpses of the social model of disability and its implication for disabled bodies. And yet, the social model bears significant weaknesses. While the social model attempts to move the structures of disability beyond

⁸⁶⁰ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁶¹ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁶² Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁶³ Sharon V. Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

⁸⁶⁴ Sharon V. Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State”

the impairment (or not) of an individual, the model is criticized for exactly that, as it “undermines or underestimates both the pain and the distinctiveness of the impaired body.”⁸⁶⁵ Additionally, a related weakness is in its attempt to demonstrate societal limitations on an individual, the social model highlights what a body “ ‘cannot do’ . . . [rather than] what they ‘can do.’ ”⁸⁶⁶ As much as the social model moves beyond binary conceptualizations, hyper-individualization and the over-medicalization of the medical model, the social model is still controversial.⁸⁶⁷ By focusing primarily on individual interaction with social environment, the social model often assumes that the disabling effect of society occurs consistently across societal structures. Here, disability becomes a socio-political category rather than a medical determination.

The reason for distinguishing between medical and social categories may originally have been an attempt to positively, rather than negatively describe disability. Scholars Roy McCloughry and Wayne Morris explain the creation of this category by saying, “In an attempt to address the fact that the medical model is a deficit model, the social model can go so far as to elevate impairment to a place beyond regret.”⁸⁶⁸ In so doing, the social model counteracts the problem of “ableism.” Ableism, according to Fred

⁸⁶⁵ Richard Cross, “Disability, Impairment and some Medieval Accounts of the Incarnation: Suggestions for a Theology of Personhood” *Modern Theology* 27:4 (October, 2011), 651.

⁸⁶⁶ Hans S. Reinders, *Receiving The Gift of Friendship: Profound Disability, Theological Anthropology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 329.

⁸⁶⁷ See, for example, Michael Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement: A Sociological Approach* (New York, NY: St Martin’s Press, 1990). And also Sharon V. Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

⁸⁶⁸ Roy McCloughry and Wayne Morris, *Making a World of Difference: Christian Reflections on Disability*, (London, England: SPCK, 2002), 17.

Pelka, is “the belief that people with disabilities are different from ‘normal’ people, and that their lives are inherently less worthwhile than those of people without disabilities.”⁸⁶⁹

And yet, a problem with the social model (also called “minority group model”) is that in its shift to societal structures, suffering that is real and inherent to some disabled bodies may be minimized and neglected.⁸⁷⁰ Jewish scholar Julia Belser-Watts argues there is a two-fold weakness of the social model. First, the social model is “ill-equipped to handle the fluidity of disability,”⁸⁷¹ and second, the social model has the potential to “efface the significance of actual, physical difference or to ignore the sometimes negative aspects of disability.”⁸⁷² Certain disabling conditions are uniquely bearers of pain from within that are not caused by societal barriers: consider, for example, fibromyalgia.⁸⁷³

The social model of disability aims to rescue the medical model from the binary problem of “failed health.”⁸⁷⁴ In so doing, the model offers strengths worthy of note here. One strength of the social model is the recognition that a body always exists within a community, in fact, it might be argued that one might not exist without a “thou” to acknowledge one’s own personhood. Certainly a strength; but also an inherent weakness perhaps, is the social model’s naming of societal prejudice and stereotypes both in attitudes and media, as well as in pervasive architecture. The shadow side of naming

⁸⁶⁹ Fred Pelka, *The Disability Rights Movement* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 3.

⁸⁷⁰ For example, Garland-Thomson appreciates the social model but acknowledges it can diminish the “material complexity” of people with disability. See: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996): 15-16. She writes: “Disability, then, can be painful, comfortable, familiar, alienating, bonding, isolating, disturbing, endearing, challenging, infuriating, or ordinary. Embedded in the complexity of actual human relations, it is always more than the disabled figure can signify” (13-14).

⁸⁷¹ Julia Watts Belser, “Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities” *Theology Today* 68:2, 2011, 185.

⁸⁷² Belser, “Disability and Christian Theology,” 185.

⁸⁷³ Capretto, “On Not Operationalizing Disability,” 896.

⁸⁷⁴ Betcher, “Of Disability and the Garden State.”

stereotypes is inherent in its potential to create stereotypes and thereby keep perpetuating them. Despite its weaknesses, and even in spite of its strengths, the social model propels society forward to consider inclusion as a fundamental moral issue.⁸⁷⁵ The social model of disability finds strength in its ability to name the impact on the disabled of their inability to reach personal goals and forward their future because of societal limitations.⁸⁷⁶

When comparing the social and the medical models of disability, some scholars have suggested the medical model might be seen as an “essentialist” approach to impairment existing within the very essence of the person versus a “constructionist” approach wherein society constructs disability.⁸⁷⁷ As we turn now to a new model of disability offered by Deborah Creamer, we will encounter what we might deem an “*existentialist*” account of disability as she wrestles with human limits before a limitless God and the existential questions raised by those real and exacting limits. As we turn to her account, we will integrate her analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each model into our assessment and then review her constructive alternative.

4.2 The Limit Model of Disability

⁸⁷⁵ See: Lorella Terzi “The Social Model of Disability: A Philosophical Critique” *The Journal of Applied Philosophy* 21:2 (August 2004), 141.

⁸⁷⁶ Cross, “Disability, Impairment and some Medieval Accounts of the Incarnation,” 650-651.

⁸⁷⁷ Myriam Winance, “Rethinking disability: Lessons from the past, questions for the future. Contributions and limits of the social model, the sociology of science and technology, and the ethics of care” *Alter: European Journal of Disability Research* 10(2016): 106.

Creamer's powerful work *Disability and Christian Theology Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities* critiques the dominant medical and social models⁸⁷⁸ of disability and provides a constructive alternative of a "limit model of disability." Her recognition of the weaknesses of both models is helpful in our ongoing desire to draw disability and moral injury together as helpful conversation partners. It became clear in the review of both the psychological and theological literature on moral injury the reservations regarding medicalization of the injury and the complexity of societal involvement. While the medical and social models of disability provide helpful starting points for assessing and refining the definition of moral injury, each model has shortcomings that restrict its usefulness. Creamer's limit model will lead us forward in considering how disability, and perhaps even human morality itself, encounters limits in varying spheres of life that can provoke disabling encounters.

Creamer's work invigorates study in disability by depicting the unavoidable limits⁸⁷⁹ of human embodiment and naming the equalizing power of this assertion for all humanity. Creamer's work is important because it addresses the real "limits" that studies in disability probe and pursuits in theological method quickly meet. For Creamer, this sense of "limit" is an integral part of being human, not simply a term that applies to those

⁸⁷⁸ Creamer refers throughout her book refers to the social model also as "the minority model of disability" (25-26).

⁸⁷⁹ Nancy Eiesland recognized human limits in her work *The Disabled God* but leaves that recognition for further development. Eiesland writes, "The disabled God makes possible a renewal of hope for people with disabilities and others who care. This symbol points not to a utopian vision of hope as the erasure of all human contingency, historically or eternally, for that would be to erase our bodies, our lives. Rather, it is a liberatory realism that maintains a clear recognition of the limits of our bodies and an acceptance of the truth of being human." Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 103.

who currently experience a disabling condition. Her understanding of “limit” is positive: limits are unsurprising, limits are intrinsic to existence, limits are good – not evil.⁸⁸⁰

By recasting limits in positive terms, Creamer erases some of the negativity associated with limits and disablement and expands “limit” to suggest a particular theological anthropology that touches all humanity. She uses the “limit-ness” of human experience to offer a third way beyond the operative “medical” and “minority” models of disability. For Creamer, the “medical” model of disability that understands disability as intrinsic to an individual misses the larger social implications of societal constructions that create their own impairment for a person who is “medically” disabled.⁸⁸¹ Instead of using the more standard term “the social model of disability,” Creamer instead refers to it as the “minority” model of disability to overcome this dismissal. By renaming the model, she offers a clear socio-political depiction of the way society fails to meet the physical and vocational needs of disabled persons thereby creating minorities.⁸⁸² Creamer’s articulation of “limit-ness” as a model for both disability and theology clarifies the bias in both that assumes “normal” bodies as the norm. A “limit” model for both disability and theology reveals a fundamental aspect of human experience as bound by limitation. Creamer’s model is a promising revision to the standard two models as she suggests the particular way in which disability is not always a given, but emerges fluidly within varying contexts.

⁸⁸⁰ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 94-96. Creamer will note later not *all* limits are good, but her point is clear. Human beings react to limits and deem them negatively. She aims here to reverse this reaction by claiming the overwhelming goodness of limits that humans encounter.

⁸⁸¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 22.

⁸⁸² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 25. In so doing, Creamer offers a reversal of the Platonic “disorder of the gods” creating havoc in the *civitas*. Here, she reverses the dynamic and describes how the *civitas* disorders the body, mind and spirit of ordinary citizens limiting abilities.

Creamer offers this third model as a “limit model” of disability to describe the fluidity through which flesh encounters various worlds and discovers inconsistent disabling since limits vary in various contexts. Though disability studies’ “social model” of disability emphasizes the way that social structures and built environments “disabled” particular individuals, this model does not does not adequately describe the “fluid” nature of disability where disabilities do not occur in all social contexts, but in certain social contexts when limits are encountered. Creamer argues that both the social and medical models fail in five ways: their inability to take into account the fluidity of disablement across social contexts⁸⁸³, the inability to embrace the great diversity of disability⁸⁸⁴, the inability to wrestle with experiences of disability such as chronic pain, the actuality that the state of disability is “more normal” than other states of being as we bear witness to the universal experience of flesh changing over time⁸⁸⁵, and the inability to engage certain areas of theological reflection⁸⁸⁶ beyond conversations key to the social model such as liberation and social justice.⁸⁸⁷ In moving toward a limit model, Creamer hopes to acknowledge “the prevalence of limits,”⁸⁸⁸ to avoid negative evaluations of a human being. This threefold posture will allow Creamer to add “necessary complexity”⁸⁸⁹ to the field of disability.

⁸⁸³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 31.

⁸⁸⁴ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 32.

⁸⁸⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 32. In the historical scholarship on disability, we noted the work of scholars like Augustine and Kierkegaard who lived with chronic pain and were keenly aware of their decaying bodies and yet arrived at different conclusions related to disability and theology.

⁸⁸⁶ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

⁸⁸⁷ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 115-116.

⁸⁸⁸ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 116. Again, worthy of note here is that the disordered body does not wreak havoc on the structures of the *civitas*; instead, the *civitas* in all of its complexity is a place of encounter with limits that can then disable and disorder.

⁸⁸⁹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 116

The beneficial result of this “necessary complexity” is the possibility of a deeper conversation across disability and theology, and even more so, between persons regarding the depth of their theological reflection in light of their own experience. With this shift, Creamer moves us from the medical world, through social contexts, into greater theological reflection. To accomplish this task, Creamer critiques the societal tendency to dismiss disability as an element of “the uninteresting randomness of life.”⁸⁹⁰ In so doing, Creamer invites deepened creativity, deepened humanity and deepened theology.⁸⁹¹ However, it is possible the very name “limit model” is a misnomer for exactly what Creamer hopes to convey. Perhaps, one might consider the suggested “*contextual limit model of disability*” to better represent Creamer’s twofold thought process: a person may be disabled in certain contexts when he or she encounters a limit; and that limit then raises questions of depth and substance about their world and relationships within that world.

Creamer’s contribution to the field is her ability to funnel these large conversations regarding justice and liberation, crucifixion and resurrection, access and exclusion as questions that deal with human limit. Her model is both radically inclusive, in that all human beings face limits. Creamer recognizes the insights of social model advocates that disability is informed, created and defined by social structures. Her model, promising as it is, requires revision in order to acknowledge the depth of human response to limit beyond her suggested affirmation that “limits are good” revealing

⁸⁹⁰ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 52.

⁸⁹¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

instead the anger, shame and self-hatred that can result in the face of limits.⁸⁹² In her discussion of limits, Creamer would do well to elaborate on different kinds of limits placing them along a spectrum of “goodness.” For example, some limits are a result of being creatures with embodied finitude; some limits are inevitable as vulnerable creatures living in God’s created universe; other limits stray from goodness when sinful human choices are made or societal structures create sinful institutions and contingencies.

And yet, Creamer does not make these distinctions. Instead, for Creamer, her key theological assertion framing her argument is that sin is the failure to acknowledge limit.⁸⁹³ Building on the work of feminist Sallie McFague, Creamer adds a fourth construction of limit in addition to McFague’s traditional threefold rubric of sin as a violation against humans, creatures or nature.⁸⁹⁴ Creamer adds that sin can occur against oneself: “Me versus Myself: living in a lie in relation to oneself.”⁸⁹⁵ Creamer explains, “This lie recognizes that we tend to hold inaccurate self-representations, especially insofar as we deny or depreciate our own limits.”⁸⁹⁶ Drawing limits into the theological category of sin betters our ability to discuss the difficulty in societal discourse regarding moral injury. When Creamer states, “From the limits perspective, sin might now be redefined as an inappropriate attitude towards limits as we both exaggerate and also reject

⁸⁹² Julia Watts Belser in her review article of Creamer’s book considers the dangers of deeming limits “good.” Belser’s conclusion is clear: “I fear that a limits model of disability may inadvertently deepen the perception of disability as a negative, even tragic condition.” See: Julia Watts Belser, “Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities,” *Theology Today* 68:2 (June, 2011): 186.

⁸⁹³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 71. Creamer makes clear: “This lie recognizes that we tend to hold inaccurate self-representations, especially insofar as we deny or depreciate our own limits.”

⁸⁹⁴ McFague, *Body of God*, 113. Creamer, *Disability and Christian Tradition*, 71.

⁸⁹⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 71.

⁸⁹⁶ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 71.

our own limits and the limits of others,”⁸⁹⁷ those of us interested in Moral Injury can imagine then the sinful limits that exist within a society that all too easily chooses what it wants to hear and what falls on deaf ears. Even more so, in discussing Creamer’s work, Mary Elise Lowe suggests, “This dread of disability can be framed in theological terms as the failure of the temporarily able-bodied to accept their limits as mortal, fragile, embodied, and vulnerable creatures of God.”⁸⁹⁸ Perhaps the societal inability to discuss Moral Injury is driven by much the same dread since the culture is unable to accept their limits as *moral* (sic), “fragile, embodied and vulnerable creatures of God.”⁸⁹⁹

Creamer’s work represents several shifts in thinking. First, she offers a shift in the world of disability scholarship by encouraging her peers to look beyond the medical and social models toward a more fluid model that takes into account the diversity of experiences of disability. Second, she, along with scholars like Sallie McFague, offers a shift in theological reflection to consider the religious significance of our bodies and the impact of embodiment on theological reflection. Third, and perhaps most important, while the social model is a helpful step beyond the medical model moving from a singular body to a social body, Creamer’s limit model engages a shift to a third sphere beyond the singular and the social bodies to consider, in McFague’s language, “the body of God.” While this shift sounds dramatic, and perhaps even impossible to consider, it is helpful for our purposes to think of the relationship between disablement and spheres of thinking beyond our own bodies and beyond the social body. Disablement, whether

⁸⁹⁷ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 33.

⁸⁹⁸ Mary Elise Lowe, “Rabbi Who Sinned? Disability Theologies and Sin” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 51: 3 (September, 2012), 188.

⁸⁹⁹ Lowe, “Rabbi Who Sinned?,” 188.

physical, mental or moral, intersects our ways of thinking about theological anthropology⁹⁰⁰ and theology.⁹⁰¹

4.2.1 Strengths of the Limit Model of Disability

Creamer's argument widens the horizon of disability studies beyond the spheres of the medical and the social to the theological. Her work allows for greater differentiation in the experience of disability than the social model and invites sustained reflection on particular limits encountered and their effect on the body, mind, spirit of the person who experienced them. Creamer claims the messiness of embodiment and its fluid unfolding across time and space through the limit model to a degree that the medical and social models do not acknowledge. She challenges existing dichotomies that draw lines between "us and them"⁹⁰² (that is, persons with and without disabilities) moving the conversation regarding limit to a horizon other than the distance between two humans and instead to the limits of finite humanity in the face of God. For example, Creamer provides the example of two women meeting in wheelchairs. The first was paralyzed since birth. The second was paralyzed late in life during a skiing accident. The medical model would equate much of their experience. The social model would equate much of their experience. The limit model succeeds in differentiating between their experiences

⁹⁰⁰ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 108-110. Aquinas, for example, took disability into account when he developed his doctrines of the *imago dei* and ecclesiological baptism as a blessing for vulnerable bodies.

⁹⁰¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 111-113. Karl Barth shaped an account of heaven and the resurrection with disability in mind as he explored heaven as the reverse side of life. See: Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/4: 338.

⁹⁰² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 118.

and the limits they encounter.⁹⁰³ With these strengths, Creamer invites new possibilities for perseverance, courage, strength, creativity, community, theological reflection, interdependence and deepened conversations requiring honesty and self-reflection.⁹⁰⁴

4.2.2 Challenges of the Limit Model of Disability

Despite the great strengths of Creamer's model and the advance the model achieves in the scholarship, there are weaknesses that are important to note. The three weaknesses that must be addressed are the lack of: depth in moral emotion, discernment for knowing which limits are good and which limits are bad, and development of the constructive model. First, does Creamer delve deep enough into human suffering in the face of limits? A repeated mantra throughout her work is that "limits are good." Creamer does makes clear: "The limits model does not aim to dismiss or deny experiences of evil or suffering, nor does it devalue efforts to overcome limits – it does not propose that all limits are good or that we ought to embrace or accept them all."⁹⁰⁵ While the assertion helps clarify her thinking, the reader is still left wanting a deeper probe of the effect of encountering limits on the experience of shame, despair and pain. Without attention to

⁹⁰³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 117.

⁹⁰⁴ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 118-120. Creamer's work here resonates with several contemporary scholars in disability who advocate for relationality, vulnerability and deepened community such as Amos Yong and Molly Haslam. Haslam offers an extended phenomenological account of a relationship with a non-verbal disabled friend in *A Constructive Theology of Intellectual Disability: Human Beings As Mutuality and Response*.

⁹⁰⁵ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 118.

these moral emotions the power and possibility of their ability to “globalize”⁹⁰⁶ and affect contexts beyond the individual are dramatically increased.

Second, Creamer’s weakness is her lack of discernment in acknowledging which limits are good and which limits are not, as well as her lack of attention in guiding the reader to make that discernment as well.⁹⁰⁷ In her review, Marilyn Martone makes clear two points: first, she questions how one is to discern, given Creamer’s model, when limits are good and when they are not. Martone invites further reflection on that element of discernment. Second, Martone does understand Creamer of having a sense of human finitude in the face of limits. Sin, for Creamer according to Martone, “is the refusal to accept our proper place.” To be clear, that notion of sin is not linked to disability or morality, but instead to the inability to acknowledge limit. Creamer begins to make the distinctions between sin, finitude and limit; but as Martone acknowledges, she does not go far enough in the discussion. Creamer recognizes finitude but doesn’t distinguish finitude which is part of human nature from sin, which is not.

Third, reviews of her work have invited further development of a constructive account of this limit model of disability rather than a deconstruction of previous

⁹⁰⁶ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

⁹⁰⁷ Marilyn Martone’s book review of Creamer’s describes her work as a “nascent theology of disability” recognizing the need despite the solid foundation articulated by Creamer to further develop her theology of limits. See: Marilyn Martone, on “Disability and Christian Theology by Deborah Creamer” in *Theological Studies*, (March 2010), 262. Martone makes clear two points: first, she questions how one is to discern, given Creamer’s model, when limits are good and when they are not. Martone invites further reflection on that element of discernment. Second, Martone does understand Creamer of having a sense of human finitude in the face of limits. Sin, for Creamer according to Martone, “is the refusal to accept our proper place.”

models.⁹⁰⁸ Aaron Klink, for example, argues Creamer's book takes "scant time developing its own interesting constructive proposal." Doing so would require developing an account of limits that are beneficial, limits that are dangerous,⁹⁰⁹ and how to discern between the two. In addition, doing so would develop an account of those moral emotions, such as despair, in the face of limits. And, doing so would deepen a depiction of God who willingly takes on a self-limitation in order to encounter human beings in their own limitations. Furthering that theological account would demand further construction of theological doctrines such as the incarnation, crucifixion or resurrection, as other scholars have helpfully accomplished. Despite these few weaknesses, Creamer's scholarship is respected across the disciplines of disability and theology to kindle creativity and invite new possibility for deeper engagement of the limits we encounter.

For moral injury, questions then are raised as changing contexts and the limits of morality within those spheres, prompt difficult reflection regarding one's own moral agency and self identity, relationships to both comrades and persons of authority, as well as religious crises amid the moral void. In response to those questions, the limit model offers possibilities. While Creamer's initial presentation does not offer substantial depth to the shame and guilt residing in moral injury, the questions of limits resonate. As we turn in the next chapter to our own constructive alternative – that is, "a revised limit model of disability" we will have to keep in mind the weaknesses of Creamer's

⁹⁰⁸ Aaron Klink notes the need for further constructive work on Creamer's model in his review article of *Disability and Christian Theology*. See: Aaron Klink, "Disability and Christian Theology" *Religious Studies Review* 35:3 (Sept. 2009): 157.

⁹⁰⁹ Belser, "Disability and Christian Theology," 186.

construction. While Creamer needs further depth in the moral emotions; further discernment in knowing which limits are natural and good and which limits are sinful and bad; and further development in a constructive model; we will see in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (that preceded Creamer's work) helpful constructs which will aid her work and ours.

4.3 Toward A Revised Limit Model of Disability

While Creamer's "limit model" succeeds in expanding the conversation beyond the standard medical and social models, her model benefits from further refinement as we set forth a constructive "revised limit model of disability." These benefits will include: a recognition of limits changing fluidly across contexts, an assessment of how functioning changes amid those differing fluid contexts, and, an account of moral emotions that includes shame and despair in response to those limits. Certainly we have learned that moral injury is deeper and more embodied than mechanized views of humanity and the healing arts; moral injury is not captured within a medical model of disability. And we have toured the contours of social issues that both contribute to and reverberate from moral injury; and yet, the social model of disability is inadequate. Creamer's model offers promise by recasting disability in relation to an exploration of limits and the repercussions those limits have for God, self and neighbor. In particular, Creamer's model is most helpful in showing how 'disabling' occurs in various spheres of life as limits are met and grief ensues. However, more development on the depth of shame and despair in human experience is needed in order to validate the depth of lament and loss a

veteran experiences beyond the simple explanation Creamer offers that limits are not evil, but a good and right part of being human.

Creamer draws on the scholarship of Sharon Betcher to refine her own work with an eye to deepening awareness of the depth of pain experience when limits are confronted. In response to Betcher's critique, Creamer offers a threefold response. Creamer argues first, that "limits" should be embraced as a challenge to the idea of a more traditional normal. When limits are recognized, suddenly there is new space in which to act and "to make and unmake issues of identity, relationality, space and place."⁹¹⁰ Second, she argues that scholars should engage across disciplines of theology, sociology and psychology. The conversation can then serve to, "question and complicate, to challenge and play, to propose and subvert, and to push continually toward complexity."⁹¹¹ And finally, she proposes what she deems "a pedagogy of pain." Betcher notes the tendency of physical pain to turn inward, mute and suppress.⁹¹² Creamer cites the work of Elaine Scarry as well who argues, "physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it."⁹¹³ If the physical pain of the body is inexpressible, how then can the reverberating pain of the spirit entangled with flesh find words? Even more so, Creamer acknowledges that unexpressed pain, pain that is turned inward for lack of words, only increases.⁹¹⁴ Most poignantly for the purposes of our overarching conversation regarding Moral Injury, Creamer takes note: "Cultures of privilege need

⁹¹⁰ Creamer, "Embracing Limits," 125.

⁹¹¹ Creamer, "Embracing Limits," 126. Here, we are reminded of Sheila Maguen and Brett Litz's cross-disciplinary challenge to address the most hyper-complex of societal problems such as moral injury. Maguen and Litz, "Moral Injury and Veterans of War," 2.

⁹¹² Creamer, "Embracing Limits," 126.

⁹¹³ Creamer, "Embracing Limits," 126. Regarding Creamer's discussion of Elaine Scarry see: Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

⁹¹⁴ Creamer, "Embracing Limits," 127.

such a pedagogy of pain.”⁹¹⁵ Pain, for Creamer, becomes one of the impetuses for a new model of disability that can transcend the predisposition to bodily “errors” of the medical model and the prejudices and stereotypes of the social model of disability.⁹¹⁶ The scholarly conversation between Creamer and Betcher reveal openness by Creamer for further engagement and refinement. In the same spirit, I will draw on these three deepened points to present a revised limit model of disability.

To be clear, a revised limit model of disability is needed to make space in the discourse for moral injury to be considered a “disability.” This terminology allows us to reject a conception of disability as taboo and instead to resource the depth and breadth of disability discourse. Here, I suggest seven reasons why a revised limit model of disability is essential for moral injury. First, a revised limit model of disability makes a *claim* upon the scholarship of moral injury and invites collaboration with the field of disability studies. Jonathan Shay revealed in his lectures at Chautauqua the many ways in which moral injury is a disabling condition.⁹¹⁷ Second, a revised limit model of disability acknowledges “the limited horizon of choice” in which veterans are forced to make decisions thereby causing at times, and in ways big and small,⁹¹⁸ disablement. When those limits are confronted and *choices* are made or invalidated; the potential exists for the disabling of body, mind and spirit. Third, a revised limit model of disability allows for the complexity of morality across varying spheres of life – acknowledging that different moral codes exist in the warzone, the bedroom and the boardroom. Each of

⁹¹⁵ Creamer, “Embracing Limits,” 127.

⁹¹⁶ Creamer, “Embracing Limits,” 127.

⁹¹⁷ Shay, “Moral Injury in War.”

⁹¹⁸ Again, an important nuance of this is described in Tyler Boudreau’s essay “The Morally Injured.”

these changing *contexts* presents rules of morality that might face different limits in an alternative context. Fourth, a revised limit model of disability reveals the reduced *coping* that occurs when a limit is transgressed in a particular context. The limited horizon of choice⁹¹⁹ and its assault of past moral codes affect embodiment and the ability to cope where functioning and flourishing once occurred with ease. One might wonder if morality then truly becomes limited further due to the reduced coping, the stress on embodiment, and the questions raised of God, self and other. Can changing flesh contribute directly to a changing morality? Fifth, a revised limit model of disability *challenges* previously held beliefs of God, self and neighbor. Veteran Michael Yandell explains,

This is what moral injury is—the winds that blow when all the laws, all the understood ways of relating to other human beings have been laid flat. For when we release the terms good and evil and start applying those terms to human beings and whole groups of people, we allow ourselves the capacity to lay flat any moral qualms in order to pursue the enemy to the ends of the earth.⁹²⁰

In this brief reflection we hear the challenges to God (good and evil), others (ways of relating) and self (we allow ourselves...). Sixth, a revised limit model of disability will travel the distance beyond Creamer's easy acceptance that "limits are good"⁹²¹ to a more

⁹¹⁹ The language of "moral horizon" is critical to the work of Theologian Sarah Bachelard. In her book *Resurrection and the Moral Imagination*, our moral imagination is conceiving the resurrection as a new reality, a new world possible within this world, provides a "new horizon" (2) against which to act. The Christian moral agent does not live solely with laws or commands within the complexities of this world, instead, the Christian moral agent acts within this new horizon the resurrection provides. Bachelard's view stands in contrast to Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and the Moral Order*. For Bachelard, resurrection creates a "new world" over and against the world broken by the fall. For O'Donovan, resurrection provides justification for the current created order. Bachelard's believes the church has a responsibility to speak from this new horizon, with non-religious language (185), in order to reach those who do not present an explicit religious belonging. Her willingness to risk religious language, though fundamentally grounded in a theology of the resurrection, echoes Bonhoeffer's often quoted advocacy of a "religionless Christianity" in a "world come of age" (183). See: Sarah Bachelard, *Resurrection and the Moral Imagination: Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

⁹²⁰ Yandell, "The War Within," 12.

⁹²¹ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 96.

nuanced engagement with a kind of Kierkegaardian angst that engagement with limits create an existential crisis and we might even become in that moment “sick unto death.” To *create space* for the shame and anguish experienced by our vets will be an essential component of a revised limit model. Finally, a revised limit model of disability draws the *conversation* regarding moral injury beyond the lone injured vet into a larger societal conversation regarding the limits all creatures encounter. Could this be in the vein of Gutierrez, an “irruption of the poor” for the twenty-first century? In no way should this element of the model negate the unique and wounded experience of our returning veterans. Instead, a reflection on *creaturely limits* might shape a theological anthropology worthy of self-reflection and societal complicity for all.⁹²²

Here, then, are seven reasons why a revised limit model of disability is needed for our veterans to gain some empowerment in recognizing moral injury as a disabling experience. Above all these reasons, however, I would herald one more. It is time that the mark of *sara’at*, that stigmatizing tattoo of moral failure,⁹²³ is removed from the shoulders of our veterans. Instead, a mantle of responsibility for all needs to be claimed, understood and addressed for our complicit cooperation in the forces that create and sustain the potential for moral injury. A revised limit model of disability makes space for individuals and institutions to understand the limits within which we live and move and

⁹²² See for example: John Macquarrie, “Theological Reflections on Disability,” *Religion and Disability: Essays in Scripture, Theology and Ethics*, ed. Marilyn E. Bishop (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward Press, 1995): 30-32. Macquarrie’s essay is an extended discussion on what it means to be human. A “thing,” as Macquarrie describes has a certain number of fixed properties. A “human” on the other hand, is comprised of limitless possibilities that “may or may not be realized.” A human being then is an ironic mix of limitation and possibility; we are finite but attracted to the infinite. However, Macquarrie looks to theologian David Pailin to claim that within this mix there is no definite set of features that necessitate full humanity. Herein, texts like Romans 8:22-23 “we groan inwardly...as we await the redemption of our bodies” and Mark 10:27 “with God all things are possible” make sense

⁹²³Melcher, “Visualizing the Perfect Cult,” 55.

have our being, and how structures of societal injustice create a limited horizon of choice causing moral injury to be inflicted in traumatic, nuanced and subtle ways on larger populations of people than we might ever imagine.⁹²⁴

4.4 Next Steps Toward a New Model of Disability to Address Moral Injury

Given the demand for the revised limit model, what then is needed to proceed forward? Rosemarie Garland-Thomson says, “Disability is the transformation that occurs as flesh encounters the world.”⁹²⁵ Her account of disability as a transformation of the human along a spectrum of life⁹²⁶ that acknowledges finitude, vulnerability and limits is an attempt to de-stigmatize the language of disability. The dynamic theological anthropology of her definition creates a conceptual space where “the world” limits, again and again, over the course of a lifetime. However, her language creates room for imagining the possibility of transformation within those encounters. Using Garland-Thomson’s definition as a lens through which to engage the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer will allow us to “revise” Creamer’s “limit model” to explore the depth of despair when human agency encounters real-world limits thereby encountering world-shattering trauma.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁴ Rita Nakashima Brock in her essay “Sophie’s Choice” articulates an inclusive stance on moral injury that argues for a much larger societal depth and breadth to moral injury than originally intended when the term was first designated for veterans of war.

⁹²⁵ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 342.

⁹²⁶ David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have been instrumental in naming the construction of a continuum that places disability along a value spectrum between ill and healthy. See: David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, eds., *The Body and Physical Difference*, 1.

⁹²⁷ See: Ronnie Janoff-Bulman: *Shattered Assumptions: Toward a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2002). We will continue in the upcoming chapters to deepen the language of trauma within the revised limit model of disability to include notions such as Janoff-Bulman’s that when the “assumptive world” in which a human lives is shattered, the only language in response is the language of trauma. Key assumptions we maintain are: the world is good, the world and our lives within it have meaning, and my self has worth (6). When these assumptions are fragmented, the self does as well.

Drawing on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's view of limit will prove to be a helpful corrective and guide to deepen our conception of human limit by addressing these weaknesses and therefore, probe human suffering in the face of limit, explore further an aspect of the theological doctrine of sin as a failure to recognize finitude, and engage sustained theological reflection on theological anthropology, Christology and theology. This movement toward Bonhoeffer to strengthen Creamer's limit model will aid in our probe for a "revised limit model" for moral injury. Garland-Thomson's definition will allow us to look at Bonhoeffer's theology through the lens of "world" (creation), "flesh" (creatures), "encounters" (the fall, and the continual fall), and "transformation" (the orders of preservation). Bonhoeffer's exposition will deepen and revise Creamer's conceptualization of *grenze* (limit); but even more so, Bonhoeffer acknowledges limits and encounters across varying spheres of life through his description of the "mandates of creation" and "the order of preservation" within those spheres once a limit has been crossed and shame ensues so that there may be functioning and flourishing in both the life of the individual and the affected society.

Recognizing the weaknesses in Creamer's account (the depth of moral emotion, the need for discernment of dangerous versus advantageous limits, and the further development of the details of a constructive model) will aid our discussion of Bonhoeffer and guide our assessment of his account of finite creatures within creation, his assessment of human sin, and his hope for redemption through the orders of preservation and the mandates of creation. Bonhoeffer's development of these areas will directly address the weaknesses in Creamer's presentation. Even more so, Bonhoeffer will be helpful in discerning limits that are natural, and thus *advantageous* to humanity, versus limits that

are sinful, and thus can be *dangerous* to humanity. In so doing, Bonhoeffer proves helpful in evaluating the moral demands of each kind of limit.

Chapter 5

BONHOEFFER'S VIEW OF LIMIT

*When I struggle with my own pain, my veteran teammates will support me;
and I will reach out of the darkness and grasp their helping hands.*

- The Veterans' Creed⁹²⁸

5.1 Introduction

In chapter three we established that drawing moral injury into conversation with disability might happen in any of three ways: by way of definition, by way of an operational framework such as social analysis, or by way of a deeper theological anthropology shaped by a robust concept of human finitude. We also recognized the potential of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's account of disability to draw us deeper into that sense of finitude. In chapter four, we continued our exploration into models of disability by analyzing the medical and social models, noting their strengths and advancements of scholarly conversation, while also clearly conveying their weaknesses. Then we turned to Deborah Creamer who saw the need for a model of disability that recognized human finitude and so presented "the limit model of disability." While that model advances the conversation, and provides helpful insight for moral injury, her model does not address the globalizing emotion of human shame and despair when confronted with those limits that raise questions about God, self and other. Nor does Creamer differentiate among different types of limits and their moral implications. We noted the need for "a revised limit model of disability" that would take into account those concerns. This chapter furthers the advancement of that revised model by drawing

⁹²⁸ Veterans' Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

Creamer into conversation with Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his conceptualization of “limit” as a necessary part of human finitude.

To comprehend Bonhoeffer’s view of limits and finitude, it will be necessary to present a contextualization and schematization of Bonhoeffer’s Genesis 1-3 lectures now published by the title *Creation and Fall*.⁹²⁹ These lectures offer, as Genesis 1 does, a sweeping view of creation (world) and God’s act in that ongoing creation. Genesis 2 presents, instead of that sweeping view of creation, a more personal introduction to two creatures, Adam and Eve (flesh). Within that broad overview of both creation (world) and creature (flesh), it will be helpful to focus on several significant terms important to Bonhoeffer in these lectures: circle, middle, limit, other, tob/ra, shame and preservation. We will see, as we analyze Bonhoeffer’s text, that Rosemarie Garland Thomson’s definition of disability as “the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world”⁹³⁰ proves to be a helpful lens through which to read and understand Bonhoeffer’s accounts of creation, fall and redemption as we draw those doctrines alongside Garland-Thomson’s language of “world”, “flesh”, “encounter” and “transformation”.⁹³¹

⁹²⁹ The life, theology, teaching and public witness of Bonhoeffer’s are described in two recent biographies. See: Charles Marsh, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014) and Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.) Also of note is the account of Bonhoeffer’s dear friend Eberhard Bethge. See: Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, trans. Eric Mosbacher et al., revised edition (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 2000). After Bonhoeffer’s death, Bethge is credited with encouraging review and publication of Bonhoeffer’s work.

⁹³⁰ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 342. See also: Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts*, 26-27. Erevelles argues disability is “not a condition of being, but of becoming, and this becoming is a historical event, it is its material context that is critical in the theorizing of disabled bodies/subjectivities” (26). Also see: Robert McRuer, *Crip theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006): 207. Robert McRuer questions, “What might it mean to welcome the disability to come, to desire it?” (207). In so asking McRuer, according to Erevelles, “celebrates the transformative potential of disability” (27).

⁹³¹ To be clear, all care will be taken not to read Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s schema of world, flesh, encounter and transformation into Bonhoeffer’s text. Instead, a thorough review of his exegetical work will allow us to see how his text presents his particular view of world, flesh, encounter and transformation. This

Bonhoeffer presents a unique interpretation of the Biblical fall account as a certain kind of “transformation of the flesh” as Adam and Eve encounter *other-than-God* experiences. Exploring this crucial terminology and its implications for morality will then allow a probe into the overarching theme for Bonhoeffer of “the orders of preservation,” a central dimension of Bonhoeffer’s theology of creation. The orders of preservation are a saving force, in the face of the fall, a mode of divine activity through which flesh that encounters the fallen world is preserved and upheld by Christ. In his later work the “Ethics” Bonhoeffer expands his account of the orders of preservation, associating this preservation in Christ more broadly within the very structures of society Bonhoeffer deems “the mandates of creation.”⁹³²

Throughout this exposition and exploration, important to keep in mind are three vital themes to which Bonhoeffer speaks: bodily life, morality and disability. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s definition provides exegetical clarity after reading Bonhoeffer. The terms, themes and theological exposition Bonhoeffer uses resonate with Garland-Thomson’s language of flesh, world, encounter and transformation. These words matter for Bonhoeffer’s account of bodily life and divine preservation. Bodily life, in all its brokenness after the fall, has direct consequences for Bonhoeffer’s account of morality. Because we are finite, vulnerable beings living in a complex world, concrete reality will demand ethical responsibility that is faithful and contextual. Encounters with those worldly demands will affect, and potentially disable, flesh; and yet, Garland-Thomson

language will prove helpful for us to consider these themes in Bonhoeffer: creation (world and flesh), the fall and sin (encounter) and redemption. Perhaps it is in this last step where we must be careful not to read Garland-Thomson into Bonhoeffer. While she uses the language of “transformation,” he uses the language of the orders of preservation to explain Christ’s ongoing redemptive work.

⁹³² See: Robin W. Lovin, “The Mandates in an Age of Globalization” in *Ontology and Ethics*. 19-31. And: Markus Franz, “The Conversion of Social Life: Bonhoeffer’s Mandates as Theological Dispositifs,” 133-149.

and Bonhoeffer both hope for divine transformation beyond the initial pain of change. This chapter concludes with an exploration of the themes of bodily life, morality and disability in Bonhoeffer and their significance for our study given the theological anthropology, Christology and soteriology Bonhoeffer develops. The conclusions Bonhoeffer draws in these three theological areas will aid our venture to present a revised limit model of disability to respond to Moral Injury. One might argue, the whole of “Creation and Fall” is an attempt to create such a model; to present an account of human being, transformed as flesh encounters world,⁹³³ confronted with questions regarding the limits of God, self and other, heightened by a debilitating moral crisis. While Creamer fails to distinguish between natural and sinful limits across a spectrum of social contexts and the different moral demands of those varied limits, Bonhoeffer offers such resources in his exegetical and theological work.

5.2 Creation and Fall

Bonhoeffer’s biblical exegesis of Genesis 1-3 from Tuesday, November 8, 1932 to Tuesday, February 21, 1933 at the University of Berlin on the subject “Creation and Sin” (*Schopfung und Sunde*) became the book later titled “Creation and Fall.”⁹³⁴ In these lectures, Bonhoeffer strove to be scholarly while using the methods of exegesis. But

⁹³³ Biblical scholar Paul Cho offered an insight worthy of note here. For those who have experienced trauma, the notion that flesh encounters world does not adequately describe the devastation of traumatic experience. He notes the scholarship of Ronnie Janof-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions: Toward a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992). Janof-Bulman makes clear extreme life events are greater than simple ‘encounter,’ instead; they are earth-shattering and world-changing (4). This strengthens our need for Bonhoeffer who argued there must be a move beyond ‘encounter.’ The divine presence through the orders of preservation and the mandates of creation is at work transforming the world.

⁹³⁴ Christine Schliesser, *Everyone Who Acts Responsibly Becomes Guilty: Bonhoeffer’s Concept of Accepting Guilt* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 55. Schliesser makes clear that upon request of Bonhoeffer’s students for the lectures to be published, he was no longer able to use the original title because of the publication of a 1931 book by Emanuel Hirsch entitled *Creation and Sin*.

instead of delivering the lectures in typical academic oration, his lecture style was that of *kerygma* (proclamation).⁹³⁵ This shift in oratory style coincided with a broader shift in audience,⁹³⁶ and perhaps a personal turning point as well, where Bonhoeffer moved from the academic exercises of works like “Sanctorum Communio” (*Sanctorum Communio: eine Dogmatische Untersuchung zur Soziologie der Kirche*) and “Act and Being” (*Akt und Sein*) to more pastoral works such as “The Cost of Discipleship” (*Nachfolge*) and “Life Together” (*Gemeinsames Leben*).⁹³⁷ Throughout his reflections on Genesis 1-3, Bonhoeffer reiterated the question, “How can these words live?”⁹³⁸ One attendee described the profound impact of his theological discourse: “In these lectures this extraordinary man, Bonhoeffer, exploded everything I had taken for granted as custom or tradition in theology/the church, the state/politics, academic scholarship/research and so on.”⁹³⁹ Even Bonhoeffer himself, reflecting back on this period of teaching, seemed surprised by the impact of these lectures not on his students, but on his own thinking: “I came to the Bible for the first time.”⁹⁴⁰

Creation and Fall is the corpus of Bonhoeffer’s teaching to students at the University of Berlin during that winter of 1933. As we well know in retrospect, this

⁹³⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, ed. I.W. de Gruchy; trans. D.S. Bax (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), (=DB WE 3), 5.

⁹³⁶ See for example, Clifford J. Green’s chapter “From the Phraseological to the Real: 1932” in his book *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*. Here, he notes a 1932 letter from Bonhoeffer to Edward Bethge: “There are people who change, and many who can scarcely change at all. I don’t think I have ever changed very much, except perhaps at the time of my first impressions abroad and under the first conscious influence of my father’s personality. Then a turning away from the phraseological to the real ensued.” Clifford J. Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 105.

⁹³⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 6.

⁹³⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 8.

⁹³⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 3.

⁹⁴⁰ Letter from Finkenwalde dated January 27, 1936 in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Volume 14: Theological Education at Finkenwalde (1935-1937)*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2013), 113

season was a time of disorienting unrest.⁹⁴¹ Historian John A. Moses describes 1933 as a pivotal year when Germany was transitioning from the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) to the National Socialist Dictatorship of Hitler.⁹⁴² Amid many changes, one of note was the passing of the Enabling Bill on March 23, 1933, just a few months after the completion of Bonhoeffer's lectures that allowed the Chancellor complete power, eliminating all other political parties so that the Chancellor could make authoritarian decisions without opposition.⁹⁴³ The unrestricted power of the new German chancellor developed in response to the flailing power of the German parliament and their inability to move forward on key elements of national life such as the economy. These shifting power dynamics – from flailing to full-fledged authoritarianism – are worthy of note in relationship to Bonhoeffer's kerygmatic lectures. Bonhoeffer, as well as some of his students, came to understand again the provocative power of scripture and its proclamation as a challenge to other powers that be, even when those powers included the state Lutheran church.

Scholars have noted the prescient timing of Bonhoeffer's doctrine of creation.⁹⁴⁴ Theologian Wayne Floyd, Jr. argues Bonhoeffer seemed to know, "not only how these themes could again become compelling for theology, but also when these specific themes

⁹⁴¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 1.

⁹⁴² John A. Moses, "Bonhoeffer's Germany: The Political Context" in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* ed. by John W. deGruchy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.

⁹⁴³ Moses, "Bonhoeffer's Germany," 15.

⁹⁴⁴ Brian Brock notes that we are called to reflect on the doctrine of creation at moments of "estrangement" in our lives. He learns from Bonhoeffer who in his cultural crisis of total estrangement turned to the doctrine of creation to ask questions of his society. Brock writes, "What it is about our present that makes it so hard to be where we are? And how does the Christian confession of God as the Creator of heaven and earth 'bring us back to earth' – recreating us, with all our limits, in all our fullness as creatures?" (433). Alongside the doctrine of creation we are compelled to reexamine our Christology as well to sense Christ as the origin and the end of all things (433). See: Brian Brock, "On Becoming Creatures: Being Called to Presence in a Distracted World," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 18:4 (October 2016): 432-452.

should come forth with prophetic vigor.”⁹⁴⁵ In addition, Bonhoeffer’s friend Eberhard Bethge noted how Bonhoeffer managed to do two difficult tasks given the challenge of the social milieu of the time. Bonhoeffer possessed an “arcane tact” when needed and knew those moments where a “possible silence” was needed.⁹⁴⁶ To be clear, tact and silence were needed to preserve the power of the church speaking in a compelling way to the needs of the world so that the church was not a noisy gong or clanging symbol, but an institution that would speak the truth in love acting toward justice. With this context in mind, we proceed to analyze Bonhoeffer’s doctrines of creation, fall and redemption through the language of world, flesh, encounter and transformation.

5.2.2 WORLD: God’s Creation in Genesis

We will examine Bonhoeffer’s doctrine of creation in two sections: focusing first on the created world as a whole and then on human beings specifically. Our exploration of “world” centers on four movements within Bonhoeffer’s thought. First, we note the attention Bonhoeffer gives to human anxiety and circularity in thinking in trying to comprehend the divine act in creation. Second, we consider the notion Bonhoeffer has of the world’s creation *ex nihilo* as an unrestrained act of God’s freedom.⁹⁴⁷ Third, we turn to Bonhoeffer’s development of creation from days one through six through the schema of what is “fixed” and what is “alive.” And fourth, we consider Bonhoeffer’s theological

⁹⁴⁵ Wayne Floyd, Jr., “Christ, Concreteness, and Creation in the Early Bonhoeffer,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 39:1-2 (1984): 101.

⁹⁴⁶ Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977): 186, 786, 882.

⁹⁴⁷ Niels Henrik Gregerson, “The Mysteries of Christ and Creation: “Center” and “Limit” in Bonhoeffer’s *Creation and Fall* and *Christology Lectures*,” *Mysteries in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Copenhagen Bonhoeffer Symposium* ed. by Christiane Kirsten Tietz, Busch Nielsen, Ulrik Nissen (Copenhagen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007):141. Gregerson argues that Bonhoeffer too unconditionally accepts standard theology of the day regarding creation *ex nihilo* instead of allowing himself to probe philosophical questions regarding the mind of God prior to the moment of creation.

conviction that God is at work prior to the fall upholding the created world in goodness. One insight that should be noted as we continued is how Bonhoeffer shifts from language regarding the order (*Ordnung*) of creation to create a theological framework other than the problematic theology Bonhoeffer was experiencing in his day regarding “the order of creation” that he believed legitimized the Nazi regime.⁹⁴⁸ We will hear in Bonhoeffer’s account the doxology and liturgy evident in the Genesis account of creation but with emphases on theological nuances different than “order.”

Bonhoeffer’s lectures begin by addressing human anxiety caused by the human predicament of being caught in a “circle” of thinking. Despite this anxiety, Bonhoeffer begins poetically: “The place where the Bible begins is one where our own most impassioned waves of thinking break, as thrown back upon themselves, and lose their strength in spray and foam.”⁹⁴⁹ This first statement makes clear that Bonhoeffer’s biblical exposition of Genesis 1 will be more than a description of God’s act of creation, instead, Bonhoeffer begins with a pair of unexpected claims beyond the act of creating itself. First, as we can see from the opening words, Bonhoeffer begins with a philosophical explanation of the conundrum in which human beings find themselves. Our very asking “Why” regarding all the probing questions we might ask regarding the beginning of creation is simply “an expression...of thinking that lacks a beginning.”⁹⁵⁰ All of those whys implode upon the abyss of the deep and get tossed within the strength of the spray and foam that is there. Because human thinking can never conceive the beginning, their

⁹⁴⁸ Joshua A. Kaiser, *Becoming Simple and Wise: Moral Discernment in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Vision of Christian Ethics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015): 158.

⁹⁴⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 25.

⁹⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 26.

conundrum is living in the middle⁹⁵¹ between the beginning and the end encircled then, by the anxiety, of all those “Whys?” Anyone then who would claim knowledge of the beginning, will be deemed by others either a “liar” or a “savior” and in the act of making truth claims about the beginning will ultimately be killed by their peers.⁹⁵² Bonhoeffer’s opening prose may seem startling, but in light of Job 38:4 this Biblical exposition makes sense: *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you are so clever!*⁹⁵³ Because of this epistemological paradox, the creature who lives in the anxious middle suffers a difficult plight. That plight, the human condition, evidenced by Bonhoeffer in Genesis 1 in the face of the תְּהוֹ וַבְּהוּ (tohu wa bohu)⁹⁵⁴ is unforeseen given that creatures have not yet been created at this point in the story. It is here, in the circularity of human thinking breaking on the spray and foam, wherein his reflection becomes Christological: “Our thinking, that is, the thinking of those who have to turn to Christ to know about God, the thinking of fallen humankind, lacks a beginning because it is a circle. We think in a circle, but we also feel and will in a circle. We exist in a circle.”⁹⁵⁵

Before delving into Bonhoeffer’s exposition of Genesis itself, it is important to stress a claim central to his Genesis exegesis: human beings exist in a circle and God’s word meets them in the circle. Bonhoeffer presents this claim as prelude to God’s act of

⁹⁵¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 28.

⁹⁵² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 28.

⁹⁵³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 29.

⁹⁵⁴ Karl Barth and Bonhoeffer disagree on their conceptions of nothingness prior to creation. While Bonhoeffer maintains the *tohu wa bohu* as absolutely nothing and a point of contrast for recognizing God’s freedom, Barth argued otherwise. He conceived the nothingness as having “no positive qualification” (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/I, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2010), 107.) In addition, it becomes a “caricature” of God’s good creation (103) and is a theological picture of “the abyss of that which is intrinsically impossible” (104).

⁹⁵⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 26.

creation. Because human beings are incomplete in their knowledge of God, themselves, and creation, Bonhoeffer argues their thought process lacks a beginning.⁹⁵⁶ And because knowledge of the future is just as incomplete, human thinking lacks an ending. Within this conundrum, since there is no beginning and no end, humans “Think in a circle. But we also feel and will in a circle. We exist in a circle.”⁹⁵⁷ Because of this conundrum in all its circularity, humans get trapped within a predicament of circuitous argument that bares ongoing fault and error and so is a “*circulus vitiosus*.”⁹⁵⁸

As he turns to the text itself, Bonhoeffer links the thinking that “pounds itself to pieces on the beginning”⁹⁵⁹ with the imagery of the spray and foam at the beginning of creation as the spirit hovers over the deep. He suggests that the waters over which God hovers exhibit the tensions we experience as creatures: “The place where the Bible begins is one where our own most impassioned waves of thinking break, are thrown back upon themselves, and lose their strength in spray and foam.”⁹⁶⁰ Being caught within the circularity creates anxiety from “being in the middle.”⁹⁶¹ Meeting us in the middle of that anxiety is the Word of God that “comes alive for us here in the middle, not as a distant, eternal being in repose but as the Creator.”⁹⁶²

If the first limitation placed on the human agent is the very fact of being caught in the middle of a circle, the second limitation arrives with the Word of God. The arrival of God’s Word helps to create the very individuality of the human being as “The word

⁹⁵⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 26.

⁹⁵⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 26.

⁹⁵⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 27.

⁹⁵⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 27.

⁹⁶⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 25.

⁹⁶¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 29.

⁹⁶² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 30.

brings into relief; it outlines and limits the individual.”⁹⁶³ God’s Word reveals a limit. To be clear, *this limit is good*. The limit exists here to clarify our existence as creatures and our status as vulnerable and dependent human beings. At the same time, God’s Word also reveals our fallen character, suggesting that Bonhoeffer understands limit both as empowering as creatures and as revelatory of our imperfection as creatures. Bonhoeffer associates the fall not solely in the Genesis story of Adam and Eve in the garden, but more generally recognizes the fall in humanity’s inability to comprehend the unity of God’s activity in the created world. When speaking of Genesis 1:3 “And God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light” Bonhoeffer explains, “Our complete inability to hold the indicative and the imperative together in our minds shows that we no longer live in the unity of the active word of God but are fallen.”⁹⁶⁴ Humans then, find themselves in the center of this story – the very Word of God – with the inability to see forward or backward. Eden is that picture of the circle that places limits upon human existence, the circle in which humans find themselves, disabled.

The second assertion made by Bonhoeffer is that God created freely *ex nihilo*. Within that circle, by the grace of God’s revealed word, humanity comes to understand several key assertions: In the beginning, God created.⁹⁶⁵ In the beginning, God created freely.⁹⁶⁶ And in the beginning, God created freely out of nothing [*das nichts*].⁹⁶⁷ With these three statements, Bonhoeffer attempts to negate any reckoning of these concepts as expressing temporality or causality. God exists beyond time and thereby creation must

⁹⁶³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 43.

⁹⁶⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 43.

⁹⁶⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 31.

⁹⁶⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 36.

⁹⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 32.

not be viewed as an unfolding of temporal events.⁹⁶⁸ Temporality, causality and freedom are linked terms as Bonhoeffer presents a God who creates freely, beyond cause and effect, beyond time, *ex nihilo*, in order to depict the utter distinction between Creator and creature. Freedom, for Bonhoeffer, is an important theme both for emphasizing that distinction between God and creation, but also for maintaining God's freedom in resurrecting Christ from the dead. Creation *ex nihilo* is an affirmation Bonhoeffer makes regarding both creation and resurrection:

The fact that Christ was dead did not provide the possibility of his resurrection but its impossibility; it was nothing itself, it was the nihil negativum. There is absolutely no transition, no continuum between the dead Christ and the resurrected Christ, but the freedom of God that in the beginning created God's work out of nothing.⁹⁶⁹

The creator who fashions creation and resurrection in absolute freedom is the one who is "Lord [over nonbeing]" and has "power to rise up again."⁹⁷⁰ These two qualities, "Lordship over nonbeing" and "rising up again power", create the capacity for God's two actions in relationship to creation. First, God is the one who "wrests" creation out of nonbeing and then "upholds" creation to affirm being, even when being is under threat.⁹⁷¹ Prior to the fall, these two actions are held together within a singular movement. After the fall, the unity of these two acts (creation and preservation) will be split.

The third point worthy of note is the way in which Bonhoeffer presents each act of creation from day two through day six by that which is "fixed" and that which is "alive." These unfold after the establishment of light on the first day. The world God

⁹⁶⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 32.

⁹⁶⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 35.

⁹⁷⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 36.

⁹⁷¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 47.

creates is full of light. Light functions to “awaken the darkness to its own being”⁹⁷² and in this awareness “form becomes aware of existing over against something else.”⁹⁷³ When the creation then, “sees the Creator’s light”⁹⁷⁴ there is gratitude, praise and thanksgiving on behalf of creation. With the separation of light from the darkness, day and night are wrested into being. Bonhoeffer laments the inability of creatures to the wonder and power and gift of any given day. Technology exhausts creatures from the possibility of daily appreciation.⁹⁷⁵ The world rests in the “rhythms” of “God’s daily works”⁹⁷⁶ which involves the “give and take” of God’s resting and movement over the course of a day.

Bonhoeffer collapses God’s creative acts of the second day (firmament, earth and sea) and the fourth day (stars, sun and moon) in his chapter “That Which is Firmly Fixed,” his exposition of Genesis 1:6-10 and 14-19. His reason for advancing in the narrative appears to be a desire to explore what is “fixed” before he examines “that which lives” in Genesis 1:11-13 and 20-25. The fixed nature of the firmament, and the fixedness of the stars are beyond human existence. They are not changed by human power and freedom. Humans, however, function within the world of “what is fixed” because they “know numbers.”⁹⁷⁷ Numbers come into play for Bonhoeffer with the “days, years and epochs of time” that “happen with complete regularity and without change.”⁹⁷⁸ Here, what was once formless becomes “fixed” and “bound to form.”⁹⁷⁹ A

⁹⁷² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 44.

⁹⁷³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 44.

⁹⁷⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 44.

⁹⁷⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 48.

⁹⁷⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 49.

⁹⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 52.

⁹⁷⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 52.

⁹⁷⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 55.

noteworthy moment of foreshadowing that occurs within this exposition is Bonhoeffer's connection between what is fixed, the numbering of creation and God's "law." He concludes that the connection between numbers and law are both upheld by God even when the fallen creation can no longer comprehend their power or live within their rhythms and structure.

With a dramatic turn, Bonhoeffer moves from the world of what is fixed to "that which lives"; he writes, "Like a waterfall that plunges from the heights down into a valley, creation moves from on high down to do its final work." The movements in the unfolding of creation are from what is formless, to "form in rhythm", to a form that is revealed in "law and in numbers."⁹⁸⁰ As creation gains more and more form, it continues to gain "distinction from the form of the Creator."⁹⁸¹ In the movement from what is fixed, to what bears life (grass, plants, trees, birds, wild animals, reptiles) God in freedom "does not will to be Lord of a dead, eternally unchangeable, subservient world; instead God wills to be Lord of life with its infinite variety of forms."⁹⁸² What was once "dead stone" becomes instead, "alive and fruitful."⁹⁸³ Now that both "law"⁹⁸⁴ and "life" have been created, Bonhoeffer makes clear neither of these, but only God alone, are worthy of praise and adoration.⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 57.

⁹⁸¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 57.

⁹⁸² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 57.

⁹⁸³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 57.

⁹⁸⁴ Bonhoeffer introduces the language of "law" in "That Which is Firmly Fixed" to describe the eternal law that holds the firmament fixed in the heavens (51). Bonhoeffer refers to this fixed law as "the command of the word of God itself." Later in the text, Bonhoeffer's reflections on this fixed law are linked to philosopher Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant states that human beings are able to consider "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

⁹⁸⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 59.

The fourth point Bonhoeffer makes regarding creation is that God is at work upholding the goodness of creation prior to the fall. There is a joyous refrain that ripples through Genesis “and God saw that it was good.” Goodness is not intrinsic to what is fixed or alive, but only because the God who created these elements is bursting with goodness. Goodness, then, is a sign of God wresting creation freely into being and upholding that creation, preserving its integrity all within a singular act prior to the fall.

Before turning from *creation* to *creature* in Bonhoeffer’s reflections on “The Image of God on Earth” in Genesis 1:26-27, it is important to make clear, in our effort to bring Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s definition of disability into conversation with Bonhoeffer, what Bonhoeffer might understand as “*world*.” Doing so requires taking a few steps forward in the Genesis text beyond Genesis 1 and 2. The exegesis of these claims by Bonhoeffer will be developed in the upcoming sections. First, “the world is created for God, for God’s honor alone.”⁹⁸⁶ Second, the world is fallen. The state of being, for humanity, within this fallen world is a state of estrangement. Humans think they are to have dominion and to be good stewards of the world, but instead “we are ruled.”⁹⁸⁷ Bonhoeffer explains further, “The world rules humankind; humankind is a prisoner, a slave, of the world, and its dominion is an illusion. Technology is the power with which the earth seizes hold of humankind and masters it.”⁹⁸⁸ As the story unfolds, once flesh is created and fall occurs, human beings are “allowed to live in this world”⁹⁸⁹ and they will not be deprived of God’s relationship with them through the Word. Third,

⁹⁸⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 72.

⁹⁸⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 67.

⁹⁸⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 67.

⁹⁸⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 132.

human beings after the fall survive in the world “under a curse.”⁹⁹⁰ Bonhoeffer makes a poignant point at this juncture, because the world is under God’s curse, not just any curse, therefore “the world is not wholly God-forsaken; instead it is a world that even under God’s curse is blessed and in its enmity, pain, and work is pacified, a world where *life is upheld and preserved*.”⁹⁹¹ God’s curse is both, strangely, an affirmation, human beings get what they want in this world to be “like God” and, God’s curse is also preservation because humans are “allowed” to live within this world.⁹⁹²

The curse and the promise that occur after the fall (to be discussed later in this chapter), reveal a creator God who in freedom chooses to preserve the world. God’s world is upheld. In this world, God will provide “restraint and order [*Ordnung*]⁹⁹³ to guide fallen humanity. Here then is a fundamental insight: this twofold restraining and ordering is a particular way God engages creation after the fall. Bonhoeffer explains, “God’s way of acting to preserve the world is to affirm the sinful world and to show it its limits by means of order.”⁹⁹⁴ Limits then, are both revealed and healed within a particular ordering of creation that is intended by God to “uphold or preserve life.”⁹⁹⁵ We will explore these orders, and the limits they both reveal and heal, later in this chapter. And, it will become clear how limits are related to Bonhoeffer’s theological conception

⁹⁹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 135.

⁹⁹¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 135.

⁹⁹² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 132.

⁹⁹³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139. To be clear, Bonhoeffer uses the language of *Ordnung* which he believes has been co-opted by the Nazi regime to maintain control. Though Bonhoeffer uses the language here, he nuances by saying, “None of these orders, however, has in itself any eternal character for all are there only to uphold or preserve life” (139). In other words, orders are not eternal and therefore should not legitimize any unjust orders of the day. Instead, they are to uphold and preserve. An opposing viewpoint to Bonhoeffer would be the Lutheran Theologian Paul Althaus. Althaus perpetuated his distorted theology through a pamphlet “Theology of the Orders” and equated the German *volk* to that of God’s eternal order in creation. See: Robert P. Eriksen, *Theologians Under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985): 100.

⁹⁹⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

⁹⁹⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

of finitude as an important aspect of his doctrine of creation and will become central to his ethical theory.⁹⁹⁶

For now, it is important to note that God takes a new action within the world to uphold what has fallen. The world we now live in, for Bonhoeffer, is “the old world.”⁹⁹⁷ Prior to his exposition of Genesis, Bonhoeffer begins the very first paragraph of his introduction with the claim: “The church speaks within the old world about the new world. And because it is surer of the new world than of anything else, it sees the old world in in the light of the new world.”⁹⁹⁸ Implied within this deceptively simple phrase are three critical claims. The first is Christological: Christ will reveal through the church a new world. The second is anthropological: human beings dwell in a fallen world. The third is soteriological: there is the need for salvation and redemption of this fallen world into newness in the end that seems illusive from the middle. The good news for Bonhoeffer, even in the very beginning of Genesis, is that “the God of Israel and of Jesus Christ is always in the midst of the world and can only be encountered there.”⁹⁹⁹ For Bonhoeffer, this is good news for all the world, perhaps what one might call his gospel of Genesis.

5.2.3 FLESH: Creature in the Created World

⁹⁹⁶ Larry Rasmussen, “The Ethics of Responsible Action,” *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* ed. by John W. de Gruchy (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 213. According to Rasmussen, the danger of neglecting finitude as a theological and ethical concept is, “mastery that knows no limits as undertaken by autonomous humans in the name of freedom without constraint” (213).

⁹⁹⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 21.

⁹⁹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 21.

⁹⁹⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 10. This insight is a comment noted by editor John W. de Gruchy.

With the affirmation of God in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” Bonhoeffer explains ““Something altogether original, is about to happen.”¹⁰⁰⁰ The originality of this creation is that creatures are not fashioned from nonbeing as all that has gone before, both “the fixed” and “that which lives.” Instead, creatures are made with “significance and sublimity”¹⁰⁰¹ through a new form of God’s planning derived from God’s image. At this moment in Genesis, suddenly “the narrative is about us.”¹⁰⁰²

Within Bonhoeffer’s doctrine of creation, he presents a theological anthropology that is derived from both the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 accounts. Bonhoeffer explores the story of Adam and Eve created in the *imago dei* in absolute freedom by God dividing the study into five short chapters: “The Image of God on Earth” (Genesis 1:26-27), “Blessing and Completion” (Genesis 1:28-31, Genesis 2:1-4a), “The Human Being of Earth and Spirit” (Genesis 2:7), “The Center of the Earth” (Genesis 2:8-17) and “The Power of the Other” (Genesis 2:18-25) with a brief interlude between Genesis 1 and 2 entitled “The Other Side.”

To understand Bonhoeffer’s theological anthropology it is necessary to: delineate two aspects of freedom for the creature and two aspects of relationality; outline three possible states of being human (blessed, cursed, resting); distinguish between the Yawhist and Elohim accounts of being human; and finally, notice the distinction Bonhoeffer makes between being human and becoming *flesh*. We will conclude in this section by analyzing Bonhoeffer through the lens of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and

¹⁰⁰⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 61.

¹⁰⁰¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 61.

¹⁰⁰² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 61.

Deborah Creamer's concepts of flesh, limit and finitude. In so doing, important to keep in mind is what happens when *flesh* encounters limits? Bonhoeffer aids in the development of Creamer's limit model by recognizing the moral emotions stirred by limits and the moral demands made by limits that can be either natural or sinful.

First, Bonhoeffer makes two critical statements regarding freedom for the human being and two crucial statements regarding relationality. Regarding freedom, Bonhoeffer posits that the creature, like God, is free. Bonhoeffer notes the constraints on that freedom: freedom is constrained within the bounds of the created universe, freedom is revealed through the word of God, freedom is aimed toward worship of the Creator who fashioned both the universe and the unique individual.¹⁰⁰³ Second, because of the variables of these limitations, freedom contains a certain paradox. Bonhoeffer explains, "Freedom is not something that people have for themselves but something they have for others."¹⁰⁰⁴ Freedom exists then only in the state of relationality with another.¹⁰⁰⁵ Because of this freedom isn't something that simply exists, instead it is something that happens over time as a relationship develops "being-free-for-the-other."¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 62

¹⁰⁰⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 62.

¹⁰⁰⁵ One might argue that it is in precisely this moment that the very first "moral injury" occurred wherein two human beings have the freedom to choose morally right and good options wholly other than the choice made by the person with whom they are in a relationship. In his article "Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action in Christian Ministry: Implications from Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer," Andrew Root shows two possible ways of acknowledging the outcome of this moment of relationality. Martin Heidegger saw in this moment the possibility for the "I" to totalize the "other" through an act of violence, even if the violence was the simple act of thematizing the other. Levinas countered this view with an account of the other that created space for the openness of an ethical act. Levinas recognized the infinity that separates human beings in relationship while Heidegger assumed categorization of that uniqueness was possible (54). See: Andrew Root, "Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action in Christian Ministry: Implications from Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 10:1 (2006): 53-75. Root sees Bonhoeffer as a practical theologian embodying Levinas' methods and insights about relationality, openness and ethical action for the other.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 63.

With regard to relationality, Bonhoeffer claims, first, the “likeness” reflecting the image of God in humanity is relationality and this is not an ontological state of being, but of relating.¹⁰⁰⁷ Bonhoeffer emphasizes this distinction very clearly when he says: this is not an *analogia entis* but instead, an *analogia relationis*.¹⁰⁰⁸ The depth and breadth of this relating between humans, and their mirroring the very image of God: “Human beings exist in duality.... that can be defined in simply no other way than in terms of the existence of human beings over-against-one-another, with-one-another, and independence-upon-one-another [*nicht anders zu bestimmen als in dem Gegenüber-Miteinander-Aufeinander-angewiesen-sein der Menschen*]’.¹⁰⁰⁹ Created in the *imago dei* human beings are created with the hope of “being-free-for” relationship. And second, while human beings are in a state of “being-free-for” relationship with God and other human beings, humans are in a state of “being-free-from” the rest of God’s created order. Bonhoeffer derives this difference from God’s call in Genesis for the ones created in God’s image to have “dominion” over the rest of the earth. The difficulty is that in “the world” these two states are less idealized and more conflated. Others, to whom the

¹⁰⁰⁷ So profound is Bonhoeffer’s view of relationality that Theologian Barry Harvey asserts that a singular ‘saint’ can never exist for Bonhoeffer. Instead, that saint is always held within a network of greater relationships. Harvey explores this in the last chapter of his book *Taking Hold of the Real: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Profound Worldliness of Christianity* where he explores the relationality of the French pacifist pastor Andre Trocme’s roll in rescuing hundreds of Jews through the community at Le Chambon. See: Barry Harvey, *Taking Hold of the Real: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Profound Worldliness of Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015): 272, 287-289, 291-294.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 64-65. The footnotes to this point in Bonhoeffer’s lectures make clear he disagreed with the popular theology, methodology and metaphysics of Catholic theologian Erich Przywara. While difference and dissimilarity between God and creation, although sacramental connection remains, are the main themes of the analogy, Bonhoeffer’s argument is wholly other preserving the relational link between creature and Creator. See: Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, trans. by John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014). Karl Barth concurred with Bonhoeffer deeming the *analogia entis* “the antichrist” and suggesting instead the relational analogy was the key to understanding the *imago dei* and theological anthropology. See: Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936–1977): 3/1:228-230 and 3/2:220-221.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 68.

individual is bound, can affect the creatures that the individual is free from. So Bonhoeffer makes a statement which appears paradoxical: “In my whole being, in my creatureliness, I belong wholly to this world: it bears me, nurtures me, holds me.”¹⁰¹⁰ He continues, “The thing, the world, rules humankind; humankind is a prisoner, a slave, of the world.”¹⁰¹¹ Implied here, is the fact that even in their freedom for God and others, human beings lose some of the power of that freedom within a world where collective creatures impact one another creating things like “technology” that “seizes hold of humankind and masters it”¹⁰¹² even despite a human being’s freedom. Despite these constraints, in their ideal representations, states, “being-free-for” and “being-free-from” express the likeness and image of God within human beings.¹⁰¹³

Second, in the next section, Bonhoeffer briefly describes three particular states of being human: being blessed, being cursed, and finding rest. It is unexpected, at this juncture in the Genesis story, where a “curse” is not yet mentioned that Bonhoeffer would introduce the concept. However, blessing and curse are interrelated concepts, one cannot be comprehended without the other. They are both “burdens that God lays upon humankind.”¹⁰¹⁴ What is critical to understand regarding Bonhoeffer’s exposition of the blessing that Genesis 28-31 introduces is greater than the “behold, it was very good” that the text itself pronounces. Instead, blessing – in all its dimensions to bear fruit, to increase, to serve the earth, and to subdue it – are key to a greater insight linking creature, in freedom, to the created world: “This blessing...affirms humankind wholly within the

¹⁰¹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 67

¹⁰¹¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* 67.

¹⁰¹² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* 67. Here, we call to mind McKenny’s critique of technology in modern medicine and its implications for suffering and choice. McKenny, *To Relieve the Human Condition*, 9.

¹⁰¹³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 67.

¹⁰¹⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 68.

world of the living in which it is placed. It is humankind's whole empirical existence that is blessed here, its creatureliness, its worldliness, its earthliness."¹⁰¹⁵ What might seem more appropriate than the blessing/curse relationship is the dynamic that occurs in this section between blessing and resting. If blessing means wholly being within the world, rest is an opportunity to retreat from the world's demands. However, instead of making this connection Bonhoeffer links blessing to curse, both 'burdens' from God; and then, links rest to a foreshadowing of the resurrection hope of the Gospels, though seemingly far removed from the God of Genesis. But for Bonhoeffer, the relationship is clear. A strong theology of resurrection hope will find its origins in the creation. Here, the day of resurrection is also the day of rest.¹⁰¹⁶

The third point begins with the interlude that occurs here in "Creation and Fall" is the juncture between the first creation story of Genesis 1 and the second creation story of Genesis 2. While Bonhoeffer lists points of contrast between the two stories (frame of reference, the character of God, the order of creation), the contrast that matters most for our understanding of human beings is this: "The first account is about humankind-for-God, the second about God-for-humankind."¹⁰¹⁷ Hence, he titles the section "The Other Side." According to Bonhoeffer, we need both depictions as necessary, not "arbitrary"¹⁰¹⁸ dimensions of the whole. Certainly, there are implications from the remaining list of contrasting points that impact creaturely life: is God removed or relatively close at hand, is God more abstract or anthropomorphic, is God creating humanity last or first and how does that impact our understanding of humanity's

¹⁰¹⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 68.

¹⁰¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 70.

¹⁰¹⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 72.

¹⁰¹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 72.

importance in God's created world? Bonhoeffer accepts the paradox of all these affirmations in tension with one another, but particularly the tension between God and humanity. Humans, in Genesis 1 are created *for* God – to worship, to reflect God's image, to share dominion. God, in Genesis 2, is there *for* humankind – in proximity, in presence, even, in planting there in the garden. While we might experience these two statements as conflicting truths, Bonhoeffer understands them as “representations [Darstellungen]”¹⁰¹⁹ showing the same thing from two separate sides.

The creator God of Genesis 2 is no longer the distant *Elohim* of Genesis 1, but the breathy and spirited God close at hand and down to earth named *Yahweh* in Genesis 2. Three significant assertions structure this chapter: first, our bodies come from the earth. Second, those bodies come to life through the breath of God. And third, within our enlivened bodies blessed by the very breath of God we become “the image of God.”¹⁰²⁰ To ground and develop these three claims, Bonhoeffer presents a theology of the body:

It is from God's earth out of which humankind is taken. From it human beings have their bodies. The body belongs to a person's essence. The body is not the prison, the shell, the exterior of a human being; instead a human being is a human body. A human being does not 'have' a body or 'have' a soul; instead a human being 'is' body and soul. The human being in the beginning really is the body, is one – just as Christ is wholly his body and the church is the body of Christ. People who reject their bodies reject their existence before God the Creator. What is to be taken seriously about human existence is its bond with mother earth, its being as body.¹⁰²¹

¹⁰¹⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 69.

¹⁰²⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 79.

¹⁰²¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 76-77.

This body, comes to life, from its previous “state of nestling [*Hingeschmiegestein*]”¹⁰²² by the breath of God which animates. The creator God breathes spirit into the dust, the earth, the human who had only known nestling, and becomes a human being. God’s glory, therefore, then shines through the body – first, through human being, second, through the body of Christ and third, through the sacraments.¹⁰²³

Fourth and finally, the section of Bonhoeffer’s theological anthropology “The Power of the Other” is the exegesis of Genesis 2:18-25. Until this point, creaturely life has been introduced as “human kind”, “Adam”, and “bodies”, but it is not until the Genesis text introduces the word “*flesh*.” The Genesis text progresses from the state of *being human* to the state of being in relationship as *flesh*. The creation of Eve draws Adam into the life of *flesh* as the first social construct of intimacy and relationship is formed. To be clear, Bonhoeffer does not introduce the word “flesh” to his description of creaturely life until scripture itself does so in the second creation story of Genesis 2. Now, this creature is ‘flesh’ fashioned when God, in Genesis 2:21 grabbed hold of Adam’s rib and “filled out its place with flesh.”¹⁰²⁴ Adam as human being is not alone for long, we learn from the Biblical story, and quickly our understanding of flesh unfolds with the first words Adam speaks to Eve, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” In their flesh, though both are naked, there is no shame.¹⁰²⁵ With this language Bonhoeffer acknowledges three ramifications of life in the flesh: flesh is the gift of the

¹⁰²² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 78.

¹⁰²³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 79.

¹⁰²⁴ Bible verse is Bonhoeffer’s translation. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 94.

¹⁰²⁵ Genesis 2:25. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 95

other as suddenly a human being becomes a social being,¹⁰²⁶ flesh creates space for relational intimacy and unity, and flesh delineates a new limit for Adam.

The first connotation of *flesh* is that it is “God’s gift.”¹⁰²⁷ Adam, who had been “alone,”¹⁰²⁸ even in the presence of animal life, is in need of a companion, a ‘helpmate’¹⁰²⁹, a partner who shares in the work and in the experience of being a human in God’s created order. In this chapter, there is only a singular use by Bonhoeffer of the terminology “flesh” outside of any direct quotation of scripture. That instance is utilized in the description of the relationship between the newly formed Eve and Adam: “Thus Adam understands the uniqueness of this creature that God has shaped with the contribution Adam has made, out of human *flesh*, but Adam sees what Adam has done for the other wholly in the light of God’s gift.”¹⁰³⁰ Flesh is used then, to describe the substance of the other, to whom Adam is called into relationship and all its complexity but who ultimately, as the text makes clear, is “gift.” Bonhoeffer’s rendering of the Genesis account is that “flesh” is the substance they share: “They have from their origin been one, and only in becoming one do they return to their origin.”¹⁰³¹ Flesh then is both a reminder of union and division, something that has been torn apart and something that will one day be united.¹⁰³²

¹⁰²⁶ Here we remember John Calvin’s commentary on John 1:14 when Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us. Calvin understands flesh as human being living within particular social contexts. See: John Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries* translated and edited by Joseph Haroutunian and Louise Pettibone Smith (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1958): 163.

¹⁰²⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 97.

¹⁰²⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 96-97.

¹⁰²⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 96.

¹⁰³⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 97.

¹⁰³¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 97.

¹⁰³² Andrew Root makes clear that Bonhoeffer’s position, like that of Emmanuel Levinas, is one of differentiation and clear identity formation. However, while Levinas’ position is phenomenological, Bonhoeffer’s is profoundly theological and Christological. In the presence of the other, for both thinkers, the other’s face demands response-ability. See: Root, “Practical Theology as Social Ethical Action,” 68.

Here begins the second connotation of flesh: flesh allows the possibility of deep union to take place. To be clear, Bonhoeffer makes vivid the fact that union does not negate the individuality of the unique creature. Instead, he maintains diversity within their ultimate unity: “This becoming one never means the merging of the two or the abolition of their creatureliness as individuals. It actualizes to the highest possible degree their belonging to each other, which is based precisely on their being different from each other.”¹⁰³³ In the beginning, Adam and Eve share flesh as Adam recognizes “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”¹⁰³⁴ And, that unity will be regained when Adam leaves his mother and father and cleaves to Eve and “they will be one flesh.”¹⁰³⁵ So, flesh is a shared substance that still maintains the essential difference between two freely created beings who share the dust of the earth and the breath of God’s spirit, but it is also the shared hope of returning in sexual union and intimacy.¹⁰³⁶

Third, and most important for our thesis, is the fact that flesh is a denotation of Adam’s limit.¹⁰³⁷ Flesh, then, becomes what Bonhoeffer understands as the “embodiment of Adam’s limit”¹⁰³⁸; herein, lies both the possibility for both desire and hatred. Limit then becomes for Adam, both the center of his existence in the garden, and

¹⁰³³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 98.

¹⁰³⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 97.

¹⁰³⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 100.

¹⁰³⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 100.

¹⁰³⁷ Clifford Green explains: ““The other person is a real *Grenze* to the I, a limit to the dominating ambitions of the self; the other person is also, as embodying the Word of forgiveness *ab extra*, the promise and possibility of the self’s liberation into a new existence.... It is only because Christ is present as person that the self acknowledges the other as a genuine person and not as an entity or merely extant thing.” See: Clifford j. Green, *Bonhoeffer. A Theology of Sociality*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 89.

¹⁰³⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 98.

another limit that is met and engaged and different points in the circle as limit “takes on form”¹⁰³⁹ through Eve.

Bonhoeffer’s view of flesh differs from the account of Garland-Thomson in his notion that flesh emerges from relationship. For Bonhoeffer, flesh is what happens to the human being when they are called into relationship with another human being. For Garland-Thomson, flesh is a dynamic and changing entity that is shaped in “its movement through time and space in the process we call life.”¹⁰⁴⁰ For Bonhoeffer, flesh is embodied limit that is a helpful gift, a hoped-for union, and an occasionally resented limit. Garland-Thomson maintains a vitalistic conception of flesh as “inherent dynamism” at play within the world.¹⁰⁴¹

In her work *Disability and Christian Theology* Creamer focuses more on the language of embodiment rather than making a distinction between flesh and body. For Bonhoeffer, a body becomes *flesh* when a limit is encountered through the gift of another human being. It could be argued that this moment is precisely when the first “moral injury” occurs since that human being, gift of God that she is, will make a moral choice “other” than what her partner might make. In so doing there is the potential for a moral injury. Creamer maintains a focus on embodiment as a neglected epistemological resource for theology and disability.¹⁰⁴² When she speaks of flesh, she denotes moments when a human being can more fully engage the fleshly nature of sensory existence within

¹⁰³⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 98.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 342.

¹⁰⁴¹ Garland-Thomson, “Conserving Disability,” 342.

¹⁰⁴² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 56-57.

the world, as well as the potential depth and struggle of human being.¹⁰⁴³ Bonhoeffer's emphasis on *flesh* as "other" more fully allows space for the demands and emotions the limitation another human being creates simply by being alive. Bonhoeffer aids in nuancing Cremer's account of limit through his account of the flesh by teasing out limits that can unite in love, as well as the flip side of those limits that can when human love is "obliterated" cause the creature to "hate the limit."¹⁰⁴⁴ In so doing, Bonhoeffer agrees with Cremer's assessment that limits are "inherent in the experience of humanity"¹⁰⁴⁵ and engage "the complexity of experiences"¹⁰⁴⁶ of human being. And he appears to agree with Cremer who acknowledges that some limits "enable" while others "make difficult" our embodied lives.¹⁰⁴⁷ But Bonhoeffer takes steps beyond Cremer's notion of limit as he irreducibly links limits both to the center of existence, as well as the very nature of existing in the *flesh*. At this point in the exegesis, Bonhoeffer has not yet begun to exponentially increase the dynamics of flesh as relationships are encountered beyond the two-some of Adam and Eve. But that will soon happen as the two encounter a snake in the garden.

5.2.4 ENCOUNTER: The Fall

¹⁰⁴³ Cremer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 56. To do so, she draws on the language of James Nelson who argues: "Body theology starts with the fleshly experience of life – with our hungers and our passions, our bodily aliveness and deadness, with the smell of coffee, with the homeless and the hungry we see on our streets, with the warm touch of a friend, with bodies violated and torn apart in war, with the scent of a honeysuckle or the soft sting of autumn air on the cheek." See: James Nelson, *Body Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992): 42.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 99.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cremer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 109

¹⁰⁴⁶ Cremer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 118.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Cremer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 118.

Having outlined Bonhoeffer's doctrine of creation, and his theological anthropology, we turn in this section to an exploration of Bonhoeffer's account of sin and the construct of the fall. Here, we use the language of "encounter" as presented by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. As cautioned earlier, it would not be helpful to distort Bonhoeffer's account by unconditionally using Garland-Thomson's language. And yet, "encounter" provides a surprisingly appropriate framework within which to appropriate Bonhoeffer's account of the Fall. The creator God has created human being in the image of God with a particular hope. Bonhoeffer writes, "It is the very God...who chooses *to encounter* [zu begegnen] the creature as its Creator."¹⁰⁴⁸ God freely chooses to create human beings with the ultimate hope of meaningful and intimate encounter; and yet, the human being chooses otherwise.

To be clear, the singular time Bonhoeffer uses the word "encounter" is in relationship to the hope God has for relationship with human beings. It is the series of actions that unfold in Genesis 3 that warp and negate the initial possibility for that encounter. One might argue then, that for Bonhoeffer, sin is characterized by rejecting or resisting a possible encounter with God, and then, choosing over and over again *other-than-God* encounters. Brian Brock explains this state of sin by saying of Bonhoeffer's account, "In their fallen state they continue to be entrapped by the dynamics of their flight from God – becoming centripetal and dissatisfied creatures who are uneasy with themselves and their limits."¹⁰⁴⁹ In the exposition that follows, we will see how Bonhoeffer develops that account as human beings continue to choose encounter after

¹⁰⁴⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 41. I have added the German translation for "to encounter" which is not included in the original text.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Brock, "On Becoming Creatures," 437.

encounter that takes them away from God and the limits at the center of their existence. To do so we will explore five alternative “encounters” Bonhoeffer highlights culminating in his account of the fall. In conclusion of this section, we will briefly compare and contrast aspects of Bonhoeffer’s account with Creamer’s and Garland-Thomson’s.

Despite all the beauty and possibility and gift of being a creature, of being created in the flesh for the world, humankind exists in a particular state of “not-wanting-to-be-a-creature [*Nicht-Geschöpf-sein-wollen*].”¹⁰⁵⁰ Laden in that restlessness is the possibility of encountering the world in a “not-wanting-to-be-a-creature” state of being. Over half of the “Creation and Fall” lectures are devoted to the fall and the series of encounters that precipitate the fall: the placement of Adam in the center of Eden, the creation of Eve in relationship to Adam, the interaction with the Serpent, the taste of the fruit, and the reckoning with God in the aftermath. Within the framework of this ancient text, Bonhoeffer understands some of the difficulties of bringing meaning from “the old picture language of the magical world into the new picture language of the technical world.”¹⁰⁵¹ In this section, we will explore Bonhoeffer’s exposition of the “limit” met in these encounters, as the flesh of Adam meets both the prohibition and possibility within the world.

In the first *other-than-God* encounter, described within the chapter “The Center of the Earth,” God places Adam within the Garden of Eve wherein two trees – the tree of knowledge and the tree of good and evil – stand at the center of the Garden. Bonhoeffer makes clear, Adam himself is not at the center; however, his entire orientation is to the

¹⁰⁵⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 116.

¹⁰⁵¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 83.

center because this is where the life that comes only from God is grounded.¹⁰⁵² With Adam's point of reference and entire circumference of being shaped by this center, Adam knows at this stage in the encounter only "unbroken obedience to the creator."¹⁰⁵³ The tree of life, the center of divine life, represents the life that allows Adam to live and move and have his very being. Even more so, the possibility for life with God at the center is one of freedom and flourishing. The life represented by this tree, in all of its potential for fullness and flourishing, may only be threatened by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁰⁵⁴ Yahweh points out to Adam both trees, but it is only with the second tree that God attaches a very particular prohibition: "You shall not eat; for on the day you eat from it you shall die."¹⁰⁵⁵ Herein, is the possibility of a new kind of encounter one that will move from "unbroken obedience" to the possibility of death. In naming this reality, a singular prohibition stated by God who envisions so much more for Adam to live "sumptuously and with delight,"¹⁰⁵⁶ God points out for the very first time "Adam's limit [*Grenze*]."¹⁰⁵⁷

Encounter, then, within this garden is full of latent possibility, but also a clear and defined limit. Crossing this limit will have consequences. The footnotes reveal Bonhoeffer's intent that "limit" is "a creaturely limit that cannot be surpassed."¹⁰⁵⁸ Bonhoeffer's text provides two synonyms as well: "boundedness" and "creatureliness."¹⁰⁵⁹ In a surprising turn, drawing on the Genesis text, Bonhoeffer reveals

¹⁰⁵² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 83.

¹⁰⁵³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 83-84.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 84.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Biblical text Genesis 2:17.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 82.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 85. To be clear, this is the first mention of "limit" in *Creation and Fall*.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 85. Footnote 15.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 85.

the limit of humanity is not at the edges, but at “the center of human existence.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Here, several affirmations are made regarding the limit. First, “life is possible only because of the limit.”¹⁰⁶¹ Second, “the limit is grace.” Limit, then, in its first iteration is full of life and grace, and so implied in these affirmations is the potential for life-giving and grace-filled encounter. Third, the limit is at “the center”, not the edge, of human existence.¹⁰⁶² And fourth, knowledge of the limit is experienced within an “internal” framework revealing an “internal limit.”¹⁰⁶³

For now, it is only possible for Adam who lives in “unbroken obedience” to understand the limit as God’s very presence with him at the center, even though the text states and we hear clear prohibition. Because Adam is oriented solely to God at the center, “Adam cannot conceive of the breaking apart of that knowledge into good and evil.”¹⁰⁶⁴ The remainder of this chapter explores however, what this good and evil might come to represent and exude within Adam’s world. To be clear, Adam has made no transgression; he lives in “unbroken obedience.” And yet, the possibility of “a moral split” is articulated by Bonhoeffer to foreshadow what will come in the garden. “*Tob*” and “*ra*” speak to the good and evil yet unleashed, but when released will have the effect of “splitting apart” what once has been unbroken, whether it is Adam himself, or the world in which he lives. Here, Bonhoeffer appears to get ahead of himself in the Genesis story, but his point in introducing the possibility of a “split apart”¹⁰⁶⁵ world is to show

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86.

¹⁰⁶¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 87.

¹⁰⁶² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86.

¹⁰⁶³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 87.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 89.

what is germinating in the garden with the elements of “life, knowledge and death.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Nothing, until now, has been lost. “*Tob*” and “*Ra*” are united, not unlike Adam’s “unbroken obedience” in the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They are inseparable, always appearing in a pair. They represent something greater than a simple moral code, but instead express the complicated good and evil of what is “pleasurable” and “painful.”¹⁰⁶⁷ And, “*tob*” and “*ra*” in their inseparability strangely always enhance the other. These three assertions witness to what is at play and will come to pass as the “ultimate split [*Zwiespalt*] in the world of humankind.”¹⁰⁶⁸ Encounter, the reader of both the Bible and Bonhoeffer will become aware, is poised to rupture and break both the human being and the world itself. Foreshadowed here is “the state of being divided or torn apart into *tob* and *ra* in the world and in humankind.”¹⁰⁶⁹ *Tob* and *ra*, both evil and goodness, will become burdens for the human being to bear. Life will no longer be gift, but instead a commandment. Why a command? Because, according to Bonhoeffer knowledge of death will be a burden on life giving life itself the sense of “to-have-to-live”¹⁰⁷⁰ rather than willingly received gift. Any splitting apart of flesh or world, due to a shaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, will directly affect and ultimately harm the precious gift of the tree of life. Encounter, given Bonhoeffer’s exposition of Genesis 2:8-17 is intended to pulse with life and gift and grace, and yet, dormant even within the garden is the possibility of “an ultimate split.”¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 83.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 88.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 88.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 90.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 91.

¹⁰⁷¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* 88.

Bonhoeffer's description of a second *other-than-God* encounter is revealed in his exposition of Genesis 2:18-25 in "The Power of the Other," which explains further the paradox described above wherein both the "limit and life" at "the inviolable, inaccessible center of paradise around which Adam's life circles."¹⁰⁷² So it is interesting to note, that the creation of Eve described in this chapter is not solely to be a companion so that Adam will not be alone with himself, but also so that Adam will have a partner with whom to share the limit he now faces.¹⁰⁷³ Prior to the fall, Adam receives this companion, not in pride or remorse, but with deep gratitude¹⁰⁷⁴ for the load she will share. The limit at the center of the Garden takes on "embodiment" as Eve becomes Adam's limit. In this, Bonhoeffer sees an early witness to the church as "two persons in community" bear witness to the limit of life at the center of human existence.¹⁰⁷⁵ Lisa Dahill makes clear the possibility inherent in this encounter which, though "*other-than-God*," still has the potential to bear witness to God's presence as the human being matures through this relationship with the other:

[Bonhoeffer] insists that it is in our encounter with the barrier or limit created by some "other" that *persons* mature and responsible agents, selves, "I's" before God – are formed. His theology of the formative role of such an encounter, in which the other mediates the ultimate alterity of God working to create and re-create persons, remains in place here in *Creation and Fall*; but not this "other" is an actual person with a name.¹⁰⁷⁶

¹⁰⁷² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 99.

¹⁰⁷³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 98.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 97.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 98-99.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Lisa Dahill, "Con-Formation with Jesus Christ: Bonhoeffer, Social Location and Embodiment." In *Being Human, Becoming Human: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Social Thought*, ed. by Jens Zimmermann and Brian Gregor (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co., 2012): 180.

Bonhoeffer's theology presents a case that once God realizes intimate encounters with the divine might be neglected by humanity, offers a new possibility for divine intimacy through human encounters with the limits of another.

At this point in the Genesis story, before the ultimate *other-than-God* encounter of the fall, this encounter between Adam and Eve is one where shame does not yet exist: "And they were both naked, the man and his woman, and they were not ashamed."¹⁰⁷⁷ However, Bonhoeffer uses this moment to introduce the concept of shame as one that will express a person's sense of "divideness" (*Entzweiung*)¹⁰⁷⁸ both internally within their own spirit, as well as an expression of their external encounters with a divided world. Shame, when it manifests will become a certain kind of "cover" within which a person may hide.¹⁰⁷⁹ The Biblical story, Bonhoeffer foreshadows, will introduce shame within three spheres of life in the "split-apart-world."¹⁰⁸⁰ Shame is taken on as a cover when one encounters the limit of knowledge, the limit of death and the limit of sexuality.¹⁰⁸¹

The third *other-than-God* encounter, for Bonhoeffer, is explored in the chapter "The Pious Question" in which the serpent tempts Adam and Eve. Here, the limit that was once experienced as grace and life-giving to Adam, now instead, becomes provocation and law-abiding.¹⁰⁸² Of note from this chapter is Bonhoeffer's wrestling with theodicy and the problem of evil. He argues that the Genesis text does not describe "the

¹⁰⁷⁷ Genesis 2:25.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 101.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 101.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 101.

¹⁰⁸¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 101. Meagher's extended reflection on necrophilia, sexuality and war in *Killing from the Inside Out* come to mind.

¹⁰⁸² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 103.

origin of evil,”¹⁰⁸³ instead, the text illumines guilt and the burden human beings carry because of that guilt. The serpent succeeds in this story, even before the physical manifestation of the fall, by leveraging a distance between Adam and God.

The fourth *other-than-God* encounter describes the moment the serpent said to Eve: “You will not die at all. Instead God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, and know what good and evil is.”¹⁰⁸⁴ The crucial instance the serpent describes is the moment Adam and Eve would suddenly “be like God,” that is, become second gods or “Sicut Deus” as Bonhoeffer deems. In the face of becoming “like” God the “limit” suddenly becomes “unlimitedness”¹⁰⁸⁵ as the serpent pushes the boundary that God has presented. And yet, Bonhoeffer provides a gracious reading of the text as he suggests Adam’s desire to “sicut deus” not as a desire to become a God, but instead as an invitation to *more* – “more pious, more obedient.”¹⁰⁸⁶ The next encounter will reveal how flawed in thinking Adam was in envisioning “more.”

The fifth *other-than-God* encounter describes the moment of “the fall.” In that encounter, Adam loses his limit. The serpent, shoved his way into the center crowding in on the boundary; but ironically, leaving Adam and Eve paradoxically alone. For Bonhoeffer, the fall starts the day that humanity begins to live without God at the center. Instead the human creature lives by its own resources, apart from God and without limits.¹⁰⁸⁷ Humankind lives with their eyes wide open to the static – that *tob* and *ra*, good and evil of creation. Bonhoeffer’s language for this is breaking-apart [*Entzweiung*]. The

¹⁰⁸³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 105.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 111. Genesis 3:4-5.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 113.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 113.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115.

two are no longer a unity, but always at odds with each other in duality. In this “breaking–apart” world, the original picture of unity and beauty of creation is lost. What is left is, “now covered in a veil; it is silent and lacking explanation, opaque and enigmatic.”¹⁰⁸⁸ This “breaking-apart world” may seem like the starting point of theological reflection. But for Bonhoeffer, where the work of theology is aimed, is not at the “why” of fallen creation or the origin of any kind of evil in the world. Instead, “The theological question is...about the actual overcoming of evil on the cross.”¹⁰⁸⁹ Such a statement radically redefines the work of theology and the stewarding of theological questions away from the “why” of creation and fall, and instead toward the “who”; that is, the one who will be at work preserving what is left of the good.

Bonhoeffer describes the new existential state of Adam after the fall in terms of the absence of limits: “Adam as limitless” (*Der grenzenlose Adam*).¹⁰⁹⁰ The consequences of this *grenzenlose* are exponential. Bonhoeffer makes here several key points regarding the ongoing consequences of this implosion of limits: first, the act is both inconceivable and inexcusable;¹⁰⁹¹ second, the act is final;¹⁰⁹² third, the resulting guilt is infinite;¹⁰⁹³ fourth, the act creates a “continual fall;”¹⁰⁹⁴ and finally, the act demands a theological reorientation regarding the question of evil. Bonhoeffer explains,

¹⁰⁸⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 126.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115.

¹⁰⁹¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 119-120.

¹⁰⁹² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 119.

¹⁰⁹³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120. Bonhoeffer’s language here is: “I am infinitely burdened with the guilt of another.”

¹⁰⁹⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

“the theological question is not a question about the origin of evil but one about the actual overcoming of evil on the cross.”¹⁰⁹⁵

Limits then, once at the center, have now imploded causing internal and external consequences with continual ramifications and deep theological questions. In this series of encounters we see the development of “limit” (*grenze*) as a key theological category. Limits, in Eden, were: central, in the middle, internal, life-affirming, grace-providing, revealed in relationships. In contrast, limits, after the fall, are: continual, everywhere, external, shame-invoking, guilt-producing, and a source of infinite burden.¹⁰⁹⁶ Moving forward with a revised limit model of disability, one wonders if it is possible to acknowledge all the dimensions, pre and post fall, of Bonhoeffer’s exposition of *grenze* and *grenzenlose*.

In Bonhoeffer’s account of the fall, three things became clear: first, God’s original hope for the relationship between Creator and creature was the possibility of real encounter [*begegnen*]; second, creatures continue to choose “other-than-God” encounters with increasingly drastic consequences; and third, central to God’s vision for creation was the notion of “limit” at the center of human experience that could help guide possible encounters in human life. For Bonhoeffer, encounter is the founding hope God has for a relationship with humanity; but results instead in the theological crisis known as “the fall.” For Garland-Thomson, encounter is the hinge moment between world and flesh when disabling occurs through encounter – those encounters might be physically

¹⁰⁹⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Christine Schliesser, in the fourth chapter of her book *Everyone Who Acts Responsibly Becomes Guilty: Bonhoeffer's Concept of Accepting Guilt* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008) offers commentary on *Creation and Fall* that affirms the universal reality of sin within the fall, and our shared guilt with Adam in that sin. But also, on a positive note, that fall creates a universal connection of all people across time and space. In so doing, she enhances the implied Christology of Bonhoeffer who understood Christianity, and Christ himself, as profoundly relational.

impairing of embodiment as world damages flesh, but it also may be a sociological impairment as world negates certain types of flesh thereby creating a social construction of disablement. For Creamer, in turn, that encounter is a limit as world limits flesh. Encounter, then, is a nexus for these disparate thinkers in the field of Theology and Disability.

Moral Injury is a particular form of disabling encounter as a crisis of morality occurs between flesh and world that causes a traumatic injury. We turned to Bonhoeffer to deepen Deborah Creamer's notions of limits and the complex theological anthropology in the face of those limits, and yet, we are reminded by the literature of trauma that Bonhoeffer still does not go deep enough. At this point, it will be helpful to call to mind the framework of scholarship in the field of trauma mentioned briefly in chapter two. The language and scholarship of trauma necessitates taking into account "encounters" that are shattering,¹⁰⁹⁷ shaming¹⁰⁹⁸ and silencing.¹⁰⁹⁹ As we develop in the next chapter "a crucial limit model of disability" we will take into account the explosive potential when flesh encounters world in traumatic ways that silence, shame and shatter. In developing that new model, what must be taken into account is not just the cumulative effects of fallen "encounters" in this world and their effect on flesh, but also the devastating

¹⁰⁹⁷ See: Ronnie Janof-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions: Toward a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992). I am grateful to Old Testament Scholar Paul Cho of Wesley Seminary in my cohort through the Louisville Institute for this insight.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See: Francis Joseph Harrington, *Trauma, Shame, and Secret Making: Being a Family without a Narrative* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2018).

¹⁰⁹⁹ On the silencing effects of trauma see: Françoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudillière, *History beyond Trauma* (New York, NY: Other Press, 2004). The authors argue that traumatized persons are the embodiment of a silenced and traumatized reality in the greater society. In an interview, they depict the trauma they encountered in a patient who said: "Je suis un codé de l'anti-passé." I am an encoded of the anti-past." For an account of this see: Cathy Caruth, *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders in the Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 82.

potential of traumatic encounters that create “shattered knowledge.”¹¹⁰⁰ Jonathan Shay explains, “Severe trauma explodes the cohesion of consciousness.”¹¹⁰¹ What can be left in their wake is “the ruins of character.”¹¹⁰² A revised limit model must take into account Bonhoeffer’s view of the critical effect of all the world’s encounters with moments other than God and then ask questions of the moral emotions encountered in the face of trauma and the moral demands required. For now, we turn to Bonhoeffer’s account of God’s response to the fall as we explore his doctrine of redemption as presented in *Creation and Fall*.

5.2.5 TRANSFORMATION: Creation Upheld through Preservation in Christ

After the fall, Bonhoeffer recognizes through the scriptural account in Genesis that a new and redemptive action must take place to preserve and uphold the fallen world. As *Creation and Fall* continues its exegesis of Genesis, the last chapters describe this redemptive work as “preservation” in Christ. We have been following Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s schema to highlight Bonhoeffer’s doctrines of creation (world and flesh), sin (encounter) and now, redemption. In this next step, I must be clear that the use of Garland-Thomson’s language is a stretch. While she speaks of “transformation,” Bonhoeffer instead speaks of “preservation.” Once we have unpacked in this section Bonhoeffer’s concept and construct of “preservation in Christ,” we will note implications of the difference between the two. For now, the disparate language is held together by the shared theological conviction that in the midst of human finitude God acts. This

¹¹⁰⁰ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 188.

¹¹⁰¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 188.

¹¹⁰² Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 188.

section will outline Bonhoeffer's view on "the orders of preservation" [*Erhaltungsordnungen*] and show how it differs from the more traditional account in his day of "the orders of creation" [*Schöpfungsordnungen*]. We will examine Bonhoeffer's critique of those orders and his constructive presentation of redemption through preservation. In addition, we will make clear theological nuances Bonhoeffer draws on to achieve his insight. From there, we will journey beyond *Creation and Fall* to see how Bonhoeffer's new concept of preservation becomes the theological basis for his *Ethics* and the structure he begins to lay out in his ethics for "the mandates of creation."

The previous section introduced the argument that for Bonhoeffer, limits are polyvalent: limits are at the center (not the edge) of human life, limits are a unique way God provides grace, limits are intimately connected to our relationships, limits cause us to be 'second gods', limits invoke wrath, and limits can provoke shame as our human and divine limitations are acknowledged.¹¹⁰³ Humanity experiences those limits over and over again within the created universe. Limits function paradoxically in a twofold manner: first, as the response of humanity to the withdrawn creator, and second, as the creator's response to humanity as a reminder of their creaturehood. As a revised limit model begins to take shape, we see how crucial "limits" are for Bonhoeffer's anthropological, Christological and soteriological convictions. The orders of preservation, a unique theological response to an issue of Bonhoeffer's day, are built on those very limits. For Bonhoeffer, the day that humanity begins to live without God 'at the center' becomes a place where moral injury is possible. Here, the human creature lives by its own

¹¹⁰³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115-120.

resources, apart from God and without limits.¹¹⁰⁴ Because of that predicament, protection is needed and since God does care for humanity, despite their shortcomings, the creator God offers preservation.¹¹⁰⁵

In response to this linked chain of “other-than-God” encounters culminating in the fall examined in the previous section, Bonhoeffer makes a remarkable claim regarding “God’s New Action”¹¹⁰⁶ in the world. A transformation, of sorts, is possible within this schema. Bonhoeffer makes that clear with these words: “The creator is now the preserver; the created world is now the fallen but *preserved world*.”¹¹⁰⁷ This gracious and generous response to humanity is a distinctive trait of God alone who “made them cloaks”¹¹⁰⁸ as an act of preservation rather than retribution. Once their eyes have been opened to good and evil, to the inherent nakedness of their own being and of the world around them, God will not leave them in that vulnerability but clothes them, cloaks them, robes them with garments of restraint.¹¹⁰⁹ This is good news, as night comes and humankind remains in the twilight. God’s new action, with this clothing, will be to, “preserve humankind in its fallen world, in its fallen orders, for death – for the resurrection, for the new creation, for Christ.”¹¹¹⁰ Until then, humanity will remain in the twilight of *tob* and *ra*, but God will uphold and preserve humankind in just this place.

The terminology of “cloak” is particularly prescient given Jonathan Shay’s account of

¹¹⁰⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115.

¹¹⁰⁵ See also: Brian Gregor, “Shame and the Other: Bonhoeffer and Levinas on Human Dignity and Ethical Responsibility,” *Ontology and Ethics*, 72-85. Brian Gregor notes the role of shame as one component of God’s work in preserving us. He writes, Bonhoeffer’s “Christological ontology allows us to understand the burden of divided being and the role of shame in preserving us, but also our ultimate source of hope for the healing of being in Christ,” 85.

¹¹⁰⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹¹⁰⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹¹⁰⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹¹⁰⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹¹¹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 140.

themis, Homer's language for "what is right."¹¹¹¹ *Themis* is, according to Shay, "the cloak of safety"¹¹¹² we wear in our day-to-day social morality operating within a framework of what is collectively known to be moral and right. Bonhoeffer's choice of words is comforting given Shay's implication that combat trauma removes that cloak of safety leaving the soldier vulnerable in the world.

To understand this act of "transformation" through preservation several steps are needed. To comprehend the new theological language Bonhoeffer is using regarding "the orders of preservation" it is necessary to describe the prevailing theology of his day regarding "the orders of creation" and the context within which those orders became perverted. Then, it will be possible to better understand the framework Bonhoeffer's presents deeming "the orders of preservation" as an intentional alternative with notable political and moral implications. Crucial at this juncture will be understanding Bonhoeffer's theological context regarding the orders and the ways in which his view of "the orders of preservation" makes particular commitments regarding natural law. Finally, in this section, it will be important to consider the relationship between Bonhoeffer's orders of preservation and "the mandates of creation" a phrase Bonhoeffer uses in his later work to describe requirements of the ethical life.

In the decades immediately preceding Bonhoeffer's "Creation and Fall" lectures during the winter of 1933, German Christians relied heavily on a phrase "the orders of creation,"¹¹¹³ (*Schöpfungsordnungen*) to undergird concepts of *Volk* and "blood and soil"

¹¹¹¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 193.

¹¹¹² Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 193.

¹¹¹³ See: Mickey L. Mattox, "Order in the House? The reception of Luther's orders teaching in early Lutheran Genesis commentaries," *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 14:2 (2012): 110-126.

that were ultimately used to legitimize the German National Socialist Movement.¹¹¹⁴ Prior to this co-opting of Lutheran theology, Martin Luther developed the orders of creation to account for human relationships in the home, the church and the state after the fall. For Luther, the orders of creation are the common structures of existence created by God through which humans can relate to each other and serve one another. However, the faithful see within the orders the divine command of God.¹¹¹⁵ The language of “orders” describes the household, the government and the church.¹¹¹⁶ Luther explains,

Thus Psalm 127:1 says that there are only two temporal governments on earth, that of the city and that of the home. “Unless the Lord builds the House: unless the Lord watches over the city.” The first government is that of the home, from which the people come; the second is that of the city, meaning the country, the people, princes and lords, which we call the secular government. These embrace everything – children, property, money, animals, etc. The home must produce, whereas the city must guard, protect and defend. Then follows the third, God’s own home and city, that is, the church, which must obtain people from the home and protection and defense from the city. These are the three hierarchies ordained by God, and we need no more indeed, we have enough and more than enough to do in living aright and resisting the devil in these three.¹¹¹⁷

In Luther’s own exegesis of Genesis in 1535, he outlines these orders of creation. The first order is that of the human being embraced by God and called to the ecclesial order of the church. The second is the order of the household, where marriage is a blessing, and,

¹¹¹⁴ Ballor, “Christ in Creation,” 7.

¹¹¹⁵ Carl E. Braaten, “God in Public Life: Rehabilitating the Orders of Creation,” *First Things* (December, 1990): 34.

¹¹¹⁶ Bonhoeffer later expands on Martin Luther’s original conception of “three estates” which included the church, marriage and government. See for example: Martin Luther, *On the Councils and the Churches* (1539), *Sermon on Matthew 7:15-23, The 8th Sunday after Trinity, House Postil, Table Talk* (1542-1543), *Great Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper* (1528).

¹¹¹⁷ Luther, “On the Councils and the Churches,” 1539.

work a necessity. The third order, necessary because of the fall, is the order of the state created by God to maintain civility.¹¹¹⁸

Through these structures of creation, as Luther explains them, God orders human life and provides a law all humanity may perceive and abide by through natural sensibilities. Ethicist Richard Higginson explains the problem that can be raised in conceptions of “the orders of creation”: “The notion of certain God-given ‘orders’ or areas of life, meanwhile, inculcated a rather static, compartmentalized view of existence, one which allowed little scope for a critical assessment of the existing state of affairs.”¹¹¹⁹ While this may be a risk, it is not inevitability. For the purposes of this dissertation, understanding the attempt to describe different social contexts and one’s agency, or lack of agency, within those contexts will be helpful as we move toward a revised limit model.

An example of the use of “orders of creation” in Nazi Germany can be found in the “Guiding Principles” of the German Christian Faith Movement¹¹²⁰ published in June of 1932. This document presents the orders of creation described in this manner:

We see in race, folk, and nation, orders of existence granted and entrusted to us by God. God's law for us is that we look to the preservation of these orders. Consequently miscegenation is to be opposed. For a long time German Foreign Missions, on the basis of its experience, has been calling to the German people: "Keep your race pure;" and tells us that faith in Christ does not destroy one's race but deepens and sanctifies it.¹¹²¹

Bonhoeffer challenged this understanding of creation directly in a paper he presented at the Youth Peace Conference in Czechoslovakia on July 26, 1932 entitled “Towards a Theological Foundation of the World Alliance [for Promoting International Friendship

¹¹¹⁸ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999): 103–104.

¹¹¹⁹ Higginson, “Bibliography: The Two Kingdoms,” 41.

¹¹²⁰ Burtness, *Shaping the Future*, 80.

¹¹²¹ A.C.Cochrane, *The Church's Confession under Hitler* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976): 222-223.

through the Churches].”¹¹²² He argued that no consistent theology existed for the growing ecumenical movement seeking to stand in opposition to a growing synchronicity between church and state.¹¹²³ He argues that the orders of creation cannot serve as a resource because the church misuses them.¹¹²⁴ He notes the problem once again of trying to sort out the fallen from the good in the orders of creation,

Because certain orders are evident in creation, one should not rebel against them, but simply accept them....Now there is a special danger in this argument; and because it is the one most used at the moment, it must be given special attention. The danger of the argument lies in the fact that just about everything can be defended by it. One need only hold out something to be God-willed and God-created for it to be vindicated for ever, the division of (man) into nations, national struggles, war, class struggle, the exploitation of the weak by the strong, the cutthroat competition of economics....But the mistake lies in the fact that ...creation and sin are so bound up together that no human eye can any longer separate the one from the other, that each human order is an order of the fallen world and not an order of creation.¹¹²⁵

Worthy of note here is the problem Bonhoeffer names that addresses one of the weaknesses in Creamer’s limit model of disability: “Creation and sin are so bound up together that no human eye can any longer separate the one from the other.”

As the address continues to unfold, Bonhoeffer introduces the concept that will replace “the orders of creation” in his theological thinking. He offers instead, “the orders of preservation” (*Erhaltungsordnungen*) as the third and final command to justify and direct the church in the world after the fall. He writes,

¹¹²² Plant, *The Sacrament of Ethical Reality*, 72.

¹¹²³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1965), 161.

¹¹²⁴ In the address, Bonhoeffer argues that while the Sermon on the Mount might seem like a mission statement for the church, he argues this is not the starting place. The answer he provides is somewhat unexpected. Even scriptural witness like the Sermon on the Mount is not universally applicable, the church must listen “afresh” for ethical guidance and responsible action during certain ages.

¹¹²⁵ Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, 161–162.

All the orders of the world only exist in that they are directed toward Christ, they all stand under the preservation of God as long as they are still open for Christ, they are orders of preservation, not orders of creation.¹¹²⁶

While Protestant theologians used “the orders of creation” to describe the structure of reality within the divine universe differentiating from Catholic theologians who upheld natural law as a fundamental structuring of reality, Bonhoeffer was angered by the “uncritical” acceptance of “the orders of creation.”¹¹²⁷ The 1932 lecture prompted by ecumenical necessity paved the way for the exegetical work Bonhoeffer engaged in the winter of 1933 on the book of Genesis as he provided theological argumentation for “the orders of preservation” as preferential to the preexisting “orders of creation.” According to Jordan Ballor, Karl Barth rejected both the orders of creation and the orders of preservation. Emil Brunner affirmed both. Bonhoeffer, in response, rejected the orders of creation and yet affirmed the orders of preservation.¹¹²⁸ This distinction is important to note within the Protestant tradition wherein Barth’s approach is often heralded. Following Barth’s rejection of both orders, one would come to the conclusion that God cannot reveal Godself through either creation or anything preserved within the creation. For Barth, God’s revelation would only occur through an infusion of that revelation into the natural world. Protestant affirmation of this approach is so thorough that Bonhoeffer’s work is often interpreted in the same vein as Barth’s in an assumed rejecting of both. Bonhoeffer however, is a middle ground between Catholic and Protestant thought.

¹¹²⁶ Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, 162.

¹¹²⁷ Wayne Whitson Floyd, “The Search for An Ethical Sacrament: From Bonhoeffer to Critical Social Theory,” *Modern Theology* 7:2 (1991): 183.

¹¹²⁸ Jordan J. Ballor, ‘Christ in Creation: Bonhoeffer’s Orders of Preservation and Natural Theology’ in *Journal of Religion* 86 (2006): 3.

Several challenges emerge for Bonhoeffer in this reenvisioning of what had been a central theological notion within Bonhoeffer's Lutheran tradition and the broader Protestant witness. James Burtness describes the task Bonhoeffer must tackle:

The problem is how to recast and transform the distorted and misused doctrine of the orders of creation, taking into account sin and grace, the fact that the creation is fallen, and that Jesus Christ is now present. The task is to restructure this notion so that it is dynamic rather than static, redemptive rather than repressive, oriented to the future rather than to the past.¹¹²⁹

Bonhoeffer's prelude to full development of his thoughts on the orders occurred during those talks for peace at the Youth Peace Conference in July of 1932. The orders of preservation emerged from a question that had distinct implications for the work of theology in practical ministry: "How can the Gospel and how can the commandment of the church be preached with authority, i.e. in quite concrete form?"¹¹³⁰ While he answers his rhetorical question only briefly at this point with the orders of preservation, he develops the concept more fully toward the end of *Creation and Fall*:

The Creator is now the preserver; the created world is now the fallen but preserved world. In the world between curse and promise, between *tob* and *ra*, good and evil, God deals with humankind in a distinctive way. "He made them cloaks," says the Bible. That means that God accepts human beings for what they are...¹¹³¹

Two points are worthy of note regarding Bonhoeffer's development of "the orders of preservation." First, they are God's ongoing work to uphold and preserve what is good within a creation that is fallen and reality within that creation is a difficult complexity within which to function. No outside revelation is necessary, instead, the possibility of preservation is present within Christ. Second, in a move differing from traditional

¹¹²⁹ Burtness, *Shaping the Future*, 81-82

¹¹³⁰ Jordan J. Ballor, 'Christ in Creation: Bonhoeffer's Orders of Preservation and Natural Theology' in *Journal of Religion* 86 (2006): 6.

¹¹³¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

Catholic theologies of natural law, the orders of preservation acknowledge the fact that the original order in creation no longer exists. What can be identified after the fall is what has been preserved toward Christ.¹¹³² God's work now will be to preserve now that creation is complete.¹¹³³ While humanity lost its center at the fall, Christ becomes the new center for beginning, living and ending all of human life. Bonhoeffer's theology on the nature of Christ is so radical that Christ "exists" only in relationship.

For a fallen creation, where brokenness reigns over all relations; here is the possibility not just for a new creation but also for a new relationship. There is a radical social aspect to the Christology presented by Bonhoeffer. He writes, "Christ can never be thought of as being for himself, but only in relation to me."¹¹³⁴ For the humanity who has only known the duality of *tob* and *ra*, in Christ a new possibility for unity is revealed. Life is preserved in Christ, and in response to that preservation, the church functioning within a fallen world witnesses to the preservation of Christ. The *transformation* that occurs is God's new action, not in retribution to the fall, but working in preservation in spite of the fall. Bonhoeffer makes clear: "God's way of acting to preserve the world is to affirm the sinful world and to show it its limits by means of order."¹¹³⁵ That order is not "orders of creation" but God's new action, "the order of preservation." Bonhoeffer makes a strategic theological shift regarding the limit that stands at the center of human

¹¹³² In a review of G. Clarke Chapman's *Universal Health Care as a Human Right: The Argument of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2014), Gerald Magill takes note of Bonhoeffer's position balancing the best of both Catholic and Protestant theologies as a point of access toward universal health care with Bonhoeffer's reliance on both natural law and the will of God. See: Gerald Magill, "Universal Health Care as a Human Right: The Argument of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," *The Journal of Church and State* 58:3 (July 2016): 564-566.

¹¹³³ Ballor, "Christ in Creation," 7.

¹¹³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1978), 47.

¹¹³⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

existence. While at first two trees marked the center, the cross of Christ¹¹³⁶ replaces that center so human life, ideally, is oriented toward that new center.

“Where does he stand? He stands pro me. He stands there in my place (Stelle), where I should stand, but cannot. He stands on the boundary (Grenze) of my existence, yet for me. That brings out clearly that ‘I’ am separated from my ‘I’, which I should be, by a boundary that I am unable to cross. The boundary lies between me and me, the old and the new ‘I’. It is in the encounter with this boundary that I shall be judged. At this place stands Christ, between me and me, the old and new existence. Thus Christ is at one and the same time, my boundary and my rediscovered center. He is the center, between ‘I’ and ‘I’, and between ‘I’ and God”¹¹³⁷

We remember here in *Creation and Fall*, how Christ the mediator [*mittler*] reclaims the center [*mitte*]¹¹³⁸ in a pinnacle moment of transformation. Christ is both the new center as well as the ultimate limit.

Bonhoeffer adds another dimension in later work that both complements and complicates his concept of “the orders of preservation.” Bonhoeffer utilizes the term “mandates of creation” to describe the way Christ relates to the world through concrete structures connecting to what has been preserved of the good. Now that Christ is the center of existence, one of the ways human life within the world is drawn into relationship with Christ is through the mandates through whom, “the relation of the world

¹¹³⁶ Benjamin Burkholder draws attention to Bonhoeffer’s penal view of atonement wherein Christ becomes the ‘placeholder’ for all of humanity on the cross taking upon himself the sin of all. He argues, “Bonhoeffer’s notion of becoming guilty should be brought to bear on the conversation....Bonhoeffer’s view that God must punish sin does not result in retributive justice becoming a stated ethical principle that justifies violent reprisals, even Bonhoeffer’s. If ever there were an action that seems justified through retributive justice, the attempt on Hitler’s life and the machinations of the resistance would certainly fit. However, rather than claiming his role in the resistance as morally justified, we find just the opposite. We find a person who sees the moral trespass that has been made and refuses to exculpate himself on the grounds of necessity. In the end, Bonhoeffer demonstrates that believing God must punish sin does not translate into a justification of one’s own violence.” See: Benjamin Burkholder, “Violence, Atonement and Retributive Justice: Bonhoeffer as a Test Case” *Modern Theology* 33:3 (July 2017): 411.

¹¹³⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Berlin: 1932-1933: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 12* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009): 306.

¹¹³⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 165.

to Christ becomes concrete.”¹¹³⁹ The mandates are labor, marriage, government and the church.¹¹⁴⁰ These are the spheres in which the preservation of the good will point toward specific purposes in the world drawing on their strength in Christ. To add “for the sake of Christ” would be a helpful descriptive for each of the mandates. Humanity labors for the sake of Christ, marries for the sake of Christ, governs for the sake of Christ and is the church for the sake of Christ. Human vocation in these areas seeks to work alongside the “Creator and Preserver of life” by seeking preservation over destruction.

The mandates become, therefore, a way of giving a spirited structuring to human life together after the fall. The mandates are not static or unchanging, as the orders of creation were perceived to be within the dominant Lutheran theology and the greater German context. Instead, the mandates are according to Larry Rasmussen “dynamic historical forms, structures of time and place that give form to ongoing responsibility and act as the media of moral formation itself.”¹¹⁴¹ Bonhoeffer’s critique of the unchanging and static “orders of creation” was their lack of reference to greater relationships. The mandates, instead, structure all of reality toward relationship with one another. When those arenas of work and government, family and culture fail to nourish life beyond one’s self for the other, they are no longer God’s mandates but human endeavors.¹¹⁴² God’s new action within a fallen creation offers transformation not just as humans are transformed by Christ with the orders of preservation, but humanity is transformed toward a new way of living, moving and having meaningful being within the world as

¹¹³⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Vol. 6* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009): 68.

¹¹⁴⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 68.

¹¹⁴¹ Rasmussen, “The Ethics of Responsible Action,” 222.

¹¹⁴² Rasmussen, “The Ethics of Responsible Action,” 222.

they work within the mandates of creation. For our purposes, the mandates of creation are helpful for recognizing different levels of functionality, morality and disability across social contexts where each presents its own limitations at varying points within its structure.

Bonhoeffer's account of creation suggests that the limit at the center of existence prior to the fall is an essential aspect of being finite human beings. Both "the orders of preservation" and "the mandates of creation" are Bonhoeffer's attempt to improve functioning within those broken relationships amid the real and concrete limits of the world after the fall. In light of the limit model of disability, these notions of Bonhoeffer offer insight into how finite creatures might be cloaked with preservation in order to function and flourish across fluid and varied contexts.

5.3 Themes in Bonhoeffer

Having completed a thorough review of Bonhoeffer's exegesis of *Creation and Fall* by analyzing his lectures and paying attention to the development of his doctrines of creation, sin and redemption, it is now helpful to explore themes in this work related to bodily life, disability and morality and their relationship to vulnerable finite beings in the concrete and complex reality of a broken world. In both the scholarship on moral injury and the scholarship in disability, we noted weaknesses in the areas of medicalization, social analysis and the idea of limits and their effects. And we made clear that perhaps the most helpful lens through which to draw together moral injury and disability is not by way of definition or analytical framework, but through a deepened theological

anthropology of human finitude in the face of limits. Three themes in Bonhoeffer's development of *Creation and Fall* speak to these issues: his notion of bodily life, his idea of morality, and the ways he speaks to issues of disability even prior to its conceptualization as a locus of scholarly analysis. In this section we will explore these issues and the implications they have for comprehending finitude and constructing in the next chapter a revised limit model of disability.

5.3.2 Bodily Life and Bonhoeffer

The overarching whole of Bonhoeffer's corpus from his doctoral dissertation *Sanctorum Communio* to his collected *Ethics* may be read through the crux of bodily life.¹¹⁴³ In the face of Nazi socialism's idolization of "ideal" bodies and rejection of "less-than-ideal" bodies, Bonhoeffer bore witness to a complex view of bodily life for individuals and communities as complex in their "interdependent vulnerability."¹¹⁴⁴ His view of bodily life critiqued mechanization and its utilitarian emphases as well as critiqued societal norms. "Sanctorum Communio," Bonhoeffer's doctoral thesis, argues for a Christian social philosophy to replace the "idealist philosophy of immanent Geist."¹¹⁴⁵ Doing so, required a complex conceptualization of bodily life as a person whose primal state is sin can only be saved through the revelation of the incarnate one who calls each broken body into the greater social body of the body of Christ. This body of Christ, for Bonhoeffer, is not idealized, abstracted or removed. Instead, this body of

¹¹⁴³ Robert Vosloo, "Body and Health in the Light of the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer" *Religion and Theology* 13:1 (2006): 23-36.

¹¹⁴⁴ Vosloo, "Body and Health," 23.

¹¹⁴⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Vol. 1, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 215. See this reference noted in: Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 29.

Christ is radically present and realized fully in human history as the church.¹¹⁴⁶ While “Sanctorum Communio” is often read as an ecclesiological defense, recent scholarship encourages Bonhoeffer’s ecclesiology to be seen within the greater context of bodily life, and God’s relationship to individuals through the incarnate one, as a more comprehensive “theology of sociality.”¹¹⁴⁷ Just as human life can not be idealized, again a radical concept in Bonhoeffer’s context, neither can the greater body of the church be idealized: “Genuine love for the church will bear and love its impurity and imperfections too; for it is in fact this empirical church in whose womb grows God’s sacred treasure.”¹¹⁴⁸ This body, the church, exists and is realized now within human history not in an idealized projection in the future, nor in a purified presumption in the present.¹¹⁴⁹

After the completion of *Sanctorum Communio*, Bonhoeffer needed to produce his *Habilitationsschrift*, a post-doctorate qualification that ensured his ability to teach in Germany at the University level. His work, “Act and Being” (*Akt und Sein*), is the most complex, debated, least understood and least debated of all Bonhoeffer’s works. Scholars debate whether the work is concerned with: theological epistemology, revelation, ontology, methodology, philosophy, or ecclesiology.¹¹⁵⁰ Amid this debate, Clifford Green argues that “Act and Being” is ultimately concerned with the body as it develops a theological anthropology concerned with “the isolated, self-imprisoned I, violating social relationships in its knowing and its intellectual power.”¹¹⁵¹ Inherent to this thesis, is for Bonhoeffer, a greater soteriological problem that he does not solve in his analysis, but

¹¹⁴⁶ Vosloo, “Body and Health,” 27.

¹¹⁴⁷ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 63.

¹¹⁴⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*, 222.

¹¹⁴⁹ Vosloo, “Body and Health,” 27.

¹¹⁵⁰ See here Clifford Green’s discussion, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 68-70.

¹¹⁵¹ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 102.

will continue to devote his intellectual and practical pursuits to as he continues his scholarship and ministry.¹¹⁵² The development of this scholarship, both in the answers he presents and the questions still to be pursued, unfolds against the growing tyranny over bodies within the Nationalist Socialist party and their ideations of “healthy bodies” and “healthy societies.”¹¹⁵³

It is at this juncture when Bonhoeffer moves from the “phraseological to the real”¹¹⁵⁴ with his Genesis lectures that pursue both a deepened, and less abstract, theological anthropology and an initial venture into the soteriological question at the heart of bodily life. To be clear, “Creation and Fall” as a theological exposition of scripture has at its heart profound implications for humanity and sociality, all situated within this unfolding paradigm of bodily life. While the winter lectures at the University of Berlin were on “Creation and Fall,” Bonhoeffer moved to the subject of Christology in the summer of 1933. Evident in these lectures with Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on the body is the temptation to become abstracted from the body even with the very theological doctrine that insists on the importance of the body. “The incarnation” can become too phraseological. Instead, at the heart of Christianity is the real, the incarnate one, the incarnate one not being an abstraction but a full-bodied presence. Bonhoeffer explains, “If we speak of God, we may not say of him that he is the representative of an idea of God, which possesses the characteristics of omniscience and omnipotence; rather we must speak of his weakness, his manger, his cross. This man is no abstract God. Strictly

¹¹⁵² Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 103.

¹¹⁵³ Vosloo, “Body and Health,” 27.

¹¹⁵⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 225.

speaking we should not talk of the incarnation, but of the incarnate one.”¹¹⁵⁵ Seeing this emphasis in the summer, after the winter lectures on Genesis, helps to make clear Bonhoeffer’s Christological reading of the Old Testament text of Genesis.

Bodies, then, are at the center of Bonhoeffer’s theology and ethics. Care for bodies and justice amid our “interdependent vulnerability”¹¹⁵⁶ is what necessitates the conversations at play in Bonhoeffer’s “Ethics.” Bonhoeffer witnessed two extremes within bodily life in his context: the notion of a nihilistic vitalism¹¹⁵⁷ and the possibility of an absolutized mechanization.¹¹⁵⁸ Together, “Vitalism and mechanization...equally express a perhaps unconscious despair about natural life, an enmity to life, a weariness of life, an incapacity for life.”¹¹⁵⁹ Between these extremes Bonhoeffer situated “natural life.”¹¹⁶⁰ Life is not a means to an end, but the end itself, as realized in Christ’s life and all its “createdness.”¹¹⁶¹ All ethical acts emerge not from the extremes of vitalism and mechanization, but instead from the very created-ness of Jesus Christ and his call to care and justice for all bodies with an eye toward preservation.

Just as bodies inform Bonhoeffer’s ethics, so do they likewise inform Bonhoeffer’s ecclesiology as presented in *Life Together* and *Discipleship*. *Life Together* invites radical praise for the other, another bodily life, even when life together is difficult or even impossible. Bonhoeffer makes clear, “A human being is created as a body; the

¹¹⁵⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ* ed. John de Gruchy (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991): 117. This is an excerpt from one of Bonhoeffer’s Christology lectures.

¹¹⁵⁶ Vosloo, “Body and Health,” 23. Here, we call to mind the shift in the scholarship in disability from the disavowal of Plato and Aristotle to those who were vulnerable in their disability to the “vulnerable communion” of Thomas Reynolds. Reynolds cited the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* as insightful for our shared vulnerability in that we are *all* dependent on God. See: Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 154.

¹¹⁵⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 123.

¹¹⁵⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 123.

¹¹⁵⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 179.

¹¹⁶⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 179.

¹¹⁶¹ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 179.

Son of God appeared on earth in the body and was raised in the body. In the sacrament the believer receives the Lord Christ in the body, and the resurrection of the dead will bring about the perfected community of God's spiritual-physical creatures. Therefore the believer praises the Creator, the Reconciler and the Redeemer, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the bodily presence of the other Christian."¹¹⁶² The complex gathering of these "other Christians" becomes the church and is an absolute necessity in light of the incarnate, crucified and risen body of Christ. The risen body of Christ, after death, needs then a particular body in which to dwell. Thus, the church becomes the community of believers [*Nachfolgegemeinde*] who are now his body. Bonhoeffer explains, "It is thus in the body of Christ that the disciples have community. They live and suffer in bodily community with Jesus. By being in community with the body of Jesus they are placed under the burden of the cross."¹¹⁶³ The cross then, makes clear, this community of disciples is not an idealized body – but a suffering, broken, crucified body. This body, both in its individual members and collective state, is a disabled body.

Bonhoeffer's overarching theology is one intimately concerned with bodily life, and even more so, it should be noted for the purposes of this dissertation that bodily life for Bonhoeffer – whether Christ, or the individual Christian, or the collective church – is fundamentally disabled. In an August 1933 letter to his grandmother, Julie Bonhoeffer, written following Bonhoeffer's winter lectures on "Creation and Fall" and summer lectures on "Christology", he speaks in the language of conversion having experienced the bodily suffering of epileptics at the Bethel clinics in the Westphalia region. He

¹¹⁶² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 5* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 29.

¹¹⁶³ Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 215.

writes, “It is said of the Buddha that he was converted by a meeting with a man who was gravely ill. It is sheer madness to believe, as is done today, that the sick can and ought to be legally eliminated. It is virtually the same as building a tower of Babel, and is bound to bring its own revenge.”¹¹⁶⁴ For Bonhoeffer, this kind of conversion in the face of bodily suffering, secured his belief not in any gnostic escape, but instead in the radicalness of the gospel realized in human form and human weakness. Bodily life undergoes transformation as “flesh encounters world” as disabilityson attests, but that does not disable life for Bonhoeffer.¹¹⁶⁵ Instead, new ways of considering responsibility and morality unfold.

5.3.3 Morality and Bonhoeffer

The brief excursus above on Bonhoeffer’s overarching theme of “the body” within his theology is important for locating Bonhoeffer within the field of disability studies. Even prior to the development of the field, we see in his work the struggle to move beyond the mechanization or ideation of the body that is the weakness of “the medical model” of disability. And, we see in his work the struggle over and against social conceptualizations of the body, as “the social model of disability” aspires to do. But as his theological anthropology reveals, there is the sense of human limit before God, self and neighbor that tugs at his theological quest. Herein, we see the precursor of “the limit model” of disability. While these confluences are helpful for the purposes of this

¹¹⁶⁴ Eherhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (London: Collins, 1970), 231.

¹¹⁶⁵ It should be noted here the distinction between “flesh” and “body” as noted in Chapter 3. While Bonhoeffer’s work precedes this scholarly conversation. If bodies are, according to Betcher, the materialization of social structures and flesh, in a deeper way, engages the spirit, then it would be fascinating to read Bonhoeffer’s bodily theology through the lens of a spirited flesh that works over and against the materialization of social structures.

dissertation, the focus on body could all too easily emphasize the “injury” of Moral Injury at the expense of considering “morality” as an equal part of the equation. In developing our revised limit model of disability, it is beneficial briefly to consider Bonhoeffer’s understanding of morality as a dimension of his theological anthropology.

For Bonhoeffer, morality is defined in relation to three concrete areas: the reality of human life, responsibility of the individual in the face of that reality, and the restructuring of human life amid our sinful structures for the purposes of a future generation. Bonhoeffer believed “the moral ground”¹¹⁶⁶ of his age was obliterated. In the face of that destruction, morality and its human implications is radically redefined. Because of this, morality becomes for Bonhoeffer what Wannewetsch deems a “vexed” moral notion.¹¹⁶⁷ Responsibility, in the face of the concrete and complex real, becomes the new moral category.

Wannewetsch sets forth a helpful schema drawing Bonhoeffer into conversation with traditional moral categories to illumine “responsibility” as the new moral category for Bonhoeffer. The question asked by the consequentialist is “What shall I do?” The question asked by the deontological agent is “What ought I do?” The question asked by Niebuhr’s “responsible self” is “What is going on?” The problem with Niebuhr’s question is that it invites self-justification rather than the justification of God. Bonhoeffer’s critique poses then a different question in response to God and neighbor, “Is

¹¹⁶⁶ Rasmussen, “The Ethics of Responsible Action,” 207.

¹¹⁶⁷ Bernd Wannewetsch, “‘Responsible Living’ or ‘Responsible Self’? Bonhoefferian Reflections on a Vexed Moral Notion” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 18.3 (2005): 125.

this helpful?” His question probes whether an action is responsible in light of the very ‘real’ situation at hand.¹¹⁶⁸

Bonhoeffer understood the hazy disparity of *tob* and *ra* of life in the real world. Because of this Bonhoeffer encouraged conformation toward the form of Christ. Bonhoeffer’s relational view of Christ invites not an internal process of self-reflection, but instead an external assessment of one’s relationships and connections. Joshua Kaiser explains, “Discernment is not an isolated spiritual activity, divorced from the reality of the natural world, but as a human activity fully embedded in the world”¹¹⁶⁹ The shift Bonhoeffer makes is that Christians act finally not from a responsible self, but from a discerned response to neighbor in the real and complex reality of the world. We then are responsible to each other, in Christ, not to our own moral and responsible self.¹¹⁷⁰ The language Bonhoeffer uses to describe this transition attests to a shattering of past understanding:

The boundary of vocation has been broken open not only vertically, that is, through Christ, but also horizontally, with regard to the extent of responsibility...Vocation is responsibility, and responsibility is the whole response of the whole person to reality as a whole.¹¹⁷¹

In this chapter from his *Ethics* Bonhoeffer returns to the experience of “encounter.” In this moment of responsibility to which a person is called, “The call of Jesus Christ is the call to belong to Christ completely; it is Christ’s address and claim at the place at which this call encounters me.”¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁶⁸ Wannewetsch, “‘Responsible Living’ or ‘Responsible Self?’” 126.

¹¹⁶⁹ Joshua A. Kaiser, *Becoming Simple and Wise: Moral Discernment in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Vision of Christian Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co., 2015), 104.

¹¹⁷⁰ Wannewetsch, “‘Responsible Living’ or ‘Responsible Self,’” 125.

¹¹⁷¹ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 293.

¹¹⁷² Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 292.

Bonhoeffer's views on reality and responsibility then shape the hope he has for restructuring the broken moral world.¹¹⁷³ The way reality and responsibility are reshaped is ultimately sacramental. The static of real life becomes sacramental when we tune into Christ in the real world filled with all sorts of surprising abilities and disabilities for all people. Bonhoeffer calls this reality "the sacrament of [the ethical] command."¹¹⁷⁴ His words here make the reader pause: *Reality is the sacrament of the ethical*. What Bonhoeffer asks us to consider is this. What is broken open as sacrament is the real. The real is the lived lives – the broken–open, not perfect, *tob/ra*, abled/disabled – realities of living human beings. Sacrament then is not a sacred other: sacrament is this life, this world, this broken reality. Bonhoeffer inadvertently anticipates Eiesland in this incredible tenet.¹¹⁷⁵ God's reality is most realized in the midst of this breaking–apart life. Bonhoeffer might even use that word 'twilight' here to offer that 'twilight' is the sacrament of the ethical. The ethical, the command to love God and neighbor, is drawn into this 'breaking–apart' life and met with the sacramental love of a God who makes Godself known in this *tob/ra* world. It is here that reality becomes the sacrament of the ethical and that the ultimate restructuring of reality begins.

Bonhoeffer's move from "orders of creation" to "orders of preservation" names a foundation for ethics. To start an ethical conversation from the Doctrine of Creation is impossible because "creation and sin are so bound up together that no human eye can any

¹¹⁷³ Matthew D. Kirkpatrick, "Bonhoeffer, Kierkegaard, and the Teleological Suspension of the Ethical," *Ontology and Ethics: Bonhoeffer and Contemporary Scholarship* ed. by Adam C. Clark and Michael Mawson (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013): 86-101.

¹¹⁷⁴ Stephen Plant, 'The Sacrament of Ethical Reality: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Ethics for Christian Citizens,' in *Studies in Christian Ethics* 18:3 (2005): 71-87.

¹¹⁷⁵ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 107-119.

longer separate the one from the other.”¹¹⁷⁶ A starting point of creation would lead to the same misrepresentation drawn by other sectors of Protestant theology who used the orders of creation to rationalize division, war and segregation. For Bonhoeffer, the starting point of ethics is preservation. What has been preserved, that is good and of God and pointed to Christ, within this fallen world? Discussions from the starting point of creation, then, leave the theologian with static. Turning to preservation instead, is not only the foundation for ethical discourse, but even more so, reality becomes the sacrament of ethics.

This view is refreshing in that reality is filled with static. Reality is broken. But so too are the sacraments. Ethics, with its starting place in Christ knows the brokenness of “this cross, this blood, this broken body”.¹¹⁷⁷ What is preserved within reality may appear broken, but this is the brokenness of and for and toward the one who by breaking his body breaks open his love for the world. With this high view, reality as sacrament of the ethical may sound disconcerting and perhaps even blasphemous. But in the area of theology and disability, reality is real situations where expectations have fallen short. The ethical is a call to live into a high calling response to what in the past could have been construed as only an unreal possibility. Sacrament then, is the way that God breaks through, blessing the situation. James Burtness offers this explanation,

It seems incongruous to place the words “sacrament” and “ethical” together. “Sacrament” refers to a purely gracious act of God. “Ethical” refers to a purely human act. “Sacrament of the ethical” is a surprising, even a strange, phrase.¹¹⁷⁸

¹¹⁷⁶ John De Gruchy ‘Afterword’, in *Creation and Fall*, 149.

¹¹⁷⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 146.

¹¹⁷⁸ James Burtness, *Shaping the Future: The Ethics of Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985), 43.

Ethics is intimately connected to the reality of creation as well as to what has been preserved within that creation. The gracious acts of God are perceived not only in the bread and wine, but also in human acts broken open as they model the forgiveness of Christ, preserving that salvific act of his through their own vocation. The ethicist then works toward a specific purpose. Bonhoeffer states this very specifically, “In the sphere of Christian ethics it is not what ought to be that effects what is, but what is that effects what ought to be.”¹¹⁷⁹ What *is* is Christ. Human perception of morality then changes from “ought” to “is” reframing the picture by naming the good that already exists and inviting society to see that goodness preserved in Christ and to be restructured to that end.

5.3.4 Disability and Bonhoeffer

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson asserts: “Disability is the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world,” and certainly what we deem Bonhoeffer’s “Gospel of Genesis” reveals the possibility of a certain form of disability in the face of the fall. To be clear, the nuance here is not a link between original sin and disability; but instead, a certain kind of disabling that emerges in response to flesh encountering world and the limits those “other-than-God” encounters provoke. When we outlined possibilities for the relationship between moral injury and disability in chapter three, we considered the effect of transmitting the definition from one field to the other, we outlined possibilities for utilizing different frameworks through which to perceive the other, and then we reflected on the option of looking at disability and moral injury through the lens of finitude. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Deborah Creamer and Dietrich Bonhoeffer each in their

¹¹⁷⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Communion of Saints* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1963), 146.

own way add to the configuration of finitude as an important aspect of our theological anthropology for considering disability, moral injury and the limits inherent within them that raise questions of theological importance. In this section we will briefly explore the context of Bonhoeffer's life that may have shaped his understanding of disability and we will review the content of Bonhoeffer's theological anthropology as shaped by a comprehension of finitude.

Bernd Wannewetsch appears to be the first theologian to bring Bonhoeffer into the discourse of theology and 'disability'.¹¹⁸⁰ In his essay, "'My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness': Bonhoeffer and the War over Disabled Life"¹¹⁸¹, he explores the language of strength and weakness to understand Bonhoeffer's claims on the disabled life. Even more so, he situates Bonhoeffer's understanding of disability through the legacy of his father and the community at Bethel. Wannewetsch argues that the dignity of the disabled is a key theme to all of Bonhoeffer's theology wherein all life is created, preserved and redeemed by God. Wannewetsch uses a comparison of Bethel, a community supporting disabled life, versus Buchenwald, a concentration camp that disposes of the disabled. Bonhoeffer is realistic about Bethel that still is a ghetto of sorts as it creates a separate place for the disabled. However, Bonhoeffer is a place of ecclesiological community wherein all life is respected. A key question Bonhoeffer asks revolves around the theme, "What is the meaning of weakness in the world?"¹¹⁸² In the

¹¹⁸⁰ To be clear, remember here Brian Brock's anachronistic caution. Brian Brock, "Augustine: Hierarchies of Human Wholeness and Healing," 65.

¹¹⁸¹ Bernd Wannewetsch, "'My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness': Bonhoeffer and the War over Disabled Life" in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, edited by Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 353-369.

¹¹⁸² Wannewetsch, "My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness," 361.

face of weakness, people must find the courage to resist the urge to distance themselves from others because of a deep theological conviction that:

God is weak and powerless in the world, and that is exactly the way, the only way in which he can be with us and help us. Matthew 8:17 makes it crystal clear that it is not by his omnipotence that Christ helps us, but by his weakness and his suffering...only a suffering God can help.¹¹⁸³

Bonhoeffer critiques what might look like the virtue of benevolence deeming it an act of condescension rather than true neighborly love that is humble.¹¹⁸⁴ Our political vocation in this world is not to “dully look on”¹¹⁸⁵ but to be a vicarious representative of Jesus the Christ who is the “origin, essence and goal of life”¹¹⁸⁶ and thereby restructures reality through the ongoing work of preservation.

When we read Bonhoeffer, as Wannewetsch has, critically and even viscerally, we begin to sense the concreteness and readiness of Bonhoeffer’s theology. This is not abstract, but realized and readied for the here and now. Michael Mawson attributes this sensibility to Bonhoeffer’s theological anthropology that is grounded in a relational anthropology of creatureliness rather than a doctrine regarding the persons of the Trinity.¹¹⁸⁷ Mawson critiques scholars who base their relational personhood solely on Trinitarian conceptions of personhood in community (such as Young and Reinders)

¹¹⁸³ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 8* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010): 479. John Swinton reiterates this theme in his essay “The Body of Christ Has Down Syndrome.” See: John Swinton, “The Body of Christ has Down Syndrome: Theological Reflections of Vulnerability, Disability, and Graceful Communities” *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 13:2 (2004): 66-78.

¹¹⁸⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “Sermon for the Evening Worship Service on 2 Corintihians 12:9, “My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness,” *London, 1933-1935: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 13*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007): 403.

¹¹⁸⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 49.

¹¹⁸⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 251.

¹¹⁸⁷ Michael Mawson, “Creatures Before God: Bonhoeffer, Disability and Theological Anthropology,” *Christ, Church, and World: New Studies in Bonhoeffer’s Theology and Ethics*, edited by Michael Mawson and Philip Ziegler (London, UK: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016): 117.

because it disavows the “concrete and embodied”¹¹⁸⁸ nature of human being. Bonhoeffer does not ground his relational anthropology within a Trinitarian framework and instead presents a view of human being that encounters finitude through “the others as a bodily limit.”¹¹⁸⁹ For Mawson, this insight allows relationship with those of varying abilities within the concrete limits of the human experience rather than awaiting ecstatic transformation or the ideal community of the Trinity.¹¹⁹⁰ Finitude, then, is essential to divine encounter not disposable as other opportunities are anticipated.

5.4 Implications and Next Steps

In our aim to develop a “revised limit model of disability” that pays attention to human finitude as a construct of our theological anthropology, we have drawn Dietrich Bonhoeffer alongside Deborah Creamer to offer deepened accounts of creation, theological anthropology, sin and redemption to develop her model. Creamer, in her account, moves from the “what happens” (we encounter limits) to the “why questions” those encounters provoke. For Creamer, particular limiting contexts evoke questions of faith. Bonhoeffer, one might argue, functions in reverse by moving from the “why questions” of creation he explores through *Creation and Fall* to the “what happens” when limits are experienced. Key aspects of “what happens” for Bonhoeffer are the orders of preservation, through which we are cloaked with new garments and upheld in Christ, the mandates of creation through which we function anew. While Bonhoeffer offers a constructive lens through which to further Creamer’s model, particularly in exploring the

¹¹⁸⁸ Mawson, “Creatures Before God,” 117.

¹¹⁸⁹ Mawson, “Creatures Before God,” 135.

¹¹⁹⁰ Mawson, “Creatures Before God,” 135.

depth of angst, despair and shame experienced within those limiting encounters, still he does not go far enough.

Bonhoeffer's account adds depth to the lines focused upon in this chapter from The Veterans' Creed: *When I struggle with my own pain, my veteran teammates will support me; and I will reach out of the darkness and grasp their helping hands.*¹¹⁹¹ And yet for as far as Bonhoeffer's accounts of creation, sin and redemption resonate with the depth of struggle, pain, darkness and grasping expressed in this creed; there is one aspect that goes unnoticed – the silence of shattering trauma, experienced as moral injury, that remains unexpressed.¹¹⁹² In order to attend to the disabling potential of finitude in the face of limits, we will construct a revised limit model in the next chapter that holds at its center the unexpressed silence and the need for an integrated narrative through which to move onward.

As we have drawn together Garland-Thomson, Creamer and Bonhoeffer to provide resources for a deepened account of finitude for the scholarship of moral injury we have held onto the phrase of Garland-Thomson: *Disability is the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world.* At this point in the project, it is helpful to consider how Creamer might frame her argument for limits in light of that definition. Perhaps, we could argue, Creamer would suggest: Disability is the *limiting* of the flesh as it encounters world. And, we could argue Bonhoeffer offers a theological nuance: Redemption is the *preservation* of the flesh as it has “other-than-God” encounters with the fallen world. As we return to moral injury in the next chapter to develop a revised

¹¹⁹¹ The Veterans' Creed.

¹¹⁹²I am thankful to my Louisville Institute cohort for the Winter 2018 Seminar. In particular, I am grateful to Biblical Scholar Paul Cho of Wesley Theological Seminary for insights and wisdom shared.

limit model of disability that will address some of those questions of medicalization, social grief, and changing limits raised in chapter two, perhaps we can keep this variation of Garland-Thomson's definition in mind: *Moral injury is the shattering of the moral world and its traumatic encodement in flesh as flesh encounters world.*

Chapter 6

A Crucial Limit Model of Disability

*I will never quit.
I will never give up.
I will never accept defeat.*

- The Veterans' Creed¹¹⁹³

6.1 Constructing a Crucial Limit Model of Disability

Having recognized the need for a revised model of disability, taking into account human finitude to address needs in the scholarship of moral injury, in this chapter we construct a crucial limit model of disability. To be clear, a crucial limit model of disability will hold steadfast to particular contexts, individual moral agents, and the unique interplay that occurs between the two as limits are encountered and shame ensues. While Bonhoeffer does not introduce a model of disability, nor does he utilize the term “crucial” at length, Bonhoeffer concludes his Genesis lecture with these words: “The tree of life, the cross of Christ, the center of God’s world (*Der baum des lebens, das kreuz Christi, das zentrum von Gottes welt*) that is fallen but upheld and preserved – that is what the end of the story about paradise is for us.”¹¹⁹⁴ In so doing, it is appropriate for us to derive from the centrality the cross (*kreuz*) and the cruciality of limits in Bonhoeffer, the language of “crucial” for our new model. A crucial limit model of disability, in turn, begins with an account of *human finitude*, encountered again and again¹¹⁹⁵ in complex *social contexts*, wherein *moral agents* experience deep shame (necessitating traumatic

¹¹⁹³ Veterans’ Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

¹¹⁹⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 146.

¹¹⁹⁵ Bonhoeffer’s language is worthy of note here. He describes Adam’s frustration after the fall where there is “a constant attack on the kingdom from which he is shutout, a desperate raging again and again against the sentinels who keep watch.” Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 144.

embodied silence and having globalizing effects on the larger world). Important to this model is the possibility of *real world redemption* even when limited horizons of choice cause morally injurious decisions to be made. The real world redemption is a response not to traditional notions of “enslavement to sin” and a conception of redemption as freedom from that enslavement,¹¹⁹⁶ but instead, an awareness for Bonhoeffer that sin is less of a “bind” and more a problematic limitlessness that requires new order and redemptive action.

Throughout this study on moral injury we have aimed to draw moral injury into the field of disability studies with an eye to “the limit model of disability” developed by Deborah Creamer. Our search for a “revised limit model” is intended to deepen, strengthen and extend her model as a resource for reflecting on moral injury. We have made use of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s exegetical attention to “limit” in *Creation and Fall*, where he allows a distinction between limits that are natural from limits that are sinful. Bonhoeffer emphasizes the deep sense of shame when a limit is transgressed and the continual, lifelong burden that life without limits can be. For Bonhoeffer, the story of Genesis is a lingering exploration of *Grenze* (limit) and the moral emotions the shame of transgressed limits generates. The dialogue between Bonhoeffer and Creamer allows us to develop a “crucial limit model of disability” wherein agency becomes disabled in diverse and unexpected contexts when “psycho-bio-social-moral-existential”¹¹⁹⁷ limits are crossed in a manner that raises deep questions regarding God, self and the humanity of others.

¹¹⁹⁶ Consider, for example, Paul’s letter to the Romans 6:1-23 where he describes enslavement to sin and the hope for freedom in Jesus Christ from that enslavement.

¹¹⁹⁷ Phrase adapted from language utilized by Brett Litz. See: Litz, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans,” 696.

In this chapter I will present a “Crucial Limit Model of Disability” and explain its relevance for moral injury. To do so, it is necessary to engage three critical conversations before presenting the twelve essential components of the model. First, we will analyze the etymological roots of “*crucial*” and explore various definitions and connotations of the word itself. Second, we will look at the four-fold development of Bonhoeffer’s notion of “*limit*” highlighting key points from chapter five and clarifying their import for the revised model. Third, we will glean insights from the scholarship of *disability* presented by Rosemarie Garland Thomson and Deborah Creamer related to human finitude in the face of limit. Once that groundwork has been established, twelve essential components of the crucial limit model of disability will be outlined. Finally, after outlining this model and its relationship to human finitude, social contexts, moral agents and concrete redemption, we will assess the impact of the model for moral injury, disability and moral theory. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the model.

The Veterans’ Creed reminds us the commitment each soldier makes: *I will never quit. I will never give up. I will never accept defeat.* And yet, the persistence of moral injury makes clear the tragic consequences when a soldier draws near to the limits of betrayal, disavowal, and moral implosion. Addressing this societal crisis demands an account of crucial limits and their disabling potential that wrestles with the complex realities of human finitude and the problematic limitlessness of sin. For vets who are at that crucial limit of quitting, giving up and ultimate defeat, the crucial limit model of disability acknowledges the despair in that reckoning as moral codes implode and questioning of self and society begins.

6.2 Etymology of “Crucial”: Definitions and Implications

The etymology of the word “crucial” reveals a fascinating legacy dating back to the eighteenth century and derived from both the Old Norse *kross* and the Latin *crux* meaning cross-shaped. First, there is a medical dimension to “crucial” with its French roots conveying an image of the ligaments of the knee that cross each other. These cruciate ligaments composed of the anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments, run diagonally in the middle of the knee and create the juncture wherein a knee can move back and forth allowing a large range of motion because of their unique design.¹¹⁹⁸ This definition reminds us both of our intricate embodiment as well as the possibility of joints and ligaments becoming disabled over time or due to injury. To be clear, the tear of a cruciate ligament is deemed to carry excruciating pain. Second, there is a social connotation within the etymology of “crucial” as one might imagine society at a crossroads, a literal fork in the road, with a signpost to deliberate and choose the course to follow. Francis Bacon utilized the phrase *instantia crucis* (a crucial instant) drawing on the imagery of the fork in the road to describe how within an experiment there might be a critical moment that gives direction to one hypothesis or another.¹¹⁹⁹ This intimation of “crucial” compels us to remember our social setting: the four cardinal points on the

¹¹⁹⁸ F. G. Girgis; Marshall, JL.; Monajem, A. "The Cruciate Ligaments of the Knee Joint. Anatomical, Functional and Experimental Analysis". *Clinical Orthopedics and Related Research* 106 (Jan/Feb 1975): 216.

¹¹⁹⁹ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, trans. G. Rees and M. Wakely, in *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Vol. 11: The Instauration Magna Part II: Novum Organum and Associated Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007): 215-17, 221, 261.

cross of a compass, constellation of the Southern Cross underneath Centaurus in the sky, the four winds, the four seasons, the four elements that compose our world. Third, the definition of the word “crucial” compels the hearer to imagine a crisis, a limit reached, which commands a decisive action and perhaps, raises existential questions that can be severe and trying. This definition invites realistic assessment of decision-making: both the actions that prove helpful, the actions that are sinful, and perhaps even, the actions that are unavoidable. Fourth, crucial can designate the form of a cross where a horizontal axis intersects a vertical one. This definition carries both the symbolism of the form of the cross as well as the metaphorical weight of existential crisis where torture causes agonizing pain and troubles all who bear witness to the event.

As we examine the implications of the crucial limit model for conceptualizing disability, these four connotations of the definition ground our model and its implications. We will see, as we turn now to Bonhoeffer, his recognition of the cross-event as the critical and decisive moment in human history as the cross becomes the new limit for humanity. And yet, we will also see how all four definitions and nuances of “crucial” are implied across his theology.

6.3 Anthropology, Sin and Crucial Limits: Revisiting Bonhoeffer

When faced with looming genocide,¹²⁰⁰ Bonhoeffer turned to Genesis for guidance. In his work *Creation and Fall*, he wrestled with the concepts of *grenze* (limit)

¹²⁰⁰Prior to the war in 1939, as early as 1932-1933, Bonhoeffer and others were aware of what Bernd Wannewetsch deems “the war over disabled life” and the classification of citizens as “useless eaters” and “life unworthy of life.” See: Bernd Wannewetsch, “Bonhoeffer and the War Over Disabled Life,” 353-369. In the summer of 1933, after the Genesis lectures, Bonhoeffer visited a community at Bethel where those with disabilities were embraced. The experience at Bethel became a “place of revelation” for

and *grezenlose* (limitlessness) to develop both a theological anthropology and the foundation of his view of moral responsibility. In this section, we will explore Bonhoeffer's account of limits in four critical moments in his exegesis of Genesis. These insights will become critical as we present the importance of his four-fold delineation of limits for our crucial limit model. Then, we will engage briefly the interplay Bonhoeffer develops between context and moral agent. Finally, we will consider how limits shape Bonhoeffer's doctrines of creation, sin and redemption. The interplay between sin and anthropology in Bonhoeffer's work is foundational for articulating the contours and depth of a crucial limit model of disability. This section will help us to assess Bonhoeffer's four-fold conceptualization of "limit" (that is, the theological concept utilized in the model) and the implication it has for context and agent guided by Bonhoeffer's theological doctrines of creation, sin and redemption (that is, the theological foundation for the model).

6.3.1 Bonhoeffer's Fourfold Account of Limit in *Creation and Fall*

Four critical moments in Bonhoeffer's exegesis are worthy of note here: his prelapsarian account of limits, his postlapsarian account of limits, his notion of preservation in the face of limits, and his conception of the cross for human limits. As examined in chapter five, at the center of Creation, prior to fall, in the series of *other-than-God* encounters that ultimately culminated. In this discussion of the fall we saw that

Bonhoeffer (355) – not the ghetto it was intended to be. Bonhoeffer wrote a letter to his Grandmother Julie explaining the beauty and truth he saw in disabled existence (354). This experience became the basis for the Bethel Confession that was the founding document of the Confessing Church. Unfortunately, Bonhoeffer did not agree with the final draft of the document and didn't sign it.

“limits” were: central,¹²⁰¹ in the middle not on the margin of life,¹²⁰² internal,¹²⁰³ life-giving,¹²⁰⁴ grace-providing,¹²⁰⁵ and revealed even more fully in relationships.¹²⁰⁶ While the limit reveals: “*life, knowledge, death*”¹²⁰⁷; there is still goodness and grace amid those limits. In the face of that limit, Bonhoeffer explains, “What Adam knows is that the secret of humankind’s limit, of the life of the human being, is in God’s keeping.”¹²⁰⁸ Prior to the fall, within the confines of Eden, Bonhoeffer recognizes what I call “the crucial limit” at the center of human existence.

The second context in which Bonhoeffer developed his particular understanding of the term “limit” is in the aftermath of the fall. Here, sin breaks into creation and the “limit” that was at the center of Eden is broken and consequently, “humankind stands in the middle, with no limit.”¹²⁰⁹ The human being is then alone, limitless, and with out divine resources.¹²¹⁰ Human beings, created originally in the *imago dei* become instead *sicut deus*.¹²¹¹ The limit that had been grace is usurped.¹²¹² The impact of the lost limit has a divine repercussion (grace becomes guilt) as well as relational ramifications (love becomes grudge.) Eve, who was to be grace to Adam as well, is now the human

¹²⁰¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86. See also: 98-99. Bonhoeffer explains: “*Limit and life* constitute the inviolable, inaccessible center of paradise around which Adam’s life circles. This center *takes on form...*”

¹²⁰² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86.

¹²⁰³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 86.

¹²⁰⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 87.

¹²⁰⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 87.

¹²⁰⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 99.

¹²⁰⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 83.

¹²⁰⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 93.

¹²⁰⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115.

¹²¹⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 115.

¹²¹¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 116. In a play on words in the German, “*Gotze*” (which resembles *Grenze*) is “False God.” Adam as *Sicut Deus* is caught between God and a false God in his loss of limit. See also: 114.

¹²¹² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 118.

experience of “God’s wrath, God’s hatred, God’s begrudging.”¹²¹³ So in contrast to prelapsarian limits, limits, after the fall, are: continual,¹²¹⁴ everywhere,¹²¹⁵ external,¹²¹⁶ shame-invoking,¹²¹⁷ guilt-producing,¹²¹⁸ and a source of infinite burden.¹²¹⁹ After the fall, the crucial limit of human existence has been transgressed and the result is twofold: creation exists in the aftermath of this “fallen-falling world”¹²²⁰ and creatures live with the aftershocks of a “continual fall” without limits “dropping into a bottomless abyss.”¹²²¹ Life in this world without limits is overwhelmed with shame.¹²²²

The third movement occurs through the redeeming work God begins in Genesis and continues until the full knowledge of the meaning of the cross is revealed. In the face of the limitlessness of sin, God’s response, according to Bonhoeffer in his account of Genesis, is threefold. First, God “makes them cloaks”¹²²³ to address their shame and nakedness, first and foremost, but even more so to acknowledge that “God affirms them

¹²¹³Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 122. Jonathan Shay provides an account of soldiers in relationship to their military and political authorities deemed “REMFS” referring to their status in the “rear echelon” even though they were of higher authority. For the soldiers, the gods’ wrath, hatred and begrudging was manifested in the “heartless, crooked, shallow, and self indulgent REMFS.” Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 154-161. It should be noted that Shay points out Homer’s willingness to engage both sides of the gods. Homer’s portrayal depicts Zeus who has men near to his heart. See: Homer, *Iliad*, trans. by Robert Fitzgerald (New York, NY: Anchor-Doubleday, 1974): 20:24ff.

¹²¹⁴Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120. Of note here, is the language of continual fall: “From now on that world has been robbed of its creatureliness and drops blindly into infinite space, like a meteor that has torn itself away from the core to which it once belonged. It is of this fallen-falling world that we must now speak.”

¹²¹⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*,

¹²¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 144.

¹²¹⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 117.

¹²¹⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 119.

¹²¹⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

¹²²⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

¹²²¹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120.

¹²²² Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 124. Jean Bethke Elshtain offers a fascinating account of the antithesis of shame that Bonhoeffer recognized in the National Socialist regime. She understood that for Bonhoeffer, shame preserves human dignity and acknowledges the divided self; while shamelessness disrespects both. She writes, “One of the reasons Dietrich Bonhoeffer was so repulsed by Nazism was precisely because of its aberrant shamelessness.” See Elshtain, “Shame and Public Life,” 18.

¹²²³ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139. Bonhoeffer envisions here Genesis 3:21.

in their fallenness.”¹²²⁴ Second, God’s action continues “to affirm the sinful world and to show it its limits by means of order”¹²²⁵ through the orders of preservation.¹²²⁶ Human beings are called to work in the fallen creation through the boundaries instituted by the mandates of creation.¹²²⁷

The fourth movement consummates at the cross and in the presence of resurrection life. God remembers the tree of life that once was at the center (*mitte*) of human existence and replaces that tree with the cross of Christ who becomes the mediator (*mittler*) between humans and God, thereby becoming “the source of life.”¹²²⁸ Bonhoeffer concludes his lecture on Genesis with this: “The tree of life, the cross of Christ, the center of God’s world (*Der baum des lebens, das kreuz Christi, das zentrum von Gottes welt*) that is fallen but upheld and preserved – that is what the end of the story about paradise is for us.”¹²²⁹ For Bonhoeffer, the ultimate traumatic event that occurred in the crisis of the cross now becomes the center of existence and the redefining narrative not just for the Bible, but for all time and space.

¹²²⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹²²⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 139.

¹²²⁶ Bonhoeffer continues use of the language of preservation even in his letters from Prison. For example, see: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: The Enlarged Edition* (London: SCM, 1971), 3. Here he writes, “It is not with the beyond that we are concerned, but with this world as created and preserved, subjected to laws, reconciled and restored.”

¹²²⁷ Rita Nakashima Brock shared the vision of the sentinel now guarding the garden in *Soul Repair*. Bonhoeffer relies on this image as well to describe Adam’s ongoing encounter with the new limit that assails him again and again from the world as he now exists between the garden and the cross. As Adam tries to return from those trials to the peace of the garden and the tree of life he violated, he experiences “a constant attack on the kingdom from which he is shutout, a desperate raging again and again against the sentinels who keep watch.” Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 144.

¹²²⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 165.

¹²²⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 146. See also: Brian Gregor, “Shame and the Other: Bonhoeffer and Levinas on Human Dignity and Ethical Responsibility,” *Ontology and Ethics*, 72-85. Brian Gregor notes the role of shame, not only of Christ, at work in preserving us. He writes, Bonhoeffer’s “Christological ontology allows us to understand the burden of divided being and the role of shame in preserving us, but also our ultimate source of hope for the healing of being in Christ,” 85.

Bonhoeffer's exposition of Genesis certainly provides a "limit" account of human existence both preceding and complementing Deborah Creamer's limit model of disability. While they share elements of similarity insofar as both affirm "limits *are* good," Bonhoeffer's conceptualization broadens and deepens Creamer's model. Most significantly, Bonhoeffer offers a construct for prelapsarian moments when "limits are good," but makes room for a post-lapsarian lament where limits create shame and displacement. Bonhoeffer returns to the claim "limits are good" and are needed to rectify our limitless condition, echoing Creamer once again, but doing so in a fashion that makes clear the breadth and depth of human emotion and divine consequence in relation to those limits.

To be clear, Bonhoeffer's exegesis and excursus is not complete – even in Genesis – without the cross (French: *Crux*, German: *Kreuz*) of Christ at the center of humanity. Bonhoeffer wrote to his best friend Eberhard Bethge on July 16, 1944 that, "God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross."¹²³⁰ While this displacement sounds initially like a rejection of the world, for Bonhoeffer, that sentiment is untrue. Instead of fleeing the world, God in Christ takes a firm stance at the center, in the middle of reality, amid the complexities of the context of *this* world and stands firm there. Bonhoeffer makes clear as he continues, "He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us."¹²³¹

In the midst of failing bodies, with society at a crossroads, the decisive action by God is to place the cross at the center of human existence. After the cross event, the church will then stand at the center of complex human existence claiming the middle, not

¹²³⁰ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 360.

¹²³¹ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 360.

the edge. Bonhoeffer's fourfold account of "limit" – culminating in the cross event – is formative for the crucial limit model of disability. As we turn now to Bonhoeffer's accounts of context and agent and their implications for ethics, as well as his doctrines of creation, sin and redemption, we will briefly explore critical elements that will be foundational for our crucial limit model of disability.

6.3.2 Bonhoeffer's Account of Context and Agent: Implications for Ethics

The import of Bonhoeffer's notion of Christ's weakness and powerlessness in the world highlights two critical aspects of Bonhoeffer's sense of ethical responsibility. First, context matters.¹²³² Certainly Deborah Creamer understands: contexts are central to human existence and can affect human agency.¹²³³ Even more so, moral responsibility cannot be abstracted from context as some moral theories have postulated,¹²³⁴ but must find its ground within reality.¹²³⁵ Second, agency matters.¹²³⁶ And yet the human agent is

¹²³² In 1958, G.E.M. Anscombe argued for a retrieval of virtue ethics building on character, rather than ethical theories built on legislative "oughts" or universal "shoulds." In so doing, she suggested a transition from a legislative view of morality to an ethical approach that honored moral psychology, virtue and an account of the good where contexts matter beyond all "oughts" and "shoulds." See: G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy" *Philosophy* 33:124 (1958): 1 – 19.

¹²³³ Ethical models vary tremendously on whether contexts should be considered or dismissed. Context based ethical systems include notions of virtue, while law-based ethics tend to emphasize norms and oughts that should be upheld regardless of context. G.E.M. Anscombe criticized the turn in ethics to rule based ethics in her 1958 work. Anscombe outlines the problem of normative theories such as utilitarianism, social contract and deontological ethics – describing them as either vile, dishonest or incoherent. She criticizes these 'law-based' concepts of ethics that deal with obligation and duty and blames this legacy on the Judeo-Christian heritage and the vision of a divine law-bearing God. "Ought", for Anscombe, is a word that may be used but with only great care and consideration (5). Too often, "ought" is a word thrown about and heard with "mere mesmeric force" (8). See: G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy*, 33:124 (1958): 1 – 19.

¹²³⁴ See: Jeffrey Bishop's critique of Kant and his recommendation of Levinas and Marion for ethical theory grounded in the contextual and the relational. Bishop, "The Broken Body," 223.

¹²³⁵ For example, Martha Nussbaum makes the argument that a "thick vague theory of the good" (214) allows for flexibility and adaptability in moral response across various contexts rather than specified should or perceived outcomes. See: Martha Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism," *Political Theory*, 20:2 (May, 1992): 202-246.

¹²³⁶ To be clear, the key notion in virtue ethics is that agents and contexts matter more than rules.

shaped by particular contexts. Again, Deborah Creamer makes this the central claim of her limit model of disability. And yet, not all moral theories take into account reality and context, and instead, focus on abstracted constructions and hypothetical situations.¹²³⁷ A crucial limit model will hold steadfast to particular contexts, individual moral agents, and the unique interplay that occurs between the two in the reality of a given situation.¹²³⁸

To understand this point, it is helpful to note an example from Bonhoeffer's writings before more fully developing the model. This example is drawn not from Bonhoeffer's early *Creation and Fall*, but from his writings, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, collected after his death. In prison, Bonhoeffer penned what became one of his most memorable, quotable and perhaps least understood phrases regarding *a world come of age*.¹²³⁹ For Bonhoeffer, a world that has come of age is a world in its complexity and maturity requires the complexity and maturity of human beings to meet the ethical demands amid the realities the world presents. The world demands more than doctrine

¹²³⁷ See: Charles R. Pinches, *Theology and Action: After Theory in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Press, 2002). Charles Pinches describes a problem in ethics wherein theory can too often neglect both the agent and the context. At stake here is a twofold loss: neglect of the agent and extraction from the context (182).

¹²³⁸ Stanley Hauerwas believes this kind of specificity and individuality is the key element often missing in discussions of disability. Hauerwas' essay "The church and Mentally Handicapped Persons: A Continuing Challenge to the Imagination" invites us to consider our stereotypes and roadblocks to knowing and loving disabled people. We are called to a deepened discipline of Christian imagination. Quoting theologian Garret Green, Hauerwas conceives the imagination as something that helps us conceive what would otherwise go unnoticed. This kind of imagination is never abstracted from reality and it must always be fully embodied. Such an imagination energizes ecclesial life. See: Stanley Hauerwas, "The Church and Mentally Handicapped Persons: The Continuing Challenge to the Imagination." *Religion and Disability: Essays in Scripture, Theology and Ethics*, ed. Marilyn E. Bishop, (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995): 46-64.

¹²³⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 342. The full quote from a letter of June 30, 1944 reads: "Let me just summarize briefly what I am concerned about – the claim of a world that has come of age by Jesus Christ." The German for "the world that is of age" is *die mundige Welt* and speaks of the *Mundigkeit* of the world. The etymology of the German is important for deeper connotations. Peter Selby makes this clear in his essay, "Christianity in a World Come of Age." *Mund* means 'mouth' and refers to a person who can speak for herself. Bonhoeffer employs this nuance to depict how humans in this age can speak without reference to a dependence upon God. See: Peter Selby, "Christianity in a World Come of Age," *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. by John W. deGruchy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 238-239.

and dogma, but instead invites the devoted to respond in freedom with the depth and breadth of the Gospel.¹²⁴⁰ While much has been discussed regarding the importance, and also perhaps misreading of this phrase,¹²⁴¹ for the purposes of this discussion it is critical to note how Bonhoeffer's notion recognizes a context where a crucial limit has been surpassed. Something has changed in this particular world that affects and disables a previously 'able' agency. The hope Bonhoeffer expresses at this juncture is anything but a *deus ex machina* fix,¹²⁴² and instead, a more radical claim to live and stand firm within "this-world."¹²⁴³ In committing to "this world", a human being informed by Christ allows certain dying and rising again, or, one might argue, a disabling and re-enabling within the context of the given world. Bonhoeffer explains:

During the last year or so I've come to know and understand more and more the profound this-worldiness of Christianity. The Christian is not a *homo religiosus*, but simply a man, as Jesus was a man – in contrast, shall we say, with John the Baptist. I don't mean the shallow and banal this-worldliness of the enlightened, the busy, the comfortable, or the lascivious, but the profound this-worldiness, characterized by discipline and the constant knowledge of death and resurrection.¹²⁴⁴

God, in Christ, does not flee the given context. Nor does the moral agent become impotent. Instead, radical commitment to the given reality necessitates "a God who is truly a suffering participant within the life of the world."¹²⁴⁵ Agency yields to the reality

¹²⁴⁰ It should be noted an interesting turn of phrase used by Bonhoeffer at this juncture. He writes that religion cannot be a flimsy "garment of Christianity." The phrase appears at first to echo Bonhoeffer's imagery of the "cloak of preservation." However, Bonhoeffer elaborates here to argue for a Christianity that is deep and complex and attuned to the realities of a broken world rather than an idealized eternity. See: Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 280.

¹²⁴¹ See: Selby, "Christianity in a World Come of Age," 226-245.

¹²⁴² Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 361.

¹²⁴³ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 369.

¹²⁴⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 369. It should be noted here that Bonhoeffer highlights Martin Luther as an exemplar of the "this-world" life Bonhoeffer commends.

¹²⁴⁵ Selby, "Christianity in a World Come of Age," 235.

at hand with the knowledge there will be a dying, and rising again.¹²⁴⁶ The phrase “ a world come of age” and the scenario it depicts helps us to understand the starting point of a crucial limit model of disability. Similar to Bonhoeffer’s “orders of preservation” and “mandates of creation,” a crucial limit acknowledges the framework of a particular context in which a limit has been surpassed and the effect that limit has, even despairingly so, on a moral agent.

6.3.3 Bonhoeffer’s Accounts of Creation, Sin and Redemption

It is important to note how Bonhoeffer informs three critical elements of the model that are helpful for moral injury. First, Bonhoeffer’s doctrine of creation¹²⁴⁷ claims limits as central, natural and good for humanity. In a positive sense, limits *are* crucial for human existence. Theologian Clifford Green explains, “In the primal state *Grenze* does not mean any deprivation or restriction of the creature’s humanity. On the contrary, it is that which guarantees the creature’s genuine human identity.”¹²⁴⁸ Crucial limits, then, are a good and God-given entity. There is, however, one “negative connotation” at this stage according to Clifford Green.¹²⁴⁹ The human being is warned “that he should not try to be boundless, unlimited, infinite: that he should not pretend to *aseitas*; that he should not be tempted to become *sicut Deus*. To do so would be to forfeit

¹²⁴⁶ See: Sarah Bachelard, *Resurrection and the Moral Imagination: Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

¹²⁴⁷ Clifford J. Green offers a helpful basis for Bonhoeffer’s implicit doctrine of creation. See: Clifford J. Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 45-48, 185-205.

¹²⁴⁸ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 194.

¹²⁴⁹ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 196.

his true humanity.”¹²⁵⁰ True humanity, then, for Bonhoeffer, is intimately connected to finitude.

Second, Bonhoeffer’s doctrine of sin acknowledges the depth and despair of human estrangement from God, self and others. Given Bonhoeffer’s “theology of sociality” that Green highlights, sin rips the fabric of human existence. When the crucial limit at the center, *mitte*, of existence is displaced by sin the rupture is radical and irreparable. The other human being, intended for relationship and infused with *grenze* (as the gift of limit to the self), becomes a burden and place of embodied brokenness. A crucial limit then, moves from an entity of grace and providence, to the implosion of relationships within a certain context that has a continual effect on reality where the residual aftershocks keep ripping one’s relationship with the world apart. Alienation, estrangement and the tendency toward a “despotic ego”¹²⁵¹ are the marks of life when crucial limits – intended for good - are transgressed. This is the depth missed by Deborah Creamer in her account of limits. Bonhoeffer returns to the goodness in limits that Creamer attests to when he rectifies the problem of limitlessness (*grezenlose*) by reimposing the cross as a limit that preserves and restructures human existence: Christ as *Mittler* (mediator) reclaims the *mitte*. Redemption occurs through a *new* crucial limit wherein Christ reclaims the center that was lost, acts to preserve creation, and provides mandates for living within those limits in various spheres of life.¹²⁵²

6.4 Revisiting Disability: Finitude, Flesh and Transformation

¹²⁵⁰ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 196.

¹²⁵¹ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 202.

¹²⁵² See: Larry Rasmussen, “The Ethics of Responsible Action,” *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, 220-222.

The etymological consideration of “crucial” and Bonhoeffer’s notion of “limits” are key component of our crucial limit model of disability. In this section, we will revisit the scholarship on disability to accomplish two things. First, to reconsider the weaknesses of Creamer’s model and, second to take into account Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s definition of disability as one that embraces the theological idea of finitude. Together, these comments will aid the analysis of “disability” presented in our crucial limit model of disability.

Our review of the literature in disability studies covered similar themes as three models of disability were presented: the medical, social and limit models of disability. Deborah Creamer’s “limit model of disability” offers a particularly helpful resource for moral injury as it accomplishes several things: honors and integrates prior models of disability acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the medical and social models while striving for a construct that moves beyond traditional models, names and explores varying social contexts as ‘abling’ for some and ‘disabling’ for others, addresses and examines theological questions raised when limits are encountered. The limit model of disability, in its original form, is deeply contextual. The social critique of the limit experienced in each context then raises existential questions of God, self and humanity. Disability, according to the limit model, is created when flesh encounters various ‘social’ worlds and limits are met. Where the limit model falls short is in probing the depth of the moral emotions, such as shame, that occurs from the meeting of those limits. The crucial limit model of disability builds on Creamer’s construct by assuming varied contexts and divine questions; and yet, deepens the emotional consequence of

experiencing those limits with shame and the “global evaluations of self” that can then ensue.

Creamer’s model is constructive and takes the field of disability studies into new territory; however, two modifications can improve her model. First, her creed that “limits are good” is intended to affirm the questions introduced when those limits are experienced. Humans are finite creatures and those limitations make us aware, in the language of Alasdair MacIntyre that we are more “dependent rational animals” than we are *Sicut Deus*. This growing sense of vulnerability, finitude and crucial limit between creature and creator is what prompts Creamer to deem limits as *good*. For those caught in the tension between that limiting experience and the shame and despair those contexts can create, the language of limits’ “goodness” can appear dismissive. Bonhoeffer adds a helpful layer of understanding through his extended meditation on creature, creation and Creator in his exegesis of Genesis in “Creation and Fall.” Limits, in the beginning are not only good, but they are central to human existence. When Eve is introduced to Adam, reiterating the limit of humanity in the face of the other, the goodness of this limiting relationship is existentially evidenced. After the fall, limits provoke shame, wrath and anger as creatures long to be *Sicut Deus* and the ongoing, continual abyss of limitless life wreaks turmoil on creature, creation and perhaps even, the Creator. When limits are reintroduced, as “cloaks” of protection, as the orders of preservation and through the mandates of creation; there is a deeper sense of the goodness and providence present in those limits. Even more so, the cross of Christ takes hold of the center of creation once again, depicting a vision of salvation and redemption that become clear through the introduction of this new crucial limit.

Second, Creamer's model may be too static. Alongside a new and more robust rendering of goodness, her account can also be enhanced by a larger awareness of the fluidity of changing limits. Though Creamer allows for shifts in limits as an individual encounters different contexts (for example: a person who is deaf may be deaf only within a broad sense of society, but not within a particular deaf community);¹²⁵³ her model does not establish a space for wide-ranging fluidity. There needs to be a model that provides allowance for bodies that are continually on a spectrum of change, as well as communities and contexts on a spectrum of change. A "revised limit model" would provide space for: the limits, the questions they provoke and the moral implications of that experience when there is a crucial intersection between creature and context. In that moment when a creature (with the changing contours of her body, mind and spirit along a continuum of ability and disability) crosses into a context (with the possibility intrinsic within that world where she may be limited or maybe not) there is the chance that she will experience a limit, the limit will raise crucial questions, and the sudden impact of that intersection may have moral implications. But to be clear, it is also possible in that moment the creature does not encounter a limit. The revised limit model of disability establishes space within the model for arbitrary encounters that can create sudden and despairing angst.

Both Creamer and Garland-Thomson draw us into a conversation about disability rooted in a theological account of human finitude that takes into account concrete limits and the realized impact of their encounters. While it could be argued that Boudreau and Wiinikka-Lydon found definitions and frameworks regarding disability threatening to

¹²⁵³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 97-103. This example is key in Creamer's final chapter "Limits and Disability Theology" for explaining her concept of a limit model of disability.

their experience of moral injury, a probe of human finitude begun by Creamer, Garland-Thomson and Bonhoeffer becomes a helpful starting place for moral injury to deepen its accounts of morality, injury and disability. Garland Thomson makes clear that finitude is at the heart of her understanding of disability, not as a definition, nor as a model or framework, but instead is the reality of human being:

Put more poetically, disabilities are the etchings left on flesh as it encounters world. So whereas disability is certainly an index of capability in context, it is also a witness to our inherent susceptibility or receptiveness to being shaped by the particular journey through the world that we call our life. Although our modern collective cultural consciousness denies vulnerability, contingency, and mortality, disability insists that our bodies are dynamic, constantly reformed by the call and response between flesh and world. In this way, we evolve into disability. Our bodies need care; we need assistance to live; we are fragile, limited, and pliable in the face of life itself. Disability is thus inherent in our being: What we call disability is perhaps the essential characteristic of being human.¹²⁵⁴

Disability and moral injury share in that essential characteristic of being human as flesh knows the limits of finitude.

In “the Medical Model” of Disability,¹²⁵⁵ focus is on the “flesh” as the location of disablement as a human being is medically impaired and subjected both to societal norms of perfection in bodies, as well as subjected to the *techne* of modern medicine. Encounter with the world then becomes a place where potential injuries might occur to body or mind causing impairment. The implication of the medical model for morally injured veterans is that they are either ‘fixable’ if psychiatry yields potential healing, or, ‘unfixable’ if *techne* fails. Historic models of disability, even Biblical texts, are most revealing regarding engrained views of the medical model and its affect on humans and societies transfixed by norms of perfection.

¹²⁵⁴ Garland-Thomson, “The Case for Conserving Disability,” 342.

¹²⁵⁵ For a comparison chart of the four models of disability see Appendix I.

Within “the Social Model” of Disability, focus shifts from flesh to “world” as the setting where disablement occurs. Flesh is socially constructed, and becomes more and more disabled when social norms or boundaries are encountered. The implication for veterans is that society is broken, and needs fixed. Here, theologies of liberation are helpful to lament and name the problem as well as to seek solutions from oppression. Nancy Eiesland’s *The Disabled God* is a pinnacle work in this field that was revolutionary in her day and continues to be today.

Deborah Creamer, in response to these models, sets forth “the Limit Model” of Disability where she focuses on ‘encounters’ as the nexus of disability. Not all bodies are disabled at all times. Not all contexts are disabling contexts. Instead, she allows a sense of fluidity to explain how some bodies become disabled in some contexts. When that disabling occurs through that particular encounter, the situation becomes an epistemological source for theological questions about the nature of being human and the providence of God. Transformation occurs when a deep embrace of those theological and anthropological questions creates a deeper view of humanity amid those limitations that have occurred. The implication of this model for veterans is that space is suddenly created for asking questions of God, self and others in the face of limits. Constructive work continues in response to Deborah Creamer’s *Disability and Christian Tradition* as scholars explore further ramifications of her work.

A revised limit model, presented here as “the Crucial Limit Model” of Disability, builds on the previous three models by acknowledging and integrating nuances of the medical, social and limit models. This model appreciates Creamer’s understanding of shifting abilities across various contexts; and yet, seeks to deepen the shame experienced

in response to those moments of disablement and to widen the arbitrary occurrence of those encounters. Potentially disabling limits present themselves in various contexts to a variety of human moral agents at unexpected, arbitrary, unpredictable and unparalleled moments. The moment when an implosion of the moral code occurs might defy moral norms and codes resisting easy definition or expectation. A crucial limit is positive in that it recognizes limits as necessary for humanity before God to honor moral codes and to prevent despotic egos.¹²⁵⁶ A crucial limit acknowledges the possibility of a dying, and rising again, in response to the loss within a given context of an important moral code. Transformation is possible when the crucial limit first, acknowledges the depth of human shame and descends to that nexus,¹²⁵⁷ and then, offers restoration through the cross of Christ at the center of existence wherein the offer for preservation is extended to all, but particularly to those disabled and fraying at their limits. While some moral theories present abstract constructs neglecting real agents and real contexts, the crucial limit model of disability claims both within the particularities of their worlds all preserved through the lens of Christ. James Burtness explains,

Bonhoeffer is certainly an ethical “situationist” in that he opposes ethical absolutes of all kinds and emphasizes concrete times and places. Yet to label him a situationist without qualifying that term is to misconstrue him completely. The Jesus Christ of time and history is also the one in whom the reality of God and the reality of the world come together. Reality, always on the move, is structured by Jesus Christ. Thus the Bonhoeffer who asked who Jesus is for us today, and who wanted to know what Jesus means, was as interested in structures as he was in situations, and worked his entire life at the intersection of the two.¹²⁵⁸

¹²⁵⁶ Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, 202.

¹²⁵⁷ Such a model offers a contrast then to the eschatological dynamic ascent proposed by Gregory of Nyssa and Amos Yong and offers instead a vision of reality wherein the dynamic descent to the concrete, the real, the complex contains profound depth of knowledge to the moral agent grounded in *this* world.

¹²⁵⁸ Burtness, *Shaping the Future*, 69-70.

While the situations of this world might lead humanity to the difficult side of a crucial limit; it is Jesus who reveals through the cross his structuring of reality the positive and redemptive dimension of crucial limits.

This section reminds us of Creamer's twofold weakness. First, limits are not always good; they in fact, can evoke shame and silence. Second, limits are more than contextual; they in fact, can be fluid, arbitrary and capricious. Awareness of these weaknesses informs the components of a revised limit model. In addition, we are reminded through Garland-Thomson that disability occurs through the interaction of flesh, encounters and world. She too assumes an optimistic conception that the ultimate "transformation" will be positive and redemptive. In so doing, she like Creamer fails to probe the depth of emotion that is met within that transformative moment. We will draw on Garland-Thomson's terminology to outline the components of our model, but in doing so, we will divide "transformation" into two critical moments: first, the depth of despair that must be met and acknowledged and second, the possibility of a new narrative for what was otherwise silenced and shamed.

6.5 A Crucial Limit Model of Disability: Essential Components

Given the need for a revised limit model, the *crucial* limit model of disability extends Creamer's construct by developing four essential components that attend to human finitude, moral agents, social context and real-world redemption. These four components will each be nuanced with insights from the etymology of "crucial", the theology of "limit" in Bonhoeffer, and the components of "disability" in Garland-

Thomson.¹²⁵⁹ Each of these four essential components contain three key nuances related to the crucial limit model of disability: the *crucial* implications of moral decisions at the heart of human existence, the effect of *limits* and the depth of experience encountered at their edge, and the *disabling* potential of those crucial limits. These four themes, and their individual threefold nuances regarding cruciality, limited agency and disability, together give rise to twelve essential components of the crucial limit model. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's definition of disability continues to be appropriate and helpful: *disability is the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world*. The crucial limit model adds a nuance to her definition as well: *Disability is the transformation (shame and redemption) of the flesh (human finitude) as it encounters (moral agents) worlds (social contexts)*. In the following four sections we will extrapolate twelve essential components of the crucial limit model of disability shaped by human finitude, social contexts, moral agents and concrete redemption.¹²⁶⁰

6.5.1 Human Finitude and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

The first essential component of the crucial limit model is rooted in the etymology and definition of “crucial.” The cruciate ligaments remind us of our embodiment as well as the potential for excruciating pain when we as embodied creatures are injured in body, mind or spirit. Second, Bonhoeffer's first insight into “limit” is the notion that limits, from the beginning of creation, are at the very center of human being. Acknowledging

¹²⁵⁹ See Appendix 2 for a chart of the twelve essential components of a crucial limit model of disability.

¹²⁶⁰ Appendix 2 sets forth these twelve essential components by intersecting cruciality, limits and disability with human finitude, social contexts, moral agents and concrete redemption. The four assertions regarding cruciality are set forth in 6.2 as four conceptions of “crucial” are derived from its etymology and definitions. The four assertions regarding limits are presented with reference to Bonhoeffer's four-fold understanding of limit in 6.3.1. The four assertions concerning disability relate to Garland-Thomson's definition.

the limit at the center of our existence, as well as the limit that meets us in every relational encounter, reminds us of human finitude which God intended for good. Third, Garland-Thomson frames flesh as finitude that is subject to encounter and there has the potential for a disabling to occur. This component prompts recognition that disability is inevitable for *all* humanity because we are finite creatures and this is a natural process of creation. The theological anthropology of human finitude, that we are MacIntyre's "dependent rational animals," highlights human vulnerability amid the natural and good limits we encounter.

6.5.2 Social Contexts and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

The fourth component of the crucial limit model of disability is a nuance of the definition of "crux" and recognizes the crucial and critical ways our society is at a crossroads. The crucial limit model of disability for moral injury must rework the notion that soldiers alone are culpable of moral failure and instead broaden the sense of societal complicity to acknowledge that soldiers find themselves in a moral crucible while at war. A crucible names that situation where a severe trial transmutes diverse elements; giving birth to a phrase such as "their relationship was forged in the crucible of war." Fifth, an essential component of the new model is the fact recognized by Bonhoeffer that in the social context of the fall, shaped by the relationships of snake, Adam, and Eve, human beings lost all sense of limit as human beings become for a moment *sicut deus*. After the fall, limits are lost to human sin and that problematic limitlessness affects all social contexts with abysmal depth, perpetual loss and infinite burden. Sixth, the crucial limit model of disability takes into account the fact that encounters between flesh and world

are fluid, complex, capricious, ambiguous and ever-changing. There is a complex interplay of the disabling that occurs across social contexts as flesh encounters limits again and again. A social context that limits and temporarily or permanently ‘disables’ one person in one situation at one particular time, may or may not do the same at any other moment or to any other person. Social contexts can dramatically affect, interact with and create “psycho-bio-social-moral-existential”¹²⁶¹ disabilities in fluid, subtle and unpredictable ways. Here, there exists a spectrum of social contexts across the human experience recognizing the unique limit both at the center of each context and in the human encounters within those contexts that have the potential to disable. The crucial limit model takes seriously the impact of shifting limits and the real impact their unpredictability can have on a soldier’s psyche, moral agency and moral identity and allows space for the apparent unpredictability of violations and the critical impact those violations have on the moral agent causing disability as Jonathan Shay makes clear.¹²⁶²

6.5.3 Moral Agents and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

The seventh component of the model reminds us of the severe and decisive nuances of the word “crucial.” Since moral responsibility in any given social context can be complex, the language of cruciality reminds us of the existential depth of the questions asked by the moral agent in the face of that complexity as limits raise questions regarding God, self and other; and, as those limits demand decisive, critical, crucial actions in key moments of decision-making. Bonhoeffer’s third connotation of limit shapes the eighth

¹²⁶¹ Phrase adapted from language utilized by Brett Litz. Litz, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans,” 696.

¹²⁶² Jonathan Shay, “Moral Injury in War.” Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016.

component of our model. Recognizing the depth of shame, the level of vulnerability and the despair of moral agents poised to make choices without limits, God acts to affirm fallen humanity, cloak them in protective garments and work perpetually to preserve and uphold them. In the midst of limitlessness, God upholds and preserves.

The ninth component of the crucial limit model of disability occurs at the intersection of moral agency and disability resulting in moral injury. Shame, despair, silence, distrust and the inability to imagine a future are some of the disabling effects of moral injury. The crucial limit model, taking a step beyond Creamer's limit model, acknowledges the depth of despair and sorrow at this juncture. Garland-Thomson recognizes there the possibility of "transformation" but that transformation is impossible without descending to the depths of despair to reside with the silence of a moral agent whose failures, whether supposed or realized, are too much to bear and have a disabling effect.

6.5.4 Concrete Redemption and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

The last critical theme in this revised model is the topic of "concrete redemption." Before outlining the last three essential components of our model, it is important here to explain the language of "concrete" redemption. We noted in chapter two in a discussion on sin that sin can occur in "concrete acts" as noted in the *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*: The consequences of sin perpetuate the structures of sin. These institutional structures of sin are rooted in personal sin and therefore, are always connected to *concrete* acts of the individuals who commit them, consolidate them and

make it difficult to remove them.¹²⁶³ And yet, we noted in the theology of Bonhoeffer in chapter five an emphasis on ethical responsibility that is always rooted in concrete reality and not abstracted by theory. For Bonhoeffer, concrete reality is that sacramental breaking open of the ethical command. Bonhoeffer's ethical theory becomes realized in concrete form as he envisions the mandates of creation as concrete places for responsible life where "the relation of the world to Christ becomes concrete."¹²⁶⁴

Bonhoeffer offered an example of concrete redemption by drawing on the skills and responsibilities of the vocation of a medical doctor. Bonhoeffer offers a surprisingly risky vision for that doctor beyond what might be considered an acceptable standard of care. Risk and responsibility, for Bonhoeffer, are cyclically linked elements of any given vocation that have a *telos* of concrete redemption:

If, for example, I am a physician, then in the concrete instance I serve not only my patients but also medical science and with it science and the knowledge of truth in general. Although in practice I perform this service at my concrete position, for example at the bedside of a patient, yet I am continuously aware of my responsibility for the whole, and it is only in this that I fulfill my calling. Furthermore, it may happen that I, as a physician, am obliged to recognize and fulfill my concrete responsibility no longer by the sick-bed but, for example, in taking public action against some measure which constitutes a threat to medical science or to human life or to science as such. Vocation is responsibility and responsibility is a total response of the whole man to the whole of reality; for this very reason there can be no petty and pedantic restricting of one's interests to one's professional duties in the narrowest sense. Any such restriction would be irresponsibility. The essential character of free responsibility makes it impossible to establish laws defining when and to what extent such a departure from the "limited field of accomplishments" forms part of a man's calling and of his responsibility towards men. Such a departure can be undertaken only after a serious weighing up of the vocational duty which is directly given, of the dangers of interface in the responsibility of others, and finally of the totality of

¹²⁶³ Catholic Church. 2005. *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 119.

¹²⁶⁴ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 68.

the question involved; when this is done I shall be guided in the one direction or the other by a free responsibility ...¹²⁶⁵

The risk urged by Bonhoeffer in this extended quote is for the individual in any given vocation to respond concretely to “the whole of reality” that presents itself within episodic and disabling ways in their vocational tasks. For the doctor, no sickness is healed unless the greater “whole of reality” causing that sickness is addressed.

In the scholarship on disability, Nancy Eiesland utilizes the language of concreteness to describe disabled life as “concrete existence”¹²⁶⁶ and draws on that knowledge for her image of God as disabled as well, while Burton Cooper speaks of the “concreteness” of God’s care for disabled life.¹²⁶⁷ The metaphor of “concrete existence” speaks to the ground under our feet, the horizon upon which we live and move and have our being, the complicated nature of social reality and the occasional limitations of disabled life; perhaps it is that place where the cross meets the garden at the center of existence. A crucial limit model of disability is grounded in both the vulnerability of finitude and the potential for sin in concrete existence for both individuals and institutions. Bonhoeffer’s theological anthropology demands exploration of how moral agency can face disability in concrete situations when limits are met, even when a moral agent is acting with responsibility. Ethicist Jeffrey Bishop, Emmanuel Levinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer agree there can be a call to concrete, contextual responsibility “so demanding that sin is necessary, and failure inevitable.”¹²⁶⁸

¹²⁶⁵ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 293.

¹²⁶⁶ Eiesland, *The Disabled God*, 69.

¹²⁶⁷ Cooper, “The Disabled God,” 179.

¹²⁶⁸ Bishop, “The Broken Body,” 223.

With these thoughts on “concrete redemption” in mind, the tenth essential component of our model takes into account the “cross-shaped” connotation of the definition of “crucial.” Here is where God’s power and transcendence descend and intersect the horizons of our concrete existence. The eleventh component, influenced by Bonhoeffer’s fourth and last conception of limit, is that the cross replaces the center of human life becoming the new limit. With that knowledge, humanity is commissioned to ethical responsibility in concrete places knowing that limits will be met, but informed by the knowledge of the dying and rising again at the cross in this world rather than a heavenly ascent into a world beyond. Finally, the transformation that occurs, even when disabling has occurred, is a new creation formed in the crucible of this world. That transformation to new ability is possible only after the depth of shame, silence, trauma and despair have been met and honored. Originally a crucible was not a melting pot nor cauldron, but a night lamp hung by a crucifix. Here is the place where a new narrative begins.¹²⁶⁹

With these four broad areas of focus of human finitude, social contexts, moral agents and concrete redemption, and the nuances for them shaped by the language of cruciality, the fluidity of limits, and the spectrum of disability, we see the contours of a

¹²⁶⁹ Stanley Hauerwas thinks critically regarding the replacement of old narratives with the new in his work *A Community of Character*. He begins with “Ten Theses Toward the Reform of Christian Social Ethics” (9-12) which serve as prelude to further reflections on *Watership Down* and communities that are story-formed. The list of ten includes: the narrative structure of Christianity shapes social convictions of the Gospel, the fact that every ethic is a narrative – the question is what kind of narrative is it?, the idea that a social ethic is inextricably linked to the truthfulness of our existence, the concept that narratives must help people deal with unexpected circumstances and strangers, the notion that the task of the church is to be truthful to its own truth which is the fact of its story, the claim that the story to which Christians are called is a story that takes one “out of control”, the fact that Christian ethics depends on the stories and gifts of her members, the idea that the social ethic of the church also depends on basic trust and kindness, care must be taken with the story of “liberalism” and the life of the church, and the claim that the story of the church is an alternative to other political stories. See: Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: IL, University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

crucial limit model of disability. This model acknowledges and integrates the strengths and weaknesses of the prior models: medical, social and limit; and at the same time acknowledges the depth of the moral experience of shame, broadens societal complicity, widens the spectrum of shifting limits across social contexts, and heightens the complexity of questioning at the heart of human existence in the face of those crucial limits. Even as we move to address the strengths and weaknesses in this model; we can quickly see this model is helpful for the fields of moral injury, disability studies and theology. The crucial limit of disability creates space within the field of moral injury to discuss disability as a necessary, helpful and liberative component of “injury” and moral theory as a spectrum of conversation key to the “moral” of moral injury. Even more so, the crucial limit model helps us to engage a conversation regarding the intersection of the two and the possibility for moral implosion when changing bodies engage a limited moral horizon. Given the considerations of moral agency, social contexts, fluid realities and human finitude presented here, as well as their nuances for constructing a crucial limit model of disability, we can see the import of this conversation for moral theory, disability and moral injury.

6.6 The Crucial Limit Model: Implications for Moral Injury

In the introduction to this dissertation, I noted the particular problem of moral injury as distinct from PTSD and explored the impact of moral injury on soldier and society today. Situating moral injury within the larger field of trauma studies, the crucial limit model bears witness to critical events in the past that can “limit” human endeavors

in the present and the future unless attention, therapy and healing are engaged.¹²⁷⁰ While such trauma may have medical and social dimensions, neither medical treatment nor social analysis is enough to address the issues at hand. The argument presented in chapter one made clear that treating moral injury through the *techne* of medicine creates a litany of issues: moral injury becomes a *problem to be solved*, patients with visible injuries receive *prioritized care*, medical treatment is unable to *plumb the depths* of moral emotions, and the issue of moral injury is *depoliticized*. The medicalization of moral injury fails to address the crucial limits of greater enfleshed embodiment and the “psycho-bio-social-moral-existential” dimensions of the injury. A crucial limit model of disability demands exploration of the crux of the human person in a given society beyond a given medical diagnosis.

In addition, assessing moral injury invites deep attention given to: the *profundity* of moral emotions such as anxiety, shame, fear and guilt¹²⁷¹, the alterations in *identity* due to “global evaluations of the self,”¹²⁷² the *fluidity* of moral injury across varying contexts, the questions of *agency*, and finally, the *ambiguity* of moral injury. A crucial limit model of disability recognizes the debilitating moral emotion of shame; this is an important counterpoint to Creamer’s limit model of disability wherein she states somewhat too blithely that, “limits are good”¹²⁷³ without leaving room for the more complex moral emotions of shame, betrayal and grief that often exist at the center of

¹²⁷⁰ Bessel van der Kolk is a pioneer in the field of trauma studies and trauma’s encodement within the body. See: Bessel van der Kolk, *When The Body Keeps the Score*, (London, UK: Penguin Press, 2015).

¹²⁷¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699.

¹²⁷² Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 699. Here, Litz draws on the work of Helen B. Lewis, *Shame and Guilt in Neurosis* (New York, NY: International Universities Press, 1971), 30. Lewis speaks of a global evaluation of self: “I did this thing” which is a different moral emotion and process than guilt which focus on the action done: “I did this *thing*.”

¹²⁷³ Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 96.

moral injury. The crucial limit model creates a construct where the shaming global evaluation of “self” projects on the greater world those same global evaluations causing an internal and external implosion. Shame, as a critical limit, wreaks havoc on perception, self-identity and potential neurosis. Thereby, the crucial limit model addresses the issues of *profundity* and *identity*. With regard to *fluidity* of injury across social contexts, the crucial limit model acknowledges the potential for disabling across a spectrum of social contexts across the human experience recognizing the unique limit at the center of each context. Each individual bears a unique inward limit with regard to an exponential number of human experiences; when that limit is crossed, the cruciality of that limit is recognized. The crucial limit model of disability honors the affect those apparently random limits have on human agency, the depth of grief in response to that loss of agency, and the disconcerting ambiguity and inability to predict when those crucial limits will be met. Tyler Boudreau lamented the shovel, the farmhouse search, and the hug as crucial limits transgressed during his service.¹²⁷⁴ The jeremiads shared by soldiers, trauma specialists, psychologists, societal critics and the biblical author of Jeremiah lament the societal woes and the soldiers’ wounds at work in moral injury. Each voice, from Jeremiah’s prophetic “they have treated the wound of my people carelessly” (Jeremiah 6:14, NRSV)¹²⁷⁵ to David Wood’s op-ed naming moral injury as “the signature wound of this generation”¹²⁷⁶ emphasizes just how crucial this new landscape of moral injury is. The crucial limit matters for both the war *within* the conscience of the enlisted soldier and the war *without* in the societal matrix. The crucial limit model of disability

¹²⁷⁴ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 754.

¹²⁷⁵ Jeremiah 6:14 (NRSV).

¹²⁷⁶ David Wood, “The Grunts: Damned if they Kill, Damned if they Don’t,” *Huffington Post* (March 18, 2014), <http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/moral-injury/the-grunts> (Accessed February 4, 2016).

accounts for the complex interaction between the human condition, social conventions, moral formation and asymmetrical power dynamics that instigate moral injury.

The review of the psychological literature reveals issues related to morality, injury and disability; but perhaps most poignantly provided an opportunity to ask whether scholarship has adequately explored notions of morality in relationship to moral injury. Shay explores Nussbaum's concept of "moral luck" and Litz briefly engages Kohlberg and Freud. The shrinkage of the moral horizon evidenced in moral injury and the resulting implosion of the moral code demand further attention to issues of morality, the fluidity of morality across various social contexts (ie. civilian life, the war arena, church and state), and the limits of morality when social conventions and moral codes are transgressed. A crucial limit model of disability comprehends the diminished capacity for morality not simply from the perspective of sin and acts of commission, but also from the perspective of human finitude in a fallen creation. When agency becomes disabled due to any number of limits encountered, studies of morality must take into account diminished capacity for virtue due to changes in embodiment. Morality exists within a complex web of moral codes, *nomos*, social conventions and complex societal systems; and yet, changes in the moral code can erupt when crucial personal limits are encountered that defy tradition or convention. The crucial limit model of disability allows space for unpredictability of violations and the critical impact those violations have on the agent.

The review of the theological literature explored issues of Cartesian dualism in medicine, social contexts, and shifting limits. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone argues for a more complex view of human embodiment rather than a radically simplified Cartesian

dualism.¹²⁷⁷ Instead of pursuing *techne* to respond to “injury”, Sheets-Johnstone advocates the possibility of “invocation” to an alternative *telos* rather than the “ingestion” of a simple fix.¹²⁷⁸ In the study of disability, such *techne* becomes a “modernist craving for ontological security”¹²⁷⁹ as disablement is aimed toward a fix. A crucial limit model of disability shifts focus from an injury to be ‘fixed’, toward a deeper embodiment to be honored and healed. When *techne* is removed, the injured veteran¹²⁸⁰ can then wrestle with that “inability to contextualize”¹²⁸¹ and the effect of that deep grief upon embodiment.

The theological literature also revealed the need for deeper exploration of the relationship between a soldier’s moral injury and societal implications; shifting the focus from the individual soldier and his or her moral accountability to the wider societal institutions and their complicity.¹²⁸² Through an analysis of socially constituted bodies, the social ordering (or disordering) of the good, social trauma and the ability (or inability) of a society to grieve; the theological literature on moral injury reveals a society on the precipice. A crucial limit model of disability recognizes that precipice and the role it

¹²⁷⁷ Maxine Sheets Johnstone, *Giving the Body Its Due*, 1.

¹²⁷⁸ Maxine Sheets Johnstone, “The Materialization of the Body,” 135.

¹²⁷⁹ Fiona Kumari Campbell, *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Aabledness* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 13.

¹²⁸⁰ David Wood notes the real impact of *techne* as he describes: “In December 2014, the Department of Veterans Affairs signed a \$16 million contract with IBM to install software at the VA’s data center in Austin, Texas, that the VA said would assist its doctors and therapists confused about how to treat patients diagnosed with PTSD. VA staff can plug in clinical data and electronic medical records, and the computer will spit out the appropriate treatment plan.” See: David Wood, *What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of our Longest Wars*, (New York, NY: Little, Brown & Co, 2016): 255.

¹²⁸¹ Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696.

¹²⁸² David Wood explains, “Yet it is not only those who served in our longest wars who suffer moral injuries. It is all of us. We made it possible for Darren Doss to be recruited, armed, and sent to Afghanistan; our attention was elsewhere while he was struggling through gunfire to help save Kruger and during the Christmas-tree-theft caper. We sent Gunny DeLeon to war twice, but weren’t watching as he came home haunted and broken. We recruited and trained Sendio Martz, but we weren’t aware that he needed forgiveness. We enlisted Jake Sexton and sent him into the fight, but we didn’t listen to the stories that troubled him until it was too late. Like it or not, fair or unfair, we are all connected by the wars. Now what?” Wood, *What Have We Done*, 263-264.

plays in placing the individual soldier into morally compromising situations with those “limited horizons of choice.” The focus moves from the individual to the individual; and there demands societal accountability for those crucial decisions with grave consequences, as well as societal rituals for grieving and processing when such a difficult choice must be made.

Additionally, the theological literature could further explain the variability, fluidity and absurdity of shifting limits. Tyler Boudreau grieved the inexplicability of knowing when a “crucial limit” might be met; seeing a limit might exist at one point one day, and then shift to a completely different critical limit on another.¹²⁸³ Once that limit is met, wherever it has since shifted, the soldier experiences disablement of agency and identity. Author Wendell Berry, in his short story “Making It Home” tells the story of World War II Veteran Arthur Rowanberry journeying home to his small farm community after three years at war. His account speaks to the centrality and fluidity of limits as Veteran Rowanberry begins to see his village after days of walking home:

He had arrived, as he had arrived again and again during the healing of his wound, at the apprehension of a pure emptiness, as if at the center of an explosion – as if, without changing at all, he and the town ahead of him and the village around him and all the long way behind him had been taken up into a dream in which every creature and every thing sat...in the dead center of the possibility of its disappearance.¹²⁸⁴

Berry draws on the same sensibility of Bonhoeffer who recognized the limits at the “dead center” of human existence – without Christ, there is emptiness and the potential for disappearance at that center. One senses in this short story the internal implosion of emptiness alongside the external explosion that occurred within the war arena; both now

¹²⁸³ Boudreau, “The Morally Injured,” 746.

¹²⁸⁴ Berry, “Making It Home,” 94.

casting a shadow across what had otherwise been taken for granted. The limits of Veteran Rowanberry's moral, spiritual and bodily existence have shifted. His war experience is the new center-point of his life and its potential to cast a new framework on his experience is fluid and unpredictable. The crucial limit model of disability takes seriously these shifting limits and the real impact their unpredictability can have on a soldier's psyche.

6.7 Impact of the Crucial Limit Model for Disability and Moral Theory

When the field of disability draws into conversation models of moral theory,¹²⁸⁵ we discover that agent and context are of the utmost importance. Certainly recent conversations in feminist ethics of care and virtue ethics take context and embodiment seriously. The next step in these conversations is to take deeper room within ethics for the effects on embodiment of trauma, suffering, disability, and moral injury. It is possible that some ethical theories assume "normalized" perceptions of human being. Moral theory needs to take into account deeper views on the enfleshment of being human. In addition, moral theory needs to take into account wider views of changing worlds and the limits experienced when those contexts are encountered. Those contexts, and their moral implications, can appear fluid, arbitrary, and unpredictable. The ongoing intersections of flesh and world are not simply moments of ability and/or disability; they

¹²⁸⁵ Recent action theories in ethics claim that actions need a home. For example, Adam C. English notes: "Actions become intelligible as they find 'homes'...Actions, like reason, faith, and personhood cannot be understood on their own, abstracted from contexts and stories." See: Adam C. English, *The Possibility of Christian Philosophy: Maurice Blondel at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2007): 82. A literary example of this appears in the work of Veteran Benjamin John Peters who begins his biography *Through All The Plain* with these words "This is my story, cemented in history," xi. Peters describes his personal history of enlistment and homecoming, story of killing and new life. Benjamin John Peters, *Through All the Plain*, (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014).

are also instances where moral agency can be abled or disabled. Each engagement with limit is an occurrence when the capacity for virtue is diminished or enhanced. Morality is affected more than is often credited with the ongoing effects and interaction with changing embodiment.

While much of Protestant theology aims to express morality in the language of sin, both acts of commission and acts of omission, a revised limit model of disability takes into account the persistence of finitude as a dimension of human existence. Moral theory proves problematic when it presumes that humans are disembodied wills who make choices detached from concrete reality. What is needed is an attentiveness to human being that takes context and material existence, our embodiment, seriously. Bonhoeffer proves helpful in his positive reckoning of creature and creation anchored by an uncanny reliance on natural law that is surprising for a Protestant theologian. Unlike Martin Luther, the forefather of Bonhoeffer's Lutheran tradition, who argued the natural world was so wholly tainted by sin that no positive account of creature and creation could be given; Bonhoeffer creates a space for moral responsibility in a complicated world that can be established and upheld through a recognition of finitude and limits.

Drawing these conversations regarding disability and moral theory to the field of moral injury facilitates deeper accounts of the *morality* at stake in moral injury as well as the *body* and its potential for an injury that prompts an instance of disability. If *disability is the transformation of the flesh as it encounters world*, then moral injury is a unique form of that transformation when flesh meets the limits of a particular world and a disabling occurs that has moral implications. The impact of that intersection might reverberate in the moment, or it might take years to come to the surface. Moral injury

can be particularly acute, when in the language of Jonathan Shay, there is the “shrinkage of the social and moral horizon.”¹²⁸⁶ World, then, becomes further limited which in turn fashions more dynamics and increases the potential for encounters of limitation that can have disabling repercussions. In that space of the “limited horizon of choice” there is increased probability of limitations that have moral and physical dimensions.

6.8 Strengths and Challenges of the Crucial Limit Model

Theologian Brian Powers suggested an Augustinian framework of internal distortion and external disorder as fallen humanity pursues disordered goods.¹²⁸⁷ A strength of the crucial limit model for those morally injured is the recognition of this pathology in the face of power, where, critical internal limits are twisted and disordered in response to the disordering of crucial societal limits – once good and right – now, gravely disrupted. The preceding list of fifteen key points regarding the crucial limit model of disability points to the internal and external implications of that disordering. Internally, there is shame, the global evaluation of self, and the search for a response beyond medical technique to the inner despair. Externally, there is a broadening of responsibility from a soldier’s impossible moral dilemma to the larger military-industrial complex that shapes society and limits moral choice.¹²⁸⁸ Moral choices, in this complex

¹²⁸⁶ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 23. Brian S. Powers uses similar language when he speaks of a “limited horizon of choice.”

¹²⁸⁷ Powers, “Moral injury and original sin,” 325.

¹²⁸⁸ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, 120. For Bonhoeffer, the Fall is bigger than a “moral lapse,” it is “the destruction of creation by the creature.”

landscape, do not always fit within societal mores, norms or conventions. Instead, there is a fluidity and unpredictability across various moral worlds.¹²⁸⁹

Several additional strengths should be noted beyond these bounds. For example, a crucial limit model of disability as a resource not only to “conserve” as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson espounds, but even more so, a possible place of creative¹²⁹⁰ reckoning¹²⁹¹ and release. Deborah Creamer makes clear that “limit” can become a resource for theological reflection allowing a dynamic response to the divine even in the face of limitations.¹²⁹² Robert McRuer asked, “Within what social conditions might we welcome the disability to come, to desire it?”¹²⁹³ In so asking, McRuer’s desiring of disability is a request for an existential creative awakening in the face of crucial limits. To be clear, this strength is acknowledged reluctantly and with unwavering recognition of the debilitating effects of moral injury. And yet, a crucial limit can be a generative resource for soldiers and societies alike. Certainly this is the hope of Brian Doerries and his “Theater of War” passion to push audiences to the limit and to discover insight there.

An additional strength, worthy of note, is the shift that occurs in moral formation and reflection with the crucial limit model. Nussbaum notes that limits are necessary, she makes clear: “Human cognitive limits circumscribe and limit ethical knowledge and

¹²⁸⁹ See for example, Wendell Berry’s short story “Making It Home” wherein Veteran Art Rowanberry makes a long walk home. On his way he reflects, “There had been a time when those houses had seen as permanent to him as the land they stood on. But where he had been, they had the answer to such houses. “We wouldn’t let one of them stand long in our way.” Berry, “Making It Home,” 84.

¹²⁹⁰ See: “In What Ways have Artists, Academics, and Cultural Institutions Responded to the U.S.-Led Invasion and Occupation of Iraq?” *October*, 123 (Winter, 2008): 3-184. Also, see Mimi Swartz, “‘W.’ and the Art of Redemption,” *New York Times* March 21, 2017.

¹²⁹¹ Wendell Berry uses the language of reckoning in his short story “Making It Home” about Veteran Arthur Rowanberry.

¹²⁹² Creamer, *Disability and Christian Theology*, 96.

¹²⁹³ Robert McRuer, *Crip theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006): 207.

discourse; and an important topic *within* ethical discourse must be the determination of an appropriate human attitude toward those limits.”¹²⁹⁴ However, perhaps she could take the concept of crucial limits to refine her framework of “moral luck.” Nussbaum advanced the concept of “moral luck” arguing that luck can make an unpredictable moral difference and deeply affect character formation. In fact, by means of moral luck an arguably “good” moral agent might change in response to a case of “bad luck.” A crucial limit model would shift the randomness and “luck” of life’s circumstances, ie. getting a dealt a bad hand, and would instead increase the potential variables that could come into play in any given moral situation. An injury to morality would occur not from “luck”, but instead from a complex and unpredictable response to reaching a limit that might defy normal societal conventions but reaches a crucial limit within both the confines of a given context and the contours of a human heart.

While the strengths of the crucial limit model are many; there are a few challenges and limitations. First and foremost, while much work has been done in the field of disability studies to universalize disability,¹²⁹⁵ so doing comes with a great risk. Creamer, Erevelles, Garland-Thomson and others strive to broaden the spectrum to humanize, universalize, and equalize the potential for disability among all people. Certainly there are strengths in this approach, but it should be made perfectly clear, this approach is not intended to disclaim the unique experience of veterans. Disability studies works to “conserve” disability as a vital resource, not just in a broadening of humanity

¹²⁹⁴ Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, 8.

¹²⁹⁵ Garland Thomson, 2002 “Integrating Disability, transforming feminist theory,” *National Women’s Studies Association Journal*, 14:3 (2002) 1-32. Robert McRuer, 2006 *Crip theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006). Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts*, 26.

sense, but also in a deep protection of each person's individual experience in the face of disability. Nirmalla Erevelles may remind us, "disability is the most universal of human conditions," and yet we must remember that moral injury is a unique and particular human condition that must be preserved in its integrity. Second, it would be inexcusable to rationalize and/or justify certain moral actions as reasonable choices given a fallen world. Scrutiny of moral choice is important for assessment, confession and redirection both for individual soldiers' and the ranks in which they serve. Third, a possible shortcoming of the Crucial Limit Model of Disability might be its Christological undertones for a secular world.¹²⁹⁶ And yet, Bonhoeffer aimed at the end of his life to present a "religionless Christianity"¹²⁹⁷ that had relevance for the contemporary dilemmas of his age.

As we move to the conclusion, the seventh chapter will apply the insights and components of this model for individual soldiers and larger societal institutions. We will look to two models, the administration of County Veterans' Courts across the country and the imagination evoked by Brian Doerries in his "Theatre of War" project. Both help veterans and societies move from the complexity and complicity of moral injury toward restorative ventures that help all to imagine new futures. Both mobilize those poised in defeat, ready to quit or give up, toward new moral horizons and personal narratives that honor the trauma and yet, restore hope. The crucial limit model is not just a construct, but an applicable concept to be used in concrete and complex situations. In order to

¹²⁹⁶ In an informal conversation regarding this dissertation with a mentor who is a professor of political philosophy said, "I love Bonhoeffer's ethics, but I could never teach them in my cross-cultural context."

¹²⁹⁷ Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 280. Bonhoeffer's quote in full reads: "We are approaching a completely religionless age: people as they are now simply cannot be religious anymore... What is bothering me incessantly is the question of what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us today?"

apply our model in the next chapter, we turn to the theological ethics of John Paul Lederach who proposes responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk in order to move forward.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Implications and Possibilities of a Crucial Limit Model

*I now stand ready to serve my veteran teammates.*¹²⁹⁸

- The Veterans' Creed

¹²⁹⁸ The Veterans' Creed written by Judge John C. Reed, III.

7.1 Moral Horizons and Human Vertigo: The Crux of the Matter

At the heart of the Veterans' Creed is the statement: *I now stand ready to serve my veteran teammates*. And yet, the traumatic intersection of limited horizons of choice with human moral vertigo in the swirl of those limited choices, makes "standing ready" an impossible ideal at times. In this section, we will look briefly again at that intersection of limited horizons of choice and moral agency distorted by human vertigo as an example of the sociological moment the crucial limit model of disability must examine. As the chapter continues, we will introduce Jon Paul Lederach's conception of the moral imagination as a helpful practice that can be employed when the crucial limit is reached. Once his construct is outlined, we will assess the application of the moral imagination in two contexts informed by the mandates of creation proposed by Bonhoeffer. Finally, we will offer next steps for scholarship and offer concluding remarks.

Bonhoeffer uses the language of the horizontal and vertical axes in a critical text on vocation and responsibility in his *Ethics*: "The boundary of vocation has been broken open not only vertically, that is, through Christ, but also horizontally, with regard to the

extent of responsibility.”¹²⁹⁹ The horizon of the horizontal axis of the cross reminds us of the importance of *context*. Here is that space of “world” where limits are possible and encounters unavoidable. Shay and Powers’ language of the shrinkage of that horizon, where there is a limited horizon of choice,¹³⁰⁰ sets the stage for moral injury’s impending potential. The second axis, the vertical one, reminds us of our *creatureliness*. Here is that space of embodiment, agency, and flesh. A vertical line draws us from the vertex at its height to the center of the earth in its depth where we are grounded. Bonhoeffer’s notion of creatures in creation as those who once knew the center as limit, and now know the center as the cross of Christ, is helpful in that Christ replaces the broken center. In the midst of changing worlds and contexts, when agency becomes disoriented by circumstance and the intersection of limits, vertigo (from the Latin *vertere* meaning “whirling” or “to turn”) sets in making it impossible to stand tall and firm.

Is it possible that the cognitive dissonance at the intersection creates a form of vertigo disrupting both the body and morality? In that lecture series at Chautauqua, in the summer of 2016, Shay made the following five claims: first, moral injury disables a person’s ability to “show up to an appointed time and place in a crowd of people one doesn’t know well.”¹³⁰¹ Second, moral injury disables a veteran’s ability to “experience

¹²⁹⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 293.

¹³⁰⁰ Veteran Zachary Moon understands the “given world”¹³⁰⁰ in which certain moral orienting systems flourish and others falter. See: Dissertation by Zach Moon, *(Re)Turning Warriors: A Practical Theology of Military Moral Stress*, 104. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1149/>. (Accessed January 14, 2018).

¹³⁰¹ Jonathan Shay, “Moral Injury in War.” Lectures given at the Chautauqua Institution. August 17, 2016. Shay’s analysis at Chautauqua may be compared to chapter ten in his book *Achilles in Vietnam* where he explores “The Breaking Points of Moral Existence.” Here he outlines the disabling persistence of the following ten things: the traumatic moment, untrustworthy perception, problematic memory, the tendency to be mobilized toward danger, the persistence of survival mode, betrayal, isolation, suicidal impulses, meaninglessness, and the inability to participate in any capacity for democracy. See: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 170-182.

words as trustworthy”¹³⁰² and in so doing, to not automatically discount words and statements as deceitful jargon. Third, with this failure of words, moral injury disables a veteran’s ability to “see the possibilities in persuasion, negotiation, compromise and concession essential to democratic functioning.”¹³⁰³ Fourth, moral injury disables “the possibility of winning a struggle without killing and of losing a struggle without dying.”¹³⁰⁴ And fifth, perhaps most destructively, moral injury disables a soldier’s ability to “see the future as real.”¹³⁰⁵ Vertigo, in other words, takes hold of the moral agent and disrupts their ability to function causing disability to their agency, the greater democracy, and perhaps, even having an impact on their eschatology.

The response to those who have found themselves at the crux of their limits in agency, democracy and eschatology will require a vibrant moral imagination that grounds and guides. Jon Paul Lederach offers a vision and application of the moral imagination that might be employed for those at the crucial limit to help re-orient when the problematic limitlessness of sin and the experience of human finitude confound. We will draw on Lederach’s construct to offer re-orienting within two of Bonhoeffer’s four mandates of creation (focusing on government and culture) for those who have reached the crucial limit within those spheres of life. The specific examples are the Mercer County Veterans’ Court of Western Pennsylvania and Brian Doerries’ Theater of War project. Then, we will offer a challenge to the church as a third mandate of creation to live into the moral imagination challenged by Lederach.

¹³⁰² Shay, “Moral Injury in War.”

¹³⁰³ Shay, “Moral Injury in War.”

¹³⁰⁴ Shay, “Moral Injury in War.”

¹³⁰⁵ Shay, “Moral Injury in War.”

7.2 The Moral Imagination and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

Professor of International Peace-building at Notre Dame University, John Paul Lederach in his work, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, invites similar acts to promote social change when limits have been transgressed that invoke violence and require new pathways to peace.¹³⁰⁶ Lederach develops four steps toward provoking the moral imagination: responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk.¹³⁰⁷ *Responsibility* requires the twofold step of accepting personal responsibility, “I am a part of this pattern”¹³⁰⁸ and discovering the meaning of that responsibility for relational mutuality.¹³⁰⁹ Once that recognition of responsibility occurs, Lederach believes the only path beyond violence is an internal valuation that has a confessional quality at its root.¹³¹⁰ *Curiosity* is both a learned skill and art that must be sustained once that initial sense of responsibility is obtained.¹³¹¹ Curiosity moves us beyond easy polarizations (i.e. right and wrong) toward an extended attentiveness to constructive care and healing from there.¹³¹² *Creativity* is a counter-cultural opposition to violence. Violence can “imagine” no other way, according to Lederach, but the creative acts and the responses they provoke can.¹³¹³ Lederach highlights creative approaches to violence by Somali women, Columbian *campesinos*, and Tajiki poets. Chicago based CreatiVets is an arts based healing program

¹³⁰⁶ Shelly Rambo draws on Lederach as a conversation partner in her essay but does not develop his work further. Here, I expand on her work prompted by his essay “The Moral Imagination” rather than the book she cites of the same title.

¹³⁰⁷ Jon Paul Lederach. “The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace,” *European Judaism* 40:2 (Winter 2007): 16-18.

¹³⁰⁸ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 16.

¹³⁰⁹ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 16.

¹³¹⁰ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 16.

¹³¹¹ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 17.

¹³¹² Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 17. Regarding curiosity, Lederach draws on the Latin root *cura* and links curiosity to both the cure and the care at its etymological root.

¹³¹³ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 18.

for veterans experiencing moral injury and/or PTSD to explore songwriting, ceramics, painting, wood crafting and printmaking.¹³¹⁴ Finally, Lederach suggests *risk* as the fourth element necessary for transcending the violence that occurs when moral limits are crossed and healing is needed. Risk invites participation in the mystery at the heart of human existence without a fixed focus on outcome, but an organic engagement of process guided by a renewed moral imagination. While the violence and perceived immorality of the past is the known entity, the unknown invites risk and an invitation to journey to a new comprehension of moral life in a complicated universe.¹³¹⁵

Lederach's four-fold model allows us to apply them to the mandates of government, culture, church and family; so that the veteran who has reached the crucial limit might then function with new ability within that realm. For those who have known the vulnerability, fluidity and unpredictability of transgressed moral limits, Lederach's practice of the moral imagination aims to honor, guide and heal beyond the pain, silence and trauma experienced. Knowing that Garland-Thomson's "encounters" are not always positive and can at times be world-shattering moments of trauma, Lederach's approach proceeds sensitively and with great respect for what has been endured. And yet, the hope of the moral imagination is that new encounters – through responsibility, curiosity, creativity, and risk – can both honor the crucial limit and guide onward. This practice allows us to build strength within societal structures for soldiers to stand their ground and reclaim their balance after moral injuries have occurred.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's definition of disability, "*Disability is the transformation that occurs as flesh encounters world,*" provided a lens through which to

¹³¹⁴ See: <http://www.creativets.org>. (Accessed January 13, 2018).

¹³¹⁵ Lederach, "The Moral Imagination," 18.

analyze the theological anthropology (i.e. “flesh”), doctrine of creation (i.e. “world”) and understanding of the fall (i.e. “encounters”) presented in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In so doing, Bonhoeffer provides an account of creature, Creator and creation. In addition, Bonhoeffer provides a robust conception of soteriology as he describes “preservation” in Christ through renewed limits manifested in the mandates of creation. While Bonhoeffer, speaks of preservation, the “transformation” Garland-Thomson envisions is left wanting. If we understand those “encounters” as the engagement of crucial limits that occur again and again, we are left in need of a stronger conception of transformation. Lederach aids this discussion by providing a model for engagement that is transformative. In addition, for the secular world of the military and returning veterans, his language provides a resource that is usable and salient. Bonhoeffer’s view of the responsible life presented in his *Ethics* echoes Lederach’s concept of responsibility and the steps responsibility can take through curiosity, creativity, and risk toward transformation.

The challenge for the individual who has transgressed (or been betrayed at) a crucial limit and therein encountered a disabling condition of injury or morality is to reclaim functioning in that context and beyond. Garland-Thomson weaves into her definition of disability a conception of “transformation” that does not only create disability when flesh encounters world. Transformation, within disability scholarship, can be liberative and powerfully enabling when disability is claimed as a resource as suggested by Garland-Thomson in her essay “Conserving Disability.” Functioning and flourishing, at that crucial limit, can be gained in a transformative way when Lederach’s moral imagination is accessed through the steps of responsibility, curiosity, creativity and

risk. Responsibility lays claim to the crucial limit experienced by the veteran, or even by the civitas. Curiosity explores the affect on functioning as well as steps toward moving forward. Creativity employs the work of moral re-ordering through an imaginative, constructive and perhaps even playful process. Risk, the final step, pushes the individual or the institution at that crucial limit to engage new methods toward renewed vitality and functioning.

In this section, Lederach's formation provides a helpful lens through which to increase moral functioning for soldiers, societies and religious institutions. Given our conception of "a crucial limit model of disability," Lederach's four steps provide a way to enable functioning when the disabling crucial limit has been crossed and transgressed. Certainly it is the hope of the author that these steps will encourage further conversation for scholars in theology, psychology and sociology to employ their own moral imagination through the work and challenge of their own fields to continue and deepen aid for both veterans and the wider context in which they live and move and have their being.

7.3 Moral Imagination and the Mandate of Government: Veterans' Court

A context for exploring the first mandate of creation – government – is the model of the County Veteran Court Treatment Program for Veterans of the Armed Forces. This model is designed for veterans who are facing criminal charges or who have been charged with violating the terms of their probation or parole. The court is presided over by the local Judge who looks to a team of psychologists, treatment providers and other professionals to be a circle of support for the individual veteran. If a veteran is brought

under the auspices of the court, he or she will be assigned a Veteran mentor who maintains frequent contact and guides the veteran through the program which includes: required group counseling sessions, required recovery meetings for substance abuse, community service, and a series of writing assignments over a two year period. While courts and their procedures vary from county to county, for the purposes of this dissertation I am drawing on resources from the Mercer County Veterans' Court.¹³¹⁶

Three specifics are worthy of note from the Mercer County Veterans' Court. First, the court takes seriously "physical-psycho-social-spiritual health" inviting routine measurement, assessment and treatment for physical health, psychological health, social health, and spiritual health. In addition, the treatment necessitates sustained reflection on identifying triggers that cause the veteran to stray from optimum "physical-psycho-social-spiritual health." Once those triggers have been named and noted, the veteran and his or her mentor develop a "trigger action plan" in case one of the triggers occurs and dislodges the veteran from their ideal course.

Second, the Mercer County Veterans' Court demands twenty-four essays every month over the course of a two-year period. These essays include line-by-line reflections on the Veterans' Creed, reports on relapses and triggers, narratives about personal "totems" (symbols of strength and hope carried with the veteran), descriptions and analyses of community service activities, reports on deficiencies in "physical-psycho-social-spiritual health", and testimonies about the impact of the Veterans' Court on their recovery. At the monthly court sessions, Veterans in the program at every stage read

¹³¹⁶ See: Sandy Scarmack, "Their own court helping veterans going through criminal justice system," *The Sharon Herald*, February 17, 2015, www.sharonherald.com/news/local_news/their-own-cour-helping-veterans-going-through-criminal-justice-system/article (Accessed October 14, 2016).

their written narratives before the court. The writing prompts engage the moral imagination of the returned veteran and provide an opportunity to share a part of their story before a community of people in the court who honor the testimony and bear witness to the grief. Kansas City poet and veteran H.C. Palmer reminds us, “The trauma won’t go away, but as my Muslim friend, Dr. Amir Hussain, so wisely said, telling our stories helps us *negotiate* the trauma, and that gives us hope.”¹³¹⁷

Third, the Veterans’ Court has at its core the Veterans’ Creed that is recited at each court session and carried by each veteran in their personal wallet. Eleven statements within the creed are presented to each veteran in the program as a writing prompt inviting reflection on its meaning and challenge to them as individuals. These testimonies are read before the court and honored with silence and mutual support. The creed bears witness to shattering events within the course of a veterans journey, and while it does not name moral injury within the creed, there is a traumatic silence evidenced and honored at the heart of this communal narrative.

7.3.1 Government, Moral Imagination and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

Veteran Zach Moon, in his dissertation upon return from war entitled *(Re)Turning Warriors: A Practical Theology of Military Moral Stress* invites soldiers, and the military culture, to get curious about “moral identity”¹³¹⁸ due to inadequate instruction, conception, and reconstruction after deployment. His scholarship asks both soldier and military to deepen their curiosity regarding a soldier’s matrix of “moral orienting

¹³¹⁷ Thomas G. McGuire, “Feet of the Messenger: A Conversation with H.C. Palmer,” *War, Literature, & the Arts An International Journal of the Humanities* 27 (2017): 12.

¹³¹⁸ Dissertation by Zach Moon, *(Re)Turning Warriors: A Practical Theology of Military Moral Stress*, 5. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1149/>. (Accessed January 14, 2018).

systems” prior to, during and after wartime service.¹³¹⁹ Moon’s suggestion of “moral orienting systems”¹³²⁰ takes into account how a moral self, the individual soldier, functions within “larger systems of power including patriarchy, white supremacy, and hetero-normativity”¹³²¹ that cause entanglement, asymmetrical dynamics, and hamper relational mutuality. The model of the Veterans’ Court helps to reimagine moral identity and societal responsibility after a soldier has become disoriented and morally wounded having reached the crucial limit within war through the mandate of a disciplined and structure Veterans’ Court within the local government.

Jon Paul Lederach’s four-fold practice of responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk is evidenced in the Veterans’ Court model. The manual makes clear the responsibility of Veterans’ within the court to adjust to the discipline and structure of the court as a healing treatment program. And, the model demands responsibility of local governments to faithfully engage and respond veterans who are struggling with moral injury, PTSD, anxiety, addiction or anger management issues. And yet, the Mercer County Veterans’ Court model engages moral terrain beyond responsibility by inviting curiosity, creativity and risk through community service, written narratives, partnership through mentors, and the circle of support through a treatment team.¹³²² The Veterans’

¹³¹⁹ Zach Moon, *(Re)Turning Warriors*, 56.

¹³²⁰ For Moon, a “moral orienting system” is “a dynamic interplay between values, beliefs, experiences, and behaviors from which assumptions, expectation, hopes, and judgments about oneself, others, and Higher Power are generated accordingly within a particular situation,” 47. Moon draws on Bourdieu’s system of “habitus” that is formed within communities of dispositions that “paint” over time adding to the layers and palette of a growing picture of morality. Moon’s choice of words in “particular” assumes that the moral orienting system, understands fluid contexts and might meet moral limits at various, and sometimes contradictory points, in different situations, 45. See: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980): 170.

¹³²¹ Zach Moon, *(Re)Turning Warriors*, 106.

¹³²² While the Mercer Country Veterans’ Court model shares much in common with similar programs, the three elements of health assessment, personal narrative and the shared creed are unique to Mercer County. A recent study assessing local Veterans’ Courts in Pennsylvania noted six components shared across the

Court is one of many models across the country, though the Mercer County Veterans' Court is uniquely crafted to its context by the leadership and veterans involved.

7.4 Moral Imagination and the Mandate of Culture: Doerries' Theatre of War

From Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam* to Martha Nussbaum's exploration of "moral luck" to Robert Meagher's exegesis of the Greek word *meignumi* from the Ancient Greek tragedies, our study of moral injury continues a cultural conversation begun centuries ago in ancient Athens by poets such as Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer regarding the moral implications, impossible dilemmas and lingering lifetime effects of war. Drawing on this rich tradition, and even more so, understanding the power of tragedy to tug humanity toward the limit of human experience, contemporary playwright Brian Doerries developed "The Theater of War" to present ancient Greek tragedies to audiences of civilians and military corps across a spectrum of rank. Doerries shares the mission of his project:

By presenting these plays to military and civilian audiences, our hope is to destigmatize psychological injury, increase awareness of post-deployment psychological health issues, disseminate information regarding available resources, and foster greater family, community, and troop resilience.¹³²³

Since its conception, over 80,000 audience members have viewed productions of Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*. After the production, Doerries invites conversation of audience members even when those discussions become "arresting, emotionally charged

systems: identification of eligible participants, definitions of eligibility, administration of teams and meetings, alternative options for various program tracks, assessment of clients and data, the establishment of mentors for each veteran. See: Anne S. Douds, Eileen M. Ahlin, Daniel Howard, and Sarah Stigerwalt, "Varieties of Veterans' Courts: A Statewide Assessment of Veterans' Treatment Court Components," *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 28:8 (2017): 746.

¹³²³ <http://theaterofwar.com/projects/theater-of-war/overview>, (Accessed November 5, 2017).

events.”¹³²⁴ In Doerries’ view, ancient Greek tragedies were utilized during their day to develop compassion, create a shared language, grieve the anguish of war, and welcome home through an “elaborate ritual” soldiers returning to civilian life.¹³²⁵ The Theater of War project is an excellent example of drawing the moral imagination to the mandate of societal culture to explore crucial limits for soldiers; and, perhaps, to draw citizens to the brink of the crucial limit.

Brian Doerries understands the concept of “crucial limit” in his aim to address the moral injuries of veterans pushed to impossible limits as well as his frustration with a society who cannot handle the inward moral probe those injuries ask of a *civitas*. Because of our unwillingness to plumb the depth, not just of emotions but also of civic culpability, Doerries welcomes those uncomfortable moments when audiences are carried to that crucial limit. He explains,

Tragedies don’t mean anything. They do something—physically, biochemically, spiritually—to us. They move us out of our heads and into our guts. They frame our response to ethical issues with emotions that help us to see more than one perspective. They make us profoundly uncomfortable in the presence of others, thereby forging a new way of connecting and relating with people who may not typically share our views.¹³²⁶

To hear Doerries explain the scholarship behind his work is compelling: the tragedies allow a space for communal grief, existential wrestling and palpable relief.¹³²⁷ The tragedies explore civic limits, as well as the consequences of their transgression and the potentially disabling repercussions in that lapse. The tragedies explore martial limits and the moral dilemmas and devastating betrayals. The tragedies, at best, explore human

¹³²⁴ <http://theaterofwar.com/projects/theater-of-war/overview>, (Accessed November 5, 2017).

¹³²⁵ <http://theaterofwar.com/projects/theater-of-war/overview>, (Accessed November 5, 2017).

¹³²⁶ Thomas G. McGuire, “Bryan Doerries Discusses the Theater of War & the Palliative of Shared Suffering,” *War, Literature & the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities* 27 (2015): 3-4.

¹³²⁷ McGuire, “Bryan Doerries Discusses the Theater of War,” 17.

limits. Doerries explains the purpose of the tragedies, “To acknowledge our fallibility and collective responsibility for the suffering. To dispense with judgment and moral superiority.”¹³²⁸ Leading audiences to those crucial limits is the aim of Doerries’ project that tugs provocatively at the moral imagination and invites spectators to the crux of the matter: what happens when new moral horizons create human vertigo? Doerries would argue such an experience creates empathy, awareness and a drive to respond otherwise than before.

Doerries’ provides a model of engaging the moral imagination that takes audiences to the crucial limit and invites deep reflection, empathic response, shared responsibility and social change. Certainly Doerries’ model participates in these four steps of responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk-taking. In so doing, he reveals these four steps at the heart of Greek tragic theatre as well. The very moment of theatre-going, then and now, creates a space for the moral imagination to be engaged developing empathy at those crucial limits as a learned skill, an art to be practiced, and an empathy to be enacted. As a response to the crucial limit model of disability, Doerries considers the elements of the crucial limit model outlined earlier. As we begin to imagine how Doerries activates the moral imagination through responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk, we see how the cultural experience provides new agency through the crucial limit model, for soldier and society alike and we can begin to imagine how such a construct might be employed in other areas of society.

7.4.1 Culture, Moral Imagination and the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

¹³²⁸ McGuire, “Bryan Doerries Discusses the Theater of War,” 19.

Much of this project explores the moral injury of individual soldiers; however, a few scholars have prompted greater exploration into the moral injury of the greater culture of our society. Lederach's invitation to the moral imagination demands societies to take responsibility, engage curiosity, kindle creativity, and respond with risk-taking. A responsible society is tasked with an honest reckoning of complicity and accountability for war-time trauma.¹³²⁹ Movies like *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* invite that kind of moral reckoning of societal complicity, but are far less popular than films easily heroizing service members.¹³³⁰ Societal responsibility will not only re-evaluate complicity, but will also take responsibility for social contributions to trauma. Often, trauma studies including moral injury, focus on the acute event of the traumatic experience rather than the larger context.¹³³¹ Peter Levine's work on trauma asks questions and pushes responsibility for trauma to larger socio-environmental conditions than singular acute events.¹³³² Based on statistics that as much as seventy percent of the general population¹³³³ has experienced a traumatic event in their lifetime, trauma expert Dr.

¹³²⁹ See, for example: Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic, 2007). Herman argues here society ebbs and flows in response and needs instead sustained attention. The first act of responsibility is to sustain society's gaze.

¹³³⁰ Interesting to note here Nancy Eiesland's reflection in *The Disabled God*: "The Christian interpretation of disability has run the gamut from symbolizing sin to representing an occasion for supererogation. The persistent thread within the Christian tradition has been that disability denotes an unusual relationship with God and that the person with disabilities is either divinely blessed or damned: the defiled evildoer or the spiritual superhero," 70. Soldiers upon return from war may be challenged with a similar dualism: defiled evildoer or military superhero? Again, moral injury can benefit from conversation with disability that has long addressed these kinds of questions in its scholarship.

¹³³¹ Zach Moon, *(Re)Turning Warriors*, 22. Moon believes Litz's adaptive disclosure method focuses too much on the acute event of trauma rather than the larger societal context.

¹³³² See: Peter Levine, *Trauma and Memory: Brain and Body in a Search for the Living Past*. (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2015).

¹³³³ The Sidran Institute for Traumatic Stress Education and Advocacy estimates that 70% of Americans have experienced a traumatic event within their lifespan and 20% of Americans, regardless of whether or not they are veterans, will have that trauma develop into full-fledged PTSD. See: www.sidran.org/resources/for-survivors-and-loved-ones/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-fact-sheet/ (Accessed March 13, 2018). To be clear, this website does not distinguish between PTSD and moral

Bessel van der Kolk maintains, “Trauma is now our most pressing public health issue.”¹³³⁴ One must then ask, in taking responsibility, if trauma invokes trauma.¹³³⁵ Addressing the larger public health issue of trauma and latent moral injury at play within society is not intended to discredit in any way the unique traumatic events contributing to a veteran’s moral injury. Instead, attention to trauma is suggested in order to bring healing to a society in order to both prevent and bring healing to those whom the society deploys.

Lederach’s construct for taking *responsibility* requires the twofold step of accepting personal responsibility, “I am a part of this pattern”¹³³⁶ and discovering the meaning of that responsibility for relational mutuality.¹³³⁷ Consider, for example, how Augustine compelled his society to Lederach’s transformative peace-making task of *responsibility* by highlighting the story of Lucretia’s suicide. Lucretia, unable to deal with the shame of her situation after being raped and finding no mechanism within suicide through which to grieve and heal, chose to commit suicide as the only viable opportunity for her given the shame she perceived from her society.¹³³⁸ Augustine explained,

injury. Further study would be helpful for assessing accurate statistics between the two for American society today.

¹³³⁴ Van der Kolk, *When the Body Keeps the Score*, 358. Van der Kolk’s prologue begins, “One does not have to be a combat soldier...to experience trauma. Trauma happens to us, our friends, our families, our neighbors,” 1. Goes on to show the extent and prevalence of trauma, “Research by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has shown that one in five Americans was sexually molested as a child; one in four was beaten by a parent to the point of a mark being left on their body; and one in three couples engages in physical violence. A quarter of us grew up with alcoholic relatives, and one out of eight witnessed their mother being beaten or hit.”

¹³³⁵ See for example: Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2008) who explores the concept of trans-generational trauma that is perpetuated over time and across generations which she deems “trans-generational haunting” (11).

¹³³⁶ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 16.

¹³³⁷ Lederach, “The Moral Imagination,” 16.

¹³³⁸ Kiess, “Augustine and the Politics of Mourning,” 217.

If she remained alive she would be thought to have enjoyed suffering the violence that she had suffered when she lived. Hence, she judged that she must use self-punishment to exhibit the state of her mind to the eyes of men to whom she could not show her conscience.¹³³⁹

Societies must take responsibility regarding their culpability even in what appears at first to be such an individualized choice. Augustine's description of Lucretia's suicide assumes a society unable to mourn. Without mourning that society is unable to move forward to justice. Lederach makes clear every act of responsibility carries with it a confessional challenge that scholars from Bernard Verkamp to Warren Kinghorn have acknowledged as essential to the healing process. Responsibility requires a comprehension of "relational mutuality" that both undergirds ethical choice, but also creates a frame of reference for understanding the societal entanglement within which a soldier might find herself where justice, power, and choice might be weighted and veiled with what Bonhoeffer would deem the *tob/ra* (or "twilight") of this world.

Curiosity and creativity, then, must be harkened and used to morally re-imagine alternative possibilities. Certainly Brian Doerries' Theater of War project aspires toward new societal responsibility, accountability and creativity. And, Brock and Lettini's "Truth Commission on Conscience in War" is a radically creative response given that the dozens of somewhat similar commissions explored by ethicist Patricia B. Hayner in her book *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*¹³⁴⁰ that highlighted nations divided by civil war that sought healing post-war through such

¹³³⁹ Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. by R.W. Dyson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 1:19.

¹³⁴⁰ Patricia B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (London, UK: Routledge Press, 2010).

commissions. Brock and Lettini's is the only example, not highlighted in the book that explores a societal reckoning for a nation not in normatized civil disarray.

What is at stake for societies at this crucial limit are new forms of public reckoning that address culpability, name laments, provides rituals for grief and then, in response, explores new alternatives for the underlying issues that contribute to moral injury. *Creativity* compels a recognition that since limits are fluid, contexts may vary, moral functioning can fluctuate, and time and space allow varied spectrums for recognition of moral injury; then "culture specific pathways to healing"¹³⁴¹ will offer varied paths depending on the agent and the context. While Bonhoeffer's mandates set forth specific limits within different sections of the created world, a crucial limit model will conceive those limits differently and with culturally specific pathways. The *risk* societies must take is to learn anew from what the communities of biblical Israel and ancient Greece and make adaptations for a twenty-first century global world. Learning from Verkamp's assessment prevents nostalgia and instead demands action for rituals of lament, acts of confession, and public accounting of war-born grief. Certainly it is in the best interest of society to heal moral injury of returning soldiers to prevent violence.¹³⁴²

Even more so, it is in the best interest of society to heal moral injury latent within its own landscape in order to prevent perpetuating violence. The challenge, however, is that trauma not only begets trauma, but also trauma hinders the imagination. According to Van Der Kolk, trauma while it births courage in certain situations; also has the effect

¹³⁴¹ John P. Wilson, "Culture Specific Pathways to Healing and Transformation for War Veterans Suffering PTSD," *Healing War Trauma: A Handbook of Creative Approaches*, ed. by Raymond Monsour Scurfield and Katherine Theresa Platoni, (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2012): 47-67.

¹³⁴² Herbert Moyo, for example, studied moral injury within the culture of Zimbabwe. See: Herbert Moyo, "Pastoral Care in the Healing of Moral Injury: A Case of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 71:2 (2015): 1-11.

on a trauma survivor to “shut down their inner compass and rob them of their imagination.”¹³⁴³ The moral imagination needed to heal and address moral injury faces a multitude of roadblocks given the aftermath of trauma and its cycles of repetition. Van Der Kolk’s insight suggests the possibility that society has transgressed a crucial limit. If so, the only hope of the *civitas* is to take responsibility, explore repercussions with curiosity, respond with creativity and also with the kind of risk Brian Doerries invites within his repertoire of Greek tragedies performed for modern audiences.

7.5 Moral Imagination and Crucial Limits: A Challenge to the Church

This dissertation on moral injury began with a question raised for churches by the National Congregations’ Study. Question #465 of the National Congregations’ Survey revealed the neglect of religious institutions in responding to veterans and their families. The question asked, “Within the past twelve months have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities? Support for veterans and their families?” Of 1330 congregations analyzed, 967 churches said ‘no’ with a percentage ranking 72.7% of the nation’s churches failing to respond to this pressing need. Of those interviewed, 27.3% or 363 institutions (of the 1300) offered support.¹³⁴⁴ The previous two sections explored creative and risky applications of moral imagination for those at the crucial limit through the mandates of government and culture. One hope of this dissertation is a prompt for churches and religious institutions to assess their theology, practices, history and hospitality to be more accessible to veterans and their families.

¹³⁴³ Van der Kolk, *When the Body Keeps the Score*, 98.

¹³⁴⁴ National Congregations Study Cumulative Data Set (1998, 2006-2007, 2012). The discouraging response to this question labeled “VETSUPPT” is even more chilling when viewed as a pie chart wherein three-quarters of the circle depicts the absence of response from religious institutions.

The work of scholar Joseph McDonald certainly takes a key step forward in accepting the perpetuation of moral injury by assessing moral injury in sacred texts within the Jewish,¹³⁴⁵ Christian, Buddhist, Muslim,¹³⁴⁶ and American civil religious traditions.¹³⁴⁷ The essays in McDonald's book explore moral identity and culpability as shaped by traditional interpretation and application of a wide array of religious texts and invite instead deeper readings and exegetical work that can be shared in religious communities. Perhaps the next step in responsibility, begun by scholars such as Erica Ann Jeschke and Tobias Winwright is whether or not just war theory in and of itself has reached a crucial limit of accountability.¹³⁴⁸

Perhaps it is at this point where the curiosity of our religious institutions must be piqued in order to address the compelling doctrinal, exegetical, spiritual and practical legacies that have promulgated war and its aftermath of moral injury. Shelly Rambo, in a recent article for *Theology Today* argues for a reckoning with war that must emerge from our religious institutions. Her encouragement is to get curious regarding the existing theological discourse that has proved itself insufficient for contemporary issues and must be reassessed. Her analysis proposes three new angles through which to view theological discourse: the angle of trauma, the angle of interreligious dialogue, and the angle of aesthetics.¹³⁴⁹ Rambo is drawn to these angles because they move past the passive

¹³⁴⁵ See: David R. Blumenthal, "Soul Repair: A Jewish View," *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts*, 33-46.

¹³⁴⁶ See: Amir Hussain, "'The Most Beautiful of Stories': A Muslim Reflection on the Qur'an and Moral Injury," *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts*, 69-82.

¹³⁴⁷ See: Daniel C. Maguire, "Civil Religion and the Moral Wounds of War," *Exploring Moral Injury in Sacred Texts*, 103-110.

¹³⁴⁸ Tobias Winwright and E. Ann Jeschke, "Combat and Confession: Just War and Moral Injury" in *Can War Be Just in the 21st Century*, 169-187.

¹³⁴⁹ Rambo argues in her essay that there have been weak theological and philosophical responses to war in the 21st century. She makes the claim that three angles on war are overworked and of less value: the angle

distance of critique, the dichotomy of stance, and the medicalization of care. Each of the new angles provides pathways toward deeper conceptions of embodiment as a human being (flesh) and as a human being within a social context (world). Given our concerns from the field of disability regarding the obstacles of a medical model of disability and the social model of disability, Rambo recognizes the limits of “critique, stance and cure” and compels new initiatives for a path forward. Trauma, for Rambo, is an under-observed societal and individual phenomenon with profound repercussions for bodies, abilities, and memories that can disable not only individuals, but also generations over time.¹³⁵⁰ Inter-religious work is a necessity amid the globalization and entanglement of twenty-first century life, as well as a necessity given the changing notions of warfare from battles of networks instead of nations.¹³⁵¹ The aesthetic angle invites critique of how war is “framed”¹³⁵² by media, culture, politicians and marketers and then presented to the public. The aesthetic, ironically, invites critique of the aesthetic ways in which war is sold and deemed either palatable or unpalatable by the public. In addition, Rambo sees the strength of an aesthetic approach to move past polarizing modes of discourse toward deeper pathways to peace.¹³⁵³ Throughout her article, Rambo nudges theological *curiosity* to move beyond critique, stance and care toward new angles of engagement our religious institutions might accomplish. Bonhoeffer’s notions of “preservation” and the

of critique, the angle of critical stance, and the angle of care. Rambo argues for alternatives and suggests instead: the traumatic, the interreligious and the aesthetic. See: Shelly Rambo, “Changing the Conversation: Theologizing War in the Twenty-First Century,” *Theology Today* 69:4 (2013): 441-462.

¹³⁵⁰ Rambo, “Changing the Conversation,” 448.

¹³⁵¹ Rambo, “Changing the Conversation,” 455. See: Susan Brooks Thiselthwaite, ed., *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011): 1.

¹³⁵² Rambo, “Changing the Conversation,” 451. See also: Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London, UK: Verso, 2009).

¹³⁵³ Rambo, “Changing the Conversation,” 454.

replacement of the tree of life by the cross at the center of human existence are creative theological tools to encourage human flourishing and functioning in the face of transgressed limits. The creative work of religious institutions today will need to engage, like Bonhoeffer, everything from reconceptualized doctrinal work to deepened exegesis to creative and accessible spiritual practices.¹³⁵⁴

Veteran Zachary Moon continues to draw attention to the responsibility, curiosity, *creativity* and risk for religious communities in his ongoing work to better equip religious communities for returning war veterans after his own deployment. He highlights the risky work of the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, Missouri for their initial mission of reaching non-churched individuals in their community, and then realizing within that initial outreach the number of disconnected veterans. RezVets¹³⁵⁵ is now a vital and active mission of The Church of the Resurrection that provides education, pastoral care, counseling, mentoring and spiritual formation for veterans.

Perhaps the greatest *risk* for communities of faith is the ongoing push toward the exploration of the deeper emotions¹³⁵⁶ in the constellation of moral life. Warren Kinghorn imagines thick conceptions of human flourishing; but that hope assumes a twofold premise. First, for humans to flourish there must be a realistic assessment of human sin, finitude and moral failure followed by an integration of those shortcomings into a personal narrative of hope and resilience. Certainly Pope Francis' famous quote about

¹³⁵⁴ See for example: Elizabeth Liebert, "Accessible spiritual practices to aid in recovery from moral injury," *Pastoral Psychology*, (forthcoming). Material originally presented by Liebert: "Accessible Spiritual Practices to Aid in Recovery from Moral Injury," Workshop for Pathways to Hope for Moral Injury and Other Invisible Wounds: National Conference on Moral Injury and Mental Health: Kansas City, October 28-30.

¹³⁵⁵ See, for example: the Resurrection Veterans' Ministry in Leawood, KS.

<http://archive.cor.org/ministries/care-and-support/veterans/index.html> (Accessed January 11, 2017).

¹³⁵⁶ Zachary Moon, "'Turn Now, My Vindication is at Stake': Military Moral Injury and Communities of Faith," *Pastoral Psychology*, (November, 2017): 1-13.

the church today should be considered as both a challenge and a confession. Pope Francis said,

The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds. You have to start from the ground up.¹³⁵⁷

The challenge to the church is to heal the wounds as a field hospital after battle would do. The confession the church must make is its inability to step beyond the walls of the church to reach those who are to injured – bodily, morally, spiritually – and there bring healing. And, the church must confess its complicity in allowing real wars to occur without greater theological reckoning and political accountability. Bonhoeffer reminds us, again and again, the church is called to stand in the middle of a complex reality, not the outer edge.

7.6 Suggestions for Further Scholarship

Brett Litz encourages cross-disciplinary conversation in order to attend to the breadth, depth and exponentially growing extent of moral injury. Future work across disciplines with an eye to morality should include probes into moral identity, moral theory and beyond to better assess, describe and evaluate the morality at the heart of moral injury. For example, even when the breadth of embodiment is included in a

¹³⁵⁷ Pope Francis, “A Big Heart Open to God,” *America Magazine* (Sept. 19, 2013). <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis> (Accessed: February 24, 2018).

description such as “the psycho-bio-social-spiritual disturbance”¹³⁵⁸ that moral injury entails, the moral dimension is missing from the equation. The polyvalence and prevalence of moral injury across disciplines should include work in moral injury across vocational lines including police compassion fatigue,¹³⁵⁹ moral injury amid child protection services,¹³⁶⁰ and the greater societal moral injury considered by scholars such as Brock and Moon. In addition, greater explanations of embodiment and its effect on morality will be helpful to explore beyond feminist accounts and virtue ethicists.

Future work across disciplines with an eye to disability should continue to build on the provocative work of Deborah Creamer offering ongoing refinement and insight to her limit model of disability. As stated repeatedly through this study, Creamer’s greatest weakness is her failure to take seriously the emotions beyond “goodness” of our encounter with limits. In addition, disability studies should take seriously ongoing conversations with moral theory. It is understandable the respectable distance which disability has given moral theory considering its damaging legacy for those with disabilities. And yet fascinating questions remain regarding the effect of limits on moral choices and the crippling effect those consequences might have for body, mind and spirit.

The ongoing work of Rita Nakashima Brock, one of the first voices in the field of theology and moral injury is to deepen the attention of theology to trauma studies with the belief that the effects of trauma disable much of society. Certainly there is a danger

¹³⁵⁸ See: Litz, “Moral injury and moral repair in war veterans,” 696. Litz originates the phrase “longstanding psycho-bio-social impairment.” For the purposes of this study, I invite adding additional modes of impairment including spiritual and moral.

¹³⁵⁹ See, for example: Konstantinos Papazoglou and Brian Chopko, “The Role of Moral Suffering (Moral Distress and Moral Injury) in Police Compassion Fatigue and PTSD: An Unexplored Topic,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (November, 2017): 1-5.

¹³⁶⁰ See, for example: Haight, W., Sugrue, E., Calhoun, M. & Black, J., “A scoping study of moral injury: Identifying directions for future research,” *Children and Youth Services Review*, 70 (2016): 190- 200.

to dismissing the experiences of soldiers in order to widen the circle of inclusion; but there is also recognition that making wise societal choices in the future depends upon a public that is fully healed, functioning and aware of the trauma that they have personally survived.

7.7 Concluding Remarks on the Crucial Limit Model of Disability

This project aims to provide a new model of disability that can take into account the complex phenomenon of Moral Injury as moral agents experience implosions of past moral codes through varied encounters that range from acts of omission, acts of commission, acts of betrayal, and also, the experience of unjust and asymmetric dynamics of power and oppression in a given situation. To accomplish this task, we began by setting forth in chapter one a thorough statement of the problem facing soldiers and societies today as moral injury presents itself in an array of symptoms different than the more commonly known, but equally distressing, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A triad of issues for moral injury including trust, shame, and despair (wholly different than PTSD's fear-based triggers) are the presenting injuries requiring triage. Chapter two examines the literature of responding care from both the fields of Psychology and Theology. While both fields advance the discussion and take seriously the impact of moral injury on soldiers and societies, noted within the chapter are weaknesses in both approaches including notions of embodiment, complexities of societal complicity, varied limits across contexts, and the failure to take seriously robust accounts of morality.

Drawing on the literature of disability studies, Chapter three invites moral injury to dismiss the military taboo of disability and to consider the possibilities within the field of disability that has wrestled with many of the same questions regarding embodiment, impairment, social contexts and limitations. A thorough review of both historical and contemporary models of disability, as well as an exploration of current models such as the medical and social model of disability, laid the groundwork for imparting Deborah Creamer's "limit model of disability" in Chapter four as compelling conversation partner to the field of moral injury. Chapter five turns from the literature of disability to the exegetical and theological work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to deepen and widen Creamer's limit model of disability by looking at notions of goodness, finitude, and limit in Bonhoeffer's accounts of creature, creation and Creator in Genesis. These chapters culminate here in chapter six as a revised limit model - a *crucial limit model of disability* - is constructed and analyzed. This crucial limit model takes seriously agent and context as well as the dynamic and often unpredictable ways in which encounter with limits can have implications not just for disability, but also for morality.

Having outlined the twelve essential elements of a crucial limit model of disability, reviewed the impact of those elements for disability, moral theory and moral injury, and assessed the cognitive dissonance that occurs at the intersection of limited moral horizons and the vertigo of human choice; we concluded with the moral imagination of Brian Doerries who leads audiences of civilians and soldiers to a "crucial limit" by way of dramatizing the Greek epic war tragedies for modern audiences. In so doing, he explores complex emotions of veterans, stresses civic culpability and invites shared communal grief. His model, though not a perfect illustration of the crucial limit

model of disability, when brought into conversation with Garland-Thomson, Creamer, Bonhoeffer and Lederach, encourages discussion for soldiers, societies and the soul of the church to provoke moral imagination and reflect on crucial limits within these cultures..

The Veterans' Creed has at its heart, "*I now stand ready to serve my veteran teammates*" and certainly that conclusion compels individual veterans, and in particular morally injured veterans, to stand ready and responsive to their team. Military service, in many ways, compels Lederach's projectile of responsibility, curiosity, creativity and risk as soldiers serve their country, care for their team, and seek pathways toward peace in far-flung war-torn places. And yet, it is the hope of this project to expand that circle of those "standing ready" to include greater circles of support in society: the soldiers' families, the greater society, and the religious institutions where soldiers venture for soul-searching. Moral Injury, the disabling condition that it is, can hamper those circles of support because, as Veteran Tim O'Brien poignantly reminds us, "A true war story is never moral."¹³⁶¹ Even more so, these circles are often complicit in allowing morally injurious situations to transpire as well as preventing complex analysis the moral horizons at play in a given situation. My hope is that the scholarship in this dissertation will help the morally injured soldier, pushed to that crucial limit, recover from vertigo and stand ready once again.

¹³⁶¹ Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, 1990), 76.

APPENDIX 1:

MODELS OF DISABILITY: MEDICAL, SOCIAL, LIMIT AND CRUCIAL

	MEDICAL MODEL	SOCIAL MODEL	LIMIT MODEL	CRUCIAL LIMIT MODEL
Disability	Focus on “ <i>flesh</i> ” as location of disablement	Focus on “ <i>world</i> ” as location of disablement	Focus on “ <i>encounters</i> ” as location of disablement	Focus on “ <i>transformation</i> ” as potential for crucial information in the face of disablement
Flesh	Medically impaired	Constructed socially	Becomes an epistemological source for divine and human questioning	Global evaluation of shame within flesh of self is projected on social flesh
Encounters	When world is encountered, potential injuries might occur to body or mind.	When social norms and/or boundaries are encountered agency can be disabled.	When limits are encountered, theological questions are raised of God, self, others.	When crucial limits are encountered, shame and despair are present.
World	Place of potential medical impairment to body	Place of potential disablement through social structures	Place of potentially disabling limits in certain contexts	Place of potentially disabling limits through arbitrary, competing and unpredictable forces that defy moral norms and codes.

Transformation	Aim of <i>techne</i> to adjust broken bodies and minds to normative view of human being	Goal of social change brings liberation to human beings and the societies in which they live	Embrace of theological and anthropological questions creates deeper view of humanity amid limitations before God	Crucial limit of human life is the cross of Christ at the center of existence and offers preservation to those at the crucial limit.
Implication for Veterans	My body needs fixed.	Society needs fixed.	God needs fixed.	My despair regarding body, society and the divine needs acknowledged.

APPENDIX 2:

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A CRUCIAL LIMIT MODEL OF DISABILITY

	<i>Crucial</i>	<i>Limit</i>	<i>Disability</i>
HUMAN FINITUDE	Recognizes the crucial nature of embodiment – potential for power and pain.	Identifies the natural limits at the center of human existence: in the middle of the garden and at the edge in relationships.	Understands human finitude as a critical element of fleshly existence.
SOCIAL CONTEXTS	Recognizes the crucial intersections when society is at a crossroads where social contexts matter and decisions therein.	Identifies the limits lost by sinful human action in varied social contexts by <i>other-than=god</i> encounters. In the aftermath, the fall affects humanity and society through the problematic limitlessness of sin.	Understands as flesh meets world in varied encounters there will be a continual and fluid encounter of limits. These encounters are fluid, subtle, unpredictable and vulnerable interactions.
MORAL AGENTS	Recognizes the crucial act of decision making by moral agents acknowledging limits, and the questions	Identifies the fact that in the midst of limitlessness, God affirms fallen humanity and sends into moral agents back into	Understands the debilitating affect of shame, trauma, silence and despair on moral agents who

	raised by critical situations.	the world cloaked and preserved.	become disabled by perceived failure.
CONCRETE REDEMPTION	Recognizes the cross-shaped intersection where the vertical dimension of God's redemptive action meets our limited horizon of choice in concrete moments.	Identifies the new reality as God acts decisively and redemptively by placing the cross as the new center of existence where there will be dying and rising again in concrete situations.	Understands need for transformative redemption in concrete reality through presence, narrative, and renewed moral imagination.

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