In “Emmaus Witnessing: Trauma and the Disordering of the Theological Imagination,” Jones explores trauma, its effects, and societies’ attempts at understanding them. Jones argues that Christians must reconstruct the trauma story to fit within the context of the fall and redemption found in the scriptures (119).

In the beginning of the essay, Jones explains the symptoms of trauma and how she personally carried those symptoms after the 9/11 attack, illustrating how significant and impactful trauma is and why it needs to be addressed. She states four common symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: constant stress, being mentally unable to stop reliving the trauma, difficulty in approaching the subject, and “withdrawal.” (Jones 116). Later in the paper, Jones heavily emphasizes the second symptom, because it produces a never-ending stream of trauma that requires recovery. Furthermore, to emphasize the gravity of the consequences, she recounts her own experience, where she expressed symptoms of PTSD, including the first especially. She writes of how hard it was to write this essay when she was “still cowering, in a sense, waiting for more violence to come” (113). By including her own emotions on such a recent event, she shows rather than simply tells of the horror trauma causes. Furthermore, she argues that trauma has a ripple effect, where the persons not immediately affected by the trauma can still suffer, since society at large is affected (117). With the widespread affect of trauma and her personal raw experiences, Jones effectively demonstrates the need for a solution to the devastating consequences of trauma.

Considering the atrocities and pains of trauma, Jones describes and dismisses three ways society has produced several coping methods: emphasizing the good in humanity, placing trust and pride in one’s country’s ideals (freedom and democracy for America), and attempting to forget the trauma through “comedy” (121). All three fail to properly address the problem, with the patriotic view causing the want to strike back and with the escapist view merely wetting the appetite with surface level happiness for the real meat of justice and understanding. As a result, she argues these two views cause more trauma, as extreme patriotism would lead to armed conflicts, and escapist comedy wouldn’t offer any beneficial change, leaving the experience loop of trauma unattended (123). However, Jones does not completely dismiss the first story. She recognizes it can be beneficial, but strongly advises that it be understood “in the context of the Christian story” (122).

In response to the tragedy of trauma, Jones argues that the church should help victims understand their trauma in the light of the fall and redemption found in the scriptures. Because one of the ways to recover from trauma is sharing the trauma with others and then focusing on creating a better future story, Jones believes that Christians first need to acknowledge and listen to the pains this world experiences (120,121). Just as Jesus listened to the horrific tragedies the disciples believed to have witnessed on the way to Emmaus, Jones argues that Christians need to first understand where the victim is coming from. Once that foundation is laid, then the work of understanding the story as a piece of the bigger puzzle of the scriptures occurs; what was once a story of only despair becomes a story that illustrates the fall, but then later the hope of the resurrection and redemption of Christ. In the same way that Jesus reiterates their false account to match and fit in with the Biblical story of “Moses and the prophets,” Christians are expected to show victims how their story makes sense when it is seen with the rest of history (126). However, Jones admits in the end that there is no perfect recovery. She quotes Langer, who believes that once someone is affected by trauma, he is always affected (cite).

In her conclusion, she emphasizes on Jesus saying, “Peace be with you,” hoping that readers will act to work towards replacing trauma with peace (128).