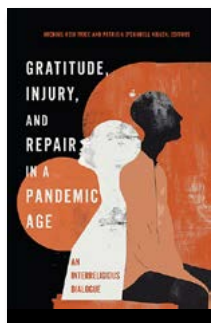


BOOK REVIEW

Gratitude, Injury, and Repair in a Pandemic Age: An Interreligious Dialogue.

By Michael Reid Trice and Patricia O’Connell Killen (eds.). Georgetown University Press, 2025. vi + 195 pp. ISBN 9781647124809 (paperback); ISBN 9781647124793 (hardcover); ISBN 9781647124816 (e-book). \$34.95 (paperback); \$104.95 (hardcover); \$34.95 (e-book).



The COVID-19 pandemic endangered all population ages for more than three years from March 2020 to May 2023. As a worldwide public health crisis, a series of measures were implemented, whether voluntarily or mandatorily, to strengthen prevention outcomes, such as masking, keeping physical distance, reducing social activities, conducting lockdowns, testing for the virus, exercising quarantines, and injecting vaccines. Such abrupt practices combined with a shortage of medical services during the COVID-19 and post-COVID periods produced not only physiological outcomes but also other equally important threats, including fear, anger, guilt, horror, shame, anxiety over uncertainty and death, feelings of loss, helplessness, loneliness, and unease. These have incurred traumatic injuries and post-traumatic stress disorders which invoke persistent adverse emotional states and disrupt “material, psychic, social and spiritual life” (19). The compilation of essays contained in *Gratitude, Injury, and Repair in a Pandemic Age: An Interreligious Dialogue* respond to this predicament. A group of scholars from America, Britain, and Germany explore interreligious contributions related to gratitude, injury, and repair, and interrelationships from their philosophical, theological, sociological, psychological, and ethical perspectives.

This volume encompasses nine chapters with three main foci. The first one displays the comprehensive concepts of gratitude, injury, and repair with different frameworks, and discusses natural, epidemiological, and political issues. Second, the book investigates how gratitude, injury, and repair connected with social justice during the pandemic. Lastly, it gives a fresh

interpretation of the pandemic and offers coping ideas. These themes extend a pivotal horizon of dealing with this painful impasse.

The pandemic inevitably amplified the physical and mental vulnerability of human beings, thereby bringing out a “survival society” (88), in which selfish survivability and highly individualistic mentality presented overtly. For instance, political polarization and divides happened in the United States due to Donald Trump’s vaccine argument and overwhelming support from his White Evangelical Christian voters (see chapter 4). Such a theo-political cooperation contained various clusters of extremes: entailing right-wing, evangelical fundamentalism, national civil religion, and racism. This resulted in an intensification of racism and xenophobia and a rise of hate and violence. Hate crimes were frequently committed against sexual minorities and queers in the form of Christian homophobic attacks and vaccine hesitancy (see, for example, chapters 4 and 8). Hence, the tendency to find a scapegoat worsened under the background of cisheteropatriarchy and cisheteronormativity, particularly when lacking mental health care resources.

This essay collection reevaluates the meaning of life and suffering and pays attention to moral repair as a process following an injury to a premature ending. For example, in the Hindu tradition, gratitude is a mixture of interdependence, mutual obligation, and sharing. While Jesuit Catholic culture emphasizes the notion of the whole person, implying dynamics of body, mind, and spirit. Both Hindu and Catholic concerns concentrate on psychological fragility, reinforce sympathetic and empathetic care to others who undergo travails, and eventually reimagine who we are and rethink the meaning of our lives with compassion. These effects associate not only with the personal level, but more importantly with social institutions, which comprise family, government, economy, education, and religion. The book reveals a great reset of affliction from disorientation to reorientation of life: an insight gained from the COVID-19 pandemic in religious and interreligious values.

However, there is room for enrichment in the readability of the book. First, the contents incline towards theoretical discourse. As such, it distances itself from its readers who may feel difficulty in applying the arguments to their daily experience. This review suggests qualitative and quantitative studies could have been added to examine challenges that rose during the pandemic, offering the voices of victims or the public.

Second, the compilation coheres mainly to Abrahamic religions, Hinduism, and civil religion, with little from Buddhist and Islamic traditions. Because Buddhism and Islam are also major religions and are growing

rapidly in the world, their absence reduces the integrity of the presentation of this book.

Third, the section on the Jewish diaspora was seemingly irrelevant to the book's focus. The author should have made more effort to narrate the linkage between this community and its plight within the pandemic occurrence and post-COVID contexts.

Fourth, the essay collection offered a limited discussion of mandatory practices from religious views, e.g., the opinions of compulsory vaccination and lockdowns on the part of these religions. Their viewpoints may have benefited from rational debate of these topics.

Fifth, the death and loss of beloved ones ambushed billions of people and their families. This suffering could have been studied in more detail. Attention to these experiences would have made this volume more conducive to grief therapy. Additionally, the authors reconstruct the meaning of life particularly in traumatic and post-traumatic contexts. Nevertheless, individuals are facing death and the fear of death, which could have been a substantial topic to be evaluated, and which would probably have guided the readers towards a brilliant notion for bereavement therapy.

Sixth, medical health practitioners and family caregivers encountered tremendous pressure in caring for patients during the pandemic and its aftermath. However, they are neglected in the book. Their perspectives are worthy of being investigated more deeply.

Seventh, the book's offerings are skewed towards American and European perspectives and research. Incorporating the perspectives of Asian researchers could have delivered intelligent insights from Eastern cultures. As a result, the collection could have been more integrative.

Eighth, the uncontrollable spread of COVID-19 was astounding, and many under-developed and low-income countries were unable to afford the vaccination costs. This vaccine inequality induced vaccine disparities. Religious leaders might play a significant role in dissolving these problems. However, these insights were not considered in the volume.

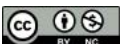
Lastly, the volume considers discrimination on diverse fields such as race, gender, and sexuality. However, it avoids discussion of positive discrimination in specific groups. For instance, positive discrimination of disabled groups is not necessary, since COVID-19 is related to health but not physical capability. If the book could have inspected these difficulties simultaneously, it would have heightened its strengths.

This volume offers expansion of theological, religious, philosophical, psychological, and sociological dimensions of viewing COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 traumas. In doing so, the compilation offers rich information to reassess the misery caused by the pandemic and aftermath. It sheds prudent light on tackling of such sorrow. Thus, it serves as a valuable reference to not only individuals who desire to gain better life quality after adversity, but also to human service professionals who strive to equip themselves with illuminating ideas to take care of their clients.

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