

And Then Your Soul is Gone

Moral Injury and U.S. War-culture

Kelly Denton-Borhaug

The sharp and unforgiving suffering of the morally injured veteran cannot be fully understood, much less effectively addressed, without a comprehensive investigation of moral injury's underlying causes in American culture and society.

And Then Your Soul is Gone exposes the threads of violence that tie together the naturalized dynamics of U.S. ways of war and militarization with collective practices of national distraction and self-deception. It shows how these same threads of violence are tightly woven and sacralized in the tapestry of U.S. national identity, tragically concealing moral injury from greater consciousness, and sourcing its toxic growth in the lives of those the nation claims it most highly esteems, our military service members and veterans.

And Then Your Soul is Gone will be of interest to students and scholars of religion and philosophy, military service members and veterans, concerned citizens, chaplains and religious leaders.

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"Kelly Denton-Borhaug offers an impassioned cultural and political critique of the moral costs of war and an analysis of the role of certain types of religion in undergirding these harms. Moral injury is a thoughtful exploration of structural and cultural violence and its devastating impact on national identity."

Katherine Stewart, author of *The Power Worshipers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism*

"We are a warlike nation. That we let 1% of our citizens do our fighting for us does not alter that fact. We are a violent people, whatever our race, gender, or ZIP code. Denton-Borhaug lifts the veil from these and other unwelcome truths in this brilliant book, distilling decades of scholarship and insight, and dispelling our militaristic delusions. A must read for truth-seekers and peacemakers, and for all who wonder why they experience such confusion and inner pain in our pervasive war culture."

Robert Emmet Meagher, author of *Killing From the Inside Out* and *Albert Camus and the Human Crisis*

"While I am a cautious reader or advocate of scholarly books – books that are dependent on the intellect over lived experience – Kelly Denton-Borhaug's effort transcends this tendency. This book is not only insightful, well crafted, sensitive and thoughtful – this book is brilliant."

Claude AnShin Thomas, Zen Buddhist monk and author of *At Hell's Gate: A Soldiers Journey From War To Peace and Bringing Meditation To Life*

"Through Kelly Denton-Borhaug's relentless pursuit of the question, 'can human morality really be accommodated with war?' she uses the 'atrocities' of moral injury as a flashpoint, a lens through which to see realities and truths about war often obscured by U.S. war-culture. Ultimately, the reader will find herself reevaluating everything in light of the atrocity of moral injury. A necessary work for any scholar, caregiver, or person who lives in the United States, immersed in a structure and culture of war."

Rev. Dr. Michael Yandell, Senior Minister at First Christian Church, Greensboro, NC

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MORAL INJURY AND
U.S. WAR-CULTURE



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