

that covered his administration. Winston then focuses on the larger and longer historical context that facilitated Reagan's rise, especially highlighting the many challenges Americans faced in the 1970s. The media in this era stoked Americans' fears of changing ideas about race, gender, and family. Next, she turns to the larger religious context and the ascent of modern evangelicalism, which sets the stage for her analysis of Reagan's response to challenges including the AIDS epidemic and the debate over a nuclear freeze. Meanwhile, journalists' efforts to provide "balanced" coverage led them to interview and quote those with somewhat fringe beliefs such as Jerry Falwell. Reporters understood that Falwell and his allies made good copy and provided cover for those who might otherwise seem critical of Reagan administration policies.

For Winston, Reagan's decision to invade Grenada in 1983 serves as a centerpiece of the book. Having learned from the coverage of the Vietnam War that the media could undermine administration objectives, Reagan prohibited reporters from accompanying the military as the invasion unfolded. Instead, Americans received almost all of their early news on the operation from Reagan himself. His "control of the story reinforced his religious imaginary" and "helped dispel Vietnam syndrome and reawaken the country's sense of righteous patriotism" (136).

Finally, Winston turns to the battle over economic policy and the welfare state. Reagan reframed "the 1960s notion that poverty is a systemic problem requiring government intervention" and instead he "cast it as an individual problem that required personal change" (192). Entertainment media – television and film – reenforced rather than challenged the racial stereotypes at the heart of Reagan's policy initiatives.

This is a well written, smartly argued, and carefully researched book. Winston masterfully supplements her meticulous reading and analysis of print media sources with other materials from film to popular novels that help bolster her arguments. While too often historians separate Reagan's economic policy from his religious rhetoric, Winston demonstrates that the two were mutually constitutive. In following Reagan's lead, journalists linked faith and policy together, which mainstreamed the president's religious vision and in the process transformed American politics and culture.

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The Feeling of Forgetting: Christianity, Race, and Violence in America. By **John Corrigan**. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2023. 248 pp. \$99.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.

Christian nationalism is having a moment in the discourse. Ever since the January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol, pundits have poured forth a voluminous stream of commentary on the religious roots of the violence. Others have just as eagerly urged Americans to move on as if there is nothing left to see here. Both postures reveal a strange kind of forgetting. Faced with the resurgence of one of America's most influential and enduring political traditions – white Christian nationalism – some act as if they

are meeting it just for the first time, while others seek to pull the curtain over it as quickly as possible.

John Corrigan is interested in this forgetting that has been so much in evidence since January 6. In this careful study, Corrigan seeks to show why something like January 6 keeps happening, and why Americans keep insisting that we must forget about it. Corrigan argues that white Americans' experience as perpetrators of genocide and slavery in American history has been passed down in a core affect of anxiety that leads to "ongoing cycles of violence toward racial others" (3). These are histories that white Americans have repeatedly repressed and tried to forget, but their not-quite-successful forgetting leaves a mark, "a feeling of *not knowing* something. . .the tip of the tongue experience" (120) that demands resolution. White Christian America, haunted by its history of violence and locked in dysfunctional attachment to the Black and Native other, seeks clarity and self-definition through the reenactment of violence.

"How," Corrigan asks, "can we write about such things, forgotten but remembered, felt but hidden just below the horizon of consciousness?" (139–140). How, indeed! How can claims about a haunted American conscience be made more than speculative? How can criticism of white evangelicalism's repression of its past (critiques this reviewer and many others have advanced repeatedly) be more than suggestive preaching to the choir? For Corrigan, the answer lies in an interdisciplinary approach that offers the possibility of drawing tangible links between the personal and social, between private affect and public action. Corrigan's study ranges widely across a dizzying array of disciplines and subfields, including the study of emotion in both the humanities and the sciences, religious studies, trauma studies, memory studies, social neuroscience, psychology, anthropology, history, and more.

Chapter 1 lays a historical foundation for the investigation to come. Corrigan covers the usual ground here, including settler colonial theory (he agrees with Patrick Wolfe that settler colonialism is an ongoing structure rather than an event contained in the past), the close links between Christianity and American expansionism, and the adaptation and agency of Native Americans. Historians familiar with settler colonialism are unlikely to find new insights in this chapter.

In chapter 2 Corrigan introduces trauma theory and provides a broad survey from Freud, to the invention of post-traumatic stress disorder, to the rise of trauma theory in literary studies. Corrigan's agenda here is to rescue a "middle ground for thinking about trauma," to see it as inside history and involving active and conscious processes, not merely involuntary and unrepresentable affect (47).

Corrigan next turns to emotion in chapter 3. Though emotions are often popularly represented as universal and hard-wired, Corrigan defends a constructivist position. Emotions are experienced and expressed in specific historically conditioned social and cultural contexts. This is a key building block in Corrigan's argument, and most humanities scholars will be in happy agreement on this point. At the end of the chapter, Corrigan extends the argument to a defense of collective emotion and the possibility that through epigenesis emotional climates can be passed down in social groups.

Chapter 4 turns to a more direct discussion of memory and forgetting. Here Corrigan is engaged not only with memory studies but with religious studies work that puts memory and forgetting at the center of the meaning of religion. Corrigan defends the proposition that "Religion is indeed fundamental to forgetting" (100). More controversial to some readers will be Corrigan's argument that evangelicalism, with its emphasis on a "new birth" and leaving the old behind, is an especially forgetful religion. While implicating core doctrines as constitutive of a harmful culture of anxiety

will trouble some Christian scholars, white evangelicalism's obvious reluctance to face its past makes Corrigan's claims all too plausible. In the end, Corrigan fittingly labels this brand of Christianity "Forgetful evangelicalism" (160).

Chapter 5 begins to pull the pieces of the argument together as Corrigan traces how unsuccessful forgetting can lead to a core affect of "high activation/high unpleasantness" (129). Feelings of uncertainty are experienced by the group as anxiety, which leads to strong pressures to take even "desperate measures" to restore a sense of certainty (132).

In the final chapter, Corrigan brings the argument home, showing how different these cycles of violence look in light of his argument. Rather than emphasizing extremist ideology and the content of what people believe – as so much scholarship and popular commentary has done – Corrigan brings the reader to the perhaps surprising conclusion that affect, not ideology, is the driving force in white Christian nationalism.

This reviewer does not have the expertise to evaluate Corrigan's characterization of the state of various fields of research, but the book can be evaluated on its own terms: by bringing all these fields together and representing them as he has done, what payoff is achieved? Though the density of the book's interdisciplinary discussions nearly demands a second reading, Corrigan has brought us closer to being able to make substantive, non-speculative claims about white Americans' haunted conscience. Corrigan's writing is far too theoretical to be of interest to the general reader, and the book has a surprising degree of redundancy for such a slim volume, but scholars looking for interdisciplinary paths forward on these troubling themes will want to carefully consult Corrigan's work.

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