Religion and emotion are intertwined. But, at a time when thinking in the humanities is increasingly gripped by the language of entanglements and assemblages, what does this actually mean? What exactly is it that twines these things together? John Corrigan’s edited volume *Feeling Religion* brings together ten scholars specializing in a variety of religious traditions, geographic areas, and historical periods to engage these questions. *Feeling Religion* grew out of a conference titled “How Do We Study Religion and Emotion?” held at the National Humanities Center in 2015. As Corrigan notes in the introduction, the stakes of this prompt lie in the *how*. Drawing on diverse theoretical and methodological orientations, contributors search for emotion in a wide variety of places—in abstract theological systems, in words on a page, in the rhythms of music, and in the ethnographer’s body. The result is a wide ranging yet thematically consistent collection of essays with a clear message—just because we know that religion and emotion are related does not mean we know *how* they are related.

The volume’s introduction provides a brief history of the study of religion and emotion, as well as a number of recommendations for future research in the field, including an emphasis on emotions as a form of cultural politics, an awareness of the historical contingency of emotions, and an increased attention to repression and conflict. Following the introduction, the first chapter, “Approaching the Morality of Emotion: Specifying the Object of Inquiry” by Diana Fritz Cates, begins with the problem of definition, pointing out that emotion is a problematically capacious concept. Comparing Aristotelian and Stoic understandings of emotion, Cates warns us that terms like affect, emotion, and passion are used in a wide variety of mutually exclusive ways. In “Metaphysics and Emotional Experience: Some Themes from John of the Cross,” Mark Wynn continues to expand the concept of emotion. According to Wynn, metaphysical and phenomenological vocabularies of emotion are linked, though they are not reducible to one another. Therefore, any nuanced understanding of the role of emotion in a religious tradition must examine these vocabularies in tandem, linking abstract systems to emotional life and vice versa.

Chapters three and four both draw on affect theory to understand the relationships among bodies, knowledge, and media. In “Beautiful Facts: Science, Secularism, and Affect,” Donovan Schaefer uses the angry marginalia of books about religion in Syracuse University’s library in order to foreground the feeling of supposedly disembodied practices of knowledge, such as reading and reasoning. Schaefer then turns to the passionate and apocalyptic tenor of the New Atheist movement, challenging the popular articulation of secularism with reason and religion with emotion. Likewise, in “Affect Theory as a Tool for Examining Religion Documentaries,” M. Gail Hamner coins the term “affecognitive” to capture the simultaneously “physiological and social matrices by which humans… feel and respond to their worlds and situations,” using this concept to analyze how documentary films about religion produce meaning and shape the contours of public culture (101).

The next three chapters bring us out of affect theory and into the history of emotions. June McDaniel’s “Dark Devotion: Religious Emotion in Shaka and Shi’ah Traditions” focuses on pain, grief, anger, and fear,
arguing that Shakta and Shi’ah traditions have their own understandings of these forces that do not map neatly onto the concept of emotion in Western philosophy (an argument that builds upon Cates’ chapter on the problem of definition). Sarah M. Ross’ “Sound and Sentiment in Judaism: Toward the Production, Perception, and Representation of Emotion in Jewish Ritual Music” focuses explicitly on the methodological stakes of the location of emotion. Does music’s capacity to produce emotion lie in the structural features of composition (its rhythms, scales, and dynamics), in the listener that registers these structural features, or somewhere in between? Arguing that emotion is co-produced by a text (broadly construed) and its audience, Ross calls for an increased attention to the role of reception in the study of religion and emotion. Moving from musical to environmental sentiment, Anna M. Gade’s “Beyond ‘Hope’: Religion and Environmental Sentiment in the USA and Indonesia” explores the implicit understanding of affect in the study of religion and the environment, which often positions religious traditions as either obstacles to environmental concern or as romanticized sources of hope. Gade then inverts this schema, arguing that Muslims communities in Southeast Asia mobilize environmental sentiments in service of religious goals, rather than the other way around.

The final three chapters return to the question of affect. In “Bodily Encounters: Affect, Religion, and Ethnography,” Jessica Johnson explores the affective ties that hold ethnographers and religious communities together. While many scholars of religion distinguish themselves from those they study on ideological grounds, Johnson demonstrates that the embodied practice of fieldwork aligns scholars and communities in often unanticipated ways. David Morgan’s chapter, “Emotion and Imagination in the Ritual Entanglement of Religion, Sport, and Nationalism,” focuses not on emotion in and of itself, but on the mediation of emotion in the ritual structure of religion, sport, and nationalism. For Morgan, analyzing these three social formations together allows us to develop a clearer understanding of the role that mediation—from the body to the radio—plays in emotional contagion. In the final chapter, “At the Limits of Feeling: Religion, Psychoanalysis, and the Affective Subject,” Abby Kluchin argues that among the many boundaries that affect theory gleefully dissolves—self and other, subject and object, human and non-human, and so on—one boundary remains, the boundary between affect and language. This boundary underpins a variety of arguments for the significance of affect theory; affect is important because it is not language, because it burrows beneath signification, because it resists representation, because it cuts across meaning. However, Kluchin concludes the volume by tempering our posthuman excitement, advocating a psychoanalytic understanding of affect that takes subjectivity and language seriously.

In offering a brief summary of each author’s contribution, my intention is not to miss the forest for the trees, but to show that Feeling Religion refuses to offer a single answer to its organizing question—how do we study religion and emotion? Its contributors animate many of the conversations outlined by Corrigan in the introduction (among these, the conversation concerning the distinction between affect and emotion looms largest). As a result, Feeling Religion is a fundamentally open-ended book. This point is underscored by the fact that the volume lacks a concluding chapter, leaving the reader to sort through and synthesize the authors’ various positions on their own (though, in her search for the “limits of feeling,” Kluchin’s chapter
provides something like narrative closure). This open-endedness is both a strength and a weakness. For scholars familiar with the field of religion and emotion, *Feeling Religion* is a welcome move forward, folding new insights into established paradigms without attempting to fix the field’s futures. However, those looking for a representative survey of the field may find the chapters of *Feeling Religion* too divergent. It is a book invested in taking stock of answers, rather than establishing them. Though, in the wake of an explosion of interdisciplinary interest in feeling and its cognate categories, the opportunity to slow down and take stock may be exactly what we need.

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