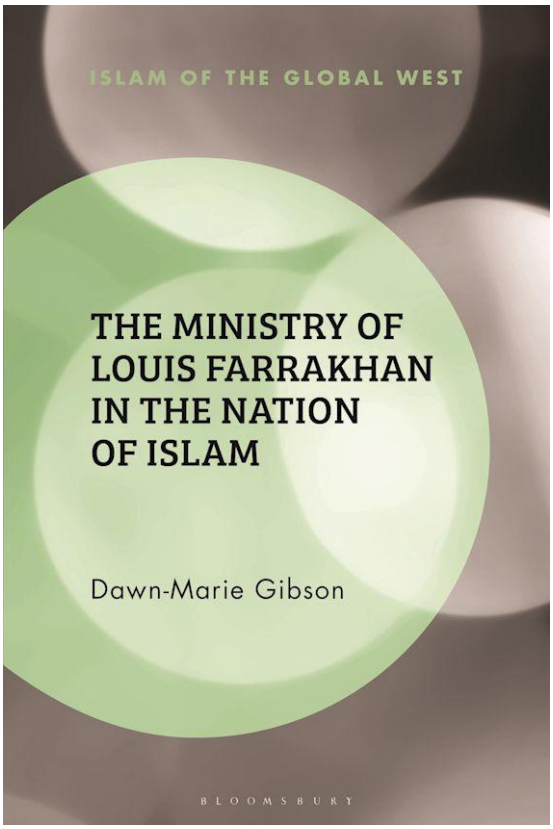
ication to the cause of African Americans via the mythology and approach of the NOI replicating that of the lost frontman. In some important ways Farrakhan's background reflects that of Malcolm X. X was born to a West Indian mother and African American father who were committed Garveyites; Farrakhan was born in 1933 to a West Indian immigrant single parent, Sarah Manning, who herself was a Garveyite and later follower of Elijah Muhammad. Several factors embedded a deep conservatism in him: as well as the gender role expectations of early 20th century Black America and Garveyism, his father was a philanderer who Manning left her husband for, but played no role in Louis's life. Unlike X however, Farrakhan appears to have been a content and committed Christian prior to his conversion – brought about by explicit targeting from Elijah Muhammad, who perceived something important within him.



The story of Farrakhan is a fascinating one – the pivot of which is his being passed over to lead the NOI after Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, in favour of Muhammad's son (and FBI choice), Warith Deen – who led the NOI quickly away from the peculiarly Fardian (and peculiarly Black American) aspects, into Islamic Sunni orthodoxy. Farrakhan first ceded to Warith Deen, then left to revive his music career, before finding himself compelled to revive the NOI in its original form. He even claimed that Elijah had been taken by God and was not dead.

It would be difficult to author any book on Farrakhan, or the NOI, without mentioning the persistent allegations of antisemitism. These, and his rejection of them, are mentioned in the book's second sentence; the subject constitutes a fair proportion of Gibson's index references and a dedicated subsection (pp.97-102). Indeed, a full investigation of the history of the Nation of Islam's antisemitic rhetoric, accusations, and defences awaits writing. In Malcolm X's infamous meetings with the KKK it was dislike for Jews over which they apparently bonded; it also marked a primary step into the spotlight when Farrakhan defended then-presidential Jessie Jackson, accused of referring to New York and Jews as Hymie-town and Hymies respectively (although Jackson assured Farrakhan that he had not uttered such). The emergence of antisemitism within the Black radical tradition is one of the saddest occurrences, and little explanation of it is made in this text (indeed, it has to my mind never been given a satisfactory explanation and I wonder whether it can really be as simple as a competition for principle persecuted minority status in America).

Gibson deals with the subject frankly and without apology, noting Farrakhan's "deep distrust of Jews and a belief that their support for civil rights was directly tied to a larger goal of controlling Black leaders." (99) In some places however her descriptions could be aided by deeper contextualisation and examination; she writes that Farrakhan "appears to have attributed the NOI's newfound acceptance [during the early 1970s] as a result of the lesser influence of Jewish Americans in civil rights organizations" (71), but as Marc Dollinger has shown, the Jewish American establishment had been anything but opposed to the NOI in earlier times (it was only during the late 1960s that the emerging rift between Black and Jewish causes prompted a re-evaluation). Unfortunately Gibson does not cite Dollinger, or attempt to assess the validity of Farrakhan's statement.

Indeed, this is a short book and one feels it could have benefited from more in depth analysis of the social forces that were operating and influencing Farrakhan as he rose to prominence, honed his doctrine, and then retreated to the shadows. The centrepiece of the book, around which it is structured, is the Million Man March which he organised in 1995, and which represented the peak of his public presence. However, this focus occludes some other interesting aspects.

One fact that is not mentioned is Farrakhan's support for the Black Hebrew Israelites who emigrated to Israel in 1969; known as the Original Hebrew Israelite Nation or African Hebrew Israelites, this group maintained an illegal presence for two decades, growing to number many hundreds, and engaged a war of attrition against the state, until their acceptance of each other in the 1990s. To Israel's dismay, they welcomed Farrakhan on an unlikely (and undercover) visit to Israel in 1978, and he took up their cause in 1984 when Israeli determination to end the stalemate led to renewed persecution. Their leader Ben Ammi shared a stage with Farrakhan when he spoke at the Million Man March.

All criticisms aside, Farrakhan has done much to help Black Americans, and his persistence paid off as the NOI's work in communities and prisons garnered much respect. Farrakhan as a vocal and powerful advocate for Black America, and critic of the establishment, should not be dismissed based on his bigotry. Gibson's book is an important contribution to our understanding of the man, and deserves a place on every scholar's shelf.

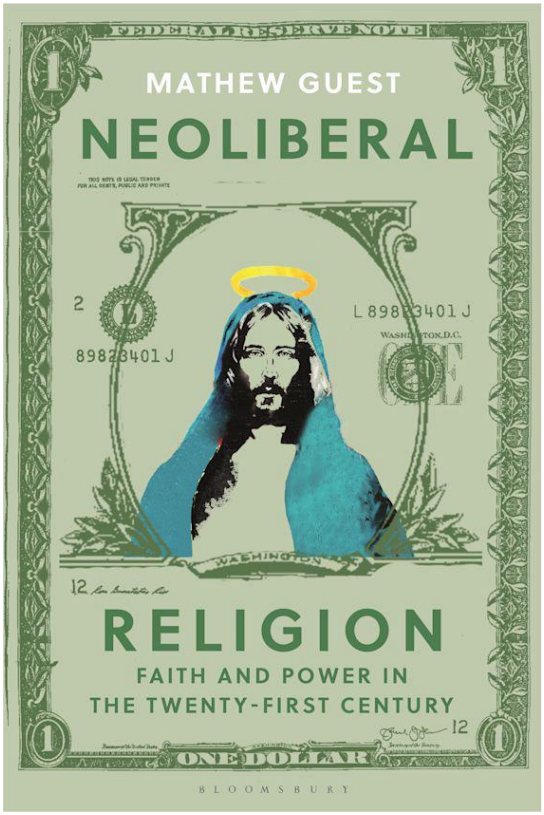
Michael T Miller

GUEST, M. (2022) *NEOLIBERAL RELIGION: FAITH AND POWER IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*. BLOOMSBURY. 203 PP. PBK £22.99. ISBN: 978-1-350-11638-2.

Matthew Guest's 'Introduction' to this timely volume includes a definition of neoliberalism as the "elevation of the sovereign individual" (p. 2), that is an individual that seeks freedom from all bonds of cultural, social or indeed religious restraint in order to pursue her or his (rational) interests. While these interests remain bound within the law, according to Guest, the Covid pandemic illustrated that in the UK, many regarded the observation of restrictions on their movement as an unbearable if not indeed tyrannical burden, despite the fact that disciplined social distancing was, in the absence of a vaccine, the only effective circuit breaker to mass infection. According to Guest, the pandemic "exposed the embeddedness of neoliberal assumptions" in society (p. 3), namely the willingness of individuals to prioritise their own private self-interest over those of wider publics. For Guest, the ubiquity and perniciousness of said "neoliberal assumptions" demands three moves: firstly a "rethink of how the sociology of religion is conceived", secondly "concerted engagement with other disciplines" and thirdly, a "jettisoning of strict notions of ethical neutrality" (p. 4). I would suggest that it is Guest's discussion the last of these that is of most interest and importance and I highlight it here partly because it has been omitted from some previous reviews of the book.

The sociology of religion has, since its inception, been dominated by the concept of modernity and the assumption that modernity's ever-expanding and disenchanting energies, signal the eclipse of religion. In the second half of the twentieth century this assumption coalesced into the secularization thesis which has dominated the field ever since. Arguably, a more interdisciplinary sociology of religion is now emerging from the shadow of the secularization hypothesis which for Guest means rethinking the field "through the neoliberal lens" (p. 15). This lens focuses attention upon the "affinity" (ibid) between diverse forms of religion from Pentecostalism to New Age religions of the Self with neoliberalism, generating "an argument about the expansion of cultural affinities between certain kinds of thinking and social organization and certain forms of religion" (p. 20) (I might take issue with the term "affinities" which seems to assume the attraction of essences or intrinsic qualities to each other. A more appropriate term could be "articulation" which means "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" [Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 105]).

The book proceeds with a series of chapters in which Guest skilfully navigates, on behalf of his reader, literatures addressing religion and markets, religion, populism and nationalism, religion and the power-knowledge nexus in the post-truth era, religion, securitization and the state, religion and the self, religion and difference and neoliberalism, the secular and non-religion. As such, Guest argues that five "cultural forces" are driving the articulation of religion and neoliberalism, specifically (i) "marketization" which "draws religious movements into the logic of commercial markets", (ii) "populism", which "reshapes opportunities for political engagement", (iii) "destabilization of knowledge" which "exposes new ways in which religious innovations become plausible and visible in the public realm", (iv) "patterns of securitization" which "reveal how religion becomes a target of state regulation" and (v) "heightened individualism" which "converges with marketization to produce market orientations to religious selfhood" (p. 166). Importantly, given that woven throughout are paradigmatic cases of economic exploitation, racial prejudice and the stigmatization of communities, Guest is right to argue that the sociology of religion's "neoliberal lens" must, at the same time, be an ethical one (p. 167). If Hayek argued that liberal values were best embedded by allowing markets to establish their own equilibrium without interference from the state, neoliberal experiments in places as diverse as Chile (1973) and Russia (following the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s) suggest that the political conditions most conducive to neoliberal capitalism are not liberal democracy but authoritarianism if not indeed fascism. According to Guest, "the tendency to treat market forces as best unhindered by moral discourse means there is a logic within neoliberalism that resists moral conversation", which "is why that conversation is especially important" (p. 169).



As Guest makes clear, the sociology of religion is no stranger to ethical and moral debates, but sociological research into religion has typically been pursued according to arguments about "methodological atheism" (p. 172) and the dangers of subjective bias. The whole argument about separating facts from values is, however, questionable. Guest finds useful alternatives in the critical sociology of the Frankfurt School and feminist theory, both of which have long distinguished between traditional theory which, under the guise of objectivity has tended to affirm the existing structures and norms of society and critical theory, which is explicitly guided by values which propose the progressive transformation of society (pp. 176-8). Yet even as he notes the complex institutional structures ("the university") within which sociologists of religion are enmeshed and the differing layers of responsibility and accountability that the pursuit of research generates to co-researchers and communities, to peers and colleagues and to institutions, Guest seems so struggle somewhat under the weight of his own undertaking, rather blandly concluding that "ethical questions are likely to be even more unavoidable for the sociology of religion in the future" (p. 182). Notwithstanding, this is a significant volume and Matthew Guest should be praised for his thoughtful navigation of a series of complex, inter-disciplinary debates, and for his attempt to push the sociology of religion into a new direction.

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