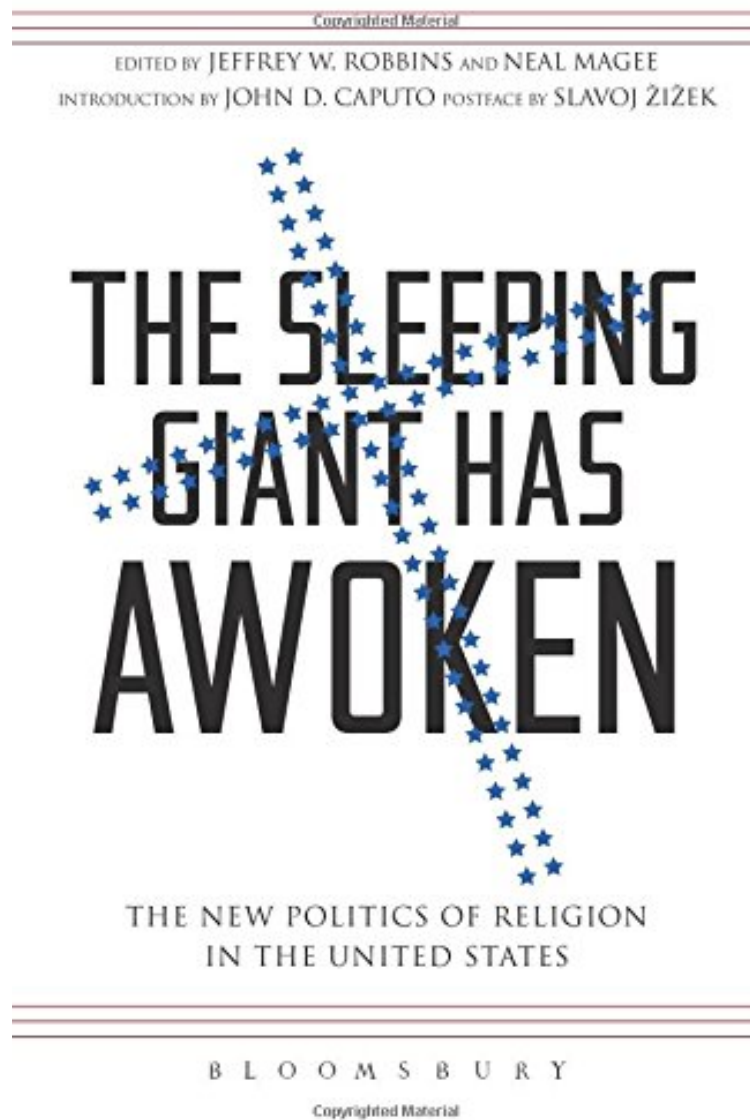


The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken: The New Politics of Religion in the United States

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From Brand: Continuum : The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken: The New Politics of Religion in the United States before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken: The New Politics of Religion in the United States:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Terribly crass title but a great bookBy MalvinDo not be fooled by

the crassness of the title: "The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken" by Jeffrey Robbins and Neal Magee (editors) consists of a serious collection of scholarly essays on the influence of religion on U.S. politics. The book's sixteen contributors are academics who bring impressive research and analytical skills to their thoughtful work. By skillfully deconstructing various historical and cultural aspects of religious practices in the U.S., the reader gains insight and understanding on how Christian fundamentalism has gained leverage in our nation's contemporary political discourse. John Caputo writes in the Introduction that religion and politics nicely complement each other because they each affirm the impossible, or that which we hope to someday attain and experience. However, a number of contributors explain that competing visions of what the Christian ethic might produce on earth have been claimed by prophetics and fundamentalists alike. On the one hand, John Robbins discusses how Prophetic Christians such as George Whitefield spread a populist message of egalitarianism during the First Great Awakening and how the movement later lent significant support to women's suffrage and the Civil Rights movement. On the other hand, Clayton Crockett provocatively contends that the peculiarly nationalistic strain of Christian fundamentalism that has found favor in the Bush White House can be traced back to a desire to heal the long-suffering Southern white male who was wounded by defeat in the Civil War and humiliation by federal support for women and minorities. Several authors connect consumerism with Christianity to demonstrate its appeal and danger to democratic practices. Adam Miller suggests that believers must probe beyond marketing messages to distinguish between meaningful spiritual practices and those that mask hidden agendas of corporate exploitation and dominance. Similarly, Christopher Haley and Creston Davis discuss how evangelicalism distracts from the task of directly engaging in class struggle with a capitalist system that sustains itself through the peddling of mass-produced consumer goods and services. Many of the writers find inspiration from philosophy. Melissa Conroy finds that Jacques Lacan's work on identity is useful in revealing how nations use religious rhetoric to exalt their own political positions and assign evil to others. J. Heath Atchley cites Henry David Thoreau to discuss how religious transcendence can blind us to a slavish devotion to consumerism. Andrew Saldino recalls Socrates warning against social domination by the moneymakers, thereby exposing how religious rhetoric is frequently used by the political class to hide an agenda that is controlled by financial interests. The intriguing Postface by Slavoj Žižek suggests that the Right has succeeded in channeling working class resentment towards a politics of cultural struggle. The author contends that the Left's embrace of tolerance may be admirable but it has thus far mitigated against the formation of the class consciousness needed to challenge capitalism. The above are merely a sample of the many thought-provoking essays contained in this excellent book. I highly recommend it to all.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. What are the dangers of religion mixing with politics in America? By Midwest Book Review

What are the dangers of religion mixing with politics in America? "The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken: The New Politics of Religion in the United States" is a collection of thoughts on the subject, running from the 2004 presidential race to 2008. The ideas found within offer much knowledge, ideas, and points out many ideas that one may have not have thought of before on the subject. An ideal anthology of essays to expand one's mind, "The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken" is a must for anyone who would truly understand religion's place in politics.

Introduction by John Caputo and Afterword by Slavoj Žižek

The triumph of American political conservatism in the last two decades has been paralleled by the ascendance of Christian evangelicalism. More importantly, the political Campaigns of 2000 and 2004 marked a convergence between these two political entities with an effectiveness never before seen in national elections. On the one side, conservatives have successfully set the terms of debate around so-called "family values" and the status of religion in the public sphere. On the other side, evangelicals have mobilized in a new self-awareness of their formidable political power and now demand representation at all levels of government. Upon what fundamental ideas does this convergence rest? What potential dangers does it present for the concepts of "religion," "politics" and "America"? How secure is this alliance, and what does each side sacrifice in order to sustain it? Must all religion in America now become similarly engaged in the political sphere? This volume is a collection of articles by a group of young scholars addressing the nexus between political conservatism, evangelical Christianity, and American consumerist culture.

"[Magee's] insights are powerful and important in the consideration of the marriage of religion and politics in America today...his writing is powerful due to the imagery it invokes in each word, like he painfully exorcises every syllable from some demonic labyrinth hidden deep in the bowels of the planet. Those bowels are always political in his eyes, when he concludes that, quoting Robert Bork, "There is an eager and growing market for depravity, and profitable industries [are] devoted to supplying it." America's Sleeping Giant is feeding from this depravity, and this collection of essays does an exceptional job of shining a light on some of the more hidden aspects in our culture today."

Popmatters.com "What are the dangers of religion missing with politics in America? The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken: The New Politics of Religion in the United States is a collection of thoughts on the subject, running from the 2004 presidential race to 2008. The ideas found within offer much knowledge, ideas, and points out many ideas that one may have not have thought of before on the subject. An ideal anthology of essays to expand one's mind, The Sleeping Giant Has Awoken is a must for anyone who would truly understand religion's place in politics." -The Midwest Book

"In sum, editors Robbins and Magee have turned both to trusted senior scholars and younger voices to produce a thought-provoking, rich, and critically responsive exploration of religion in American politics from diverse and sophisticated points of view. The integration of theory, history, and political analysis on a wide range of issues across an equally wide range of perspectives make this volume a valuable addition to the debate on religion's function and place in American life." Aaron Klink, *The Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Fall 2008

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Aaron Klink, *The Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory*, Fall 2008

About the Author: Jeffrey W. Robbins is Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy (August 2002 to present) and Director of the College Colloquium (January 2006 to present) Lebanon Valley College, Pennsylvania.