



The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism

By Paul Cliteur

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The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism shows how people can live together and overcome the challenge of religious terrorism by adopting a "secular outlook" on life and politics.

- Shows how secularism can answer the problem of religious terrorism
- Provides new perspectives on how religious minorities can be integrated into liberal democracies
- Reveals how secularism has gained a new political and moral significance.
- Also examines such topics as atheism, religious criticism and free speech

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book would be ideal for an upper-level undergraduate or graduate religious studies or philosophy seminar. Highly educated lay readers and academics interested in religion and secularism will also likely find the book of interest." (Journal of Contemporary Religion, 1 January 2012)

"The book is a balanced account of what went wrong in defending liberal democracy in the past two decades and what is to be done to revigorate the foundations for liberal democracy ." (Acta Politica, 2011)

"It is a level-headed contribution to an important debate about how best to address religious fundamentalism and political fanaticism." (The Christian Century, 8 March 2011)

"Cliteur's book is timely and well written. It covers some very recent events, and offers coherent - if sometime impatient - perspectives on religion from the secular standpoint. Recommended. Upper-level undergraduates through researchers/faculty." (Choice , 1 April 2011)

"You actually have to focus on the paragraphs. That doesn't mean that the style is inaccessible or difficult - not at all, it's very readable - but this is a meaty book that asks for (and rewards) a certain amount of concentration." (Metamagician and the Hellfire Club, 7 April 2011)

"The primary goal of this book, its author says, is 'to show how religious believers and unbelievers can live peacefully together and what principles the state should try to stimulate in its citizenry to achieve social harmony and social cohesion.' He recommends a moral and political vision which he calls "'a 'secular outlook' on life.'" Its four main components are atheism, criticism of religion, free speech, and 'moral autonomy.' Cliteur wants us to be freethinkers and to expose the ways in which sacred texts actually endorse or even encourage violence, terrorism, and injustice. Cliteur is right, of course, that free inquiry and criticism should be protected." (Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, 6 March 2011)

"Accessible, engaging and convincing, it is the perfect tome for those who wish to learn about the ethical and logical case for a secular moral and political framework." (Tribune, 4 March 2011)

"A robust defence of the Enlightenment tradition and a must-read for those concerned by the corrosive aspects of religion on society." (Times Higher Education, 10 February 2011)

"But Cliteur challenges this interpretation, charging Armstrong with seeking to dismiss fundamentalism as a 'perversion' of religion when in fact the fundamentalists can claim to be adopting the very attitude their sacred texts demand". (Church of England Newspaper, 7 January 2011)

"The book has an interesting discussion of the philosophical justifications of free expression. Free thought, combining religious criticism and freedom of speech, is necessary for emancipating humankind." (Open Parachute, 18 November 2010)

"The Secular Outlook is a thought-provoking discussion of how liberal, secular democracies can and should respond to extremism and a much-needed exposition of the vital importance, in that response, of rationality and an emphasis on common humanity". (New Internationalist, 1 December 2010)

"*Secularism* is one of those concepts that is widely used without a clear notion of what it is. Dutch humanist philosopher Paul Cliteur's *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism* supplies a theoretical clarification of what secularism is and what it is not. However, the book is more than a helpful analytical exercise—it is also an urgent plea for political and moral secularism." (*Free Inquiry*, October 2010)

Review

"This is a brave and timely book, a light in the gathering Endarkenment. Cliteur responds lucidly to the West's many failures of political nerve, to the new climate of rationalizing the irrational and appeasing authoritarians. He advances a powerful case for the values of freedom and reason."

—**Russell Blackford**, Co-editor for *50 Voices of Disbelief: Why We Are Atheists*

From the Back Cover

Instead of the move towards secularization predicted by many social thinkers, the closing decades of the twentieth century witnessed a major upsurge in religion – followed by a resurgence of religious fanaticism and global religious terrorism. Was the "secularization thesis" really such a dismal failure? And, perhaps more importantly, how should we react to the spiritual and ideological challenges that radical religious movements pose to Western liberal democracies?

Using a variety of thought-provoking arguments, *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism* argues for a "secular outlook" on society and politics to meet the challenges of religious extremism in the twenty-first century. Unlike the highly polemical writings of authors such as Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens, philosopher Paul Cliteur does not vociferously defend atheism – but neither does he defend theism. Instead, he reveals how religious believers and non-believers can live together peacefully by pointing to principles that the state should use to stimulate its citizenry to achieve social harmony and social cohesion. With chapters on atheism, religious criticism, free speech, and moral secularism, Cliteur offers a perspective that is in the interest of all citizens of multireligious and liberal democracies. Timely and stimulating, *The Secular Outlook* offers a surprisingly optimistic view on the social and political challenges we face in the increasingly complex contemporary world.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elton Williams:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading behavior give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The knowledge you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with training books but if you want feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. The actual *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism* is kind of publication which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Florence Williams:

The publication untitled *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism* is the book that recommended to you to read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to you actually. The language that writer use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The writer

was did a lot of analysis when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism* from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

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