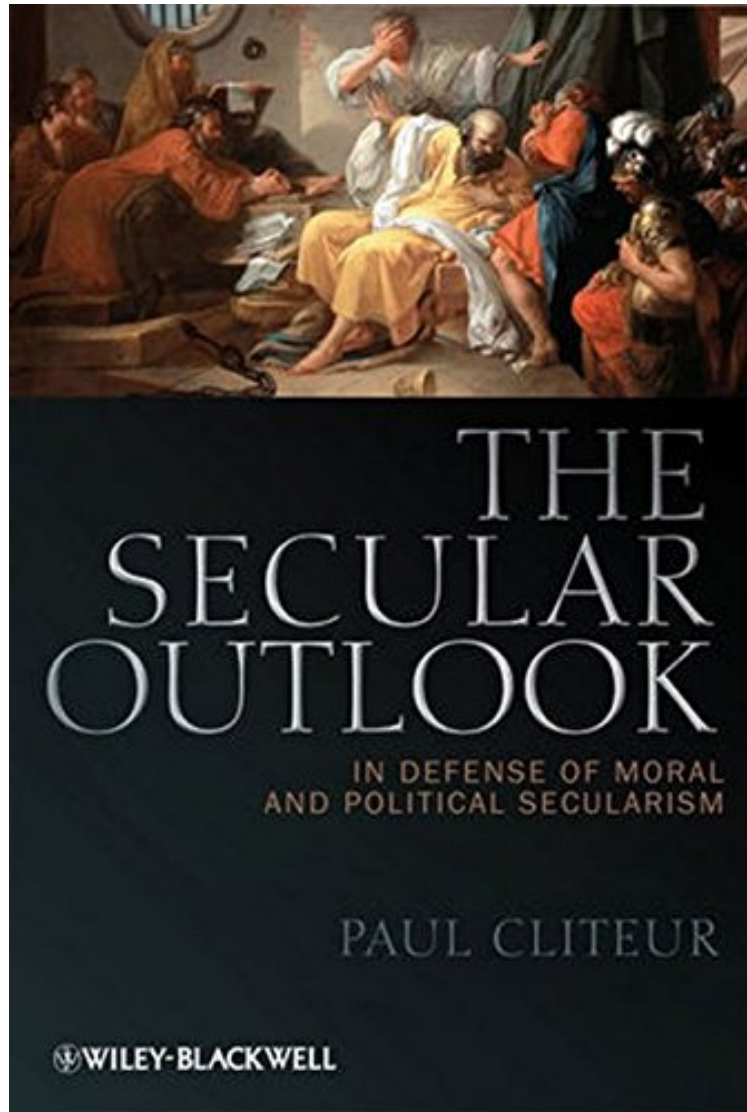


(Free pdf) The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism

The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism

Paul Cliteur

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#2782700 in Books Wiley-Blackwell 2010-08-23 2010-08-13Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.06 x .78 x 6.10l, 1.05 #File Name: 1444335219328 pages | File size: 19.Mb

Paul Cliteur : The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Thinking Secularism ThroughBy Annemarieke OttenSecularism is one of those concepts that are widely used without having a clear notion of what it is. Dutch humanist philosopher Paul Cliteur's book The Secular Outlook gives the theoretical clarification of what secularism is and what it is not.Cliteur takes the reader on an intellectual journey in the history of ideas, especially to the, nowadays not often

read, 19th century freethinkers, like Holyoake and Clifford. He sees four aspects of the secular outlook: atheism, criticism of religion, freedom of expression and moral autonomy. So, to make it more concrete, when you are an outspoken liberal atheist you have, what Cliteur calls, 'a secular outlook'. Cliteur shifts focus from atheism to secularism, and atheism is not secularism. Atheism is an intellectual position about the non-existence of god. Secularism is in an intellectual position about morality (moral secularism) and politics (political secularism). Cliteur begins a helpful distinction between secularization and secularism. Secularization is description of how much of social and political life is influenced by religion. It is the process of a decreasing influence of religion on politics and society. Secularization and its causes are much studied by social scientists. Secularism, on the other hand, is a normative notion. It is about how ethics and politics should be, and what the relation between and religion should be. The secular outlook means having a nonreligious outlook on ethics and politics. The private sphere is the domain of religion, according to Cliteur. Religion is like a hobby. Cliteur is a liberal; that means he holds that, in the Millian tradition, freedom of the individual is the ultimate value. Individuals are free to think and do what they like, as long as they do not harm others. Political secularism is about how the state should be organized. It won't come as a surprise that Cliteur pleads for a strong form of separation of religion and state. Cliteur shows that in the texts of the Abrahamic religions, there are passages, which justify and encourage violence and terror. In other words, terrorists can find justification in the scriptures. 'The problem is that if Scriptures are, indeed, considered "holy", even though they contain only a small number of passages that incite violence, they can still cause much harm.' (p. 121). Cliteur criticizes many political correct 'thinkers', such as Tariq Ramadan and Karen Armstrong, who deny that there is anything wrong with religion (especially Islam) per se. A well argued secular outlook is the cure for the problem of religious inspired and justified terrorism and subjection of freedom. The secular outlook is the moral and political ideal for the open society to protect itself from the enemy of religious terrorism. Floris van den Berg teaches philosophy at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent and insightful By Junior The world needs Cliteur works more than ever. Minorities should be culturally assimilated, which will allow them to have the advantage of succeeding in society. The liberal ideal of cultural preservation is mad as it will only keep the poor marginalize. European culture can be everyone's culture.

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

"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 s, 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) "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.