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Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism

Tariq Modood

“Over the years, Tariq Modood has been reflecting on complex issues raised by secularism and multiculturalism, and has emerged as a major theorist. These essays amply justify his reputation and are a most welcome addition to the growing body of literature.”

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“In these essays, Modood brings his wise voice to the confusing mixture of claims about secularism, religious liberty and ethno-religious identity.”

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Whether the recently settled religious minorities, Muslims, in particular, can be accommodated as religious groups in European countries has become a central political question and threatens to create long-term fault lines.

In this collection of essays Tariq Modood argues that to grasp the nature of the problem we have to see how Muslims have become a target of a cultural racism, Islamophobia. Yet, the problem is not just one of anti-racism but of an understanding of multicultural citizenship, of how minority identities, including those formed by race, ethnicity and religion, can be incorporated into national identities so all can have a sense of belonging together. This means that the tendency amongst some to exclude religious identities from public institutions and the re-making of national identities has to be challenged. Modood suggests that this can be done in a principled yet pragmatic way by drawing on Western Europe's moderate political secularism and eschewing forms of secularism that offer religious groups a second-class citizenship.

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“This book offers a precious collection of (Modood’s) conceptual and empirical insights as they have evolved over the last decade, in the midst of important political and scholarly contestations of multiculturalism. The book is a must-read for both scholars and students in the field of ethnicity and citizenship.”

Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute

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