

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change
Series VIII, Christian Philosophical Studies, Volume 22

Narrating Secularisms: Being between Identities in a Secularized World

Edited by
William Desmond & Dennis Vanden Auweele

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

**Copyright © 2017 by
The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy**

Gibbons Hall B-20
620 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, D.C. 20064

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication

Names: Desmond, William, 1951- editor.

Title: Narrating secularisms : being between identities in a secularized world / edited by William Desmond and Dennis Vanden Auweele.

Description: first [edition]. | Washington, DC : Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2017. | Series: Cultural heritage and contemporary change. Series VIII, Christian philosophical studies ; Volume 22 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017040734 | ISBN 9781565183223 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Secularism. | Religions.

Classification: LCC BL2747.8 .N365 2017 | DDC 211/.6--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017040734>

Table of Contents

Preface	v
<i>William Desmond & Dennis Vanden Auweele</i>	
Part One: Being Singular, Being Unsure and Being Together	
1. Finessing a Plurivocal Between: Culture, Religious Community and Public Life	
<i>William Desmond</i>	1
2. The Allure of (A)theism	
<i>Dennis Vanden Auweele</i>	23
Part Two: Being Not Quite At Home	
3. The Unbearable Present: Reflections on the Homelessness of Secular Modernity	
<i>Jared Schumacher</i>	45
4. Between Homelessness and Community in a Secular Age	
<i>Robert Aaron Wessman</i>	79
5. Reflections towards a Christian Spirituality of Pilgrimage and Service	
<i>Philip Gonzales</i>	101
Part Three: Being Self, Being Other, and Being Plural	
6. The Sense of Being Religious from the Viewpoint of Betweenness: How Can the Japanese Sense of Being Human and Religious Meaningful for the West?	
<i>Takeshi Morisato</i>	121
7. Constructing the Self in Dialogues with Cultural and Religious Others	
<i>Lu Chao</i>	145

8. Constitutional Secularism and the Symmetry of Religious Pluralism: Belgian Involvement and the Nigerian View: A Case for the Religious Being <i>Michael Uzochukwu Nwokocha</i>	159
9. Univocalizing Political Hindutva: A Threat to Indian Secularism <i>Manoj Francis</i>	183
Note on the Contributors	213
Index	217

Preface

WILLIAM DESMOND & DENNIS VANDEN AUWEELE

The present volume of essays came to be under unusual circumstances. The general idea was to collect a number of narratives on how relatively young academics deal with the experience of being displaced by the confrontation with differing ideologies in a new place of residence. Concretely, this meant that eight young academics would reflect on their relocation to KU Leuven, often from a place that they call home that was of a different religious or ideological mindset. In most cases, Leuven proved to be a far more secularized environment than the one to which these young academics were accustomed. For most, this proved to be a wonderful occasion for self-reflection and even held the promise for mutual enrichment. But this did not always happen smoothly, and a variety of cultural shocks aroused hesitation, incomprehension and, at times, irritation.

In a desire to hang on to the authenticity of these experiences, we have chosen for the unusual approach of letting these narratives unfold themselves. Authors were not asked to reflect *sine ira et studio* – they remain self-consciously aware of being a philosopher, as well as an individual – but they were asked only to keep an open mind of intellectual integrity. Needless to say, this means that not all contributors – as well as the editors – subscribe to every word of caution, value judgment or normative suggestion that is made throughout this volume. Some of the contributions naturally evolved into highly personal reflections on passing through secularization, doubt and (new) faith; others moved more smoothly into philosophical reflection, at times assisted by some of the great philosophers of our age and the past. We hope that these reflections open up perspectives and that readers find themselves enriched (and perhaps strengthened) by their content.

One final, more personal note. Originally, this volume was planned as having one more contribution by a good friend and fine scholar, Peter Losonczi. Alas, Peter passed away before attending to his contribution, and he is dearly missed. The editors and contributors would like to dedicate this volume to Peter and his family. *Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem*. Farewell Peter, wherever you may roam, know that you are missed.