

The Promise of Postcolonial Postsecularism

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Abstract: *Cumpsty, Rebekah.* Postsecular Poetics: Negotiating the Sacred and Secular in Contemporary African Fiction, *Routledge*, 2023. 161 pp. \$127.50

McNamara, Roger. Secularism and the Crisis of Minority Identity in Postcolonial Literature, *Lexington Books*, 2018. 171 pp. \$100.00

Ratti, Manav. The Postsecular Imagination: Postcolonialism, Religion and Literature, *Routledge*, 2013. 240 pp. \$120.00

Sagir Ali, Sk, Goutam Karmakar, and Nasima Islam, editors. Religion in South Asian Anglophone Literature: Traversing Resistance, Margins and Extremism, *Routledge*, 2022. 187 pp. \$127.50

After spending much of his career celebrating the secular nature of the public sphere, in 2008 philosopher Jürgen Habermas observed that “religion is gaining influence not only worldwide but also within national public spheres” (20). Even as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 provided the impetus for Habermas’s radical revisioning of the secular, the Iranian revolution of 1979, the rise to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the resurgence of Roman Catholic and orthodox churches in late communist European countries, the rise of the Christian right in the US, and Hindu and Buddhist extremism in India and Myanmar all signified a global resurgence in religion.

While Habermas is not wrong in observing a surge in religious practice across the world, scholars like Elizabeth Isichei, Charles Taylor, and Lata Mani have noted that the privatization of religion is a relatively recent phenomenon institutionalized in Enlightenment discourses that reacting against the tyranny of the church in Western Europe “extolled reason and science as the best means of improving society and of ending political despotism and the tyranny of ‘blind faith and superstition’” (87). European ideas of rationality permeated the formation of the postcolonial nation-state as well as early generations of postcolonial authors who adopted it as a model for literary descriptions of their newly formed societies (Ashcroft et al. 16). In their work, religion functioned more as a historical marker of a national trauma (the partition of India, 1947; the Biafran civil war, 1967) than a representation of the ways in which religious ideas are “embedded and actualized in habits of practice shared by people and communities” that

often exceed national models put forward by European and postcolonial secularism (Ratti, "Intersections" 12).

Taking its cue from the literary models of the time, postcolonial scholarship also maintained a significantly secular focus foregrounding analyses around thematic issues of nationality, gender, sexuality, caste, and class. Consequently, when I started to write about postcolonial authors like Pico Iyer, Leila Ahmed, and William Dalrymple looking beyond institutionalized religion towards its more ephemeral and amorphous spiritual manifestations, I could find only three books that were focused on this topic: *And the Birds Begin to Sing: Religion and Literature in Postcolonial Literatures* (1996) edited by Jamie S. Scott; *Mapping the Sacred: Religion, Geography and Postcolonial Literature* edited by Jamie S. Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley (2001); and *Identity, Ethics, and Non Violence in Postcolonial Theory: A Rahnerian Theological Assessment* by Susan Abraham (2007). Since the publication of my book, *Postcolonial Yearning: Reshaping Spiritual and Secular Discourses in Contemporary Literature* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), however, there have been many important scholarly contributions seeking to decolonize majoritarian definitions of religion and secularism by attempting to bridge the artificial divide between sacred and secular epistemologies in postcolonial literature. Disillusioned with the failure of secular modernity and concerned about the rise in religious fundamentalism, the authors of these monographs reconceptualize normative definitions of religion and secularism as they map the turn to religion in postcolonial literature and its implications for a renewed understanding of the world we live in. Foregrounding the importance of literature as an agent of social change, they situate the texts they study alongside the historical events they narrate in order to present the possibility of alternative epistemological and historical futures. Their scholarship gives primacy to the affective appeal embodied in postsecular literary representations of religion and religious sentiment and its impact on personal and political agency and action. Collectively their contributions have reshaped the direction of postcolonial studies, resulting in the newly emergent field of "postcolonial postsecularism:"

Postcolonial Postsecularism explores how postcolonial lives—in all the heterogeneous, lived experiences of race, gender, nation, class, caste, language and sexuality intersect with (post)secularism, religion, faith, indigenous traditions and practices, and state policies, including laws and rights. Just as postcolonial theory contests the practices, discourses, and epistemologies of colonialism (historical and ongoing) postcolonial postsecularism contests the practices, discourses, and epistemologies of (post)secularism, including the very distinction between secularism and religion. (Ratti, "Intersections" 2)

Some of the more significant contributions to this field include: Manav Ratti's *The Postsecular Imagination: Postcolonialism, Religion, and Literature* (2013); Roger McNamara's *Secularism and the Crisis of Minority Identity in Postcolonial Literature* (2018); *Religion in South Asian Anglophone Literature: Traversing Resistance, Margins and Extremism* (edited by Sk Sagir Ali et al. 2021); and Rebekah Cumpsty's *Postsecular Poetics: Negotiating the Sacred and Secular in Contemporary African Fiction* (2023).

Manav Ratti's monograph, *The Postsecular Imagination*, provides an essential template for thinking through the complications of the "postcolonial postsecular" and is an important influence on the other three books, which build upon, complicate, and extend its conceptual frameworks to a variety of global literatures. Published in 2013, the same year as my book (*Postcolonial Yearning*), *The Postsecular Imagination* is driven by a similar search for a critical vocabulary by which to capture moments of spiritual affirmation that might be resistant to secular representation. Responding to the failure of state secularism in India, which promotes equality in theory but not in practice, as well as to the limitations of state-sanctioned multiculturalism in Europe, Manav Ratti suggests that literature's ability to juxtapose contradictory values and positions against each other can provide us with ways of thinking through the limitations of secularism and religious violence (*PI* xxi). Even as he admits that literary aesthetics may not be able to effect immediate political change, the book seeks to unearth the radical potential behind bringing "epistemic change" to the way in which we think about religion and the secular. To that end, *The Postsecular Imagination* presents "postsecularism" as "an affirmational political possibility emerging through the potentials and limits of both secularism and religious thought" (editor's note at the back of *PI*).¹

In his book, Ratti examines "how writers write *through* religion by invoking its great signifiers and great ethics and then translate and secularize them within the—contingency—and urgency of material and historical circumstance" (*PI* xxiii). Thus, for instance, Ratti's analysis of Michael Ondaatje's aesthetic representation of the Golden Temple in *The English Patient* "secularizes the religious meaning of the Temple, with beauty becoming 'a kind of religion, provoking religion-like feelings such as awe and enchantment'" (*PI* 53; "Intersection" 14), which helps "bridge . . . the national and religious difference between Kip (Asian other: Indian, Sikh) and Hana (western observer: Canadian, non-believer)" (*PI* 53). It is as Ratti maintains this "postsecular search for a 'a non-religious religion'" (*PI* xx) that helps "affirm some of this religious practice's affective dimensions of awe and enchantment away from the conflict and violence attached, including ideologically, to Sikhism in both India (1984) and Canada (the 1985 Air India bombing)" (Ratti, "Intersections" 14). The role of Kip as a Sikh Canadian sapper who defuses bombs instead of creating them further reinforces this affective move.

The book as a whole is devoted to finding and foregrounding the daily minutiae of such postsecular affective moments in South Asian writers Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Ghosh, and Mahasweta Devi. Ratti's analysis shows how spiritual values such as love, community, and friendship are brought about by human choice without being overdetermined by the nation-state or national policy. By refusing to turn spirituality into one more conceptual category to be added to an everlasting laundry list of epistemes, Ratti instead foregrounds "how these affirmative moments emerge, how they subsume and demonstrate the edge of the postcolonial, the national, the diasporic, the minority position" (PI xxiii) *The Postsecular Imagination* lays an effective template for the consideration of the turn to the sacred in different geographic locations, including Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, South Africa, Nigeria, the US, and India (Ratti, "Intersections" 1). As Manav Ratti notes in the preface to his book:

Studies of secularism have often been confined to the single nation-state. . . . What *postcolonial postsecularism* can bring to these discussions is a consideration of how the interactions and collisions between at least two different worldviews, variously philosophical and political, can provoke the imagining and re-imagining of some of the greatest ideas of our times: what it means to be secular, religious, a citizen, a minority, a majority—and, by implication, an intellectual, a writer, an artist, each committed to making a difference in the world, whether it be by exploring what constitutes religious thought, or by trying one's best to represent with dignity and seriousness the violence and injustices of war. (PI xxiii)

Scholarly work by Rebekah Cumpsty ("Manav Ratti's *The Postsecular Imagination* in the Context of African Literatures" [2022]; *Postsecular Poetics: Negotiating the Sacred and Secular in Contemporary African Fiction* [2023]), Stanislaw Obirek ("Europe in Dialogue with Manav Ratti's *The Postsecular Imagination*" [2022]), and Rajgopal Saikumar ("Reading in the Absolute Night: Re-evaluating Secularism in Illiberal Democracies" [2022]), reinforces the importance of this epistemic intervention in the field of postcolonial studies.

Another important work, Roger McNamara's *Secularism and the Crisis of Minority Identity in Postcolonial Literature*, extends Ratti's arguments about the postsecular to minority communities like the Burghers in Sri Lanka and Parsi and Dalit communities in India, in addition to the Muslim and Christian communities that both authors reference. Like *The Postsecular Imagination*, *Secularism and the Crisis of Minority Identity* is written in response to the failure of secular nationalism and the rise of religious fundamentalism in countries like India. Both authors juxtapose events in the novels they study

with historical incidents that happen during the same time period to show how a literary genre, like the novel, can provide an alternate and perhaps better reality to the way in which events play out in “secular” time. In his analysis of I. Allan Sealy’s *The Everest Hotel*, for instance, Manav Ratti points out that in 1998, when the novel was published, Christians in India could not fully adopt children (PI 80). Consequently, we cannot rule out the fact that the emotional affect of the protagonist Ritu’s attempt at adopting Masha might have played a role in influencing the passage of legislation in 2006 that granted equal adoption rights to all Indian citizens. Complementarily, Roger McNamara examines how authors like Frank Anthony and I. Allen Sealy examine Anglo-Indian community life against a background of the successes and failures of Indian nationalism. According to McNamara, while Anthony’s *Britain’s Betrayal of India* (1969) promotes the ideals of secular nationalism, twenty years later I. Allen Sealy’s *Trotter Nama* (1988) acknowledges its lack of support for the Anglo-Indian community and posits instead “the distant colonial past as an alternative, where a pre-secularized Anglo-Indian identity was fluid and incorporated elements of Hinduism, Islam, and Europe” (xxi).

McNamara’s analysis of the authors he studies—Carl Muller, Michael Ondaatje, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Rohinton Mistry, Frank Anthony, I. Allan Sealy, and Bama—explores the way in which “secularism and religion shape personal experiences and desires” and focuses on “the tension within protagonists who affirm variations of secular nationalism but reveal unconscious biases when it comes to gender, class, and ethnicity; and how rationality and religion are fused to promote equality” (xiii). Focusing on the daily minutiae of the lived realities of random characters provides McNamara, as well as Ratti, with aesthetic frames of reference that go beyond the limitations of secular critique. While McNamara acknowledges the role of secular criticism in exposing “how communities of ‘filiation,’ such as the family or the nation, legitimize their authority on the grounds that they are ‘organic’ or ‘natural,’ while in reality they constantly marginalize identities, social relationships, and cultural practices that disrupt the status quo” (xvii), he points out that it does not pay enough attention to the role of affect in promoting social change. As evidence, McNamara cites the example of Dalit author Bama, who uses a kind of secular criticism in demanding justice for Dalits, especially Dalit women. Bama couches this criticism in the language and values of Christianity and within all-female spaces, both factors that reference cultural experiences and practices that cannot be contained by the progressive politics of the left (xvii). Rajgopal Saikumar makes a similar argument in his analysis of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedhkar’s (1891–1956) turn to Buddhism for its very secular ethics. Saikumar argues that the Dalit “invocation of rationalism is full of enchantment: a kind of enchantment that comes from a yearning for emancipation”

and concludes that “Maybe rationality of this kind is not always the other of enchantment?” (5). As Ratti himself points out, “[t]he enchantment informing yearning can be seen as one component of a wider mobilization, a political inspiration—an enthusiasm driven by and toward rationality” (“Intersections” 15–16). It is this enchantment with rationality that comes to its logical conclusion in the Shaheen Bagh protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 that sought to disenfranchise Muslim voters’ citizenship rights. The protestors used “constitutionalist, rights-based, Ambedhkarite discourse” to appeal to “liberalism, the Indian constitution, and most importantly secularism” (Saikumar 4). By decolonizing both the religious and the secular from state policy and returning them to the daily and the mundane, McNamara, like Ratti, creates a “third space” of “incommensurability” (Bhabha 218) or a “capacious” sensibility for the postcolonial postsecular (Saikumar 4; Ratti, “Intersections” 14) from which to “mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social” (Ahmed 119).

Both *The Postsecular Imagination* and *Secularism and the Crisis of Minority Literature* emphasize the significance of postsecular affect created by aesthetic framing as a way to achieve personal and communal healing and alternative futures. In *The Postsecular Imagination*, Ratti offers the “aesthetic” as a framing and a cognitive device (36) that allows for the affirmation of friendship, love and community. McNamara’s careful examination of rhetorical structures behind aesthetic representations of the Pietà and the Buddha in Michael Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost* (2000) and Zoroastrian ritualized practice in Rohinton Mistry’s *Family Matters* (2002) helps further their argument. However, even as postsecular affect can inspire social mobilization and ethical change, populist manifestations of enchantment can also be manipulated to trigger “hurt sentiment” and lead to religious violence instead of sustaining pluralism and civic peace (Ratti, “Intersections” 13; Saikumar 2). Looking back at his analysis of *Anil’s Ghost* in *The Postsecular Imagination*, Manav Ratti acknowledges that while the “closing image of a large reconstructed Buddha statue” in Michael Ondaatje’s novel “could symbolize hope and regeneration . . . it could also be a pre-national symbol of Sinhala hegemony and political domination in Sri Lanka” (“Intersections” 13). He also points out that the diasporic writers Salman Rushdie and Michael Ondaatje, whom he writes about in *The Postsecular Imagination*, might be vulnerable to a certain romanticizing of “enchantment” when they are removed from daily trials that plague subaltern lives (“Intersections” 14). For these reasons, both Ratti and McNamara emphasize the need to focus on the localized histories embedded in textual production and consumption in order to ensure the “capaciousness” of the postcolonial postsecular (Saikumar 2; “Intersections” 14).

As he reflects upon the analytic framework of his book, Manav Ratti asks us to consider: “Who has access, as writer, reader, or critic to the

pleasures of aesthetic enchantment?" ("Intersections" 14). It is this question that serves as the impetus behind the edited collection of essays *Religion in South Asian Anglophone Literature: Traversing Resistance, Margins and Extremism* (2021). The book's editors, Sk Sagir Ali, Gautom Karmakar, and Nasima Islam "seek to democratize different regimes of interpreting literature" in twentieth- and twenty-first-century South Asian literature by including essays on lesser-known writers like Intizar Hussain and Mirza Waheed, alongside more canonical authors Amitav Ghosh and Salman Rushdie. Conscious of the rise of religious nationalism in South Asia, like Manav Ratti and Roger McNamara, they situate their interpretation within the context of localized historical events such as 26/11 (the 26th November 2008 Mumbai attacks) and foreground the role of literature in advocating for ethical change. The contributors to the collection are also situated in South Asia, which enables them to bring a more localized set of perspectives to the literature. However, as the editors themselves note, essays on India dominate the collection, contributing to the country's hegemonic grip on postcolonial literary production and interpretation from the area.

In keeping with the tenets of the postcolonial postsecular, the editors approach religion from both affective and cognitive perspectives. To that end, they attempt to be "attentive not only to what religion is but what religion *does* [emphasis added] [as well as to] why people *do* religion" (Ali et al. 3). The essays in the collection consequently examine the ways in which religion creates community and aesthetics and also how it lends legitimacy to majoritarian control and mythmaking in ways that benefit some at the cost of others. The editors use Manav Ratti's reference to Habermas in *The Post-secular Imagination* as the starting point for their imagining of various post-secular imaginaries:

According to Manav Ratti Habermas uses the term 'postsecular' to refer to the threats that increasing relevance and public influence of religion poses to the 'secularised' societies of contemporary nation-states, especially when there seems to be absolutely no guarantee that in the wake of something called 'modernisation' religion is going to take leave from the world over anytime soon. (Ratti 2013: 6). (Ali et al. 6)

Consequently, even as they arrive at similar conclusions as Manav Ratti and Roger McNamara, namely "that religion acts as an existential attitude, a mode of being rather than the institutional adherence of the masses across the globe" (Ali et al. 9), they look at the negative consequences of this attitude as well as its affirmative potential.

While religion and faith have always been integral to the daily lives of South Asian peoples, any interpretation of religion in South Asia must, as the editors point out, take into consideration the transformative role of

colonial modernity and postcolonial nationalism in the construction of public space. Moreover, “[w]hile maintaining a subtle distance from religion, the institutional role of faith is given major importance by South Asian countries in their respective constitutions” (Ali et al. 7). For instance, the “principled distance” of Indian state secularism allows selective state intervention and reform (Bhargava 28; qtd in Ratti, “Secularism in India” 313, “Intersections” 10). Furthermore, “as states in the region have struggled to find a judicious balance between the absence of religion in politics and the use of religious symbols to bolster their power, political parties, particularly religio-political parties have garnered support” (Riaz 1, qtd. in Ali et al. 7). Ontological insecurities caused by globalization and political cosmopolitanism have also created existential anxieties sharpening religious boundaries, resulting in atrocities such as the July 1983 massacre of Tamils in Colombo (Ali et al. 7–10). Consequently, the editors contend that “During the last five decades, the structure of conflicts in South Asia can be chronicled as pathological in the sense that the image of the other is positioned on a perverted understanding of reality, coupled with fear and suspicion” (Ali et al. 10). To that end, they suggest that religion in a post-ethical age embodies self-contradictory notions of ethics and self-sacrifice, resulting in the radical acts of self-sacrifice associated with religious fundamentalism (Ali et al. 11).

In an attempt to answer the heterogeneous and often contradictory aspects of postsecularism in South Asia, some of the essays in the collection critique the xenophobia that lurks behind liberal humanism and secularism (Farddina Hussain; Kaushani Mondal), or the ideology behind “hurt sentiment” (Nasima Islam; Jai Singh), or the gender/caste nexus (Arunima Ray). Other essays offer pluralist syncretic alternatives to religious nationalism (Haris Qadeer; Somjyoti Mridha) or celebrate or critique the aesthetic and political limitations of the postsecular (Swati Moitra, Sibsankar Majumdar, Swayamdipta Das). Still others focus on the relationship between the individual and the communal (Sk Sagir Ali; Rimi Nath; Avijit Basak). Collectively, the essays use a multidisciplinary approach to issues of religion, faith, and their affective registers in South Asia, showing that even as religion can be seen as the prime reason behind conflict and war, it can also promote peace, harmony, and social cohesion. Embodied in their collection is the hope that the sharpening of religious boundaries might also mean the fluidity of faith that can combat ethnic violence and political instability.

The last book under discussion, Rebekah Cumpsty’s *Postsecular Poetics: Negotiating the Sacred and Secular in Contemporary African Fiction*, is the first full-length study of postsecularism in African literature and provides a useful coda to the earlier monographs, which focus on the literature of South Asia and its diasporas. Cumpsty extends the reach of the postcolonial post-secular to Africa and the African diaspora,² as well as to a selection of other

global texts, simultaneously affirming Manav Ratti's belief in "the transnationalism of the postsecular" (*PI* xxv) and providing us with the skills with which to rethink and re-world contemporary life as we know it.

The struggles with colonial and secular modernity and postcolonial nationalism faced by the African countries she discusses are not dissimilar to South Asia's challenges. For instance, Cumpsty points out that, like the constitution of India, the Nigerian constitution is secular in prohibiting the government from adopting a specific religion, even as the state is required to provide facilities for religious life (6). Moreover, as with India, despite a constitutional commitment to secularism, religious belief and affiliation continue to play a huge role in public life (6). Consequently, Cumpsty credits Manav Ratti with giving her "a conceptual vocabulary with which to explore the heterodoxies birthed by the entanglements of colonialism, monotheistic, and indigenous religion" ("Manav Ratti's *The Postsecular Imagination* in the Context of African Literatures" 5). Like Manav Ratti in *The Postsecular Imagination*, Cumpsty offers her work:

as both a subject study and a hermeneutic, [which] offers a way to read, develop and celebrate the agency of the subject, attuning the reader to the recuperative and reconstructive strategies of each novel as the protagonists negotiate the conditions of postsecular globalised modernity through affirmative gestures of belonging and selfhood. (xv)

Drawing from the work of David Chidester and Martin Hägglund, Cumpsty argues that the "inextricable tension between a commitment to care and a sense of the precariousness of existence are important to understand the postsecular presentation of sacred discourse. The motivation to sacrilise originates from the finitude of living on" (16). To that end, her book is organized around the concepts of ritualized practice and the sacred and sublime in Igbo, Yoruba, Christian, Muslim, Animist, and indigenous cosmology and examines their literary manifestations in textual depictions of the human body, the city, and the land. The main authors covered are: Chris Abani and Teju Cole (Nigeria/US); Yvonne Vera (Zimbabwe); Phaswane Mpe, Ivan Vladislavić, J. M. Coetzee, and Marlene van Niekerk (South Africa). In her final chapter, Cumpsty applies her postsecular analysis to a variety of global texts by authors like Alexis Wright (Australia) and Jesmyn Ward (US).

Like Manav Ratti, Roger McNamara, Sk Sagir Ali, Gautom Karmakar, and Nasima Ali, Rebekah Cumpsty foregrounds the role of affect in her analysis of the postsecular, and like them she is also aware of its limitations and how these might be potentially circumvented. For instance, in writing about Chris Abani, she points out that "his fiction may at times make the reader uncomfortable, this feeling of discomfort, this affect, so carefully

constructed, is in itself an ethical injunction against the easier identification of universal humanism that elides the distance and difference between reader and the representation of suffering" (35). To that end, her book foregrounds the production of bodily affect by examining the strategies writers use that set vulnerable bodies away from socially constructed discourse, allowing for them to become heterogeneous sites of alterity and resistance. By focusing on the ritualized language and bodily performance presented in the novels, as well as the embodied position of their protagonists in relation to the city and the country, her analysis emphasizes the body "as a bio-cultural product that generates and mediates a sense of agency, subjectivity and belonging" (53). For instance, her analysis of Katherine's body in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* builds upon and complicates Manav Ratti's discussion of the same scene in *The Postsecular Imagination*:

Almásy consecrates Katherine's body with a historical ritual practice, an act of differentiation and resignification. . . . While Ratti locates faith in Almásy's secular lived experience, postsecular ritual is also found in the novel's lyrical description, the repetitions and rhythms of the language that separate this moment from the mundane. Katherine's body, the cave, the presence of Almásy all constitute the space and the scene as ordinary, until Almásy begins his ritualised movement in the space around her body. . . . Although Ratti reads the desert and therefore the cave as secular, he overlooks the ritualised performance of this passage as well as the lyricism and the persistent poetic description of the desert that mark it not as secular, but as intimately sacred. (112–13)

In its focus on bodily aesthetics, *Postsecular Poetics* adds an important layering to the capaciousness of the postcolonial postsecular. It also brings up interesting questions about the gendered/sexed nature of the production and circulation of postcolonial literature. Although all the books under discussion *do* consider the affective registers of marginalized minoritized bodies, much of their work focuses on texts produced by male, middle-class, and often diasporic authors. This is of course necessitated by the hegemony of publishers who dictate what is available for mass production based on their determination of the tastes of the global marketplace. Still, it would be worth investigating how the postsecular poetics of affect might play out in spaces of queer indigeneity or in the space of a transcultural poetics that mediates between regional and Anglophone languages (Qadeer 33–46). Given that emotions are always already feminized in heteronormative discourse, it is worth considering why and how some kinds of affective appeals get normalized more quickly than others. If, as John McClure reminds us in *Partial Faiths: Postsecular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and*

Morrison, “religion returns . . . when worldly life becomes intolerable” (10), then the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the visceral effects of climate change, the invasion of Ukraine . . . have surely set the stage for it to come back. The capacious sensibilities of the postcolonial postsecular can help us move beyond the limitations of secular/sacred binaries towards imagining and implementing more desirable futures.

Notes

1. Manav Ratti rejects the temporality of the “post” in “post-secular,” insisting that the term as he uses it does not signify a return to religion but instead proffers it as a way of thinking beyond the binary limits of secularism and religion, offering critiques of both and paving the way forward for a “non-religious religion” and a “non-secular secularism.”
2. The book mainly looks at literature from three African countries: Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

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