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Introduction: International Relations and the 'Death of God'

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Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation of the 'Death of God' has come to function as something akin to a heuristic device in International Relations (IR) signifying the shattering of metaphysical and ontological certainty in European (post)modernity. According to Chris Brown, Nietzsche's declaration is commonly believed to signify a 'crisis in thought' which constitutes a 'genuine danger' insofar as it risks 'the collapse of the foundations of the old world order'.1 Roland Bleiker notes that such a crisis is deemed by many to be symptomatic of the loss 'of a generally accepted worldview that provided a stable ground from which it was possible to assess nature, knowledge, common values, truth, politics – in short, life itself'.2 This forum seeks to interrogate the substance and consequences of the claim that 'God is Dead' in the context of global politics, and specifically its implications for IR theory, contemporary political violence, and questions of ethics and responsibility.3 Before providing an overview of the points of synergy, agonism and divergence in the papers, this introduction will offer some contextualising remarks relating to the metaphysical, conceptual and historical parameters of the 'Death of God', marking its emergence in European political thought and provisionally mapping the terrain of its pertinence to contemporary IR.

While the claim that 'God is Dead' can be traced to Hegel,4 as F. Thomas Trotter notes the 'striking – and problematic – shape of the term belongs, of course, to Nietzsche, who gave [it] extended expression.'5 He explains that the claim represents not a singular moment of rupture with a recent God-fearing past, but rather the culmination of an increasing scepticism towards revealed religion in Europe. God, he suggests, had been 'attacked' and 'out-flanked' in Europe over the course of several centuries, from Copernicus, through the Philosophes, culminating in the 19th century. God had been 'on trial', he claims, for a considerable period, and 'it was Nietzsche who announced that sentence had been passed.'6 Among other implications, what this demonstrates is that both the 'death' and the 'God' in question must be read as distinctively European and Christian.

Nietzsche's account of the death of this God is frequently treated in the discipline of IR as intimately connected to, indeed even synonymous with, a profound and enduring crisis underpinning the modern condition. Despite the magnitude of this claim, however, the implications of Nietzsche's thought in this context, as well as his corpus more generally, remain relatively undertheorised in IR. While William Connolly and James der Derian in particular have drawn significantly on Nietzsche, references to his thought, while not infrequent, tend to be somewhat cursory; as der Derian notes, Nietzsche has suffered considerable 'neglect in international theory.'7 This is worthy of redress not least, as Connolly argues, because Nietzsche's thought contains significant critical purchase: 'numerous possibilities reside in the Nietzschean texts, and several inspire democratic reconfigurations of matrix interpretations.'8 This is also important, he continues, because many thinkers frequently drawn upon within IR inherit a good deal from Nietzsche; figures as diverse as Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe can all, Connolly claims, be regarded as 'post-Nietzschean.'9 At the heart of this Nietzschean inheritance lies, according to Jim George and David Campbell, the notion that

ontological and metaphysical claims to truth, knowledge or moral certainty have become radically problematic. A central feature of 'dissident' and post-structural thought, they claim, is that 'it looks for no distinction between "truth" and power, for it expects none. Its perspective on history, society, and politics thus resonates with the voice of Nietzsche.'[10] Put differently, what these thinkers and many others inherit from Nietzsche is precisely his claim of the 'Death of God', understood as a synonym for the foundationless condition of modern political thought and life, in which all divinely sanctioned, transcendental and universal guarantees have been undermined. As Brown suggests, 'Nietzsche's stress on the deep, but largely unrecognised, significance of the "death of God" prefigures twentieth century anti-foundationalism.'[11] It is from this broadly anti-foundationalist tradition that these papers emerge and, drawing on a range of Nietzsche's inheritors, develop accounts of the ethico-political implications of the 'Death of God' with respect to global politics.

Nietzsche's furious indictments of European Christianity and his ecstatic declarations of God's death reverberate throughout his entire oeuvre. Importantly for this forum, two broad tones are clearly discernible in his commentary. On the one hand, in bearing witness to these divine death throes, Nietzsche's discourse is characterised by a sense of awe and existential vertigo: 'How will we console ourselves, the murderers of all murderers! … who will wipe this blood from us? With what water could we clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what holy games will we have to invent for ourselves? Is the magnitude of the deed not too great for us?'[12] He thus emphasises the vastness of the void left in God's stead: (European) 'man' has 'sacrifice[d] God for nothingness.'[13] Previously, he explains, God had provided a means by which existence could be rendered intelligible and meaningful; man can stand his suffering 'provided that he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering… and the acetic ideal gave it a meaning!… In that ideal suffering found an explanation; the tremendous gap seemed filled; the door to all suicidal Nihilism was closed … [M]an was saved thereby, he had a meaning.'[14] Thus man's 'metaphysical need'[15] was met. Following the 'Death of God', however, man loses the connection to such meaning, and consequently 'feels an unpleasant emptiness and deprivation at the annihilation of religious delusions.'[16] With the 'Death of God' die all stable points of reference and access to the transcendental; man finds himself 'straying as though through an infinite nothing.'[17]

Yet in conjunction with this abyssal dimension of Nietzsche's treatment of the 'Death of God' is a far more affirmatory tone. Far from lamenting 'man's' newly vertiginous condition, Nietzsche frames the 'Death of God' as conferring an opportunity and an opening as a consequence of the challenges it poses to the constraints and limitations placed on man by Christianity: 'This eternal accusation against Christianity I would fain write on all walls, wherever there are walls … I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge … I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind.'[18] According to Nietzsche, deference to the Christian God reflects and brings about a denial of what is sublime in human experience. Insofar as a particular moral code 'says "God sees into the heart of man," it says nay to the profoundest and most superior desires of life and takes God as the enemy of life. The saint in whom God is well pleased is the ideal eunuch. Life terminates where the "Kingdom of God" begins.'[19] Thus, for Nietzsche, Christianity has a domesticating and pacifying effect; accordingly, he regards 'what has been revered as "God", not as "divine", but as wretched, absurd, pernicious; not as an error, but as a crime against life … We deny God as God.'[20] These two dimensions of Nietzsche's thought – the vertiginous and the affirmatory – are central to many forms of European critical thought which have since emerged, from mid-20th century Existentialism, through the Frankfurt School, to

Poststructuralism and its variants, and this dual and frequently tension-ridden legacy plays a central role in what follows in this forum.

What unites these two dimensions or tones in Nietzsche's oeuvre, as well as connecting together many of the contributions in this collection, is that the 'Death of God' represents an opportunity for new and different forms of self-realising subjectivity. As he explains, 'the concept "God" has been the greatest objection to human existence hitherto … We deny God, we deny responsibility in God: thus alone do we save the world.'21 The world is saved, Nietzsche suggests, by this 'greatest recent event … that the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable.'22 We must, Nietzsche explains, 'be our own experiments and guinea pigs,'23 we must 'become who we are – human beings who are unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves.'24 What this entails is a '[r]evaluation of all values: that is my formula for the highest act of self-reflection on the part of humanity.'25 Thinking through the limitations and possibilities associated with such a radical rewriting of 'value' and 'life' in the context of global theory and praxis is a central theme of the papers in this collection.

Such value scepticism is intimately connected to, and sheds light upon the contradictions within, many traditions of thought emanating from the Enlightenment. Taking their cue from apparently religiously motivated political violence some, such as Richard Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens, argue that the most urgent political project continues to be how we might complete the ejection of God, once and for all, such that humanity can take command of its enlightened destiny.26 Such a tradition is nowhere clearer than in the neo-classicist articulation of the Liberal vision in IR, under which a teleological framing of the progression from dogma and despotism to science and democracy ensures that Liberal society is ever faced by new yet old opponents, interchangeably Papist, Nazi, Stalinist or Jihadi.27 An Enlightenment historicism is no less present in the founding Westphalian narrative which traditionally frames Realist IR, namely reading 1648 as the moment at which political reason overtook religion in determining the behaviour of states, and so associating the birth of the modern International indelibly with the parochialisation of faith via the accession of reasoned statesmanship. What this suggests is that the implications of the 'Death of God' for IR certainly cannot be thought without reference to (and recognition of the problems associated with) the latter's inheritance of core Enlightenment themes. The contributors to this forum share a suspicion that the founding binaries of the Enlightenment, in particular that of 'faith vs. reason', are integrally problematic and predicated on codes and logics of violence. The Liberal tradition in particular, it is claimed, insists upon God's death only to pave the way for Him to return as an archaism, a revenant of undead religiosity needing to be cast ever back into the abyss to affirm the reflective truth of the modern project.

Accordingly, the contributors to this forum suggest that the 'Death of God' has been greatly overstated.28 The desire for God's 'final' expulsion has always run the risk of absurdity, inasmuch as modern teleologies of progress can themselves be read as the 'dusty remnants of religious faith.'29 Whilst the accession to 'modern', 'developed' or 'reasoned' statehood is frequently presented in the discipline as intimately connected to the expulsion of religion as an ordering and animating political force, various theological threads were always woven into the fabric of mainstream IR. The work of classical Realists, with their particular understanding of the tragic vision marking out the impossibilities of the international, has always been closely bound up with a theology of human nature as indelibly corrupt and prone to sin that goes back to Hobbes.30 A recent flurry of work has

centred on scrutinising the systematic theoretical occlusion of the many intertwinings between IR and Theology.31 The idea that we might anchor a critical project suitable for the contemporary global era in uncovering that religiosity lurking within modern international theories runs through the papers in this forum, several of which identify in the contemporary European Liberal-democratic moment a latent political theology which inherits directly from the Christian tradition.32 As Williams notes, for Nietzsche 'liberalism, socialism, Utilitarianism and so on are just secularized expressions of those same [Christian] forces.'33 The extent to which the Christian God has been merely eclipsed rather than murdered thus remains a crucial issue for contemporary IR.34

The 'Death of God' is, however, more than simply a deficiency of vision, or inability to perceive His remains; in addition, it imputes a generic condition of under-determination. European critical thought has notably responded to this acute and disruptive provocation by developing modes of thinking which take seriously both the imperative to self-author under foundationless conditions, and the precarious and contingent nature of any and all such projects. Immanent to attempting to think the instability and indefensibility which results from, and is synonymous with, the 'Death of God' is a concern to mark, theorise and resist the effacement of the violence that always accompanies political thought, praxis, and processes of subject-formation. Expressed through the vertiginous frames of Heidegger's 'das Nichts', Sartre's 'nausea', Camus' 'absurd', Derrida's 'aporias', and Nietzsche's 'abyss', as well as the more affirmatory notions associated with Deleuze and Guattari's 'lines of flights' and 'assemblages', the disruption caused by the unsettling of the metaphysical tradition has been treated as a crucial problem and provocation underpinning radical philosophical and political thought. This concern resides at the heart of traditions as diverse as dialectical, deconstructive, genealogical and deterritorialising/nomadic thought, examples of which are all employed in this forum. Perhaps the most important result of this has been the increasingly broad scepticism with which historicist, onto-political, universal and transcendental claims have been treated. Far from the metaphysical and teleological security such premises seemed to promise, critical and Continental thought has read these as violent, exclusionary and totalising, and has consequently sought to address problems of ethics, responsibility and violence via interventions which interrupt, destabilise and subvert onto-political totalisation.

Poststructuralist and other forms of post-positivist thought have been noteworthy for their conceptualisations of the project of detotalisation in IR and elsewhere, and many of the papers in the forum draw from this tradition. It is, however, crucial to emphasise that theoretical celebration of mobile identities and immanent ambiguity in the aftermath of the linguistic turn carries far from global appeal. As Baudrillard noted, the 'liquid terror' of immanence, understood as the dissolution of fixed subject positions, may appeal predominantly to minorities whose de-territorialization reflects a privileged location within the global economy.35 The celebration of fluidity, uncertainty and consequent injunctions to resilience associated with Neoliberalism appears to be no less acutely implicated in theoretical privilegings of immanence over transcendence after Nietzsche.36 In this context, ontological insecurity precisely gives urgency and justification to faith amidst postmodern futurity. As Barbato and Kratochwil point out, revolts against secular internationalism have unsurprisingly often been spearheaded 'by counter-elites and "converted" adherents of secularism.'37 Deeming such 'resurgent' faith the exception seems not only implausible, but also to occlude the reciprocity between (both critical and Liberal) political technologies of immanence and the turn to transcendence among populations worldwide. The growth and dissemination of monotheistic faith across the globe certainly seems to render 'partial, provincial and extraneous' any

claim to the universality or inevitability of the 'Death of God.'38 Consequently, we take the view that whilst many critical forms of thought attempt to theorise ethics, politics and violence given foundationlessness, there is arguably a problematic Eurocentrism to viewing such disruptive gestures as the necessary condition for salient forms of political thought and praxis. As post-colonial theorists among others have argued, forms of critical thought which begin from the 'Death of God' are frequently insufficiently circumspect regarding the geo-cultural specificity of this experience, and potentially totalising consequences of rendering this immanent and destabilising form of intervention the condition of possibility of a radical political agency. While intended to disrupt the homogenising and self-fulfilling tendencies of transcendental or onto-political projects, too inflexible an insistence on this risks becoming itself an exclusionary, hierarchising and totalising criterion of thought.

In this context, it is also worth keeping in mind that Western states' foreign policies are hardly unadulterated by explicit appeals to the sacred. The concept of an authentic Christian identity clearly still haunts European politics, more or less openly framing debates around EU expansion.39 The political ecology of the United States has sustained a demand for fervent religiosity amongst its political classes, which leaves abundant scope for faith's explicit assemblage with state policy at home and abroad.40 This collection is centrally concerned with the question of the propounded secularism of the current European context, but it is critical to note the multiplicity that assembles 'the West', with articulations of divine presence and absence refracted in quite different ways across the Atlantic. Western claims to a secular politics have always been abridged and provisional, subject to contamination and porosity, and thus pervaded by sacred articles in diverse ways. Recognition of this integral ambiguity has generated the recent testimonials to a nascent post-secular era.41

Given this tangled conceptual terrain, each of the contributors to this forum has provided a distinct account of and engagement with the (im)possibilities of a critical-theoretical engagement with the 'Death of God', but they are nonetheless united by a number of core themes. A key concern shared among the papers is that of temporality. The 'Death of God' is treated here not as a past event located in and limited to a determined temporal moment, but rather as an ongoing and violent series of ruptures. In Dillon's terms, it 'remains a violent project, not an accomplishment. Neither is it a done theological or philosophical deal.'42 The significance of this is that the political challenges and provocations associated with the 'Death of God' are by no means simply a matter of historical interest but rather retain unpredictable and ongoing implications for current political theorising and praxis. Understood in this way, the 'Death of God' refers not to a past event, the consequences of which are awaiting discovery, but rather to a vocabulary or register through which conversations between different critical traditions concerned with the calling in questions of ontological and metaphysical foundations can occur. The question of the possibility of 'post-secularity' is thus taken up through an examination of what might be termed spectral markers of 'quasi-transcendence,'43 taking the form of messianic and tragic traditions of thought. Aggie Hirst and Tom Houseman respectively engage in some depth with the concept of the messianic, Hirst offering an account of the potential ethico-political limitations or 'traps' which accompany a (re)turn to the structural promise in the context of the 'Death of God'. As Houseman similarly affirms, the messianic promise has already been shattered, or indeed arrived at, in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, rendering messianism a horror in its own right. The question of the tragic as at once a marker of, and a form of thought which potentially resists, the totalising tendencies of ontology is also explored by Hirst, its

'lethargic' elements and tone of 'affirmative pathos' combining Nietzsche's tones of vertigo and affirmation in ways which pose important questions of the tragic's traps and possibilities.

The theme of eschatology relates closely to the post-secular, and is similarly at work in many of the papers. Michael Dillon situates Foucault's thought within this question by interrogating the 'immanentisation of eschatology' associated with truth-telling in Liberal modernity, claiming that while the site of its operation has changed, the now immanent eschaton 'retains the force of the promise it carries in revealed religion (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).' Such an interiorised eschatology wields significant political power, according to Dillon; 'combined, soteriological and finitudinal eschatology are not only capable of engendering violent world changing forces, they also pose an extraordinarily complex theo-logico political problematique.' Exploring the concept of eschatology somewhat differently, Houseman presents a vision of Auschwitz as an apocalyptic eschatological break, one which in its 'catastrophic fulfilment of the promise of history' at once heralds the collapse of the Enlightenment and undergirds a renewed critical-theoretical imperative.

The related themes of the geo-, bio- and necropolitical configurations of contemporary Liberalism are also raised. Michael Dillon and Nicholas Michelsen explore these still-sacred configurations revealing that Liberal-democracy's civil religion is organised around logistics of human mortality. Michelsen observes that 'coding mortality' is a critical problem for any and all political diagrams, but argues that suicide-bombers' truth-telling draws on and deterritorialises the mixed constitution of Liberal necropolitics. Mustapha Pasha develops this line of inquiry, exploring the assemblage of immanence and transcendence underwriting 'apocalyptic vision[s]' and the 'propensity for self-annihilation' in contemporary politics. For Houseman, Auschwitz's transformation of the dead into 'mere remains' is read as an inversion of the religious promise of resurrection, a 'horrific parody of the prophesised kingdom of ends'. Relatedly, as both Dillon and Hirst argue, the 'Death of God' is at once the death of 'Man', the latter understood as something in particular. For Dillon, the performative simulacrum of such exhausted certitudes as 'Man' and 'Life' constitutes a 'living death'; this 'Man' is read as a 'figure that helps to govern life politically through the living death of the state, "the coldest of cold monsters" (geopolitics) and, where that proves insufficient, through the Life of species being (biopolitics).' As both Dillon and Hirst respectively affirm, however, the death of 'Man' spells not the end of the subject's political life, understood as something other than the living death of Liberal modernity, but rather the condition of possibility of a certain kind of lively, politicised life. Dillon's contribution serves as a prologomena to the ways in which Foucault's later work explores opportunities for novel forms of living through an exploration of notions of the 'courage of truth', 'care of the self' and forms of 'spirituality'.

Residing at the heart of these discussions is the crucial question of the relationship between Europe and the religious 'others' comprising its constitutive outsides. Rejecting all too prevalent framings of these others as archaic insofar as they retain religious or transcendental modes of thought or belief, and demonstrating the extent to which these 'outsides' are indeed constitutive of Europe's self-identification, the papers seek to render implausible the latter's articulation of its relationship to the sacred in simply oppositional terms. The constitutive role of global technological deterritorialisation in determining the meaning and character of Jihadist violence corrodes the border between a supposedly innocent secular West and the incurably un-modern other.44 This theme is taken up variously in the contributions of Pasha, Hirst and Michelsen. These papers, in different ways, suggest that if there is no purity to defend against the dragons of secular imagination, declaring the 'Death

of God' appears simply to enforce neglect of the fractural and multi-lineal qualities of contemporary globalisations, thereby preventing us from recognising the porosity of the borders between immanence and transcendence in international life. Michelsen frames suicide-bombing and Liberalism as operating in a shared field of contestation with respect to the negotiation of immanence/transcendence in political theologies of the human qua mortal, and the political possibilities implied therein, rejecting the view that the practice simply represents an archaic sacrificial construction of transcendent ideals of community. Liberalism, he suggests, cannot sustain an uncontaminated purity from the practice of suicide-bombing, but neither can we comprehend suicide-bombing without reference to the immanentist political diagram that enframes it. Pasha correspondingly argues that 'what passes as Islamic nihilism … is the nihilism of immanence presented, albeit, through the medium of transcendent authorisations.' He roundly critiques the notion that immanence and transcendence are fundamentally incompatible, and argues that the 'inseparability of transcendence and immanence in certain versions of Islamic mysticism … offers a major challenge to the singularity of the "death of God" narrative and its attendant nihilism.'

The papers thus share a concern to conceptualise possible means by which the potential nihilism associated with a 'godless' terrain may be navigated from the perspective of (broadly) European thought, invoking variously dialectical (Houseman), genealogical (Dillon), deterritorialising (Michelsen) and deconstructive (Hirst) traditions. The limitations and exclusions associated with the parameters of this conversation are highlighted in Pasha's engagement with Islamic accounts of nihilism; his account of the colonialism of a nihilism coded exclusively in European terms poses profound questions of much of Continental thought in this context. A crucial point of contention which emerges from this conversation is the status of what Pasha terms 'ontological nihilism', which is redeemed neither by messianic nor by tragic qualities. For Pasha such nihilism 'can only engender an encounter with the abyss,' something which is particularly dangerous insofar as it 'let[s] loose collective energy and fury no longer susceptible to domestication.' Read in this manner, the emergence of particular understandings of the foundationlessness provoked by the 'Death of God' is connected to the triumphalist and crusading modes of thought which echo logics responsible for 'human tragedy' and 'brutality unleashed against non-Western Others in preceding centuries.' Resisting such an ontological nihilism, Pasha points instead to one which is 'purposeful' and thereby connected to the transcendental. In contrast to this reading, other contributors, including Houseman, Dillon and Hirst, attempt, in different ways, to think the ethico-political openings such an acutely, ontologically foundationless condition might render possible. In so doing, it is hoped in those accounts that such ontological destabilisation can perhaps be read in ways which gesture towards resisting, rather than bringing about, such cruelties and violence. Most important, however, is that what unites all of the papers included here with the question of nihilism is the recognition of various registers and forms of thinking absolute negation, and the variety of politically salient implications this may have both within and outside European configurations of thought. What these papers individually and collectively demonstrate is that thinking the abyss (in all its forms) and insisting upon affirmative forms of political disruption and self-creation are intimately connected to one another, and that the best hope for aiming towards an always impossible ethico-political responsibility is located at some intersection of these dual tones of vertigo and affirmation.

Finally, the papers are united in their respective attempts to engage with the problem of violence in global politics, albeit read in multiple ways. Pasha and Michelsen locate their respective contributions in an examination of concrete forms of political violence which provoke and rupture

the political-theological conceptual parameters of contemporary Liberalism. In so doing, they insist upon challenging many of the prevailing understandings and representations of so-called 'Islamic' violence, thereby exposing the silent and self-legitimating violences which are synonymous with the bio- and necro-political regimes underpinning European governance after the 'Death of God'. Dillon deals with the violences associated with contemporary Liberal order in which the 'living death' of an already exhausted figure of 'Man' comprises a key dimension of its governing biopolitical logics, a lifeless life performed 'so as not to have to speak for fear of falling back into nothingness.' For their part, Houseman and Hirst respectively explore the concept of violence in relation to the processes of material and ontological totalitarianisms which have always already taken place, and continue to take place, emanating as they do precisely from the Enlightenment logics and principles which underpin the everyday horrors of the neoliberal capitalist global order. The problem of violence is thus for all the papers intimately connected to the question of ethico-political responsibility. In their different focuses on violence, each contribution is haunted by the urgent challenge of responsibility in the context of the 'Death of God', comprising elements of Nietzsche's more vertiginous and more affirmation tones regarding the (im)possibility of ethico-political responsibility.

The 'Death of God' appears in each of these papers as the problematic space from which thought is called at once into being and into question. On the one hand, Dillon and Michelsen both ask whether and how we might ever 'be done' with God if His divine fingerprints are still all around us, inked into new historical forms. To seek to finally eradicate God's presence from the IR would be to forget the pathological value we moderns invested in His (always already in part illusory) expulsion, re-presenting sustained contemporary traditions of, as Pasha shows, violent reverence within a binary opposition of novelty or archaism, and pinning our hopes for an authentic ethical critique on that gesture. Does the continuing international festival of horror and holocaust insist that we sustain or invent transcendent or quasi-transcendent markers for navigation, or are the former inexorably bound up with the continued production of the latter, as Houseman and Hirst explore? What is clear is that we cannot defer a response to the 'Death of God' in the context of global politics. The urgency of the task is not encoded by temporality – as if God's death demanded a singular response 'now' – but derives from recognising that the 'Death of God' is a confluence of problems that instantiates an imperative gravitational force, a seductively febrile condition of (im)possibility, a shattering of anchors and an invitation to new sacred and perhaps inevitably fatal games.

Notes

↵1. Chris Brown, '"Turtles All the Way Down": Anti-Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations', Millennium 23, no. 2 (1994): 213–36, 216.

↵2. Roland Bleiker, 'Postmodernism', in Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives, eds. Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke and Jim George (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 94.

↵3. This forum was put together as a consequence of conversations begun at the workshop 'Political Violence in International Relations and the "Death of God"', which was held in May 2012 at the University of Leeds and supported the BISA Poststructural Politics Working Group, POLIS at the University of Leeds, and the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

4. Martin Heidegger, 'The Word of Nietzsche: "God Is Dead",' in Holzwege, eds. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 58–9.

5. F. Thomas Trotter, 'Variations on the "Death of God" Theme in Recent Theology', Journal of the American Academy of Religion XXXIII, no. 1 (1965), 42.

6. Trotter, 'Variations', 43.

7. James der Derian, 'The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard', in The Political Subject of Violence, eds. David Campbell and Michael Dillon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 101.

8. William E. Connolly, The Ethos of Pluralism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 26.

9. Connolly, The Ethos of Pluralism, 26.

10. Jim George and David Campbell, 'Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations', International Studies Quarterly 34, no. 3 (1990): 269–93, 281.

11. Brown, 'Turtles', 216.

12. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 120.

13. Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future (Mineola: Dover Thrift: 1997), 39.

14. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals (Mineola: Dover, 2003), 118.

15. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 131.

16. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 131.

17. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 120.

18. 'Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist (London: Wordsworth: 2007), 163.

19. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), 26–7.

20. Nietzsche, The Antichrist, 140.

21. Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols, 36. Here, Nietzsche's universalising tendencies as regards rendering a distinctly European series of phenomena a matter of 'the world's' experience is noteworthy and problematic.

22. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 199.

23. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 180.

24. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 189.

↵25. Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 88.

↵26. Christopher Hitchens, God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything (London: Atlantic, 2008); Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion (Leicester: W.F. Howes, 2007).

↵27. P. Berman, Terror and Liberalism (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004).

↵28. Z. Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

↵29. J. Gray, Al Qaeda and What it Means to Be Modern (London: Faber, 2007).

↵30. R. Niebuhr, Christianity and Power Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952). See also the collection of articles in Toni Erksine and Richard Ned Lebow, eds., Tragedy and International Relations (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Richard Ned Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Policies: Ethics, Interests and Orders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

↵31. See, for example, Daniel Philpott, 'The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations', World Politics 52 (January 2000): 206–45; M. Luoma-Aho, God and International Relations: Christian Theology and World Politics (New York: Continuum, 2012); M.K. Pasha, 'Western Nihilism and Dialogue: Prelude to an Uncanny Encounter in International Relations', Millennium 39, no. 3 (2011): 683–99.

↵32. G. Agamben, The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government (Homo Sacer II, 2) (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); C. Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

↵33. Williams, in Nietzsche, The Gay Science, xiii.

↵34. See Buber, Eclipse of God: Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy (London: Victor Gollancz, 1953).

↵35. J. Baudrillard, Forget Foucault (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 79.

↵36. Z. Bauman, Liquid Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Z. Bauman, Liquid Life (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005); Z. Bauman, Liquid Fear (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); F. Jameson, Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (London: Verso, 1991).

↵37. See Pasha, 'Western Nihilism and Dialogue'; Mariano Barbato and Friedrich Kratochwil, 'Towards a Post-secular Political Order?' European Political Science Review 1 (2009): 317–40; S. Qutb, Milestones (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1981).

↵38. Pasha, 'Western Nihilism and Dialogue'.

↵39. D. Fuchs and H.D. Klingemann, 'Eastward Enlargement of the European Union and the Identity of Europe', West European Politics 25, no. 2 (2002): 19–54; A.J. Menendez, 'A Christian or a Laïc Europe? Christian Values and European Identity', Ratio Juris 18, no. 2 (2005): 179–205; I.B. Neumann, 'European Identity, EU Expansion, and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus', Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 23, no. 3 (1998): 397–416.

40. See W.E. Connolly, Capitalism and Christianity, American Style (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

41. Jurgan Habermas, 'Notes on Post-Secular Society', New Perspectives Quarterly 25, no. 4 (2008): 17–29.

42. Michael Dillon, 'Specres of Biopolitics: Finitude, Eschaton, and Katechon', South Atlantic Quarterly, 110: 3 (Summer, 2011), 785.

43. See Derrida in C. Mouffe, Deconstruction and Pragmatism: Simon Critchley, Jacques Derrida, Ernesto Laclau and Richard Rorty (London: Routledge, 1996).

44. F. Devji, Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity (London: Hurst, 2005); F. Devji, The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics (London: Hurst, 2008).