Foreword

The contributions in this book originate in presentations delivered at the 23rd International Conference of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society, held at Bath Spa University in September 2017 on the theme ‘Nietzsche’s God(s): Theism, Pantheism, and Atheism’. The conference was convened by Sarah Flavel (Bath Spa University), Katrina Mitcheson (University of the West of England) and Russell Re Manning (Bath Spa University).

The conference sought to explore the place (or absence) of God in Nietzsche’s thought. Nietzsche’s proclamation of the death of God is one of the most famous (and parodied) slogans in modern philosophy, seeming to encapsulate the nineteenth-century loss of religious faith in the affirmation that God has ‘turned out to be our oldest lie’ (GM III 24, KSA 5, p. 401) and yet the nature of Nietzsche’s own ‘theology’ is far from clear. The conference engaged with Nietzsche’s arguments about God, theology and religion. It also extended discussion to an engagement of Nietzsche with alternative models of God (notably pantheism), with non-Christian religions, and with discussions of diversity (race, class, gender, sex) in dis/conjunction with religion. Papers examined Nietzsche’s genealogy of religion and his claims about the place of God and theology in the history of western thought (‘that faith of the Christians, which was also Plato’s faith’ [GM III 24, KSA 5, p. 401]), as well as his engagements with alternative conceptions of God. The conference considered the historical and contemporary reception of Nietzsche’s arguments about God by religious and non-religious thinkers, asking to what extent Nietzsche’s philosophy of God speaks to the challenges and opportunities of thinking about God in today’s situation of globalised religion and philosophy and of the consequences of Nietzsche’s thought for work at the interface of religion and the sciences.

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