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Abstract

Recent emphasis and attention by thinkers, media pundits, and politicians on terrorism requires new, critical evaluation of the processes by which terrorism is understood. By investigating the concept of biopolitics, as developed specifically through Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben, new insights into the interactions between terrorism, politics, and religion can emerge. Most notably, the attempts to explain terror as simply an economic problem, an excessive form of violence, and/or as religious fervency gone awry rely on embedded biopolitical concepts. The continual attempts to solve terrorism through increased biopolitical strategies, thereby making terrorism a problem *for* biopolitics, only further substantiate the crisis that biopolitics brings about in the first place. Carefully investigating the relationship between biopolitical theory and religious concepts uncovers those very motivations of defining terrorism in certain forms (economically problematic, excessively violent, religiously passionate), and the continued insistence that terrorism is another problem to be solved, like any other political issue. Instead, I propose that by taking the religious concepts of biopolitics seriously, we can reimagine terror as heresy,

requiring a different political calculus articulating terrorism not as a problem *for* biopolitics to fix but instead as a problem *of* biopolitics.