

# 5 The Work of Art and the Death of God in Nietzsche and Agamben

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<https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474478779.003.0005>

Pages 83–99

- **Published:** September 2021

## Abstract

The repercussions of Nietzsche's idea of the death of God were not only felt in the religious sphere, but also in how we think about the meaning and place of creation and creativity in life. Agamben's discussion of creativity as 'inoperativity' is the latest, important contribution to the debate, arguably initiated by Existentialism, on how the death of God relates to life as material for artistic creation. I situate Agamben's theses on 'inoperativity' in dialogue with Nietzsche's discussion of the death of God and the 'work of art without artist.' Agamben helps us to get beyond the Existentialist interpretation of the human subject as creator of its own life (*bios*) by proposing an anarchic conception of giving artistic form to life (*zoe*) that deconstructs the position of mastery over life assigned to modern subjectivity and de-centres the idea of the human agency in the process of creation. However, Agamben's conception of the artistic life downplays or avoids other features of Nietzsche's thinking on the death of God and creation that are tied to animality and the divinity of nature.

**Keywords:** [Nietzsche](#), [Agamben](#), [Death of God](#), [Creativity](#), [Work of Art](#), [Inoperativity](#), [Existentialism](#)

## Subject

[Philosophy](#)