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Introduction

Apocalyptic Times

As May 21, 2011 approached, radio evangelist Harold Camping preached a message of cosmic hope and despair. A cross-country billboard campaign urged Americans to "Save the Date!" and announced the "Return of Christ. May 21, 2011." On this day, he warned, a small group of the faithful would be taken up to heaven in the rapture.

From their celestial perches, they would watch a wave of divine destruction circle the globe and massacre the unfaithful. Earthquakes would devastate the world, opening the graves of sinners and spewing forth their bodies to be "desecrated and shamed."[1] Those still alive would weep and wail as famines, plagues, and wars ravaged the earth for five months. As God wreaked his terrifying final judgment, nearly seven billion new corpses would be strewn around the world.[2] No one would be left to bury them. God would have won his final victory over the forces of evil.

Camping's predictions described the apocalypse. They were his interpretation of the story told in Revelation, the final book of the Christian Bible. This is the story of a world that is corrupt and beastly. A world ruled by power, greed, and deceit. A world in which moral goodness and religious devotion are mocked and punished. But the end of this world is imminent. Revelation foretells a transformation both gruesome and sublime. Four horsemen will bring war, conquest, famine, and death. All the great cities will be destroyed by violent earthquakes. The stars will fall from the sky and the earth will run with

[1] Scott James, "From Oakland to the World, Words of Warning: Time's Up," *The New York Times*, May 19, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/05/20/us/20bcjames.html.

[2] Dan Amira, "A Conversation With Harold Camping, Prophesier of Judgment Day," *New York Magazine: Daily Intelligencer*, May 11, 2011, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2011/05/a_conversation_with_harold_cam.html.

rivers of blood. At the end of this divine carnage, Christ will grant eternal life to the chosen and eternal torment to the damned.

These hallucinogenic images have avalanched down through the centuries to our secular age.

When we speak of apocalypse today, we describe cataclysms – from nuclear war to climate change – that are of human making and not divine. What is common to ancient and contemporary ideas of apocalypse is an imminent and cataclysmic end to the known world and the arrival of a radically new future. Apocalypses position us at a rupture in time, at the edge of a great transformation. Nothing will be the same again.

When the world failed to end on May 21, Camping and his followers, some of whom had quit their jobs and liquidated their assets, were widely mocked.[3] They were exactly what most people expect an apocalyptic group to be – marginal, religious, and wrong.

We imagine apocalyptic believers as vulnerable people who, under the direction of a charismatic leader, have gathered in a rural bunker to await the end of the world. Or worse, we picture people who have cut themselves off from mainstream society to pursue their doomsday expectations to a violent end. There are certainly examples that look like this. The mass suicide of more than 900 members of the Peoples Temple at Jonestown, Guyana in 1978 was motivated by this group's apocalyptic beliefs. The Branch Davidians, who were locked in a fifty-one-day armed standoff with the FBI near Waco, Texas in 1993, were motivated by an ideology of the end times.

In 1995, members of Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese group whose beliefs incorporate elements of yoga, Buddhism, and Christian apocalypticism, released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system, killing thirteen people and severely injuring many others. In 1997, thirty-nine members of Heaven's Gate, a group that combined Christian apocalypticism with beliefs about the salvation of the soul through UFO transport, committed mass suicide.

More recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has used extremist readings of Sunni doomsday theology to recruit thousands of followers in a campaign of territorial expansion, violence, subjugation, and enslavement in Iraq and Syria. The group's leaders and recruits portray the wars in the Middle East as the "final battles of the apocalypse," after which the Caliphate will be restored and prophecy fulfilled.[4]

These movements caused far more destruction of life and property than did Camping's May 21 group. But like that group, they reinforce our preconceptions about apocalyptic movements. In each case, followers were motivated by

[3] Jesse McKinley, "Despite Careful Calculations, the World Does Not End," *The New York Times*, May 21, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/05/22/us/22doomsday.html; Jesse McKinley, "An Autumn Date for the Apocalypse," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/us/24rapture.html.

[4] William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 99.

charismatic leaders with beliefs about the imminent end that are difficult for most outsiders to understand, let alone accept.

Yet as we will see over the course of this book, apocalyptic beliefs are not exclusively held by marginal groups.[5] They are embraced by those in the highest positions of political power. Consider George W. Bush's presidential rhetoric in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The two decades prior to the attacks, Bush said, had seemed like "years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical." The terrorist attacks brought this familiar world to an end. Suddenly, the past looked different. During these "years of relative quiet," dark forces had been at work.[6] We had now awoken to a new world.

Bush's rhetoric initially appears quite different from Camping's – it seems to lack Camping's overtly biblical references. But when we take a closer look, we can see that it tells a similar story. Camping and his followers expected that May 21, 2011 would be the end of time and the cataclysmic birth of a new world. Bush also described a rupture in the temporal continuity of history. The 9/11 attacks were a "day of fire."[7] They heralded a new world in which different rules of state practice applied. Previously unacceptable forms of political violence were now necessary to win a war against "evil."[8]

Like Camping, Bush was sure about the direction of history. Camping expected God's justice to wind its way around the world, destroying the damned wherever they may be hiding. For Bush, the "untamed fire of freedom" would spread to the "darkest corners of the world." It would burn "those who fight its progress."[9] The United States-led military campaign in Afghanistan was originally called Operation Ultimate Justice before being renamed Operation Enduring Freedom. Americans were told that the campaign would seek out terrorists wherever they were hiding. While they may initially "burrow deeper into caves and other entrenched hiding places," American troops would soon "drive them out and bring them to justice."[10] To non-Christian audiences, these images

[5] As Stephen O'Leary notes, "apocalyptic arguments made by people of good and sincere faith have apparently succeeded in persuading millions; it is unfair and dangerous to dismiss these arguments as irrational and the audiences persuaded by them as ignorant fools." And along similar lines: "A brief survey of the history of apocalyptic discourse shows that its appeal has historically cut across class lines. The audience of those receptive to prophecy and its interpreters included emperors, peasants, merchants, farmers and factory workers, the educated and the uneducated alike from Isaac Newton to Ronald Reagan." Stephen D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4, 9.

[6] George W. Bush, "Inaugural Address," The American Presidency Project, January 20, 2005, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=58745.

[7] Bush, "Inaugural Address."

[8] George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," The American Presidency Project, January 29, 2002, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29644.

[9] Bush, "Inaugural Address."

[10] George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation Announcing Strikes Against Al Qaida Training Camps and Taliban Military Installations in Afghanistan," The American Presidency Project, October 7, 2001, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/mediaplay.php?id=65088&admin=43. See also: William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2008), 39–68.

might not have carried any special meaning, beyond the familiar promise that American military power would be both effective and decisive. To many Christians, however, Bush's statement might well have evoked Revelation, where sinners "hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb [Jesus]; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"[11] The apocalyptic undertones of Bush's speeches may not be as obvious as those of Camping's, but they are there for those able and willing to hear them.

Camping called upon his followers to put their trust in God's plan for history. May 21, 2011 would mark the beginning of a terrifying battle between good and evil that would inaugurate a new and better world. Bush asked Americans for a similar act of faith: "We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. We do not . . . claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all life and all history."[12] Bush's apocalyptic narrative absorbs the September 11 attacks, which might initially have raised questions about the progressive direction of history. The attacks become the terrifying birth pangs of a new world.[13]

Bush is not the only American president to put contemporary events into an apocalyptic narrative. Even before assuming office, Abraham Lincoln cast the looming civil war in overtly apocalyptic terms. Drawing on the imagery of the bowls of God's wrath from Revelation 16, he said that it seemed to him "as if God had borne with this thing (slavery) until the very teachers of religion had come to defend it from the Bible to claim for it a divine character and sanction; and now the cup of iniquity is full, and the vials of wrath will be poured out."[14]

More than seventy years later, Theodore Roosevelt used the same rich stock of apocalyptic imagery to link his own battle against "special privilege" to Lincoln's resistance to slavery. In 1912, as the Republican National Committee seemed set to award the party's nomination to William Howard Taft, Roosevelt gathered his supporters in Chicago the night before the convention. He urged the cheering crowd to fight for a country in peril: "Fearless of the future; unheeding of our individual fates; with unflinching hearts and undimmed eyes; we stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord."[15]

Amid global conflagrations and the ever-looming threat of nuclear annihilation, Ronald Reagan was drawn to similar visions of a final battle. While

[11] Rev. 6:15–17. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).
[12] George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," The American Presidency Project, January 28, 2003, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29645#axzz1UZTKZP00.
[13] Antoine Bousquet, "Time Zero: Hiroshima, September 11 and Apocalyptic Revelations in Historical Consciousness," *Millennium* 34, no. 3 (2006): 761.
[14] As quoted in Isaac Newton Arnold, *The History of Abraham Lincoln, and the Overthrow of Slavery* (Chicago: Clarke & Co., 1866), 689.
[15] Theodore Roosevelt, "The Case Against the Reactionaries (June 17, 1912)," in *Selected Speeches and Writings of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Gordon Hunter (New York: Vintage, 2014), 159.

governor of California, he confided to a political associate that the recent coup in Libya was "a sign that the day of Armageddon isn't far off." Reagan downplayed these beliefs when he became president. But his Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger was more forthright: "I have read the Book of Revelation and yes, I believe the world is going to end – by an act of God, I hope – but every day I think that time is running out."[16] Bush's apocalyptic rhetoric is therefore by no means politically unique.

And consider the more secular apocalyptic rhetoric that Donald Trump used in the 2016 United States presidential campaign. "Our country is going to hell," he warned, claiming that the United States faced economic collapse, the disintegration of its vital infrastructure, and looming annihilation at the hands of "radical Islamic terrorists." In short, it was the apocalypse: "If we don't get tough, and if we don't get smart, and fast, we're not going to have a country anymore." The time to act is now "because later is too late."[17] The 2016 election was "a moment of reckoning" and a "crossroads in the history of our civilization."[18] If voters heeded his call, Trump promised, there was hope. The country's "problems can all be fixed, but . . . only by me."[19] Casting himself in the role of a messiah, Trump promised to lead the United States away from Armageddon and make the country "great again."[20] Trump's rhetoric borrows from the narrative of apocalypticism, while shedding much of its Christian imagery.

Even if we recognize that it need not always be religious, we might still conclude that apocalypticism is uniquely attractive to Republicans or those on the political right. But consider this statement by environmentalist James Lovelock: "The evidence coming in from the watchers around the world brings news of an imminent shift in our climate towards one that could easily be described as Hell: so hot, so deadly that only a handful of the teeming billions now alive will survive."[21] Lovelock draws on the religious language of doomsday to convey the threat of global climate change.

He is not alone. Former Vice President Al Gore uses biblical imagery to describe a secular day of reckoning. After showing devastating images of

[16] As quoted in Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 142, 141.

[17] "Transcript of the New Hampshire GOP Debate, Annotated," *Washington Post*, February 6, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/06/transcript-of-the-feb-6-gop-debate-annotated/; "Read Trump's Speech on the Orlando Shooting," *Time*, June 13, 2016, http://time.com/4367120/orlando-shooting-donald-trump-transcript/.

[18] "TRANSCRIPT: Donald Trump's Speech Responding To Assault Accusations," *NPR.org*, October 13, 2016, www.npr.org/2016/10/13/497857068/transcript-donald-trumps-speech-responding-to-assault-accusations.

[19] "Full Transcript: Donald Trump NYC Speech on Stakes of the Election," *POLITICO*, June 22, 2016, www.politico.com/story/2016/06/transcript-trump-speech-on-the-stakes-of-the-election-224654.

[20] Repurposing a slogan from Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign, Trump's campaign promised to "Make America Great Again."

[21] James Lovelock, *The Revenge of Gaia: Earth's Climate Crisis and the Fate of Humanity* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 147.

climate catastrophe in the 2006 documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth*, he notes that they are "like a nature hike through the book of Revelations [sic]." He concludes his 2009 book *Our Choice* on a similar note, with a poem that combines references to melting ice caps, ocean acidification, and species extinction with one of the most ominous images of the Christian apocalypse: "Horsemen ready their stirrups."[22] Lovelock and Gore, no less than Camping, Bush, and Trump, convey apocalyptic visions of the end of the world.

And yet, one might think, surely there is a difference between religious and secular expectations about the end of the world, even if the latter are often clothed in scriptural garb. Today's environmentalists, for example, like the anti-nuclear activists of the Cold War, are not describing some fantastical apocalypse outlined in the Bible and transposed into the contemporary world. They are talking about the *real* apocalypse – an impending end supported by hard facts and data. The polar ice caps *are* melting. Rates of extreme weather events *are* on the rise. Yet as we shall see, the terrors nourished by the Christian apocalypticism of early modern Europe were real enough for those who experienced them. Believers saw signs of an impending end that seemed every bit as incontrovertible to them as evidence of environmental doom is to many today.[23]

Whether held by the marginal or the powerful, whether overtly religious or seemingly secular, apocalyptic beliefs share an expectation of the coming cataclysmic end of the world and the arrival of a radically new future. It is a terrifying and captivating vision.

Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times

This book began with a concern about the prevalence of apocalyptic rhetoric in post-9/11 political discourse. I discovered that this was a concern that I shared with members of a particular tradition of political thought. In the autumn of 2002, when an American-led invasion of Iraq seemed likely, the *New York Times* ran an op-ed advertisement criticizing the Bush administration's case for the invasion. The signatories were scholars of international security and about half of them were self-identified political realists.

That is, they are the contemporary social scientific heirs of a tradition that is focused on power and interest, suspicious of moralizing, and attentive to

[22] Al Gore, *Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Books, 2009), 28.

[23] Frank Kermode makes a similar point in a comparison of fears of nuclear annihilation and older forms of apocalyptic expectation. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction (with a New Epilogue)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182–83. This, of course, is not to deny that the epistemological statuses of these portents differ or that environmentalists might have more warrant for their expectations than did Christians in Renaissance Florence and seventeenth-century England. It is merely to suggest that the *experience* of these hopes and fears and the agents' *own estimation* of how warranted these feelings were could well have been roughly equal in all cases.

the limits of political action. In the history of political thought, this approach is most strongly associated with such thinkers as Thucydides, St. Augustine, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber, and Carl Schmitt. In international relations, it is linked with E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer.

In brief, the realist case against military intervention in Iraq was that the war was not in America's national interest – that the real threat was Al Qaeda, and that there was no good evidence of Saddam Hussein's cooperation with this organization; that a costly war would divert resources from the fight against Al Qaeda; that an effective invasion and state-building effort would cost too much in American and Iraqi lives and resources; that a war would almost certainly spread instability in a region essential to America's security and interests; and that the United States lacked a "plausible exit strategy."[24] Many of these worries were prescient. Looking back, some wondered whether the political realists in this debate were like "Hegel's Owl of Minerva, their wisdom only taking flight at dusk – when most of the damage ha[d] been done."[25]

But the realist case against the war went beyond claims about national interest. It also included worries about the worldview behind the argument in favor of war. John Mearsheimer, for instance, suggests that the Bush administration's case for war drew from an idealistic worldview historically associated with Woodrow Wilson. This worldview rests on a Manichean division of the world into good (democratic) and bad (non-democratic) states. Once all states are brought to democracy either by internal pressures, shining foreign exemplars, well-meaning international encouragement, or external coercion, there will be enduring peace. The worst that we should fear after this "end of history" is boredom.[26]

An earlier generation of political realists went further. They recognized an apocalyptic belief structure in Wilsonian idealism, which shared Revelation's hope for a final escape from conflict and the arrival of a permanent peace. For E. H. Carr, "Woodrow Wilson's [own] moral authority was built up on the conviction, shared by himself, that he possessed the key to a just, comprehensive and final settlement of the political ills of mankind. It is noteworthy that almost

[24] "War with Iraq Is Not in America's National Interest," ad published in *The New York Times*, September 26, 2002, www.bear-left.com/archive/2002/0926oped.html. The signatories included, for instance: Michael C. Desch, Robert Jervis, John Mearsheimer, Randall Schweller, Stephen van Evera, Stephen Walt, and Kenneth Waltz. See also: John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (2003): 50–59.

[25] Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 209.

[26] John J. Mearsheimer, "Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism versus Neo-Conservatism," *openDemocracy*, May 19, 2005, www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-americanpower/morgenthau_2522.jsp. See also: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 330.

all religions agree in postulating an ultimate state of complete blessedness."[27] Similarly, Hans Morgenthau casts Wilson's promise that World War I would be a "war to end war" as the "expression of an eschatological hope deeply embedded in the very foundations of liberal foreign policy."[28]

These kinds of intriguing remarks prompted me to embark on a more sustained investigation of realist responses to apocalypticism. What I expected to find were curt dismissals. What I in fact found was a history of more uneasy and sustained realist encounters with the apocalypse.

The three thinkers that I examine here represent epiphanic moments in this history. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), and Hans Morgenthau (1904–1980) are all defining members of the realist tradition.[29] They all wrote during times when powerful political, social, and religious actors were announcing the imminent end of the world. Apocalyptic expectations were not uncommon after the rise of Christianity. But the periods in which Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau wrote were ones in which these hopes and fears emerged in particularly sharp relief and held immense political sway.[30] Machiavelli wrote in the context of Dominican friar

[27] Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 90.

[28] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 52.

[29] While Machiavelli and Hobbes do not self-identify as political realists, contemporary realists and students of realism tend to look back on these earlier thinkers as intellectual predecessors. See, for example: Steven Forde, "Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli," *Journal of Politics* 54, no. 2 (1992): 372–93; David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 90–167; Thomas L. Pangle and Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *Justice Among Nations: On the Moral Basis of Power and Peace* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 125–61; Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13–15, 24–26; Michael C. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 19–51. Hans Morgenthau did self-identify as a realist. However, scholars such as William Scheuerman and Michael C. Williams have questioned and sought to complicate this identification. See: Williams, *The Realist Tradition*, 82–127; William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 1–10; William E. Scheuerman, "Was Morgenthau a Realist? Revisiting *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*," *Constellations* 14, no. 4 (2007): 506–30. I discuss important concerns about tradition-building below.

[30] If this work were primarily concerned with making a causal argument for the effect of periods of heightened apocalypticism on political realism as such, choosing only realists who wrote during such periods would pose a clear selection problem. If we wanted to understand the effect of periods of heightened apocalypticism on realist commitments, so the suggestion goes, we would want to include in the analysis at least one political realist who did not write in a period of heightened apocalypticism. I have two thoughts to offer in response to this potential worry. First, the addition of a realist who did not write in a period of heightened apocalyptic expectation would, at best, make for an awkward and completely insufficient proxy for the kind of social scientific research design that allows for robust causal inferences. Second, and more importantly, my goal is not to make a causal argument about two general phenomena (political realism and

Girolamo Savonarola's disturbing apocalyptic visions about the future of Florence. Although Savonarola was executed in 1498, the apocalyptic hopes and fears to which he gave voice would continue to shape Italy well into the sixteenth century.

Thomas Hobbes developed his political thought against the backdrop of both radical and Royalist attempts to cast the English Civil War in apocalyptic terms. This apocalypticism persisted during the Protectorate, when visions of doomsday were wielded both by and against Oliver Cromwell. Working much later, Hans Morgenthau wrote his most influential works on international politics in the aftermath of the Holocaust and in the shadow of nuclear war. Yet with a few notable exceptions, interpreters have given little attention to these thinkers' apocalyptic contexts.[31]

Over the course of this book, I show that attending to the apocalyptic circumstances in which Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau wrote does three things. First, it prompts us to consider aspects of their work that we might otherwise neglect. For instance, the final two books of Hobbes's *Leviathan* continue to receive comparatively little attention by scholars of the history of political thought.[32] These are chapters in which Hobbes engages in detailed scriptural arguments that, at first blush, can seem largely unconnected to the political arguments outlined in the first two books of the work. However, as I show in Chapter 4, these scriptural arguments are central to Hobbes's political project. He uses them to combat the revolutionary apocalypticism of the English Civil War and to make Christianity's most radical expectations safe for political order and civil peace.

Second, an attention to the apocalyptic context in which these thinkers wrote casts the more familiar parts of their work in a new light. For example, seen alongside Savonarola's visions of the end times, the final chapter of Machiavelli's *Prince* begins to look less like a strategic ploy to curry favor with the

apocalypticism). It is, at least in part, to see how looking at their engagement with apocalypticism casts these thinkers' work in a new light, sometimes in ways that affirm and other times in ways that challenge their identification as political realists. In so doing, I occasionally make causal suggestions about the impact of a confrontation with apocalypticism on a particular thinker's realist commitments. These suggestions are supported, to the extent possible, with contextual and textual evidence specific to that thinker and time.

[31] John G. A. Pocock has given apocalyptic beliefs some treatment in his work on Machiavelli and Hobbes. John G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 83–113; John G. A. Pocock, "Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes," in *The Diversity of History: Essays in Honour of Sir Herbert Butterfield*, ed. J. H. Elliott and H. G. Koenigsberger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 149–98.

[32] Pocock wryly notes: "The two books in which Hobbes expounds Christian faith and its sacred history are almost exactly equal in length to Books I and II [of *Leviathan*]; yet the attitude of too many scholars towards them has traditionally been, first, that they aren't really there, second, that Hobbes didn't really mean them." See: Pocock, "Time, History and Eschatology," 161–62. However, as I note in Chapter 4, there are now important exceptions to this trend.

Medici and more like an apocalyptic exhortation of despair and redemption. Third, tracing these thinkers' responses to hopes and fears about the end of the world prompts us to consider the rhetorical and normative challenges of responding to catastrophes today.

Finding any kind of sustained attention to apocalyptic ideas in the works of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Morgenthau may seem surprising. To see why, we need to understand a bit more about the tradition of political thought to which these thinkers are seen to belong. Political realism is a distinctive family of approaches to the study, practice, and normative evaluation of politics.[33] Despite their differences, these approaches tend to share four commitments. First, realists think that there is something distinctive about politics. It is a realm of activity with "its own character, purposes, and means."[34] For realists, this distinctiveness shapes the relationship between ethics and politics. Some hold that politics is an amoral realm, while others claim that it is a realm with its own moral rules that are distinct from those in other spheres, while still others claim that politics is a realm in which conventional or universal moral rules must be overridden and "good" political actors must dirty their hands. For instance, Machiavelli advises rulers that they must "not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil when necessary."[35]

Second, realists think that politics is agonistic or conflictual. They attribute this disagreement to a variety of causes, including human nature and the limits

[33] Over the past decade, there has been a revival of interest in realism within political theory. This revival is most strongly associated with the work of Bernard Williams and that of Raymond Geuss. See: Bernard Williams, "Realism and Moralism in Political Theory," in *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, ed. Geoffrey Hawthorn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 1–17; Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). For an influential statement of realism's core commitments, see: William A. Galston, "Realism in Political Theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 385–411. See also: Duncan Bell, ed., *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (May 2012): 455–70; Alison McQueen, "The Case for Kinship: Political Realism and Classical Realism," in *Politics Recovered: Essays on Realist Political Thought*, ed. Matt Sleat (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), chapter 10; Alison McQueen, "Political Realism and the Realist Tradition," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (2017): 296–313; Enzo Rossi and Matt Sleat, "Realism in Normative Political Theory," *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 10 (October 1, 2014): 689–701; William E. Scheuerman, "The Realist Revival in Political Philosophy, or: Why New Is Not Always Improved," *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (November 2013): 798–814; Joel Alden Schlosser, "Herodotean Realism," *Political Theory* 42, no. 3 (June 1, 2014): 239–61; Matt Sleat, *Liberal Realism: A Realist Theory of Liberal Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Matt Sleat, "Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory or, Are There Two Ways to Do Realistic Political Theory?," *Political Studies* 64, no. 1 (2016): 27–41.

[34] Sleat, "Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory," 32.

[35] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), chapter 18, 70.