

Editorial Foreword

Giorgio Agamben and “Theology”

CHIN Kenpa & YANG Huilin

“The Latin term *dispositio*, from which the French term *dispositif*, or *apparatus*, derives, comes therefore to take on the complex semantic sphere of the theological *oikonomia*. The ‘dispositifs’ about which Foucault speaks are somehow linked to this theological legacy. They can be in some way traced back to the fracture that divides and, at the same time, articulates in God being and praxis, the nature or essence, on the one hand, and the operation through which He administers and governs the created world, on the other.”—G. Agamben^①

I

Giorgio Agamben’s thought shows a particular theological focus, which Antonio Nergi has termed “theological-political.” This term is obviously a direct reference to Agamben’s radical reconsideration of Carl Schmitt’s proposition on political theology—the state of exception—and because of his identification with Benjamin’s messianic discourse, Agamben’s relationship with theology seems to be innovatively both clear and obscure.^② Agamben’s thought both closely follows the ideas of Michel

^① Giorgio Agamben, “*What is an Apparatus?*” and *Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 11.

^② For details on the nature of Agamben’s “poetic atheology” see Colby Dickinson in *Agamben and Theology* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2011), 11.

Foucault and also fills in the fragmentary arc late Foucault on biopolitics and governmentality. Both trace back to the ancient and archaic ideas of the Classical period—a period when philosophy and theology informed each other. ^①

What, then is the thesis of Agamben’s “theological” inquiries, one might ask? The quest for the answer(s) takes us to his *Homo Sacer* project, beginning with the eponymous monograph: *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (*HS*, 1995), and asking why subsequent works have consistently had recourse to Classical Antiquity: *The Kingdom and the Glory* (2007), *The Sacrament of Language* (2008), *Nudities* (2009), *The Higher Poverty* (2013), and *Opus Dei* (2013). In what sense does the work *What is an Apparatus* (2009) clarify the nature of Agamben inquiries? And how does his unique reading of Paul’s “messianism” (in *The Time that Remains*, 2000) make reference to the “theological” core, regarded as the most significant reflection on contemporary politics, in *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1998) and *State of Exception* (2003). It is only through this vast body of work, touching on major theological themes, that we may perhaps be able to pinpoint the complex core of Agamben’s “political theology.”^②

II

In “The Idea of politics,” before proceeding to a critical analysis of Thomas Aquinas’ *Scriptum super Sententiis*, Agamben writes:

According to theology, the greatest punishment a creature can meet with, the one for which there is truly no remedy, is not the wrath but his forgetting. His wrath, in fact, is made of the same stuff as his mercy: but if our evil has overflowed the measure, then even the wrath of God abandons us. “Behold the terrible instance,” writes Origen, “the extreme instance in which we are no longer punished for our sins: when we go beyond the

^① Jeffrey Bussolini, “Critical Encounter between Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault,” *Foucault Studies*, no. 10 (2010): 108.

^② Colby Dickinson, *Agamben and Theology*; Alex Murray and Jessica Whyte, eds., *The Agamben Dictionary* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

measure of evil, the jealous God withdraws his zeal from us: ‘My jealousy,’ he says, ‘shall abandon you, I shall be wroth no longer for your sake.’”^①

In his work *Homo Sacer*, Agamben discusses the paradigm of bare life as captured in the legal figure of *homo sacer*—one who may not be sacrificed, yet may be murdered with impunity—of ancient Roman law. The notion of exclusion is subtly linked to the concept of “divine abandonment” as illustrated in the text quoted above.^② In this book, Agamben reveals the true nature of modern democratic politics. He contends that modern politics is not derived from the Greek *polis*, but from the concentration camp. The former is based on the rule of law and mutual consent, while the latter is established by the enactment of a sovereign ban (exception), in which the law is suspended. According to Agamben, therefore, both democratic and totalitarian politics are flawed. For Agamben, Auschwitz revealed to us a logic of organizational behavior (that of naked life and sovereign choice), which has progressed even further since the end of WWII. In the political sphere of modernity, human beings are, in general, stripped of their subjectivity, in terms of executing their rights, and turned into mere objects. These are the “bare lives” that are forced into silence: the exiles, refugees, and deportees—the *homo sacer* that falls into oblivion. Their biological bodies are disciplined without restriction; put into prison, and threatened with death. Following this line of thought, Agamben presents one of his most critical arguments:

The fact is that one and the same affirmation of the bare life leads, in bourgeois democracy, to a primacy of the private over the public and of individual liberties over collective obligations and yet becomes, in totalitarian states, the decisive political criterion and the exemplary realm of sovereign decisions. And only because biological life and its needs had become the

^① Giorgio Agamben, “The Idea of Politics”, in *Idea of Prose*, trans. Michael Sullivan and Sam Whitsitt (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 77.

^② Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 13.

politically decisive fact is it possible to understand the otherwise incomprehensible rapidity with which twentieth-century parliamentary democracies were able to turn into totalitarian states and with which this century’s totalitarian states were able to be converted, almost without interruption, into parliamentary democracies. In both cases, these transformations were produced in a context in which for quite some time politics had already turned into biopolitics, and in which the only real question to be decided was which form of organization would be best suited to the task of assuring the care, control, and use of bare life.^① *Homo sacer* in Latin bears the dual meaning of “sacred person” and “accursed person.” It refers to a “depoliticized” object, and Agamben labels this de-politicizing mechanism biopolitics.

Homo sacer was deemed to be “beyond the realm of law,” and bound for exile. In other words, this is an individual stripped of legal status and transformed, in relation to the sovereign power, into a bare life without rights, and deemed excluded from the religious community and from all political life. Agamben perceives that such is the situation of subjects in modern states. He provocatively equates the modern state to a concentration camp which relentlessly de-subjectivizes its citizens at will, only later to perform a resubjectivization whose aim is to realize the subjugation of the individuals who have ceased being persons, and are instead naked lives, represented as numbers.

Agamben concedes that: One of the essential characteristics of modern bio-politics (which will continue to increase in our century) is its constant need to redefine the threshold in life that distinguishes and separates what is inside from what is outside...And when natural life is wholly included in the polis—and this much has, by now, already happened—these thresholds pass, as we will see, beyond the dark boundaries separating life from death in order to identify a new living dead man, a new sacred man.^②

Parliamentary democracies and totalitarian establishments share the

^① Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 121-122.

^② *Ibid.*, 131.

common ground of biopolitics in their governing mechanism, seeking to produce political *homo sacer*—the living dead. Agamben retraces parliament democracy as far back as the foundational stages of human rights declarations to reveal the implicit notion of biopolitics inherent in Britain's *Habeas Corpus Act* of 1679—the predecessor of the French 1789 *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*. He sees the birth of natural life as inextricably connected to the status of citizenship, and contends that the declaration of human rights is a biopolitical mechanism that serves to inscribe life within the order of the state's sovereign ban. In other words, human rights declarations are exclusively meant for protecting politicized life; life confined within State borders.

The binding of natural life with nationalism is the core essence of Nazism. Agamben observes this particular life form in terms of Auschwitz, and examines this life form within the framework of a complex crisscrossing sphere of juridico-medico-philosophy. This understanding is formative for Agamben's proposition of "bare life." Agamben identifies a genealogy of bare life actualization throughout Western social-political history, which includes *Homo Sacer* under Roman law; the execution of criminals under the jurisdiction of *Habeas Corpus*; Karl Binding's advocacy of euthanasia, and the experience of Jews in Auschwitz. Bare life signifies an over-politicized being which passes the threshold of politics; and in a sense is "abandoned" by politics—an entity that is deemed unworthy of life and rights. This is the paradigm of all modern politics: sovereign power constantly sees the need to redefine the threshold that separates the living from the dead—creating in the process a hoard of living dead (*homo sacer*). It is such a paradigm that makes possible the technologies of modern governance. In the rule of biopolitics, bare life is kept constantly in a state of exception: an indistinct zone of between human and animal, rule and lawlessness, inside and outside of the law, etc. The bio-politics of the modern age, which is marked by the absence of asylum, inaugurates a universal state of exception in today's world. Based on Foucault's biopolitics and Hannah Arendt's studies of totalitarian regimes, Agamben infers that the core essence of modern politics is none other than the enactment of "exception as *norms*."

In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben has made clear the fundamental of his thesis:

that political oppression can deprive individuals of their ability to perform in the political community. Agamben defines this ability as “a qualified form of life”—political life, or *bios*. Those who are banned from the political community by the sovereign are reduced to a life defined only in terms of *zoē* (natural reproductive life),^① recognized by the sovereign only as biological beings. In order to rectify this flawed relationship between life and sovereignty, Agamben sees the need to expose the fictionality of “the state of exception” in biopolitics, and counters Schmitt in this regard. In *The Times that Remain*, Agamben has engaged Schmitt as arch-opponent in the chapter “The Fifth Day *Eis Euaggelion theou*,”^② which sparks his intellectual inquiry and discourse on the state of exception. In his book that follows *Homo Sacer: State of Exception*, Agamben further distinguishes the state of exception into two modes: the fictitious and the real, a critical gesture and articulation toward contemporary politics brought through his engagement with Schmitt. In the first part of *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Schmitt’s propositions in political-theology continue to be the subject of discussion of Agamben’s most austere critique of contemporary politics. Carl Schmitt in *Political Theology* contends that the exception should be prioritized over the rule, because the rule comes from the *State of Exception*. Agamben argues that this state of exception, which is governed by the logic of sovereignty, is an inclusive exclusion made possible by the apparatus prescribed by the sovereign. The apparatus enables the sovereign to define the state of exception and gives rise to judicial order; as Agamben points out: “The rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception”—that is, juridical order, suspending its own validity, produces the exception of bare life—“and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule.”^③ Upon this inclusive exclusion of bare life, Agamben contends that the politics of the West itself is constituted. He summarizes the situation succinctly, “the paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order, but

^① Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 183.

^② “Political theology,” a distinctive buzzword in contemporary political studies, has made its major proponent Carl Schmitt an unavoidable figure among contemporary political philosophers, regardless of political stance.

^③ Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 18.

does not exclude the force of law from this rule.”^① It is this sovereign logic that renders Schmitt’s state of exception a fiction, since his state of exception is linked inextricably to the will of a totalitarian sovereign.

III

According to Agamben, actual political action lies not in the Schmittian distinction between friend and enemy, but rather in the separation of life from law. Based on this insight, Agamben develops a fundamental strategy for countering modern bio-politics at its root. This ongoing gesture of resistance is more clearly adumbrated in his Pauline commentaries. Agamben concedes that: “To show law in its non-relation to life and life in its non-relation to law means to open a space between them for human action, which once claimed for itself the name of ‘politics.’”^②

In a real state of exception, actual political action is that which dislocates life from law, a state in which even executive power (which is instituted by the law) is rendered inactive. Life is thus connected to its own ontological sovereignty and is no longer under the rule of the state sovereign, going beyond the logic of bare life. It is on this crucial point that the Schmittian state of exception which is literally realized “by means of which law seeks to annex anomie itself”^③ differs from the real state of exception. Agamben discusses this explicitly and comprehensively in *The Time that Remains*, an exposition of political messianism in Pauline texts.

There are three noteworthy aspects to *The Time that Remains*: Firstly, an investigation of the law, grace, messianic time, and Jewish Christians. The philosophical and political transformations that these traditional theological themes had undergone as they were explored by various contemporary thinkers, and the reality and impact of these changes on theology and philosophy are noteworthy. Secondly, Agamben’s commentary on the *Letter to the Romans* reflects the political situation of the era and

^① Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 15.

^② Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 88.

^③ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 39.

questions of modernity, and gestures towards bare life and biopolitics; Agamben considered Paul a “contemporary.” Thirdly, the transformations in theological concepts and in interpretive perspectives brought about significant tension between theology, philosophy and politics, and Agamben’s method of “theological genealogy” can already be seen in this work. Agamben’s reading of Paul is a political theology reading. From Walter Benjamin to Jacob Taubes, Paul has always been seen as the perfect representation of the messianic tradition. Agamben develops Taubes’ messianism and offers his own historical thematic conception of “the time that remains” in which messianic time is conceived as the model par excellence of historical time, and he expands Benjamin’s perceptions of law and the state of exception in relation to the concept of messianic time. Here, Agamben attempts to evoke the life experience of the early Christians of Paul’s time in order to resist the symptoms of our times. ^①

Unlike Schmitt, Agamben highlights three critical points that characterize the law in an actual state of exception: absolute indefiniteness, indistinction of observance and transgression, and indefiniteness of formality. What Agamben wants to highlight is the “law of faith” by which to respond to the zone of indistinction in a Schmittian state of exception. What is the “law of faith”? In Agamben’s interpretation, Paul places promise (*epaggelia*) and faith (*pistis*) on one side, and the Law (*nomos*) opposite. ^② And with this, Agamben has entangled himself in a complex debate between law and grace.

Nomos as a measure of distinction first differentiates Jews from non-Jews in terms of circumcision/foreskin. However, Jesus the Messiah, as the complete fulfillment of the Law, brings forth a new standard of distinction: the distinction between the physical and the spiritual (*sarx/pneuma*, flesh/breath). In terms of the Law alone, there is no encompassing division between Jews and non-Jews, however this is not the case under messianic law, in which the differentiation between Jews/non-Jews can be further divided into Jews in the flesh/ Jews in the spirit and non-Jews in the flesh/non-Jews in the spirit. Out of this double-differentiation emerges a

^① Ref. Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

^② Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005), 90, 94, 117-119.

“remnant” that cannot be categorized (the non-non-Jews). As Agamben succinctly points out:

The division of the law into Jew/non-Jew, in the law/without law, now leaves a remnant on either side, which cannot be defined either as a Jew, or as a non-Jew. He who dwells in the law of the Messiah is the non-non-Jew.^①

Agamben contends that Paul has literally set a measure of distinction within Christianity as well as within the Law. These distinctions conclude in the distinction between *epaggelia-pistis* and *nomos*. Based on these distinctions, Paul unites the *pistis* of Jesus Messiah with the *epaggelia-pistis* of the Law, and sets up an opposition with the faith of the historical Messiah and the imperative *dogmata* of the Law. In the Letters to the Galatians and the Romans Paul represents this repeatedly by the analogy of Abraham and Moses.^②

In Agamben's discussion, Paul's political messianism is viewed as the paradigm of conceptual resources of the messianic discourse. Agamben asserts that Pauline political messianism suggests a particular temporality: the messianic time which is to be understood in the sense of *kairos*, “the time that remains between time and its end.”^③ As such, the messianic time inaugurates a messianic state of exception in which the “remnant”—“non-non-Jews” live. In other words, it is as if these remnants live in a state of “as not” (*hos me*) in the existing order, a state in which the Messianic law as the law of faith suspends the law from within the law and consequently fulfils it.^④ It is in this regard that Agamben's Pauline commentary exemplifies a counter discourse to Schmittian political theology.

Agamben further extended his critical engagement against Schmitt's political theology in *The Kingdom and the Glory*. In this book, through his engagement with Foucault's genealogy of governmentality, Agamben

^① Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, 51.

^② Ibid., 93-95.

^③ Ibid., 62.

^④ See Lorenzo Chiesa, “Giorgio Agamben's Franciscan Ontology,” *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5. no. 1(2009): 111.

addresses the issues arising from the Carl Schmitt/Erik Peterson debate on the closure of political theology.^① Using derivation discourse, he traces the theological genealogy of Foucault’s concept of “governmentality” in order to demonstrate why power in itself is without subjectivity. This is a clear response to Carl Schmitt’s theological stance derived from the formula *le roi règne, mais il ne gouverne pas* (The king rules but does not govern). Schmitt in his debate with Peterson (i.e. the content of *Political Theology II*), reiterates the problem he mentioned in his preface written for the republication of *Political Theology I*, namely, in traditional theocratic system, God “reigns but not govern” (*qui regne et ne gouverne pas*), while modern states “administer but not govern” (*qui administer et ne gouverne pas*). In other words, modern sovereign state exercises her sovereignty by separating *potestas* (the magistrate’s power to execute the law) from sovereignty *auctoritas* (the power to suspend or reactivate the law, but not formally in force as law), which has made the sovereign disrupted and impotent. This is the origin of the theory of separations of powers in modern democratic society.^② Agamben’s mode of responding and answering why power has no subject is to understand rule and governance separately. This approach is precisely the essence of political theology but different from Schmitt’s understanding.^③ In this sense, *The Kingdom and the Glory* is the sequel to *State of Exception*.

According to Schmitt, there are two distinct forms of power: the absolute power to reign, which is the supreme power to judge; and the power of governing, in terms of routine operations, for a ruler does not concern himself with daily operations but leaves those to his ministers. Such perception is an

^① Schmitt/Peterson debate focuses and derives from the notion and implication of Western political analogy of “le roi règne, mais il ne gouverne pas” (The king rules but not governs). This analogy continues to be the focus of Carl Schmitt’s *political theology* discussions. See Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, trans. Jeffrey Seitzer (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: Chicago Press, 2005); and *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*, trans. M. Hoelzl and Graham Ward (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

^② The difference between these two power forms, see Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, 315.

^③ See German Eduardo Primera, *The Political Ontology of Giorgio Agamben: Signatures of Life and Power* (Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 51.

analogy to God's appointment of earthly representatives to govern the world. While the ultimate authority, the supreme authority to judge, is vested in the supreme ruler (i.e. God, or in the case of earthly kingdoms—the kings, emperors, etc.), the real efficacy of management in the earthly realm is not the sovereign reign of God, but the governing of humanity.^① The significance of *The Kingdom and the Glory* lies in Agamben's detailed and convincing theological genealogy of governmentality which tracks back further than Foucault to the trinitarian theology and which serves as the basic principle of distinguishing ontology and action; transcendent sovereignty and immanent governance; being and praxis; contemplation and ministry.

Agamben often alludes to Walter Benjamin's metaphor of blotting paper and ink when referring to the role of theology in relation to his thought; his thought is soaked in theology; if the ink is wiped off, there will be nothing on the blotting paper.^② He sees his work rather as "archeological" in nature. In *The Kingdom and the Glory*, he traces the articulations or manifestations of theological intent such as providence, grace, angels, hymnal praise, acclamations, and celebration rituals back to their origins. This is to prove that power lies in governance not sovereign rule: "God does not govern, the angels do." Thus, from Scholastic contemplation on angelology to the idea of hierarchy, angels are endowed with dual natures: contemplative and ministerial.^③ The glory discussed in *The Kingdom and the Glory* is in fact in regard to power, especially in its manifestations. In other words, the discussion is on what makes power possible, and the significant role it plays in the constitution of jurisprudence and governance. *The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath*, the book which follows *The Kingdom and the Glory*, develops this theme further.

Through his critique on the Schmitt/Peterson debate, and how Peterson's theology, drawing on the church fathers, advanced Greek

^① LAN Jiang, "From the Bare Life to the Glory Politics: On the Development Pedigree of Giorgio Agamben's Thoughts of *Homo Sacer*," *Social Sciences in Heilongjiang*, no. 4(2014): 8.

^② Leland De la Durantaye, *Giorgio Agamben: a Critical Introduction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 369-370.

^③ Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mandarini (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 149-158.

metaphysics and bid farewell to Jewish messianism—that is, regarding “the Trinity and the closure of political theology”—Agamben presents his own thesis. Based on Christian theology, he proposes a new economic-governmental model, rather than a politico-statal (politico-statuale) one, his initial thesis contra Schmitt. ^①

According to Agamben, the contemporary democratic economic-governmental mission is not something which emerges randomly, but is a constituent part of the theological inheritance accumulated through the ages. Contemporary democratic politics is a “government of consensus” which is in essence the acclamation and doxology of sovereignty itself. It is here that Agamben locates his central inquiries regarding the form of power which takes place through the expression of acclamation and doxology—*oikonomia*:

Why does power need glory? If it is essentially force and capacity for action and government, why does it assume the rigid, cumbersome, and “glorious” form of ceremonies, acclamations, and protocols? What is the relation between economy and Glory?^②

Here, Agamben’s ultimate quest is to answer the question “whether it is possible to think politics—beyond the economy and beyond glory—beginning from the inoperative disarticulation of both *bios* and *zoē* ...”^③ This is a thematic statement of his project of which he announced already at the end of *Homo Sacer*.

Agamben further comments that modern governance is one that separates yet holds together, in the sense that it takes for itself a sovereignty separated from its divine origin, yet maintains the theological model of earthly governance. ^④ Therefore, “the central mystery of politics is not sovereignty, but government; it is not God, but the angel; it is not the king, but ministry; it is not the law, but the police—that is to say, the

^① Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 66.

^② *Ibid.*, xii.

^③ *Ibid.*, 259.

^④ *Ibid.*, 285.

governmental machine that they form and support.”^① What causes humans to wonder is that it is as if “God has made the world just as if it were without God and governs it as thought is governed itself.”^②

Through his discussion of Trinitarian theology, Agamben reveals that politics is mimicry of theology, and life assumes its political form in a theological sense. The reign of political sovereignty over natural life is in fact grounded in an irreconcilable division between being and action; just as there is a division between the being (*ousia*) and the activity (*energeia*) of God: the fracture of God and his action. It is a separation of being and praxis, a dialectic relationship of the two which is simultaneously separate and together.

As such we see the ends of the two thematic theological genealogies in *The Kingdom and the Glory* which have contributed significantly to the shaping of contemporary political theory. The first is that all existing forms of sovereign power are based on exception, and such exception has to be understood in terms of its “progression.” The second is that classical economic theory is the model of absolute providence applied in liberal democratic governance. Hence, Agamben concludes that:

In this grand image, in which the world created by God is identified with the world without God, and where contingency and necessity, freedom and slavery all merge into one another, the glorious center of the governmental machine appears clearly. Modernity, removing God from the world, has not only failed to leave theology behind, but in some ways has done nothing other than to lead the project of the providential *oikonomia* to completion.

This conclusion succinctly summarizes the core essentials of Agamben’s theological discourse: while the world has rejected God, it ironically makes itself equal to God. This has led humankind into a paradoxical dilemma:

^① Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, 276.

^② Ibid., 286.

^③ Ibid., 286-287.

they have to go back to God (theology) in order to understand the world. In other words, a meaningful perception of the world can only take place under the perspective of theology. Based on this understanding, Agamben contends that all modern forms of governance are apparently performing in a gesture of salvation, and this is precisely the critique of Agamben with regard to “naked life.”

IV

As the above analysis shows, from the first book *Homo Sacer* which calls for reconsideration of the problematic “sovereign” to the *State of Exception* (Part II.1) in which he offers a fully-fledged criticism of Schmitt’s political theology, a span of over a decade, Agamben draws on his expertise in classical poetics and aesthetics, as well as ancient theology: his thinking on politics has always been inextricably linked to theological matter. Moreover, the source for this thinking may be Walter Benjamin, since Agamben was for many years the editor of Benjamin’s collected works in Italian translation, and he called Benjamin’s thought “the antidote that allowed me to survive Heidegger.”^① Agamben’s speech, “The Messiah and the Sovereign: The Problem of Law in Walter Benjamin,” presented at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1992 had clearly shown how through Benjamin he returned to Jewish-Christian theological traditions on messianic thought.^②

As the second part of the *Homo Sacer* series, *The Kingdom and the Glory* is a sequel to *State of Exception*, although it is also three to four times longer. The later *Sacrament of Language* is a further sequel. The “theological” nature of all three is pronounced, and the third part of the *Homo Sacer* series, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, shows a very clear interest in Jewish studies. Across the entire series of the nine volumes of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben’s “theological” discourse takes a clear, distinctive shape. Agamben’s political philosophy is characterized, in short, by his creative convergence

^① Durantaye, *Giorgio Agamben*, 53.

^② Giorgio Agamben, “The Messiah and the Sovereign: The Problem of Law in Walter Benjamin,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. & trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999).

of the messianic notion and politics, and by his close examination of the ethical issues in contemporary politics, represented by an unconventional theological poetics.

譯者簡介

葉蕙依，臺灣輔仁大學跨文化研究所博士生。

郵箱：sonnetypoet@gmail.com

Introduction to the Translator

YAP Hue Yee, Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, Fu Jen Catholic University.

Email: sonnetypoet@gmail.com

參考文獻 [Bibliography]

西文文獻 [Works in Western Languages]

- Agamben, Giorgio. “The Idea of Politics.” In *Idea of Prose*. Translated by Michael Sullivan & Sam Whitsitt. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- _____. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- _____. *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Edited & Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- _____. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005a.
- _____. *The Time that Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*. Translated by Patricia Dailey. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005b.
- _____. “What is an Apparatus?” and Other Essays. Translated by David Kishik & Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- _____. *The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath*. Translated by Adam Kotsko. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- _____. *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*. Translated by Lorenzo Chiesa & Matteo Mandarini. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.
- Bussolini, Jeffrey. “Critical Encounter between Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault.” *Foucault Studies*, no. 10 (2010): 108-143.
- Cattoi, Thomas. “Il Regno e la Gloria: Per una Genealogia Teologica dell’Economia e del Governo. *Homo Sacer*, II, 2 [The Reign and the Glory: Towards a Theological Genealogy of Economics and Government. *Homo Sacer*, II, 2]— By Giorgio Agamben.” *Reviews in Religion & Theology* 17, no. 2(2010): 211-214.
- Chiesa, Lorenzo. “Giorgio Agamben’s Franciscan Ontology.” *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5. no. 1(2009): 105-116.
- De la Durantaye, Leland. *Giorgio Agamben: a Critical Introduction*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Dickinson, Colby. *Agamben and Theology*. London: T. & T. Clark, 2011.
- Murray, Alex and Jessica Whyte, eds. *The Agamben Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- O’Donoghue, Amy. “Sovereign Exception: Notes on the Thought of Giorgio Agamben,” *Critical Legal Thinking*, accessed on 13th Nov, 2020, <https://rb.gy/sruell>.
- Peterson, Erik. “Monotheism as a Political Problem: A Contribution to the History of *Political Theology* in the Late Roman Empire.” In *Theological Tractates*. Translated and edited by Erik Peterson, 68-105. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011.

- Primera, German E. *The Political Ontology of Giorgio Agamben: Signatures of Life and Power*. Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- _____. *Constitutional Theory*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Seitzer. Durham. London: Duke University Press, 2008a.
- _____. *Political Theology II: The Myth of the Closure of Any Political Theology*. Translated by M. Hoelzl and Graham Ward. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008b.
- Taubes, Jacob. *The Political Theology of Paul*. Translated by Dana Hollander. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

中文文獻 [Works in Chinese]

- 喬治·阿甘本：《剩餘的時間：羅馬書評註》，莊振華譯，新北：臺灣基督教文藝出版社，2010年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *The Time that Remains*. Translated by ZHUANG Zhenhua. Xinbei: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd., 2010.]
- 喬治·阿甘本：《例外狀態：“神聖之人”二之一》，薛熙平譯，臺北：麥田出版社，2010年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *Li wai zhuang tai: “Shen sheng zhi ren” er zhi yi* (State of Exception. *Homo Sacer* II, 1). Translated by XUE Xiping. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co., 2010.]
- 喬治·阿甘本：《潛能》，王立秋，嚴和來譯，桂林：灕江出版社，2014年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *Potentialities*. Translated by WANG Liqiu and YAN Helai. Guilin: Lijiang Publishing Limited, 2014.]
- 吉奧喬·阿甘本：《神聖人：至高權力與赤裸生命》，吳冠軍譯，北京：中央編譯出版社，2016年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by WU GuanJun. Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2016.]
- 吉奧喬·阿甘本：《語言的聖禮：誓言考古學》，藍江譯，重慶：重慶大學出版社，2016年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *Yu yan de sheng li: Shi yan kao gu xue (The Sacrament of Language: An Archaeology of the Oath)*. Translated by LAN Jiang. Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, 2016.]
- 吉奧喬·阿甘本：《甚麼是裝置？》，劉耀輝、尉光吉譯，載阿甘本《論友愛》，劉耀輝、尉光吉譯，北京：北京大學出版社，2017年。[Agamben, Giorgio. “*What is an Apparatus?*” Translated by LIU Yaohui and WEI Guangji. In Giorgio Agamben, *L'amico*. Translated by LIU Yaohui and WEI Guangji. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2017.]
- 吉奧喬·阿甘本：《散文的理念》，王立秋譯，南京：南京大學出版社，2020年。[Agamben, Giorgio. *San wen de li nian* (Idea of Prose). Translated by WANG Liqiu. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2020.]

藍江：《從赤裸生命到榮耀政治——淺論阿甘本*homo sacer*思想的發展譜系》，載《黑龍江社會科學》，2014年第4期，第1-10頁。[LAN Jiang. “From the Bare Life to the Glory Politics: On the Development Pedigree of Giorgio Agamben's Thoughts of *Homo Sacer*.” *Social Sciences in Heilongjiang*, no. 4(2014): 1-10.]