

THE TESTAMENT OF TIME – THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN AND THE
RECAPITULATIO OF TIME ACCORDING TO GIORGIO AGAMBEN
by Kurt Appel

Abstract

This paper responds to the challenge that the virtual world poses to time. The author argues that virtuality, forgetful of death, leads to a melancholic search for the body and its time. The paper traces key concepts (sovereign, homo sacer, government etc.) of Agamben's *Homo Sacer* project and *The Testament of Time* that respond to these challenges and then responds to these concepts with observations from the Bible. Agamben's messianism is not to be understood as eternity (the mirror of working time) but as the end of chronological time and thus corresponds to *biblical* apocalypticism. The author shows that subjectivity appears in the witness of the homo sacer who represents a complete lack of representation. In the *Gospel of John* such a messianic moment that shatters denotative language occurs, when Jesus utters his last statement “ecce homo” (often attributed to Pilate). Homo sacer and divine sovereign coincide as Jesus becomes the witness of a desubjectivization. The letter of John recapitulates the entire biblical history and reinterprets it which leads to a linguistic and symbolic displacement of all representations of the ruling and violent powers of history. What remains is a new symbolic order in which all images are rendered inoperative, a sphere of pure vulnerability and fragility.

Keywords:

Agamben

Messianism

Homo Sacer

Revelation to John

Testament of Time

Eschatology

Virtuality