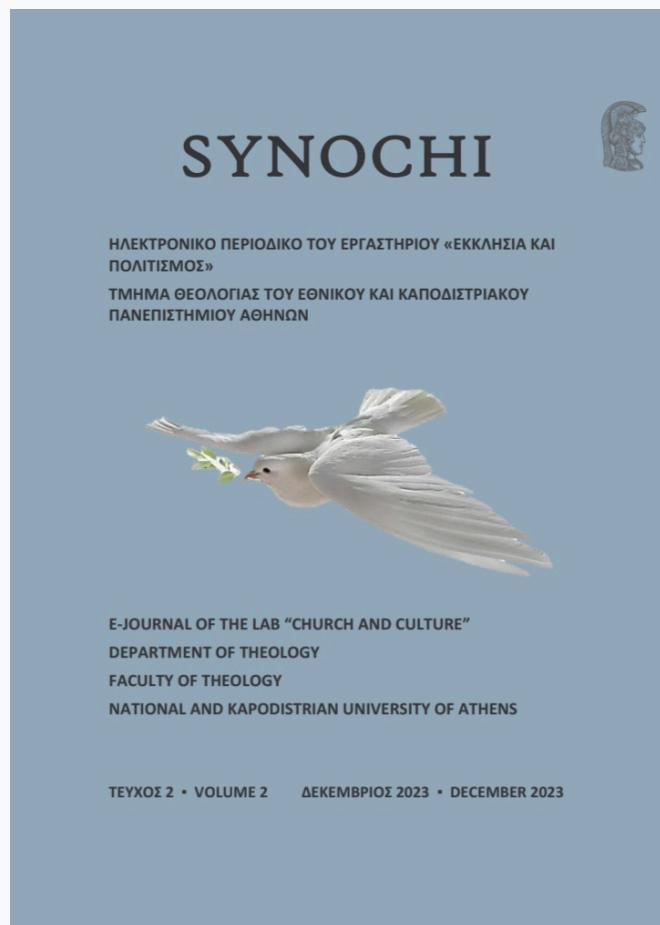


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**Pedagogical Eschatology in the work of Seltzer,
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SYNOCHI



ΗΛΕΚΤΡΟΝΙΚΟ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΟ ΤΟΥ ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΥ «ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ»

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΕΘΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟΥ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



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Pedagogical Eschatology in the work of Seltzer, David, The Omen – The encounter of Man with the further knowledge of his future

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Abstract

Eschatology is the last fundamental key to Christian dogmatics grounded on the Revelation of John and a futuristic asset for further debate and synthesis in the literature world. A more widespread multidisciplinary discussion of this topic is fostered by the subject of what would happen at the end of days on earth, especially when the present age is a portion of it. The novel *Omen* of David Seltzer illustrates such a literature synthesis describing the rising of the antichrist. Nevertheless, many questions remain concerning the role of the person of antichrist alone and the role of essential horizontal institutions such as education. The latter's role during an eschatological age could be varied either to the directions of higher human governance leading society structure into abatement and doubt or towards a well-prepared moral stand according to the individuals' intrinsic declaration of goodwill and Christian faith. The present study raises a new problem by testing the interlinear connection between the educational establishment and the novel's core in the sense of an eschatological social perspective.

Keywords: Pedagogical Eschatology, Revelation, Spiritual Capital, Religious Capital, Education, Faith.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The general frame

The word "conflict" emerges as the more intense one when dealing with topics of ominous future scenes regarding the fate of humanity, especially when those were successfully cinematographically illustrated years ago. Indeed, "The Final Conflict Movie" of the *Omen III* trilogy, directed by Graham Baker, based on the novel by Andrew Birkin and David Seltzer (1981), seems quite representative of the case⁶⁸. The plot, however, begins in the trilogy's first book, where the antichrist's decided course is being laid out for realization, and his plan to control the globe according to the dictates of the wicked one appears to be in hand⁶⁹. The *Omen I* movie (1976), directed by Richard Donner and based on the novel of David Seltzer⁷⁰, establishes the initialization of chain reaction leading the facts to the Final Conflict part. The prementioned novel shall be one of the primary study sources of the eschatology research frame of the Christian sacred text of the book of Revelation of John concerning the current social realm. In other words, the central part of this research shall be the inquiry into the relationship between education (pedagogy) and Christian eschatology⁷¹ occasioned by the novel. In what way could human beings, as little protagonists of this world, deal with those eschatological magnitudes lying beyond their grasp and what the role of pedagogy⁷² might be?

1.2 The plot of the novel

David Seltzer has worked as a scriptwriter on different movie projects, such as *The Shining Through* (1992), *The Dragon Fly* (2002), and *The Omen* (2006), the

⁶⁸ Harvey Bernhard, "The Omen," *IMDb*, 1976, accessed February 13, 2023, shorturl.at/nuOSW.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ David Seltzer, *Omen* (Dreamscape Media LLC, 2019)

⁷¹ David Wilkinson, *Christian Eschatology and the Physical Universe* (London: A&C Black, 2010), p.1

⁷² The terms of *education* and *pedagogy* in this current research are used interchangeably.

latter depicted as a cinematic refreshment of part one of the trilogies. There are many more works of his as a writer, co-writer, or even writer and producer, but still, the work which made him exquisite is the omen trilogy work of his starting with the first book.

Firstly, proceeding to the omen term might be helpful since it encrypts a dark mystery burden inside its pronunciation and notion and transmits similar attributes to the utility and quality of the novel. Omen illustrates a dark sign, a foggy and tremendous symbolism of a future malicious event coming up, threatening the world around by its realization. Omen consists of a dark scene ready to be unfolded⁷³, making a unique novel and movie title selection providing anguish for the described events and curiosity for those to come. That is the first impression when reading the Omen I novel since its first chapter begins with a slight description of the diplomatic consultant of the U.S.A. and future American ambassador, Jeremy Thorn⁷⁴, travelling by plane, ready to reach his wife bearing forth his child. His stress is described tremendously, for his wife had previously experienced several miscarries⁷⁵, which had formatted a fragile and ready-to-collapse female persona from the perspective of one more failure. Through the protagonist's (the husband) anguish as he crosses the oceans to return to Italy (where he was appointed), the reader is allowed to see the couple's deepened love for one another.

When reaching the place of the Italian hospital and finding out that his lovely wife had miscarried once more, he could not handle the pain of losing his child, especially the unreparable and inconceivable pain that was meant to be given to his wife when hearing about it⁷⁶. Fate had other plans, though, since Father Spilletto, with a maid sister, proposed to him to make a secret pact offering to exchange his dead child with a newborn boy. His real child was much alive and murdered afterwards, and the infant boy had a jackal as a mother. Nevertheless, the reality was not exposed to him by any means. So, Mr Thorn, the future ambassador

⁷³ Laura Duhan-Kaplan, Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, and Harry O. Maier, *Visions of the End Times: Revelations of Hope and Challenge* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2022), p. 81

⁷⁴ Seltzer, *Omen*, p. 12

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 11

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 13-14

of American States in England⁷⁷, was ready to raise a child whose pedigree was utterly unknown to him.

After a lot of obscure and ominous incidents happening to Thorn's life, providing him power and quick ascent, and after the inconceivable and unexplainable death of Chessa⁷⁸, the nanny of his child, named Damien, during the celebration of his birthday, Thorn was obliged to hire the services of Mrs. Baylock. This future nanny appeared at the right time and mysteriously had all the necessary documents proving her replacement at her disposal. She was Damien's key woman and protector⁷⁹ or an apostate of hell⁸⁰. She murdered thorn's wife, and Thorn battled to remedy his error after discovering the truth with the help of Jennings, a photographer-parazzi who assisted him in unearthing the truth at the cost of his life. The exorcist priest Bugenhagen told the truth about her⁸¹.

The novel ends up with the thriving of little Damien using his human father's death, position, and wealth to rise further into the world scenery of financial industry and politics with one purpose: to defeat Christ before His Second Coming and surrender humanity into the fires of hell⁸².

1.3 The cinematic transfer of the novel

As many novel writings have been transferred into the big screen, the same occurred in Seltzer David's *Omen* novel in 1976⁸³. When the teaser was released for

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 17

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 20

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 20

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 123

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 124

⁸² It is pretty interesting that Jerusalem, in particular, is called *Sodoma and Gomora* by the actions of the antichrist in Seth Turner, "Revelation 11:1-13: History of Interpretation," (PhD diss., St. John's College, 2005), p.50. William Milligan has correctly observed that the point of Revelation concurs with the scope of hindering Satan from ruling for a thousand years after breaking the chains of his imprisonment in Sydney H. T. Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," *JETS* 23, no. 1 (March/April 1980), p.32

⁸³ Adrian Schober, *The Omen* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022), p. 7

commercial purposes was a blast according to the communicative criteria of a newly presented horror film into the film industry, ready to sell many copies worldwide⁸⁴. Specifically, it could be mentioned: a) that the teaser was covered up by an ominous and mysterious music theme, inspiring an inner chill in the audience and horror film lovers⁸⁵ b) Gregory Peck as Jeremy Thorn, and the main protagonist character of the movie turned out to be a terrific choice for the role of Damien's father due to his age and style. He and his wife were in a similar with Oedipus's position since they were not aware of the truth, and by the time they found out, their cost was redeemed by their own lives c) Billie Whitelaw was a splendid cinematographic choice since she passionately incarnated Mrs. Baylock, one of Satan's apostates to protect little Damien (: *Fear not, little one," she whispered in a faltering voice. "I am here to protect thee*)⁸⁶.

Her role was the vantage point of action since she was the corner adversary keeping the ultimate identity of Damien in deep secrecy and also foreshadowing the final battle against his questioning father d) the movie was ultimately guided by action; on the contrary, the novel was more esoteric and used the psychographies of the characters masterfully as the next steps for the incidents to be unfolded. For example, Jennings' past and character are perfectly described in the novel. Not even his little hippy style was a clue to his slovenly lifestyle as depicted in the book, e) the movie trick or metaphysical horror invention of the photos foretelling the death of the individuals, which had been taken in various circumstances, and the illustration of the shadowy and gradually proceeding spear appearance against them as an ominous threat towards their passing out in the short term denoted the mysteriosity of the situation⁸⁷. Finally, the music vestment of the Ave

⁸⁴ Schober claims that the movie Omen was a success due to the general climate of paranoia illustrated in the U.S.A. after the Vietnam War and the bursting out scandal of Watergate (Schober, Omen, p. 8). Instead, it provided a subconscious hermeneutical transposition of political corruption into religious metaphysics.

⁸⁵ Jenny McDonnel, "Year of the Remake: The Omen 666 and The Wicker Man," *Irish Journal of Gothic & Horror Studies*, no. 1 (2006), p. 120

⁸⁶ Seltzer, *Omen*, p. 23

⁸⁷ The described aspect of the ongoing story element is included in the multimodality terminology of a film's making since directors are not grounded only in the linguistic part of the script but create a whole new space for the unexpected to be developed and nurtured during the filmmaking process (Kay

Satani orchestral chorus written by Jerry Goldsmith had been the basic frame of the movie's theme, providing the expected to be created chill towards the audience based on the music rhythm and speed of the verses⁸⁸.

1.4 Theological meaning of the novel and movie

The novel's author is profoundly inspired by the most ominous and cryptic Christian book of all centuries, the Revelation of John⁸⁹. The latter is well known in the frame of academic theology due to the diversified and ambiguous signs and symbols and the intrinsic prophecies incorporated within⁹⁰. The difficulty of unlocking the mysteries of those prophesies, which are grounded on the past Roman persecution occasions, the corpus of primitive Christian Theological martyrdom, and the eschatological concepts⁹¹ of the current negotiated theological issues remains a stable rock beyond any.

However, as far as conceptions do not hinder research reconceptions, new points of thought are welcome to independently add a brick to the hermeneutical castle, whether the latter comes from science, philosophy, or art. The previous occasion of the structuring mode of conception intended to be made by all the sites of human cognition makes the portrait of Revelation an undeniable source of historical inspiration and divine grandeur beyond the ken of humanity, additionally providing the right to any good willing researcher to establish one more word for the case. Therefore, the *Omen* novel and its advocated movie (1976) make unique but not-so-mythical comments about man's eschatological fate and everyday

Richardson, "Multimodality and the Study of Popular Drama," *Language and Literature: International Journal of Stylistics*, 19, no. 4 (2010), p. 385.

⁸⁸ Berthold Hoeckner et al., "Film music influences how viewers relate to movie characters," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 5, no. 2 (2011), p. 146

⁸⁹ James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Ada: Baker Academic, 2009), pp. 18-23

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Robert Banks, "Eschatological Faith in the Gospel of John," in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), pp. 36-52

human reality⁹² occasioned by the adventure of a wealthy family. A tremendous theological fact is that no one could be aware of what and how, and through what means eschatological facts shall occur in the long term, especially concerning the end of times⁹³. However, since all scholars are considered mortals of this world, they are called to be a part of the subjectification view process of it⁹⁴, as all humans seem to be, thinking over this eschatological form of Christian fate (mainly when the talking is focused on Christian believers). Therefore, their obligation remains to think and share their findings with others, primarily when the thinking method lies out of the box. On that occasion, fiction prospects could come across artful creativity, such as literature and filmography, enhancing the speculation and problematization of the theological issue being put on the table (eschatology).

Additionally, when historical and theological documentation (Revelation of John) and artful speculation or scenario (Omen novel) are being met, approvals and disapprovals of the thematical illustrations could boost contemplation and wonder. On the other hand, relationships could not be excluded. It is the moment when art meets psychological theory⁹⁵.

In that concept, the novel demonstrates an out-of-the-box hypothesis of the final conflict start up moment between Christ and the antichrist providing through its scenario some useful -to think about- tips for the Revelation case: a) the

⁹² According to the plot of the book *The Omen*, evil events are forced to occur as a result of human error or omission in the form of causation and resulting formality, whereby warnings and hints are vested by a metaphysical or supernatural veil. If that is so, then evil penetrates the human world through worldish frames. An interesting account of how evil challenges human reason and perception is Susan Neiman's *"Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁹³ Avery Dulles, "The Symbolic Structure of Revelation," *Theological Studies* 41, no. 1 (1980), p. 51. Dulles argues that the Revelation facts consist of a disclosure of God to humans motivated by love (ibid.). The challenge of Revelation's unreachable knowledge generates alternative contemplation through fantasy and scenario assumptions.

⁹⁴ E. Thomas Dowd and Terry M. Pace, "The Relativity of Reality," in *Comprehensive Handbook of Cognitive Therapy*, ed. Hal Arkowitz, L.E. Beutler, and Karen Simon (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 1989), p.213

⁹⁵ Ibid

antichrist will be a person⁹⁶, b) he will be born in human flesh aping Christ's ancient birth⁹⁷ c) his birth shall be filthy as a result of his immorality and sin – that's why he is characterized as the abomination and the son of perdition by John in his epistles adding as well the kind of quality of his plans, if not be extraordinary as the ones of the novel's scenario d) he will also have great power, which means that as a human character supported by his true father, Satan, will be a patronizing person, a great manipulator, a systematic liar, a perfect actor of a good and virtuous persona and a man of cognitive and communicative charisma misleading his subordinates⁹⁸, f) Revelation also gives him a package of supernatural powers, which might combine his charismatic personality and the perfect use of lies against men since he is of man's nature and is not so capable of or mighty as Christ. So, the novel focuses on his human hypostasis and future dynamic charisma⁹⁹ grounded on the unique wealthy human family institution from where he begins his unholy carrier. Finally, g) the political background of the antichrist is intensely realistic. Antichrist cannot mislead people into perdition if he has not the power to do so, and cognitive or social education of his, whether of high level might be, cannot provide him with that displacement. So, a political and financial background is far more necessary to provide him with that concept of power¹⁰⁰. That is why the last movie of the Trilogy, *Omen IV-The Final Conflict*¹⁰¹, presents the 32 years old Damien Thorn, almost ready to apply his great political power but still reserving the financial rights of his diseased father's firm, verifying the social saying that money makes the world move.

⁹⁶ Johannes Van Oort, "The end is now: Augustine on History and Eschatology," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012), p. 6

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Josephine M. Ford, "The construction of the other - The Antichrist," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, no. 2 (1995), p. 205

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Marcus, Itamar and Crook, Barbara. "11. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: An Authentic Document in Palestinian Authority Ideology" in *The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* edited by Richard Landes, 152-160. New York, USA: New York University Press, 2011, p. 152

¹⁰¹ *Omen III: The Final Conflict*, directed by Graham Baker. (1981; 1981), Film

The plot of the novel, following the above elements, provides a general context or hypothesis of a realistic future attitude of the antichrist though in conjunction with the modern time's spirit of someone who employs, corrupts, distorts, and deceives all along¹⁰² to find the glory that money and power and fame could provide. The conjuring of such a realization may not allow miraculously opened skies above but surely familiarises men with their broader social and political environment of nowadays and affiliates vividly the essence of the Divine plan of the Scripture with the modern time world as the antidote against the abomination. On that occasion, the theological meaning of the novel and film is served dramatically.

2. Three Central Questions- Problems

When proceeding with the study of a novel or movie from an academic perspective and whether another familiar or unfamiliar object of interest is going to be reviewed through it, then a specific context of analysis should technically intervene to serve as the connector and understanding mediate between the two magnitudes, aiding the full consideration of their relationship. Therefore, there is the novel writing text or script at hand and, on the other, the notion of the theological category of eschatology¹⁰³, mainly derived from a Christian perspective. The latter appears dynamically and provides an eye lens through which the fate of humanity shall be judged at the end of times. The notion between this account shall be called medium, provided through the technical theological term of *eschatology*¹⁰⁴. Through the review of this term, a double-sided problem emerged, which shall be under the lens of scrutiny: a) the first problem is the kind of relationship that might exist between the *Omen* novel (the *Omen* movie assists the overview

¹⁰² Richard Bennet, *The Antichrist unveiled* (Still Waters Revival Books, 2000), pp. 4-5

¹⁰³ "According to Moltmann (1996: xii), 'Christianity is wholly and entirely eschatology, not just in an appendix. It is hope, a vista, and a forward direction, and it is hence a new departure and a transformation of the present' in Chen Yuehua, "On Augustine's theology of hope: From the perspective of creation," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 1 (2022), p. 4

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

consideration) and Revelation of John b) what might be the aftermath of the events meant to take place in the unknown future to humanity and c) is there any pedagogical preparation for such an encounter?

3. Methodology

3.1 Defining the context of analysis

Pointing out some practical remarks would be beneficial when talking technically about the future notion in philosophy and theology¹⁰⁵. It seems like three kinds of future time modes emerge: a) The future, which is developed forehand and therefore is manageable but still challenging to predict b) The future as a far and long way time destination and consideration and c) The outbound future, which lies beyond any human consideration and which comes hand in hand with *eschatology*. The first kind (a) functions in short-term, and humans could evaluate their activities and schedule their management goings-on in their daily or professionally living. However, process and management problems might suddenly emerge even in its short-term discussion. The second kind (b) leads humans to conceive and accept their weaknesses against time and future prediction in a long-term account. Man cannot tame time by predicting events for his benefit.

Moreover, last but not least is the outbound territory (c), which overlaps the long-term future category encapsulated in the realm of God's provision. All of the above kinds of future are interconnected and drive one to another at some point with just an exception appearance: knowledge of God or the realm of God is unbearable and unreachable humanly. As long as the future goes, human knowledge flourishes footprint by footprint while God's truthfulness and knowledge lie even

¹⁰⁵ Nelus Niemandt, "Believing in the Future: Missiology's Future Prospect," *Missionalia* 50, no. 1 (2022), p. 6, says that Bosch's idea of the future in theological terms is the church's mission. So the future of the church is prevailing against evil since Christ and evil cannot co-exist according to Matthew 12:30 (*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters*).

beyond. The knowledge beyond is the mission of the Church, and the latter is conceived as eschatology and future knowledge behind the human brick walls¹⁰⁶.

God's provision includes three other continents of God's wisdom: a) *eschatology*, b) *meta-scene eschatology*, and c) *the infinite of the will of God*¹⁰⁷. None of those areas could be studied or defined by any means since human knowledge consists of a transparent magnitude and a weak tool for such leapt endeavours. On the other hand, there is always the risk of humans willing to take the risk to discover things related to the mystery of life, the cosmos, and God. When discussing eschatology and meta-eschatology, it is essential to note that these concepts are intended to have concrete manifestations in the present world. However, their origin differs a little since eschatology comes with preparing the present facts, their symbolical meanings illustrating the future and the human adjustment to the new terms of conduct. Eschatology should be the fruit of the near future to come.

On the other hand, meta-scene eschatology comes hand in hand with *Revelation*¹⁰⁸. It announces the aftermath of the preparation events and the final conflict between good and evil. Consequently, the outcome of the final conflict shall determine the fate of the world and, according to the Revelation of John, shall be the establishment of the Kingdom of God¹⁰⁹.

3.2 The Revelation of John in the present day

¹⁰⁶ A very interesting account is that of Gregory of Nyssa's metaphor of human knowledge as a ladder leading to human fulfillment. in Christ in Ludlow Morwenna., "Gregory of Nyssa: *Contra Eunomium II*," in *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II: An English Version with Supporting Studies - Proceedings of the 10th International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Olomouc, September 15-18, 2004)*, ed. Lenka Karfíková, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber (Leiden: BRILL, 2007)

¹⁰⁷ The author takes another footprint towards the process of the contour understanding of eschatology.

¹⁰⁸ Elena Kalmykova, "Holding doctrinal belief as an artefact," *Religious Studies* 57, no. 2 (2019), p. 239

¹⁰⁹ "The kingdom of God is a learning community with gifts of life, liberation and love" in Johannes J. Knoetze, "Transforming theological education is not the accumulation of knowledge, but the development of consciousness," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41, no. 1 (2020), p. 3

The work of John belongs to the generalized apocalyptic grammatology and includes the final bridging frontier between two main eras: the prophetic era and the eschatological era¹¹⁰. Although it was penned during the tremendous Roman tribulations and has been used symbolically¹¹¹ on multiple occasions to reveal hidden meanings to Christian initiates about the Roman emperor as the great beast and the central antichrist of the world, the same work possesses great and classical symbolic power to be adjusted in any time context of human history when the faith of Christ battles against the unholy son of satan. According to mystical Christian traditions, the son of satan comes forth every 1000 years to give his fight again, making even with Christ.

Every time Satan escapes from his bondage, the world needs preparation, and history comes towards an eschatological era. Antichrist¹¹² illustrates not only Christ's adversary but the one who is to come instead of Him. In other words, he will dare to replace the Holy One, pretending to be He who has been expected as the true Messiah deceiving the whole world¹¹³. The second meaning makes much difference since his title as antichrist indirectly denotes that his identity must be derived from the broader spectrum of the believers of the Christian tradition but not strictly originated by the Christian world¹¹⁴. The latter makes much sense since his title could not be rationally legitimate if he did not underestimate the power of the Son of God. That is why anti-*Christ* is just the title (with the name of Christ as the second term), indirectly denoting the beast's character¹¹⁵. The name is meant to belong to a human meant to be born in a sinful environment and embrace sin and corruption as a true philosophy and religion of an authentic human living according to the dogmas of the fallen one¹¹⁶. The first warning of Revelation of John was the letters to the seven churches¹¹⁷: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira,

¹¹⁰ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Ada: Baker Academic, 2002), p. 1

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid, p. 16

¹¹³ Thomas D. Ice, "The Ethnicity of the Antichris," *Article Archives* 93 (May/June 2009), p. 1

¹¹⁴ There are quite many references about his jewish origin from the Dan tribe.

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Martin, "When Did Angels Become Demons?", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 4 (2010), p. 657

¹¹⁷ Rev. 1:4 (NRSV)

Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Only the Church of Smyrna was up to a point to remain faithful against the trials and persecutions. On the other hand, all the others have been severely warned to keep the faith of Christ alive. Otherwise, they shall be spitted of the mouth of Christ during the great judgment day.

The seven seals¹¹⁸ are destined to be the sources of tremendous trials for both the faithful and the unfaithful to be tested according to their works of faith. The tribulations will be derived from God, and the antichrist will be motivated differently. The former wants to warn and pedagogy the fallen humans as their last hope for repentance and a great return to His embrace; the latter means to control and finally deceive humans to the last into the pit of hell revenging his father. The antichrist shall be human but disposes of no human feelings or remorse. He is the gate-keeper of satan's commands, being his father in spirit¹¹⁹. In that concept, great persecutions of different forms shall emerge, like financial, occupational, psychological, physical, social, educational, etc. The whole modern world will be in crisis. John also denotes that great martyrs of the true Church of Christ shall arise, gaining the crown of victory and sanctity and foreshadowing the beast's defeat¹²⁰. The number *seven* is symbolic and points out the extended last attribution of the Church. The seven churches are just the preface door for the mystery of iniquity, as the context idea for the congregation of the fallen since the antichrist will also rule for seven years¹²¹. The Christian Church's wound shall project the mystery of iniquity out from its veil¹²², which may be merely justified because demolishing or depriving faith is considered the outcome of the pre-existence of faith.

Antichrist could not facilitate his establishment's creation and function if he would not prior adjust the cultural presumptions of his future empire to his own measures¹²³. Several presuppositions could occur first, but the most crucial seem to be two: a) the cultivation of rhetoric and b) the control of the earth's population.

¹¹⁸ Rev. 6:1–16:21 (NRSV)

¹¹⁹ Hane Kila, "The Antichrist," *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 19, no. 1 (January 2003), p. 119

¹²⁰ Kila, "The Antichrist", p.122

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Ibid, pp. 120-21

¹²³ Ibid

Revelation also refers to a false prophet¹²⁴ who will arise and have in mind to propagandize the new movement ideals and religion era. The new movement has its roots from the ancient times of John's period till today. It could not be regarded as a random fact that the increasing number of astrologers and fortunetellers today, primarily through media¹²⁵, selling hope and, through that hope demanding control of the human will. Magic, through many forms of its own, the Wicca and the Dark Path, for instance, are on the run, gaining prestige among the young people and demanding the right of free space to be legally adjusted in the social realm. The renegades of the LOATKI¹²⁶ movement are tremendously trying to make multiple sexual preferences morally and ethically justified and socially accepted, invoking the legal right of their physical freedom of sexual choice. In that concept, intersexual plurality drives towards a multi-polygamic arrogance against the respect of the ideal of the man-woman scriptural established relationship¹²⁷, turning personality into flesh carrier disposing of the legitimate right for pleasure or even sexual sadistic pain.

Politics shall be the vehicle for the establishment of the new ethos. The political battles meant to be given into international organizations and forums for human rights, immigration issues, international relations, commerce, financial aid, health, sexual freedom and many more to retain a specified national respect might be smoothed into political compromises through the usage of other unknown or undefined external pressures, which shall be applied for the gain of the total political control. By the time the latter happens, the cultural and ethical boundaries shall kneel,¹²⁸ and the era of the antichrist shall be in hand.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 122

¹²⁵ "Astrology, which, by its origin, initially sought to interpret and forecast natural phenomena and later administrative and ideological problems, has entered a brand-new era with the advent of the mass media" in Gülenay Pınarbaşı, "Massmedia and astrology as a reflection of the culture industry," *Psychology Research on Education and Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (December 2021), pp. 83-93

¹²⁶ Aikaterini Tomana, ""Keep it Radical": A qualitative analysis of contemporary queer discourse around gay pride," (master's thesis, Lund University, 2021), p. 5

¹²⁷ John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), p. 114

¹²⁸ Paul Dunion, "A Crisis of Morality," HuffPost, last modified December 13, 2017, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-crisis-of-morality_b_5a312953e4b0b73dde46a8e4.

In addition, there is always the mark of the antichrist in the discussion, which according to Revelation, shall be the mark of a human¹²⁹, consonant with the three sixes¹³⁰. Furthermore, his minions and followers shall bear the same mark on their head or right hand to be recognized as his servants. The novel's story follows the same motif since little Damien holds the mark of the beast behind his head when his father sneakily enters his bedroom during the child's sleep and, based on Bugenhagen's advice, searches for the mark on his child. Of course, *Omen I* does not provide much information about the follower's mark as the starting up of the case but leaves many implications.

At this point is considered quite crucial to observe the shared characteristics between the novel and the work of John. For that reason, the table below provides a specified picture of the case:

Table (1) - Novel and Revelation events' relation

Novel	Revelation of John	Commonplace (C) or a Difference (D)?
Birth of the antichrist as a human being	The antichrist shall be a human indeed	C
A female Chagall brought him to the world	There is no such account of Revelation	D
The child's bearing was escorted with	There is no such account of Revelation	D

¹²⁹ Gregory Bale, "Why Is the Number of the Beast 666?", Westminster Theological Seminary, last modified August 13, 2015, <https://faculty.wts.edu/posts/why-is-the-number-of-the-beast-666/>.

¹³⁰ Rev. 13:17

the death of another innocent child.		
His name was Damien	His name shall be one of the humans	C
Damien bears the mark of the beast on his head	The antichrist shall bring the mark of the beast	C
His nanny (Mrs. Baylock) was a hell's apostate	Revelation does not refer to such a case	D
Damien is being born into an environment of politics	Revelation refers to the rise of the anti-christ from the waving sea, interpreted as politics or political tribulations.	C
Antichrist kills his adversaries mercilessly after warning them through signs.	The antichrist is the beast and the major abomination without ethical codes or remorse.	D

According to the above table observations, there is a 50% balance between the novel of *Omen I* and *Revelation of John*. Besides that, some of the diversions found consist of the specific ground cultivating an imaginative scenario of the author. Furthermore, some novel incidents are considered dynamic and logical events which may occur when the antichrist's appearance shall be in hand. No one could reject

the possibility of people helping the antichrist with his work when the time comes¹³¹. Those might be characterized freely as *apostates of hell* inspired by the devil and will finally be condemned in the lake of fire¹³². The latter would be regarded as a normal consecutive fact since Revelation of John is about his followers in general. The work of Revelation, though, does not focus on details of the life of the antichrist since it is not his autobiography but a warning for humanity concerning future events instead¹³³. The 50% balance justifies the last estimation providing a pretty large territory for the development of the plot, which could be a version of the actual events to follow.

3.3 Education as a tool of ominous groundwork

Education was always regarded as the top of the spear for every nation and human wishing to make progress. On the other hand, there is always the possibility of the misuse of education for alien or even malicious purposes. Scientific achievements made human life more manageable but simultaneously provided the chance for making wealth beyond measure by the few¹³⁴. Even laypeople could figure out the environmental damages or the several warfares that have exploded throughout human history. Scientific progress is considered the first pillar of the education case¹³⁵, while the other may be the content of philosophy and value systems derived from schooling.

Schooling is necessary for developing the cognitive and psychological background of the lads since it could dynamically initiate multiple consecutive reactions in everyday life and even other concerning activities of humans. That is why every

¹³¹ Ice D. Thomas, "The Mark of the Beas," *Article Archives* 104 (May/June 2009), p. 3

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Mark 10.23 (NRSV)

¹³⁵ Maria Chuy et al., "Understanding the nature of science and scientific progress: A theory-building approach," *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology / La revue canadienne de l'apprentissage et de la technologie* 36, no. 1 (2010), p. 2

action is derived from mental and psychological motivation. The motives are regarded as a sum of cognitive/mental element¹³⁶s being transformed and developed every second regarding the scenery of situations coming ahead. Intelligent people can formulate their motives and plan actions and reactions accordingly¹³⁷. Moreover, highly mentally skilled persons could manage and lead a group according to their directives and purposes. Schooling facilitates the learning process for all students, especially medium-class persons, while an intelligent one finds opportunities and sets higher goals to achieve¹³⁸.

Achieving goals is not bad, but when those goals are escorted by ominous objectives and motives highly connected with faith and the world's exploitation through faith, it provides a whole different perspective on the issue. Many people have tried the same and still do it through industry, finance, politics, or even education. However, the final gain is personified and refers to the gain of money and broadening their wealth. On the other hand, very few people have a genuine interest in leading the world through hope and faith, using advancement and intelligence for the benefit of humanity and not against it, since they are the only ones who have conceived the importance of nature and the final scope of humanity¹³⁹. Four group pillars are well aware of that: a) the Christian Church (especially the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic), b) the Mystics (in an inter-religious view), c) the evil theorists and practitioners, and d) a part of the scientific community. The Christian church doctrine establishes the world's fate in cultivating the good; the second incorporates excellent and evil as essential parameters of balance; the third confirms the world's fate into the ecstasy of the power of evil, while the fourth is overwhelming with the cultivation of a collective or a global mind. From all those pillars, it is not considered a random thing that one of the mystics stands between religious

¹³⁶ See: S. Volet and S. Jarvela, *Motivation in Learning Contexts: Theoretical and Methodological Implications* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001)

¹³⁷ Chy et all, "Understanding...", *Ibid*

¹³⁸ Karen E. Ablard, "Achievement Goals and Implicit Theories of Intelligence among Academically Talented Students," *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 25, no. 3 (2002), p. 216

¹³⁹ Barbara C. Crosby, "Leading in the Shared-Power World of 2020," *Public Administration Review* 70 (2010), p. 70

faith and evil practice¹⁴⁰ since both sides dispose of their mystics. In that case, the balance of the forces of good and evil has been divided since a number of them have already chosen their camp. The human world is regarded as their battlefield, and the win of one or the other will determine the world's fate, which shall be near God or far astray.

During this spiritual warfare, human knowledge and education are regarded as the top spears of the wisest ones, who shall determine the outcome by convincing the doubter, proving the facts accordingly, deluding the ignorant, converting the weakest, or even annihilating the opponent according to the will of the son of perdition. Pedagogical eschatology is the duration of this particular time-space and the cognitive battle effect situation of the opposite values via their representatives. The latter is precisely the period nowadays, during which technological means and scientific advancements are added and affiliated with the proof element tools destined to rebuild the sociology-philosophical facts concluding reality and through a new modern philosophy structure of theirs to escalate their intervention in human conviction and doubt formulating the human puppet of the new age. The antichrist is the prototype puppeteer man-shape of the new age running. From that point of view, current education seems to cultivate logos of the new era without including the elements of faith and remorse. Profoundly, the *Clear Logos*¹⁴¹ of Kantian thought has been the footstep for annihilating metaphysics simultaneously with the rise of another metaphysical event. That is quite an oxymoron event, likewise. However, pedagogical eschatology serves the anti-logos meaning the battle within for restoring the authentic logos as reality and essence of man through the restoring of logical faith¹⁴². Furthermore, every battle is a discerning one.

¹⁴⁰ Dickson N. Kagema, "The Mystery of Mystical Power, Evil Magic, Witchcraft and Sorcery in Africa and the Christian Response," *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 3 (2020), p. 237

¹⁴¹ "In Plotinus, perception is organized into a totality by the activity of the intellectual through imagination, the image-making power, and the logos endiathetos..." in John S. Hendrix, "Immanuel Kant: Philosophy of Perception," DOCS@RWU, accessed February 25, 2023, https://docs.rwu.edu/saahp_fp/41.

¹⁴² In that case, Divine Liturgy, and then liturgical theology, maintain the corpus verum of the feeding of logical faith on all humanity. Nathan Jennings, "Divine Economy, Divine Liturgy: Liturgical Theology as a Retrieval of Figural Interpretation," *Radical Orthodoxy: Theology, Philosophy, Politics* 2, no. 1 (2014).

In the novel, the reader can see Mr. Thorn trying to overcome his human perceptions about parenthood and childhood, which might be tools for truth distortion shortly (if they had not become already), and see the absolute truth about his "son." Christ, however, had said through the gospels that the true believer of His has to leave his mother, father, and children and collied to him carrying his cross, meaning that family and human bloodline cannot provide truth and salvation without the presupposition of faith within¹⁴³. From that point of view, if education provides learning without judgment and goodwill¹⁴⁴, only faith-religious faith could provide, then adheres to distortion and evil¹⁴⁵. Moreover, evil does not care about humankind's benefit but only for restructuring the chaotic battlefield of the primordial fall of the fallen angels. Systematically evil could be the implementation of educational logos without faith in God, leading to chaos. Keeping the ancient Greek analogy according to which man without the Gods is nothing¹⁴⁶, the same could be implemented in the direction of learning- Education without faith also leads to nothingness¹⁴⁷. History has described the dark role of the Christian Church during the middle ages. However, even if Church and faith are related, they remain autonomous parameters, and the distortion of one does not necessarily mean the distortion of the whole faith¹⁴⁸. For a better overview of pedagogical eschatology as a battle of discerning between good and evil education, the table below (2) provides three columns regarding eschatology, pedagogical eschatology, and current history manners attributes:

¹⁴³ Matthew 19:29 (NRSV)

¹⁴⁴ Kent Den Heyer and Cathryn Van Kessel, "Evil, Agency, and Citizenship Education," *Articles / Les articles* 50, no. 1 (2016), p. 79

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 90

¹⁴⁶ Homer, *Odyssey*, Book 18,130

¹⁴⁷ In that concept, education without faith should be taken more as an education without the internal scope of improving human morality and self-internal; see also: Mary B. Armstrong, J. Edward Ketz, and Dwight Owsen, "Ethics education in accounting: moving toward ethical motivation and ethical behavior," *Journal of Accounting Education* 21, no. 1 (2003).

¹⁴⁸ An interesting distinction comes around through the *spiritual capital* (faith) and *religious capital* (church) in Chris Baker and Hanahh Skinner, *Faith in action* (Manchester: William Temple Foundation, 2006), pp. 4-5

Table (2) - Quality comparison		
Eschatology	Pedagogical Eschatology	Current Time
Based on Christian belief, eschatology refers to the end of times.	The familiarization of men with the nature and attributes of future cognition. It is the learning beyond.	The gradual familiarization of men with the knowledge and perspective of the current time.
The end of times is adherent with the good and evil battle.	Pedagogical eschatology is adherent to the wholeness of men's attributes.	Current's time pedagogy is affiliated with the current development of man.
According to eschatology, the whole world's Biblical meaning and narrative center is Christ, and the antichrist is his adversary.	There is a crisis of true discerning since moral and ethical impediments emerge very often.	Current educative problems include class management difficulties, behavioral shortcomings, and cognitive devotion.
According to Biblical Eschatology, the final aim is the prevailing of Christ	According to Pedagogical Eschatology, learning should be Christ-centered.	Current educative initiatives adhere to the prevailing systematic character of existing knowledge content.
Eschatologically, the Teacher shall be Christ.	The Teacher, most of the time, consists of a tribulated character.	The Teacher is the man without having a fear of discerning and evaluating.

The final fruit, through the eschatology period, shall be the fruit of Theosis.	The final aim is purported to be the wholeness of man.	The final accomplishment is meant to be a helpful citizen.
All men are regarded as students.		The kids are regarded to be the students.

4. Damien and Pedagogical Eschatology

Little Damien is the central protagonist and character of the *Omen* novel. A newborn kid appears to be born from a jackal denoting the unholiness and the unsacred way of the antichrist to be manifested on earth¹⁴⁹. His mission was already known from John's Revelation as the damnation of all humankind and the submission of it to his only father, satan himself. Nevertheless, he still needed a sum of collaborators to achieve such a goal. Father Spilletto, at the start, was the one who promoted the unholy child to the candidate father¹⁵⁰, and Mrs Baylock, later on, was his suitable protector¹⁵¹. Nothing of the above could occur without a family to foster the child. From that point of view, the Thorn family initiated the antichrist's plan process and was meant to be the mainstream collaborator of the novel's scenario¹⁵² until all the facts led to the gain of the previously mentioned anti-logos by his father¹⁵³, who, through his battle victory managed to see the truth and took the decision to take out the child.

¹⁴⁹Seltzer, *Omen*, p. 47

¹⁵⁰Ibid, p. 49

¹⁵¹Ibid, p. 23

¹⁵²Ibid, p. 14

¹⁵³Ibid, p. 90

The facts were also considered the vehicle through which the incidents were placed one after the other in logical and consequent terms. Those facts exactly were in the position to transplant the elements of the story (occurrences, places, individuals, roles) into another level, more powerful and metaphysical than the current one. In that concept, pedagogical eschatology frames another fact dimension and a new learning approach to reality for the human being. Although the last transplanted attribute might be called equally as a simple scenario, the possibility of manipulated sequents of facts cannot be excluded from the real world, leading to conflict between the forces of good and evil. Pedagogical eschatology is about this conflict which could be linked with the story of the novel through the main hero attributes, Damien, as shown below:

Table 3 – Damien and Pedagogical Eschatology Reflection

Damien	Pedagogical Eschatology
He has not been baptized.	Family neglection and ignorance and the cause of the fostering of the new member led to the oblivion of Baptism utility and protection that the mystery could provide.
Family's decision to bring Damien to the Church.	This leads to a crisis outside the temple
Suicide of the previous nanny	Considered as the next step of Mrs Baylock's hire
Mrs Baylocks arrival	leads to Mutual recognition of their mission

Educational Visit to the zoo denotes	Manifestation of Damien's power over animals and nature.
The murder of Damien's mother	Manifestation of Damien's killing power through Mrs Baylock.

Damien's personality seems to correspond to the type of metaphysical anti-christ who lands on history in a humanistic way aping Christ on the opposite reflection. Nevertheless, the scenario keeps the myth ingredient as a functional tool for ongoing development without losing its anchoring on the real human characters and occurrences. The latter is one of the ingredients which, on the one hand, makes *Omen I* novel a faithful practice of Revelation. On the other hand, it corresponds to a symbolic and encrypted notion of human social practice and education as quite inferior to the human challenges to come and a precursor of any of the metaphysical events pre-described in Revelation.

Human current education cannot indicate the future of the cosmos but cares for the peaceful maintenance of the existing social structure. Although men cannot predict the future and seem pretty vulnerable to plans they cannot control or comprehend, they seem capable of upholding faith in God and providing a different and more ethical boost in their education reality on an individualistic and social level through it¹⁵⁴. The latter makes quite an impression as a hope meant to last.

5. Conclusions

After reading the *Omen I* novel and understanding the depth of the described facts of the scenario (every writer has a scenario in their mind, after all), Pedagogical Eschatology emerged as a tool of faith that could boost education to the next level by preparing the frames for the conflict occurrence which is related with the

¹⁵⁴ Owsen, "Ethics education..", Ibid

social and educational matters. In that concept, the present work leads to the following conclusions:

- 1) *Omen I* novel adheres sharply to the Revelation of John, incorporating a helpful scenario myth.
- 2) The novel links the current time with the time to come as an eschatological era duration.
- 3) Eschatology as a notion is more affiliated with the work of John and therefore is more a Christian attribute.
- 4) Eschatological facts embrace the cosmos' social and scientific facts and pedagogical (educational) issues. The latter seems to be a unique point since education enhances man to know, think, and contribute.
- 5) The relationship between education and eschatology bears up to a new philosophical tool called *pedagogical eschatology*.
- 6) *Pedagogical Eschatology* drives man of thought into an internal conflict between intrinsic morality and evil, providing him with an antidote against doubt: faith.
- 7) The current Education system is grounded on logos of social maintenance. On the other hand, Eschatological Education and pedagogical eschatology are also grounded on anti-logos providing moral motives grounded on God's purport for humankind. The divine plan of His leads humans to understand that human society lies in mortality and suffering through death and perdition, but still, the wisest gifts that God gave to humans may start functioning, indicating that all human institutions may turn from corruption into immortality and salvation. This "anti-logos" is much more affiliated with its replacement characteristic (instead of the Kantian Clear logos, which has been already misinterpreted and corrupted) as an advancement attribute, not as a firm contradiction leading to despair.

8) Finally, anti-logos may be identified as a precursor of God's grace¹⁵⁵ ending the conflict and restoring education to its authentic form. Debating education, though, is like generating its authenticity from its ashes.

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¹⁵⁵ "In *Philippians 3:3* Paul claims that those who belong to the new Israel, with its circumcision of the old self, 'serve' by the Spirit of God. They are able to 'serve' God because they are animated by the Holy Spirit. But he does not explain how they are empowered to do so." in John W. Kleinig, "The work of the Holy Spirit in the divine service," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 44, no. 1 (May 2010), p. 15

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