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The Duality of Paul in Pier Paolo Pasolini's Saint Paul: The Katechon and the Collapse of a Film Project

Jason Michael Collins

Department of World Languages and Cultures, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tennessee,
Knoxville, TN 37920, USA; jcoll121@utk.edu

Abstract: Recent scholarship on Pier Paolo Pasolini has put into focus many of the Italian intellectual's lesser-known works. Among these is his screenplay for an unrealized film on the topic of the apostle Paul, *San Paolo*. Analyses of the film address Pasolini's portrayal of Paul as dichotomic, as a representation of both revolutionary and conformist. In examining the criticism that addresses the duality of Saint Paul's, this representation proves essential to understanding the role Pasolini intended the apostle to play. Paul, one of the architects of the Christian religion, is in fact the *katechon* that he names in 2 Thessalonians. Paul as the *katechon* is thus the force that holds back evil and annihilation. In doing so, however, he also prevents Man's final redemption. As such, his portrayal of Paul is blasphemy, and Pasolini sent this screenplay to Don Emilio Cordero, head of Sampaolo Films, a Catholic film company charged with making religious movies in line with Church doctrine. This depiction of Paul proves one reason the film remains unmade and not solely the astronomical costs evident from the screenplay, as has been generally accepted until now.

Keywords: Pasolini; Saint Paul; cinema; *katechon*; biopolitics

1. Introduction

Pasolini's cinema held the ability to shock audiences into the theater, and one could justly conjecture that this outcome pleased producers and studios that brought his vision to fruition. Pasolini proposed only one film that remains unrealized due to controversial substance, although he never completed other works such as *Porno-Teo-Kolossal* because of his death, *La Nebbiosa*, commissioned by Renzo Tresoldi, and *The Savage Father*. These film ideas by Pasolinian standards are not scandalous. *Porno-Teo-Kolossal* follows his *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975) chronologically and in substance, and the other two are tame. His portrayal of Paul of Tarsus, however, transposing him to the 20th century, and his use of the saint as a vehicle for biopolitical doctrine, one who composes a good and evil dyad, elicits presumptions of blasphemy and politically motivated antipathy. Pasolini would eschew the approach he favored in his early cinematic offerings from the neorealism of *Accatone* (1961) and *Mama Roma* (1965) to *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964) in favor of more baroque figurations beginning in 1966 with his critically acclaimed film *The Hawks and the Sparrows* (1966), a sociopolitical allegory, and his unrealized vision, *San Paolo, or Saint Paul*.

Pasolini's *Saint Paul* is not a hagiography, a retelling of the life of Paul of Tarsus, but rather a transposition of the biblical figure Paul to the world stage in the years 1938–1968, one that reveals him as a dichotomy of revolution and conformist. Paul appears as an instigator against norms and as a conformist that, through the 20th century transposition, exemplifies contemporary capitalist hegemony as a continuation of fascism and religious conformity. Paul rebels against the very hegemony and conformity in which he participates, but both revolution and hegemony function within the same neo-liberal capitalist paradigm with which Pasolini concerns himself. This archetype of Paul as dichotomic presents the Paul of the people and the Paul of the Church, and effectively, the *katechon*. In 2 Thessalonians Paul describes a force that holds back the son of perdition. It proves both a



Citation: Collins, Jason Michael. 2023. The Duality of Paul in Pier Paolo Pasolini's Saint Paul: The Katechon and the Collapse of a Film Project. *Humanities* 12: 144. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h12060144>

Received: 25 September 2023

Revised: 21 November 2023

Accepted: 23 November 2023

Published: 5 December 2023



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positive and a negative force, one that encapsulates oppressive law, state, and church, and the revolution against such bodies.

Recent criticism has shown an interest in *Saint Paul*, and scholars have addressed Paul's dichotomic nature (See [Di Blasi 2012](#); [Walsh 2018](#); [Twomey 2019](#); [Blanton 2014](#)). A book dedicated to the work, *Il sogno di Pier Paolo Pasolini. La sceneggiatura incompiuta del suo film su san Paolo*, by authors Carlotta Ciarrapica and Andrea Bizzozero, was released in 2023 by the very publishing house linked to the film company slated to release the film. It therefore provides unique insight and pertinent analysis. None of these works, however, identify Paul as the embodiment of the *katechon*. Sean Desilets's book *Hermeneutic Humility and the Political Theology of Cinema*, as well as Sean Mark's *Pound and Pasolini: Poetics of Crisis* both argue a linkage between Paul and the *katechon*, a discussion began with Ward Blanton's "Afterward: Appropriation's Excess, Paul of Tarsus for an Age of the Capitalization of Master." None, however, assert that Pasolini portrays Paul, the identifier of the *katechon*, as the *katechon*. Desilets associates the *katechon* with Paul's homosexuality and his restraining of such instincts, thus a force that restrains evil (tendencies), as the Church he organizes defines it (See [Desilets 2017](#), pp. 37–40). Mark's argument centers on the *katechon* within the context of Pasolini and Ezra Pound's *œuvres* overall, and Blanton's a hermeneutical association of Pasolini, Paul, and the *katechon*. Paul as the *katechon* is political by design, and therefore conforms to brutalizing antisemitic and lifelong Nazi Karl Schmitt's idea as the *katechon* as a political force. Regarding a figure like Paul, antifascist philosopher Paolo Virno's analysis of this concept compliments Pasolini's rendering.

Schmitt views this force as necessary to maintain society. In essence, this force unifies a divergent public prone to chaos. The *katechon* proves to be a force organizational and practical, one that originates from a cooperation of authority (priesthood) and power (empire), now church and state. In *The Nomos of the Earth*, he argues that "'Empire' in this sense meant the historical power to restrain the appearance of the Antichrist and the end of the present eon; it was a power that withholds (qui tenet) . . ." ([Schmitt 2006](#), pp. 59–60) and that "The emperor's office was inseparable from the work of the *katechon*, with concrete tasks and missions" ([Schmitt 2006](#), p. 62). Of course, Schmitt's explanation acts as an apologia to Nazism's rise out of the chaos of the Weimar Republic, but this model prefigures Pasolini's dichotomic Paul, which sees the saint as a Nazi in occupied Paris at the beginning of the screenplay. Pasolini constructs the saint as a fascist collaborator, a revolutionary, a capitalist, and a founder of corrupted and restrictive institutions. The significance of this examination lies in its establishment of Pasolini's depiction of Paul as the *katechon*. This interpretation of Paul, which proves irreverent and contrary to the mission of the film company that commissioned it, remains the evident reason for the film remains unmade, and not solely the financial and logistic impracticality of making it. In this analysis I will (1) discuss Paul's dichotomy within a framework of contemporary criticism on Pasolini's screenplay; (2) show that this dichotomy comprises Pasolini's Saintly Paul and Priestly Paul drawn from both Acts and Letters; (3) demonstrate that Paul's contradictory dichotomy reveals him as the *katechon* pronounced in 2 Thessalonians; and (4) argue this as a primary reason for the film's rejection by the Catholic film company that sought its realization.

To begin, it is first imperative to delineate the temporal and locational transpositions Pasolini elected. Such transpositions reveal Pasolini's codified hermeneutic ideology and overall worldview. Each biblical locus has a contemporary equivalent analogous to its hegemonic station. Fortunately, many of these Pasolini explicitly illuminated, both the historical equivalent of a modern locality and justification for the contemporary counterpart. Pasolini first lists Rome, which he designates as New York or Washington, although it is clearly New York in the text. It is a choice that alludes to Pasolini's awareness that money factors into power more than bureaucracy. Pasolini describes New York and Washington as the center of the modern world and the capital of modern imperialism, the seat of power over the rest of the earth (See [Pasolini 2014](#), p. 4); Paris replaces Jerusalem—presented as a cultural, ideological, civil, and religious center, "the sanctuary of enlightened and

intelligent conformism” (Pasolini 2014, p. 4). Athens is substituted with Rome, a city parenthetically defined as being “of grand historical but not religious tradition” (Pasolini 2014, p. 4). Antioch converts to London as the “capital of an imperial antecedent of power to America’s supremacy just as Macedonian-Alexandrian was antecedent to the Roman Empire” (Pasolini 2014, p. 4). Paul is thus transposed to the Atlantic region that Replaces the Mediterranean. Interestingly however, as the text remains mostly unedited by Pasolini, and contains numerous redundancies and changes that he composes without canceling the previous ones; Antioch later proves to be Geneva. Further transpositions of locus are Caesarea to Vichy France, Damascus to Barcelona, Marseille to Seleucia, a Lombardian city to Troy, and unidentified biblical sites to the German Plains, Munich, Cologne, and Bonn. Because of biblical text selections, one can deduce that Naples has replaced Corinth, and New York includes a palimpsest of Memphis Tennessee because of Pasolini’s curious insistence of transposing Paul to the motel where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, but in the New York City scenes 110–112.

The choice of Pasolini’s transpositions, the presumptions about the contemporary sites’ hegemonic status in contemporary globalism, and each archaic equivalent denote a continuation of power structures that have persisted. Now, however, they are recycled anew, filtered, and formed by consumerism and its various vehicles, Church, state, media, and how they control, and are controlled, by global economic calculations. What Pasolini views as hegemony itself, that complex web of power and its maintenance, he reduces to cultural imperialism, or coca-colonization, the diffusion of American product consumerism that feeds, quite literally, the same hegemonic complex that cultivates it (See Righi 2011, pp. 77–78). It would make sense then that Pasolini would situate Imperial Rome in New York City. At the center is his design of Paul as the *katechonic* force, a suppressive force, a partisan, as Ward Blanton alludes to him (See Blanton 2014, pp. 129–30). As biblical scholar Richard Walsh notes in “Ready for His Closeup? Pasolini’s *San Paolo* and *Paul, Apostle of Christ*

Pasolini uses Paul’s words—many of which modern biblical scholars wish to eliminate from discussion—to create Paul’s schizoid character. He is both creator of a moralistic, hierarchical, oppressive institution and a sickly mystic/prophet/poet. Instead of a linear development from one to the other, Pasolini moves back and forth between these different Pauls (or Pauline words), conjoining them carefully, in order to create ambiguity, contradiction, and even sickness. Thus, from the beginning (scene 42) to the end (scenes 103–11), Paul is both oppressive moralist and apocalyptic poet. (Walsh 2018, p. 27)

Again, such a brash image of Paul, fluctuating between revolutionary saint and capitalist collaborationist, seems almost haphazard, as though Pasolini did not calibrate the text this way, but Desilets notes that such a dizzying portrayal functions according to the author’s plans, writing “the film’s ambivalence about Paul in particular is so extreme that the valorizations being presented in the text are constantly in danger of tipping over into their opposites” (Desilets 20). The design intends to blur the lines of definition regarding Paul. One could reasonably deduce that such ambiguity would be unacceptable to Cordero, who commissioned Pasolini to make a hagiography. Then, there remains the issue with the production company Cordero represents.

2. Pasolini, Don Emilio Cordero and Sampaolo Film

Pasolini first proposed the commissioned film in 1966 to Don Emilio Cordero, director of the aptly named Sampaolo film—now San Paolo Film. The film company is linked to Edizioni San Paolo, which dedicates its mission to releasing books, magazines, and other works uniform with Church doctrine. Pasolini enjoyed credibility stemming from Church officials’ praise for his film *Il vangelo secondo Matteo*, even if many expressed distastes for its director.¹ Sampaolo film is a company initiated for the purpose of disseminating Catholic themed cinema, like its publishing house equivalent, thereby spreading doctrine, akin to Saint Paul. Cordero first rejected the idea temporarily but gave hope regarding its possible

future.² In 1968 Pasolini composed most of the screenplay and began to indicate what needed to be grandiose and what could be economized, providing insight into Pasolini's own worries that the film would be monetarily impossible to bring to fruition. He remarks in the screenplay which scenes could be filmed in studio modestly, and which would require hundreds of extras on location. Pasolini sent no more known letters, and none are recorded from Cordero after this last letter in June 1968. Pasolini returned to the work in 1974 to prepare it for publication, adding some of the most damning additions depicting Satan guiding Luke. It remains to this day a literary work.

Cordero never comments on the presentation of Paul in the work, the dual nature with which Pasolini fashioned him, as icon and iconoclast, as the *katechon*. The representation of a wavering and even deceitful Paul must have weighed heavily on Cordero's mind. The association with both revolutionaries and conformists, Marxist intellectuals and fascists, and the subversive and arbiters of capitalism presents more problems of scandal than did his Gramscian and neorealist presentation of Christ, which for the most part was so illusively straightforward as not to arouse protest or criticism from Church hierarchy. Paul's transposition to recent historical milieus drops the saint firmly in the middle of controversy and unsettled ideological power disputes. There is Paul that is a consumed devotee, one then reformed by the conventions of such devotion, and Paul that is consumed and regurgitated by the Church via its interpretation of the Pauline epistles for its own ends.

So, what is gained by transposing Paul to a setting contemporaneous to Pasolini's? Elizabeth A. Castelli, in her "Introduction: Translating Pasolini Translating Paul" asserts that in part it is autobiographical. She notes that he used anecdotes about Saint Paul in relation to himself (See Castelli 2014, pp. XXIV–XXVI). Further, she notes that "numerous autobiographical resonances, which echo most forcefully through the script for the Paul film, also interact with the religio-political [sic] and historiographical elements of Pasolini's project of cultural translation and critical critique" (Castelli 2014, p. XXVI). Pasolini finds himself in a consumer society, one that is nearly global. He thus places Paul, a Paul akin to himself in some ways, in the same situation. As Luca Di Blasi notes in "One Divided by another: Split and Conversion in Pasolini's San Paolo" "The saint is thus-like Pasolini—a deeply divided or split man" (Di Blasi 2012, p.192). Paul, in consumer society, consumes consumption. And consumption, an imperative for capitalist hegemony, always consumes, at least in part, the revolutionary spirit, making it a part of consumption and the capitalist hegemony that completes, for Pasolini, a nexus with Church hierarchy and fascism. Transposing Paul and his travels to Pasolini's time proves efficacious as he can move within his frame of reference with a figure in which he sees himself in part. Castelli notes "from the early 1960s, the figure of Paul—and the doubleness of that figure . . . plays a role in Pasolini's articulation of his politics" (Castelli 2014, p. XXV). Pasolini was, as he himself liked to say as a pejorative, bourgeois, and he could not escape from it, but also a communist.³ He was an intellectual elite, who scorned it in favor of the uneducated subproletariat's supposed purity. He represents Paul as such, strengthening Castelli's claim.

In scene 109 from *Saint Paul*, Pasolini imagines a very observant stroll typical of the poet in his beloved Rome (which is now New York), and complete with product placement:

Paul, after having written the letter/testament to Timothy, goes out to take a walk. It is the first time that he does something useless and disinterested. He arrives at Central Park. He observes everyday life. Everyday things, events, characters, occurrences—outside of everyday history and religion. He stops before a children's carousel that goes around and around, accompanied by organ music. Then he leaves. He goes into a bar. He drinks a Coca-Cola. (Pasolini 2014, p. 106)

Much like Pasolini, Paul is prone to *flânerie* and sets out after writing. It is an act that Pasolini considers bourgeois, "something useless and disinterested" (Pasolini 2014, p. 106), reserved for a class with the luxury to spend time and energy wandering. *Flânerie's* status as a celebrated bourgeois act, however, reaches back to Baudelaire, whose acts of *flânerie* are outlined in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*.⁴ He arrives in Central Park, the center of consumerism and capitalism. He consumes everyday life, and a Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola

embodies the ultimate cultural imperialism, one of commodity and consumption, and one of visual and verbal persuasion—advertising. It is the weaving of contemporary hegemony. The camera viewing Saint Paul, who consumes a Coca-Cola in the capitol of capital, shows a Paul who is entrenched in the society in which he finds himself. He is now one who accepts it and becomes a part of it, and the scene does come towards the end of the screenplay, cementing this as Paul's final incarnation before his assassination/martyrdom. Patrick Rumble explains in *Allegories of Contamination: Pier Paolo Pasolini's Trilogy of Life* that Pasolini "reveals . . . how the global project of post-national neocapitalism spreads throughout the world at the expense of local identities and particular traditions . . . Pasolini's style is an allegory of the coca-colonization of the planet" (Rumble 1996, p. 13). Pasolini, in almost every film, does offer a story that reveals a political meaning. Beyond speaking openly about his intent, his work holds many esoteric machinations. Coca-Cola is a global project that embodies the antithesis of local identity and tradition. It is a product disseminated through global marketing. It is as much a unifying signifier with global appeal as it is a communal invasion.

Transposing Saint Paul to modern times permits Pasolini to offer new context to millennia-old texts. In doing so, we are invited to see our epoch and the systems and structures that sustain it through a new lens. We are invited to reexamine both the validity of the biblical texts, their meaning that was, and what it has become in a new setting. The biblical texts in modern settings function accordingly: it allows the poet to show how capitalism gains and maintains hegemony through interacting with and coopting other power systems, namely the Church and fascism; it exposes the Church hierarchy *mise en scene* as complicit in the corrosion of society; and details the syncretic nature between the three.

Pasolini does not conceal the motive for using the biblical texts and how they function. The texts he employs include Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Timothy, Thessalonians, and The Acts. But it is the notes and instructions, as well as the physical setting with their im-signs conducive to the epoch, that most offers insight.⁵ In one parenthetical instruction Pasolini writes

Radio interview about Paul: what will prevail, among other things, is a response that situates Paul in the historical-cultural frame of his time . . . what will be emphasized/highlighted in this interview above all is Christian syncretism; and thus, Christianity as a historical product of the whole Jewish-Greco-Roman world, and which only accidentally finds in Paul its theory. (Pasolini 2014, p. 54)

The entry, scene 55, set in Bonn, seems to frame the Church's hegemony solely, but Pasolini's language here is careful even if perhaps rushed. His choice of a radio interview shows mass media as an instrument. He notes that the interview is about Christian syncretism and uses phrasing like historical product. Since syncretism denotes amalgamation, it means Christianity has adopted other beliefs and has been reciprocally adopted by other competing systems. He makes clear that this is capitalism in a replacement note, writing "Replace this theoretical discourse with a frame of the organization created by Paul: sections, membership, funding, capital, banking" (Pasolini 2014, p. 54). Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin and from Tarsus, but these do not constitute organizations created by Paul. It seems likely that Pasolini intends the converted Gentiles, fusing religion with capital and also recognizing the ancestral group of today's ruling class.

The transposition of biblical text to a postwar world between 1939 and 1968 is a transposition to historical time and historical context. Pasolini asserts his belief, as a Catholic, that the Church has gone astray, the hierarchy has led it astray, and the people are the actual Church, and not the conglomerate fashioned hierarchy that staff it. Antonio Righi in *Biopolitics and Social Change in Italy: From Gramsci to Pasolini to Negri* explains

According to Pasolini, the Church, one of the most solid institutions of the precapitalist Italian society . . . received a fatal blow not by proletarian emancipation, nor by the official left, but by consumerism. Pasolini maintains that consumer culture is an obscene contradiction that bound religion, in a self-destructive fashion, to

the new era of mass consumption. Monarchy's power, even fascism, as earthy political powers were less damaging for the Church than the new bourgeois spirit ... New beliefs, new behaviors, and especially the construction of a new identity replaced the Church's traditional jurisdiction. (Righi 2011, p. 83)

In the historical time period the poet has chosen for his film, Righi's passage seems particularly acute. The Church adapted to the Italian monarchy, fascism, and a capitalist republic in a short timeframe, appropriating reciprocally the cultural facets that make all function and thereby inviting syncretism. Essentially, the Church operates in an open market of ideas, one controlled by capital. It has appended itself to that hegemonic power. This is the Saint Paul of Pasolini. Paul is aware he competes in an open market of ideas. He is building a church not of Jews, his own people, but of Gentiles. He can proselytize to them; he can sell them a product. His identity is associated with the Church's hierarchy, and it in turn is associated with capitalist identity. It is, as Righi notes, not the proletarian emancipation that deals a fatal blow to the Church of yesterday. Paul is trying to enact a sort of spiritual revolution. The modern historical transposition conversely reveals that a revolutionary cause too relies on opportunity, chance, and thus a free-market economy to advance. Paul is creating a conformist apostolate and a revolutionary apostolate that operate in a market of ideas and that utilize the same strategies. The Church that once scorned materialism and coveting has adopted a new reality living alongside competing forces.

Pasolini's view and inevitable portrayal of the Church is inherently Gramscian in that it recognizes the division of the Church's foundation. It is, of course, founded on a structured hierarchy that is buttressed by text and doctrine, but a hierarchy that regulates both. This is one division of the Church's foundation. The other is the people that make up the Church as a community, a collective, those that make what goes on within the Church transpire. It is a collective that produces and performs the faith and are therefore rightfully the beneficiaries of their faith. Throughout the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci is highly critical of Church hierarchy and doctrine, but not the faithful or the faith to which they adhere (See Gramsci 2011, pp. 701–2, 722; Grelle 2017, pp. 18–36). Pasolini fostered his view of the *chiesa contadina* during his time in Casarsa.⁶ He was a Catholic, even if his relationship to his faith was complicated by an atheist-leaning attitude and his belief that the hierarchy is a coterie of corrupted conformists passive to capitalism's hegemony. The hierarchy of the Church remains much like a tone-deaf parliamentary representation, bereft of the actual desire to represent, and instead concerned with maintaining power, and therefore, it is incumbent upon it to interact financially and culturally for survival. Gramsci was an ardent atheist, but respectful of the Church and religion in general. He opposed the overly simplistic Marxist assertion that religion is the opium of the masses. He understood that faith is the people's expression of embracing that which they cannot fathom, and he understood the Church as a vessel where the people could rest their abstractions: hope, insecurities, vulnerability, and fears. It served a purpose and therefore it served the people. But the hierarchy was another issue. Already in his time, he viewed the Church as complicit with capitalism at least to some degree. In *quaderno 20*, Gramsci links the Church's common understanding of poverty diffused via "documenti autorizzati" (Gramsci 2011, p. 2087),⁷ presented in three summations, as supportive of truths by which capitalist society operates. He states that the Church holds (1) private property is a natural right not to be violated; (2) the poor must content themselves with their fate as the distinctions of class and the distribution of wealth are the will of God; and (3) almsgiving is a Christian duty and thus implies the existence of poverty (Gramsci 2011, p. 2087).

Pasolini infused these ideas into his screenplay and his characterization of Paul. He fashions a morally bankrupt Church and a greedy power system in collusion. Paul is the founder, in part, of this morally bankrupt Church and its participation in the greedy power system. Pasolini fearlessly offered this version of the life of Paul to Cordero, seemingly unaware that such a distance from his faithful portrayal of Jesus would present a problem for Sampaolo Film.

3. Sainly Paul, Priestly Paul

It is not only the duality of the Saint that challenges the acceptable paradigm of Paul. There remains also the fact that Pasolini presents this duality as binary, or intrinsically linked and inseparable, but still somehow representative of the traditional paradigm of Paul, thus leaving it intact. More simply, Pasolini uses the traditional paradigm of Paul; he does not dismantle it. He merely alters it, adds to it, and gives it a shapeshifting fluidity that fluctuates between Paul's two personae. Rather than fixed, Pasolini's paradigm for Paul is amoebic. To the Church, Paul's figure and his teachings are apodictic. Pasolini smashes this apodicticity, demonstrating the shapeshifting or transfiguration of any constructed paradigm. Pasolini's Paul reaches further than the mere figure of Paul. With Paul, he offers an iconoclast to almost any construal of the Church. As an iconoclast, Paul in Pasolini's vision does appropriate the role of revolutionary, not unlike Pasolini himself. In *St. Paul*, the revolutionary aspect of Paul, which is heretical and blasphemous, is a necessity. The revolutionary Paul, the one who questions, the one who develops a bohemian following, proves to be the lesser of two evils. Pasolini inserts him and the more progressive biblical passages that concern him into the script to paint a better Paul, a less flawed Paul.

Pasolini concerns himself with the revolutionary seedling who secures hegemony by adopting the means of whatever officialdom is protecting the status quo (see [Pasolini 1999](#), pp. 336–42). *Sessantotto*, or the 1968 movement in Italy, weighed heavily on Pasolini's mind around the time he was drafting *Saint Paul* and offers insight into his enthusiasm for making this film. Pasolini had reeled against the very class to which he belonged for most of his adult life. Regarding the 1968 movement, he exposed his dialectical manner of thinking. The students who took over the universities in Italy, who attacked the police in Rome were revolutionaries, ones who had the support of Italy's left. They themselves, though, were of Pasolini's class—in his eyes the sons of the ruling class, the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie. He therefore wrote invectives against them. The police, in contrast, were, in his thinking, the sons of the proletariat, more likely to be southerners or working-class northerners, who lacked the means to study and instead were compelled to join an organization like the police force (See [Pasolini 1968](#)). Both these portrayals are overly simplistic, but Pasolini's rationale held that the students are of the right logic, and the police force is a tool, a malicious force, used by the dominant power, although not a dominant power itself. Owing to this line of thinking, a proper revolutionary had to be impossibly saintly—not a saint like Paul. A saint could not be bourgeois, could not be complicit, and yet Paul, like Pasolini, was all those things. In contemporary times, he is the student class Pasolini lambasts. If Paul, a founder of Christianity and the Church, is of the bourgeois, educated class of capital, he represents the paradox of this struggle, as he remains the radical that ushered in a sort of revolution. Pasolini clarifies to Don Cordero he tells a story of two Pauls, one a saint and the other a priest. He lends his approval to the saint but not the priest, whom he assures he does not treat tenderly (See [Pasolini 1988](#), p. 639).

As Pasolini uses biblical texts from different books of the bible, the presentation of Paul fluctuates. The Paul of the Letters and the Paul of the Acts paint at times two incongruent portraits of the saint. In Paul's Letters, he presents himself as a Jew who conflicts with individuals. In Acts, Paul conflicts with organized authority, both Jewish and Gentile. In the Letters of Paul, however, the apostle states emphatically that he did not go to Jerusalem to consult the other apostles of Christ. In Acts, written presumably by Luke, he does go to consult the apostles, or, as it can be viewed, authority. Paul's revelation in his own writings seems to be divine, and he is imbued with a sense of revolution. In Luke's Acts, Paul's act of going to see the Apostles renders him a conformist, as he in fact conforms with their message instead of the divine message given to him in the Letters. Just as these two texts conflict, their use in Pasolini's unrealized film moves the screenplay forward, allowing him invention in explaining the discrepancy: Satan dictates the Acts, and Luke pens the texts in accordance with what Satan desires.

The biblical texts about Paul, or attributed to Paul, have suffered the reputation of pseudepigrapha. Pasolini plays on this further in his scandalous depiction of Luke as a

disciple of Satan, and he plays doubly on this with his own text. He is, after all, using biblical text to create his own work, distancing himself from his own authorship. So, Pasolini, in spite of using the biblical text transposed to recent history for his work, calls into question authorship by way of pseudepigraphic authorship. As he calls into question the authors of the text, he unveils his own crisis of authorship with this adaptation. Pasolini writes “Luke is writing again, with the euphemistic sweetness commended to him by Satan, as if everything had been lubricated by foresight and divine predestination” (Pasolini 2014, p. 38). Pasolini invents this Satan-guided Luke to write contradictory attestations to texts attributed to Paul. Luke’s position is one of deceit by creating a false paradigm in line with Satan’s desires, desires eventually that formed the Church, and adhered to by the Church. Although already mentioned in the script, as the story progresses, Pasolini in scene 93 reveals who commands Luke leaving no uncertainty by showing their direct interaction:

The visitor is seen from the back, and, for the whole episode, will be seen from the back. He is, as we will see, Satan. He enters the building and goes up to Luke’s apartment. A long dialogue between the two: grinning sarcastically at his boss, Luke summarizes the continuation of Paul’s story. Practically the goal has already been reached. The Church is founded. The rest is nothing but a long appendix, an agony. The destiny of Paul doesn’t interest Satan: let him be saved and go to Paradise anyway. Satan and his hired assassin laugh sarcastically, satisfied. Luke gets up, takes a bottle of champagne from a cabinet, and the two of them repeatedly drink a toast to *their* Church. They drink and get drunk, evoking all the crimes of the Church: a huge, long list of criminal popes, of compromises by the Church with power, of bullying, violence, repressions, ignorance, dogmas. At the end, the two are completely drunk and they laugh thinking of Paul who is still there, travelling around the world preaching and organizing. (Pasolini 2014, p. 96)

Consequently, Paul is an agent, a mere agent, and the Church is the product he advocates.⁸ He is unknowingly and unwillingly an agent of Satan, and he travels the world preaching and organizing for what he believes to be Christ’s church, a revolution in approach. He instead is a minister of continued evil and Man’s participation in it that begin with the apple in the Garden of Eden.

4. Paul of Letters, Paul of Acts

Paul proves to represent the revolutionary whom the hegemonic powers use to reinforce control. As he rebels against evil, spreads his visions of Christ, and founds the Church, capitalism and fascism use Paul as something to oppose until he sees the wisdom in collaboration. He becomes the scapegoat with which they can cause fear. After all, he wavers between revolutionary and conformist, as explained, throughout the text as Pasolini interlaces passages from Letters and the Acts to indicate a camp: resistor or conformer. The texts Pasolini chooses to represent Paul’s revolutionary side speaks to Pasolini’s vision and knowledge of scripture. An example is scene 108 for which Pasolini uses 2 Timothy 3. Paul describes the last day, warning

Men in fact will be egoists, lovers of money, vainglorious, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, impious, without love, irreconcilable, slanderers, unrestrained, merciless, not lovers of good, traitors, arrogant [sic], blinded by the fumes of pride, lovers of pleasure more than God. (Pasolini 2014, p. 105)

This passage appears at the end of the screenplay when Paul languishes in an American prison, condemned to death. The scene, however, immediately precedes scene 109 cited earlier, which sees Pasolini as a collaborationist and pawn in capitalism’s game, enjoying a Coca-Cola. The fluctuation between revolutionary and conformist gathers speed towards the end representing a destabilization of the *katechon*. Pasolini portrays Paul as an oscillating force right to his martyrdom.

This oscillation between the two Pauls that becomes more rapid towards the end is set early in the screenplay. Paul first reflects on the topic of circumcision in scene 25, and he consciously converts Gentiles to the Church (the institution) and speaks out against Judaizing the converts. Pasolini focuses particular attention on the act of circumcision. Reasoning against it proves revolutionary. He does not seek to conform the Gentiles to the Jewish people's customs and dogma; rather, he seeks to create a new doctrine that refutes the laws and customs of others. He revolts against his own acculturation. Pasolini invents these scenarios constructed with biblical text in scenes that clearly show Paul in his revolutionary state, as indicated by his speech, associations, and the im-signs Pasolini uses in the scenes. Only scene 42 regarding circumcision appears when he is conformist, when he meets Timothy and tells him he will circumcise him, an act of conformity.

The Letters contain many passages that seem conformist in tone, while Acts contains passages that contain rebellious content. It must be remembered, however, that Acts is Satan's work through Luke. The scenes to which Pasolini assigns the Acts, then, are dubious as to whether they mean to depict conformity or revolutionary thought. Pasolini engages the texts of Paul and of Luke guided by Satan to paint a portrait of his dichotomic Paul. In scene 25, the poet observes a young boy coming from the school he used to attend. The boy appears as a young Paul, a young bourgeois in a wealthy neighborhood, getting into a chauffeured car. The car is occupied by a sick man whose dialogue is Philippians 3, but Pasolini, as Di Blasi observes, wrongly attributes it to Acts (See [Di Blasi 2012](#), p. 193). The sick man "mutters bitterly, but in 'a fashion barely audible, to himself: Circumcised on the eighth day . . . of the people of Israel . . . of the tribe of Benjamin . . . Hebrew from the Hebrews . . . Pharisee in relation to the Law . . .'" ([Pasolini 2014](#), p. 29). Scene 25 displays a conformist Paul, one looking back on whom he was, the bourgeois kid that was taught to obey the law. But Pasolini cleverly chooses a conformity that Paul will later challenge in the script, thus, this reflection on passage, conformist in tone, leads to a decidedly more antagonistic Paul.

Shortly after, in scene 31, Paul meets with Peter. Scenes 31–38 switch between a clandestine meeting room and Luke's studio where he is writing Acts, both in Paris (Jerusalem). In the clandestine meeting room, Peter, Paul, the leaders, and an assembly of elders and apostles meet and hold a summit to discuss contradictory information preached by Paul. In Luke's writings, once again the topic is circumcision, but the attendees concern themselves with gentiles and their ability to remain so while adopting the faith of Jesus's Jewish apostles. Peter is conciliatory to the new faithful not getting circumcised. Pasolini has Paul recite Acts 15 before indicating "the assembly listens in great silence to this admission. The 'Pharisaic' of Paul is radiant and triumphant. James gets up (he too, like Peter, but more conciliatory)" ([Pasolini 2014](#), p. 37). Peter then continues Acts 15, a text instructing to cast off circumcision, and in fact one could argue, other burdensome obligations, laws, and customs of the Jewish people, thereby making the product, Christianity, more accessible. This complex scene portrays conformists appropriating the revolutionary act of allowing Gentiles to remain uncircumcised to appeal and sell their product to the masses. When considering these scenes 25 and 31–38, it is worth noting that one is Philippians, a letter Paul may have penned while in prison in Rome. It is presented here as the work of Paul. It appears clear, even if it is Paul reciting Acts at the meeting, that Satan through Luke is the author of his words. This contradiction is analogous to the student movements of 68. Paul, the author of Philippians, seems a conformist, while Paul, author of the Acts, aligns with the false Church, the façade created by Satan. The first Paul resembles the police; the second the students. The conflation of the two identities, conformist/revolutionary and preacher of truth versus preacher of deceit, speaks to the overall presentation of Paul as *katechon*. This tension sustains. As Roberto Esposito notes in *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*, "The triumph of evil is held in check, true, but the divine *parousia* [second coming] is also delayed by its very existence. Its function is positive, but negatively so. The *katechon* is exactly that: the positive of a negative" ([Esposito 2011](#), p. 63). Most revealing, this force needs to continue after Paul, as it was there before him. It is a transient force.

The revolutionary, or saintly, Paul falls ill among images meant to invoke Nazi Germany and the holocaust. He, like his companion evangelists, is imprisoned. Escaping persecution, Paul reemerges as the priestly Paul, the man of law, and conformist. Pasolini describes that he is “liberated from an attack of illness. His face is normal. His expression is hard, certain, almost authoritarian. (It seems that the old Pharisee, born in normativity, in legality and in privilege, speaks in him now, rendering him unrecognizable, compared to the wounded Paul who had sung the sacred song through the night)” (Pasolini 2014, p. 48). Pasolini divulges here his religious philosophy. Hierarchy is by nature authoritarian and therefore malicious, and he echoes what he made clear with his Gramscian Christ in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, that the meek shall inherit the earth.⁹ In Pasolini’s mindset, there are the wicked, and then there are the meek, innocent of even their own sins. The former control for avarice, the latter are righteous, explaining why Pasolini acts as apologist for the evils committed by a class he ardently protects and venerates. Pasolini started by making films where the protagonist suffers a cruel fate, as in *Accatone* and *Mamma Roma*. In *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, he constructs a philosophy of biopolitics within the frame of Psalm 37.11–12 “But the poor will possess the land, will delight in great prosperity. The wicked plot against the just and grind their teeth at them” (*The Catholic Bible*, Psalm 37.11–12). Matthew 5:5 references this verse, part of Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount shown in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. But in *Saint Paul*, Pasolini demonstrates how Paul collaborates in stark contrast to his depiction of Christ. Pasolini writes

From a general view of the city (Philippi), we pass to the interior of a vast office: it is the ‘Christian section’ of Bonn. Mimeographed pages, newspapers, manifestos. There is even a small print shop. Paul visits everything with the aspect and attitude of a minister. Then, followed by the most important collaborators, he goes out and gets into a big Mercedes. The route of the Mercedes shows us a rich neighborhood in the capital. Meanwhile the car stops in front of a particularly luxurious house, in a residential zone of the grand bourgeoisie: it is the house of Jason. (Pasolini 2014, p.49)

Pasolini shows the Church’s transformation into the entity designed by Luke and his instructor, Satan. The poet intends to pan from the view of Bonn, at the time the capital of Germany, here representing the Greek city of Philippi. He shows the innerworkings of a well-oiled machine engaged in organization, dissemination, and indoctrination—tools of hegemony. Paul, with the air of a minister, means to administer. Pasolini fills this Paul with all the tropes that he believes embellish him as the conformist within the power system that he shows himself to be in the following scenes. As a member of the bourgeois, he cultures his sermon like a product to be protected from competitors despite the false capitalist notion of open market based on competition.

In scenes 64–69, reflective of Pasolini’s mindset, a destitute group from a slum reduced to the antics of con artists witnesses Paul’s sermons and healings. These con artists are the beloved Neapolitan lumpenproletariat that Pasolini celebrates in his adaptation of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (1971). The scene, taking place in Naples, reflects more of Pasolini’s interpretation of Naples than what it is. Paul performs his miracles here with the lumpenproletariat. A man from the group pretends to prostrate himself only to slip off Paul’s sandal and purloin it. This man absconds to his impoverished family and uses the sandal to heal his infant child. The three swindlers see this through his dwelling’s window and follow the man when he leaves. He returns to Paul with gifts thanking the saint for his child’s reinvigoration. These scenes include dialogue from Ephesians as Pasolini sanctions the actions of the tricksters using Paul’s Letters instead of Acts attributed to Luke.

Pasolini introduces the three tricksters as though anyone reading the script were waiting for their appearance: “Here they are, the trickster brothers. In the middle of a crowd of ragamuffins, miserable peasants and subproletariats emerged from enormous wormholes of the slums of the city, three faces, unheard, worm-eaten by misery, corruption, bestial innocence—and of course, hunger” (Pasolini 2014, p. 71). The poet always exhibited a manner of speaking about the Neapolitan lumpenproletariat that attempted to marry the

contradictions he himself projected. On the one hand, he disparages their environment, their upbringing, and their comportment. He must as he is attempting to draw a picture for the viewer that exposes how people are forced to live in a degraded state by an antipathetic dominant class that disdains their utility but relies on it. On the other hand, he acts as apologist for their behavior and asserts their innocence, even if bestial. The three innocents conspire to replicate what they witnessed for profit. One preaches Paul's sermons, while the others feign paralysis or lameness that most certainly gets resolved when the swindlers place their hands on the heads of the imposters, who immediately act healed. The imposters, in turn, give fake gifts to the swindlers. Paul coming across this protects his product:

... Paul arrives. He does not take the thing at all in fun. Rather, he thunders with authority against the swindlers, pointing them out to the admiring crowd, some of whom are disappointed and about to come to blows. So much for our three poor devils, having seen that things have taken a bad turn, they run as fast as their legs will carry them, disappearing down the dusty road, as in a comic film. (Pasolini 2014, p. 76)

The seemingly disparaging disregard that Pasolini shows in his use of language and imagery tethers itself to Pasolini's ideology that these men are blameless. They are lumpenproletariat, apolitical to an extent, not subproletariat made conscious of their plight and thrown into political and thus historical action. They are happy to find a way to get by in the society that subjugates and dismisses them. Paul is left to defend with disapproval his product like a bourgeois shop owner who is defending it from shoplifting or knock-off imitations, while the crowd of consumers feel cheated and defeated by the swindlers act as nobody likes to purchase a counterfeit product.

5. Paul, the *Katechon*

Pasolini presented this sketch of a dichotomic Paul to Don Cordero twice, seemingly unaware of how it may elicit a repulsion from Sampaolo Film. His final additions, made in 1974, mostly enhance Satan's presence as Luke's guide. But in the bulk of the screenplay, written in 1968, we see that Pasolini's dichotomic rendering finds solution in the idea presented by Paul himself in his Second Letter to the Thessalonians. Paolo Virno in *Multitude: Between Innovation and Negation* identifies the essence of the *katechon* writing:

In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul speaks of a force that restrains the prevalence of evil in the world, continually keeping at bay the triumph of the Antichrist. Holding back, restraining: these are terms that have nothing in common with "expunging" or "defeating" or even "circumscribing." That which restrains does not distance itself from what needs to be restrained; rather, it remains close to it and does not even avoid mingling with what must be restrained. *Katechon* does not eradicate evil, but it does limit it, and it wards off repeatedly every blow that evil presents. It does not save us from destruction, but it restrains destruction and, in order to restrain it, it conforms to the innumerable occasions when destruction can manifest itself. It resists the pressure of chaos by adhering to chaos, just as the concave adheres to the convex. (Virno 2008, p. 56)

Virno identifies *katechon* as a force that restrains; it holds something back, but makes no attempt to eradicate it. Virno implies, then, that this force, although it restrains, also maintains a proximity to evil. The *katechon* flirts with evil, engages it. It is the force that holds one back during a fight but does not expel the perpetrator from the premises. He concedes that the *katechon* does deflect the blows of evil, but in so doing, conforms to its nature time and again. The *katechon* is not good, it is not evil; it exhibits characteristics of both facets. If this proves true, then Paul, as a dichotomic figure, is a neutral energy, a power that neither presents evil, nor restrains it. But Virno's explanation has darker implications.

The *katechon* reflects two images, as does Pasolini's Paul. It is, in its own way, both revolutionary and conformist, two poles that arise concomitantly and fashion a median force. This is complicit with evil for not eradicating it, but contradictory to evil for withhold-

ing complete destruction of Mankind. The nature of the revolutionary presents problems. When we think of the revolutionary, the recurring trope of the resistance liberating a subjugated people come to mind. The revolutionary who is altruistic and engaged in action for the betterment of a people adheres to one side of the idea of revolutionary comportment. Revolution, as an idea, leads to a certain liberation from something that oppresses. It is associated with a progressive action or movement. In this, Paul as a revolutionary, a radical even, converts the Gentiles and forms a Church designed, even if erroneously, for salvation. The revolutionary Paul wishes, by converting, to hold back evil from the converts lives. He fulfills a role as the *katechon* in his radical state. And just as Virno notes that the *katechon* engages that which it repels, evil, so too does Paul. He does not dispel it, however, which remains the aim of most revolutionary forces.

The conformist model too suits the other aspect of the *katechon*. Its complacency and its action that resists but does not dispel denotes a collusion with the very force it should seek to remove. This collusion is not only the nature of hegemony born in rightwing authoritarianism, but also centrism. As a conformist, the *katechon* need not be an authoritarian force, merely a collaborative and even compromising force—one that compromises with and engages malevolent forces. The conformist represents the *katechon* by withholding perhaps difficult change but change that is necessary. It resists a regenerative force that could degenerate something and subsume the remainder to furnish a new matter. The *katechon* is conformist simply because it tries to maintain without altering the dynamics of power. It seeks to uphold the dynamics of power. Accordingly, as Paul is both revolutionary and conformist, both of which bear the mark or characteristics of the *katechon*, he is the *katechon*. As noted before, this tension sustains, or as Stefania Benini argues in *Pasolini: The Sacred Flesh* “Saint Paul . . . represents both the knot and the suture between the sacred dimension and the foundation of an institution” (Benini 2015, p. 193). Paul is the knot and suture between the sacred dimension that promises salvation, and the institution that will retard it.

Paul is the very one who set up the church for our salvation, but he is the one holding back the son of perdition, and by doing so, our salvation. Paul as the *katechon* works against Man’s salvation since he conforms and holds back the force of evil, and thus he revolts against God’s design. He maintains a constant stasis. Saint Paul identifies the *katechon* and becomes its representative embodiment in near-concomitance. Saint Paul, as a dichotomy, reflects that which corrodes society and maintains it in both facets as revolutionary. He represents the contradictory nature of revolution, which demands that the revolutionary restrict the very freedoms for which they fought so as to maintain the order they have created. Saint Paul also reflects the dysfunctional and hypocritical aspect of the Church whose patriarchal structure is mirrored in the businessman who maintains a family, but who conducts business and maintains his family at the expense of and to the detriment of other humans or populations, who must be both existent and available for exploitation to buoy the very bourgeois and Church hierarchal structure that orders their lives.

Saint Paul, as the ethos of Church doctrine and proselytization, allows for enough evil to counteract the good, and vice versa; he does so to keep back evil. Paul evokes the idea of a necessary evil. Paul as the *katechon*, then, contradicts to the extent of blasphemy his role as founder of a Christian church based on the idea of salvation that he holds back. Virno explains

Here is the double bond to which *katechon* is subjected: if it restrains evil, it blocks the final defeat of evil; if it limits aggression, it gets in the way of having this aggression annihilated once and for all. Thwarting continuously the dangerous state of the species *Homo sapiens* means, of course, avoiding its lethal unleashing; but it also means, and perhaps more importantly, prohibiting the definitive elimination of that dangerous state: that elimination, let us understand, which the theories of sovereignty pursue by means of a sharp division between the state of nature and the civil state. From a logical perspective, the antynomy [sic] that takes root in the *katechon*-institution is comparable, perhaps, to the paradoxical

command: “I command you to be spontaneous!”: if I am spontaneous, then I am not spontaneous, since I am following the command to do so; if I follow the command, I am not really following it, while being spontaneous. (Virno 2008, p. 59)

Virno expresses an original idea of the *katechon* predicated in part on the model Karl Schmitt and, as Virno describes them, his family photo album, Hobbes, de Maistre, and Donoso Cortés, but steers away from them and their general vocalization of the hegemonic power structure. He does not merely accept *katechon* as a force that restrains, instead revealing its contradictory and thus antagonistic trait to both forces—salvation and destruction. As such, the *katechon* is bonded to both and interacts with both. By preventing the definitive elimination of evil, it appears as the obstacle to the Church’s message ultimately being fulfilled. If Paul is the *katechon*, then he is that obstacle. Pasolini presents Paul as the *katechon* as a conflation of state and revolution against the state, as Church hierarchy antithetical to the message he preaches.

In scenes depicting Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, Pasolini presents Paul as his dictatorial conformist self. He observes a gaunt young man as he pronounces the text of Thessalonians, seemingly sexually aroused. He carries on while he and the young man view each other “Only the one who restrains him now will be taken in the middle . . .” (Pasolini 2014, p. 42). Pasolini then describes Paul’s action and dialogue to this young man, who reveals himself to be Timothy:

Paul in pronouncing these words is terrifying and almost livid—by who knows what mysterious engorgement of his spirit . . . Paul: ‘Do you want to follow me?’ The boy answers right away, without thinking about it: ‘Yes.’ ‘What is your name?’ ‘Timothy.’ ‘Who are your parents?’ My father is Greek, my mother is Jewish, a convert . . . ‘First I will circumcise you—even if it is in contradiction to my conviction’ . . . The boy looks at him, obediently. In Paul there is the arrogance of the leader. (Pasolini 2014, pp. 42–43)

He shows the compromising trait of the *katechon* with his lividness at his own words and the decision to circumcise the boy against his own conviction, but it will placate the Jews of the city, who know the boy has a Greek father and a convert mother. Finally, Paul’s leadership gives him the arrogance of one who revels in his station.

6. Conclusions

Schmitt argues that the *katechon* as the state in conjunction with the Church—as his vision of the *katechon* links the two within a Christian nationalist framework—exists to preserve society from itself, its own chaotic nature. The *katechontic* force must exist for the stability of the power structure, a trajectory, as Schmitt reasons, that comprises the Roman Empire, The Holy Roman Empire, and what he calls the *respublica Christiana*. Virno, instead, recognizing Schmitt’s intentions as a Fascist, perceives the finer subtlety of the *katechon*’s construct: it interacts with evil. It proves a force that sustains society, but an ill, much like Schmitt’s Nazi Germany, with whom Paul collaborates at the beginning of Pasolini’s sketch. Paul, and so the Church or the state, the one fostered by Paul, must become the force that holds back evil and prevents Man’s final redemption after Paul’s death. The *katechon* is transient, it moves from one incarnation to the next. Pasolini offered Cordero his vision of Paul. Cordero had the responsibility to produce pro-Catholic movies for Sampaolo Film as their mission explicitly states their endeavors are “ispirata alla figura di San Paolo apostolo e mossa dal desiderio di diffondere il Vangelo e i valori cristiani attraverso i più moderni mezzi di comunicazione” (Gruppo Editoriale San Paolo).¹⁰ Pasolini came with the good reputation of his *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* but did not present a similar rendering of Paul. For Cordero to accept the screenplay would have been to defy the mission of Sampaolo Film and its affiliated publishing house.

This essay has provided a recognition of Pasolini’s Paul as a dichotomic representation and an analysis of that portrayal. The saint is shown as both a sickly revolutionary and a conformist. From this, I have presented such a depiction of Paul as representing the

katechon itself. This remains the justifiable reason the film was never brought to fruition by the company that charged Pasolini to make it. The exorbitant costs to undertake such a production only serve as an excuse for not accepting the film, and yet Don Cordero evidently does not offer that as the reason. Instead, he left Pasolini to wonder whether the film, in stark contrast to *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, could commence in the future. Pasolini moved the idea to a new format without the religious implication: his last unfinished novel *Petrolio*, an epic dive into the world of Carlo, a man split in two who, as conformist and iconoclast, experiences the duality present in the *katechon*. *Petrolio* comes to us extant in far worse condition than *San Paolo*, and with many revelations missing.¹¹ What appears clear in *Petrolio* is the autobiographical nature of the two Carlos. Here is the bourgeois Pasolini who despised himself and the extremely irreverent Pasolini that engaged in behavior contradictory to his class, the substratum of the hegemonic bourgeoisie. With Pasolini's contradictory nature, he too may have believed himself to be a sort of *katechon*.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ For example, the film won the Premio OCIC (Office catholique internationale du cinéma, now Signis) and its praise by priests has been well noted even by Pasolini. See (Pasolini 1992, p. 1).
- ² See Don Emilio Cordero in (Pasolini 1988, pp. 615–16).
- ³ Pasolini famously remarked “I too, like Moravia and Bertolucci, am a bourgeois, in fact a petit-bourgeois, a turd.” Pasolini, P. “Why that of Oedipus is a Story” in *Oedipus Rex*. New York: Lorrimer Publishing, 1984, p. 7.
- ⁴ See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcade Projects*, pp. 10–11.
- ⁵ Pasolini defines im-signs in (Pasolini 2005, pp. 168–71).
- ⁶ See Pasolini, “La preghiera dell’uomo—un mondo che cambia” e “Mondo rurale e religione (1968) Pier Paolo Pasolini intervistato da Alfonso M. Di Nola.” *Città Pasolini*, <https://www.cittapasolini.com/post/la-preghiera-dell-uomo-un-mondo-che-cambia-pier-paolo-pasolini-1968> (accessed on 7 September 2023), and (Pasolini 1999, pp. 359–60).
- ⁷ “Authorized documents,” translated by self.
- ⁸ In (Walsh 2018, p. 30), Richard Walsh explains “Hagiography, providence, and the institutional church are Satanic (scenes 39, 93)”.
- ⁹ *Gramscian* is used here instead of the more common *Marxist* because of Pasolini's own description in the article “Il mio Cristo fra Gramsci e la fede” in which he writes his version of Christ is filled with “lo spirito gramsciano del racconto nazionale-popolare” (Pasolini 1). The article was published 17 years after his death.
- ¹⁰ (Chi 2021). “. . . inspired by the figure of Saint Paul the apostle and driven by the desire to spread the Gospel and Christian values through the most modern means of communication”. Translated by self.
- ¹¹ (Mugnaini 2022) It was reasoned that Pasolini had speculated correctly as to whom was responsible for the death of Enrico Mattei. See “Pier Paolo Pasolini e la morte di Enrico Mattei nel manoscritto di *Petrolio*.” *Il Giorno*, <https://www.ilgiorno.it/cronaca/mattei-pasolini-petrolio-1.8212856> (accessed on 5 September 2023).

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