

**Walker Percy's Dr. More Sequence : *Love in
the Ruins* and *The Thanatos Syndrome***

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要 約

Walker Percy の Dr. More 連作

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旧大陸との絆を切断すること、ヨーロッパ文学からの離脱によって、アメリカ作家たちはその「自己実現」を試みてきた。しかし、*American Fictions 1940—1980* の著者、Frederick Karl が指摘するように、現代のアメリカ作家たちは、この「アメリカ的なもの」の探求と、西洋文明の伝統への執着との狭間にあって、「軽業師のような役割を演じている」といえるのでなかろうか。この過去・歴史への執着と回帰は、アメリカ作家のなかでも、特にアメリカ南部の作家たちにより顕著にあらわれる。ヨクナパトッファ群の南部貴族たちの「年代記」のみならず、近代アメリカ南部の新興階級の「年代記」をも書き継いだ William Faulkner はその好例として挙げられるし、また、20世紀初頭過渡期の南部社会に成長する少女—Miranda Gay—を中心にした連作 (the Miranda Cycle) を発表した Katherine Anne Porter も同様である。

小論は、現在活躍中のアメリカ南部作家の一人である Walker Percy の Dr. More 連作—*Love in the Ruins* (1971) と *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987)—にみられる、この現代アメリカ作家の歴史・過去への関心とは如何なるものかを考察するものである。Dr. More 連作に登場する精神分析医 Thomas More を *Utopia* の著者、イギリス・ルネサンス期のヒューマニスト、Sir Thomas More の子孫として設定することによって、作者 Walker Percy は現代アメリカ文学を西洋文明の伝統の中に再び位置づけようと試みている。さらに、この小論は、Dr. More 連作の考察を通して、作者の創作意図が如何に成功しているかをも問うものである。

There is a distinct sense of genealogy in the works of Southern writers. William Faulkner continued to pursue the histories of the families in the Yoknapatawpha saga from the antebellum South to his contemporary Mississippi: The Compsons, the McCaslins, the Sartoris. Not only these "aristocrats" of the Old South but also the new comers in modern South receive a similar concern and interest of the author. Flem Snopes, the protagonist of the trilogy—*The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* (1957), and *The Mansion* (1959)—, first appears in *Sartoris* (1929). He continues to haunt the imaginary universe of his creator during the interim of three decades.¹ Katherine Anne Porter worked under the same principle, though on a lesser scale, with her adolescent girl Miranda Gay in the stories of the Miranda cycle: *The Old Order*, "Old Mortality," and *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. The obsession with the past even of the fictional characters is a peculiarity shared by other American Southern writers.

Walker Percy, one of America's important novelists writing today, shares with his predecessors the sense of continuous past, Southern or personal. Percy's career as a writer of fiction is brief; he started to write fiction much later in his life, as he once told his interviewer, after he became tired of being paid in offprints of his philosophical essays.² His first book, *The Movie-goer*, came out in 1960 when he was almost forty-five. The novel won the National Book Award for 1961; then followed *The Last Gentleman* (1966), *Love in the Ruins* (1971), *Lancelot* (1977), and *The Second Coming* (1980). With the publication of each new book, Percy received a steady and favorable critical attention. As Faulkner traced the fates of his characters in a series of stories and novels, our contemporary author does the same in several of his books. Will Barrett, the lost young man of *The Last Gentleman* reappears in *The Second Coming*, duly aged, successful, and a widower. Dr. Thomas More, the failed psychiatrist, and the saintly Father Smith, who survive "the end of the world" in *Love in the Ruins* return in Percy's latest novel, *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987). Robert Penn Warren once remarked that Katherine Anne Porter's work has "the inner coherence"— "a deeply imaginative confrontation of a sensibility of genius with the *chiaroscuro* of modern civilization."³ The remark is even more appropriate to the novels of Walker Percy, in which the identification of the social predicament with the personal dilemma becomes an increasingly crucial issue. Indeed, "The season's ill" reads "My mind's not right" as in Robert Lowell's poem, "Skunk Hour".

Walker Percy, "the latter-day prophet" or "the comic Dostoevsky" as he is variously called, is seriously involved with the human situation as our century draws to its close. His persistent concern with the nature of human soul, the dignity of human life (and death), and the future of mankind finds its expression in a comic apocalypse of *Love in the Ruins* and in a comic thriller— *The Thanatos Syndrome*. To explore the shared concern of Dr. More and Father Smith with the ills of the world and to examine the panacea they offer to one of the imminent maladies of our time is the purpose of this brief essay.

I

As the subtitle indicates, *Love in the Ruins* is about "the adventures of a bad Catholic at a time near the end of the world." The adventures of Dr. More, a bad Catholic, center around the fourth of July set in some near future. Instead of celebrating the national holiday, the doctor waits for a catastrophe to happen. He muses hiding in a pine grove: "Either I am right and a catastrophe will occur, or it won't and I'm crazy. In either case the outlook is not so good" (LR 3).⁴ He prepares a hideout in a deserted Howard Johnson which he stocks with the Campbell's soup and the cases of Early Times. There he plans to survive the catastrophe with the three beautiful women—Moirra, Lola, and Ellen. Just out of mental institution, this half-cracked forty-four year old physician is in the custody of his colleagues with whom he engages in a fierce debate over euthanasia, "the hottest political issue of the day" (LR 122). The catastrophe never happens; the plot of the Bantus Thomas More eavesdrops ends in a fiasco. In the epilogue of the novel, entitled "Five Years Later," we find our hero married to the trustworthy nurse Ellen, the father of two children (Meg and Thomas More Jr.), and reconciled to his faith! The novel ends with Thomas More on Christmas Day "at home in bed where all good folks belong" (LR 403). The moral of the story? If you insist, the author will repeat the title of his book, *Love in the Ruins*. For the doctor does discover love in the ruins, in which his beloved U.S.A. finds itself, and the concluding line overlaps Father Smith's admonition: "You are a doctor and it is your business to help people, not harm them" and again "You are also a husband and father and it is your duty to love and cherish your family" (LR 399). Which echoes Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*—to love human beings is the only true sign that you are a Christian.⁵

Just the same, the novel is meant to be a farce from beginning to end; the narrator-hero is extremely funny in his half-cracked way. It is a tale told by an alcoholic, fornicator, but nonetheless a good man.

Paradise Estates, where I live, is a paradise indeed, an oasis of concord in a troubled land. For our beloved old U. S. A. is in a bad way. Americans have turned against each other ; race against race, right against left, believer against heathen, . . . Vines sprout in sections of New York where not even Negroes will live. Wolves have been seen in downtown Cleveland, like Rome during the Black Plague. . . (LR 17).

Given above is the cause and effect of what Thomas More calls the catastrophe, "the Modern Black Death". The world is broken, polarized into black-white, North-South, young-old, rich-poor, and men and women, we might add. People suffer from "More's syndrome, or : chronic angelism-bestialism that rives soul from body and sets it orbiting the great world as the spirit of abstraction whence it takes the form of beasts, swans and bulls, werewolves, blood-suckers, Mr, Hydes, or just poor lonesome ghost locked in its own machinery" (LR 383). Man is not a whole human being, but an abstraction, a monster whom we again encounter in *The Thanatos Syndrome*. The sinister influences

of the great Cartesian divide are seen everywhere in Dr. More's beloved old U. S. A.

In *Love in the Ruins* Percy resorts to the good old artistic weapon of comic satire, and the ultimate aim of his satire is, as he explains, not so much to prophesy as to show how such predictions can be avoided.⁶ Thus, every conceivable fad, cult, ideology, cultural and sexual revolution, and even American literature which "is not having its finest hour" (LR 19) are the butt of the novelist's scathing though redeeming satire. And so are blacks and whites, liberals and conservatives, and scientists and religious people. There is yet another important novelistic strategy Percy employs to achieve his end. He makes his crazed uncanny physician a descendant of Sir Thomas More, the English Renaissance humanist. What the naming is supposed to do, Percy answers Charles Bunting in an interview, is to "establish an Anglo-Saxon, English-American, Roman Catholic point of view."⁷ It is also to place "the novel squarely in the Western tradition," and the novel is, therefore, what might be called "the Western counter-attack against certain Orientalizing and other influences."⁸ Here we see Percy's deliberate attempt to claim his American (or Southern, if you like) identity and to find his solution to the human predicament within the context of the Western tradition as against many contemporary attempts to seek panaceas to the malaise of our time outside that tradition. For example, this is accomplished at the narrator-hero's own expense. Dr. More's first wife is lost to English spiritual cultists; she elopes with the leader of the cult and meets her own death instead of a new life she dreamed of on the island of Cozumel.

Percy's Tom More represents more than a point of view for the author to comment and chastise the America which is "in a bad way." With his namesake Dr. More shares a vision of a utopian society, a better community where the greatest number of people enjoy the greatest happiness, which used to constitute the first Americans' dream of the new world. In their vision of utopia everyone is entitled to "a life as free of anxiety and as full of joy as possible," and one is to "help all one's fellow men toward that end" (*Utopia* 55). And one of the salient aspects of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is the caring of the sick and the dying; below is given a prescription for tending the sick and the dying in the Saint's *Utopia*.

As I said before, the sick are carefully tended, and nothing is neglected in the way of medicine and diet which might cure them. Everything is done to mitigate the pain of those who are suffering from incurable diseases; and visitors do their best to console them by sitting and talking with them. But if the disease is not only incurable, but excruciatingly and continually painful, then the priests and public officials come and urge the invalid not to endure such agony any longer (*Utopia* 65).

The model given in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* finds its modern application in the highly advanced and mechanized medicare and hygenics practiced in Dr. More's America, where people suffer nonetheless from morning terror and the "heart-wrenching longings which have no name" (LR 23). Percy's hero tries to cure the disease with his scientific invention, "the More Quantitative Qualitative Ontological Lapsometer," which fails to serve the

purpose, even though the instrument is effective in finding the diagnosis of the malaise.

Percy's satire penetrates like an X-ray through the professional jargon of the euthanasists or "qualitarians" as they call themselves in the novel, and exposes the evil and injustice done in the name of science and progress, namely a better life. Indeed, the very language of the euthanasists echoes the ideal of dignified death proposed in *Utopia*: "It is the quality of life that counts, not longevity, etcetera. Every man is entitled to live his life with freedom and to end it with dignity, etcetera etcetera... (LR 122). To free oneself from "the rack of living" would be "a wise act, they say, since for him death puts an end, not to pleasure, but to agony" (*Utopia* 65). But in practice such philosophy of euthanasia leads to the absurdity of the Happy Isles and the Euphoric Switch portrayed in *Love in the Ruins*. A vision of dystopia of the Happy Isles is a terrifying reality of our contemporary society and its system, where everything is done in the name of the greatest good of the greatest number. So tending the sick with incurable diseases and the antisocial (the snile) has come to a choice either of "the button" or "the switch". "Those who don't respond? Off they're packed to the Happy Isles of Georgia, the federal Good Time Garden where reconditioning is no longer attempted but rather the opposite: whenever they behave antisocially they're shocked into bliss, soon learning to press the button themselves, off and dreaming so blissful that they pass up meals—" (LR 121–22).

Dr. More stands witness to one Mr. Ives who is about to be disposed of at the Happy Isles because of his antisocial behavior. He has not talked nor walked for weeks at his retirement home. Through Dr. More's intervention the truth of the matter is disclosed: this ex-linguist is engaged in deciphering the Ocala Frieze he comes upon near the retirement home, and cannot tolerate the trivial interferences of his fellow retirees and the petty regulations of the home. He explains to the Director that "only one kind of response to those who would control your responses by throwing you in a Skinner box" is "to refuse to respond at all" (LR 234). Thanks to Dr. More's ingenuity and efforts which win the old man's confidence—this is More's way of controlling his fellowmen—Mr. Ives by and for himself regains the "sacred right to control his own body and to choose his own destiny and realize his own potential" (LR 197), and thereby exposes the theoretical contradiction of Dr. Brown and other behaviorists and euthanasists. He further tells the whole audience gathered at the Pit to watch the debate between Dr. Brown and Dr. More that he "intends to go home and write a book, look at the hills, live till [he dies] "(LR 234).

So Dr. More comes out the debate victorious, but he is not above the worldly success and fame, and dreams of winning "Nobel, screw prizes" for his lapsometer. And the great mistake in him is "that he could believe he could treat a spiritual disease with a scientific device however sophisticated."⁹ Just the same this failed psychiatrist retains vestiges of virtue which is "living according to nature" (*Utopia* 55), and overcomes the temptation of the Devil who appears in the form of Art Immelman. Thomas More=Faust dispatches this phony "salesman" by a prayer offered to his kinsman: "*Sir Thomas More, kinsman, saint, best dearest merriest of Englishmen, pray for us and drive this son of a bitch hence*" (LR 376). As has been mentioned earlier, finally this bad Catholic achieves a sort of reconcilia-

tion with Father Smith, priest to the small remnant of a once prosperous Catholic congregation, who teaches the doctor to be human rather than a monster and cures him of "chronic angelism–bestialism." The Christmas Eve five years later finds him a whole man: "What I want is no longer the Nobel, screw prizes, but just to figure out what I've hit on. Some day a man will walk into my office as ghost or beast or ghost–beast and walk out as a man, . . ." (LR 383). What Dr. More fails to effect with his scientific tool is accomplished by the priest's "radical therapy". We encounter both these characters after the sixteen year interim in *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987).

II

In Percy's latest novel set in the early 1990's still "[t]he season's ill", and Dr. More is not much better, either. Medical malpractice, euthanasia (pedeuthanasia), sexual perversions of all kinds (paedophilia in particular) are rampant in Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. On parole after two years in prison for an illegal drug dealing, Dr. More notices "something strange is occurring in [his] region" (TS 3).¹⁰ His former patients have undergone personality changes, developed creepy behavior patterns, and become sexually "animalized." People in town, not excepting his wife Ellen, are socially docile, inarticulate speaking in incomplete and fragmented sentences. Blacks are submissive, toiling and singing in the fields like the niggers in the antebellum South. People seem happy, carefree, yet deprived of human reason with no sense of self. Dr. Thomas More sets out to find the root of the eerie phenomenon, assisted by his lovely cousin Lucy, who is an epidemiologist, and by the omnipotent computer. They uncover, or rather the computer printout does, a criminal experiment coded as "Operation Blue Boy", a project by Dr. Comeaux, and Dr. Van Dorn who runs Belle Ame Academy, where future Olympic champions are trained under a secret, special program. For the worthy cause of scientific progress and better society, human behavior is controlled chemically by a water addictive heavy sodium, not this time in a Skinner box at Dr. Brown's Love Clinic.

The Thanatos Syndrome which deals with serious social problems—the hottest political issue of our time, euthanasia among other things—is satire like its companion piece. Besides, the novel is a comic thriller, our raconteur–hero playing a detective. Dr. More fights the enemies and save the people and children from the hands of the devils. Dr. Thomas More the detective reveals the grotesquery of the misguided "qualitarians". The juvenile molester Dr. Van Dorn gets an eye for eye punishment. He is forced to drink an overdose of his own heavy sodium and literally becomes an ape, showing the familiar symptoms of chronic angelism–bestialism. He regains humanity, to be sure, but only after two months of treatment with a therapeutic gorilla named Eve! The episode is a hilarious Swiftian savagery, and the direction of Percy's satire is self-evident. Percy once told his interviewer that he is increasingly "revolted by the trend of a certain branch of the American novel, which is more and more explicit with all kinds of sexual encounters—. . . All this lurid sexuality and lurid violence distracts the reader from the real purpose of art."¹¹ Pornography in *The Thanatos Syndrome* is integrated into the artistic process of the story, a parody of "a certain branch of the American novel.

"American literature is not having its finest hour," Dr. More muses in *Love in the Ruins*, "The Southern gothic novel yielded to the Jewish masturbatory novel, which in turn gave way to the WASP homosexual novel, which has nearly run its course" (LR 19). As for Rob Comeaux and Max Gottlieb, Dr. More reaches a gentleman's agreement with his former colleagues. They do not go scot free, however. They pay in kind. It is suggested that they stay in Feliciana long enough to dismantle the sodium shunt and to divert next year's funds to St. Margaret's Hospice, and to leave town (TS 345).

Thus, *The Thanatos Syndrome* ends on an affirmative note on the side of life rather than death, as it is the case with *Love in the Ruins*. Dr. More is back to his decent practice, refusing a lucrative position offered him to work with Max Gottlieb in Mandeville—"to do group work and divorce facilitation with Max's aging yuppies, crisis intervention with their stoned-out teenage children." "It's good work and I need the money, but I'd rather do my old-fashioned one-on-one therapy with depressed and terrified people" (TS 366). Ellen his wife, who has outlived her bridge craze, is back as his secretary-nurse-receptionist. His former patients gradually come back with their old problems, the fears, the phobias, and the depressions. So all is well with Thomas More and with the world. Or is it? For the answer we have to turn to another character who has the final word to the problem.

As has been mentioned, Father Smith, the lone Catholic priest of *Love in the Ruins* returns with Dr. More in *The Thanatos Syndrome*. In the latter book, Father Smith assumes a greater role than he does in the first of the sequence. He becomes a hero on his own terms, as it were. He is up in the fire tower on strike, not doing it for an "albeit" as in *Love in the Ruins*. And it is Dr. More who visits the priest, asking him to come down from the tower, as his health is in jeopardy. He becomes a pivotal figure placed at the center of the novel; and Dr. More in his old profession treats the priest. Exchanges in the fire tower between Father Smith and Dr. More is a re-enactment of the therapy Dr. More performs on Mr. Ives in the earlier novel. The doctor is unsuccessful with the priest the first time, but a good Freudian as he is, he practices "[his] best therapy, killing two birds with one stone, asking for help and helping by asking. He may be depressed, but I'm in a fix too" (TS 234). Tom More gradually earns the confidence of his "patient." The doctor first makes his confession, sharing with his patient what he and Lucy discover as the result of their investigation of "Blue Boy" project. They are given an impressive evidence of reduction of street crime, teenage pregnancies, suicides and drug abuse. What is he going to make of this "social betterment" effected through the action of heavy sodium in the water supply of their region? "Social betterment?" the Father retorts to the doctor. The implication is obvious. "What is social betterment at the cost of human dignity?" is the priest's question to the scientists who populate Percy's Dr. More sequence.

Then the role is reversed; it is the Catholic priest who makes confession, thereby is absolved of the memory of his experience in a distant past which nonetheless haunts the saintly man. "Father Smith's Confession" with its footnote inserted in the novel (TS 239-251, 252-254) is in itself a splendid piece of writing. It is the story of his student days

in pre-World War II Germany. Father Smith's tale told in a rambling manner to the doctor makes an interesting analogy between the idealistic German eugenicists engaged in pedeuthanasia and the so-called "qualitarians" who populate Percy's Dr. More sequence under consideration here. "Father Smith's Confession" presents a self-reflection of the novel which is the mirror-image of the beloved old U. S. A. portrayed in Percy's novels. The priest points out that if one starts tampering with the human personality and condoning mercy killings one will surely end up in repeating the holocaust. His footnote is especially poignant; at the time he was *not* horrified, interested yes, but not horrified. "Only later was I horrified. We've got it wrong about horror. It doesn't come naturally but takes some effort" (TS 254), which shows how easily evil is committed by the self-appointed scientists in the name of social betterment. After the confession, Father Smith feels hungry all of a sudden and asks for food he has not touched for long. Furthermore, he comes down from the watchtower, when the hospice reopens, because his function of firewatcher is then over.

The debate which constitutes one of the climaxes in *Love in the Ruins* is thus resumed between Father Smith and Dr. More on the one hand, and Dr. Comeaux and his cronies on the other in *The Thanatos Syndrome*, which is the name of the game Percy's euthanasists play. In his usual rambling episodic way, Dr. Thomas More tells the story of horrifying future (or reality) to warn and make the people not merely interested, curious, but horrified, so that "the New Terror" can be prevented. And the preventive method is the writing of the novel itself for Dr. More=Walker Percy. The author's satiric genius is as acute and potent as in the case of his earlier work. Mordecai Richler's remark that Percy is "an American Waugh with a social conscience"¹² is well made. And Father Smith's "choice" points toward the same direction. After the confession, Thomas More asks the priest why he became a priest.

"Why did I become a priest." The priest at first seems surprised.

Then he ruminates.

"Yes."

"What else?"

"What else what?"

"That's all."

He shrugs, appearing to lose interest. "In the end one must choose—given the chance."

"Choose what?"

"Life or death. What else?" (TS 257)

What else, indeed. Finally the doctor comprehends the full meaning of Father Smith's choice. And if we recall, that is the choice Mr. Ives makes, in *Love in the Ruins*, to live until he dies.

So Walker Percy is still on the side of life, life that is lived according to nature; and "God, they say, created us to that end. When a man obeys the dictates of reason in choosing one thing and avoiding another, he is following nature" (*Utopia* 55), Thomas More must be recalling his namesake, his ancestor, his favorite saint, Sir Thomas More.

As has been observed, the idea of euthanasia expounded in Thomas More's *Utopia* is subject to abuse and misapplication in wrong hands. Behind the authorial intention of having the long anecdote inserted in the novel lies the key to Percy's answer to "the hottest political issue of the day" (LR 122), and also in Father Smith's answer to Thomas More's question, "Why did you become a priest?" And the question the author asks the reader will be "Which do you choose, life or death?" The answer to the question is only too apparent to the readers of Percy's Dr. More sequence: *Love in the Ruins* and *The Thanatos Syndrome*.

In *American Fictions 1940-1980*, Frederick Karl observes that the postwar American writer is "constantly working out a process of adjustment: fully conscious of other cultures and yet himself in pursuit of something essentially American" (24). He is "divided, even torn, rejecting history and yet yearning after it" (25), and the same critic continues that Walker Percy is "particularly equipped for the tightrope act of American fiction" (25). We have seen that Percy's intention for naming his protagonist after the English saint, Sir Thomas More, is "to establish an Anglo-Saxon, English-American, Roman Catholic point of view" as opposed to the WASP tradition, and to place his novel in the western tradition. Percy's Dr. More sequence is meant to be "the western counter-attack against certain Orientalizing and other influences." This explains why the final word is given to Dr. More and to Father Smith in both novels here examined. Answering his interviewer in 1971, Percy comments concerning his position as a Catholic writer; his view of man is

... that man is neither an organism controlled by his environment, not a creature controlled by the forces of history as the Marxists would say, nor is he a detached, wholly objective, angelic being who views the world in a God-like way ... He is a strange creature whom both Thomas Aquinas and Marcel called *homo viator*, man the wayfarer, man the wanderer. So, to me, the Catholic view of man as pilgrim, in transit, in journey, is very compatible with the vocation of a novelist because a novelist is writing about man in transit, man as pilgrim.¹³

It is this image of man that Percy presents in novel after novel: Bink Bolling, Will Barrett, Lancelot, Dr. Thomas More and Father Smith. Dr. More is man in transit, a pilgrim; his journey is not yet finished with *The Thanatos Syndrome*, and his creator will continue the story of this good, humane, yet fallible physician of the soul.

Notes

1. Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963). Brooks provides the genealogies of the major families of Faulkner country in the appendix, which is indispensable to the reader of Faulkner's *oeuvre*.
2. Robert Coles, "The Search I, II," *The New Yorker*. October 2 and 9, 1978.
3. Robert Penn Warren, "Introduction," *Katherine Anne Porter: A Collection of Critical Essays*

- (Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice-Hall, 1979), p. 14.
4. Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971). All references to the novel are to this edition; hereafter the pagination is given in parenthesis within the text.
 5. Charles T. Bunting, "An Afternoon with Walker Percy," *Conversations with Walker Percy*. (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1985) ed. Lewis A. Lawson and Victor A. Kramer, p. 48.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 49
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 47
 9. Patricia Lewis Poteat, *Walker Percy and the Old Modern Age: Reflections on Language, Argument, and the Telling of Stories* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), p. 73.
 10. Walker Percy, *The Thanatos Syndrome* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1987). All references to the novel are to this edition; hereafter the pagination is given in parenthesis within the text.
 11. Barbara King, "Walker Percy Prevails," *Conversations with Walker Percy*, p. 97.
 12. Mordecai Richler, "The Thanatos Syndrome by Walker Percy," *Book of the Month Club News*, May 1987, p. 3.
 13. John C. Car, "An Interview with Walker Percy," *Conversations with Walker Percy*, pp. 63-64.

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