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METAMORPHOSING THE INFALLIBILITY OF SCIENCE IN WALKER PERCY'S *LOVE IN THE RUINS*

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Abstract

Science fiction delineates dementia in every sphere of human life under the nexus of diabolical isms. The mystery is that the iniquitous prejudices are disguised in human potentiality. The evolution of science methodically declares human beings to be erudite. But the resultant ruins harbinger how man's selfishness disintegrates the world. Walker Percy's writings are manifestations of the redemptions from the ruins of scientific hubris. His satiric novel *Love in the Ruins* facilitates the rationale to be sanguine about the prospects of reconciliation between science and humanities. Mutual attention and appreciation are the quirks and the quiddities of human beings. The pivot of the novel is philosophical realism of the conglomeration of various facets of life. It vindicates the feasibility of familial rapprochement amidst political unrest, social discrimination, and religious upheaval. The protagonist, Dr. Tom More's invention, makes him the victim of angelism. However, the edifying humility of Fr. Smith channels at the end More's contrition to access the Lord's Eucharist, the source and the summit of Christian faith. The primary goal of human quiddity is to be in rich fellowship with

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mutual ministrations and appreciation. The focal point of discussion in this article is to substantiate how the false hopes of science can be ameliorated with humanity only through inter-subjectivity and *koinonia* (κοινωνία) conglomerated for an authentic living.

KeyWords: Human Potency, Pride, Angelism and Bestialism, Scientific Advancements, Inter-subjectivity, and Religious upheaval and *koinonia*.

Introduction

The human species is the nucleus of this universe and the topmost living organism with its reason and passion. The evolution of human knowledge and scientific advancements born out of his reason marshal the human taxonomy of the real ingredients of the cosmos far and wide and high and deep as the supreme erudition, but the inextricable and invisible realities like soul, death are bypassed. His proficiency and complacency over the visible earth that has evolved through the centuries have occasioned him the pride of infallibility. However, the motive behind his comfortable sophistication and selfishness has led him to dissolution and alienation in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual consumerist interests and weakens the fraternal and communitarian dimensions of life.

Science, a systematic empirical knowledge to postulate theories and laws to investigate the questions of life on earth, must renew our encounter with society's most impoverished and vulnerable sectors. But, the complex contemporary vicissitudes of science and perversion of technology reverberate man's reason to acknowledge the failure. Man's ongoing mental ailment and the spiritual malady are evidently due to the canker of consumerism, secularism, materialism, scientism, and bestialism that alienates him from his fellowmen, the world around, and even from his self.

Walker Percy (1911-1983), an American prophetic and philosophical author, addresses this spiritual malady resulting from religious and moral decadence. He professes in his fiction the project of man coming home and establishing a meaningful existence. In all his writings, he has distinctly authorized that the primary goal of human quiddity is to be in rich fellowship with mutual ministrations and appreciation. Unlike Freud's assertion that literature couldn't change the fundamental construction of an individual and the society, Percy inspected that science cannot ensure a standard ground for human qualities and individual ailments for which literary craftsmanship and writing, he guarantees, are satisfactory when appropriately approached. Fiction is not just recreation rather a delineation of our day-to-day encounters. Into the oeuvre of American fictions, Walker Percy, the National Book Award laureate (1962), made his pensive emergence in 1961, after his long and formative convalescence required of tuberculosis of which he narrated, "I was the happiest man ever to contract tuberculosis because it enabled me to get out of Bellevue and quit medicine." (**James Atlas, 185**) Though much

later, his authentic religious and moral fecundity to establish true humanism earned him an exclusive crown in American intelligence. His suicidal ancestry, though disavowed him, it subsumed him into a search for actual survival, ranking him in European existential echelon Jean-Paul Satre, Albert Camus, Kierkegaard, and Gabriel Marcel.

The fracturing setbacks of his tactless father's suicide, unseemly mother's drowning in the river incardinated Percy with the stream of questions. Leaving behind his rotten childhood, he began to investigate meaningful existence. Percy's Biographer Jay Tolson registers Percy's battling words as: "I did not feel guilty or responsible the way some children of suicides do.... I was angry, and I was determined not only to find out why he did it but also to make damn sure that it didn't happen to me." (**Jay Tolson, 396**. Though the ancestral stoicism restrained the adolescent Percy into an alienated wilderness, he, under the guidance of his paternal uncle Will Percy framed a 'second half of his life. (**Walker Percy, 1973**) Budding young Percy trudged against the air of genetic despondency. The science fictions of H.G. Wells and Sinclair Lewis (*Arrowsmith*) assured Percy that science could "answer to the philosophical and theological questions that lay beyond its immediate expertise." (**Pilgrim in the Ruins, 97**) However, science's inertness, which considered human beings as only a mechanism under experimental pathology, soon disgusted him.

Percy was constrained to long convalescence and inertness due to the tubercle bacillus at the autopsy (1941) in Bellevue Hospital. Percy describes this as a "cataclysm" (**From Facts to Fiction, 28**) that assisted him in categorizing the afflictions of modern America. The exilic confinement and dormancy redeemed Percy not only from physical sickness but also from spiritual melancholy. He learned, "Modern science is itself radically incoherent, not when it seeks to understand things... but when it seeks to understand man" (**Percy, Signposts in the Strange Land, 271**). His readings and reflections affirmed that science could never resolve the sempiternal fear of death and direct a purposeful existence of body and soul intact in this muddled world. Percy acknowledged that his introspection on European Existential authors fulfilled "a tremendous gap in his view of the world." (**Ashley Brown, 6**). On science or the European Existential exposition, Percy expresses his quandary:

"I was.... alone so much that I had nothing to do but read and think. I began to question everything I had once believed... answers through an application of the scientific method... a rather impressive and beautiful thing... But I gradually began to realize that as a scientist, a doctor, a pathologist – I knew so very much about the man but had little idea what man is." (**Qtd. in Robert Coles, 63**).

Percy interrogated the sufficiency of scientific methods and contemplated on the perplexity of the "nature and destiny of man; especially and more immediately the predicament of man in a modern technological society." (**From Facts and Fiction, 28**) The regnant technological advancements and the materialistic concerns of science have stripped off the phenomenology of life and offered only the general outlook of the entire species. As it could not discern the individual uniqueness and complexity

involved in man's joys and sorrows, it can only provide a theoretical composition of human life disregarding the interior and spiritual dimension which perpetuates the thirst for redemption.

Percy highlighted the fissures in technology that could not explain "an individual as an individual but only insofar as he resembles other individuals" (**Martin Luschei, 7**), and this vacuum in science expounded him the spiritual domain of an individual. The people who glorify science and the empirical postulations distinguish "the world ordered by scientific constructions with himself as a great lacuna, a vacuum." (**Jon Carr, ed., 39**) Percy never repudiated the potency of science that ameliorates human physic and the environment despite the spiritual realm being unresolved. Eerie questions related to the mind as a virtual extension of the body stipulate science a *modus operandi* for a meaningful co-existence of body and soul in-tact and the trajectory of concordance of the differences of religious and ethnic aspects in a given social group. The existential novels, like *Nausea*, *War, and Peace*, *Brothers of Karamazov*, and others, enlightened Percy to contextualize the human quiddity and explicate the internal struggle between stoicism and scientific piety in opposition with empirical strategies of science. The patient-doctor, realizing the purpose of life, conceived his new vocation to be a writer. Kierkegaard's *Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle* offered Percy an extensive view on the authority of Catholicism as the sole source of meaningful existence against modern malicious materialism. Percy, as the modern apostle of the message of hope, ascertained by writing novels to bring home the trembling mind of the modern man.

An Apostle is the God's chosen to proclaim authoritatively what "neither the eye has seen, nor the ear heard; the good news to the poor, liberty to captives and the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free and to proclaim the Lord's year of favor (redemption)." (**Luke 4:18**) Percy's acceptance of Catholic faith and the discovery of resolute *modus operandi* of life ensued him as a responsible propagandist of morals and faith to be delineated in his with an extraordinary call and transcendental tidings oeuvre. Thus "becoming a writer as in professing his Catholicism, Percy believed himself to be born again, born to a new understanding" of the predicament of man (**Alfred Kazin, 85**) and assumed the prophetic and apostolic mantle to exhort the modern man to pay attention to the apocalyptic arena around. "Therefore, it is possible that a novelist may find himself in "radical disagreement with his fellow countrymen." (**Lawson and Krammer, eds., 63**)

Percy, by upholding the dignity and morality of an individual, believed that Catholic theology could obliterate the wayfaring of fallen man's despair and the illusion of the infallibility of science. He affirmed the human uniqueness to Phil McCombs: "Once you ignore the uniqueness and sacredness of the individual human being and set up abstract ideas for the improvement of society, then the terminus is the gas chamber." (**Southern Review, 810**) Scientific methods can understand human situations only in resemblance with the other in the larger unit. Percy attempted to bridge the gap between technology and transcendence, and as Jay Tolson has noted: "The whole impetus behind Percy's attempt to write fiction was to express something quite mysterious; the journey that led to his accepting a transcendent order and purpose." (**Pilgrim in the Ruins, 212**)

The self-alienated universal man is unaware that he is away from the mass and his idiosyncratic depletion tenants only “the position of the man in the Bible who would gain the whole world and lose his soul.” (**Coming Crisis in Psychiatry, 359**). Wherefore, Percy channels his protagonists from their predicaments into a new realm of peace, hope, charity, and redemption. The initial failure of two attempts never brought down his torch. The first published novel, “*The Moviegoer*” (1960), received acclaim and the subsequent novels and essays portrayed a short description of malice and despair and directions to proceed for an authentic living. Harold Bloom ascertains in Percy’s novels “a metamorphosis from the language of story to the urgencies that transcend art.” (**Harold Bloom ed., 1**)

Man has idolized science and technology to the extreme of complete annihilation of religious concordance. The religious recovery is urgent for man to transform this futile complacency and resolve the dichotomy between science and morals. The moralist novelist must explore the human condition, not as an objective scientist but provide therapy for inner-conflicts of human inter-subjectivity and a message of hope for redemption from treacherous alienation caused by the unparalleled faith in science.

To make the man aware of his last days, “The fictional use of violence, shock, comedy, insult and the bizarre are the everyday tools of his trade. Thus if a novelist wishes to warn the world about its end, he must conjure up a catastrophe.” (**MB 118**) The primary task of a religious novelist, as Psalmist says, is “to sing a new song” of hope (*Psalms* 98:1) and “to make God real in His absence, i.e., God must be invoked without being named.” (**Joy Jacob, xliii**)

A Panacea for Modern Delirium

Percy affirmed that he could endorse the vicious fabrication gnawing at the roots of modern technology and engross the reader to contrive the sovereign self to progress from nihilism to authenticity and from maliciousness to redemption. His primary intention was to expose his conversion story from an existential agony owing to The Fall of first parents and its consecutive repercussions on mankind. He diagnosed the mire of contemporary malady and assessed the individual’s potentiality for committed and holy living. Percy’s writing adopts a propagandist approach to alarm the perturbation of meaningless productivity and Thanatos syndrome subscribed by the false assurance of modern science and technology. However, instead of a bleak, gloomy ending, a new proem is entrenched at the close “to make a contribution however small and leave the world just a little better off” (**MG 101**) and “to assist others and in turn be assisted by them in their dark journeys towards personal salvation.” (**Susan S. Kissel, 135.**) The protagonists overcome the span of turbulence, conceiving that “Only a meaningful interpersonal relationship or inter-subjectivity can bring them to the threshold of consciousness and knowledge of themselves and deliverance from the everydayness” (**Joy Jacob, 16**) and the vain guarantee of science. The fragmented postmodern notion of man as “an organism among other organisms” (**MB 19**) is due to the empirical science that cannot account for mental alienation and emotional impoverishment. The evasive answers of science, devoid of divine and human, never vent

the cataclysm of the personal estrangement contrived by the fragmented notion of God-world-man. Percy admonishes the objectification of the individuality as his fictional aura in *Love in the Ruins* to extricate the vortex of malice aforethought evincing the transcendence deep within, from “the dislocated postmodern world back into the ancestral past and into a transcendental timelessness.” (**Martin Luschei, 169**)

Love in the Ruins (LIR) is certainly distinguishable for its scientific and satiric aura that flushes out the most phenomenal facet of Percy’s propaganda. It propels the hostile and the topsy-turvy apocalyptic atmosphere emerging out of World War I & II, Civil War dilapidations, Cold War allies and rivals, the modern culture of free-love, slavery and the racial riots in Detroit, and the ecological crisis causing the extinction of vulnerable species from the face of the earth. Percy, at the crucial hour of destruction, immorality, materialistic consumerism wherein human beings were the purchasable commodities, environmental issues and the political imbalance precipitated by the assassinations of Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther Jr., profoundly gazed into the nearing end that no one noticed. The chronicles of history elucidate, “Every age has suffered crises that have pushed some prophets and artists to don metaphysical sackcloth and cry out, This is the End.” (**Jessica Hooten, 53**) Percy cried out about eventual defilement over God’s creation and accounted for all these ravages on human allegiance to the false hopes of science and technology that separate the human self from its true Being. In this topsy-turvy apocalyptic setting, his essay, “*Notes for the end of the World,*” elucidated how modern consumerist technology has suspended religion.

In his correspondence to Shelby Foote, Percy has shared the outline of what would become the plot of *LIR*, “I have in mind a futuristic novel dealing with the deadline and the fall of the U.S.A, the country rent almost hopelessly between the rural knothheaded right and the godless alienated to the left.” (**Correspondence, 129**) Percy intended to explicate the absorption into science on the one side and the sin of slavery and the racial riots on the other as the root cause of “Why America didn’t work out?” (**LIR, 53**) Choosing the little way of Saint Teresa of Little Flower in line with Kierkegaard’s notion of self discovery of becoming itself transparently under God, Percy, by engaging the protagonist in the ordinary Sacramental Life, heals the fragmentations of American suburban life and the lethal effects of scientism.

The most disturbing conundrum for Percy was whether it is the absorption of the magical aura of science or the tempestuous restructuring of consciousness with the assistance of science that causes dilapidation all over and estrangement individually. The chasm is unbridgeable that Percy presents a startling picture in *LIR* to grab the attention of oblivious readers: “How peculiar it is that people don’t seem to notice how awful the happenings are.” (**Signpost, 156**) Percy, to detect the deeper spiritual and social pathologies, compares the original sin of the first parents in the Bible with the American nigger business, racial uprising and the brutal mishandling of the slaves, etc., “All that you have to do was to pass one little test... Here is a hopeless man of Africa... All you have to do is not violate him. That’s all. One little test: You flunk!” (*LIR*, 53-54)

The geographically dividing and psychologically discriminating determinants such as swamplands' Bantu guerillas, Paradise estate (residence of the political parties and the rich), Honey Island Swamp (the home of castoffs and rebels), and federal complex (hospitals, NASA facility, and the behavioral institute) throwback vantage on Yeats's phrase 'the center did not hold' in his poem "*The Second Coming*." In other words, the protagonist, Dr. Tom More, devoid of faith in God and man, surrounded by pandemonium, anarchy, and animosity, postulates the end of everything perching against the pine tree in complete bewilderment.

Maritin Luschei, ordains the loss of sense of sin as "the monstrousness which the twentieth century let loose upon the world" (**Martin Luschei, 174**). When the novel is set out,

"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, San Francisco against Los Angeles, Chicago against Cicero." (**LIR, 17**)

An unhappy, cuckolded midlife alcoholic and psychiatrist in a fragmented and phantasmagorical backdrop crippled by megalomania wanders in wanton sex and scientific pride. He is a self-professed misanthropist who surmises retrieving paradise with the prophylactic instrument LAPSOMETER to cure the havoc of life and the psychological perturbations of the soul. (**LIR, 29**) Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Harvey Cox's *Secular City*, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, and St. Augustine's *City of God* strongly cajoled Percy while writing *LIR*. Nevertheless, Percy deviates from them, frames the fictional world shortly around the 1980s, and focuses on the city nearing its misanthropic end of which none of the fellow citizens pay attention. In *Understanding Walker Percy*, Linda Hobson observes that like Dante in *Divine Comedy*, who ascends to paradise from earth via purgatory and hell, Dr. More jumps between the paradise, town, swamp, and the pit (**81**) to show his psychic ailments. The storyline strolls back to the occurrences that have led to the current catastrophe and the associating collapse of the southern values, and the bifurcation that disorients the narrator himself. Dr. More is the doppelganger of today's melancholic man and facsimiles those who search for love and fulfillment disregarding the responsibility behind; who are monopolized in the fabrication and conjectures of science; who desperately need medication for an air of despondency; who combat the aberrations of life in which he is also a victim. Thus, Percy is an author of every age in which love and companionship are the prime-most requisite for the small-scale "Sacramental Life" (**Jessica Hooten, 54**) of contentment.

The degenerated catholic, Dr. More envisages Armageddon, the complete annihilation of the past, and the emergence of the new world. The four days sequence of the novel traverses back and forth to sustain the secrets of Armageddon till the resolution. The political unrest (liberals and conservatives), social fragmentations (racism and slavery) and the religious dissipation, and individual infirmity and indisposition (death of Tom's innocent daughter) are the clear signs of the universal tribulations that have inaugurated angelism and bestialism. Dr. More, with his MQQOL (More's Qualitative and Quantitative Ontological Lapsometer), believes in measuring all these ailments and gets astonished to

find that the words *eros* and *Thanatos* have been stripped down their denotation (*eros* only for sex and *Thanatos* for suffering). Dr. More scrutinizes the words to find out their original meaning. Moreover, Tom's attempted self-slaughter and the realization of life (*LIR 97*) sustain him as an ex-suicide in a dilemma or dead in life between the fear of losing life and thirst for true love.

Dr. More, devastated by the memory of his deceased daughter and his wife's unfaithfulness, lacerates himself. The blood spouting from his artery struck him: "I came to myself, saw myself as myself and the world as what it is and began to love life." (*LIR 97*) Perceiving his anomalies, More confines himself in the mental asylum where he remains to escalate his sagacity until the end. He deciphers suffering as the inevitable reality to discern one's true self and at odds with the Cartesian split disputes, "Is it possible to live without feasting on death?" (*LIR 374*) Reflections on his daughter's afflictions and death and eventual expulsion of his wife drastically torments him and surfaces his bestialism and his wife to angelism due to her choice of new spirituality. Although of her search for the self and true love, Doris exiles herself from the household responsibility and abundance of love. Because she is often reminded of her dead daughter than the living husband and of gnostic belief, which locates the evil outside of the human realm and affirms the human facility for eradicating the evil.

The two divergent slant on death, one by Doris, who believes death is a result of the inability of a man to handle life; another by Tom, who sees death and suffering as an inevitable and inexorable reality, slowly explores the disorientation of life due to the gnostic heresy extant. Cleanth Brook, in his essay, "*Walker Percy and Modern Gnosticism*," accentuates the dual components of the heresy thus: "1. Man is blameless for the dreadful world which he is part of, and he has the right to accuse someone or something else as responsible for the evils; 2. Redemption is eventual with personal exertion." (**Cleanth Brook, 680**)

The ultra-modern men are exploited in their explicit acts of susceptible frailty by the false and convenient comforts by the heresy that also endorses with the alternate medium of proper antidote and the precise mixture of chemicals for a cure. Ross Douthat, the New York Times editor, in his *Bad Religion*, states that Gnosticism "has a mass following that far exceeds the Sunday attendance at every mainline denomination." (**Ross Douthat, 6**). To bring home the wandering man, Percy attempts to predicate most of the characters in *LIR* as entangled in futile promises of Gnosticism that causes division all over. More, despite his repugnance for his mother's "Catholic Gnosticism" (*LIR 177*), is also an inert dupe of the heresy in his vanity that science is infallible. He is the messiah to redeem the world from all its defilements. More takes his authority from his intelligence against the grace of God.

Self-righteous Dr. More conjectures to recreate the new Garden of Eden on the earth and professes himself as the creator with the success of the MQQOL, which he believed, can read the human psychic perturbations. More proudly exalts, "Now I know how to be happy and make others happy" (20) and "My little machine is the first caliper of the soul" (*LIR 106*), shunning that science procures its purposefulness only from man. Conversely, Dr. More himself is the victim of psychological imbalance: he couldn't keep up what he promised Samantha, his dying daughter, and he couldn't fulfill

his wife's expectations. Dr. Tom's conceit, emanated from his unconscious gnostic dissipation, forges him vulnerable to the fiend, Art Immalmann. In his *The Death of Satan*, Andrew Delbanco explores how the Gnostics approved Satan, "not as deceiver at all, but a giver of knowledge, the source of man's understanding" (**Andrew Delbanco, 25**), and this is the leitmotif of Percy's oeuvre. Fr. Rinaldo Smith wails, "They've won, and we've lost" (*LIR* 185) and "I am surrounded by the corpses of souls" (*LIR* 186), which expose the apocalyptic scenario of the novel and truly current demonic age in which intelligence is attributed exclusively to human capability.

Even though Art Immelmann's caricature is More's devil, his messianic pride and credence on science's infallibility that he secretly wishes for the end of the time and the emergence of a new one with the help of technology is the apodictic fiend. He reflects on the "lapsometer that could treat as well as diagnose." (165). Art's mixture of "curiously old-fashioned" (166) attire with Ban deodorant exposes the long awaiting satanic force as referred to in the Bible: "because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." This fusion of old and modern well explains the presence of evil in human history. Albeit More's initial reprimands, in the third encounter, the frustrated More acquiesces Immalmann, who fascinates him with a proffer of ionizer to convert the diagnostic device therapeutic. Inveigled More yields to Art, hoping for the Oscar. But Jessica Hooten asserts, "Just as Doris, More's wife opened the door to her subsequent fall by reading books on various forms of spirituality, so More has invited the devil into his life by trusting science too much, idolizing women and music and ultimately exalting Immelmann to the highest place." (**Reading Walker Percy's Novel, 65**) More himself, admits that he "believed in God but love women best, music and science next. Whisky next, God fourth, and my fellowmen hardly at all." (*LIR* 6)

Art never unleashes a titanic wrangle against More but establish rapport with him, saying, "Science to help all men and a happy, joyous love to help woman... This love has its counterpart in scientific knowledge: it is neutral morally, abstractive godlike-" (*LIR* 213-214) Art as a charitable man, entangles More with the assurance of the name and fame and to assist American psychic and social struggles to be cured. Only the unlawful distribution of the device transpires the conspiracy of wicked Art. More cognizes the trick and beseeches to his collateral descendant: "St. Tomas More, kinsman, saint best and dearest merriest of Englishmen, pray for us and drive this son of a bitch hence." (*LIR* 376)

More's secret and unconscious alliance with Gnosticism, the evils of racism and division of Knotheads and Lefts, angelism, bestiliasm, and the sanguinity over machinery effectuates the end of time. More observes one of his patients as "having so abstracted himself from himself and the world around him, seeing things as theories and himself as a shadow, that he cannot, so to speak, reenter the lovely ordinary world" (*LIR* 34) and mirrors the same abstraction as universal dilemma and individual's defilement. Unlike the Catholic belief that admonishes human beings embodied with body and soul intact, the sensual scientists in *LIR* believe in B. F. Skinner's behaviorist theory (stimulus and response), which establishes that the environment conditions human beings. However, Dr. More asserts that

beneath the conditioned behavior lies in every individual an unseen soul that inhabits one's docility towards sin and delirium/guilt and the thirst for redemption. Eventually, he defends the personal freedom of his patient, Mr. Ives, against Dr. Buddy Brown, who wants to hand over Ives to euthanasia due to unseemly behavior. Disregarding the free will/soul, the sensual scientists experiment only with the external outcome of the behavior and choose euthanasia for unwarranted manners. Jesus says in the Bible, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (**Matthew 26:41**) and St. Paul illustrates this struggle when he says, "For I do not understand my actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. (Romans 7:15) Hence Dr. More argues that an inappropriate exercise of freedom due to misapprehension of reality cannot confine one anomaly in the patterned social structure. Thus the storyline centers on the Love Clinic in the swamp and the Geriatrics clinic for euthanasia, and hence, the factual tension is between Love (*eros*) and death (*Thanatos*).

The subtitle of the novel clarifies how love initiates a new hope of rising amidst great ruins and at the apocalyptic age. For, this wicked and consumerist cohort has lost the sense of sin, the authentic meaning for real love, and the ability to deal with death, the indispensable reality. The protagonist was trembling between wanton sex and stardom of intelligence quests for individual freedom. Percy himself asserts, "The novel is incidentally about politics. It is about the pursuit of happiness." (**Signposts, 248**) Most exasperations of life are the outcome of unlawful sources for pleasure. Dr. More in helplessness cries out, "The first thing a man remembers is longing and the last thing that he is conscious of before death the same longing" (*LIR* 20) as St. Augustine's starting line in his *Confession*, "Our hearts are restless, God until they rest in you." Ergo, both St. Augustine and Dr. More are the victims of devastating sensual pleasures which they tend to derive from the wrong sources of Gnosticism, Manichaeism, cohabitation outside marriage and drinking, and high yielding scientific achievements and aspiration esteemed, etc.,

Dr. More, at the close of the narrative, after five years of the occurrences, awaits in the queue for Confession in penitential attire, another facet of Percy's propaganda - waiting and watching. For years past, Dr. More has been in the sin of pride anchoring science and technology. The key for his conversion is the exemplary humility of Fr. Smith, who admonishes Dr. More against the evil aspirations and adjures about manifesto of the Little Way:

"Meanwhile, forgive me, but there are other things we must think about: like doing our jobs, you being a better doctor, I being a better priest, showing a bit of ordinary kindness to people, particularly our own families – unkindness to those close to us is such a pitiful thing – doing what we can for our poor unhappy country – things, which, please forgive me, sometimes seem more important than dwelling on a few middle-aged daydreams." (***LIR* 399**)

Fr. Smith's edifying humility hits on the nail, and Dr. More repents for his wandering and concedes, "You're right. I am Sorry." (*LIR* 399) More, resolved of his sin of pride, he revamps his Garden of Eden, accentuating the right resource, in Percy's term, the Eucharist, and begins his journey.

Dr. Tom More, with a humble heart, begins fostering his Garden of Happiness amidst the ruins of the technologically sundered world. Finally, the nativity of Dr. More on Christmas Eve parallels the nativity of Christ, with which the new life began, and the yearly celebration of the same recalls every Christian to access the right resource of life against the perishable realities.

Here and Now

The significant protocol of the narrative technique of *LIR* intensely delineates the facet of 'here and now' tightly ascribing the reader to the apocalyptic age. Dante's opening lines, "Midway along the journey of our life I came to myself in a dark wood" in his *Inferno* influenced Percy to begin: "Now in this dread later days... (*LIR* 3) This accent on NOW ruminates on the reader's present and comprehends the personal relevance of the novel. NOW signifies each instant in real life of the relator and the reader. Every NOW is the end of the world that alleviates worldliness and cries out the possibility of a New Beginning as Kierkegaard's journey forms the aesthetic face of life to the religious sphere via ethics.

Conclusion

The constraining contemporary crass materialism and callousness of technological apparatus alienate modern man from man and even from his self. Shocked by the amoral aspirations, Percy explores the hope and possibility of eradicating the existing anomalies and the inauguration of the New. The concealed signs of nuclear holocaust, euthanasia, scientific pride propose the end time, and Percy draws a ray of hope from the individuals' conversion to southern sensibility and fecundity.

The primordial estrangement of a man propelled by the aboriginal catastrophe of the Biblical fall is the cardinal ingredient of Percy's novels which establish the candor that the thirst for intersubjectivity can never be achieved through science and technology. The holocaust of atomic inventions contravenes the interior self of man, causing deeper rootlessness and sick unto death. Therefore Percy exhibits contemporary secular America in its extraordinary delirium, and all his protagonists, outwardly successful gentlemen, are aware of the plummet of the merits of morality and spirituality, which sustained the foundation of the American tradition - Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The modern scientific view of man as a mere organism to be done away with or be improved in the laboratory is the octopus clutches that cripple man inane. Perceiving these vices, Percy's paragons quest for the reunion of the brokenness and the communion-*koinonia* (κοινωνία) of the individuals for an authentic living. He sets about a new trend in analyzing the frailty of men. His elucidation on the individuals' thirst for happiness and on the little ways and means for actualizing the destiny of creation stand high in regard. In this sense, Percy's novels are Gospels of redemption in Christian terms, yet he remains literati rather than a preacher.

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