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Walker Percy and Eric Voegelin's Political Philosophy

All of Percy's works circle around what he refers to as "the modern malaise"¹ or "post-Christian malaise,"² a deep transformation of the consciousness of modern Western man. Such a malaise is marked by a crippling feeling of limitation, a sense of disorientation, and loss of identity: "People are suffering from a deep dislocation in their lives, alienation from themselves, dehumanization. . . . I'm not talking about poverty, racial discrimination, and women's rights. I'm talking about the malaise which seems to overtake the very people who seem to have escaped these material and social evils."³ To Percy the essence of this transformation is not primarily sociological, although he does not ignore this aspect. Unlike the Agrarians of the 1920s and 30s, he does not blame the feeling of impoverishment exclusively on the negative impacts of economic and technological progress, on mass society, mechanization, and urbanization. To him the decline has an ontological quality located at the very root of modern existence. It shows itself, for example, in the isolation of sexuality from (spiritual) love, which has led not only to depersonalization and moral nihilism, but also to an increase of violence, the dominance of thanatos over libido. The most pervasive symptom, however, is the breakdown of genuine communication, the loss of a common language due to the dissolution of a shared discourse into a multiplicity of voices, creeds, ideologies and scientific doctrines:⁴ "The trouble is when you put together half a dozen experts on religion, science, creativity, and sexuality, plus their lay followers, what you've got is a small deranged society."⁵ The falling apart of scientific knowledge and individual life and the predominance of the abstract and collective over the concrete and personal are the most negative effects of this tendency.

A great number of other manifestations of the malaise can be found in Percy's work – political, social, psychological, and moral ones

–, but the underlying issue is always the same: Modern man is confronted with a disruption of self that he can neither control nor understand because modernity has deprived him of all viable modes of (transcendental) orientation. It is here that Percy sees the task of the novelist. It is not enough for him simply to document the symptoms of the disease; he also wants to diagnose them and find remedies for them. “The point is,” Percy writes, “that, in a new age when things and people are devalued, when meanings break down, it lies within the province of the novelist to start the search afresh, like Robinson Crusoe on his island.”⁶

Percy always refused to be labelled merely a ‘Southern writer.’ “The expression, ‘the Southern novelist,’” he writes, “has always depressed me, conjuring up as it does a creature both exotic and familiar and therefore boring like a yak or llama in the zoo.”⁷ On the other hand, Percy attributes an exceptional position to the Southern writer because in the South, so he points out, the malaise arrived with a time lag and therefore clashed all the more depressingly with the memory of the old traditional life:

This paradoxical diminishment in the midst of plenty, its impoverishment in the face of riches, is the peculiar vocation of the novelist. It gives the Southern writer a privileged position. . . . His great advantage is that he can see the inside and the outside – inside because, living as he does in the resurgent Sunbelt, he is more American than ever; from the outside because he’s still Southern whether he likes it or not, which is to say he can still see the American proposition from a tragic historical perspective.⁸

This explains why Percy always locates his versions of the modern apocalypse in the fictional parish of Feliciana in Louisiana, the heartland of the Old South. But unlike other Southern novelists he is not interested any longer in portraying the old Agrarian opposition between a venerable Southern tradition and the advance of a Northern progressive wasteland, but focuses instead on the struggle between culture and non-culture in the South itself, which he sees in the grip of what he calls “Los Angelization.”⁹ Percy’s earlier works still follow the classic portrayals of existentialist alienations such as Jean Paul Sartre’s *Nausea*, Albert Camus’ *The Stranger*, or Saul Bellow’s *Dangling Man*. *The Moviegoer* (1962) and *The Last Gentleman* (1966) exemplify the malaise by concentrating on the existential dilemmas of his protagonists, with the South serving as an atmospheric background. In his later novels, in particular in *Love Among the Ruins* (1971), *Lancelot* (1977), and *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987), the South as such increas-

ingly serves him as an epitome of the modern malaise. In all these works Percy was strongly influenced by a great number of European thinkers – Søren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, José Ortega y Gasset, Martin Heidegger, C. G. Jung, and, last but not least, Erich Voegelin. His influence becomes particularly visible in Percy's dystopian novels. Cleanth Brooks was the first to point out striking analogies between Percy's ideas and those of the emigré Austrian philosopher. "The basic resemblance between Percy and Voegelin that first struck me," he writes in his essay "Walker Percy and Modern Gnosticism" (1977), "was the fact that both writers see modern man as impoverished by his distorted and disordered view of reality."¹⁰ Percy responded approvingly and thanked Brooks for the positive impulses he derived from his essay.¹¹

Voegelin was born in 1901 in Cologne, Germany, but he received his education in Austria.¹² He studied at the University of Vienna, obtained his habilitation in 1928 and taught political philosophy and sociology at the faculty of Law. In the thirties he criticized Nazi racism and totalitarianism in his books *Rasse und Staat* (1933) and *Der autoritäre Staat* (1936). In 1938 he published *Die politischen Religionen*, a book that exposes the Nazi ideology as a form of pseudo-religion. Losing his job as a university teacher and persecuted by the Gestapo Voegelin had to flee from Austria with his wife after the *anschluss* in 1938. After a brief stay in Switzerland, he emigrated to the US in 1939, held teaching positions at various universities and became an American citizen in 1944. From 1942 to 1958 he was a professor of Political Science at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. In 1958 he accepted an offer by the University of Munich to fill Max Weber's former chair in political science and founded the Institut für Politische Wissenschaft. In 1969 he returned to the US to join the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He continued his scholarly work until his death in 1985 and completed – beside many other works – his five-volume opus magnum *Order and History*, a complex encyclopedia of the history of Western thought.

The book that is most relevant in the context of this investigation is *The New Science of Politics*, published in English at the University of Chicago Press in 1952 and reprinted many times since.¹³ The German translation *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* appeared six years later in 1958. *Time Magazine* gave Voegelin a spacious review in March 1953 introducing his ideas to a nationwide audience.¹⁴ Percy too carefully read the book, as we know from an interview with Ashley Brown

in 1967, where he mentions Voegelin in connection with *The Last Gentleman*.¹⁵ There Percy made use of Voegelin's idea of the "end of history" in Jewish-Christian thinking supplanting the cyclical conceptions of the ancient Greeks. Voegelin's book outlines the rise of Western civilization as an extended fall from religious transcendence in the wake of the erroneous attempts to create secular paradises on earth. He establishes an analogy between the ancient Christian heresy of Gnosticism and modern political mass movements, in particular Nazism and Communism.¹⁶ In the Gnostic speculations of the Calabrian abbot Joachim de Fiore around 1200 in the wake of Saint John's *Revelations* he saw a striking foreshadowing of these later developments.¹⁷ While St. Augustine had divided history into a sacred and a profane track – *civitas dei* and *civitas terrena* – Joachim rejoined the two streams. He saw history as a three-stage progress following successively the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. After a time of disorder in the second stage and the appearance of the Antichrist destroying the corrupt and worldly Church, a new prophetic leader will arrive and initiate the millennium, the third realm of spiritual redemption. By this, so Percy argues, Joachim created the aggregate of symbols which have governed the self-interpretation of modern societies up to our time. Later Gnostic movements adopted the symbolic tri-partite scheme and secularized it by replacing the transcendental order of being by a world-immanent order. Gnostic speculation 'immanentized' the Christian eschatology, the religious afterlife, in order to create human perfection on earth: "It overcomes the uncertainty of faith by receding from transcendence and endowing man and his intramundane range of action with the meaning of eschatological fulfilment."¹⁸ The history of Western civilization, seen from this perspective, has been an extended process of mass movements replacing the original transcendental definition of man by way of totalitarian utopias. Hitler's 'Third Reich' or Stalin's communist classless society as the third and final stage of dialectical materialism are the most conspicuous examples.

Voegelin's religious conservatism must be understood in the context of the authoritarian Austrian Christian-Socialist 'Ständestaat' of the 1930s and its rigidly Catholic orientation – what has later been labelled 'Austro-Fascism.' Voegelin belonged to the relatively small number of opponents to the Nazi regime coming from the Christian right wing of the political spectrum. In the late 1960s, however, after his return from the US, he was harshly criticized in Germany for what

was then seen as a reactionary ideology. Voegelin returned to the US in 1969, where his ideas, like those of his immigrant friend and Jewish counterpart Leo Strauss, met a more positive reception and contributed to the neo-conservative climate of the 1970s. In the Cold War period his ideas were simplified and instrumentalized by neo-conservative and fundamentalist ideologues against Communism abroad and left-wing liberalism at home.¹⁹

Percy's interest in Voegelin's ideas evidently derived from certain parallels with his own thinking. He too was a Catholic and conservative humanist and saw apocalyptic tendencies in modernity. As Lewis Lawson has shown in his article "The Gnostic Vision in *Lancelot*," this indebtedness to Voegelin can clearly be seen in his novel *Lancelot* (1977).²⁰ The protagonist, Lance Lamar or Lancelot, a romantic Southern idealist, traditionalist, and descendant of an old aristocratic Louisiana family, is confronted with moral decay and corruption in his own family and in America in general. In his search for a 'new order' he seeks recourse in the past, in the heroic stoicism of his Old South ancestors. He blows up his old plantation building in a hurricane and kills his adulterous wife and her lover. In a long inner monologue from the cell in a "Center of Aberrant Behavior,"²¹ to which he has been confined, he tells his violent story. He dreams of an ultra-conservative "Third Revolution" (*L* 157), a return to a morally rigid and militantly feudal yeoman culture based on the ethical principles of the Old South. He chooses Virginia, the place "where it all began" (*L* 219) as the proper stage for his utopian vision. After the successful First American Revolution in 1776 against the British and the failed Second Revolution in 1861 against the North, the "Third Revolution" strives for a post-apocalyptic millennium in the wake of Saint John's *Revelations*: "There will be leaders, and there will be followers . . . There will be men who are strong and pure of heart" (*L* 178). "The new order will not be based on . . . Communism or fascism or liberalism or any ism at all, but simply on that stern rectitude, valued by the new breed and marked by the violence which will attend its break" (*L* 158). Christianity will be purified from all liberal and humanistic traits and follow the martial code of the crusaders: "They believed in a God who said he came not to bring peace but the sword, Make love not war? I'll take war rather than what this age calls love" (*L* 157-58). In an interview Percy calls Lancelot's "Third Revolution" "a very violent almost fascist revolution" and compares it with the rise of Nazi Germany in the early thirties. "There was a tremendous excitement at the 'rejuve-

nation' of Germany, and the creation of new values in the Nietzschean sense."²² At the end of the novel the Southern ideal turns into an apocalyptic nightmare and Lancelot, the Gnostic revolutionary, is reduced to the role of a crazy messianic fascist. He asks his old friend Father John, a Catholic priest, whom he calls Percival: "Is there anything you wish to tell me before I leave?" (*L* 257). Father John's laconic answer "Yes" contains the omitted Christian humanist alternative to Lancelot's madness. The old priest listens silently to his ravings and Percy leaves it to his readers to decide on which side to stand. Father John's silence in a way calls in question Lancelot's ultra-reactionary stand. The unrealized and unresolved confrontation between the two men at the end of the novel creates a strange ambiguity. Percy, in order to prevent misunderstandings, has later interpreted the novel in this way: "Lancelot's 'Third Revolution' is in the deepest sense immoral and, I hope, is so taken by the reader."²³ Both Lancelot and Percival have arrived at the same pessimistic diagnosis of the world, but the therapies they propose are radically different. In the end, evidently, only Father John, the orthodox Christian, will reach the Holy Grail.

In his dystopian satire *Love in the Ruins* (1971) Percy projects the 'modern malaise' into a future America with the South as the central setting. Percy called the novel a "prophecy in reverse"²⁴ about the end of the world, in which he lays bare negative trends in today's America in order to provoke his readers' reaction. The author's reflective voice of the philosopher-novelist, so typical of his early works, now gives way to a satirical, almost apocalyptic tone:

Our beloved old USA 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. ²⁵

For the world is broken, sundered, busted down in the middle, self ripped from self and man pasted back together as mythical monster, half angel, half beast, but no man. (*LR* 382-83)

Louisiana has become totally disrupted by political division and racial strife, and the 'Bantus,' a rebellious group of black guerillas, have gained control over the country. However, despite the strongly sociological and political orientation of the novel, the catastrophe is brought about by the psychic disruption of the people involved: a Cartesian bifurcation of mind and body, reducing the body to a mere object of the mind with all needs automatically satisfied. Percy uses the term

“angelism-bestialism” (*LR* 27) for this disease, which eclipses one side of the character and makes psychic wholeness inaccessible. Man vacillates between total estrangement from his social environment and mindless adjustment to it. Under the impact of this pathological disturbance he falls prey to abstract notions proposed to him and willingly commits extreme acts of violence with the best possible intentions. A group of scientists, among them the brain specialist and Freudian psychiatrist Dr. Thomas More, try to cope with the chaos by way of social engineering. He develops a ‘lapsometer’, a device that can diagnose the malaise – the fall of the self from itself – by measuring the chasm between mind and body. More pursues the Gnostic dream of overcoming the subject/object split in order to reach human perfection. But he fails to find the right therapy and the social engineers and technocrats finally threaten to exploit his invention in a harmful way.

Dr. More, after two years in prison for drug dealing, reappears again as first person narrator in Percy's last novel *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987), the second dystopia set in his fictional Feliciana parish, Louisiana. In its ethnic diversity, its “too many malls, banks, hospitals, chiropractors, politicians, lawyers, realtors”²⁶ it once more serves as a microcosm of contemporary America. Percy again draws a grotesque, overblown picture of what to him is wrong with the world around him. More notices “certain small clinical changes” (*TS* 1) with some of his patients, his wife Ellen and other people. They seem to have overcome their former anxieties, phobias, guilt feelings, violent aggressions, obsessions, and sexual inhibitions. At the same time they have become strangely “diminished” (*TS* 85), suffering from what More diagnoses as the “Thanatos Syndrome,” i.e. a loss of self, creativity and imagination. The language they use is minimalistic, cleansed of all emotional ballast with a computer-like capacity of remembering information. The novel at this point turns into a kind of intellectual thriller, with More adopting the role of a doctor/detective: “I think it's a syndrome, but I am not sure. I'm to find out” (*TS* 90). With the help of his cousin Lucy Lipscomb, a medical doctor and computer statistician, he uncovers the secret ‘Blue Boy’ conspiracy, which has been instigated by a group of doctors and scientists – among them his colleagues, Dr. Comeaux, and John Van Dorn, a leading educator and president of the Belle Ame Academy. They have established a brave new world of human perfection, but in contrast to B. F. Skinner's behavioristic social engineering in *Walden Two* they have achieved it by way of chem-

ical manipulation. They have administered a collective chemotherapy by mixing heavy sodium (Na-24) into the drinking water reservoir of Feliciana. By neutralizing the Freudian superego in the brain cells of their 'patients' they have created a "chemical New Zion"²⁷ and restored "the best of the Southern Way of Life" (*TS* 197). They have abolished violence, drug addiction, homosexuality and pornography and reduced the crime rate in the streets by eighty-five percent. People have lost their anxieties, guilt feelings, terrors, panics, phobias, and practice their sexuality with an animal-like frankness. The Cartesian split between mind and body, the cognitive and instinctive aspects of personality, has been levelled out. But at the same time all creative impulses too, for example the urge to produce or receive literature and art have vanished. The most terrifying aspect of this Southern dystopia are the "Qualitarian Centers" (*TS* 111), where unfit infants and useless old people are systematically extinguished by euthanasia. Significantly, the horror scenario is not caused by outside forces and totalitarian systems as in Zamiatin's *We*, Orwell's *1984*, or Huxley's *Brave New World*, but from within – "the barbarians of the inner gate"²⁸ – secular humanists, scientists and bureaucrats, who have lost their religious beliefs and moral responsibilities. The central issue of the novel is a warning against all secular messianisms, utopian abstractions and scientific and social manipulations of man, which in the last analysis always involve a violation of the sanctity, sovereignty, and transcendental rootedness of the individual mind.

Obvious parallels to Voegelin emerge in the sections "Father Smith's Confession" and "Father Smith's Footnote" (*TS* 239-54), which link the dystopian project with Nazi Germany. This part of the novel is based on observations Percy himself had made during his stay in Germany in 1934. Father Rinaldo Smith, an old priest, who in his disgust with hedonism and political corruption has withdrawn to a remote fire station, represents the typical outsider figure of the Utopian genre and obviously functions as Percy's "polemic mouthpiece."²⁹ He is a new version of Father John in *Lancelot*, not silent anymore but speaking as a moral mentor. He tells More of his former enthusiasm for the Nazi cult of racial purity and national pride. He talks about a discussion he had with German medical doctors and psychiatrists in Weimar/Germany in the early thirties about the problem of eugenics. "Their argument," he confesses, "made considerable sense to me. I was not repelled by their theories and practices of eugenics – why prolong the life of the genetically unfit or the hopelessly ill?" (*TS* 247).

"If I had been German, not American," he adds, "I would have gone to the Junkerschule and sworn the solemn oath of the Teutonic knights at Marienberg and joined the Schutzstaffel" (*TS* 248-49). Years later, when he returned to Germany as a U.S. army officer in 1945, he became aware of his former blindness. After liberating a eugenics hospital in Munich one of the nurses showed him the "special departments" (*TS* 257), where mentally handicapped children were killed by Zyklon B and lethal injections. The shock of recognition triggered off by this revelation dissolved his distorted awareness and induced him to become a priest dedicated to Catholicism and Judaism as the last bulwarks of transcendence against the moral nihilism of a radically secularized world. His conclusion is that 'tenderness,' i.e. any striving for human perfection which is not rooted in religious transcendence, necessarily ends up in a catastrophe: "Do you know where tenderness always leads?", he asks Dr. More, "To the gas chamber. . . . [I]f you put the two together, a lover of Mankind and a theorist of Mankind, what you've got is Robespierre, or Stalin or Hitler and the Terror, and millions dead for he good of Mankind" (*TS* 128-29). In his sermon towards the end of the novel he once more elaborates on this notion:

Never before in the history of the world have there been so many civilized tender-hearted souls as have lived in this century. Never in the history of the world have so many people been killed. More people have been killed in this century by tender-hearted souls than by cruel barbarians in all other centuries put together. (*TS* 361)

It is because God agreed to let the Great Prince Satan have his way with men for a hundred years – this [sic] one hundred years, the twentieth century. . . . How did he do it? No great evil scenes, no demons – he's too smart for that. All he had to do was to leave us alone. We did it. Reason warred with faith. Science triumphed. (*TS* 365)

Near the end of the novel the Father Smith episode is merged with the dystopian plot, when the priest asks More two questions: "What do you think . . . of your colleagues, the Weimar . . . psychiatrists?" (*TS* 252), and "Do you think we're different from the Germans" (*TS* 256). In answering these questions More must decide whether to collaborate with the Blue Boy project or turn against it from a position of Christian ethics. He decides for the latter, renounces his former Gnostic illusion of perfecting man, exposes the dystopian scenario and restores the status quo in Feliciana. The novel reaches a grotesque climax when More forces Van Dorn, the Gnostic mastermind, to take an overdose

of heavy sodium himself, and by this reduces him to an apelike existence.

The Thanatos Syndrome, with its rather contrived plot, didactic diction and allegorical allusions certainly is not one of Percy's masterpieces, but it once more sums up his criticism of secular humanism. Like Voegelin before him, the Southern Catholic "wayfarer"³⁰ warns his readers of the dangers and negative effects of scientism, utopian activism, and collectivism. At a time when Fascism, Communism and the Cold War had their heyday Voegelin's and in his wake Percy's notions certainly made a great amount of sense. Today, when the older types of totalitarianism have largely disappeared and a globalized capitalism is taking hold of the world, they appear strangely obsolete. Their refusal of what Voegelin subsumes under the term 'Gnosticism,' i.e. all humanistic and scientific endeavors to restructure the world in a rational way, has obviously led to no sustainable results either except accelerating the rise of religious radicalism. No matter whether Christian, Islamic or Zionist fundamentalists are at work, their dogmatic insistence on transcendental guidance has resulted in equally dehumanizing petrifications and intensified the clash of cultures.

Clearly, not Voegelin, and his neo-conservative followers, but Karl Popper, another Austrian thinker who emerged from the same historical background, deserves approval today. Like Voegelin he pursued his academic career at the University of Vienna in the twenties and thirties and also had to flee from Austria. Under the impact of the Nazi terror Popper arrived at precisely the same conclusion about the modern dilemma as Voegelin: "The attempt to establish heaven on earth always produces hell."³¹ In his book *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945), however, he gives a very different answer to Gnostic leaders, totalitarian regimes, and collective utopias. He refuses any kind of transcendental dogmatism and believes in historical and metaphysical indeterminacy. As a critical rationalist Popper spoke out for a democratic 'Open Society' safeguarding individual freedom and autonomy for every human being.

Percy somehow stood between these two antipodes. He shared Voegelin's pessimistic diagnosis of modernity and like him rejected scientism and political utopianism from a Christian conservative perspective. But, like Popper, he also favoured individual self-determination and self-fulfilment. This explains why his fictional protagonists are strangely ambiguous: Lancelot sympathizes with utopian ideals and regresses into a Gnostic madman in the end. Dr. More, the psychi-

atric technocrat, strives for human perfection in *Love Among the Ruins*, but ultimately abandons his Gnostic pipedreams. In *The Thanatos Syndrome* he reappears as a disillusioned realist, while his dystopian opponents are exposed as absurdist caricatures. Voegelin's dogmatic transcendental theory of modern Gnosticism, so it seems, served Percy as a long-term stimulus for his artistic imagination but he never accepted its totalizing ideological concept.

Notes

- ¹ Walker Percy, "Diagnosing the Modern Malaise," *Signposts in a Strange Land* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1991) 397-98.
- ² *Ibid.* 166.
- ³ *Ibid.* 36.
- ⁴ For Percy's studies in language theory and semiotics see Walker Percy, *Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1975), and Walker Percy, *Lost in the Cosmos* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1983). William Poeteat, "Reflection of Walker Percy's Theory of Language," *The Art of Walker Percy* 192-218.
- ⁵ Percy, *Signposts* 160-61.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* 221.
- ⁷ "Novel-Writing in an Apocalyptic Time," *Signposts* 397-98. Comp. Arno Heller, "Within and Beyond the Southern Tradition: Walker Percy," *Rewriting the South: History and Fiction*, ed. Lothar Hönnighausen and Valeria Gennaro Lerda (Tübingen and Basel: Francke Verlag, 1993) 371-81.
- ⁸ Percy, *Signposts* 163.
- ⁹ *Ibid.* 166.
- ¹⁰ Cleanth Brooks, "Walker Percy and Modern Gnosticism," *Southern Review* 13 (Autumn 1977): 677.
- ¹¹ Jay Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins. A Life of Walker Percy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992) 430.
- ¹² Peter J. Opitz, "Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik. Zum biographischen und theoretischen Hintergrund eines Klassikers," *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 1991) 271-86; Ellis Sandoz, *The Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).
- ¹³ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).
- ¹⁴ *Time Magazine* March 9, 1953: 57-61.
- ¹⁵ Ashley Brown, "An Interview with Walker Percy," *Shenandoah* 18 (Spring 1967): 6.
- ¹⁶ Peter J. Opitz, "Zur Binnenstruktur eines ontologisch-normativen Theorie-Ansatzes. Versuch einer systematischen Rekonstruktion der politischen Philosophie Eric Voegelins," *Zeitschrift für Politik* 36 (1989): 370-81; Gregor Sebba, "Prelude and Variations on the Theme of Eric Voegelin," *Southern Review* 13 (1977): 646-76; Barry Cooper, *Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science*

- (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999); Michael Henkel, *Eric Voegelin zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 1998).
- ¹⁷ Delno C. West, ed., *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1975). Joachim of Fiore's impact on Voegelin and Percy is discussed by Cecil L. Eubanks, "Walker Percy: Eschatology and the Politics of Grace," *Walker Percy: Art and Ethics*, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1980) 121-33; and Louis P. Zamora, *Writing the Apocalypse: Historical Vision in Contemporary U.S. and Latin American Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 125-34.
- ¹⁸ *The New Science of Politics* 129.
- ¹⁹ Ted V. McAllister, *Revolt Against Modernity. Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and the Search for a Post-Liberal Order* (Lawrence, KS: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1996).
- ²⁰ Lewis A. Lawson, "The Gnostic Vision of Lancelot," *Renascence* 32 (August 1979): 52-64.
- ²¹ Walker Percy, *Lancelot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1977) iii. Hereafter cited as "L."
- ²² Jan N. Gretlund, "Interview with Walker Percy in his Home in Covington, Louisiana, Jan. 2, 1981," *South Carolina Review* 13 (1981) 6-7. For a more penetrating discussion of Lancelot's Gnostic fascism see Lewis Lawson, *Another Generation. Southern Fiction Since World War II* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984) 128-35.
- ²³ Percy, *Signposts* 379; Comp. Arno Heller, *Gewaltphantasien: Untersuchungen zu einem Phänomen des amerikanischen Gegenwartsromans* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1990) 189-200.
- ²⁴ Walker Percy, "Notes for a Novel about the End of the World," *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1975) 101-18; Comp. Jac Tharpe, *Walker Percy* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983) 81-82.
- ²⁵ Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1971) 17. Hereafter cited as "LR."
- ²⁶ Walker Percy, *The Thanatos Syndrome* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1987) viii. Hereafter cited as "TS."
- ²⁷ François Pitavy, "Walker Percy's Brave New World: *The Thanatos Syndrome*," *Walker Percy, Novelist and Philosopher*, eds. Gretlund and Westarp (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi) 180.
- ²⁸ Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (New York: Knopf, 1961) 33.
- ²⁹ John E. Hardy, *The Fiction of Walker Percy* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1987) 245; Comp. William R. Allen, "Father Smith's Confession in *The Thanatos Syndrome*," *Walker Percy, Novelist and Philosopher*, eds. Gretlund and Westarp 189-98.
- ³⁰ Percy, *Signposts* 369; Comp. Patricia L. Poteat, "Pilgrim's Progress; or, A Few Night Thoughts on Tenderness and the Will to Power," *Walker Percy, Novelist and Philosopher*, eds. Gretlund and Westarp 210-24.
- ³¹ Karl Popper, *Die offene Gesellschaft und ihre Feinde II: Falsche Propheten*. UTB 473 (München: Francke, 1980) 292.

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